

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2014-2020

Driving Northamptonshire's Economic Growth

supporting the creation of a £20bn economy and 32,500 jobs

Strategic Imperatives



Strategic Priorities

Innovation

- SMART Specialisation
- Commercialisation - New Products and Processes
- Access to Innovation/ICT
- Innovation Finance

SME Competitiveness

- Driving SME competitiveness and Entrepreneurship
- Enhancing Enterprise and SME competitiveness
- Supporting Business Growth
- Access to Finance Fund

Responsive and Adaptable Workforce

- Key Sector Skills
- Access to Employment
- Return to Work Programme

Growing the Rural Economy

- Support for Tourism Activities
- Support for Micros and SMEs in Rural Areas

Financed by



European Regional Development Fund
European Social Fund
European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development

Results

Additional GVA, Jobs Created, Businesses Created,
Increased Employment, Skilled Workforce, Improved Productivity

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. ESIF Programme..... | 2 |
| 3. Priority 1: Strengthening Innovation within the Northamptonshire Economy..... | 5 |
| 4. Priority 2: Driving SME Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship..... | 8 |
| 5. Priority 3: Responsive and Adaptable Workforce..... | 16 |
| 6. Priority 4: Growing the Rural Economy | 288 |
| 7. Early Actions | 366 |
| 8. Project Calls and Selection Procedures | 39 |
| 9. Management and Governance Arrangements..... | 422 |
| Appendix 1: Governance BodiesqTerms of Reference | 455 |
| Appendix 2: Northamptonshire Area Eligible for EAFRD Investment | 544 |

Section 1 - Introduction

This ESIF Implementation Plan sets out Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership's (NEP's) approach to taking forward the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy prepared in 2014. It outlines how by working in partnership, NEP will ensure that our £48.3m programme allocation is effectively utilised. This has been structured around the four priorities of the ESIF Strategy - innovation (ERDF); SME competitiveness and entrepreneurship (ERDF); a responsive and adaptable workforce (ESF); and growing the rural economy (EAFRD). This Implementation Plan focuses on the first half of programme activity¹ but also sets the context for the remainder of the 2014-2020 Programming period, ensuring that the programme is quickly mobilised, whilst retaining the to allow activities to evolve in response to changing conditions, delivery experiences and receipt or otherwise of the Performance Reserve.

This Plan has been prepared to capitalise on Northamptonshire's position as ***The Place for Growth***, based on our rapidly growing population, exceptional location, broad economic base both sectorally and locationally, can do attitude and entrepreneurial culture. ESIF funding has been designed to build on our existing strengths and address challenges to support the area, its businesses and residents to reach their maximum potential. It will play a critical role in helping to grow Northamptonshire's economy from £15bn to £20bn by 2021, outperforming national growth levels and increasing both population and employment to achieve our ambition.

Our vision, as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) is to:

Increase the prosperity of Northamptonshire's people and businesses by creating high skilled employment opportunities, within the most connected, safe and vibrant place to live, work and do business.

This Implementation Plan outlines how the 2014-2020 ESIF Strategy and funding will make a major contribution to delivering the Business and Innovation and Employment and Skills strategic priorities within the SEP, and will specifically:

- Support over 2,000 businesses;
- Help more than 15,000 people to improve their skills to either enter or progress in employment; and
- Support the creation of over 2,000 jobs.

It also outlines how this ambition will be turned into reality by working in close partnership with the Managing Authorities, the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee and all of our partners to ensure that the ESIF programme allocation and local match funding is deployed to maximum effect.

¹ All applications for funding are designed to cover the first three years of activity.

Section 2 - ESIF Programme

Allocation

The ESIF Strategy sets out the proposed breakdown of our £48.3m allocation by Thematic Objective and outlines the potential sources of match funding. This profile continues to reflect our ambition, ensuring that a broad range of issues can be addressed and opportunities maximised through effective use of the funds. Allocations by thematic objective for the totality of the ESIF period and for the first half of the programme are summarised below.

| European Allocation by Funding Stream and Thematic Objective | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Activity | Total ESIF allocation £m | Allocation to 2018 £m |
| ERDF | | | |
| TO1:Innovation | Northamptonshire Innovation Programme | 4.9 | 2.5 |
| TO2:ICT | SME Digital Improvement | 1.5 | 0.75 |
| TO3:SME Competitiveness | SME Competitiveness | 5.0 | 2.5 |
| | International Trade | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | High Growth | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | Manufacturing Growth | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | Access to Finance Fund | 4.0 | N/A |
| | <i>TO3 totals</i> | <i>12.0</i> | <i>4.0</i> |
| TO4:Low Carbon | SME Resource Efficiency | 1.6 | 0.8 |
| | Low Carbon and Energy Revolving Fund | 3.0 | 1.5 |
| | <i>TO4 totals</i> | <i>4.6</i> | <i>2.3</i> |
| | ERDF total | 23.0 | 11.5 |
| ESF* | | | |
| TO8:Employment and Labour Mobility | Support for Troubled Families | 6.5 | 0.4 |
| | Support for Carers | | 0.7 |
| | Support for Self Employment | | 0.5 |
| | Support for the Unemployed | | 1.5 |
| | Northamptonshire NEET and young people Support | | 0.3 |
| | <i>TO8 totals</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>3.4</i> |
| TO9:Social Inclusion | Return to Work | 5.1 | 1.5 |
| | Northamptonshire Community Grants | | 0.3 |
| | <i>TO9 totals</i> | <i>5.1</i> | <i>1.8</i> |
| TO10: Skills | Workforce Skills Programme | 11.5 | 3.0 |
| | Local Responsiveness Fund | | 0.4 |
| | Enterprise Skills Development | | 0.6 |
| | <i>TO10 totals</i> | <i>11.5</i> | <i>4.1</i> |
| | ESF total | 23.1 | 9.3 |
| EAFRD | | | |
| Art 36 Tourism | Support for Quality Rural Tourism | 0.25 | 0.15 |
| | Tourism Promotion | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | <i>Art 36 totals</i> | <i>0.35</i> | <i>0.25</i> |
| Art 20 business | Support for Increasing Rural Business Productivity | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| | Business Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| | Grant Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs | 0.45 | 0.25 |
| | Support for SMEs to grow | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| | Energy Efficiency for SMEs | 0.25 | 0.15 |
| | <i>Art 20 totals</i> | <i>1.9</i> | <i>1.0</i> |
| | EAFRD total | 2.2 | 1.25 |
| | TOTAL | 48.3 | 22.05 |
| * at this stage, ESF allocations by activity have only been determined for 2014-18. Totals may not add due to rounding | | | |

NEP is also seeking Technical Assistance funding equivalent to 2% of the ERDF and ESF allocation. Further details are provided in Section 7.

