

# Public Document Pack

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Meeting Space - Block 1, Floor 2 - County Hall on Thursday, 2 December 2021 at 10.00 am.

#### PRESENT

W Daley (Chair) (in the Chair)

#### COUNCILLORS

C Ball  
L Dunn

R Dodd

#### CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

A Hodgson

D Lennox

#### TEACHER UNION REPRESENTATIVES

L Houghton

J Sanderson

#### OFFICERS

C Angus  
N Dorward

Scrutiny Officer  
Senior Manager - Education Development &  
Collaborative Projects  
Service Director - Education and Skills  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Service Director - Children's Social Care  
Deputy Director of Education

A Kingham  
L Little  
G Reiter  
D Street

#### ALSO PRESENT

G Renner-Thompson

Cabinet Member

Press/Public : 1

#### 36 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair wished to recognise and acknowledge the hard work and speedy response provided by staff, Councillors and volunteers in supporting their communities following Storm Arwen. He offered his gratitude and thanks to all those who had been involved.

Ch.'s Initials.....

37 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Carr, Dunbar, Scott, Swinburn, Taylor Thorne and from Mr Rickeard.

38 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Daley advised that he had an interest in item 4 – Opportunity for expansion of Northumberland Health Education England (HEE) Project Choice as he had undertaken work with NHS England and Project Choice and would leave the meeting whilst this item was being discussed. Councillor Dodd, Vice Chair would take the Chair for this item.

39 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions for December 2021 to March 2022 had been shared with Members for information.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

Councillor Daley left the room at this point and Councillor Dodd took the Chair.

40 **OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPANSION OF NORTHUMBERLAND HEALTH EDUCATION ENGLAND (HEE) PROJECT CHOICE**

The Cabinet report provided information on the opportunity to develop a wider scope of delivery for Health Education England's Project Choice within Northumberland in order to more rapidly deliver on Northumberland County Council's (NCC) education priorities and SEND priorities. N Dorward, Senior Manager - Education Development & Collaborative Projects provided a comprehensive introduction to the report with the aid of a power point presentation. Members were advised that the pilot programme launched in September 2021 with apprenticeship being the intended progression route following internship thereby creating a sustainable career for young people with SEND. There would be an opportunity for Northumberland Health Care Trust (NHCT) interns to attend 12 week placements within NCC in 2022 with a further opportunity to deliver NCC cohorts from September 2022 on a 36 week programme and in time for NCC to work with Project Choice to widen participation across partner employers in Northumberland.

Councillor Renner-Thompson advised that this was part of the overall strategy to improve outcomes for children & young people with SEND and would enhance the schemes already in place. Councillor Dunn advised that this had previously been the subject of discussions at Corporate Parenting and it was fabulous to see it come to fruition.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

41 **NORTHUMBERLAND STRATEGIC SKILLS PLAN 2021-25 (MARCH 2021, UPDATED OCTOBER 2021)**

Ch.'s Initials.....

The Cabinet report provided details of the Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25 which had been designed to guide skills planning and the approach in designing impactful vocational skills provision within the County to yield greatest impact for residents and the local economy. An introduction to the report was provided by N Dorward, Senior Manager - Education Development & Collaborative Projects with the aid of a power point presentation. The Plan provided a clear presentation of the vocational education ambition for Northumberland and would be a powerful tool to communicate the County vision to inward investors and how workforce building could be supported.

The Chair suggested that this could be used as a template for schools at an early stage so that the world of work was embedded from primary levels right through to post 16. A Kingham, Service Director – Education and Skills advised that the link between education and industry had been undeveloped and the challenge was how to improve this. The approach would allow the link to start at a much younger age and would assist to raise the ambitions and aspirations of children in the County and to engage industry.

Councillor Renner-Thompson advised that this was a priority of the Administration and would enable students to progress and support some of the organisations which were making huge investments in Northumberland, showed forward thinking in the educational offer and would contribute to the wider north east economy.

In response to questions, Members were advised that this was a vocational skills based plan, would allow technical progression and allow students to be apprenticeship ready. Work would be undertaken in conjunction with Northumberland College to develop opportunities for 14-16 year olds and a fabricating/welding training facility within the Port of Blyth was part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Members highlighted the need for different skill sets required for important roles which had previously been seen as unpopular choices and the need to ensure that these were seen as career pathways. In response to a request to include the “arts” so that STEM became STEAM in order to be more inclusive, Members were advised that the whole strategy around the plan was inclusion at every level and to make sure that there were opportunities for all. Work had been undertaken with both NTCA and NECA to look at opportunities collectively around inclusion and looking at the most disadvantaged areas and reach into these areas and engage with industries to do this. Assurance was provided that it had not been missed and was included in all approaches.

The Chair advised that the document was part of wider system changes which were required to be acted upon. It formed part of the holistic approach to get a mobilised workforce which was fit for the future. Members were reminded that this was an action from the Education Report from the previous year and would be delivered in conjunction with wider partners and whilst it was a NCC document it was for the whole of Northumberland.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Ch.'s Initials.....

The report shared a sample of content and findings from a suite of reports resulting from a range of internal and externally commissioned skills and employment based research activities conducted on the subject of curriculum development priorities within Northumberland. The content and findings underpinned the Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25 which was designed to inform skills planning and the approach in designing impactful vocational skills provision. An introduction to the report was provided by N Dorward, Senior Manager - Education Development & Collaborative Projects with the aid of a power point presentation. The appendices to the report were available for viewing on the Council's website. Mrs Kingham stated that all the reports presented at the Committee today would be a catalyst for change in the future. Work would be undertaken with Senior Officers in the first instance to get this embedded within the Council and this would also be done with all schools across the County via partnerships. It was a long piece of work but it had already started.

A skills audit had been discussed at Corporate Parenting for members of that Group and it was suggested that this should be undertaken in a broader sense for all Councillors and Officers of the Council and the different career paths they have had and use this free resource to take into schools for young people to understand and know the different roles and jobs which were available and to which they could aspire to.

Mr Hodgson highlighted the work which he had previously undertaken with schools in the EU and the common theme of which had been the effective links they had with industries which gave young people aged 13/14 the opportunity to sample a wide range of industries which we could learn from. In some instances transport had also been provided to able the young people to access these chances.

Councillor Daley commented that schools were often too focussed on achieving Ofsted approval that they had lost sight of the importance of links with business. There was an opportunity for a rethink and to look at linking learning with earning and the huge benefit of vocational, business and industry led training and he questioned if Ofsted was still fit for purpose following Covid. A Kingham agreed that some education systems in other countries were phenomenal in terms of their business/industry links and whilst we were at an early stage there were some opportunities for us to link with industry training units in Germany and Denmark, where some links had already been established. There were some opportunities on a regional and national level for the work the Council was doing to be shared, but it would take more than this to change things. Industry would have a much larger voice and we needed to get them on board to take forward and there was an opportunity to start to change.

