



Cumbria
Local Enterprise
Partnership



News Spring 2017



For all the latest developments, visit the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership website at www.cumbrialep.co.uk

NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

It's increasingly clear that 2017 is bringing different opportunities and challenges as we strive for stronger economic growth for the county.

In this newsletter, you can find out more about our latest Growth Deal investment plans, continuing availability of EU funding, business support, transport developments and skills news.

In February, we welcomed the launch of the £400m Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF) as a new source of regional economic development funding to boost the local economy.



We have invested a share of Cumbria's European investment funding to the initiative together with nine other northern LEPs. Not many funds have its breadth and flexibility, with conventional loan, micro-finance and equity funds. We continue to work with fund investment managers to ensure they have a physical presence in Cumbria to encourage high take up.

The Northern Powerhouse is very much taking centre stage, and we must ensure we are not on its periphery. The county's energy offer in particular puts us in a strong position to make a major contribution to its success.

I recently represented Cumbria LEP at the UK Northern Powerhouse conference and chaired the main plenary session on energy. Many leading energy experts are predicting that the North will play a major role in future energy provision and reassert itself as the nation's 'powerhouse' through a low carbon route.

Cumbria is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities presented by changing energy needs. Our ability to supply more energy will be critical to the local economy and the wider economic health of the North and the UK as a whole.

Whilst an established home to extensive nuclear capability, there are other growth opportunities too, for example in renewable power from off shore wind and tidal schemes, together with other forms of renewable energy generation.

With these capabilities, the energy sector in Cumbria can be an integral part of the national industrial strategy and play a crucial role in the success of the Northern Powerhouse.

We must therefore be alive to the opportunities, seek to bring our influence to bear wherever we can, and look for ways to devolve decision making as power generation industries continue to diversify.

In the meantime, the LEP has also been busy preparing our response to the Government's Industrial Strategy consultation paper and how we might maximise benefits for Cumbria.

George Beveridge, Chair, Cumbria LEP

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NORTHERN POWERHOUSE INVESTMENT FUND

Cumbrian businesses with aspirations for growth could benefit from the new £400m Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF), which aims to provide a wider choice of finance options and produce higher levels of investment across the region.

Over 100 delegates gathered at an event at Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership's Penrith headquarters in March to hear about the new funding opportunities available and how these can be accessed.

The NPIF is providing the money for fund managers to offer microfinance (£25,000 - £100,000), business loans (£100,000 - £750,000) and equity finance (up to £2m), specifically to help SMEs secure the funding they need for growth. The project is supported with investment from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The aim of NPIF is to change the structure of finance markets for smaller businesses, providing a mixture of loans and equity capital to Cumbrian SMEs at all stages of their development.

Cumbria LEP chair George Beveridge says: "This is about improving funding options and opportunities to support smaller businesses across the county. It will complement the business support activity already delivering jobs and growth here, and it will be an important part of the finance mix alongside banks and other gap funding programmes."

NPIF is a combination of capital allocated to the 10 LEPs in the North West, Yorkshire and Humber and the Tees Valley by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), a loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB), funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and an additional loan from British Business Finance Limited, a British Business Bank group company.

For more information, visit www.npif.co.uk

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IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED FOR CUMBRIAN COASTAL RAILWAY



Plans to improve the Cumbrian coastal railway are set to open up greater accessibility and freight and passenger capacity and capability for businesses and residents in West Cumbria.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is spearheading a consortium of parties and developers with vested interests in moving forward with upgrades to the coastal railway.

The Rail Programme Board, chaired by Cumbria LEP, involves NuGen, Sellafield, the Low Level Waste Repository, National Grid North West Coast Connections, West Cumbria Mining, Network Rail, Northern Rail and others as key partners. It aims to drive forward the improvements needed on the coastal railway and increase capacity to make the line suitable to serve existing and future industrial developments.

The consortium is now working with Network Rail on the next stage of capacity and capability modelling and designs for improvements. This will also involve the production of a business case to secure funding to upgrade critical infrastructure.

A detailed study of current capacity on the Cumbrian coastal railway shows that it will be exceeded by 2019/20. So the consortium is putting together a package of measures and collective investment in the project to work with Network Rail to undertake the next stage of vital work.

The plans are aimed specifically at modernisation and improving line capacity and reliability, with increased passenger and freight services including Sundays. Signalling changes, station upgrades and better access will also help increase capacity, usage and resilience to protect lines from flooding and coastal erosion, as well as meeting demand from new developments.