Targets

ESIF investment is expected to generate significant benefits for the local economy, both as a direct and longer term consequence of the activities that are supported. The table below sets out the core indicators² and targets included in the ESIF Strategy, which will guide delivery of the programme, including the identification of targets to be associated with individual calls.

| Output Targets by Fund | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| | ESIF totals | Totals to 2018 |
| ERDF | | |
| No. of enterprises supported | 2,144 | 1,172 |
| No. of new enterprises supported | 680 | 340 |
| No. of enterprises co-operating with research institutions | 260 | 130 |
| No. enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 200 | 100 |
| No. enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | 535 | 267 |
| No. additional enterprises with broadband access of at least 30 mbps | 240 | 120 |
| Private investment matching public sector support to enterprises (£) | 520,000 | 260,000 |
| Employment increase | 2,160 | 1,080 |
| ESF | | |
| Number of participants | 17,288 | 6,915 |
| Number of unemployed (including long-term unemployed) or inactive participants | 8,870 | 3,548 |
| Number of participants aged 15 - 24 | 2,928 | 1,171 |
| Number of supported micro, small and medium sized enterprises | 600 | 240 |
| EAFRD | | |
| Jobs created | 320 | 115 |
| Number of participants in training | 150 | 75 |
| Number of training days | 3,000 | 1,250 |
| Number of cooperation operations supported | 2 | 2 |
| Number of operations supported | 155 | 66 |

Later sections of this plan outline how expenditure and outputs will be delivered at the level of individual calls.

Our Delivery Principles

Partners in Northamptonshire are committed to securing maximum value and impact from ESIF resources. The overarching programme and the delivery approaches outlined in this Implementation Plan are therefore designed to ensure that the ESIF Programme is:

- **Strategic** . making a strong contribution to the delivery of the priorities within the SEP;
- **Concentrated** . on those activities that are most important to Northamptonshire, its people and its economy;
- **Additional** . providing assistance where activities would not otherwise proceed or would do so on a smaller scale or at a later date;
- **Catalytic** – delivering exemplary projects that genuinely drive forward Northamptonshire's economy;
- **Ambitious** – delivery pace to ensure early performance to unlock the Performance Reserve;
- **Aligned** – with strategic partners investment priorities to maximise the availability of match funding and return on investment;
- **Responsive** – sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing and emerging needs of the local economy; and guidance from the European Commission and the Managing Authority;
- **Compliant** – developed and delivered in line with all regulatory requirements;

² A number of more specialised indicators apply to some elements of the programme.

- **Cross Cutting** – genuinely embeds the themes of sustainable development and gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the commissioning and delivery of activities.

Sections 3 to 6 of this document set out the activities that it is intended to support and the high level approaches to be adopted in each case. Further details of commissioning milestones and processes as well as programme wide delivery and governance arrangements follow in Sections 7 to 9.

This implementation plan has been developed in line with national guidance and delivery routes. However, where possible and practical, efforts will be made to ensure that approaches are tailored to meet local needs. Clearly, we will work effectively and in close partnership with national and local partners to ensure successful delivery.

Section 3 - Priority 1: Strengthening Innovation within the Northamptonshire Economy

Strategic Context

Northamptonshire's economic ambitions require the business base to perform to its full potential, exploiting new ways of working, new markets and new products in order to remain competitive, thrive and drive growth. Equipping businesses with the knowledge and skills they need to innovate is key to driving this agenda.

Although there are pockets of strength (for example the scale and breadth of the High Performance Technologies (HPT) Network where innovation is key to maintaining competitive advantage), overall, innovation is a recognised gap within the Northamptonshire economy. The ESIF acknowledged the low levels of employment in the knowledge economy and high and medium tech manufacturing, poor overall levels of innovation and ICT adoption, low levels of R&D investment and a weak skills base for the promotion and delivery of innovation. Addressing these issues is a high priority.

A requirement to support businesses to access the knowledge they need to innovate has been recognised, enabling more businesses to both step on and progress up the innovation ladder. This priority and the activities proposed under it are designed to address these needs and result in the creation of high value added jobs as well as helping to restore the county's exporting and productivity premium.

Implementation Approach

Activity under this theme is intended to add value to existing innovation initiatives, for example offered through the RGF HPT sector support programme. Resources will therefore be carefully targeted to ensure they do not duplicate existing activities and can effectively engage businesses in the innovation agenda, providing tailored support to allow advances to be made.

This theme will account for £4.9m of the programme's lifetime ERDF allocation with awards to be made at a maximum 50% intervention rate. Applicants will be required to identify match funds for all activities. Sources will be determined through the open procurement processes but are anticipated to include both private and other public sector contributions. We expect to work closely with those organisations with an active interest in this area, such as Innovate UK, to ensure that activities add value to national programmes and can identify sufficient match funds from across a range of sources.

Activity will be procured through the planned national open calls for bids with a preference identified to commission large activities (e.g. bringing together business support services to ensure the coordination of activities) rather than multiple small awards. No geographic focus is intended to be specified through the commissioning process with bidders free to offer a county wider offer (or potentially cross-LEP provision where a clear case is made) or to suggest a justified geographic focus for provision.

