# European Update for Cheshire and Warrington Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector 31st August 2021

## Highlights

Four new ESF Action Notes

Replacements for ESF

 Community Renewal Fund waiting

 Community Ownership Fund second round

 UK-Shared Prosperity Fund - what next?

Civil Society Forum

## ESF Action Notes

ESF Action Note 068/21 published 29/7/21. Future Programme Delivery arrangements including the direct claims process which apply from Quarter 3 2021.

ESF Action Note 069/21 published 3/8/21. Revision to Simplified Cost Options Guidance.

ESF Action Note 070/21 published 26/8/21. Revisions to National and Programme Guidance.

ESF Action Note 071/21 published 31/8/21. Reversal of Covid easements. Recommencement of visits to ESF Projects.

[*www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-action-notes-2014-to-2020-programme*](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-action-notes-2014-to-2020-programme)

## ERDF/ESF Beneficiaries

The list of ERDF Beneficiaries was updated on 27th July and the list of ESF Beneficiaries on 25th August.

*www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-useful-resources*

## Employment and Skills Funding Agency - CE leaving

The ESFA Chief Executive Eileen Milner has left, and John Edwards (previously Director of Funding) is interim Chief Executive from 26th July. This means Owen Jenkins takes over as interim Director of Funding.

*www.gov.uk/government/news/appointment-of-interim-esfa-chief-executive*

**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.

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

## Community Ownership Fund

A useful fund - half the cost of rescuing a building for community use (pub, shop, post office, museum, sports, music, cultural centre etc). Announced in a rush, with the Prospectus on 15th July, webinars not advertised in the usual place, and final Q&As appearing on 9th August. Deadline for bids 13th August. £50k also available (without match) as part of the bid, for associated revenue costs.

There are likely to be seven further bidding rounds, over four years. The next round will be announced shortly with a deadline towards the end of this year.

Warrington Voluntary Action are running a Zoom seminar on 23rd September.

[*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)

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

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

This replaces previous European Funding, will come to £1.5bn a year, and starts in 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, in particular at local level through local authorities, local third sector organisations and others. What Next - a well attended Zoom event was held for North West Third Sector Organisations on 25th August. A further event will be at 10am on 30th September.

## UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement

A useful research briefing to the TCA was published on 3rd August. It has a diagram including the **Civil Society Forum** for the UK, which is part of the Agreement.

Lord Frost replied to a House of Lords debate on 24th June. He said “*It is the nature of civil society that it does not need the Government’s permission to develop such links and to work effectively with fora established under the treaties. We certainly hope that would happen.”*

The first meeting of a Forum representing civil society across the four nations of the UK was on 23rd April.

A **consultation** on the Civil Society Forum has now been announced - deadline 14th September

[*https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9139*](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9139)

*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/1008842/Final-Consultation-Document-Civil-Society-Forum-and-Domestic-Advisory-Group.pdf*

## 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 3rd August. 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)

**Network for Europe**

info@networkforeurope.eu