



## Minutes of the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP Area ESI Funds Sub Committee meeting

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015

Venue: The White Room, County Buildings, Staffordshire

Present	Representing
Jonathan Dale (Chair)	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Harjinder Dhani	Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)
Joanne Rushton	Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)
Thomas Blackmore	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
Roger Allonby	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Kevin Postones	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Paul Hodgkinson	Keele University
Sarah Robinson	Stoke on Trent College
Jill Norman	Support Staffordshire
Mark Connell	Stoke on Trent City Council (Observer)
Julie Evans	Staffordshire County Council (Observer)
Peter Hamid	Department for Communities and Local Government - DCLG (Observer)
Julie Obada	Stoke-on-Trent County Council (Presented Agenda Item 6)
Anthony Baines	Staffordshire County Council (Presented Agenda Item 6)
Apologies	Representing
John Adlen	Staffordshire University
Cllr Gordon Allcot	Cannock Chase District Council
Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr George Adamson	Cannock Chase District Council
Dr Mark Bacon	Keele University
Cllr Abigail Brown	Stoke-On-Trent City Council
Cllr Stephen Claymore	Tamworth District Council
Adele Cope	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
Amanda Craig	Natural England/ Staffordshire Local Nature Partnership
James Dennison	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust/ Staffordshire Local Nature Partnership
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Stafford Borough Council
Deborah Harris (Non-Member/Alternate)	Cannock Chase Council
Sajid Hashmi	VAST
Cllr Gwen Hassall	Stoke on Trent City Council
Allan Howells	Staffordshire University
Jo Jury	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Sue Lawley	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Prof Trevor McMillan	Keele University
Graham Morley	South Staffordshire College
Cllr Mohammed Pervez	Stoke on Trent City Council
Nigel Senior	Staffordshire County Council (Observer)



Cllr Mike Stubbs	Newcastle Borough Council
Antony Werren	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council

<b>1. Welcome and Introductions (Jonathan Dale)</b>	<b>Action</b>
The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Sub-Committee members were asked to complete a Declaration of Interest Form if applicable. Copies of the form were available at the meeting.	
<b>2. Notes from previous meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015</b>	<b>Action</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Sub-Committee group agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015.</li> <li>During the previous meeting the Sub-Committee had requested a paper setting out how the strategic fit considerations of the GBSLEP and Stoke and Staffordshire ESIF Sub-Committees would inform the use of ERDF and ESF Funds in the overlapping Staffordshire districts. Tom Blackmore advised that the paper is in progress and will be presented at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.</li> </ol>	<b>Thomas Blackmore to present the paper referred to in 2 (2) at the next ESIF Sub-Committee meeting.</b>
<b>3. Terms of Reference and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>Action</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and Deputy Chair stressed that if Sub-Committee members are unable to attend meetings, they are responsible for arranging for the relevant named alternate member to attend. The alternate should be given sufficient advance warning so that he/she can prepare sufficiently for the meeting. The use of alternates/substitutes is covered in the LEP Area ESI Funds Terms of Reference – ESIF – GN - 2-003 Version 3. It is essential that this procedure is followed, particularly in terms of ensuring that meetings are quorate.</li> <li>It was agreed that this meeting of the Sub-Committee was not quorate and therefore it would not be possible for any decisions to be made. The purpose of the meeting was restricted to the sharing of information.</li> </ol>	
<b>4. Update on First Bidding Round – Thomas Blackmore</b>	<b>Action</b>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tom Blackmore directed Sub-Committee members to the minutes of the last meeting (28<sup>th</sup> July 2015) which contains a record of the advice provided by the Committee in respect of the applications submitted in the First Bidding Round.</li> <li>2. Overall the response to the Project Call was positive, with over 30 applications. The general quality of the submissions was fairly high, with 25 invited via letter to the Full Application stage. The deadline for submitting the completed Technical Assistance applications is the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.</li> <li>3. The deadline for submitting all of the other Full Applications is 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Paul Hodgkinson advised that the LEP will deliver a workshop to support the development of Full Applications. Date to be confirmed.</li> <li>4. A slide was circulated to sub- committee members summarising the following for each priority: The number of bids invited to Full; The ESIF strategy indicative Theme Allocation; The ESIF Current Project Value; The ESIF Residual Amount.</li> <li>5. It was noted that the ESIF value of the Priority 4 –Low Carbon applications to the ‘Full’ stage amounts to £18,222,430, compared to an indicative allocation of £11,250,000. Tom advised that the relevant projects will be reduced in scale during the appraisal process.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>5. Update on Second Bidding Round - Tom Blackmore</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tom advised that there will be a bidding round in August 2015, with a deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> September for completed applications. The bidding round will cover the following Priority Axes; P1 – Promoting Research and Innovation, P2 Enhancing Access to, Use &amp; Quality of ICT, P3 Enhancing Competitiveness of SME’s, P4 Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy; P6 Preserving &amp; Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency.</li> <li>2. There will also be a call for Financial Engineering Instruments following further consultation with the ESIF Sub-Committees on the structure and timing of the call.</li> <li>3. The Chair noted the importance of encouraging high quality responses to the Project Call.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Action</b></p>

