



**European Union**

European Structural  
and Investment Funds

**GPB20220322 Item 4(i)**  
**European Structural and Investment Funds**  
**2014 - 2020**

**Growth Programme for England**

**Minutes of the Growth Programme Board**

**11:30 Tuesday 22 March 2022**

**Microsoft Teams**

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**Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Progress on Programmes\* *Agenda items marked \* were*
3. Governance Review\* *accompanied by Board papers*
4. Minutes of December Meeting and  
progress on Actions\*
5. Items for information\*

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**Minutes**

**Item 1: Welcome and introductions**

1. **Jenny Dibden** welcomed Board Members and substitutes and advised that apologies received would be recorded in the minutes. She also advised that the meeting was being recorded and transcribed.
2. **Jenny Dibden** asked the board for any conflicts of interest, although she added that she felt there was nothing on the agenda that would require members to recuse themselves.
3. **Jenny Dibden** invited board Members to say if they had anything they wished to include under **Items for Information**. No items were received.

**Item 2: Progress of Programmes**

**European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

4. **Simon Jones** presented the ERDF update. He pointed members to the ERDF progress update paper for the detail around progress being made delivering the programme. He then stated that the focus of his presentation was around setting out the DLUHC strategy for maximising ERDF programme expenditure.

5. Simon outlined the approach (which is set out in the accompanying power point presentation) including detail around forex calculations and what they mean for the programme value, recognising and understanding trends around project underspends and setting out each of the courses of action considered.
6. He then confirmed that the selected approach would be to commit further funding in 2023 and outlined the reasons for this decision – we will be in a stronger position to understand the quantum available, minimising the risk of programme overspend; we will have a clearer idea of projects that may require extensions to bridge the gap to the UKSPF, enabling us to recycle funding into projects in need enabling a smoother transition to UKSPF; at the end of the programme we are able to channel £50-60m into equity funds which would enable us to commit funding arising from an attrition rate up to 5% on remaining unclaimed funding; delaying commitments means more of the programme will have been claimed from the EC and so we will better understand the programme budget available and if required use project attrition to offset any potential forecast forex losses.
7. Simon concluded his presentation by outlining the significant amount of work which lies ahead for the MA in the coming two years, with 750 live projects needing claims paid and closure to be completed, and 42% of the total programme value still to be paid out (against a hard regulatory deadline which can't be moved). He then invited questions.
8. **Alison Gordon** asked what the route would be for spend taking place in 2023 – presumably Financial Instruments and extending existing projects? She then asked whether UKSPF would be seen as suitable match funding for ERDF?
9. **Simon** responded by saying that the first step in allocating unspent funds would be to offset forex losses. The next would be to identify any projects that need extending to bridge the gap to UKSPF (with the knowledge that not all of the ERDF portfolio will be supported by UKSPF going forward). Then finally it would be looking at channelling remaining funds into equity funding for financial instruments. That would be the sequencing. There are currently quite a few uncertainties around UKSPF but once there is more clarity on that we can consider more quickly what our approach to bridging the gap will be.
10. **Pernille Kousgaard** asked how many projects have been extended to September 2023 and are there actually any more to extend? She also asked if the MA were looking at extending to December 2023 (as DWP are doing for ESF)? How much are we talking about?
11. **Simon** stated that there is a backlog of information due to extended projects only showing up in the data as extended once their original end dates have been reached. The MA leadership team will discuss how this is managed. On extending later into 2023, Simon mentioned he had already set out the volume of work involved which makes

extending further into 2023 very difficult. The MA will extend as far as they can, where it is practical to do so.

12. **Pernille** also asked how would funding be used as a bridge to UKSPF given the differing geographical areas UKSPF will be dealing with (Local Authority areas as opposed to LEP areas) and stated that she felt that this, in most cases, would be almost impossible. She also asked whether the FI funding would be an extension of spending to the end of 2023 or are we looking at setting money out in ESCROW accounts so FIs can defray that money between 2024 and 2027. **Simon** responded by agreeing that the use of funding to bridge projects to UKSPF is very difficult, given the different geographical areas UKSPF works to, but that it would still be looked at as an option. On the FI funding, he confirmed it would be ESCROW.

13. **Pernille** requested that at the next PDR there is a discussion around how many projects are in a position where they can be extended and how many have already been extended.

