



**Oxfordshire ESIF Steering Group – Meeting  
2-4pm, 19 February, NFU office, Eynsham**

**MINUTES**

Present: Jon Trott, Sam Callear, Mandy Scruby, Caroline Craft, Jonathan King, Suzanne Malcolm, Anne Augustine, Garry Llewellyn, Dene Robson, Nigel Tipple, Joanne Shahvisi, Graham Watt, Anne Miller, Matt Smart  
Apologies: David Hartley, Richard Byard, Adrian Lockwood, Diane Chung, Kate Sawdy, Peter Reynolds, Emily Smith, Jacqui Canton, Val Johnson, Steven Newman, Ingo Schruder

<b>Substitutes:</b>	Dene Robson for Giles Hughes, Anne Miller for Ingo Schruder, Caroline Craft for Peter Reynolds
<b>Minutes:</b>	Dawn Pettis
<b>In attendance:</b>	

Item	Lead	Dead-line
<b>1. Welcome and introductions</b>		
NT welcomed the Sub-Committee to the NFU meeting room.		
<b>2. Note of the previous meeting – 15 January 2015 and Matters Arising</b>		
15 January minutes agreed as a correct record.		
<b>3. Programme updates</b>		
<p><u>DCLG – Graham Watt</u></p> <p>At a recent meeting of the National Sub Committee it was made apparent that many LEPs remain unclear about their role in the ESIF programme. A letter to all LEPs outlining their role is due from Lord Ahmad in due course. (Note: Lord Ahmad’s letter was circulated to ESIF Committee members on 20 February) LEPs and ESIF Committees cannot make decisions on funding decisions themselves, but have an important role in aiding the MAs in coming to decisions.</p> <p>LEPs have been asked to draw up their Technical Assistance (TA) ambitions in readiness for a call in March</p> <p>The England Operational Programme is on track to be notionally agreed by the end of February and formal adoption will take place in the summer.</p> <p>IT systems are being set up for project call applicants to log onto. LEPs have been advised to let DCLG know who might be applying for the March ERDF</p>		

call so they can be logged onto the system sooner.

**Action: DP to send round the spread-sheet for potential applicants to log their details**

DP

17/2

A special ESIF Partner Update is due to be circulated before the end of February. (Note: this is now due to be issued in early March)

Concern was raised about TA and the insufficient amounts of funding available to deliver the programme in Oxfordshire. OxLEP will be working on the level of resources required and determine how to fill the funding gap at a meeting on 2 March.

NT/D  
P/RB/  
MS

2/3

Defra – Jonathan King

The EARDF programme has been formally signed off and is available on the GOV UK website. Guidance for applicants is being prepared and there are on-going discussions around localised branding.

The announcement of LEADER programmes has been delayed due to the appeals process.

DWP – John Trott/Sam Callear

DWP are MA for the ESF programme and as such have been working closely with DCLG. There will also be a national call for TA for the ESF programme, meaning that LEPs will have to apply twice for TA – from DWP for ESF and DCLG for ERDF.

The ESF ICT system is being joined up with that of DCLG. DWP confirmed that all applications will be made online – Digital by Default. However, there will be a helpline for organisations who may find this difficult.

SFA – Garry Llewellyn

OxLEP has submitted two PIDs to the SFA:

- Retraining older workers for the care sector
- Community grants scheme

SFA will be providing feedback in due course.

#### **4. Draft project call template for SME competitiveness**

GW and DP introduced the draft project call template for SME competitiveness, recognising that more work was needed in certain sections providing the Oxfordshire context.

Comments and questions

DCLG will be launching the ERDF programme on a LEP by LEP basis between 16 and 24 March. OxLEP intends to hold a local launch and information event towards the end of March before purdah. The target audience for this event will be potential applicants, businesses, local authorities, business representative organisations, colleges, universities etc.

The application process is in two stages – Expression of Interest (Eoi) and then Full Application. It is envisaged that the closing date for the Eoi stage is 27 April. (Note: it has subsequently emerged that closure dates will be staggered from late April to late May). DCLG will be in a position to inform OxLEP of those applications deemed to go to full application stage towards the end of May, indicating that an early June ESIF Sub-Committee meeting would be desirable (Note: this may need to be reviewed in the light of the revised deadlines).

BIS national products (UKTI, MAS, GA) – DCLG have suggested that LEPs consider allocating some of their ESI funds to the national calls. It was agreed that Oxfordshire would not allocate any of its funds at this stage. It was understood that local businesses could still apply to these national bodies for support/funding.

AM suggested more text to be included about sustainability.

The deadline for the call template to be submitted to DCLG is 2 March.

GW confirmed that guidance is expected on targets and costs per unit in due course.

**Actions:**

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|---|----|------|
| • <b>All to make comments on the draft and send to DP by close of play on Wednesday 25 February.</b>  | DP | 25/2 |
| • <b>DP to check with GW about the wording on the cross cutting themes</b>  | DP | 26/2 |
| • <b>DP to incorporate comments and circulate to the LEP Board sub-group who have helped pull the draft call template together by close of play Thursday 26 February.</b> | DP | 26/2 |
| • <b>NT to report on the call template to the full LEP board on 3 March</b>   | NT | 3/3  |
| • <b>DP to ensure an Oxfordshire ESIF SC meeting is programmed for early June</b>   | DP | 31/3 |

The SME competitiveness draft call template was endorsed subject to the

actions outline above.		
<b>5. Communications – Mandy Scruby</b>		
<p>The first newsletter is nearly ready to go out to a circulation list of around 300 stakeholders. A dedicated inbox has been set up for ESIF enquiries – <a href="mailto:ESIFEnquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk">ESIFEnquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>It was agreed that the newsletter would be broad in approach and be written in plain English.</p> <p>JT confirmed there will be national publicity material and guidance including videos and case studies.</p> <p>OxLEP will circulate the newsletter to all partners who can then forward it through their own networks.</p> <p>DR stated that it is important that the right information was made available to the right organisations – this indicates a clear role for the ESIF SC members, and particularly the Economic Development Officers around the county.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>GW to send to MS summary information on ERDF and ESF to insert into the newsletter</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Any comments on the draft newsletter to MS by 26 February</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>DP to work on developing an Oxfordshire prospectus to aid applicants. This would essentially be an executive summary of the ESIF strategy, but with up to date information.</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>GW All DP/Jo hn Bell</p>	<p>27/2 26/2 13/3</p>
<b>6. Any other businesses</b>		
<p>AA enquired about the EAFRD early call – it was agreed that calls would go out in June. A workshop around EAFRD is taking place on 5 March at Witney Lakes</p> <p>DP informed the SC that she would be developing a Forward Plan for future meetings</p>		
<b>7. Date of the next meeting</b>		
2-4pm - 19 March 2015 in Meeting Room 1, County Hall, New Road, Oxford.		