Whilst some elements of the programme will be commissioned to focus on high value priority sectors identified through the SEP, others will be available to all ERDF eligible sectors. This approach will help to secure improvements across the economy and recognise the strong potential for innovation identified in some of the county's dominant and emerging sectors.

Allocations

The Priority 1 funding allocation is shown below.

| European Allocation by Thematic Objective | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Activity | Total ESIF allocation £m | Allocation to 2018 £m |
| ERDF | | | |
| TO1: Innovation | Northamptonshire Innovation Programme | 4.9 | 2.5 |
| Sub-total | | 4.9 | 2.5 |

Activities

The following activities will be pursued to support Northamptonshire to realise its innovation potential and support a shift towards high value added activities. Each strand will be offered through a Northamptonshire Innovation Programme gateway service to increase SME awareness of innovation opportunities and help them to identify business specific support needs. The service will identify relevant information and support routes for each business and broker responding services.

| Northamptonshire Innovation Programme | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Overview | Improved innovation will help to drive the creation of higher value jobs and support the area's resilience in the face of international competition. Businesses in the NEP area require support to enhance their innovation planning and delivery with the results to generate benefits for the economy as a whole. | |
| | Achieving this will require collaboration with the research base and recognition of existing areas of strength and opportunity. All activities will support businesses to move into higher value activities, extend their market reach and/or improve access to the R&D base to support the testing and commercialisation of new products, processes and services. | |
| | Support will be available for a range of activities under this call including: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">supporting collaborative research between enterprises, universities/research institutions and public organisations across a pan LEP area, including support for innovation partnerships and to aid commercialisation in areas of competitive advantagesupporting the commercialisation of new products and processesbrokering tailored support services to help businesses to develop their ideas | |
| | developing access to finance and grant mechanisms that provide the funding needed to take activities forward and align with specialist support services | |
| Thematic objective | TO1 | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation |
| | £4.9m ERDF | £2.5m ERDF |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders but anticipated to include a mix of public and private sector contributions | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call to be issued Q1 2015 | |
| Target sectors | Focus on identified areas of smart specialisation/growth sectors | |
| Beneficiaries | Enterprises demonstrating innovation potential | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to engage target businesses and effectively tailor supportBreadth and intensity of the support offerAlignment with existing support services | |
| Expected number of awards | Ability to engage the partners required for a collaborative approach Single award (potentially to a main contractor with identified sub-contractors to cover all requirements) | |

| Target outputs | Outputs | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
|----------------|---|------------|---------|
| | Number of enterprises supported | 400 | 200 |
| | Number of new enterprises supported | 74 | 37 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving grants | 100 | 50 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants | 300 | 150 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | 300 | 150 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 40 | 20 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | 255 | 127 |
| | Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants) | 100 | 50 |
| | Number of enterprises cooperating with research entities | 220 | 110 |

Section 4 - Priority 2: Driving SME Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship

Strategic Context

Northamptonshire has a dynamic economy characterised by high levels of start-ups and self-employment. The consequence is a skewed business base containing a high concentration of businesses with fewer than five employees but limited large businesses with statistics showing that fewer than 100 employers have more than 250 employees. Uneven patterns of start-ups and self-employment are also found across the county with low proportions concentrated in disadvantaged areas.

Supporting the business base to start up, survive and grow is a priority, helping both established SMEs and new start enterprises to improve their competitiveness and gain market share, including in international markets. This is a particular imperative following the recession to support business resilience in the short and medium term and continued economic growth. In doing so there is a need to address identified barriers to growth (including access to finance, skills shortages and the ability to access new markets) and explore new opportunities to support entrepreneurship as well as business survival and expansion, for example through new ways of working.

The county has already made a strong commitment to reducing greenhouse gases generated by economic activities. There are recognised drivers to pursue this agenda further, both at the level of individual businesses and economy wide. Interventions are required to support sustainable growth ambitions but there remain a number of barriers to doing so, including limited awareness and cost, that need to be overcome to allow potential to be realised in a way that generates both economic and environmental benefits.

Implementation Approach

An ERDF lifetime allocation of £12.1m will be made under this priority. All project applicants will be responsible for identifying match funds for investment alongside the ESIF allocation. Although ERDF opt-ins are no longer offered, we anticipate continuing to work with those organisations identified in our ESIF Strategy (UKTI, Growth Accelerator and the Manufacturing Advisory Service) as well as other partners to ensure that activities align with wider programmes of activity, respond to business needs and sufficient match funding can be identified.

In commissioning activity we will be conscious of existing business support provision and the findings of the Business Support Simplification pilot undertaken by NEP. Resources will be allocated to reflect opportunities to add value and respond to identified business needs whilst building on existing support infrastructure to aid delivery.

A series of calls through national procedures are anticipated to reflect the breadth of activity proposed under this priority along with one local call (see Activities section). All project allocations will be assigned through a competitive process but drawing on existing structures where possible to ensure additionality and working to a clearly defined requirement in each case, including locally specific provision where possible. A £4m contribution to a pan-LEP Access to Finance fund is also provisionally proposed across the full programme period, subject to ex-ante assessment findings.

Supported activity will focus on securing growth in significant sectors and high value start-ups to help reduce the productivity and GVA gap. Promoting and supporting the advancement of the low carbon/energy efficiency agenda will also feature prominently within supported activities with flexibility offered to delivery partners to identify how this will be realised.

