# European Update for Cheshire and Warrington Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector 30th September 2021

## Highlights

Reshuffle

Replacements for ESF

Community Renewal Fund still waiting

Community Ownership Fund second round

UK-Shared Prosperity Fund - what next?

## Reshuffle, new name

As a result of the reshuffle last week, Robert Jenrick is no longer Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. and is replaced by Michael Gove. It is thought that this will mean a temporary halt to activities around the replacements for ESF, but then perhaps a faster and more focussed approach.

Andy Haldane (ex Bank of England Chief Economist) has been seconded to be head of a new Levelling Up taskforce for six months.

And MHCLG has been renamed MLUHC (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government becomes Ministry for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).

*[www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitious-plans-to-drive-levelling-up-agenda](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitious-plans-to-drive-levelling-up-agenda)*

## Flexibility for existing projects Q&A page

ESIF Coronavirus Response Page is useful for those running projects, with updated Q&A for the three funds. The ESF Q&A was updated on 21st September (questions 3, 12, 16, 17 and 24 have been closed, due to recent covid changes). All projects still to be completed by 2023.

### [www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-coronavirus-covid-19-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-coronavirus-covid-19-response)

**Community Renewal Fund**.

Originally called Pilot Programme for the UK-Shared Prosperity Fund. This is £220m of short term ESF-style funding to test ideas for the UK-SPF. Due to finish March 2022, but not yet started. Winning bids were expected to be announced from **late July**, but we are not aware that any have yet been announced. It would seem that appraisals have finally been completed, but we are waiting for the Minister to “moderate” the results.

It could be that because the results are so late, projects might be able to run beyond the end date of March 2022. this might in turn delay the start .of the UK-Shared Prosperity Fund?

*www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments*

## Community Ownership Fund

The first round was a rush. Announced 15th July, deadline 13th August, we are told result are expected mid October.

Seven more rounds due, with revised guidance “in the autumn”, next rounds in December and May.

*[www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus/community-ownership-fund-prospectus](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus/community-ownership-fund-prospectus)*

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

This replaces previous European Funding, will come to £1.5bn a year, and should start April 2022. Very little information has been revealed, and the promised open consultation has been scrapped. We are still hoping for proper partnership involvement, so that together we can deliver an effective and efficient fund at local level through local authorities, local third sector organisations and others. North West Third Sector Organisations met in August and September to share information, and discuss how it could work.

## Early end to local involvement proposed

The National Performance sub-group met on 9th September, and had a short notice paper (on the 8th) proposing the local ESIF committees be scrapped, as they were no longer useful. Almost all the Partners present objected, explaining that the ESF programme would spend until the end of 2023, that local understanding of delivery and strategy was important, and that Management Information will be important as we move towards a replacement programme. The paper was binned, and an emergency meeting will be called in early October.

## Visits to restart

The National Performance sub-group reported that ESF appraisals should all be completed by about the end of October, and that face to face visits would resume in the last quarter of 2021.

## Payment Delays

Payments for ESF and ERDF in England are made quarterly in arrears, after a variety of checks have been made. A recent email has asked ERDF organisations if they would prefer payment delays. (Once every six months), as this would reduce the workload of Government Staff.

## Announcement dates?

The Three Year Spending Review and Budget will now be on 27th October. This may (or may not) give more information about the replacements for European Funding.

The Levelling Up White Paper has been further delayed, and now might appear in November (or perhaps later).

## Levelling up reports

Understanding People, Understanding Places - an interesting study from the Salvation Army, looking at issues which are relevant to Levelling Up.

*[www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/understanding-people-understanding-places](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/understanding-people-understanding-places)*

A report from the Institute for Government about Levelling Up.

*www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/levelling-up*

## European Week of Regions and Cities 2021

This annual event will be held 11th to 14th October, and is available on-line. Organised by the European Commission (DG REGIO) and the Committee of the Regions, it is a useful way to catch up with and discuss issues affecting us all across the continent.

*https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/European-week-of-regions-and-cities-EWRC.aspx*

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