In response to a question on how as a body the Committee could change the focus of Ofsted to include vocational studies and embrace different ways of learning, the Chair advised that a letter could be sent to the Regional Ofsted Inspector, however, to achieve any change would require a collective voice including politicians, government and industry and senior officers throughout the Country. The work undertaken recently in connection with Looked After Children

by the Directors of Children's Services in the LA7 was highlighted and it was recognised that a collaborative approach building up nationally would be the best way forward. Mrs Kingham advised that she worked closely with the Regional Ofsted office and these views would be shared with them and once the outlined plans were in place and we could provide evidence to say that these were providing a bigger difference than the current framework then the route to change would be through lobby groups which would include industry voices.

Mr Hodgson highlighted the work he had witnessed in Latvia and Lithuania in relation to the heavy investment in the development of IT skills within schools some 25 years ago and they now led the world in this field, this was something that could be replicated within our schools.

The Chair advised that he did not wish to lose sight of the discussion in relation to Ofsted and an additional recommendation should be included to request that Officers talk to other Directors of Education within the LA7 or wider field on putting something to Government on how there could be more flexibility within Ofsted. Mr Street advised that there was currently scope within the Ofsted framework to cover a lot of the areas discussed. A broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet the needs of the local community rather than a one size fits all for the whole Country allowed schools to be deemed to be outstanding because they met the needs of their learners and residents. It would be great if this could be made clearer in the national framework, however there was a need to give Head Teachers the confidence that working this way could help their schools to become outstanding. The Chair advised that it was vital that this knowledge become embedded in schools and that schools and colleges understood that they could be part of the wider solution and requested an additional recommendation be included to reflect that.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. the content and general approach of the Northumberland Skills Pathfinder Curriculum Research be noted;
2. the use of the document with internal NCC stakeholder groups be authorised; and
3. that work be undertaken with schools and colleges to embed the knowledge of the Ofsted framework which included the use of a broad and balanced curriculum which was designed to meet the needs of their learners and residents.

43 **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2021/22**

A copy of the work programme had been circulated for information. The Scrutiny Officer advised that it had been agreed that an additional meeting be held on 13 January 2022 in order to manage the number of items on the agenda for the 6 January 2022 meeting.

Members were advised that an item that had been requested on School Transport would be provided at the May or June meeting, however details of the terms of reference could be provided in advance to provide assurance to members that it was being taken forward.

Ch.'s Initials.....

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

Ch.'s Initials.....

---

**BRIEFING NOTE:** Director - Business Development Education and Skills

---

**Report Title:** Curriculum Development Projects for Northumberland.

**Report of:** Audrey Kingham

(Director - Business Development Education and Skills)

**Report by:** Neil Dorward

(Senior Manager - Education Development & Collaborative Projects)

---

**Purpose of report**

To formulate a series of next steps in response to the report on '*Curriculum Development Opportunities in Northumberland*' presented to Director - Business Development Education and Skills August 2020. To propose reform of Northumberland County Council Learning & Skills Service curriculum offer by indicating the strategic locations and curriculum offers that should be implemented as a reform phase one going forward. The proposed reform projects will provide industry and county priority skills and career pipelines which offer the greatest impact upon young people, adults, industry and regional GVA. Projects will also align with the vision of the '*Good Work Pledge*' and with the '*Strategic Economic Plan*' in creating new apprenticeships and new jobs within Northumberland for those living in Northumberland, also enhancing the potential for businesses to relocate to Northumberland.




**Background**

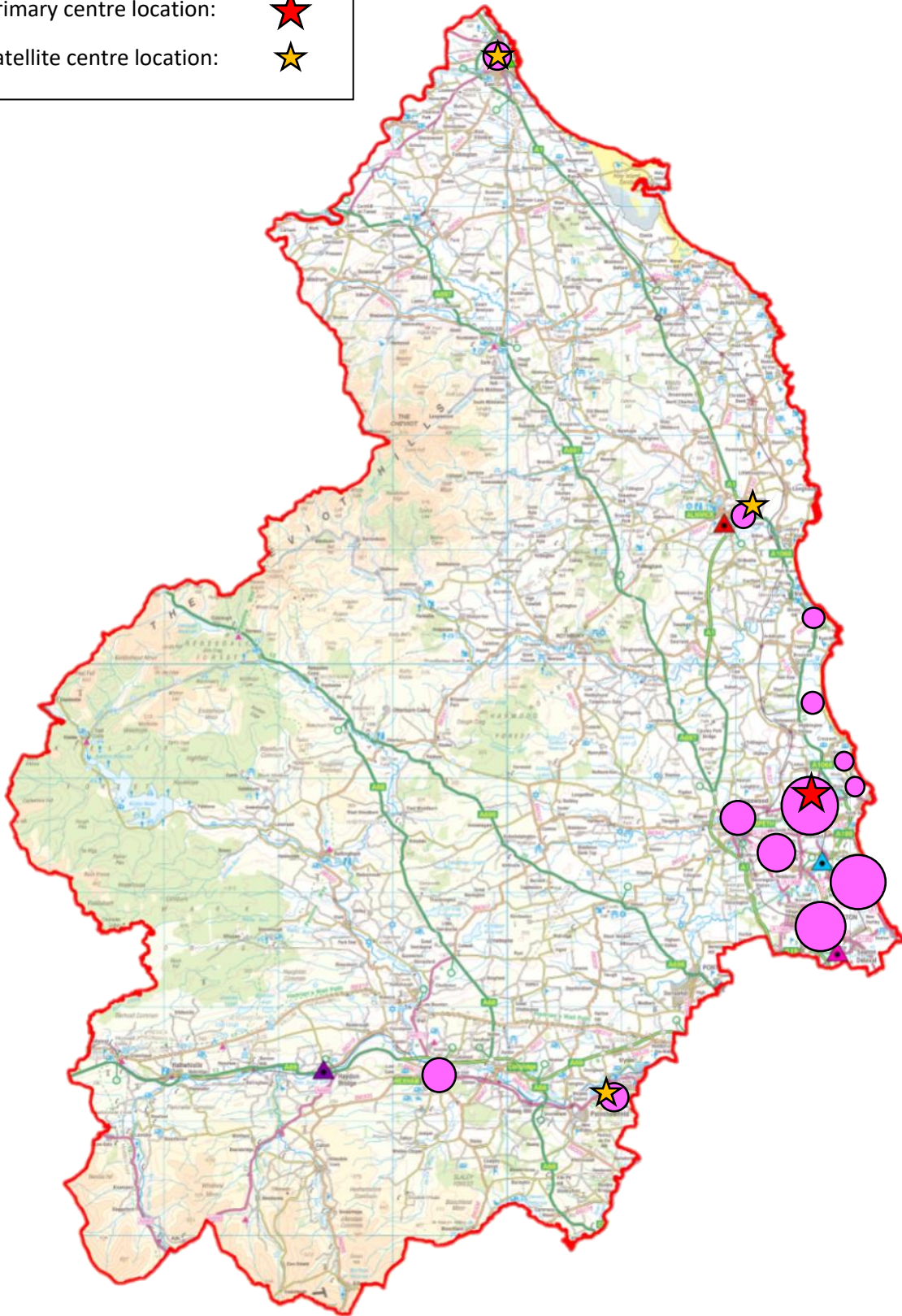
During August 2020 a study into the curriculum offer of Northumberland County Council Learning & Skills Service was completed. The study analysed current curriculum offer in comparison to county employment data, regional GVA data, geographical industry density and geographical demographics. The study indicates that the current curriculum has capacity for improvement in terms of the curriculum intent and the strategic locations for the curriculum to have the required impact upon the future of young people and adults as well as positive impact upon the regional economy. As part of the study the key areas to address in phase one are concluded as: Human health and social work activities, Manufacturing/Engineering, Retail & wholesale, Construction, Administration/Business, Digital skills/IT, Accommodation & Foodservice.

