

## **ESIF-ESF Update for VCS            ESF**

This is the sixteenth in a series to update you on the main European Funds in Greater Manchester, provided by GMCVO with the support of Network for Europe, and is part of Technical Assistance. This one covers ESF.

### **Context**

ERDF P1 deadline 31/10/17.

ERDF SUD still open, final deadline 31/10/17.

EAFRD rural still open, more money added

### **ESF Working Well**

Work is continuing to identify the organisation that will be the lead agency for the delivery of the over £50m funding through ESF and Working Well. It is expected that considerable portions of the activity could be contracted to third sector organisations.

The successful applicant should be decided and announced probably mid-November, with delivery starting in 2018.

### **Rest of ESF**

As we move to the second half of the Programme, it now seems that only 44% of ESF has been committed across England. This means Manchester will be ahead, once the £52.6m is committed through the current bidding round. It is not clear what will happen if some other LEP areas are unable to commit their allocation in full.

Plans are developing England wide for the second half of the Programme, in particular looking at whether the national Co-Financing Organisations will continue to be involved. For example, if Big Lottery Fund decided to be involved again, then they would likely bring their own match (which would increase funding available to Manchester). But nothing has been decided yet.

Attention will focus on the remaining ESF funds for Manchester, which are expected to be run through the Combined Authority (as Co-Financing Organisation), and it will be identifying what further match is available. It is possible that there could be funding for Social Capital - Community Grants, as has been done in other LEP areas.

### **Value for Money**

The Treasury has guaranteed funding for all projects agreed before we leave the EU (so if we leave in March 2019, this would give funding to 2022). As part of the guarantee, projects have to show that they fit with domestic strategies, and are value for money. This is checked before projects are approved.

At first, there was a concern that this might lead to cheap projects, which just delivered low hanging fruit, and didn't properly tackle the problems we have. It is now apparent that considerable work has been done on describing Value for Money, and how it means that the appropriate amount should be spent (which is less for generic projects, but could be more where particular excluded groups are targeted, or where results are good).

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Discussions are underway about what would replace ESF funding once the current Programme runs out in 2022. For England, this is around £3bn over seven years, plus match, much of it focussed on inclusion, and the worst off areas and people. A green paper for discussion is expected shortly, and

there should be an opportunity for local input, in particular looking at good practice in current ESF projects.

**ESIF sub-committee meeting**

The local LEP level committee meeting for EU funds was due on 22nd September, but has now been put back to early October.

31st August 2017

Part funded by the European Union



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