



**European Union**

European Structural  
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment  
Funds  
2014 - 2020**

**Growth Programme for England**

**Minutes of the Growth Programme Board meeting  
12:00 Thursday 15 September 2016  
Conference Room 5, Marsham Street, London**

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**Agenda**

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Welcome and introduction          | 7. Minutes of June Meeting & Update           |
| 2. Progress on Programmes*           | on Actions*                                   |
| 3. Managing Authority designation    | 8. Forward Look*                              |
| 4. Review of Growth Programme Board  | 9. Items for information                      |
| Membership and Terms of              |   |
| Reference*                           | <i>Agenda items marked * were accompanied</i> |
| 5. Partnership Working Review*       | <i>by Board papers</i>                        |
| 6. Summary Report from National Sub- |   |
| committees*                          |   |

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**Minutes**

**1. Welcome and introduction**

- 1.1. The **Chair** (Julia Sweeney) welcomed members to the meeting. She introduced new Board member **Sandra Rothwell** (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly). Councillor **Phil Davies** attended as deputy for Councillor Joe Anderson (Sustainable Urban Development), Dr **Huw Edwards** and Dr **Jon Hunt** for James Newman and John Markham (Local Enterprise Partnerships) and Dr **Clive Winters** for Professor John Latham (Higher Education, Universities).

**2. Progress on Programmes**

- 2.1. **ESF: Anne Donkin** noted there were no current open calls. DWP has potential to commit a further £60m and is liaising with HM Treasury (HMT) to launch up to 23 calls before the Autumn Statement. It submitted ten calls for HMT approval as a high priority, the preceding week. Commitment measured against Investment Priority and Category of Region is on course. Community Led Local Development (CLLD) is at stage 1, but might reasonably be expected to progress to stage 2

before late November in the normal course of business. Less Developed area work has progressed under Investment Priority 1 (Access to Employment). Performance Framework targets and progress in Transitional and More Developed areas are broadly on track and applications are under appraisal. Of 412 identified projects, all except 50 were expected to be complete by the time of the Autumn Statement. Performance data and development of Memoranda of Understanding with Co-Financing Organisations (CFO) are showing onward commitment and progress in delivery. DWP CFO expects the remaining forward commitments against the value of MOUs to go live by the end of January 2017, with four contracts (about £15m) under Investment Priority 4 (Active Inclusion).

2.2. Members noted the paper. There was a short discussion on exchange rates.

**David Morral** recalled that the rate had last been updated at the beginning of the year but, in the interest of maintaining stability while Government is developing post-Autumn Statement arrangements, it had not done so since. Members commented about HMT's approval of calls, querying whether it might lead to delays. Anne confirmed the calls process had not changed, save for the submission of calls to Treasury. The **Chair** noted that structural and investment funds account for a large quantum of Government spending, but the managing departments are not the sole decision-makers. The Chancellor will need to take a view on spending and Managing Authorities have developed a good working relationship with Treasury. As people build expertise in the area, the Managing Authorities will get better and faster in obtaining Treasury clearances. **Tom Mellish** noted that Technical Assistance had not been taken up in Leeds. Anne committed to look into the issue. **Carol Botten** queried the level of Skills Funding Agency underspend across the programme and whether there might be other options for the Adult Education budget. There was recognition that timing of calls influences timing of spend; and if the contracting process is extended, the window for spend shortens. Stakeholders are eager to receive ESF Category of Region Guidance. Anne confirmed it had been prepared. She undertook to share the draft with Carol and invite comment before publication. **Sandra Rothwell** sought further information about claims, delivery and payment at local level. DWP committed to provide more granular information at local level as soon as is feasible.

**Action 1609/01: Anne Donkin will share ESF Category of Region Guidance with Carol Botten**

**Action 1609/02: Anne Donkin will ensure the ESF MA provides local claims, delivery and payment information as soon as this is available.**

**Action 1609/03: Anne Donkin to look into the take-up of Technical Assistance in Leeds and respond to Tom Mellish.**

2.3. **ERDF: David Malpass** presented the progress report, including a breakdown of expenditure targets for the Priority Axes and Categories of Region. Targets have been discussed at the Performance & Dispute Resolution sub-committee. The N+3 targets account for more than €500m across the programme. Four calls have completed across England and there are 130 live projects. Financial Instruments account for a significant tranche of funds and will require careful contract

management. There is good activity across all LEPs; Cornwall & Isles of Scilly are doing well, but a noticeably weaker pipeline of activity and legal commitment under PAs 5 and 6 across all Categories of Region.