Allocations

The breakdown of Priority 2 funding by Thematic Objective, activity and timing is shown below.

| European Allocation by Thematic Objective | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Activity | Total ESIF allocation £m | Allocation to 2018 £m |
| ERDF | | | |
| TO2:ICT | SME Digital Improvement | 1.5 | 0.75 |
| TO3: SME Competitiveness | SME Competitiveness | 5.0 | 2.5 |
| | International Trade | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | High Growth | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | Manufacturing Growth | 1.0 | 0.5 |
| | Access to Finance Fund | 4.0 | N/A |
| | <i>TO3 total</i> | <i>12.0</i> | <i>4.0</i> |
| TO4:Low Carbon | SME Resource Efficiency | 1.6 | 0.8 |
| | Low Carbon and Energy Revolving Fund | 3.0 | 1.5 |
| | <i>TO4 total</i> | <i>4.6</i> | <i>2.3</i> |
| Sub-total | | 18.1 | 7.05 |

Activities

The following activities will be pursued to support Northamptonshire's SMEs (including those in rural areas) to deliver to their potential and overcome some of the challenges outlined above. A combination of local and national processes will be used to deliver this priority. The SME Competitiveness activities outlined in the box below will be commissioned through a local call while all remaining activities will be commissioned as part of national calls.

| SME Competitiveness | |
|---------------------|--|
| Overview | <p>This activity will improve the competitiveness of SMEs by increasing their capacity and capability and promote entrepreneurship. Three strands of activity will be supported:</p> <p>3a – Supporting entrepreneurship: actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted engagement, outreach and mentoring to strengthen enterprise culture developing entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to support business start-up, including amongst under-represented groups advice and support to help new business survival and growth providing non-grant finance to start-ups and entrepreneurs where there is a clear market failure providing land and premises for new employment, e.g. incubator space and managed workspace <p>3c – Increasing growth capacity: actions may include providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> key sector support services comprising a targeted programme that aligns with the smart specialisation agenda and the development of leadership and management skills incubation and grow on space in key locations, particularly for high growth potential businesses, and offering support services in cases of market failure or lack of existing support advice, mentoring and peer to peer support for collaborative projects access to finance and supply chain advice grants to invest in new product, process and service improvements where they can generate employment <p>3d – Increasing growth capability: actions may include providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> efficient local referral routes to allow SMEs to access tailored support for their growth needs advice, consultancy, mentoring and peer to peer support to existing businesses and inward investors to develop and implement growth plans leadership and management coaching where it supports the development and implementation of a business growth plan |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----|-----|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">support for events, trade fairs and missions to support SMEs to enter and thrive in new domestic and international marketstargeted grant schemes to support productive investment <p>Awards will be for a minimum of £0.5m ERDF.</p> | | | |
| Thematic objective | TO3 | | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014- 2018 allocation | | |
| | £5.0m ERDF | £2.5m ERDF | | |
| Match funding | Match funds to be identified through the call process | | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call issued Q1 2015 | | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to engage SMEs, including those in key sectorsApproach to identifying entrepreneurial and growth potentialAppropriateness and strength of the proposed support offerUnderstanding of the existing support landscape and additionality | | | |
| Target sectors | Eligible businesses across the economy with a focus on the NEP key sectors | | | |
| Beneficiaries | Strand 3a: entrepreneurs with potential to generate employment and grow turnover (including from within key target groups including women, BME communities and those in disadvantaged areas) Strand 3c: growth potential domestic and foreign owned SMEs, with a focus on those in NEP key sectors Strand 3d: domestic and foreign owned SMEs In each case beneficiaries will come from across the LEP area. | | | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards | | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | | |
| | Total ESIF | 3a | 3c | 3d |
| | Number of enterprises supported | 824 | 160 | 200 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants | 40 | 60 | 200 |
| | Number of new enterprises supported | 400 | 80 | 20 |
| | Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants) | 200 | 60 | 30 |
| | Private investment matching public support to enterprises (non-grants) | 40 | 60 | 30 |
| | Employment increase in supported enterprises | 1,400 | 360 | 400 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 160 | - | - |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | - | 120 | - |
| | 2014-18 | 3a | 3c | 3d |
| | Number of enterprises supported | 412 | 80 | 100 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants | 20 | 30 | 100 |
| | Number of new enterprises supported | 200 | 40 | 10 |
| | Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants) | 100 | 30 | 15 |
| | Private investment matching public support to enterprises (non-grants) | 20 | 30 | 15 |
| | Employment increase in supported enterprises | 700 | 180 | 200 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 80 | - | - |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | - | 60 | - |

| Enhancing International Trade | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Increasing levels of exporting is a priority for NEP to help it to strengthen its economic performance and build profile in international markets. Support is proposed to fall under three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulating exporting: by engaging businesses that don't currently export and working with them to consider and develop an approach to exporting as a mechanism for growth.• Early stage coaching: offering intensive support to early stage companies to support them to be export ready.• Additional advisory services: offering additional exporting advice to businesses in the NEP's identified key sectors. All activities will support delivery of the LEP's Internationalisation Strategy ³ . | | |
| Thematic objective | TO3 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £1.0m ERDF | £0.5m ERDF | |
| Match funding | Match funds to be identified through the call process | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call issued Q1 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciation of international trade opportunities across a range of sectors• Understanding of and fit with the existing support offer Ability to engage SMEs and the suitability of proposed support approaches | | |
| Target sectors | Available to SMEs across the economy with a focus on NEP key sectors | | |
| Beneficiaries | SMEs demonstrating potential for international trade | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of enterprises supported | TBC | TBC |
| | Employment increase in supported enterprises | TBC | TBC |

