

LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC SENIOR OFFICERS GROUP
14 FEBRUARY 2007

REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS
TASK GROUP

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUNDS (ESF) AND EUROPEAN
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) CONSULTATION

Purpose of the report

1. To inform SSOG of the progress made by the European Structural Funds Task Group, which was set up to develop responses to the consultations on the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Operating Programmes, on behalf of Leicestershire Together.

Background

2. On 19 October SSOG agreed to set up a Task Group to respond to the European Structural Funds consultations. Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council, Leicestershire County Council, Jobcentre Plus, the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership and Government Office for the East Midlands agreed to sit on this Group.
3. One to one meetings with partners took place to seek views on the draft National ESF Operating Programme. The Group met on the 17 January and agreed the response, which was submitted by the deadline of 22 January. A copy is attached at Annex 1.
4. The consultation on the draft East Midlands ERDF Operating Programme is now open, with a deadline for responses of 12 March. Again one to one meetings with partner organisations will take place, and a draft response considered at the next Task Group meeting on 26 February.
5. The draft ERDF programme aims to help the East Midlands *become a region of highly productive, innovative and sustainable businesses and enable all communities to realise their economic potential*. It sets out two priorities...
 - 1) Raising productivity through innovation, diversification and the embedding of sustainable business practice.
 - 2) Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities.

6. Priority 1 will be thematically targeted, which means that the whole region including Leicestershire will have the potential to access ERDF money to support Priority 1 activities. Priority 2 will be spatially targeted, and the draft Operational Programme suggests an initial focus on the top 10 worst performing districts in the region. No districts from Leicestershire fall into this category. However there is scope for limited intervention outside of these areas.

8. Following submission of the Leicestershire Together response, the European Structural Funds Task Group will report back to SSOG with recommendations on how to take forward the development of both the ESF Strategy and ERDF Operating Programme, at a Sub-Regional level.

Recommendation

8. That SSOG notes the contents of this report.

Officer to contact

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