

**Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire ESI Funds Sub-Committee****Minutes of meeting held 26/10/2016  
Trentham Suite, 1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford****Agenda:**

1. Welcome and introduction, and Apologies
2. Minutes of Last Meeting (08/09/2016) and action update
3. Declarations of Interest
4. BiSU Presentation
5. ERDF Update
6. ESF Opt In Update
7. EAFRD and Leader Update
8. ERDF Full Application
9. Any Other Business

**1. Welcome and introduction**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- 1.2. With the acknowledgement of new members present, all sub-committee attendees introduced themselves.
- 1.3. Apologies were received from Cllr Abigail Brown, Cllr Terence Follows, Andrea Whitworth, Debbie Harris, Peter Davenport, Julian Woolford, and John Adlen.
- 1.4. The Chair reminded sub-committee members of the importance of these meetings, and would like to see higher numbers of attendance at future meetings.

**2. Minutes of 08/09/2016 meeting and action update**

- 2.1. The Chair provided an update on Action 1 from the meeting. The Strategic Targeted Statement draft is yet to be presented to the sub-committee. Action forwarded to next meeting.
- 2.2. Sub-committee members agreed that the minutes were a true record of the previous meeting.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1. The Chair asked sub-committee members to declare any expressions of interest.
- 3.2. The following were declared: Mark Bacon, Item 8.

#### **4. BiSU Presentation**

- 4.1. The Chair introduced Claire Hameed, the project manager for Be Inspired at Staffordshire University, which was now in delivery.
- 4.2. Claire Hameed provided a presentation to sub-committee members and handed out a booklet containing an overview of the project.
- 4.3. Sub-committee members were notified that the initial cohort of outputs had already been achieved.
- 4.4. The Chair queried how this project integrates with other organisations within the Staffordshire LEP, and expressed the importance of integrating with The Growth Hub.
- 4.5. Claire Hameed advised that the project has contacts within the Chamber of Commerce and will be seeking to work closely with the Growth Hub.
- 4.6. Sara Williams suggested that it may be beneficial to appoint a member of staff to liaise and work closely to the Growth Hub.
- 4.7. The Chair queried the reason why the only company type associating with BiSU, are either sole traders or partnerships.
- 4.8. Claire clarified that, to date, little interest has been shown from beneficiaries with regards to Limited Companies as no beneficiary has registered as a Limited Company. It is anticipated that this may change.
- 4.9. Jill Norman queried the length of support available that is available to graduates.
- 4.10. Claire Hameed advised that that the length of support usually lasts 1 year, but the University will continue assisting students or graduates after this period should they still require support.

#### **5. ERDF Update**

- 5.1. The Deputy Chair assured all sub-committee members that the Government will honour project activity that is contracted up to the point in which the UK departs the EU. Where projects secure EU funding before we exit, payments will be guaranteed even after Britain has left the EU. Projects will need to provide good value for money and meet domestic priorities
- 5.2. Sub-committee members were advised that 247 projects are currently live nationally and that 58% of the budget has been allocated/under consideration.
- 5.3. The Deputy Chair presented a verbal summary of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP Project Status Summary and Management information reports to the Board.
- 5.4. Sub-committee members were advised that for Priority Axis 1, the total amount currently under consideration represents 20.5% of the notional allocation, but it was acknowledged there is a pipeline of potential projects ready to come forward in future Calls.
- 5.5. Under Priority Axis 2, there is currently a lack of activity, but SSLEP Officers have recently identified some potential schemes that could come forward.
- 5.6. Good progress is being made with PA3, with 11 projects currently in delivery.
- 5.7. Regarding Priority Axis 4, sub-committee members were advised that there are still only 2 projects - Low Carbon Business Evolution Programme and SEND. SEND is currently at the full appraisal stage and will be presented at the next sub-committee meeting.
- 5.8. There is currently no PA6 activity under consideration but SSLEP Officers have identified a pipeline of schemes for future Calls.
- 5.9. The Deputy Chair asked sub-committee members to consider which Priority Axis would benefit from future Calls.
- 5.10. Sub-committee members agreed that Call covering all priorities would be beneficial.

5.11. Cllr Phillip Atkins shared a statement from a letter from Sajid Javed, and advised sub-committee members that projects will still be considered post autumn statement, providing it fits with domestic priorities, and provides good value for money.

5.12. The Deputy Chair confirmed that the value of Sterling against Euro for notional allocations is still based on a 0.78 conversion rate.

5.13. Jill Norman queried whether claims were beginning to be processed for ERDF projects currently in delivery.

5.14. The Deputy Chair advised that claims have started to be paid, and applicants will be directed to use the E-Claims systems in the near future. The interim process consists of all claims being submitted to the managing authority.