³ In draft form as of February 2015

| Supporting High Growth Potential SMEs | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | The dynamism of the Northamptonshire economy is one of its strengths but there are further opportunities to support businesses to grow beyond current trends. Targeted support is needed to unlock the opportunity presented by high growth potential SMEs if the LEP area is to achieve its target levels of growth. | | |
| | Activities to be supported to achieve this include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">actions to identify and target high growth potential sectors and individual businessesraising awareness of opportunities for growth within target sectors providing tailored and targeted advice and support to individual businesses and supply chains, including intensive growth coaching | | |
| Thematic objective | TO3 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £1.0m ERDF | £0.5m ERDF | |
| Match funding | Match funds to be identified through the call process | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call issued Q1 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to work alongside other support providers to secure referrals and ensure additionalityApproach to identifying and engaging high growth businesses The appropriateness of the support package by breadth and intensity | | |
| Target sectors | Focus on NEP key sectors | | |
| Beneficiaries | SMEs with identified high growth potential | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of enterprises supported | TBC | TBC |
| | Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants | TBC | TBC |
| | Employment increase in supported enterprise | TBC | TBC |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the market | TBC | TBC |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the firm | TBC | TBC |

| Securing Manufacturing Growth | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Manufacturing continues to play an important role in the economy but there is a need to take action to ensure businesses maintain their position and competitiveness in an international marketplace. Activity under this call will enhance the national service by offering an improved quality and volume of support to target businesses. In Northamptonshire the support offer will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">targeting support on identified areas of smart specialisation within the manufacturing sectorstimulating and supporting manufacturers to innovate within both their processes and product offerfacilitating growth within rural based manufacturers supporting SME manufacturers to grow within the LEP area | | |
| Thematic objective | TO3 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £1.0m ERDF | £0.5m ERDF | |
| Match funding | Match funds to be identified through the call process | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call issued Q1 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to engage manufacturing businesses including those in identified target sectorsUnderstanding of the wider support landscape and proposals for alignment/additionality Responsiveness of the proposed support packages | | |
| Target sectors | Manufacturing businesses with strong representation anticipated in the food and drink and high performance technologies sectors | | |
| Beneficiaries | SMEs with employment and GVA growth potential | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of enterprises supported | TBC | TBC |
| | Employment increase in supported enterprise | TBC | TBC |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the market | TBC | TBC |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the firm | TBC | TBC |

| SME Digital Improvement | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Access to broadband alongside effective use of ICT is important to support SMEs to maintain and build their competitiveness. It can support SMEs to access new markets, perform more effectively in their current markets and support the development of new services. This activity will support SMEs in Northamptonshire to take advantage of such opportunities. Support will be made available to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">increase SME awareness of the opportunities presented by faster broadband and the commercialisation of ICTextend the availability of superfast broadband and introduce ultrafast broadbandstimulate demand for new connections provide support to SMEs to maximise the benefits of faster broadband connections/ICT | | |
| Thematic objective | TO2 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £1.5m ERDF | £0.75m ERDF | |
| Match funding | Match funds to be identified through the call process | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Call issued . TBC . later in 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding of the broadband marketplace and the opportunities for SMEs to generate benefitsApproach to engaging SMEs and demonstrating benefits Additionality of provision (both infrastructure and support services) | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus anticipated | | |
| Beneficiaries | SMEs across Northamptonshire with a focus on areas without current superfast connections | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of enterprises supported | 600 | 300 |
| | Number of new enterprises supported | 80 | 40 |
| | Additional businesses with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps | 240 | 120 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the firm | 100 | 50 |

| Supporting SME Resource Efficiency/Low Carbon and Energy Revolving Fund | | | |
|--|---|---|---------|
| Overview | Supporting businesses to make more efficient use of resources is a high priority for Northamptonshire and the country as a whole. This element of the programme will be designed (following further national guidance) to offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">support services to businesses to help them to engage in the agenda, understand the opportunities available to them and apply them to their business operations over time; anda revolving loan fund that supports investments in low carbon and energy initiatives, thereby supporting new ideas to be taken forward. | | |
| Thematic objective | TO4 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £1.6m ERDF (SME resource efficiency) £3.0m (revolving loan fund) | £0.8m ERDF (SME resource efficiency) £1.5m (revolving loan fund) | |
| Match funding | Match funds will be identified by bidders as part of the call process | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | ERDF national call Both calls issued Q3 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Details to be determined | | |
| Target sectors | To be determined | | |
| Beneficiaries | Details to be finalised | | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards for SME Resource Efficiency, single appointment for a loan fund with multiple funding awards to be made through it | | |
| Target outputs (to be confirmed once scheme details have been finalised) | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of enterprises receiving support | 160 | 80 |
| | Number of new enterprises supported | 26 | 13 |
| | Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | 40 | 20 |
| | Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | 60 | 30 |

Section 5 - Priority 3: Responsive and Adaptable Workforce

Strategic Context

To achieve its economic ambition Northamptonshire requires an engaged and skilled workforce that can support employers and the economy as a whole to grow and be more productive. Although the county already has a large proportion of the working age population in employment, there is a need to support more people to access employment and to support those already in employment to continue to develop their skills in response to employer needs, including those of target growth sectors. At present Northamptonshire falls behind the national average for the proportion of working age residents qualified at NVQ levels 1 through to 4.

Our growth ambition means that the skills needs of employers are changing both in scale and nature. We need to equip the workforce with the skills that employers need to drive competitiveness and innovation. In accordance with Government policy, provision needs to be led by employers not skills providers to ensure it is responsive and supports people to enter and progress in employment.

This element of the programme will ensure that all elements of the working age population are able to make a contribution. At present, there are areas that do not make as strong an economic contribution as they could due to factors including higher than average levels of unemployment, barriers to accessing or returning to work and limited awareness of emerging employment opportunities and skills needs. Activities are intended to engage both those currently in work and out of work, including support for young people and disadvantaged groups as well as the existing workforce in need of new skills development. Activities under this priority are designed to generate benefits for both individuals and businesses.

Implementation Approach

This element of the programme will be supported by Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnerships' ESF allocation. The majority of funds allocated under this priority will be made available through opt-in arrangements, given the limited availability of local match. Working with the SFA (£11.5m) and DWP (£6.5m) we will secure match funding at source whilst still ensuring that local objectives are satisfied. The Big Lottery will allocate match funding at the level of each individual project (forecast to be £1.5m for the first half of the programme).

Break clauses are being discussed as part of negotiations with opt-in partners. They will be identified for the programme's mid-point (2017/18) providing an opportunity to reflect on delivery approaches, expenditure and output achievements relative to profile and for changes to be made where necessary for the remainder of the programme period. Early call timescales therefore acknowledge this potential break point and offer an opportunity for review in light of changing local conditions as well as potential delivery routes.