<b>6. Skills, Employment and Social Inclusion Commissioning Plan and Prospectus 2014-20 – Julie Obada and Anthony Baines</b>	<b>Action</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Julie and Anthony delivered a presentation of the above plan to Sub-Committee members and invited comments and questions. The proposed Programme will be delivered by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP alongside 3 opt-in partners, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Big Lottery.</li> <li>2. In response to a query from the Chair, Julie clarified that the proposed outcomes and outputs set out in the plan were generated from national targets, which were then apportioned to create LEP area targets. The LEP can challenge these targets if they appear to be unrealistic.</li> <li>3. A number of Sub-Committee members noted that there is risk of the delivery partners duplicating services to beneficiaries, particularly in terms of NEETS. Julie and Anthony acknowledged this and advised that the LEP will work with the opt-in partners to reduce this risk.</li> <li>4. Sub-Committee members also noted that a key challenge will be ensuring that the progress of beneficiaries through the proposed programme pathway model can be accurately tracked.</li> <li>5. Leading on from point 4, a wider point was made by Sub-Committee members including Sarah Robinson that applicants and delivery partners in ESIF programmes should be made fully aware of the document retention requirements. This point was acknowledged by the Sub-Committee group. Tom Blackmore noted that ERDF applicants will be made aware of the document retention requirements at various stages of the process, including the application and contracting phases. Jo Rushden and Harjinder Dhami also advised that provisions are in place to ensure that ESF applicants are made aware of the requirements.</li> <li>6. Sub-Committee members including Jill Norman agreed that the Programme should not simply strive for 'Quick Wins' in order to report outputs and outcomes, but should also attempt to address the more problematic, deep-rooted cases of unemployment, underemployment etc.</li> <li>7. A number of sub-committee members commented on the proposed Programme governance structure, noting the lack of an obvious interface between the Education Trust and the ESIF Sub-Committee. It was agreed that this would be reviewed by the LEP. One solution might be for a member of the Education Trust to attend the ESIF Sub-Committee as an observer.</li> <li>8. The Chair commented that there needs to be a robust interface between the Growth Hub and the Programme.</li> <li>9. There was a general agreement that whilst the delivery of the proposed Programme does present a number of risks. it also offers an opportunity to address a number of critical socio-economic challenges within the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP area.</li> </ol>	

<b>7. EAFRD Update – Roger Allonby</b>	<b>Action</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roger Allonby advised that there will be a Bidding Round in either August 2015 or September 2015. September 2015 is the most likely option.</li> <li>2. The Bidding Round will be targeted towards micro and small rural businesses. The total grant available for the call will be £300,000.</li> <li>3. The proposed Project Call Specification will be circulated to Sub-Committee members for consideration in due course.</li> <li>4. The Rural Payments Agency will seek to work with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP to ensure that the Project Call is sufficiently publicised.</li> <li>5. Roger confirmed that grant awards under the September call (if it goes ahead) would not be affected by the outcome of the next Government Spending Review. The position is less clear for Project Calls beyond September 2015.</li> </ol>	
<b>8. ESF Update Harjinder Dhami and Jo Rushden</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Operational Programme is expected to be formally adopted in September 2015 at which point a final version will be published on GOV.UK. This may result in possible calls in October but nothing is confirmed as yet.</li> <li>2. Some procedural/administrative issues have arisen with the SFA applications. The ESF Managing Authority is working closely with the SFA to resolve these issues as soon as possible. The ESF Managing Authority is currently working on clearing MOU's this week which are dependent on receiving documentation from SFA.</li> <li>3. The ESF Managing Authority received the second tranche of Big Lottery Fund (BLF) applications in early August. The applications are now being appraised.</li> <li>4. The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire BLF application needed to be re-submitted as the original application did not make clear that funds from GBSLEP were being utilised in the application. The application is to be treated as a multi LEP application pending Managing Authority update regarding the logistics of re-allocating GBSLEP ESF funds into the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP notional allocation. This will require comment on Strategic fit from both ESIF-Sub Committees. The ESF Managing Authority asked the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire ESIF-Sub-Committee if the application could be taken forward via written procedure to fit in with the BLF deadline to prevent any delays in their procurement timeline. This was agreed by the Sub- Committee.</li> </ol>	
<b>9. Any other Business and Date of the Next Meeting</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A number of Sub-Committee members during the meeting expressed concern at the potential impact of the Government Comprehensive Spending Review on ESIF project match-funding. The Chair declared that this issue would be</li> </ol>	<b>A nominee to work with the Skills</b>



<p>flagged up with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. A nominee is required to work with the Skills Funding Agency on the ESF Programme. Julie Obada expressed her interest, but it was agreed that this would need to be considered at the next Sub-Committee Meeting.</li><li>3. The date of the next meeting will be confirmed to Sub-Committee members in September 2015.</li></ol>	<p><b>Funding Agency on the ESF Programme is to be considered and selected by the ESIF-Sub-Committee at the next meeting of the group.</b></p>
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