

**Tourism Lancashire West**

**Call for applications to support investments that develop small scale tourism and recreational opportunities which build on the distinctiveness of the Lancashire West LAG area**

**1.1 Local context**

Lancashire has a strong and vibrant visitor economy that offers a rich and diverse mix of visitor experiences, whether for a short break, holiday or day out. With its stunning rural landscapes and outdoor offer, including cycling and walking; a rich cultural heritage and an extensive calendar of diverse events; its coastal plains and resorts and its reputation for locally produced food and drink. Rural tourism is a significant part of the overall offer in Lancashire.

In 2015, the county welcomed just over 64 million visitors who helped generate £3.8bn of visitor expenditure across Lancashire and supported 56,551 full time jobs.

The visitor economy is recognised as one of seven leading business sectors that the county has identified as a provider of jobs and wealth in the future, currently representing 7% of the county’s GVA and employing 1 in 10 of the working population. Our goal, by 2020, is to grow the county’s visitor economy by:

* An additional 6.3 million new visitors and achieve a ratio of 80:20 between new and staying visitors (i.e. 1.3 million additional staying visitors and 5 million additional day visitors)
* An additional visitor spend of £650 million
* An additional 5,000 FTE jobs

Lancashire has the strong foundations for delivering outstanding visitor experiences; set against an increasingly competitive marketplace, the sector must continue to not only meet, but exceed the expectations of visitors if it is to deliver sustainable growth.

The Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination Management Plan therefore sets out a blueprint by which we can seek to build on the existing assets and facilities that the county has to offer the visitor by identifying the greatest opportunities for sector growth. The county’s vision, as a visitor destination, by 2020 is:

* To be recognised as one of the top 5 English counties for a refreshing and relaxing short break and an active family holiday.
* To be known nationally as a culinary ‘must visit destination’ because of the authenticity and quality of its food and drink, from field to table, locally sourced from the county’s stunning valleys, plains, woodlands and coasts.
* For the county’s cultural, countryside and heritage offer to be main reasons that visitors choose to visit Lancashire.
* To be recognised for its stunning 137-mile coastline that effortlessly combines seaside heritage and contemporary leisure experiences.
* To be a preferred location for corporate events and association conferences because of the choice and value for money of its venues and the breadth and depth of the business tourism infrastructure.
* A destination that offers outstanding customer service on a par with the best worldwide and is an example of best practice in offering accessible holidays.

**2.1 Scope of the Call**

Priority areas of investment

* Provide new or enhanced, restored, upgraded quality accommodation that helps to increase the amount, variety and quality of visitor accommodation and encourages increases in the number and / or length of stay of visitors
* Support the development of a co-ordinated, quality tourism offer that focuses on the local distinctiveness of the county’s strengths in food and drink, outdoor activities, culture, heritage and coastal experiences.

Examples of eligible activity include:

* Developing high quality visitor products and services that encourage visitors to stay longer, link tourism providers together and extend the tourism season;
* Developing quality accommodation where there are clearly defined wider benefits to the local tourism economy and where activities do not displace existing accommodation;
* Supporting tourism activities / niche products linked to quality local food, culture, sport, heritage and rural crafts / assets such as heritage events and festivals promoting local culture;
* Supporting shops, catering services – restaurants and cafes where there are wider benefits to the local tourism economy;
* Developing culture, leisure, heritage, visitor activities or attractions and the associated marketing and support of these;
* Supporting events and festivals that demonstrate wider benefits and attract visitors from outside the community;
* Developing innovative technology that enhances collaboration between businesses and provides information to attract visitors.

**2.2 Geographical Scope**

All activities are confined to activity and benefit occurring in the Lancashire West LAG. Your postcode can be checked by emailing ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk.

**2.3 Total funding available**

The total grant funding available for this call is £128,165. Funding will be offered to a limited number of projects. All applications are competitive.

Additional funding may be available via the Growth Programme, which is managed separately from LEADER please check the Gov UK web site [here](https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds).

**2.4 Size of grants available**

Minimum grants will be available for this call from £20,000; there is no maximum amount other than the amount of funding available, however projects will need to demonstrate value for money. State aid rules will apply which may affect the amount of grant offered. Further details on state aid rules are available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid) and in the applicant hand book.

Applications can apply to cover up to 40% for commercial projects; up to 80% for non-profit making projects and up to 100% for projects that have a benefit in terms of value added to the wider local tourist economy.

**2.5 Call Deadline**

This is an open call:

The call will open for Expressions of Interest until December 2018 or until all funds are committed.

If the Expression of Interest passes the eligibility and completeness check you will be invited to proceed to full application.

Applications will be dealt with on a first come first served basis.

Your Project Officer will visit you at full application stage to provide you with advice and guidance.

**3 Outputs to be delivered**

Applications need to show how their project will contribute to the achievement of the following outputs;

1. New full time equivalent jobs created (1 FTE = 30 paid hours per week)
2. Additional number of tourist visits
3. Additional overnight stays
4. Number of businesses supported

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate how they will deliver the outputs they have committed to within their application along with the methodology used. Further detail on the evidence required will be available from your Project Officer.

**4 How to apply**

In the first instance please contact Karen Lawrenson on 01772 538797 or email Karen.lawrenson@lancashire.gov.uk. Karen can advise you whether your project idea fits with the Programme's priorities and whether you are in an eligible area. If you are eligible you will be invited to submit an Outline Application. Alternatively you can complete our [online register of interest](https://lccsecure.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/questionnaires/runQuestionnaire.asp?qid=586101) and one of the team will contact you to discuss your project.

If your Expression of Interest is eligible you will be invited to proceed to Full Application. Work must not start on any part of the proposed project before the applicant has received a signed Grant Funding Agreement.

For further information regarding LEADER rural Funding please visit our web site at:

[Rural development - Lancashire County Council](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/rural-development)