# £10bn Blyth data centre to anchor UK’s AI infrastructure drive



Preparatory works are due to begin later this year on a landmark £10 billion data centre development at the former Blyth Power Station site in Northumberland. The project, led by QTS, a subsidiary of US investment giant Blackstone, secured outline planning approval in March and will see ten data centre buildings constructed over the next decade, covering 540,000 square metres.

The Cambois site, 30km north of Newcastle, has a storied industrial past. Once home to Blyth Power Station, demolished in 2003, it was later earmarked for Britishvolt’s £3.8 billion battery gigafactory before the company’s collapse in 2023. Blackstone’s move to redevelop the land as a hyperscale data campus reflects surging global demand for cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) capacity.

Each of the ten buildings will stand up to 35 metres tall, housing around 72 megawatts of IT capacity for large-scale cloud storage and AI workloads. Alongside substations and generators, the scheme includes sustainable features such as a closed-loop water system to reduce environmental impact.

The economic benefits are significant. More than 1,200 long-term construction jobs and 2,700 indirect roles are expected, with around 400 permanent specialist positions once the site is fully operational. QTS has pledged to prioritise local hiring and training, supported by a £110 million investment package for job creation and growth along the Northumberland Line corridor.

Construction will be phased through to 2035, beginning with clearance, earthworks and compound setup. Environmental mitigation is also planned, including a £40,000 contribution to improve the nearby Wader Mitigation Site. Logistics will favour rail and port deliveries, with worker shuttle services and noise restrictions designed to minimise disruption to local communities.

The development dovetails with the UK government’s ambition to establish the country as an AI leader. Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s Artificial Intelligence Plan includes AI “growth zones” and a new supercomputer to expand national computational capacity twentyfold by 2030. Projects such as the Blyth campus provide the backbone infrastructure to deliver these goals.

Industry voices stress the wider benefits. Dave Seed of Qube Residential notes that AI has the potential to transform sectors such as property management, making investments in digital infrastructure foundational to broader economic productivity.

