



**PRACTICE ABSTRACT**

**Digital technology**

August, 2020

## CYBERMOOR

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Cybermoor is a cooperative bringing innovative services to the local community of Alston Moor (Cumbria, United Kingdom) and the surrounding areas. It began with a community broadband project in 2003 to bring fast wired (fibre optic) broadband connectivity to the village of Alston Moor. The cooperative progressed to become a limited company providing an extended range of services to local communities (such as a community website) and went on to broaden their reach, for example in leading the development of community broadband initiatives further afield.

The mission of Cybermoor was to bring Internet connectivity to the rural community of Alston Moor and surrounding areas, which would provide residents with the tools they needed to support and grow their businesses, create new routes to employment and new jobs, and to access a range of services (educational, health, entertainment, etc.) which would bring positive social impacts.

Ten years later a broad range of impacts were already in evidence, including those relating to access to healthcare services, education, rural business innovation and social cohesion in the village. First generation broadband has now been upgraded to a range of superfast broadband services available to local residents, and the reach of these services has expanded to more villages in the area.

The development of community broadband in underserved rural areas brings a wide range of benefits. The case of Cybermoor shows that such initiatives can lead to job creation and economic growth, as well as social impacts ranging from healthcare accessibility to increased social cohesion at the local level.

### Application scenario

Internet connectivity for rural community; rural development, local community and businesses

### Digital technologies

Superfast broadband provided to Alston Moor and surrounding towns; community website

### Socio-economic impact

- Economic: Enable local businesses through connectivity to other businesses, suppliers and local and wider markets; create local employment
- Environmental: Reduce impact of transportation and use of external inputs
- Social: Connect communities to educational, health and entertainment services; connect community to wider networks

**More info:** <http://www.cybermoor.org/>

Structure Cybermoor roles

[http://www.cybermoor.org/images/cybermoor/cybermoor\\_companies\\_trading\\_relationship.pdf](http://www.cybermoor.org/images/cybermoor/cybermoor_companies_trading_relationship.pdf)



## Purpose of the tool

The main purpose of the Cybermoor initiative was to bring connectivity to the village of Alston Moor and surrounding areas, which would support the community in accessing a range of innovative services. This goal was based on an understanding that the community and local businesses were at a competitive disadvantage due to not being able to access Internet-enabled services, which were increasingly becoming part of everyday life for better-connected urban and rural areas. In particular, the aim was to provide the tools needed to support and grow the local economy, create new employment, and to enable community access to a range of services (educational, health, entertainment, transport, community services, etc.) which would bring positive social impacts.

## Description of the tool

The Cybermoor broadband network was developed using fibre optic technologies. The fibre infrastructure has expanded since its initial development to serve communities around Alston Moor, Nenthead and the South Tyne Valley, to Haltwhistle in the North Pennines. Cybermoor works with Quickline who supply the broadband service to residents and businesses on Alston Moor and surrounding areas. The network covers 500 properties. The technology is used by both rural businesses and local rural residents, who use it to access a range of services enabled by fast broadband, including communications services (social media, email, online video conferencing tools such as Skype and Zoom), entertainment services (Internet TV, YouTube, Netflix), online local Government, educational and e-health services, and online shopping services. The service has ensured that these rural businesses and communities are no longer left behind to suffer disadvantages associated with the urban-rural digital divide.

## Areas of socio-economic impacts

<b>Social</b>	Increased connectivity for community members, with networks inside of, and external to, the local community. A community website resulted from the implementation of broadband connectivity – this has increased social cohesion at the local level. Residents can access a range of services which are becoming increasingly prevalent in everyday life – this increases social inclusion and reduces negative impacts of an urban-rural digital divide.
<b>Economic</b>	Local businesses are able to connect with innovative services, build their networks with other businesses and wider markets/customers, and innovate their own products and services. New jobs are created. In economic terms of ‘added value’ to the whole community, all employ predominantly local labour, who in turn spend a significant proportion of their income locally.
<b>Environmental</b>	Better online connectivity (e.g. online shopping, online meeting spaces) leads to reduced travel and therefore reduced emissions from vehicles.