---



Human Health and Social Work Activities – occupation hot-spots:

- Occupation density zone: 
- Primary centre location: 
- Satellite centre location: 





## **Human Health and Social Work Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1, L2, L3 programmes of study in Health & Social Care with locally relevant unit selection.
- L4 Diploma in Healthcare Science.
- Apprenticeship Standards at L2, L3 (with potential to grow into L4, L5).
- Nursing & Midwifery Council approved qualifications (to support apprenticeship and full cost).
- Commercial short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard (vast range of opportunity).
- Higher Education/University Undergraduate degree.
- L4/L5/L6 Degree apprenticeships.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult (short course).
- Commercial full cost short course.

### **Location**

Placement in or around the Ashington/Wansbeck Business Park area would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland and beyond (inc N'land line) and would be central to the built up areas where health related occupations are prevalent. This would also enable generic learning spaces to be utilised for supporting the range of businesses in and around the immediate area. Some satellite delivery in Prudhoe (Fuse), Alnwick and Berwick would raise participation with the option to transport learners to the primary site on demand for specialist topic coverage.

### **Justification**




Human Health & Social Work activity is the largest employer in Northumberland, contributes the second largest GVA, continues to demonstrate sector growth but also suffers recruitment challenges with the majority of regional 'hard skill' shortages being in this sector. The sector offers significant opportunity for progression into positions requiring higher education qualifications.

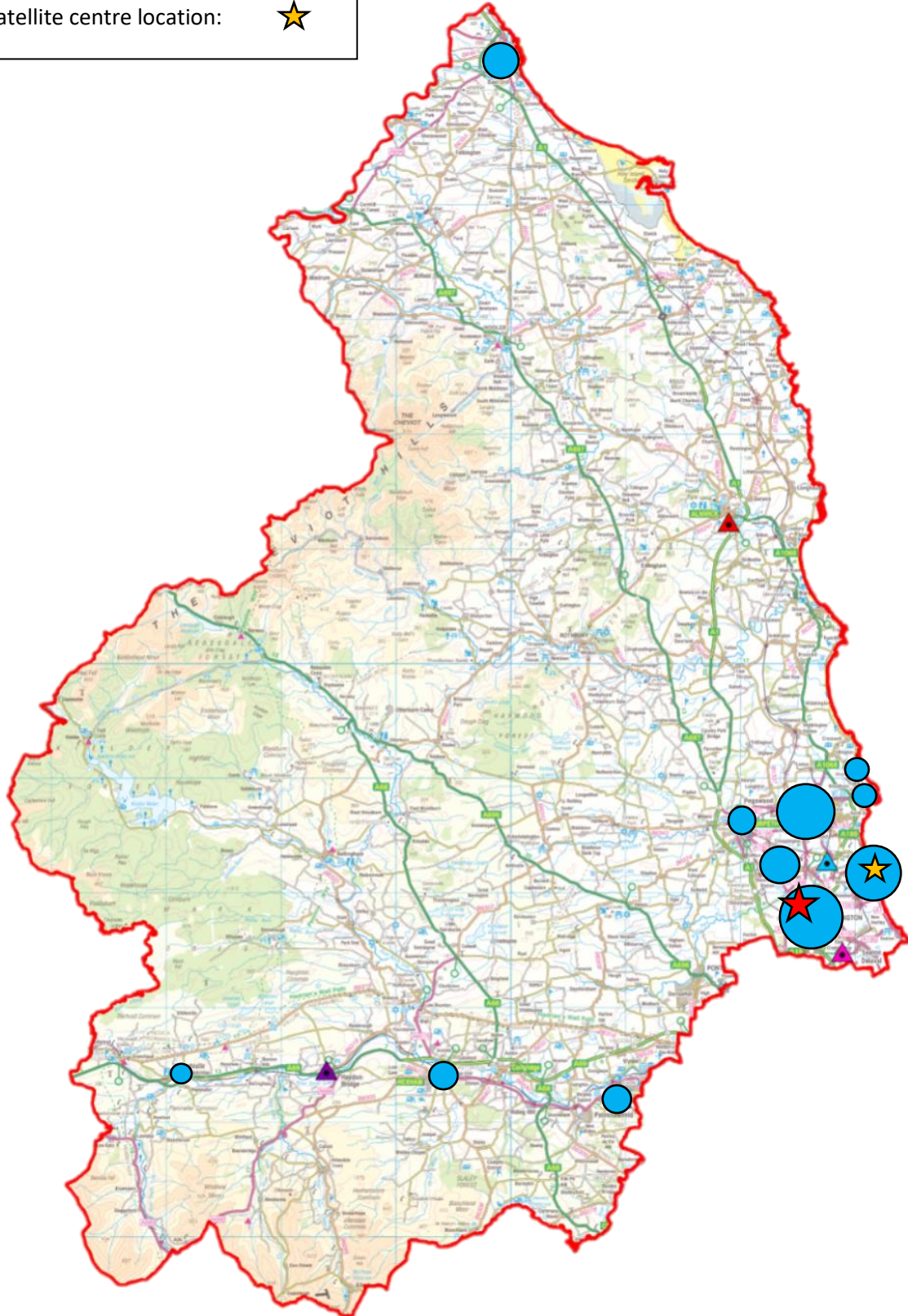
### **Potential stakeholders**

- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
- Centre for Life.
- Industry sponsorship from local pharmaceutical & healthcare sector organisations.