## **6. ESF Update**

6.1. Joanne Rushton presented an update paper dated 19/10/2016 to sub-committee board members. The paper included a summary of the progress to date in respect of Opt-ins and Non Opt-ins and a table setting out commitment levels by priority.

6.2. It was confirmed that the ESF managing authority has been in discussion with co-financing organisation to determine how future Management Information will be presented to the sub-committee.

6.3. Mark Connell provided a verbal summary of the joint SSLEP and GBS LEP update paper, presenting a current position on funding allocations and the co-financing organisations contractual position to date.

6.4. Sub-committee members were advised that more information regarding the Opt In programme will be disclosed by the MA, following receipt of Opt-in first claims in the first quarter of 2017.

6.5. Jo Rushton advised the sub-committee members that SS LEP Officers had taken the position to provide coverage across the whole SS LEP transitional area, including the overlapping geographies when commissioning provision, regardless of the virement of notional allocation from GBS LEP

6.6. The Chair advised that it would be beneficial to have access to current spends, or potential spend as this would assist with managing the process.

6.7. Jo Rushton requested the Committee's view on the SFA's recent letter to LEP and local sub-committee members, offering an extension to Contracts from March 2018 to July 2018. The Committee were supportive of the proposed extension.

## **7. EAFRD and Leader Update**

7.1. Jo Jury delivered a verbal summary of the EAFRD paper circulated to sub-committee members in advance of the meeting.

7.2. Members were advised that the SSLEP has a relatively small EAFRD allocation of £3.127m against other EU funds.

7.3. Jo Jury notified members that there have been only 2 projects to date, which is a lower response than anticipated. Both of which are at pre appraisal stage.

7.4. The board were advised of potential calls in the winter;

- Business and Development
- Tourism Infrastructure

- Tourism Co-operation
- Food processing

7.5. Jo Jury provided a breakdown of the approximate value per call, and discussed the investment priority against each call, totalling just over 3 million.

7.6. The Chair recommended that the Rural Forum should actively participate in this process

7.7. Jill Norman queried whether a map which determines which area is rural would be beneficial.

7.8. Jo Jury advised of the benefits of signposting all businesses who make contact rather than only those who fit within rural areas.

## **8. ERDF Full Application**

8.1. The Deputy Chair provided a verbal summary of the Keele Research and Innovation Gateway (KRIG), and Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF). A written summary of the appraisal was provided to ESIF sub-committee members in advance of the meeting.

8.2. KRIG - Attention was drawn to the changes since the outline stage, including a reduction to the grant request and a subsequent revision to outputs.

8.3. The Deputy Chair added that the appraisal found that the project appears to offer good value for money. Comments for advice on local strategic fit were invited.

8.4. Sub-committee members confirmed that the project was strongly aligned to their Strategic Priorities

8.5. MEIF – The Deputy Chair provided a summary of the project

8.6. ESIF sub-committee members were in agreement that the project is sufficiently aligned to local strategic priorities.

8.7. It was noted that it would be helpful to have a mechanism to review the offer during the delivery period to ensure that it continued to be a viable offer for SMEs in the SSLEP region.

8.8. The level of outputs being forecast from MEIF would mean that activity coming forward from the remaining PA3 allocation would need to provide very good VFM to help ensure the LEP's overall target was met.

8.9. There were some discrepancies in the proportional split of outputs to level of investment being made by each LEP.

8.10. The Deputy Chair advised that quarterly updates on MEIF will be presented to the sub-committee.

## **9. Any other Business**

9.1. Sara Williams promoted the forthcoming business festival event to the sub-committee members.

## **10. Future Meeting Dates**

**16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Venue, date and time to be confirmed**

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Venue, date and time to be confirmed**

## **Annex A**

**List of Agreed Actions from [Date] [Insert LEP area] Sub-Committee Meeting**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Assigned to</b>
2	Strategic Targeted Statement draft to be presented at the next Sub-Committee meeting	Nigel Senior – Staffordshire County Council

## Annex B Attendee List

### Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire ESI Funds Sub-Committee 08/09/2016 meeting

#### Chair & Deputy Chair:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Jonathan Dale	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP Board member (Chair)
Darren Cope	DCLG (Deputy Chair)

#### Sub-Committee Members:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Cllr Gordon Alcott	Southern Staffordshire District Authorities
Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Dr Mark Bacon	Keele University
Mark Connell	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Andrew Greenhough	Stoke-on-Trent College
Jill Norman	Support Staffordshire
Joanne Rushton	DWP
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce
Glen Watson	Cannock Chase District Council

#### Others in attendance (non-members - including secretariat):

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Saqab Hussain	DCLG
Michelle Kynaston	BEIS

#### Apologies:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
John Adlen	Staffordshire University
Cllr Abigail Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Terrence Follows	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Andrea Whitworth	BEIS
Peter Davenport	Staffordshire County Council
Julian Woolford	Natural England
Debbie Harris	Cannock Chase District Council