

# Quarter of a billion pound boost for Wales' rural communities

Lesley Griffiths today confirmed she is fully committing the remaining tranche of funding under the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020.

The funding, a combination of Welsh Government and EU money, is an investment in key areas that will help rural communities to be more resilient during the post-EU transition period. It will provide Wales' farmers, food producers, landowners and others with a certain degree of assurance that they can start to make future plans and shape their business operations accordingly.

Clarity on future funding arrangements was a key issue raised during a number of Brexit Round Table meetings and workshops, involving representatives from across the Environment and Rural Affairs portfolio, set up by the Cabinet Secretary immediately after the outcome of the EU referendum.

Today's announcement means a wide range of important schemes can now open including Farm Business Grant, Glastir Advanced, Food Business Investment Scheme, Co-operation and Supply Chain Development, Glastir Woodland Creation and Rural Community Development Fund.

The Cabinet Secretary made the decision to fully commit the remaining EU element of the funding, totalling £126.3m, after the UK Government guaranteed funding for all projects signed before the UK leaves the EU. Previously, the Chancellor only guaranteed to finance projects signed before the 2016 Autumn Statement. The Welsh Government will also provide £96.4m.

The Cabinet Secretary's Round Table group, comprising representatives from across the portfolio, reconvened yesterday. In addition, a series of cross-sector stakeholder workshops, involving more than one hundred people have taken place at different locations across Wales between August and October 2016.

The Round Table meetings and workshops have enabled representatives from across the Environment and Rural Affairs portfolio to look at the implications of Brexit in a joined-up way, in particular the key risks, opportunities, and possible ways forward.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Tomorrow promises to be a significant day for Wales and the UK, when the prospect of a future outside the EU starts to become very much a reality. It also signals the official start of a period of uncertainty for all involved in Wales' rural communities. We still don't know what the future landscape will look like but we are pressing the UK Government to honour the commitment made during the referendum campaign that we will not lose out on money we would

otherwise have received from the EU.

“I am pleased to confirm, therefore, we are committing the entirety of the remaining funding under the RDP, worth nearly a quarter of a billion pounds. I hope this provides reassurance to Wales’ rural communities who have benefited greatly from the wide range of programmes under the RDP.

“Following the result of the EU referendum, I was keen to bring together representatives from across my portfolio to discuss in detail the risks and opportunities that Brexit presents. The contribution by all involved has been very positive and there is a real commitment from them to work together.

“This engagement underlines the strength of the links that exist in Wales between areas like agriculture, communities and the wider environment. The discussions that have taken place have been invaluable in identifying how we should plan for a future outside the EU.”

Full details of upcoming scheme windows under the [RDP](#) will be available on the Welsh Government website in due course.