**ACTION: 2203/01: Numbers of projects extended or with potential to be extended to be shared at the next PDR**

14. **Carol Botten** then asked if conversations had taken place with partners in the North East and Yorkshire in terms of the strategy for spending the underspend. While she understands the current plan for putting the money into Financial Instruments, she would welcome discussions in those two areas, including a consideration on whether the FIs are in a position to absorb additional funding. **Simon** stated that he would ensure the appropriate discussions took place.

15. Carol also stated that was still not happy with the level of detail being provided in the ERDF update paper on equality and diversity. Simon mentioned that there had been a conversation at the PDR meeting and that he was working with colleagues to provide more information in that space and stated that we have commitments to go to the next PDR with further detail. He also mentioned the Equality and Diversity National Sub-Committee was set to meet later in the week (24/03/2012) and they would be in a position to help move some of the required information forward.

**ACTION: 2203/02: ERDF MA to bring forward more detailed information on the programme relating to Equality and Diversity for both PDR and the next GPB**

16. **Pernille** made a final observation / query, stating that she was concerned about the transitional areas performance around being able to meet the performance framework output targets for C1s and greenhouse gas emissions. **Simon** did not have the answer to hand but said he would bring an appropriate explanation to the PDR.

**ACTION: 2203/03: ERDF MA to provide an update progress of C1 and greenhouse gas emissions output targets in transition regions to PDR**

### **European Social Fund (ESF)**

17. **Pete Long** and **Mark Burns** then talked through the ESF programme update paper and accompanying slides highlighting key points around PCRs and providing updates on the N+3 position for this year, remaining funds to commit, a performance improvement with direct bid organisations and YEI Funds.

18. **James Newman** asked whether we would have more or less money as a result of the forex recalculation? He also asked if there had been any indication from the various LEP areas that they do require any further money for their projects – is there a sense that the demand is out there? **Mark** responded on the forex question by saying it would result in less money for us to spend. This will mean even more care will need to be taken around monitoring those PCRs and ensuring that the money is being spent. On the second question, **Pete** stated that it links heavily with the underperformance strategy being developed by the managing authority. More detail will be provided at the next PDR meeting but an important part of this strategy is engagement with local areas to understand what can be done with any recycling any remaining money. It was also mentioned that the MA went out to all projects via an action note in 2021 seeking project extensions at that stage, and a number of projects were extended through that route.

19. **James Newman** then followed up on the forex issue by asking if was right in his assumption that forex is done on the amount outstanding in terms of the claims – he was looking at this particularly from a TASCO (TA) point of view and concerned that foreign exchange negativity could result in a big reduction. **Mark** responded by saying that it was a balancing act with that risk against the potential to get that 4% of TA money. Those two things are being balanced and the MA will be looking to get that in a claim to the EC this year.

20. **Pernille Kousgaard** then asked, on direct bids, about the growing shortfall in claims against profile. Last year it was £270m, it is now £424m. When will see a reduction in that number? **Pete** stated that they were critically aware of the urgency for action and committed to providing much more detail around the underperformance strategy including details around the action being taken by the MA to arrest this position.

**ACTION: 2203/04: MA to provide further detail on the ESF underperformance strategy to the next PDR and GPB meetings**

21. **Jenny Dibden** then highlighted one last question (from the chat) asking if there was any way to avoid further long delays on ESF evaluation being published. **Clare Bonson**

responded by saying that the timing of publication was controlled by Government's Communications trajectory and certain priority communications have to go out ahead of others. So the MA would hope to avoid further delays but it is, in part, controlled by what is happening in the world. They did push to try and get the documents published as soon as possible and would continue to act in that way in the future.

22. **Evert Veltkamp** then provided some information points from the EU. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, Marc Vermyle's successor, Peter Matthijs, would take up his full portfolio. And on the YEI proposals, they were consulting with their Finance and Legal teams on whether the proposals are possible and on how to reply. The intention is to reply before the end of March. And lastly, the EC has adopted a CARE proposal for the refugees in the Ukraine with both ERDF and ESF able to access this money. It is understood that BEIS are to contact all managing authorities in the UK about the new possibilities. Evert then asked if there was an intention to use CARE or not.

