

European Union Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020

Report to the Humber LEP Board, 18 September 2020
Report from Isobel Mills, Chair of Humber LEP Area ESIF Sub Committee

1. Summary

1.1. This report highlights the latest progress regarding the utilisation of European Union Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the Humber LEP area.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Board is asked **to note** the information within this paper.

3. Programme Overview

3.1. All remaining allocations from LEP areas have now been used to form National Reserve Funds for ERDF, ESF and EAFRD. The Humber has secured additional funding from the ESF Reserve Fund and projects / businesses in our area have also had the opportunity to access the EAFRD National Reserve calls.

3.2. The approach to the National Reserve Funds has changed in light of Covid-19. The European Commission has agreed a package of flexibilities within existing ESIF budgets, setting out how programmes can respond to the COVID-19 crisis – known as the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative. The Managing Authorities are utilising the National Reserve Funds to respond to Covid-19 related issues. Further details are provided below.

4. ERDF

4.1. A further £30m from the National Reserve Fund has been confirmed for both the Kick-starting Tourism and SME Restart & Recovery Package. The Humber LEP has secured an additional £500,535 for both strands.

4.2. Delivered through the Growth Hubs, the funding will give small businesses 100% grants of between £1,000 and £3,000 to help them adapt their businesses following the Coronavirus pandemic.

4.3. Businesses will be able to use the funding to pay for specialist professional advice such as human resources, legal or financial expertise, to adopt new technology and online systems or to purchase new equipment.

4.4. The programme is being delivered by the Humber Business Growth Hub working with existing delivery partners East Riding of Yorkshire Council. To date the scheme has had 650 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for the SME Restart & Recovery and 137 for the Kickstarting Tourism Packages. The

programme is due to go live on Tuesday 15th September and a large level of demand is anticipated, based on EOI levels.

5. ESF

5.1. The three calls using the ESF National Reserve Fund that went live prior to the lockdown closed in July 2020:

- Leadership and Management
- 50+ - Recruiting, retaining, retraining
- Digital Skills

5.2. Applications have been received for both Leadership and Management and Digital Skills which are currently in appraisal. 50+ did not manage to get a compliant bid submitted within the timescale though we were made aware that there is still interest in this call.

5.3. In order to enable the 50+ call to be relaunched and for us to be able to launch Mental Health proposals that were put on hold at the start of the pandemic, we the opportunity to resubmit our proposals, demonstrating their relevance to the response to Covid-19 impacts and their links to the LEP's Economic Recovery Plans.

5.4. The LEP has been successful in securing funding for three calls using the ESF Reserve totalling £2.8m. As a result, the following calls will be launched in September / October:

- 50+ - Recruiting, retaining, retraining (relaunch)
- Humber Mental Health Support (PA1 – Individuals and Young People)
- Humber Mental Health Training and Development Support (PA2- Skills Development and SMEs)

6. EAFRD

6.1. The RPA continues to progress with the EoIs that were submitted earlier in the year. Eligible projects are invited to submit Full Applications which will be considered at one of the three decision points to be held in the summer and autumn. It is recognised that a number of the planned projects may no longer be in a position to proceed in light of Covid-19 impacts.

7. Technical Assistance

7.1. The Technical Assistance Partnership has continued to support potential applicants for the current ESF calls which remain open. There have been a number of brokerage events held virtually with organisations interested in leading or being a partner in an application for the ESF calls.

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