**Manufacturing/Engineering – occupation hot-spots:**

- Occupation density zone: 
- Primary centre location: 
- Satellite centre location: 



## **Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering & Welding/Fabrication Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1, L2, L3 programmes of study in multi-skilled Advanced Manufacturing Engineering, Machining and Welding & Fabrication.
- Apprenticeship Standards at L2, L3 (with potential to grow into L4+).
- Sub-contract qualifications to support apprenticeship standards.
- Commercial short course.
- Adult short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard predominantly at L3.
- Higher Education/University Undergraduate degree.
- L4+ apprenticeship.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Sub-contract for apprenticeship standards.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial full cost short course.

### **Location**

Placement of Advanced Manufacturing Engineering curriculum within the heavily industrialised area of Cramlington would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland and beyond (inc ECML station) and Placement of Welding & Fabrication curriculum within the Port of Blyth area would again allow exceptional transport links. Placement in these locations will promote curriculum relevance, industrial sponsorship, commercial training work, 16-18 work experience and progression opportunity for Study Programme learners as well as having local hotel facilities to partner with to support commercial training.

### **Justification**

Manufacturing holds the third greatest industry share of jobs in Northumberland and contributes the greatest GVA to the county whilst continuing to demonstrate growth. The continued investment in the Blyth area also promises future opportunity in the sector. The sector offers significant opportunity for high value employment via L3 Apprenticeship in Northumberland and also a well established route into higher education.

### **Potential stakeholders**

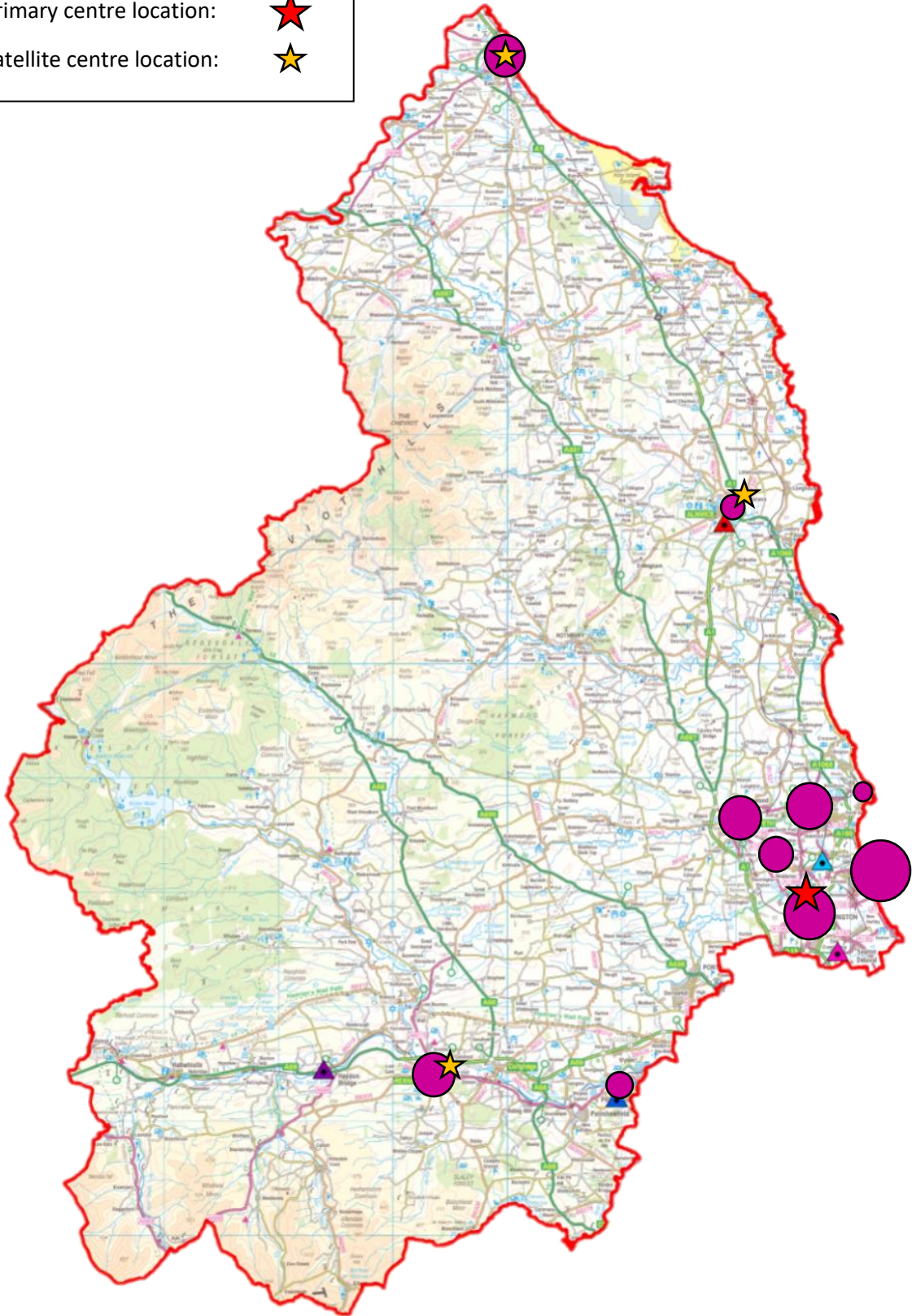
- Manufacturing/Engineering organisations within Northumberland (and potentially beyond).
- Subject specific institutes.
- Private training providers.
- F.E. colleges.





**Retail & Wholesale industry hot-spots:**

Occupation density zone:	
Primary centre location:	
Satellite centre location:	



## **Retail & Wholesale Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1, L2, L3 programmes of study in retail disciplines.
- Apprenticeship Standards at L2, L3, L4.
- Commercial short course.
- Adult short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard.
- Direct to employment.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial full cost short course for employees.

### **Location**

Placement of retail curriculum within the high foot-fall retail area of Manor Walks Cramlington would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland and beyond (inc ECML station). This area would provide outstanding opportunity for live and simulated retail training spaces to provide real world experience and also work experience for programme of study. This opportunity could dovetail with business curriculum whereby the ongoing retail activity would be the ideal business case study allowing the two occupation areas to collaborate. The location would also bring visibility to enhance participation and sponsorship opportunity.

