

# Press Release

6 October 2008



## **YORKSHIRE FORWARD INVESTS IN RURAL RETAIL BUSINESSES**

Yorkshire Forward is investing £170,000 of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England in a pilot programme that will enable essential retail businesses in rural locations to diversify and add to the services that they offer.

Successful businesses applying for support from the Rural Retail Support Programme will benefit from help up to a total value of £10,000 support per business. This can cover both specialist advice to the business and small scale capital investments in developing the business for the future.

The programme will be managed and delivered on behalf of Yorkshire Forward by Business Link Yorkshire, the organisation providing free support for businesses in the Yorkshire and Humber area, offering information for any business, no matter what its size or stage of development.

Having identified the basic requirements of the business with Business Link Yorkshire, the package may include access to the services of a specialist business adviser with an understanding of the issues facing retail businesses in rural areas. The business adviser can help the business assess the underlying business, look at new opportunities, the local market and take forward any actions that result from this assessment.

In addition to specialist support, grant support will be made available for essential capital improvements identified in the action plan. This could include internal or external improvements to the property that will increase the viability of the business, making a shop more attractive to a wider range of customers, or investing in equipment needed to develop new income streams. The Business Link's business adviser can help retail businesses in rural areas assess whether they are eligible for this grant and how to apply for it.

Qualifying businesses need to be the only essential retail service in that community, and already be considering significant changes to the services they offer. They also need to be prepared to invest in the changes along with the grant support. Businesses benefiting could include village



[forward.com](http://forward.com)

Yorkshire Forward, Victoria House, 2 Victoria Place, Leeds, LS11 5AE.  
Tel: 0113 394 9600 Fax: 0113 234 9211

[www.yorkshire-](http://www.yorkshire-)

shops, or independently owned petrol filling stations and public houses that already offer a wider range of products for sale to their rural community.

Andy Tordoff, Head of Rural Renaissance and Tourism for Yorkshire Forward said:

“Yorkshire Forward aims to support the development of rural businesses and encourage them to diversify to meet the needs of their customers and the local community. Investing in pilot projects like this helps us to develop a way forward that supports communities at a local level.”

Helen West, Chief Executive of Business Link Yorkshire said:

“Rural retail businesses often need to operate with a greater flexibility than their urban counterparts as they are often the only local service provider. This programme aims to work with existing businesses to ensure that they offer a wide range of goods and services to their customers.”

For more information on how Business Link Yorkshire can support established and budding entrepreneurs, please ring 08456 048 048 or visit [www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk).