REGIONAL SKILLS PACK · NORTH EAST

Eight North East projects to plan your college and university courses around before 2029

See which big projects are coming to Tees Valley, County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, when the work arrives and where your region already trains for it. A GridteamAI skills pack for North East colleges and universities, first edition, October 2026.

The short version

Look past the headline values when you plan. The biggest North East project on our map is the data centre campus that QTS plans at Cambois in Northumberland, which the county council puts at £10bn. Once it is running, the council expects it to employ only around 400 people.

Start two-year courses for operating roles by September 2027, so your first students finish in 2029 as operating teams grow. At least three Tees Valley projects are due to start up in 2028, and Eastern Green Link 1, the subsea power cable landing in County Durham, is due to be fully operating in 2029.

Plan your courses for two waves of hiring, building first and then running. Net Zero Teesside Power alone says it could create and support more than 3,000 jobs while it is built and 1,000 once it is running.

Expect demand beyond these eight projects too. When the Tees Valley Local Skills Improvement Plan, the employer-led plan setting out the skills local businesses need, was published in July, the Tees Valley Combined Authority cited a forecast of around 33,000 extra jobs in Tees Valley by 2035.

Build on what your region already has, including two Technical Excellence Colleges with their own partner colleges and a new energy institute being built in Blyth, all set out below.

Eight projects at a glance

This table lists the North East projects on our map with the largest announced values, plus those with a major milestone due before the end of 2029. Each value and date is as published by the developer, the regulator, the council or another public body, and the brackets show who announced each value.

Project	Where	What it is	Announced value, and what it covers	Latest decision or next milestone
QTS Cambois campus	Cambois, Northumberland	Data centre campus, up to 10 buildings	£10bn, whole project (county council)	Latest decision: first two buildings approved, December 2025
Northern Endurance Partnership	Teesside	Carbon dioxide pipeline and store under the sea	About £4bn of contracts, covering this project and Net Zero Teesside Power (Equinor)	First carbon dioxide stored from 2028
Net Zero Teesside Power	Teesworks, Redcar	Gas power station that captures its carbon dioxide for storage under the sea, up to 742 megawatts (MW)	£833m construction contract that Balfour Beatty won from Technip Energies (Balfour Beatty)	Start-up expected in 2028
Eastern Green Link 1	Torness (East Lothian) to Hawthorn Pit, County Durham	196km subsea power cable	£2.5bn, whole project (National Grid)	Full operation targeted for 2029
Lighthouse Green Fuels	Seal Sands, Teesside	Sustainable aviation fuel plant	More than £2bn, whole project (developer)	Planning application accepted, not yet approved; planning inspectors review it next

Project	Where	What it is	Announced value, and what it covers	Latest decision or next milestone
Teesside GigaPark	Wilton International, Redcar	Long-duration battery park	£1bn, whole project (Sembcorp and NatPower)	Construction start planned for 2027
Forth Yards	Newcastle upon Tyne	Up to 2,500 homes on brownfield land	£121.8m, public infrastructure funding (government)	Development partner for Quayside West (about 1,100 homes), expected to be chosen around 30 October 2026
Hartmoor battery	Near Hartlepool	200MW battery storage site	Not disclosed	Switch-on expected in 2028

Treat each value separately rather than adding up the column, because each one covers something different.

The map also holds smaller schemes, including hydrogen plants shortlisted for government support on Teesside and at Wallsend, a lithium refinery at Billingham, battery sites across County Durham and Tyne and Wear, and the Tyne Clean Energy Park at the Port of Tyne.

When the work lands, 2026 to 2029

Match your course dates to when each project hires. Read each start-up date as the hand-over from building to running. Builders hire most in the years before it, and operators start hiring around it.

2026. Building has started on the £25m Energy Central Institute in Blyth.

2027. NatPower plans to start building Teesside GigaPark, and the Energy Central Institute in Blyth is due to open late in the year.

2028. In Tees Valley, Net Zero Teesside Power is expected to start up, the Northern Endurance Partnership expects to store its first carbon dioxide, and the Hartmoor battery near Hartlepool is due to be switched on. Lighthouse Green Fuels aims to start building at Seal Sands in 2028, if it wins planning approval.