- 2.4. Members raised issues with the accessibility of the PA4 Guidance which was due to be published alongside calls in July. The Managing Authority reported that feedback had been positive, although it was taking longer than had been hoped to upload the document to GOV.UK. **David Morrall** briefed members that the Sustainable Urban Development & Urban Agenda sub-committee had met for the first time earlier in the week and was confident that all Intermediate Bodies would be progressed by the end of the year.
- 2.5. **EAFRD: Tony Williamson** reported that the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) had contracted 11 projects, making a legal commitment of £1.4m towards total project costs of £4.4m. The aim is to clear as many assessments as possible by the Autumn Statement. Defra is pushing hard to issue calls worth up to £120m, which will focus on tourism, business development and food processing. The quality of calls, which had been discussed at the Board previously, is still not as high as the MA would like to see. The RPA is exploring whether the call structure could be improved and/or standardised, while retaining local strategic fit as a key component of Expressions of Interest. If local strategic fit remains the same in both the Expression of Interest and Full Application, that element of the process need not be duplicated, which could reduce the time needed to take a project through the application and appraisal process to 7-8 months.
- 2.6. Members recognised the value and need for improving application processes and streamlining had been discussed at the North East LEP Area sub-committee the previous day. **Richard Powell** suggested that a streamlined process might encourage promoters of local projects to talk to each other and develop higher quality proposals. Cross-cutting equalities issues should be considered in proposals. There was disappointment that broadband was not a focus of imminent calls, but Defra recognised that it is fundamental for rural growth and is critical for more remote areas. Broadband is not ruled out from future calls and is likely to be central to Government support for rural areas in the future.

**Action 1609/04: Tony Williamson to discuss streamlining the application process while ensuring local strategic fit, with Richard Powell.**

- 2.7. **EMFF: Paul Little** reported that 206 applications had been received, with total project costs of £25m. Of those, 78 had been approved worth a total of £8.4m and attracting EMFF and match-funding of about £3.4m. Two panels, one meeting in September and the second in early November, had been scheduled. The first will focus on Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and could deliver £6m of commitment, supporting Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs); the second in early November, would consider between 10-15 projects and could commit about £3m funds. As the fishing industry is weather dependent, the majority of applications are expected through the winter months.
- 2.8. Members recognised that CLLD programmes had been intended to run for three years, but may need to be reduced to two. There was encouragement for any

opportunities to link CLLD to the LEADER programme. **Sandra Rothwell** emphasised the importance of EMFF support for the fishing industry in the south west and asked that EMFF headline figures should be broken down and presented in the context of supported projects.

**Action 1609/05: Defra to provide breakdowns and descriptions of EMFF supported projects at subsequent Board meetings.**

### **3. Managing Authority designation**

3.1. Nick Dexter noted designation as ERDF and ESF Managing Authorities is expected in mid to late October 2016. Auditors are satisfying themselves that processes and IT systems, including ECLAIMS, are satisfactory and are expected report their opinion to BEIS by mid-October. If the report is 'unqualified', designation will follow which means that Managing Authorities will then be able to reclaim money from the Commission.

### **4. Review of Growth Programme Board membership and terms of reference.**

4.1. The **Secretary** recalled that the Board had published its terms of reference in December 2015. They include a requirement for review after one year and again in 2017. It was agreed that the secretariat should develop a review proposal for the next meeting, setting out proposed objectives, scope and timescale. Project governance will require a Steering Group. Board members asked that it include representatives of local government, the LEP network and LEP Area sub-committees; and that the secretariat consider inviting a Treasury representative to join it.

### **5. Partnership Working Review**

5.1. **David Morrall** recalled the full text of the Partnership Working Review Report had been discussed at the June meeting. Following comments received from members, the Executive Summary, Conclusions and next steps had been added. Lean-working disciplines had been introduced to processes and systems, which will be important for engagement work leading up to the Autumn Statement. Work with partners to develop post-Autumn Statement implementation arrangements will commence on Monday 19 September.

5.2. Responding to the Commission, David committed to ensure the role of sub-committee Chairs be made more explicit. A progress report describing how the Review recommendations had been implemented will be presented to the Board in March 2017.