**ACTION: 2203/05: ERDF and ESF MAs to follow up with BEIS for details on this CARE proposal**

### **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**

23. **Emma Friend** then talked through the RDPE growth programme update paper and accompanying slides highlighting key points around progress on funding committed and spent plus on jobs contracted/created.
24. **James Newman** raised some concerns about the current shortfall in jobs created and asked what the consequences would be if the jobs created target was not met. **Emma** responded by saying that money would not have to be given back to the Commission. Beneficiaries falling considerably short of reaching jobs created targets could face some form of claw back. She added that the current figures aren't the full picture and they won't have this until all projects are complete and final claims are in.
25. **Pernille Kousgaard** asked if money did come back into the programme from underperforming projects, what would happen to that money? **Emma** suggested that the bulk could be taken up by project variations based on the fact that everything is currently costing more than when projects were originally conceived.

**ACTION: 2203/06: MA to contact RPA for an interim position on jobs created (and the likelihood of reaching the target based on interim claims etc.)**

26. **Emma** then presented an RDPE project case study relating to North Shire, a family farm based in Clevedon in the North Yorkshire Moors, offering film and book themed accommodation. They successfully bid for just over £150,000 of programme funding (total project value £425,000) to create more themed accommodation and facilities, a

cafe and to develop a car park to help meet demand. This project is featured in an RDPE case study brochure which is set to be published shortly.

27. **Jan Thornton** added that this project was on her patch of North Yorkshire and that it was one of many across the country which enhance the local tourism offer, increase overnight stays and help to extend the tourism season.
28. There were no further questions or comments – **Jenny Dibden** thanked Emma for her update and for the case study and then introduced the next item.

### **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

29. **Adam Kennedy** from the Marine Management Organisation (the body responsible for delivering the EMFF scheme in England) then introduced himself before providing an update on the EMFF England programme. Running through the slides and accompanying paper he highlighted some key points including that the £46m programme has been fully committed and closed for new applications since late 2020. £42m of this has been spent
30. **Pernille Kousgaard** thanked Adam for his presentation and then queried if the listings in the report was just of live projects as the numbers didn't quite match/add up. Pernille went on to ask how the programme recycles its funds?
31. **Adam** responded by saying that the listings in the paper only include more popular areas of the scheme and that there are some more obscure areas which aren't set out within the report. And on the recycling question he said that there are performance framework targets which lead to them in some instances targeting particular areas and speaking to applicants to encourage interest and projects within those areas.

### **Item 3: Local Governance Review**

32. **Tina Collopy** presented a paper on the Local Governance Review in which MAs are seeking to confirm the role of Local Sub-Committees as we move into the final stages of delivery and closure.
33. At the last GPB the MAs were asked to set up a special PDR meeting to discuss the review. That meeting took place in January and the topic was then picked up at the subsequent scheduled PDR meeting in early March. Having taken on board a lot of feedback the MAs concluded that the Sub-Committees will no longer meet in person but the MAs will continue to report to them bi-annually through a written procedure. Last week a final paper and the revised terms of reference were circulated to be agreed by the GPB ahead of them being published.
34. **Tina** took the opportunity to thank members for their input and feedback during this process and invited questions/comments.

35. **Richard Powell** requested that we record our thanks/send letters of thanks to the members of the local groups. **Tina** confirmed that the plan was to send such letters after the revised terms of reference are published
36. **Carol Botten** expressed the view on behalf of the voluntary sector that local level understanding of how projects are performing at a project-by-project level is really important. We don't want to be re-contracting with underperforming local projects under UKSPF. She asked if the door could still be open for a discussion around the level of detail provided in these reports.
37. **Simon Jones** responded, that the day-to-day management of projects is the responsibility of the Managing Authority, the list of projects supported in an area is set out in the list of beneficiaries. This gives a clear understanding of what is being supported in an area, amounts of support provided and closing dates (the next version of this list will be updated before the end of April for both ERDF and ESF). In terms of ERDF all projects are required to do summative assessments which provides projects with the opportunity to set out what they have delivered and the lessons they learned. The MAs won't be revisiting discussions around the information that gets shared with partners, but there are these two sources of information on GOV.UK that do help fulfil the request being made.
38. **Alison Gordon** asked if the summative assessments were available to the sub-committees or were they, in effect, owned by the applicant and could be used by them to support potential applications. **Simon** responded by saying that legal advice from within DLUHC suggests the copyright for the summative assessments sits with the applicants. DLUHC undertake follow up surveys with applicants to help us understand how the activity has been for them. At this point we also ask for permission to publish documents – there is currently a suite of these documents on GOV.UK. We also encourage the project to promote it themselves. **Tina** added that from an ESF perspective it is slightly different in that they publish evaluations on their own projects websites and they are also encouraged to share them with local sub-committees as well.
39. There were no further questions or comments - **Jenny** closed the item by saying that we would take this as the way forward and implement as set out in the paper.