This implementation plan focuses on the first three years of activity but considering the 2014-2020 programme as a whole, £3.6m of ESF expenditure currently sits outside the opt-in arrangements⁴. NEP is working with the community and voluntary sector to agree investment priorities. The sector is preparing its own strategy for the funds with final proposals for this allocation to be determined through this process, including consideration of potential sources of match funds. The allocation may be routed through local commissioning or (subject to early performance) allocated through the Big Lottery opt-in arrangements for the latter half of the programme.

⁴ This includes £1m originally proposed for investment through a Local Impact Fund which has since been removed from the programme. Holding these funds back allows the programme to retain an element of flexibility.

While resources will be available across the NEP area, care will be taken to ensure that supported activities do not duplicate provision available through other initiatives/funding streams and target areas in need of support. For example, activities to address low skills or unemployment will focus on areas where concentrations are known to be high and activities that are not offered through core support programmes.

Allocations

The proposed breakdown of Priority 3 funding by Thematic Objective, activity and timing within the programme is shown below. Programme wide allocations by activity remain to be determined, reflecting the need to retain flexibility in the delivery of this element of the programme.

| European Allocation by Thematic Objective | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Activity | Total allocation £m | Allocation to 2018 £m ⁵ |
| ESF | | | |
| TO8:Employment and Labour mobility | Support for Troubled Families | 6.5 | 0.4 |
| | Support for Carers | | 0.7 |
| | Support for Self Employment | | 0.5 |
| | Support for the Unemployed | | 1.5 |
| | Northamptonshire NEET/young people Support | | 0.3 |
| | TO8 total | 6.5 | 3.4 |
| TO9:Social Inclusion | Return to Work | 5.1 | 1.5 |
| | Northamptonshire Community Grants | | 0.3 |
| | TO9 total | 5.1 | 1.8 |
| TO10: Skills | Workforce Skills Programme | 11.5 | 3.0 |
| | Local Responsiveness Fund | | 0.4 |
| | Enterprise Skills Development | | 0.6 |
| | TO10 total | 11.5 | 4.1 |
| ESF total | | 23.1 | 9.3 |

Activities

The following activities will be pursued to support Northamptonshire residents to improve their skills and make a full contribution to the county's growth.

| Support for Troubled Families | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Overview | <p>Almost 1,500 families in Northamptonshire satisfy troubled families criteria⁶. Tailored actions are required to support these family members to overcome the multiple barriers that they face to entering and sustaining employment.</p> <p>Activity will be designed to support adults to access employment and also raise the aspirations of other family members thereby taking a whole family approach. It will be delivered alongside existing services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend the extent and range of support available • provide different or more intensive support alongside mainstream provision to people facing the most significant barriers • offer specific help to disadvantaged older people to support them to find and keep employment • support people to sustain employment once they have found work • overcome a lack of awareness of locally available roles and how to access them • offer tailored support through personalised skills training programmes to overcome skills shortages and address barriers faced by individuals <p>All provision will respond to a tailored action plan that identifies a minimum of three goals per beneficiary. Typically, 20+ hours of support will be</p> |

⁵ All figures are the ESF allocation, excluding administration costs.

⁶ No adults in the family are in work, children are not attending or are excluded from school and family members are involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| | provided. | | |
| Thematic objective | TO8 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.4m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | DWP opt-in Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additionality of support and ability to align with other support providers• Ability to engage troubled families Ability to address support requirements and the appropriateness of proposed interventions | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Members of households meeting the troubled families definition and are not in receipt of other forms of DWP ESF provision from across the NEP area | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 160 |

| Support for Carers | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Within Northamptonshire, an economically inactive population, 12% of people aged 50+ care for a sick, disabled or elderly person for 20 or more hours per week and across the county 5,490 people receive carer's allowance. Solutions to support people to combine caring responsibilities with paid work are required. | | |
| | Supported activities will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help carers to participate in education, employment and training• add value to or extend the scope of existing provision, e.g. through DWP and Adult Skills Budget• offer personalised skills training programmes where they can address skills shortages• offer progression routes from mainstream provision• develop the capacity of the existing provider network to respond to the target group's needs and demands prepare employers to employ people with caring responsibilities and assist their recruitment (e.g. employment incentives) | | |
| Thematic objective | TO8 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.7m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | DWP opt-in Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability to engage target groups and retain their involvement for a full support package• Alignment with the services of other care and support providers• Additionality of support proposals Appropriateness and deliverability of proposed support packages | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (potentially to a main contractor supported by sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Beneficiaries will fall into three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• carers who have recently become unemployed or have been out of work• carers in work who need to retrain to stay in the labour market• carers aged 50-64 The service will cover all of Northamptonshire but would be expected to focus on those areas with high proportions of carers | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 460 |

| Support for Self Employment | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Residents of disadvantaged areas traditionally face barriers to self-employment which restricts levels of enterprise. Targeted, locally delivered support is needed to work with this group to achieve its enterprise potential. Support will help to overcome barriers and provide individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to develop a business. A minimum 6 hour support package is anticipated. | | |
| | <p>Support services are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-start workshops . to explore whether self-employment/ starting a business is an appropriate option and the basics of doing so• Business planning workshops . to support beneficiaries through the process of preparing a business plan• Introduction to sales and marketing . sessions designed to cover techniques and the value of such opportunities• Accounting for small businesses . to develop understanding of financial management requirements and how to keep accurate records <p>Bespoke one-to-one services are also required including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one-to-one mentoring with an assigned business advisor• business planning coaching (both one-to-one and small groups)• advice and information services on specialist subjects, e.g. finance, legal, HR matters <p>where self-employment is found not to be appropriate, training and structured job search support</p> | | |
| Thematic objective | TO8 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.5m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | DWP opt-in Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | <p>Specific tests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of challenges faced and areas to be targeted• Ability to engage the target group and maintain their engagement• Building relationships with other support providers and local organisations• Appropriateness of the proposed support package <p>Added value beyond mainstream provision</p> | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (potentially to a main contractor with appointed sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | 80% of beneficiaries to come from disadvantaged districts | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 200 |