2029. The developers of Eastern Green Link 1 aim to have it fully operating in 2029. The cable comes ashore just north of Seaham and runs on to Hawthorn Pit in County Durham, where a new converter station makes its power ready for the grid and a substation connects it.

Four types of project and the trades your courses can feed

Read this section as our own view of what each type of project needs. It sets out the usual trades for each, so you can match them to your courses. We have not tried to forecast job numbers.

Power cables, substations and batteries

Plan courses for the high-voltage electricians, cable jointers and civil engineers that Eastern Green Link 1 and the battery sites will need, then for the maintenance crews that keep them running.

Carbon capture, hydrogen and fuels

Prepare learners for work as pipefitters, welders, and mechanical and electrical installers on the build at Net Zero Teesside Power, the carbon store, the shortlisted hydrogen plants and the fuel plant. After that, these sites need process operators and instrument technicians for as long as the plants run.

Data centres

At Cambois, much of the work is fitting out up to 10 large buildings with mechanical and electrical systems. Set up electrical, cooling and controls courses for that fit-out, then expect a much smaller permanent team.

Homes and regeneration

Get learners ready for the building trades, site management and surveying jobs that Forth Yards and other Tyne and Wear housing schemes will need.

Two routes for your learners

Give learners construction courses and upskilling now, and longer technician programmes for operating jobs that last as long as the plants do. If you run university partnerships, build degree apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications around the engineer and technician roles in the operating wave.

Two college networks and Energy Central already training your region for this work

Sunderland College was named one of 10 Construction Technical Excellence Colleges by the Department for Education in August 2025, a status that comes with government funding for specialist training. Its six partners are Redcar and Cleveland College, plus Derwentside, East Durham, Northumberland, Stockton Riverside and Tyne Coast colleges.

The Education Training Collective, a group of colleges on Teesside, was named a Clean Energy Technical Excellence College in April 2026, one of five announced nationally. Its Clean Energy Education Hub at Redcar and Cleveland College trains people for work in hydrogen, carbon capture, electrical systems and wind.

Redcar and Cleveland College and Stockton Riverside College sit in both networks, as members of the Collective and partners of Sunderland College. The Collective works with Newcastle College and Hull College as partner colleges, and with Teesside University's Net Zero Innovation Centre as a strategic partner. Contact Sunderland College or the Education Training Collective if you want to share specialist kit or staff.

Energy Central, part of Northumberland County Council's Energising Blyth programme, opened its Learning Hub at the Port of Blyth in September 2024, with courses for people heading into clean energy careers. Ask Energy Central how your courses could link to its Energy Central Institute, now being built.

Two skills plans, and which one covers your college

Two Local Skills Improvement Plans cover your region from 2026 to 2029, and colleges are expected to respond to them. Both were published in July 2026 with different priorities. Use the matching priority sector from your plan when you make the case for a new course.

The North East Chamber of Commerce leads the Tees Valley plan, which lists clean energy, construction and the chemical and process industries among its six priority sectors.

The North East Automotive Alliance leads the North East plan, which takes in the seven council areas from County Durham to Northumberland, leaving out Tees Valley. Its eight priority sectors include construction, along with one for offshore wind and the energy transition, meaning the move to low-carbon power.

Four things to watch over the next year

Find out who Homes England picks as development partner for Quayside West at Forth Yards around 30 October 2026, because that choice will shape when building starts. Homes England is the government's housing and regeneration agency. Track the national planning decision on Lighthouse Green Fuels, since the building jobs at Seal Sands depend on it.

Ask the Cambois contractors about local hiring as they are appointed. Their answers will show how much of the fit-out work stays in the region.

Look out for Durham County Council's decision on a 300MW battery that the storage company Zenobe plans at Hawthorn Pit. It would sit next to the new Eastern Green Link 1 substation and bring battery construction work there. Zenobe's project page still showed the application as under consideration in October 2026.

About this pack

The GridteamAI project map tracks more than 1,000 UK and Irish infrastructure projects, each one traced back to its original source. This pack sets the map's North East projects beside your region's published skills plans. We checked every figure against its source in October 2026, and the sources are listed below.

Ask us if you have a specific question about your own catchment, such as which projects will need which trades and when. Our Custom Intelligence Reports answer it from the original documents, and the details are at gridteamai.com/services. Email book@gridteamai.com and we will gladly talk it through with you.

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