#### **Standing Item 4: Minutes of March Meeting and Progress on Actions**

40. **Rob Martell** outlined the actions arising from the December meeting and stated that all actions have been completed - there are no outstanding actions.
41. **Rob** asked the board if they approve of the minutes - the board agreed the minutes as a true record.

#### **Standing Item 5: Items for Information**

##### **National Sub-Committee Report**

42. **Rob Martell** informed the board about the National Sub Committee (NSC) report. The Employment, Skills and Social Inclusion NSC and the Performance and Dispute Resolution NSC have met since the previous GPB and updates were provided within the paper. The Equality and Diversity NSC is set to meet on Thursday 24 March and the other ongoing action is the refresh of the membership of the Evaluation NSC ahead of a meeting set to take place in the coming weeks.

43. **Carol Botten** raised a point that the summary report back from the Employment, Skills and Social Inclusion NSC isn't correct as it states that no concerns were raised when in fact members did raise concerns about the gap in ESF provision and UKSPF. **Rob** stated that he would consult with the chair of that NSC and come back with an update on that.

**ACTION: 2203/07: GPB Secretariat to consult with ESSI NSC chair on the summary of the last meeting provided in the NSC paper to clarify any concerns which may have been raised and provide an update.**

44. **James Newman** asked Jenny how long we were expecting the GPB to continue to meet for. **Jenny** responded that there hasn't yet been a final decision but it wouldn't end before December 2023. **James** asked, as a LEP representative, if a presentation could be made to the LEP Network or LEP Chairs on where the programme has got to, on the basis that we will be operating as a board until at least December 2023. Jenny stated that we could certainly consider such a request.

45. **Richard Powell** asked if we were comfortable, given that the GPB will continue until at least the end of 2023, that some of the NSCs had not met for since 2019, such as the Sustainability one. With COP 26 and other things happening maybe we should be doing a sustainability review. If we're not comfortable with them not meeting, should we make sure that the people who are running them pull the meetings together?

46. **Simon Jones** responded that he agreed that there is value in the right people coming together to talk about lessons learned. There is a question mark over whether sub-committees that have not met for so long can be convened in a coherent way. We need to work out as managing authorities what the best mechanism to support the GPB on what the learning is. We have just closed the tender on the national evaluation of the ERDF programme. Phase 3 needs to report to the GPB by the end of December and we will try to ensure that we are trying to draw together some of these cross-cutting issues.

47. **Pernille Kousgaard** then asked if would be worth reviewing the terms for the thematic NSCs and how they feed into GPB, as a way of streamlining them but without losing sight of the learning and how this needs to feed into other domestic funding streams. Simon agreed that this made sense, given that the NSCs are sub-committees to the GPB. **Huw Edwards** made the observation that discussion, consultation and engagement with stakeholders until the end of the programme is necessary.



**ACTION: 2203/08: MAs to undertake a review of the future roles (encompassing terms of reference if necessary) of NSCs.**

48. There were no other items raised under AOB – **Jenny Dibden** confirmed that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 June and asked for preferences on either a face-to-face meeting (to take place at the new DLUHC offices in Wolverhampton) or a meeting conducted once again on Teams (or a mixture of physical/virtual). We will obviously keep COVID under review as well. Votes will be counted up and plans communicated with members.

49. **Jenny** thanked everyone for their time and attention and closed the meeting

**Meeting closed: 13:30**

#### **Date, Time and Venue of Future Meetings**

Tuesday 21 June 2022	11:00 – 14:00 (venue tbc)
Tuesday 27 September 2022	11:00 – 14:00 (venue tbc)
Tuesday 6 December 2022	11:00 – 14:00 (venue tbc)