### **6. Summary Report from National Sub-Committees**

6.1. The **Secretary** presented a compiled report describing previous quarter and forthcoming meetings for the National Sub-Committees. Since the Board meeting in June, the Sustainable Urban Development and Urban Agenda sub-committee had formed and good progress is being made to inaugurate the Sustainable Growth & Development sub-committee. A Chair for that group had been

identified; invitations had been issued to potential members and the first meeting is planned for Tuesday 8 November.

- 6.2. **Ian Stewart** considered that local government might be under-represented on some groups. The **Secretary** confirmed that membership is not fixed and that, if a gap is identified or it was felt that a sub-committee would benefit from additional expertise, then members could draw that to his attention and nominate additional representation on the sub-committee. The **Chair** reminded everybody that sub-committee chairs need to be consulted on the membership of the groups.

## **7. Minutes of last meeting and progress on actions**

- 7.1. The **Secretary** confirmed that minutes from the Board meeting in June had been circulated for comment and the actions were complete. The Commission requested one correction to the list of apologies. The minutes were agreed and will be published on GOV.UK.

## **8. Forward Look**

- 8.1. The **Secretary** presented the Forward Look and suggested that members might want to discuss the Autumn Statement at the December meeting. Review of GPB membership and terms of reference will be added to the agenda. A progress report on Partnership Working Review actions will be listed for March 2017.
- 8.2. **Noel Farrell** suggested the Assurance Package could be discussed at the December meeting. **Carol Botten** recalled that Co-Financing Organisations had been discussed at a previous meeting and could be re-visited in the future.

## **9. Items for Information**

- 9.1. The **Chair** asked members to note the Communications Action Plan is being revised and will be put to the Board for approval by Written Procedure, during the autumn.
- 9.2. The **Secretary** noted that a technical amendment to the ERDF Operational Programme is required. It will be circulated to members for approval by Written Procedure.
- 9.3. The **Secretary** noted the ESF Scoring Framework had been circulated for approval by Written Procedure on 10 August. The process concluded on 24 August and the Scoring Framework is now operational.

**ACTION 1609/06: DWP will report back to the Board in December 2016 on the criteria for selection of CFO projects**

**Meeting closed: 13:30**

### **Date, time and venue of future meetings**

- Tuesday 13 December 2016, 11:00 – 15:00, DCLG Conference Rooms 5A & 5B
- Tuesday 28 March 2017, 11:00 – 15:00, DCLG Conference Rooms 5A & 5B
- Wednesday 14 June 2017, 11:00 – 15:00, DCLG Conference Rooms 5A & 5B
- Thursday 14 September, 11:00 – 15:00, DCLG Conference Rooms 5A & 5B

## Annex A

### List of agreed actions from September 2016 Growth Programme Board meeting

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>
Action 1609/01	<b>Anne Donkin will share ESF Category of Region Guidance with Carol Botten</b>	Anne Donkin
Action 1609/02	<b>Anne Donkin will ensure the ESF MA provides local claims, delivery and payment information as soon as this is available</b>	Anne Donkin
Action 1609/03	<b>Anne Donkin to look into the take-up of Technical Assistance in Leeds and respond to Tom Mellish</b>	Anne Donkin
Action 1609/04	<b>Tony Williamson to discuss streamlining the application process while ensuring local strategic fit, with Richard Powell</b>	Tony Williamson
Action 1609/05	<b>Defra to provide breakdowns and descriptions of EMFF supported projects at subsequent Board meetings</b>	Paul Little
Action 1609/06	<b>DWP will report back to the Board in December 2016 on the criteria for selection of CFO projects</b>	Anne Donkin

## Annex B Attendee List

### Growth Programme Board meeting 15 September 2016

Chair:

	<i><b>Sector/Organisation Representing</b></i>
<b>Julia Sweeney</b> Director, Europe Programmes and Local Growth Delivery	DCLG

