

Cumbria LEP invites bid submissions for Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Businesses and organisations in Cumbria's cultural and creative sector are being invited to submit project proposals and outline bids for funding support of up to £4 million from the new Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the county's strategic economic body, will be administering the funding application process and supporting those who come forward with initial expressions of interest for projects that make demonstrable, lasting and sustainable changes to places and spaces.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced the £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund as a legacy to celebrate great art, culture and design in the North of England. It will run in alignment with the Great Exhibition of the North, which takes place in Newcastle Gateshead next year.

Project proposals and bids for the funding must encourage sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the North of England, as well as benefiting areas in the North of England that have historically had low levels of cultural and creative investment.

Projects should lead to at least one the following six outcomes:

- Increased opportunities for people, including children and young people, to experience and be inspired by culture and creativity
- A better quality of life and wellbeing within local communities
- More resilient and sustainable cultural and creative organisations
- Innovative and effective partnerships between the cultural and creative sector and other sectors, especially digital and technology sectors
- Increased investment and economic growth
- Support for Cumbria LEP's rural and visitor economy growth plan.

The Cumbria LEP area is allowed to make one bid for a single capital project, with funding sought not to exceed a £4 million threshold. Expressions of interest must be submitted by 12 noon on 21 September 2017, with outline bids prioritised by Cumbria LEP before being worked-up for final submission of business cases to DCMS at the end of November.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership board member Nigel Wilkinson said: "We welcome this new source of funding and the potential opportunities it can bring to Cumbria. It's a valuable source of funding for arts and cultural projects in the county and we are looking forward to working with partners on bid submissions to ensure they meet the stated outcomes and objective of the fund.

"Most important of all, projects will need to demonstrate that they will increase investment and support economic growth for the county, as well as nurturing innovative and effective partnerships between the cultural, creative and especially the digital and technology sectors."

Decisions on grants will be made by the end of the current financial year (2017-18). A further round of funding may follow if not all the available funding has been committed.

For further information, please visit www.cumbrialep.co.uk

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Notes for editors

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.

- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/