



Northern Grid for Learning Three Year Strategy Executive Summary

April 2009 to March 2012

By 2012 Northern Grid will:

- Deliver a world class broadband experience which supports learning across the region
- Strive to ensure the online safety and protection of all users of the Northern Grid network and their data
- Deliver high quality services and value for money, bringing significant annual cost savings to LA partners and their schools
- Promote the take up and embedding of online and digital technologies to better support the outcomes within “Every Child Matters”, “The Children’s Plan” and “Harnessing Technology”.
- Support the delivery of anytime, anywhere learning, exceeding national guidelines for networked systems, security, data storage and personal entitlements.
- Foster school creativity and innovation by supporting the development of best practice and expertise in the use of ICT to optimise learning opportunities and maximise achievements

The **Technologies and Infrastructure** programme will include:

- Maintaining and upgrading core regional wide area network
- Improved and granular monitoring and reporting on usage
- Backup, disaster recovery and security improvements
- Development to comply with changing national technical standards
- Improved filtering
- Evaluation of new technologies

In the area of **Safety and security** Northern Grid will:

- Improve the technical infrastructure to meet or exceed national standards
- Develop and deliver a coherent regional approach to educational single sign-on in line with national initiatives and expectations
- Develop policies, practices and support materials
- Develop standards to establish a common baseline with regard to best practice security implementation
- Deliver awareness raising events
- Develop partnerships with regional and national agencies
- Improve monitoring of usage
- Support education professionals in their work with parents and learners.

In the area of **Online learning and resources** Northern Grid will:

- Develop high quality online content and activities
- Work with national partners to source resources which are appropriate for all ages and stages
- Support the use of the online learning through the regional learning platforms
- Promote collaboration, sharing, inclusion, access and personalisation through its resources, activities and events.
- Procure new software and services where appropriate
- Research, evaluate and disseminate best practice and innovation.

Working with Others Northern Grid will:

- Work with its partners to ensure effective communication channels which are used to share and spread valuable messages.
- Promote, disseminate and foster collaboration and the embedding of good practice across the region.
- Foster a wide range of collaborative partnerships within and beyond the region to extend services to Local Authorities and their schools.

To ensure **Best Value, Cost Efficiencies and Sustainability** Northern Grid will:

- Rigorously manage aggregated procurements
- Deliver effective office and contract management
- Provide optimisation of additional income by providing further services to individual partners and by selling services to third parties
- Ensure that all plans and work targets, although challenging, are realistic and achievable within available resources.
- Support the delivery of national priorities targeted to regional need

What this means for Local Authorities, Children's Services and Corporate ICT services:

- LAs are confident of best value through aggregation and do not have the stress and worry of managing broadband technology contracts.
- LAs can be confident that they are receiving high quality, affordable and cost effective services that exceed national standards.
- LAs can rest assured regarding the integrity of the networks that are delivered into their LAs and schools. Security and safety are high priorities for Northern Grid and its technology partners.
- LAs can be confident that, as national standards change and new criteria are introduced, the Northern Grid network and its underpinning infrastructure will be developed to meet changing requirements to support learning across the region for all sectors including 14- 19.

What this means for Schools:

- Schools within Northern Grid partner LAs will benefit from fast, reliable, always on, affordable broadband connections. These connections are sufficiently powerful and robust to meet the growing educational demands and the needs of learners.
- Remotely hosted systems mean that teachers and pupils work will be stored securely off site, enabling constant access and an anytime/ anywhere approach. This will support the 14-19 agenda and enable personalised learning.
- Internet connections are filtered and meet BECTA's national standards.
- Teachers and pupils will have access to individual learning platforms which can be accessed from anywhere with an Internet connection.
- Systems will constantly be monitored and faults often rectified before schools are aware of an issue.
- Discovery of and access to a wide range of free or reduced priced software and online digital resources and activities including managed forums, real time video conferencing and other communication tools including powerful email systems.
- An ever-increasing range of support materials, information, advice and guidance is frequently used by schools to support the embedding of broadband technologies into teaching and learning or to improve approaches in e-safety.

What this means for Teachers:

- Teachers within Northern Grid LA partner schools will benefit from an increasing range of resources, help, advice and guidance.
- The learning platform, being re-procured by Northern Grid and delivered through a managed service contract, will provide exciting and interactive teaching opportunities and enable teachers to access resources and their own work from anywhere through an internet connection.
- Teachers are able to benefit from attending workshops, seminars and conferences.
- Many teachers will benefit from sharing experiences and developments through the best practice case studies.
- Regional awards which celebrate achievement within the region.
- Opportunities to benefit from Northern Grid funding for innovative projects that will support the development of new ideas for using broadband technologies to support teaching and learning.
- The Northern Grid for Learning will continue to deliver the NEN to every teacher's desktop in school. This means that teachers are automatically part of a national community of users, creating and sharing resources, ideas and support within a managed and dedicated education intranet.

What this means for Learners:

- The Northern Grid regional broadband network is helping learners to enjoy a range of high quality experiences.
- Individual learning platforms enable students to access resources and their own work from anywhere with an Internet connection.
- The learning platform supports collaborative learning and co-operation across a class, within a school, across the local area, regionally, nationally and even internationally.
- The learning platform is web based and can be customised by learners to suit their own preferences. Many learners are used to being within a digital community, sharing ideas, experiences and resources. The Northern Grid platform is flexible enough to meet individual learning styles.
- Inclusion and accessibility are important to the Northern Grid for Learning. The resources on the public portal are able to meet a wide range of needs and preferences.

- Learners can be confident that the system is built to offer high standards of protection that safeguards their privacy and their well being.
- The speed and the capacity of the broadband connections into schools enable exciting and engaging learning experiences including interactivity, video, film, music and communication with other learners.

What this means for Parents and Carers:

"Every Child Matters" and "The Children's Plan" focus on the importance of parents and carers in children's learning. Working with partner LAs, Northern Grid is able to offer access to online learning spaces and support reporting to parents. The regional virtual learning environment means that parents and carers can communicate electronically with their children's school. It means that they can be given access to elements of their children's work so that shared learning can take place. Effective individual identification and authorisation will be delivered through the regional data interchange service enabling parents to view their children's work, progress, attendance and attainment. This will meet 2010 targets for real time parental reporting.

Northern Grid is working with its LA partners and their schools to provide information, guidance and help for parents regarding e-safety and safeguarding within a digital world. This means that parents are better informed about the measures the school is taking to protect their children from inappropriate access to materials or people. Northern Grid's work in this area also means that schools are better able to offer information to parents on how they can better protect their children when online at home.

The full version of the Northern Grid for Learning Three Year Strategy is available at:
www.portal.northerngrid.org/attachments/120_NG_3_Year_Strategy_2009-2012.pdf