**European Update for Cheshire and Warrington Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector 14th December 2020**

**Highlights**

ESF calls due soon

ESF Good Practice Booklet

**ERDF Reserve Fund**

All the initial £80m in the ERDF Reserve Fund was committed, being distributed with three funds through the Growth Hub and the Local Authorities.

A further £100m has now been identified - there is expected to be an announcement on how this will be spent early in the new year. Likely not to be a call, but allocated to Growth Hub and perhaps Local Authorities to distribute as with the previous three funds.

**ESF Reserve Fund**

The Lottery has been considering extending funding for projects that are delivering. This is expected to be around £58.7m, and should be considered at its internal meeting towards the end of January (as it provides the match from its own funds).

A variety of calls are due any day, and others are being prepared, which could reduce the Reserve Fund to perhaps £147million

**ESF calls**

Announcements are expected shortly of several new ESF funds for Cheshire and Warrington, with deadlines for bids perhaps early March.

*www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds*

**ESIF Coronavirus Response Page**

The ESIF Coronavirus Response Page is helpful for ESF, ERDF and EAFRD Projects, with a Q&A for each fund. No update since 10th November.

*www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-coronavirus-covid-19-response*

**Appraisals**

While appraisals are still slow, ESF has now cut the number of bids waiting for an appraiser to be appointed to zero. And more appraisals are being completed, which is good news.

**ESF Projects Booklet**

Each year, the government produces a booklet on ESF and one on ERDF projects, giving good practice examples and showing the range of activity across England supported with money from Europe. The ESF booklet is now available. The New Leaf Programme (led by the Torus Foundation) is featured - funded by ESF and the Lottery.

### *www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-case-studies*

*www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-regional-development-fund-case-studies*

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

This replaces current ESF and ERDF monies (€13bn or about £11.7bn over seven years) which we would have received if we had stayed in the EU. It was finally announced as part of the Spending Review on 25th November. The review included (page 37) Heads of Terms for the Fund, but there has been little information since. The promised consultation seems to have been scrapped (apparently there has already been enough consultation), and Partners, including the third sector, have been asking why they are not involved. Clearly, we need to all work together to devise an effective and efficient new fund, with less bureaucracy and more rapid delivery.

**What we do know about UK-SPF**

The fund is being led by Cities and Local Growth (MHCLG), to be delivered by MHCLG and DWP (the two government departments that have been Managing Authorities for ERDF and ESF in England).

*UK-SPF is for*

 investment in people

 investment in places

 investment for local businesses

Employment and skill programmes will be tailored to local need.

Places receiving funding will need to work up proposals that fit within a UK framework.

*Timetable*

New Year More Details, including of Pilot Programmes to prepare for full launch

Spring 2021 Investment Framework published

April 2021 Pilot Programmes start (£220m for one year)

??? 2021 (Comprehensive) Spending Review gives more details

April 2022 Full launch of UK-SPF, ramping up to £1.5bn a year.

**Network for Europe**

info@networkforeurope.eu