## Annex A

### **List of agreed actions from December 2021 Growth Programme Board meeting**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>
2103/01	Numbers of projects extended or with potential to be extended to be shared at the next PDR	David Malpass
2103/02	ERDF MA to bring forward more detailed information on the programme relating to Equality and Diversity for both PDR and the next GPB	David Malpass
2103/03	ERDF MA to provide an update progress of C1 and greenhouse gas emissions output targets in transition regions to PDR	David Malpass
2103/04	MA to provide further detail on the ESF underperformance strategy at the next PDR and GPB meetings	Clare Bonson
2103/05	ERDF and ESF MAs to follow up with BEIS for details on this CARE proposal	David Malpass / Clare Bonson
2103/06	EAFRD MA to contact RPA for an interim position on jobs created (and the likelihood of reaching the target based on interim claims etc.).	Emma Friend
2103/07	GPB Secretariat to consult with ESSI NSC chair on the summary of the last meeting provided in the NSC paper to clarify any concerns which may have been raised and provide an update	GPB Secretariat
2103/08	MAs to undertake a review of the future roles (encompassing terms of reference if necessary) of NSCs	David Malpass / Clare Bonson



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**2014 - 2020**

**Growth Programme for England**

**Chair:**

	<b>Sector/Organisation Representing</b>	<b>Attending (Y/N)</b>	<b>Substitute For</b>
<b>Jenny Dibden</b> Director, Cities and Local Growth	DLUHC	Y	

**Board Members (full and advisory):**

	<b>Sector/Organisation Representing</b>	<b>Attending (Y/N)</b>	<b>Substitute For</b>
<b>Simon Jones</b> Cities and Local Growth	DLUHC	Y	David Malpass
<b>Stacey Sleeman</b> Cornwall Council	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Y	Emily Kent
<b>Carol Botten</b> Network for Europe	Voluntary/Community Sector	Y	
<b>Councillor Sir Albert Bore</b> Birmingham City Council	Local Authorities	Y	
<b>Councillor Philip Atkins</b> Staffordshire County Council	Local Authorities	Y	
<b>Alison Gordon</b> Greater Manchester Combined Authority	LEPs	Y	Simon Nokes
<b>Jennifer Gunn</b> LEP Network	LEPs	Y	
<b>Dr Huw Edwards</b> Thames Valley Berkshire	LEPs	Y	
<b>Joanne Dobson</b> Coventry University	Higher Education	Y	John Latham

<b>Pernille Kousgaard</b> Liverpool City Region	SUD	Y	
<b>Guus Muijzers</b> European Commission	EC	Y	
<b>Evert Veltkamp</b> European Commission	EC	Y	Peter Matthijs
<b>James Newman</b> Sheffield City Region LEP	LEPs	Y	
<b>Janet Thornton</b> Rural and Farming Network	Rural	Y	
<b>Richard Powell</b> Chair Wild Anglia	Local Nature Partnerships	Y	
<b>Clare Bonson</b> ESF Division	DWP	Y	
<b>Emma Kirkpatrick</b> ESF Division	DWP	Y	
<b>Emma Friend</b> EAFRD Division	DEFRA	Y	
<b>Laure Farret</b> European Programmes	GLA	Y	Alex Conway
<b>Richard Davies</b> European Programmes	BEIS	Y	
<b>Paul Green</b> Local Government Association	Local Government	Y	

#### Additional Attendees / Observers:

Name	Sector/Organisation	
<b>Mark Burns</b> ESF Division	DWP	Presenter
<b>Pete Long</b>	DWP	Presenter

ESF Division		
<b>Tina Collopy</b> Cities and Local Growth	DLUHC	Presenter
<b>Adam Kennedy</b> EMFF	Marine Management Organisation	Presenter
<b>Sean Hughes</b> Growth Programme Board Secretariat	DLUHC	Growth Programme Board Secretariat
<b>Rob Martell</b> Growth Programme Board Secretariat	DLUHC	Growth Programme Board Secretariat
<b>Rachel Sylvester</b> ESF Division	DWP	Observer
<b>Dashiell Shaw</b> Cities and Local Growth	DLUHC	Observer
<b>Linda Mayers</b> Cities and Local Growth	DLUHC	Observer

#### Apologies:

	Sector/Organisation	Sending a Substitute?
<b>David Malpass</b> Greater Manchester Combined Authority	DLUHC	Yes, Simon Jones
<b>Simon Nokes</b> Greater Manchester Combined Authority	LEPs	Yes, Alison Gordon
<b>John Latham</b> Coventry University	Higher Education	Yes, Joanne Dobson
<b>Alex Conway</b> Greater London Authority	GLA	Yes, Laure Farret
<b>Emily Kent</b> Cornwall Council	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Yes, Stacey Sleeman
<b>Helen Millne</b> The Women's Organisation	Voluntary/Community Sector	No