### **Justification**

Retail and wholesale contributes one of the largest share of jobs in Northumberland and is significant in GVA contribution whilst also demonstrating growth. The continued investment in retail parks and in town centre regeneration underpins part of the predicted growth and resultant opportunity in the sector. Retail sector work is within easy reach of the majority of small towns so is accessible to the majority yet despite the growing retail & wholesale infrastructure there is little opportunity for young people or adults to train toward this career pathway.

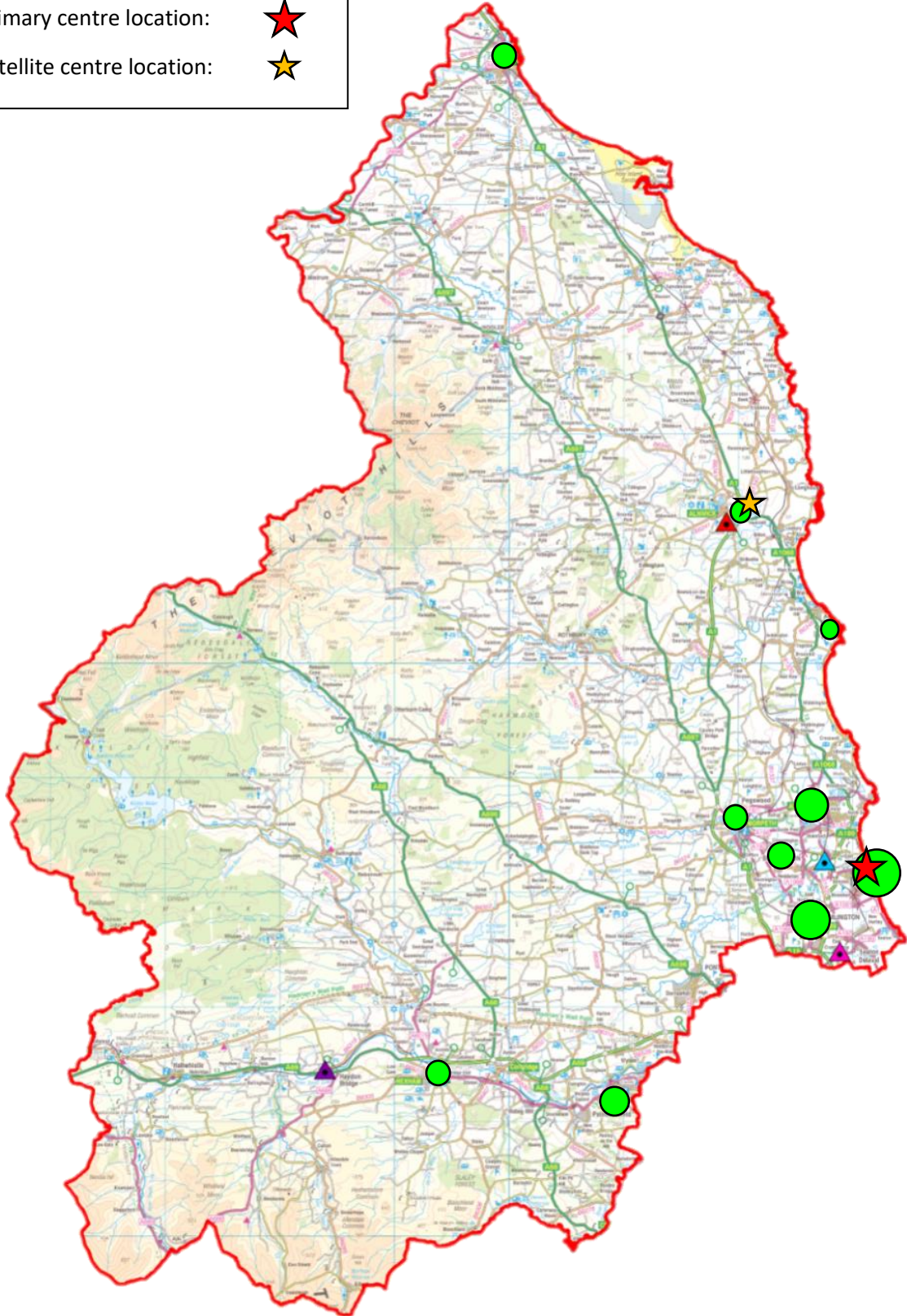
### **Potential stakeholders**

- Significant local retailers (contribute to CSR policies).



**Construction – occupation hot-spots:**

Occupation density zone:	●
Primary centre location:	★
Satellite centre location:	★





## **Construction Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1, L2, L3 programmes of study in construction trades.
- L3 Diploma in Civil Engineering.
- Apprenticeship Standards at L2.
- Commercial short course.
- Adult short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard.
- Direct to employment.
- Foundation degree on Civil Engineering pathway.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial full cost short course.

### **Location**

Placement of Construction/Civils curriculum at Dunn Cow Quay or in the local area of the Blyth industrial area would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland. Blyth and surrounding N.E. Northumberland are significant locations for construction occupations providing curriculum relevance, industrial sponsorship, commercial training work, 16-18 work experience and progression opportunity for Study Programme learners, not least owing to the vast amount of investment and regeneration in the area requiring additional industrial premises and homes. Generic classroom space in the facility would be well placed to support the wealth of existing and emerging businesses in the area for work aligned with other local sectors. In order to raise participation and to overcome geographic obstacles Alnwick would operate as a satellite centre for basic traditional trades and some modular technology.

### **Justification**




Construction trades provide the 7<sup>th</sup> largest share of jobs in Northumberland and 5<sup>th</sup> largest GVA contribution whilst also demonstrating 6<sup>th</sup> greatest levels of industry growth. Industry growth is likely to continue given the investment in retail parks, commercial sites and in town centre regeneration which underpins predicted growth and resultant opportunity in the sector. Opportunity exists to focus on emerging modular construction technology and civils as well as basic traditional trades.