### Board Members (full and advisory):

	<i><b>Sector/Organisation Representing</b></i>
<b>Dominic Williams</b> Chair, Local Government Policy Unit, Federation of Small Businesses	Business / Private Sector (SME)
<b>Louise Bennett</b> Chief Executive, Chamber of Commerce	Business / Private Sector
<b>Alex Conway</b> Greater London Authority	Greater London Authority
<b>Cllr Phil Davies</b> Leader, Wirral Borough Council	Sustainable Urban Development
<b>Sandra Rothwell</b> Chief Executive, Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly LEP	Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly
<b>Sir Richard Leese</b> Leader, Manchester City Council	LEPs
<b>George Kieffer</b> Vice Chair, South East LEP	LEPs
<b>Dr Huw Edwards</b> ESIF Chair, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP	LEPs
<b>Dr Jon Hunt</b> ESIF Chair, West of England LEP	LEPs
<b>Cllr Ian Stewart</b> Cumbria County Council & South Lakeland District Council	Local Authorities
<b>Cllr Philip Atkins</b> Leader, Staffordshire County Council	Local Authorities
<b>Sir Albert Bore</b> Birmingham City Council	LGA / Local Authorities
<b>Carol Botten</b> Deputy Chief Executive, VONNE	Voluntary & Community Sector (Local)
<b>Tim Parry</b> Chief Operating Officer, Community Council for Berkshire	Voluntary & Community Sector (National)
<b>Tom Mellish</b> Policy Officer, Trade Union Congress	Trade Unions
<b>Dr Clive Winters</b> Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University	Higher Education (Universities)
<b>Keith Cowell</b>	Further Education

Principal, City of Westminster College	
<b>Richard Powell</b> Chair, Wild Anglia Local Nature Partnership	Local Nature Partnerships
<b>Mark Tinsley</b> Chair, Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture	Rural & Farming Network
<b>Keith Harrison</b> Chief Executive, Action with Communities in Rural Kent	LEADER
<b>Tony Williamson</b> Head of RDPE Strategy Team, Rural Policy	Defra
<b>Paul Little</b> Policy Advisor, EU Fisheries Funding	Defra
<b>Catherine Blair</b> Head of ESF Division	DWP
<b>Anne Donkin</b> Head of ESF Policy and Programme	DWP
<b>Tim Courtney</b> Deputy Director, Europe Directorate	BEIS
<b>Nick Dexter</b> Deputy Director, Policy & Partnership	DCLG
<b>David Malpass</b> Deputy Director, Growth Delivery Network	DCLG
<b>David Morrall</b> Head of 2014-20 Policy Team	DCLG
<b>Noel Farrell</b> UK Unit	European Commission, DG REGIO
<b>Guus Muijzers</b>	European Commission, DG REGIO
<b>Christian Aagaard</b> Programme Manager UK	European Commission DG EMPL

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sector/Organisation</b>
<b>Simon Jones</b> European Programmes Team	DCLG
<b>Iain Derrick</b> European Programmes Team	DCLG
<b>James Ransom</b> Policy Researcher	Universities UK
<b>Warren Ralls</b> Director, LEP Network	LEPs
<b>Russell Reefer</b> Policy Advisor, LGA	Local Government
<b>Andy Churchill</b> Network for Europe	Voluntary & Community Sector
<b>Annie Ekwere</b> European Directorate	BEIS
<b>Tricia Allen</b> South West Growth Delivery Team	DCLG



<b>Chrisi Page</b> National ESIF Compliance Co-Team Leader, DCLG	DCLG
<b>Richard Inman</b> Growth Programme Board Secretariat	DCLG
<b>Ben Meadows</b> Growth Programme Board Secretariat	DCLG

### Apologies:

	<b><i>Sector/Organisation</i></b>
<b>Professor John Latham</b> Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University	Higher Education
<b>John Markham</b> Chair, Northamptonshire LEP	LEPs
<b>James Newman</b> Chair, Sheffield City Region LEP	LEPs
<b>Mayor Joe Anderson</b> Liverpool City Council	SUD / Core Cities
<b>Shelly Dowrich</b> EU & International Policy, Government Equalities Office	Equalities
<b>Shirley Trundle</b> Director, Countryside and Nature	Defra
<b>Matt Sowrey</b> Defra	Defra
<b>Deša Srsen</b> Head of Unit (D4 – Ireland & United Kingdom)	European Commission, DG REGIO
<b>Carmen Gonzalez</b> Deputy Head of UK Unit	European Commission, DG REGIO
<b>Tamara Pavlin</b> Programme Manager, UK Unit	European Commission, DG REGIO
<b>Andriana Sukova-Tosheva</b> Director EMPL F, Investment	European Commission DG EMPL
<b>Nicolas Gibert-Morin</b> Head of Unit of EMPL F4	European Commission DG EMPL
<b>Jean-Bernard Benhaïem</b> Deputy Head of Unit, DG AGRI	European Commission DG AGRI