



European Union

European Structural
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment
Funds**

2014 - 2020

Growth Programme for England

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley ESI Funds Sub-Committee

Tuesday 16 January 2018

The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, HP14 4BF

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Minutes of 18 September 2017 meeting and progress of actions
3. Governance and Membership
4. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Programme Update
5. EAFRD Expressions of Interest
6. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme Update
7. ERDF general update on Applications & Calls
8. ERDF Full Applications
9. European Social Fund (ESF) National Programme Update
10. Buckinghamshire Thames Valley (BTV) LEP Update - including initial findings from the Ex Ante evaluation
11. AOB

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 **The Deputy Chair** thanked members for their attendance and apologies were noted as detailed in Appendix B. **The Deputy Chair** invited round the table introductions for the benefit of new ESIF Sub Committee members.

1.2 **The Deputy Chair** reminded the ESIF Sub Committee that their role was provide comments on the local strategic fit of the applications presented to them during this meeting. Members were reminded to make declarations of interest - **Sean Mackney** and **Rebecca Chandler-Wilde** declared an interest regarding the Buckinghamshire Heath and Social Care Innovation Hub project, and Adrian Champney in the Bucks 2020 project.

2. Minutes of 18 September 2017 meeting and action update

2.1. Actions from the 18 September 2017 meeting were discussed and the draft minutes of the meeting were approved as accurate. Actions were confirmed

as completed; a glossary of terms has been drawn up and is now circulated with the meeting's papers.

3. Governance and Membership

- 3.1. The **Deputy Chair** confirmed that Guy Lachlan had stepped down as Chair and all members were invited to volunteer to become the next Chair. Nominations to be received by email to GSE.ERDFENQUIRIES@communities.gsi.gov.uk by the 7th March 2018. It was also confirmed that Emma Martin Vignerte had been nominated to become a new BTV LEP Board Member.
- 3.2. Ian Barham explained that it was important to have a balanced membership and that key sectors and specialisms (eg low carbon) should be represented, and so steps would be taken to fill the gaps. Members were invited to submit ideas to the Secretariat.

Action 1:

- **Nominations for the new Chair to be submitted to Graham Watt by email to GSE.ERDFENQUIRIES@communities.gsi.gov.uk by the 7th March 2018.**

4. National and Local Programme Update – EAFRD

- 4.1. **Sarah McGinn** introduced the item and summarised key points from her written update, confirming that the deadline for submission of expressions of interest for the current Call has been extended until the end of May 2018. Sarah McGinn also discussed Countryside Productivity; new funds are available within the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The RPA are also looking to develop small business awards.

5. EAFRD Expressions of Interest

- 5.1. **Sarah McGinn** introduced the item and asked the ESIF Sub Committee to provide local strategic fit advice on the assessments presented to them.

5.2. Odds Farm Park Day Nursery Project

There were no declarations of interest for this project. The project proposes to expand the farm park business by building a child's day nursery/ pre-school. The project aims to increase turnover by 26% within 3 year and has requested £186,000 of funding. The ESIF Sub Committee's advice was that the project had satisfactory Local Strategic Fit.

5.3. Phase 1 Down Infrastructure Improvements

There were no declarations of interest for this project. The project proposes to develop the heritage and cultural visitor activities at a STEM related tourism and leisure attraction. The project has requested £402,940 of funding. The ESIF Sub Committee's advice was that the project had satisfactory Local

Strategic Fit and had significant recommendations related to value for money, STEM opportunities and education and inter-generational links.