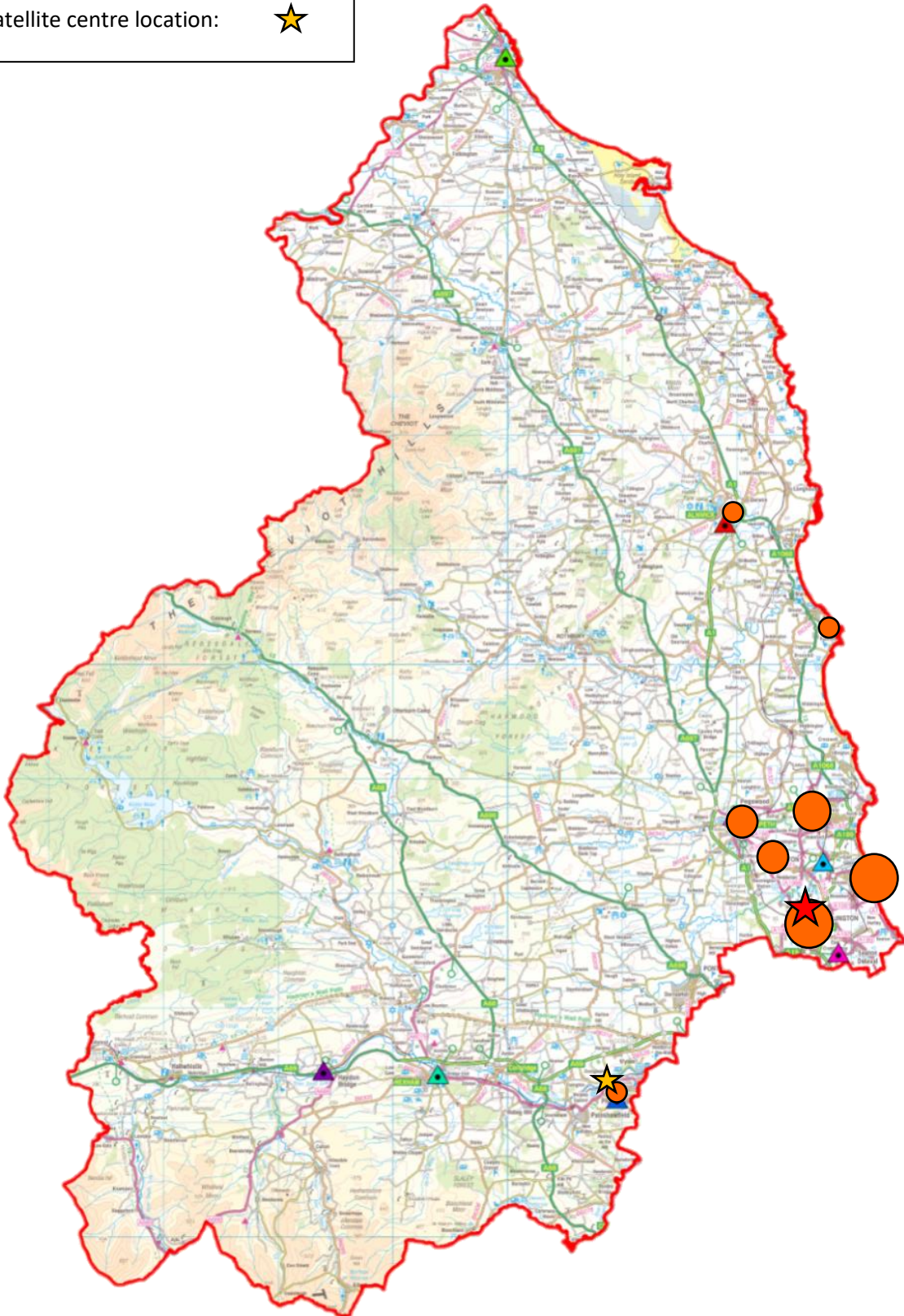
### **Potential stakeholders**

- Significant local construction/property/development organisations (contribute to CSR policies).



**Administration/Business – occupation hot-spots:**

- Occupation density zone: 
- Primary centre location: 
- Satellite centre location: 





## **Administration & Business Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1, L2, L3 Diploma programmes of study.
- Apprenticeship Standard at L3.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard at L3 (with progression options to higher level standards)
- Direct to employment.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial full cost short course for employees.

### **Location**

Placement of Business & Administration curriculum within the high foot-fall retail area of Manor Walks Cramlington would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland and beyond (inc ECML station). This area would provide outstanding opportunity for links to local businesses for work experience for programme of study learners. This opportunity could dovetail with Retail curriculum whereby the ongoing retail activity would be the ideal business case study allowing the two occupation areas to collaborate. The location would also bring visibility to enhance participation and sponsorship opportunity.

### **Justification**

Business and administrative activity provides the 6<sup>th</sup> largest share of jobs in Northumberland and contributes significantly to regional GVA. Occupations in this area show demand at more than double supply. Occupations in this area are also indicated to be in a period of growth which will be enhanced once again with the emerging regeneration and investment in retail and industrial zones. Continued investment in retail parks and in town centre regeneration underpin predicted growth and resultant opportunity in the sector however there is little opportunity for young people or adults to train directly toward this career pathway. In this location curriculum in Business & Administration could dovetail with retail curriculum whereby the ongoing retail activity would be the ideal business case study allowing the two occupation areas to collaborate and also share facilities. Satellite delivery at Prudhoe can be used to raise participation within the Tyne Valley.