| Support for the Unemployed | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Reducing the number of people who are outside employment will help to enhance the economic performance of the NEP area. Support services will be made available to all unemployed residents of Northamptonshire in need of additional support to transition into work. This will include tailoring support packages where necessary to address the needs of different groups, e.g. young people, older clients and vulnerable adults ⁷ . | | |
| | This activity will ensure that beneficiaries receive specific support to help them to train and access employment. Interventions are expected to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extending the amount and/or range of available support (e.g. interview and presentation coaching, motivational training, mentoring, tailored IAG)• providing additional support in areas that are recognised barriers to employment• providing more intensive support to people facing the greatest barriers• arranging work placements and volunteering opportunities• continuing to offer support after people have entered employment to help them to sustain and retain a job• raising awareness of locally available employment opportunities• matching businesses with hard to fill vacancies and skills shortages with the unemployed• offering personalised skills training programmes to overcome skills shortages including regulating units and qualifications from the QCF• referrals to other specialist support where required to overcome challenges (e.g. benefits, debt management, housing) All beneficiaries are expected to receive a minimum of 6 hours support. | | |
| Thematic objective | TO8 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £1.5m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | DWP opt-in Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of the context for support and additionality relative to mainstream provision• Ability to effectively engage and work with target groups• Appropriateness of support approaches for target groups and the population overall Approaches to engaging relevant organisations (e.g. employers, health and social care providers) | | |
| | | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (potentially to a main contractor with sub-contractors to ensure the scale of activity can be satisfied. | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Unemployed Northamptonshire residents, including support for the long term unemployed, older clients, young people and vulnerable adults. To avoid duplication, the service will target people who fall outside the Work Programme criteria | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 1,000 |

⁷ Individuals suffering from mental health and disability or who have been unable to work due to other health related issues

| Northamptonshire NEET /Young People Support | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | This activity area will help to reduce the number of young people in Northamptonshire who are not in education, employment or training or are identified to be at risk of entering this category and support them to progress into positive outcomes. At present this position is restricting young people's life chances and will impact on growth. | | |
| | A package of support will be procured comprising three main elements: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Retention in post-16 learning: activity to ensure that young people entering post-16 learning progress along a pathway to the age of 19. Activities will include innovative approaches such as targeted support, enhanced learning programmes and development of clear progression routes.2. Engagement of the hardest to reach NEETs: contacting and re-engaging young people to help improve their attendance, attainment, performance and behaviour which in turn will support them to access suitable learning and/or employment.3. 16, 17 and 18 year olds who are currently NEET: focusing on the priority groups outlined later in this table. <p>An initial assessment will be followed by a tailored programme that supports progression into education, employment or training. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information, advice and guidance• Action planning• Accredited and non-accredited training provision• Personal and social development support• Work and vocational taster sessions <p>Mentoring support</p> | | |
| Thematic objective | TO8 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.3m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | SFA opt-in Call to be prepared Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to engage and retain the involvement of young people who are NEET/at risk of being NEET• Appropriateness of delivery arrangements and additionality beyond mainstream provision <p>Forecast success rates and progression routes</p> | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (with the potential for a main contractor to identify sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | 16-18 year olds who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET from across Northamptonshire, with a particular focus on those areas with high levels of NEETs | | |
| Target outputs | Within this group, particular focus will be placed on engagement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities• Looked after children• Young offenders• Teenage parents and mums to be <p>Young people from workless families</p> | | |
| | Outputs | | |
| | Number of beneficiaries | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | TBC | 120 | |

| Northamptonshire Community Grants | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|---------|
| Overview | A series of approaches are required to help reduce the number of NEETs (6%), unemployed (1.5%) and economically inactive residents in Northamptonshire, including tackling pockets of persistent issues. This activity will administer and deliver small grants of up to £50,000 to small non-governmental or community and voluntary organisations. Supported activities will focus on helping unemployed and inactive people to move towards and/or into the labour market. A simplified application process will help organisations build their capacity to deliver services. A wide range of activities can potentially be supported as long as they target unemployed or inactive people who are at a particular disadvantage. Example activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• first contact activities, e.g. providing training in venues that people feel comfortable to visit to encourage engagement• soft skills development, e.g. anger management and assertiveness• development of local networks and groups (e.g. job clubs) to support access to training and employment• projects to build confidence, motivation and social integration | | |
| Thematic objective | TO9 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 | |
| | TBC | £0.3m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | SFA opt-in Call to be prepared Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills and capacity of the organisation to administer grants in accordance with ESF requirements• Ability to engage target groups• Appropriateness of delivery approaches to support a move towards and into employment Awareness of existing provision and added value | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (with potential for the successful bidder to have a series of sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Grants will be awarded to appropriate organisations across the County with priority to be given to those working in areas with high levels of NEETs, youth unemployment and economic inactivity. Ultimate beneficiaries will be the registered unemployed, especially young people and those furthest from the labour market, e.g. looked after children, young offenders and teenage parents. | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 200 |