For Northumberland, the scheme represents both regeneration and reinvention: a major foreign direct investment that will reshape the local economy while supporting Britain’s position as a global hub for AI innovation. While future planning and environmental challenges remain, the project sets a positive example of responsible, forward-looking development at scale.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pbctoday.co.uk/news/projects/work-begin-10bn-northumberland-data-centre/154498/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.placenortheast.co.uk/former-power-station-set-to-house-cambois-data-centre-campus/> - An application from Renaissance Land for the construction of 10 data centres on the former Blyth Power station has been approved by Northumberland Council. The project team consists of real estate investment company QTS, which will operate the site, asset manager Blackstone, planners Quod, architect Corgan, environmental surveyors Arcadis, and Cundall as civil engineers. Approval has been recommended for the scheme, with a £40,000 contribution recommended to increase the size of the Wader Mitigation Site, to make up for the loss of on-site breeding habitat. Blyth Power Station closed in 2001 and was demolished in 2003. The vacant brownfield site is approximately 250-acres, located to the west and south of Cambois village and around 30km north of Newcastle. The site was for a long time earmarked as a Britishvolt gigafactory site for electric vehicle battery production. QTS, bought by Blackstone in 2021 for $10bn, has 60 data centres in operation or under construction globally, but this would be its first in the UK, and only second in Europe. Each of the 10 580,000 sq ft buildings will provide approximately 72 megawatt of IT capacity, as well as contain an office and support departments. The buildings would be identical in design, with three storeys and an indicative height of 35 metres, including rooftop planting.
3. <https://www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/blackstone-gets-green-light-for-10bn-qts-data-center-in-northumberland-uk/> - Blackstone’s plan to build a £10 billion ($13.3bn) data center on a derelict industrial site in Blyth, UK, has cleared a key planning hurdle. Outline planning permission for the 10-building data center was granted by Northumberland County Council at a planning committee meeting on Tuesday. The data center will be built on the site of a former coal-fired power plant in the village of Cambois, just outside Blyth in Northumberland. The land had been earmarked for a battery production factory owned by the now defunct electric vehicle battery firm Britishvolt. However, work on the site halted in 2022, and Britishvolt went into administration a year later. Blackstone announced last year that it had purchased the site, and the data center will be operated by its QTS subsidiary.
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2025-03-05/major-step-for-10bn-investment-in-northumberland-as-data-centre-plans-approved> - Landmark proposals that would see one of the largest ever foreign investments in the UK come to Northumberland have taken a significant step forward after outline planning permission to build a data centre campus was granted. The major development would consist of 10 separate buildings totalling 540,000sqm of floor space built on the site of the former coal-fired Blyth Power Station, near Cambois. Total investment in the site from US firm QTS could reach £10bn, the Local Democracy Reporting Service reports. Members of the council’s strategic planning committee voted unanimously to approve the plans on Tuesday (4 March). Further details will need to be confirmed in a series of future planning applications before construction can begin. Members were told that the buildings will reach a maximum height of 35 metres, and provide 72 megawatts of capacity per building to power technology such as cloud storage and AI systems. Each building will require around 40 staff on completion, totalling 400 specialised employees once fully built out.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/blackstones-plans-northern-england-hyperscale-data-centre-get-green-light-2025-03-05/> - Blackstone, a U.S. private equity firm, has received approval from Northumberland County Council to build a $13 billion "hyperscale" data centre in North East England. The centre, which will cover 540,000 square metres and involve an investment of up to £10 billion, will provide data storage and cloud computing services. The project is expected to create hundreds of long-term jobs, 1,200 long-term construction jobs, and potentially 2,700 indirect jobs. Additionally, Blackstone will fund a £110 million growth and job scheme in the area. The demand for data centre capacity has surged due to technological advancements and the increased use of AI, contributing to a rise in energy requirements. This development follows a previous failed project by UK startup Britishvolt.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyvmme1gnero> - The data centre will be built on land previously earmarked for a £3.8bn battery factory. James Robinson Local Democracy Reporting Service 21 May 2025 The timeline for delivery of a £10bn artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud computing data centre has been revealed. Papers published as part of new planning applications for the site at Cambois, near Blyth, in Northumberland, from US firm QTS say the first phase of so-called enabling works has a target start date of late 2025. Construction on the first phase of the data centres themselves is set to begin next year. A further four phases are slated to follow, with the final one completed in 2035. Those timescales are subject to securing future planning permissions, documents say By the time it is completed, the site will total up to 540,000 sq m (5,812,512 sq km) of internal space, as well as the likes of substations and other associated works. Outline permission for the facility, which will include 10 buildings, was granted in March. The first phase of the project covers the south and south-western portion of the former Blyth Power Station site. Construction of that stage alone is not expected to be completed until 2029, the Local Democracy Reporting Service said. QTS is a data subsidiary of investment giant Blackstone. Blackstone has previously said the development would create more than 1,600 jobs, including 1,200 long-term construction roles. In addition, it was estimated a further 2,700 jobs would be created across the wider local area. The site had previously been home to Britishvolt, which had intended to build a £3.8bn battery factory for the electric car industry. However, the company collapsed in 2023 leading to the loss of more than 200 jobs. Follow BBC North East on X, Facebook, Nextdoor and Instagram.
7. <https://qtsdatacenters.com/data-centers/cambois/> - QTS will implement several measures to mitigate the construction impact to the local community including bringing materials to site through Blyth port and rail, putting on shuttle buses for workers to reduce traffic, no continuous 24-hour activities, and no work on Sundays or Bank Holidays without prior approval from the Northumberland County Council. What is happening next? On March 4, Northumberland County Council approved QTS’s plans to develop one of Europe’s largest data centre campuses in Cambois, marking a major milestone for the project. The data centre campus will span a total of 540,000 square metres, along with other associated works and structures. Representing a significant inward investment of up to £10 billion—one of the largest in the UK—the state-of-the-art facility will significantly enhance the region’s digital infrastructure. Following the Council’s approval, construction work is expected to commence on the site toward the end of 2025.