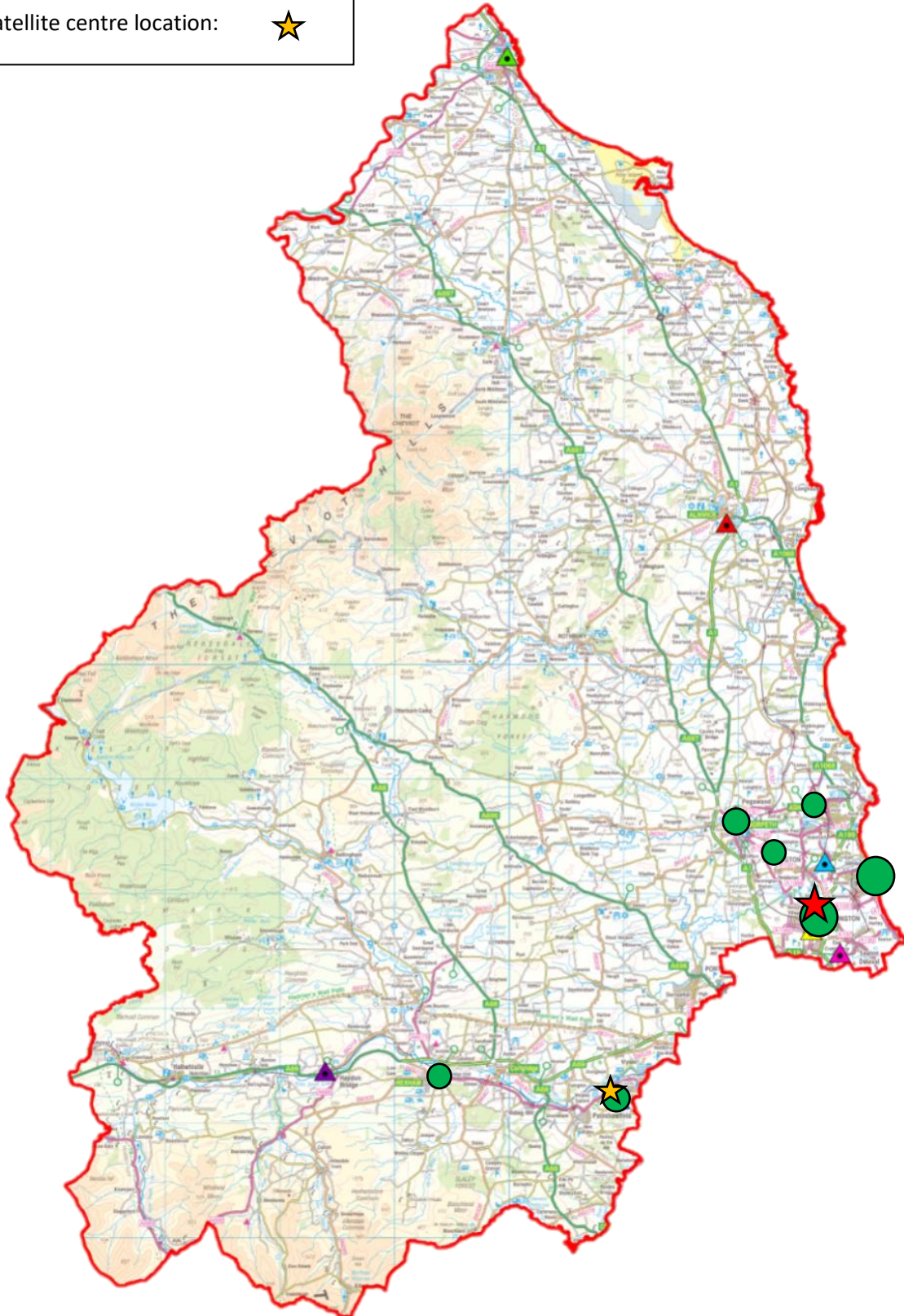
### **Potential stakeholders**

- Significant local organisations with business and administration related function (contribute to CSR policies).



Digital skills/IT – occupation hot-spots:

Occupation density zone:	●
Primary centre location:	★
Satellite centre location:	★



## **Digital skills/IT Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L2, L3 Diploma programmes of study.
- Apprenticeship Standard at L3 (9 pathways). Progress to App Standards of L4+ (17 Pathways).
- Adult short course.
- Commercial short course.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard at L3 (with progression options to higher level standards)
- Direct to employment.
- HE - a range of local HNC, HND, Foundation Degree and Bachelor degree options.

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult short course.
- Commercial full cost short course for employees.

### **Location**

Placement of IT & Digital curriculum within the high foot-fall retail area of Manor Walks Cramlington would allow exceptional transport links for those within S.E. Northumberland and beyond (inc ECML station). This area would provide outstanding opportunity for links to local businesses for work experience for programme of study learners. This opportunity could provide opportunity to share premises with Retail and Business/Admin curriculum at the Manor Walks site. Many local businesses are available for work experience and progression to employment. Prudhoe campus is placed well to offer a satellite curriculum to allow participation into the Tyne Valley.

### **Justification**

Digital & IT occupations appear difficult to extract from industry categories however there are few sectors that do not feature digital and IT functions within core business operations. Digitalisation of manufacturing and business functions, including post COVID recovery, suggest that a strong skills demand will only grow stronger in the short to medium term.




### **Potential stakeholders**

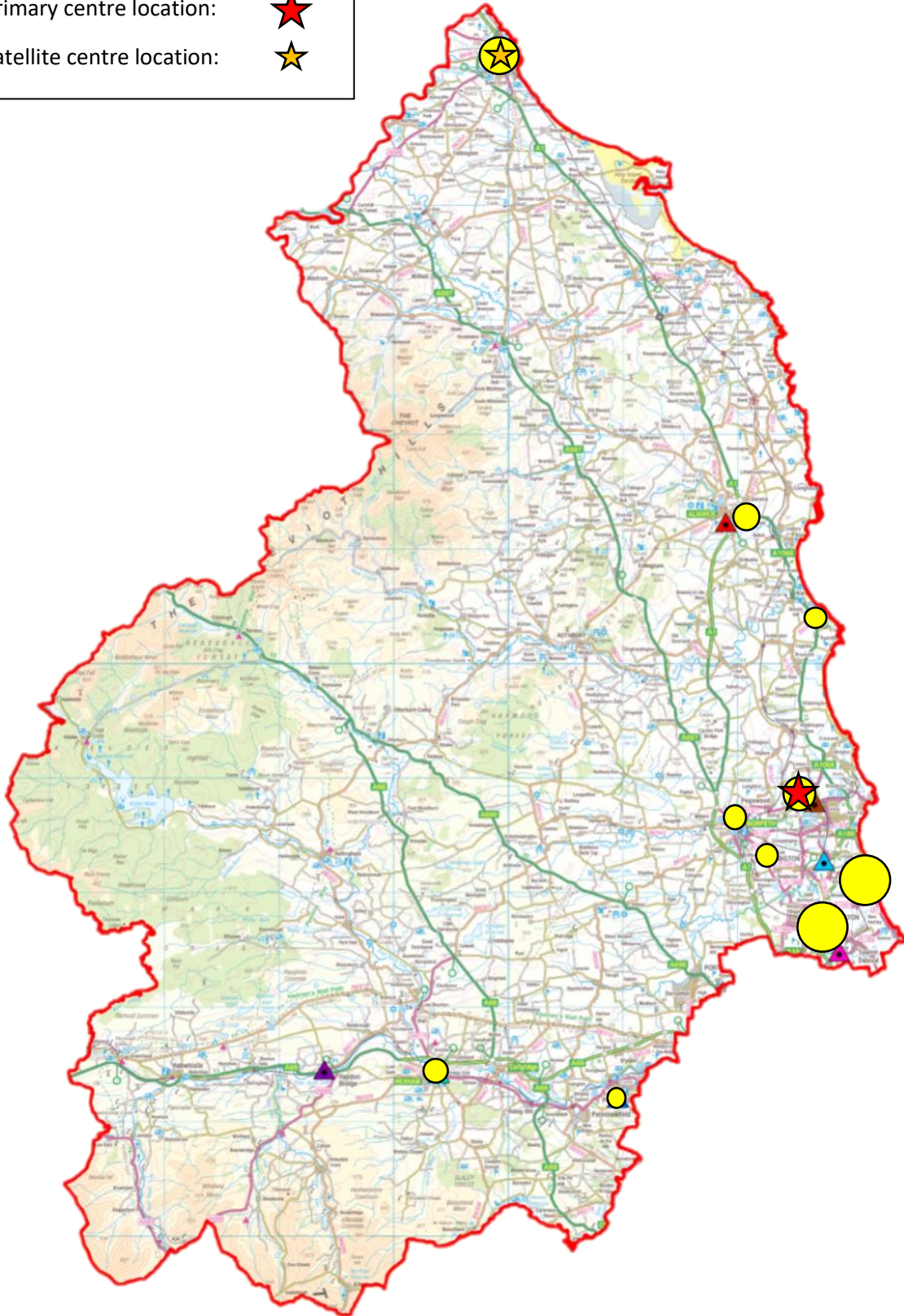
- Significant local organisations with digital & IT related infrastructure (contribute to CSR policies).