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£12.7M FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR GROWTH DEAL 3

Cumbria LEP's Board has set out plans for five more major investment programmes, including £5m for developments at Lillyhall North, £4.5m for improvements to Whitehaven Town Centre, and £1m for Carlisle Station Gateway and the Citadels.

These programmes are to be funded by the county's £12.7m Growth Deal 3 allocation from central government. The funding comes on top of the £47.7m already secured in previous Growth Deal rounds.

The five investment programmes are as follows:

- Lillyhall North - £5,000,000 to develop the employment site, create and safeguard jobs and provide new workspace.
- Whitehaven Town Centre - £4,500,000 investment for commercial office development.
- Carlisle Station Gateway and the Citadels - £1,000,000 investment for commercial development.
- Skills Capital 2 - £1,160,000 to deliver Cumbria Skills Implementation Plan projects and support the Area-Based Review process.
- Growing Our Potential 2 - £1,000,000 for grants to help small business.

The Growth Deal 3 allocations coincide with the launch of the government's industrial strategy, with new 'sector deals' and investment in research and development to support future industries, as well as plans to drive growth by creating more high skilled, high paid jobs and opportunities.



Image credit: CN Group

CRANSTONS INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE



Penrith based Cranstons Quality Butchers recently completed a £1.5m expansion to enhance its Ullswater Road production facility and complete a refit of their head office.

The project was supported with investment from Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, allowing Cranstons to meet the increased volume for butchery and delicatessen produce created by the company's recent retail growth.

The latest investment includes a 5,000 square foot extension to its production facility, with a new pie production room and a state-of-the-art beef maturation chiller which dry ages Cranstons beef.

Cranstons managing director Philip Cranston said: "The factory extension has increased our production capacity significantly and the addition of specialist maturation chillers should further enhance our reputation for quality. We are confident that this latest investment will allow us to enhance the breadth and quality of our produce whilst also giving us the capacity to launch another food hall in the future when the right site comes up. The latest investment will strengthen the business securing jobs for the future."

Cranstons operates four local produce food halls and two traditional high street butchers shops along with a thriving online shop delivering nationally. The newly extended production facility on Ullswater Road is a hive of activity creating a wide range of butchery and delicatessen produce.

Director of Cumbria LEP Graham Haywood added: "Cranstons Quality Butchers is one of over 40 Cumbrian firms we have been able to help in recent months by investing Regional Growth Funding grants to expand premises, increase capacity and develop their respective businesses. Boosting productivity and innovation in Cumbria's food and drink sector is a crucial element in nurturing a vibrant rural and visitor economy within the county."

IMPROVEMENT WORKS COMPLETE AT DURRANHILL



A multi million pound infrastructure improvement scheme at Durranhill industrial estate on the outskirts of Carlisle has been completed.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership invested £2m in the project to deliver access improvements and site servicing, with the remainder coming from the Homes and Communities Agency.

The aim is to attract more businesses to this key M6 corridor employment site and help to boost the local business economy, opening up opportunities for growing SMEs and for new businesses to be created here or attracted to the area.

The work undertaken by Carlisle City Council has included a new road link from Eastern Way into the existing estate road network and access to vacant land adjoining Cavaghan & Gray's Riverbank site which will release a further 3.3 ha for development. It also involved the widening of Brunel Way and improvements to electrical infrastructure and landscaping.

Cumbria LEP director Graham Haywood said: "We're pleased to see one of the LEP's major projects in Carlisle come to fruition. Durranhill is an important Growth Deal investment which is contributing to our economic priorities to support infrastructure improvements and exploit the strategic connectivity of the M6 corridor."

For all the latest developments, visit the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership website at www.cumbrialep.co.uk

