

Cumbria LEP welcomes government's Industrial Strategy proposals

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the county's strategic economic body, has given its strong support to the government's Industrial Strategy.

George Beveridge, Chair of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, says

"Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership warmly welcomes and strongly supports the Industrial Strategy proposals and sees them as a strong basis for delivering the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan, which already prioritises the UK and World leading sectors in Cumbria; nuclear and energy, advanced manufacturing, plus rural and visitor.

"The Local Enterprise Partnership and its partners have already prepared clear strategies and growth plans, which are well advanced, for each of these sectors and will help deliver economic growth and improved productivity and benefits to the people of Cumbria, as well as the Northern Powerhouse and the UK.

"The Local Enterprise Partnership is also working on key drivers for growth that every sector in Cumbria will benefit from: infrastructure, skills and business support."

The Local Enterprise Partnership was responding to the government's consultation on its Industrial Strategy proposals.

The goals of the Industrial Strategy are to build on the UK's strengths and excellence: close the gap between the UK's most productive companies, industries, places and people and the rest; and make the UK one of the most competitive places in the world to start or grow a business.

The Local Enterprise Partnership's response also included the following additional points, which it considers would increase the effectiveness of the Industrial Strategy:

- Other government policies around transport, housing, education and rural need to be aligned with the strategy.

- Any sector programmes, need to offer opportunities to small and medium sized business, so that the economic benefits of large scale projects can be spread across communities.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership believes that sector deals for nuclear and advanced manufacturing are not enough and that the tourism and rural sectors should be given equal priority.
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on environmentally sustainable, low carbon growth where Cumbria has World leading capability.
- It is essential for there to be local involvement in infrastructure planning to maximize economic growth.
- A new model for financing infrastructure, such as roads is vital. Where infrastructure is needed for a large-scale development, the government could fund the work up-front and then recover contributions from the developer once the project has been built.
- Greater investment is required in our research and development potential.
- Small and medium sized firms are often the source of innovation. The government should encourage projects, such as Innovus, that provides mentoring and support for innovative small and medium sized firms.
- It is vital to make sure small and medium sized firms are not prevented from expanding by the lack of access to finance..
- The government should provide assistance to sectors which are not currently given EU funding, such as nuclear and tourism to reduce the imbalance between sectors that are eligible for funding and those which are not.

To find the Local Enterprise Partnership's response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation go to www.cumbrialep.co.uk