**Accomodation & Foodservice Activities – occupation hot-spots:**

- Occupation density zone: 
- Primary centre location: 
- Satellite centre location: 



## **Accommodation & Foodservice Curriculum Proposal:**

### **Curriculum**

- Full time L1 and L2 programmes of study in either Hospitality or Food pathways.
- Apprenticeship Standards at L2, L3 and into management at L4.
- Commercial short courses.

### **Progression**

- Next level study programme.
- Apprenticeship Standard at L2 and L3, progressing to L4 for management.
- Higher Education/University Undergraduate degree (UoS BSc Tourism Management).

### **Audience**

- 16-18 study programme.
- 19+ study programme.
- Adult (short course).
- Commercial full cost short course.

### **Location**

Placement in or around the Ashington/Wansbeck Business Park area would allow exceptional transport links for those traveling from the densely populated South East but also be well placed for those travelling from the more rural North and Western areas where accommodation and food service activity also occurs. Satellite delivery in Berwick would service the extreme North and Borderlands, transport to the primary centre could be arranged for specialist topic coverage as required.

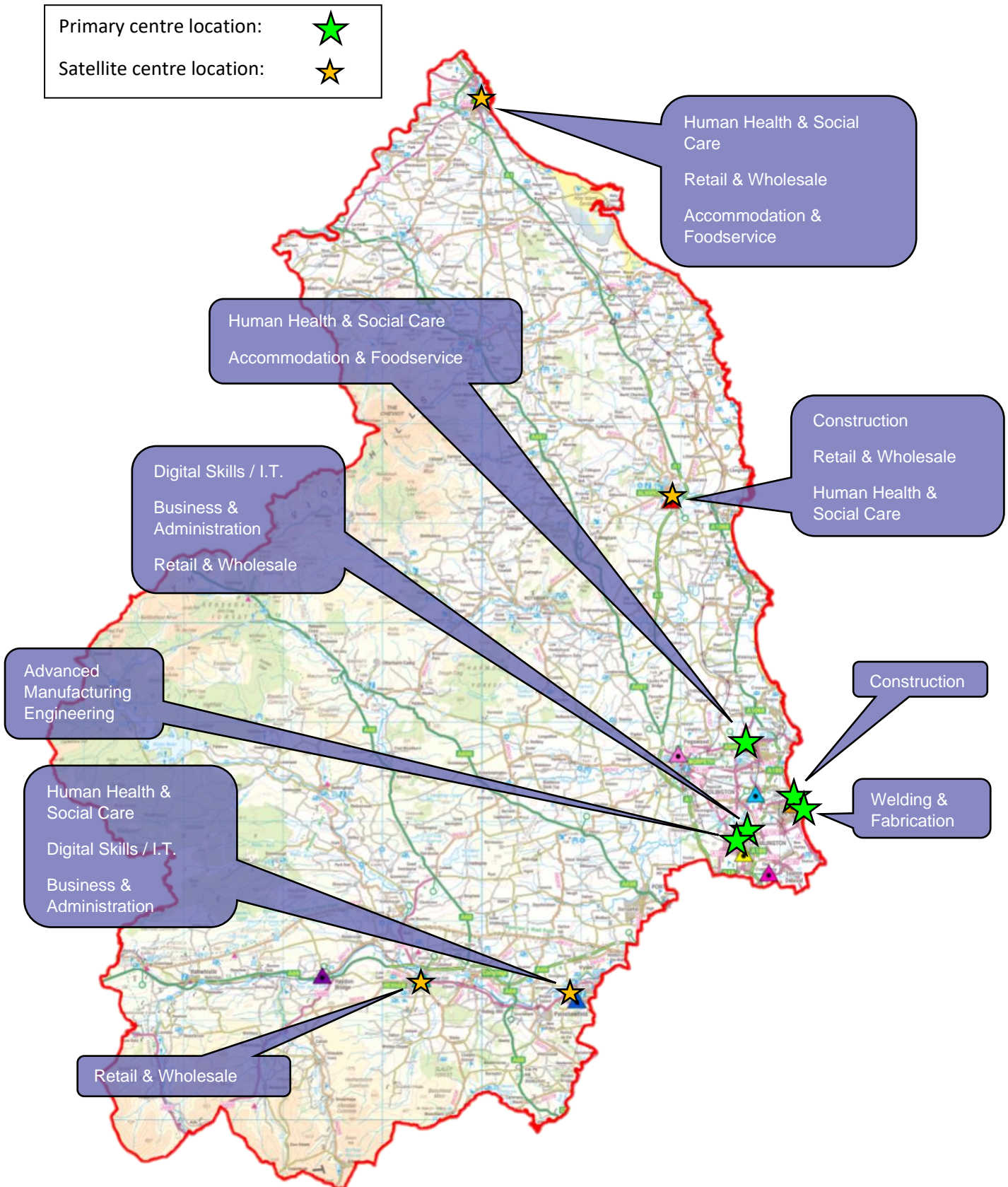
### **Justification**

Accommodation and Foodservice provides the fourth greatest industry share of jobs in Northumberland and is in the top 10 GVA contributors as well as continuing to demonstrate sector growth but also suffers recruitment challenges. Emsi Economic overview published 2018 indicates that within Northumberland County 'Hospitality & Catering Operations' has remained in a period of significant inability to satisfy employee demand 2014-2017 for roles pitched at L2 and L3 qualification with 500 unfilled roles over the period.

### **Potential stakeholders**

- Larger food/accommodation service providers.

**Overview of proposed curriculum placement (map):**





---

**Overview of proposed curriculum placement (matrix):**

	Port of Blyth	Cramlington Ind Est area	Manor Walks area	Wansbeck Business Park	Prudhoe	Alnwick	Berwick	Hexham
Human Health & Social Care				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	
Advanced Manufacturing Engineering		Primary						
Welding & Fabrication	Primary							
Construction	Primary					Secondary		
Retail & Wholesale			Primary			Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Business & Admin			Primary		Secondary			
Digital/IT			Primary		Secondary			
Accomodation & Foodservice				Primary			Secondary	

---

This page is intentionally left blank