



Shadow European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Committee

Meeting note - Tuesday 28th April 2015

At County Buildings, Staffordshire County Council

Attendees

Name	Representation/Organisation
Jonathan Dale (Chair)	Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Representing HMG Managing Authorities	
Kevin Postones	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Roger Allonby	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Joanne Rushton	Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)
Mark Foley	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
Representing Staffordshire Districts	
Cllr Gordon Alcott	Cannock Chase Council
Deborah Harris (Non-Member/Alternate)	Cannock Chase Council
Representing Higher Education	
Dr Mark Bacon	Keele University
Representing Further Education, Skills & Employment	
Graham Morley	South Staffordshire College
Representing LEP Local Authority Accountable Bodies	
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Gwen Hassall	Stoke on Trent City Council
Representing Voluntary and Community Sector	
Jill Norman	Support Staffordshire
Representing Environmental Sustainability Policy Theme	
Amanda Craig	Natural England/ Staffordshire Local Nature Partnership
Representing the Private Sector	
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Name	Representation/Organisation
Observers	
Nigel Senior	Staffordshire County Council
Paul Hodgkinson	Stoke on Trent City Council
Peter Hamid	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
Apologies (alternates)	
Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Mohammed Pervez	Stoke on Trent City Council
Cllr George Adamson	Cannock Chase District Council
John Adlen	Staffordshire University
Cllr Stephen Claymore	Tamworth District Council
Thomas Blackmore	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
Adele Cope	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
James Dennison	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust/ Staffordshire Local Nature Partnership
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Stafford Borough Council
Sajid Hashmi	VAST
Allan Howells	Staffordshire University
Jo Jury	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Sue Lawley	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Pete Long	Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)
Prof Trevor McMillan	Keele University
Sarah Robinson	Stoke on Trent College
Cllr Mike Stubbs	Newcastle Borough Council
Antony Werren	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

1. Welcome and Introduction
The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest
Item 5: Cllr Gordon Allcott, Deborah Harris Item 7: Jill Norman, Dr Mark Bacon, Graham Morley
3. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising from 24th February 2015 meeting
The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on the 24 th February 2015.
Update on Actions from last meeting
<u>Written Procedures – ESIF call templates and ESIF Communications Plan</u>
Nigel Senior confirmed that following the previous meeting, committee members were invited to provide feedback in respect of the ESIF call templates and the ESIF Communications Plan. Constructive responses were received.
The Committee agreed that this action has been closed.
<u>Opt in position update</u>
It was agreed that this would be addressed under Agenda Item 6.

Analysis of previous MAS, UKTI and Growth Accelerator Impact in SSLEP area

Nigel Senior advised that this action is still outstanding. Discussions are currently being held with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Risk assessment from delivery of previous EU Funded programmes and activities

Paul Hogkinson confirmed that this action is currently in 'progress.' Work is being undertaken to identify and incorporate lessons from the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 European Programmes in order to reduce delivery risks.

Emerging ESIF Project Pipeline

It was agreed that this point would be considered under Agenda Item 4

Joint working with GBSLEP update

It was agreed that this point would be considered under Agenda Item 5

Proposals for ESIF Technical Assistance

It was agreed that this point would be considered under Agenda Item 7

4. Programme Launch, ESIF bidding calls and response

Update from DCLG

Mark Foley was invited to provide an update on the Programme launch from a national perspective. He made the following points-

-The programme was launched on the basis of a staged approach, partially in anticipation of 'Purdah' and also with a nod to managing workloads.

-Noted that Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP has allocated a relatively high proportion of its ESIF allocation in the March call.

-Acknowledged that it has been an 'imperfect launch', in part because of the need to announce the March bidding round before 'Purdah.'

-The involvement of the ESIF Committees will be needed during the assessment of the applications. This will include for example providing local intelligence on the deliverability, desirability and strategic value of projects. A guidance note for ESIF Committees and revised terms of reference will be issued in the near future

Paul Hogkinson added that a list of received applications will be made available to Committee members.

ESIF Launch Event – 25th March

Nigel Senior reported that the event, held at Staffordshire University was well received, attracting 60+ attendees.

The Chair noted that the organisation of such an event at such an early stage is indicative of the desire of the Group to build the momentum of the programme.

ESIF Bidding Calls

Nigel Senior provided an outline of each call, specifically the indicative ESIF value and the submission. A good response to the calls, with the possible exception of ICT is expected.

Further details of Nigel Senior's presentation can be found in the slides circulated to meeting attendees.

Committee Members asked if ERDF projects would be able to claim for eligible costs incurred and defrayed prior to the approval of the project. Mark Foley confirmed that approved projects

will in principle be able to claim for eligible costs from the date that the applicant is invited to submit a full ERDF application. However the intention to claim costs from this date would need to be flagged up in advance by the applicant and considered as part of the appraisal process.