A595 upgrades in Cumbria

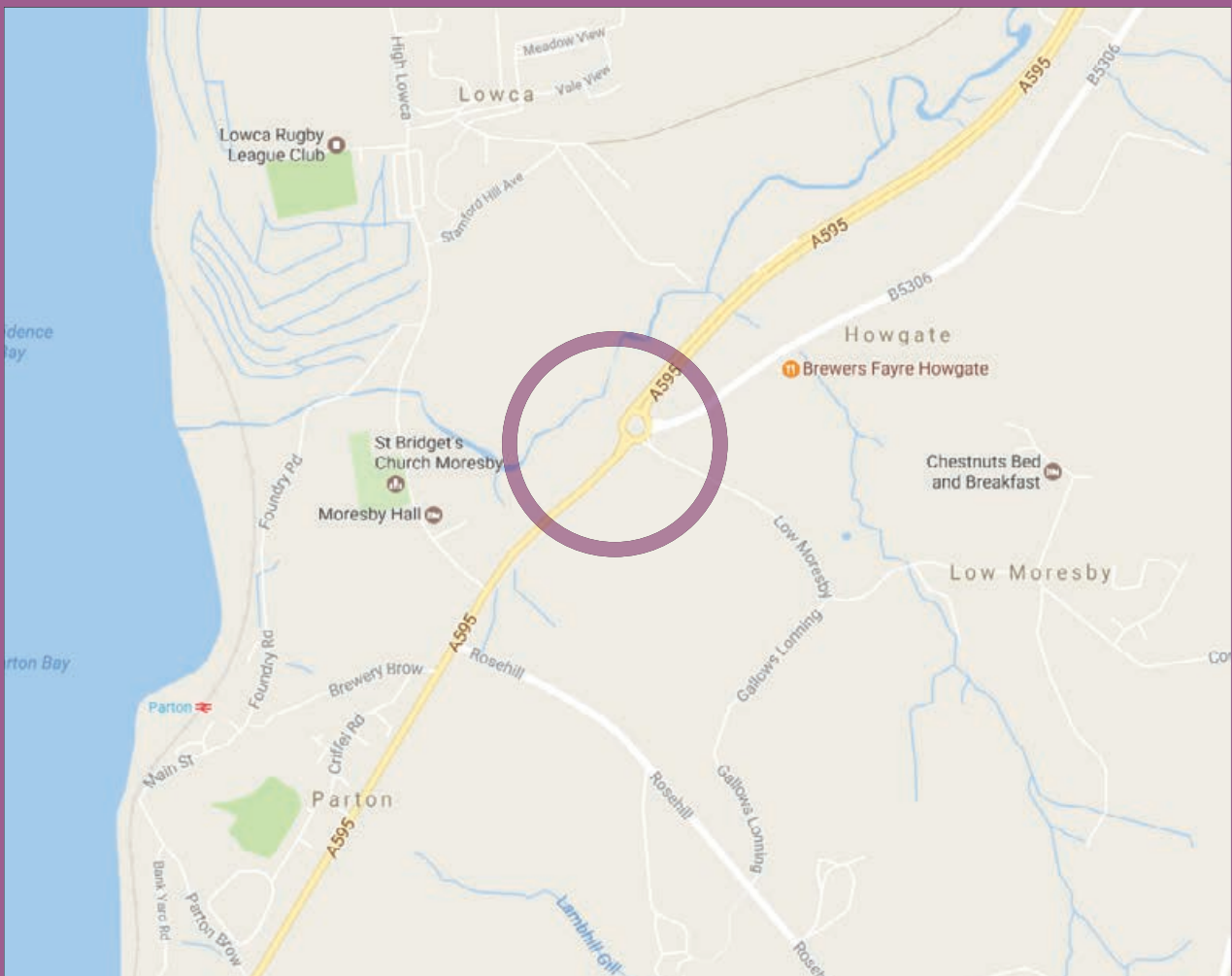
Transport Secretary Chris Grayling visited the county in early March to announce two road infrastructure improvement schemes to cut congestion on the A595 and A66 between Cockermouth and Workington.

The improvements will reduce journey times for motorists and allow the roads to cope with future demand from new housing and the Port of Workington.

Highways England will spend £1.6m on improving the A595/A66 roundabout at Great Clifton. A further £1m will be invested in the Fitz roundabout. Work is expected to start by the spring of 2018 and end in 2018/2019.

The latest investments follow on from the West of M6 Strategic Connectivity Study, a key piece of research to plan the county's future road improvements and to provide the evidence base to bid for government funding.

The study, published after consultation by Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and Highways England, identifies the priority improvement schemes for the county's major roads which would support economic growth, improve road use for tourists, reduce delays and accidents, improve the road system's resilience to severe weather and roadworks, and minimise the environmental impact of traffic.



Map data ©2017 Google

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European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

EU funding still open for Cumbrian businesses

A range of EU funding is still available for Cumbria throughout 2017 designed to boost business growth, enterprise and skills development.