6. National Programme Update – ERDF

- 6.1 **Graham Watt** introduced the National ERDF Programme overview paper and provided some highlights from the written update. The programme will now continue beyond March 2019 to its original intended completion by 31st December 2020, though this is dependant on the agreement to be reached in March 2019 on the UK's departure from the EU. There may be further Calls later this year and early next year, subject to further discussion.
- 6.2 Performance Framework targets for Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3 are performing well but Priority Axes 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are performing less well (5, 7 and 8 are not relevant in this LEP Area).
- 6.3 **Graham Watt** explained the 2018 N+3 target, a spend target to draw down the allocated ERDF grant from the European Commission over the 3 years from January 2015 to December 2018. This target is 573m Euros (£515m using the current exchange rate, which fluctuates month by month). £121m has already been claimed to date plus there is another £208m in progress so is £329m anticipated to be claimed in total leaving approximately £184m still required to reach the target by December 2018.
- 6.4 There will be Calls in March 2018 which will be open to applications from 20 March until 2 April 2018. There will also be National Calls under the Growth, International Trade and Manufacturing Growth products.
- 6.5 During 2017 83 Article 125 visits were conducted by the Department's Compliance Team of which only 2.66% of expenditure checked was confirmed to be 'at risk'. The Article 127 audits conducted by the Government Internal Audit Agency fared even better, with only 0.213% to be 'at risk'.

7. General Update on ERDF Applications and Calls

- 7.1. **Vicki Bidwell** introduced the item and provided the ESIF Sub Committee with an updated position on the progress of applications in each of the ERDF Priority Axes, and the remaining funds available, as per the written paper – the ERDF MI Dashboard.
- 7.2. Priority Axis 1 allocation is £1.8m, commitment is £0.5m with just one contracted project so far and there are two full applications each for £0.5m currently being considered – Bucks 2020 and Bucks Health and Social Care Innovation Hub. It is expected that the N+3 spend target of £302k will be met but not the 2018 Performance Framework Target of £467k. Outputs are not expected to meet the 2018 PF target by 4 enterprises supported but is expected to meet the 2023 target. The December 2017 Call is still open until 26 January 2018 for the remaining allocation of £0.507m.

- 7.3. Priority Axis 2 allocation is £0.759m, none of this is committed as there are no contracted projects yet. However the full application for E-BITE was submitted on 1 December 2017 and, if contracted, that will commit 92% of the allocation. There is no spend to date however it is expected that the N+3 target of £126k will be achieved. The output target is nil so any achievement will exceed the target. The December 2017 Call is still open until 26 January 2018 for the remaining allocation of £0.759m.
- 7.4. Priority Axis 3 allocation is £3.56m, £0.5m has been committed with just one project currently contracted. £3m is earmarked for a Financial Instrument. Spend is currently £36k and it is not expected that the N+3 target of £580k or the PF target of £908k will be met as only £445k is forecast. Spend is high risk due to the majority of this allocation being set aside for the Financial Instrument. The 2018 output targets are expected to be met or exceeded however the 2023 target is not expected to be achieved (forecast to be short by £75k). The December 2017 Call is also still open until 26 January 2018 for the remaining allocation of £3m.
- 7.5. Priority Axis 4 allocation is £1.63m, £0.5m has been committed to one contracted project – The SMILE (Low Carbon Workspaces) project. Spend is currently £19k, the N+3 target of £269k is expected to be achieved however the PF target of £415k is not as only £273k is forecast. The outputs targets for 2018 are expected to be achieved but not those for 2023. The December 2017 Call is also still open until 26 January 2018 for the remaining allocation of £1.123m.
- 7.6. Priority Axis 9 contains funds committed for one project; Block 2 - Ex Ante contract with an ERDF value of £0.035m The Grant Funding Agreement has expired and the funding has been withdrawn.
- 7.7. The ESIF Sub Committee asked whether the low number of applications is a cause for concern, whether this is typical and how this can be addressed. The ESIF Sub Committee were asked to help publicise the Calls and to encourage applicants to come forward, also to consider multi-LEP projects with LEPs that are both inside and outside the Greater South East area. There is also the opportunity to participate in national programmes of activity. It was acknowledged that it is difficult to generate interest when there is a relatively small amount of funding available and also no Technical Assistance funded facilitation project to provide this type of support to potential applicants.

8. ERDF Full Applications

- 8.1. **Vicki Bidwell** introduced the item and asked the ESIF Sub Committee to provide local strategic fit advice on the appraisal presented to them.

