

## **EU grants still up for grabs for Cumbrian businesses**

Rural, tourism and agriculture businesses and organisations in Cumbria are being reminded that the county still has access to EU funding grants to support their business growth and boost the local economy.

As part of the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) up to 2020, business development grants are available to support growth in micro and small businesses. This includes social enterprises in rural areas as well as farming businesses looking to diversify into non-agricultural activities.

Grants to support rural tourism infrastructure projects are also available, where the aim is to encourage more tourists to come, to stay longer and to spend more in the county's rural areas. In addition, businesses which process agricultural and horticultural products in the food and drink sector can benefit from grants to support their growth plans.

EAFRD funding provides support for rural businesses to start-up, grow, expand or diversify with grants of between £35,000 and £250,000. The deadline for expressions of interest is midnight on 31 January 2018.

Corinne Watson from Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership says: "Whether you are a small rural firm looking to convert a barn into a food production facility, an established SME seeking to invest in new technology, or a tourism firm wanting to develop your business, you may be eligible for this EU grant funding which can make it all happen for you.

"We want to support businesses to grow their ideas and this type of rural grant funding could be the springboard for your business growth and success, helping you to expand facilities, launch new products or services, create jobs or develop staff skills.

"We need more businesses to take a close look at their options because it could be the perfect solution to their growth plans. We can point them in the right direction to receive support on eligibility as well as on completing the application process.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is helping to manage the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) programme, which includes the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

For further information about available funding and how to apply, visit [www.cumbriaesif.co.uk](http://www.cumbriaesif.co.uk), search for 'RDPE growth' on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or contact Corinne Watson at Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership by emailing [corinne.watson@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:corinne.watson@cumbria.gov.uk)

### **Ends**

For media information please contact Karen Gardner at Osprey Communications on 015394-42436.

### **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/](http://www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/)