A new website - www.cumbriaesif.co.uk – has been launched to help potential applicants access each of the funding streams and their relevant programmes.

This year will see a number of ongoing and new investment programmes delivered under the European Regional Development Fund, including funding rounds for International Trade Support, Advanced Manufacturing Support and the Cumbria Growth Hub to help business start ups.

Innovation is being supported by the Cumbria Innovations Platform and Eco-Innovation Cumbria projects, whilst Kingmoor Park will also benefit from direct ERDF assistance.

Under the European Social Fund, several initiatives are either underway or to be launched shortly. These include the Inspira led NEET reduction and skills support for the unemployed projects, as well as the G4S Unemployment Support Programme. The Carlisle College led consortia, The Edge, will continue to deliver skills support for workforce development, apprenticeships and higher level skills.

Jackie Arnold, Chair of the ESIF committee which sets the strategic direction of how funds are allocated, says: "Many organisations do not realise that there is funding available to them, nor how EU money is actually being delivered on the ground here in Cumbria and the support available to them.

"We need to ensure the county spends its remaining EU funding resources wisely, so business networks need to be aware of these opportunities and have support in place to submit strong applications."

Cumbria LEP and its partners play a key role in determining how EU funds are invested throughout the county. These are highly beneficial programmes and projects which continue to support business growth and innovation, create jobs and improve skills levels.

For further information, please visit www.cumbriaesif.co.uk or contact Corinne Watson by email corinne.watson@cumbria.gov.uk

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NEW PRIVATE SECTOR BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT UNDERWAY

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is looking to recruit at least two new board directors from the private sector to help shape the county's economic future.

The board positions are unique, challenging and rewarding opportunities for experienced, forward thinking business leaders. Successful candidates will help influence key decisions aimed at delivering growth, jobs and prosperity for Cumbria's economy.

The roles are envisaged to involve an overall commitment of 2-3 days per month.

Experience of the county's strategic economic plan sectors, priorities and drivers is essential, and applicants in the energy, nuclear, rural and tourism industries will help maintain a balance of skills and experience on the Board.

Successful candidates will have significant experience in an ownership or senior managerial capacity within a business organisation active in the Cumbria LEP area. They will also have a proven track record of providing strategic leadership, achieving business objectives and operating effectively at board level.

Board appointments are for an initial period of one year, with the option for re-selection thereafter. All board members sign up to a Code of Practice ensuring there is no conflict of interest in taking key decisions that influence development and investment.

Applicants need to provide a CV and covering letter setting out relevant skills and experience, as well as details of their business sector, geographic and business size category. Applicants need to either live or work in Cumbria.

Applications can be emailed to info@cumbrialep.co.uk or posted to Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Redhills, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0DT by Friday 12 May 2017.

A recruitment pack is available on the Cumbria LEP website.

“WE ARE LOOKING FOR OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT BUSINESS GROWTH AND THE NEED TO SEIZE THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ON OFFER FOR OUR GREAT COUNTY.”

SKILLS TEAM STRENGTHENED WITH THREE KEY APPOINTMENTS

Three education and skills experts have joined Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to help implement the county's Skills Investment Plan up to 2020.

The LEP's new Head of Employment and Skills Craig Ivison is responsible for ensuring effective, collaborative partnership working to meet the skills needs of employers in the county. He is also playing a key role in ensuring that employers and training providers are ready to maximise the benefits of the new Apprenticeship Levy.

Caroline Ledward's role as Cumbria LEP's 16-19 NEET Manager will involve working with employers, partners and wider stakeholders to address skills issues and support direct training provision for young people not in employment, education or training.

As Sector Skills Manager Charlotte Crozier will act as a link with employers to help analyse future skills needs to ensure more local people can gain the right qualifications to remain in Cumbria to work.



The skills plan for the county, drawn up in consultation with employers and local education and training institutions, aims to improve skills levels, increasing the county's workforce and assisting employers. It includes key targets for 2020, such as increasing apprenticeships within the county from 5,000 to 6,000 per year and the number of working age people with level 4 qualifications by 9,000.

KEY TARGETS FOR 2020

Increasing apprenticeships within the county from

5,000 per year → **6,000** per year

The number of working age people with level 4 qualifications by

9,000 per year

FOR ALL THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS, VISIT THE CUMBRIA LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE AT WWW.CUMBRIALEP.CO.UK

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