Funding Partner Workshop

Nigel Senior advised that the workshop will be held at Staffordshire Place on the 30th April. The meeting will offer an opportunity for partners to obtain information and guidance on the application process. It is hoped that this will help to improve the quality of funding applications.

Project Pipeline Dashboard

Paul Hodgkinson outlined some of the mechanisms that will be used to monitor the performance of the Programme. Performance management will encompass number of elements including spend, outputs and project monitoring. An A3 hand-out accompanying Paul's presentation was circulated to the meeting attendees.

Following this item, Committee members discussed the current position on outputs. In summary the following was noted-

- The output definitions are still in the process of being agreed
- Indicative unit costs for outputs are in development
- The Managing Authority will be responsible for undertaking Value for Money assessments of project applications.
- Output information will be captured at a LEP-level. Noted that it may be difficult to drill-down this information to a more local level.

5. GBSLEP and other Cross LEP working

Nigel Senior provided an update to the Committee, a summary of which was issued to each attendee in the form of a presentation slide. A number of steps have and will be taken to facilitate effective cross-LEP collaboration including-

- The Chairs of the respective Stoke & Staffordshire LEP and Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEPS will meet on the 26th May.
- A Joint working Panel, comprising members of the both of the above LEPS will be set up. Panel to meet as and when required. The first meeting is expected to take place in June. Discussions will include ESF Opt-ins and Business Support activity. Recommendations will be fed back to the relevant committees.
- Meeting between the Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire and Marches LEPS to discuss Rural Workspace on 27th April 2015

Meeting attendees noted that there may potentially be opportunities to work with the Cheshire LEP. Attendees also agreed that existing cross-HEI networks can potentially complement and aid cross-LEP working.

6. ESF Opt-In latest position

Tony Baines provided a detailed progress update on the ESF Opt-Ins. It is apparent that the DWP, SFA and Big Lottery Opt Ins are at different stages and have presented varying challenges. It is currently anticipated that there will be a June bidding call for the DWP and SFA Opt-ins and an October call for the Big Lottery Opt in.

Committee members noted that the ESF Opt-Ins offer an opportunity to address multiple problems, including unemployment, under-employment and skills shortages.

Full details of Tony's presentation can be found in the slides which were circulated to Committee members.

7. Technical Assistance

Paul Hodgkinson advised that the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP had submitted two co-ordinated bids, one for ESF (£498,962) and one for ERDF (£595,262) by the 27th April deadline. The submission was previously approved by the Committee via written procedure.

Both Paul and the Chair advised that a pragmatic approach had been adopted when determining the level of funding applied for –e.g. in terms of what was deemed necessary and obtainable. It was also noted that this is only the first bid for funding. There will be further opportunities for 'enhancements.'

A presentation slide summarising key points in respect of the Technical Assistance bid was circulated to the meeting attendees.

8. Other Task & Finish Group Update

Due to time constraints, a brief update was provided by Nigel Senior. He reported that a number of Task & Finish Groups have been and will be set up to complete specific tasks. The Groups will primarily be comprised of members of the Organisational Working Group which supports the ESIF Committee. There are currently Task & Finish Groups in relation to the ESF Opt Ins and the Growth Hub. The Existing LEP VCSE Forum and Staffordshire Rural Forum are also recognised as effective networks to operate in a Task & Finish format to develop ESIF proposals for the VCS sector and proposals to support rural businesses under ESIF and EAFRD programmes. A Task & Finish Group will also be set up to co-ordinate Technical Assistance Proposals from the LEP area.

9. Other EU Funding

Roger Allonby provided an EAFRD update.

He proposed that EAFRD funds should be focussed on the following 4 themes: Farm and Rural Development; Investments in Physical Assets; Basic Services and Village Renewal; Basic Services and Village Renewal.

Bids for Rural Broadband will not be invited this year.

Roger advised that there will be a new bidding round in June and invited the Committee to consider how it will respond, particularly in terms of prioritising themes.

Action – Committee to agree prioritisation of EAFRD themes via written procedure – deadline to be confirmed.

9. Summary of Actions

Action – Committee to agree prioritisation of EAFRD themes via written procedure – deadline to be confirmed.

Date of Next Meeting and Any Other Business

The Committee will next meet on Tuesday 23rd June at 4.00 pm, at the Civic Centre, Stoke on Trent City Council. Proposed future dates for 2015 are:

- 28th July – Staffordshire Place 1, Stafford
- 8th September – Civic Centre, Stoke on Trent
- 3rd November – County Buildings, Stafford
- 15th December - Civic Centre, Stoke on Trent

All at 4.00 pm

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