

Dumfries and Galloway to host Scotland's first rural 5G connectivity hub

Farming and rural healthcare are amongst the sectors set to benefit

The Crichton, a business and academic campus in Dumfries, will host Scotland's first rural 5G connectivity hub. The new hub will bring together technological expertise, academic research and local businesses in order to accelerate the potential of 5G to transform communities and economies throughout the south of Scotland.

The S5GConnect Dumfries hub, part of the S5GConnect programme, is being equipped with a dedicated 5G network with advanced capabilities including a testbed that will enable SMEs to test products, services and solutions.

Some of the projects set to get underway include the development of agritech solutions, where sensors and drones are used to measure crop growth, animal behaviour and wellness; and remote healthcare initiatives including the use of 5G technology to support assisted living.

This will mark the third S5GConnect hub, following the establishment of hubs in Forth Valley and Dundee. The choice of Dumfries for the first rural hub of the Scottish Government funded £4 million programme to establish a network of 5G innovation hubs to accelerate 5G across the country, reflects the longstanding commitment to deliver enhanced connectivity across all areas of Scotland.

Created by the Scotland 5G Centre, the national centre for encouraging use of 5G, the S5GConnect programme is seen as a catalyst that will increase awareness about 5G and lead to the development of new products, services and applications. A dedicated team has been recruited for the S5GConnect hub at The Crichton to work with local partners and businesses.

Paul Coffey, CEO of The Scotland 5G Centre, said: "Our S5GConnect programme will equip businesses and entrepreneurs across Dumfries & Galloway with the skills they need to understand how 5G can benefit their business. It is planned over three levels – kicking off with raising awareness of the scope of 5G; followed by more detailed evaluation of the business possibilities; culminating in months of in-depth support to scale up and test using our dedicated 5G private network."

The Crichton, an 85-acre parkland estate on the edge of Dumfries, is home to over 90 organisations including five academic partners. The S5GConnect hub at The Crichton is being supported by South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). They will be a key partner in helping to develop future 5G dependent projects.

Gwilym Gibbons, Chief Executive of registered charity and social enterprise, The Crichton Trust said: “This is a hugely exciting project which will have a significant impact on the South of Scotland. We believe that 5G connectivity will enable our rural communities to experience the power of fast connectivity and the opportunities this brings for innovation and the future economy, helping to generate the solutions and services we require to meet the challenges of our ageing society, the climate crisis and the fourth industrial revolution. Solutions that start in Dumfries but can scale and be replicated into our neighbouring rural and urban areas and exported across the world.”

I am delighted that Scotland's first rural 5G Hub will be in the South of Scotland, and that our organisation is a key partner in this landmark project. While our focus in our first year was to support our region to respond and recover from COVID-19, this significant announcement highlights our commitment to now looking to the future.

**South of Scotland Enterprise's Chief Executive,
Jane Morrison-Ross**

Jane added: “With digital connectivity an issue in a number of areas of the South of Scotland, the 5G Hub will bring together industry, academia and government bodies on a series of projects to explore opportunities which offer considerable benefits to local businesses and communities, including Net Zero manufacturing, farming and agriculture and sustainable and connected housing. I look forward to working with our partners to help the South of Scotland lead the way in this transformational technology.”

A programme of virtual events will start in June with a series of in-person events at the hubs from September. Details can be found [here](#).