- 8.2. Buckinghamshire Heath and Social Care Innovation Hub

Sean Mackney and **Rebecca Chandler-Wilde** declared a conflict of interest with this application so they left the room during the discussion on this project

appraisal. The project aims to offer targeted business support and incubation services for innovative digital health and med tech companies will help to improve the retention of high tech innovative businesses in the LEP area. The applicant has requested £762,374 of funding. **Ian Barham** commented that the project is strategically important for the area given the number of hospitals (Stoke Mandeville being one) and health centres that operate in the BTV LEP area. BTV LEP stated that this project is a prime opportunity to assist SMEs to synergise and innovate in line with the health profession needs. The ESIF Sub Committee raised no concerns and therefore advised that the project had good Local Strategic Fit.

9. National Programme Update – ESF

9.1. Joanna Wright had sent her apologies in advance as she was unable to attend the meeting due to other work pressures. In her absence **the Deputy Chair** presented the written update on her behalf.

9.2. **Ian Barham** suggested that it would be helpful to have an update on the current commitment and spend progress being made for the Big Lottery Fund and the Education and Skills Funding Agency funds – more information than was presented in the written update paper.

Action 2:

- **Joanna Wright to provide an update on the current commitment and spend progress being made for the Big Lottery Fund and the Education and Skills Funding Agency funds.**

10. Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Update – including initial findings from the Ex Ante evaluation

10.1. **Ian Barham** provided a verbal update and confirmed that, for ERDF, the LEP is looking to focus in particular on PA4. PA3 is the biggest risk, with £2m held back for the Financial Instrument.

10.2. **Ian Barham** introduced the Ex Ante evaluation and then handed over to **Jonathan Dixon** from Blue Sky who then presented a Powerpoint slideshow to explain the proposed Financial Instrument, for information only at this stage. He also passed around a copy of the slides.

11. Any Other Business

11.1. No other business.

Date, time and venue of future meetings:

- Date: 16/04/2018, Time TBC, venue TBC.
- Date: 19/07/2018, Time TBC, venue TBC

Annex A

List of Agreed Actions for the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley ESI Funds Sub-committee 16/01/2018 Meeting.

Agenda Item	Action	Action Assigned to
3.	Action 1 – Nominations for the new Chair to be submitted by the end of February.	All Sub Committee members
9.	Action 2 – Joanna Wright to provide an update on the current commitment and spend progress being made for the Big Lottery Fund and the Education and Skills Funding Agency funds.	Joanna Wright

Annex B Attendee List

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley ESI Funds Subcommittee 16/01/2018 Meeting

Chair & Deputy Chair:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Graham Watt, DCLG	Deputy Chair (ERDF Managing Authority)

Subcommittee Members:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Sarah McGinn	RPA, EAFRD Managing Authority
Rebecca Chandler-Wilde	Higher Education
Ian Barham, BTV LEP	BTV LEP
Nigel Sims, Buckinghamshire County Council	Education, Skills & Employment
Jan White, Job Centre Plus	DWP, ESF Managing Authority
Steve Adkins, Aylesbury Vale DC	Local Authority
Sean Mackney, Bucks New University	Higher Education
Adrian Champney, Buckinghamshire Business First	Private Sector - Business Support
Val Cumberland, Bucks College Group	Further Education

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

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Vicki Bidwell, DCLG	ERDF Managing Authority
Paul Smith, DCLG	ERDF Managing Authority
Yemi Medeyinlo, RPA	EAFRD Managing Authority
Richard Standing, RPA	EAFRD Managing Authority
Jonathan Dixon, Blue Sky	Financial Instrument - EX Ante Evaluation

Apologies:

Name, title and organisation	Sector/Organisation Representing
Catherine Whitehead, Wycombe District Council	Local Authority
Claire Britton, Aylesbury Vale DC	Local Authority
Fred Wilson, Chiltern and South Bucks District Council	Local Authority
Karen Mitchell, Aylesbury College & the Buckinghamshire College Group	Further Education
Martin Tugwell, Buckinghamshire County Council	Local Authority
Nick Phillips,	VCS
Richard Harrington, BTV LEP CEO	BTV LEP
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First	Private Sector - Business Support
Steve Bambrick, Chiltern District Council	Local Authority