Workforce Skills Programme

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Overview | <p>Ensuring that the workforce has the skills required by employers in the NEP area is a high priority to ensure growth plans are supported. This activity will add value to existing provision by offering locally defined and delivered provision that supports higher levels of workforce engagement in education and training. Support will help employed people to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhance their skills in order to be more successful in the labour market advance their career prospects respond to employer requirements to support key sector growth <p>Provision will fall under three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General skills provision: Support to improve the overall skills base, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employability skills provision (including communication, presentation, customer service, IT and team working skills) recruitment, selection, induction and retention support skills health checks to define skills development strategies leadership and management skills provision in key sectors unit/modular delivery in response to employer needs unfunded higher level skills support Sector specific skills: Focusing on priorities identified through the skills strategy with the successful bidder to guide delivery approaches: <p>High performance technologies: e.g. addressing gaps in metals industry and polymer processing Higher Level Apprenticeships and providing technical and engineering training including assembly line/production robotics and tool setting.</p> <p>Food and drink: e.g. food processing and hygiene skills, engineering and machine maintenance, sales skills.</p> <p>Logistics: e.g. progression from basic to sector based training, HGV driving, warehousing skills, high tech vehicle maintenance.</p> <p>Health and social care: e.g. management and leadership, catering for replacement demand, specialist health worker skills.</p> <p>Sustainable construction: e.g. leadership and management, craft workers, IT and legislative knowledge.</p> <p>Creative and cultural: e.g. management and business skills, legislative insight (e.g. IP issues).</p> Capacity building: Activities to increase awareness and encourage take up of skills provision including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness raising around Apprenticeships pre-Apprenticeship pathways for the employed coaching and mentoring for staff supporting Apprenticeships support for Apprenticeship progression routes <p>building relationships between employers and providers</p> | |
| Thematic objective | TO10 | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation |
| | TBC | £3.0m ESF |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | SFA opt-in Call to be prepared for Q2 2015 | |
| Selection criteria | <p>Specific tests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of local skills needs, including sector specific requirements Ability to deliver tailored provision and add value to existing services Arrangements for engagement/liaison with employers and participants <p>Strategic alignment with other ESF and ERDF contracts</p> | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards to enable a variety of skills requirements to be addressed | |
| Target beneficiaries | Northamptonshire residents who are in employment but not participating in education or training, especially young people and those in low skilled and | |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------|----------------|
| | low paid occupations. Although support will be available across all sections of the economy, there will be a weighting towards SMEs and LEP priority sectors. | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 1,670 |

Northamptonshire Local Responsiveness Fund

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|----------------|
| Overview | There is a need for skills provision to remain responsive to changing employer needs, if the economy is to thrive. This funding will create a Local Responsiveness Fund that pilots solutions to existing and new skills needs, particularly in key sectors. It will help to overcome barriers in the current system and support both take up and progression through the skills system. | | |
| | Although emphasising the need to remain responsive, support is expected to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">overcoming barriers to participation, achievement and progression among under-represented groups and prioritised locations (e.g. areas of deprivation or the Enterprise Zone)engaging new employers and other stakeholders who can influence the delivery of learningexploring locally appropriate new delivery models, e.g. Skills Bank to encourage SME engagement in trainingencourage collaboration between SMEs in key sectors to develop new and innovative trainingdeveloping the capacity of the existing provider networkencouraging and supporting participation in Apprenticeships offering workplace support | | |
| Thematic objective | TO10 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.4m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | SFA opt-in Call to be prepared for Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Approach to ensuring responsive provisionCapacity to deliver all contract elementsUnderstanding of the local economy and existing support provision to ensure additionality Ability to liaise with other support providers | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (potentially with a main contractor and sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | SMEs and their employees (especially young adults and those in low skilled and low paid occupations) with a weighting towards the LEP priority sectors | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 230 |

| Enterprise Skills Development | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | <p>New entrepreneurs require a wide range of skills and support to successfully launch, sustain and grow their business. While Northamptonshire has high business birth and self-employment rates, survival rates decline significantly after three years requiring support to help businesses to sustain their activities.</p> <p>This activity will deliver a programme of new skills development and support for entrepreneurs with pre-start and existing enterprises up to 12 months old. It will establish a group of start-up experts who can deliver support and provide at least 2 hours of one-to-many and at least 6 hours of one-to-one start up/self-employment advice and support.</p> <p>Training areas are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to entrepreneurship, e.g. personal motivation, choosing a business area, risk, reward and life balance• Business planning, e.g. analysing target markets, competitors, marketing, financial forecasting• Business networking, e.g. generating leads, networking skills (including online), how to present a brand• Presentation skills, e.g. writing compelling content, defining personal style, listening and understanding other viewpoints• Writing for business, e.g. language to persuade, writing for optimum impact, mistakes to avoid <p>Marketing, e.g. marketing and sales strategy, social media training</p> | | |
| Thematic objective | TO10 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £0.6m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided through opt-in arrangements | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | SFA opt-in Call prepared for Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | <p>Specific tests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to engage new enterprises• Understanding of skills needs and responsiveness• Appropriateness of delivery approaches• Understanding of existing provision to ensure added value <p>Ability to align with other programme elements and the work of the Growth Hub to support referrals</p> | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award to a main contractor (to potentially be supported by sub-contractors) | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Entrepreneurs/new companies (up to 12 months old) across Northamptonshire with a particular focus on new entrepreneurs from the following groups: 20-24 year olds; females; ethnic minorities; and areas of high economic inactivity. | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 300 |

| Return to Work | |
|-----------------|--|
| Overview | <p>The offer of locally responsive, tailored activities can play an important role in tackling poverty and ensuring social inclusion amongst the hardest to reach groups in our communities. Such approaches can effectively secure the engagement of local communities and individuals within them to take ownership of activity and improve their future prospects.</p> <p>Activity under this element of the programme will complement the proposed DWP programme by providing holistic support to overcome barriers of work. Topics may include reducing drug and alcohol dependency, increasing educational attainment, improving access to childcare and supporting volunteering as a route into employment.</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------|
| | Three central themes are expected to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overcoming barriers to work . providing additional support to unemployed people with complex needs and those who have been out of work for more than two years.• Improving social and economic engagement . targeting Northamptonshire's most deprived areas through a package of support (including wrap around support) that helps residents to engage in learning, employment and enterprise.• Targeted financial inclusion . providing wrap around support to improve financial inclusion and reduce debt, particularly amongst those affected by Universal Credit, with a focus on progression to skills and employment provision. <p>Further details will continue to be refined through discussions with Big Lottery to determine the opt-in offer.</p> | | |
| Thematic objective | TO9 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | TBC | £1.5m ESF | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be provided by Big Lottery on a project by project basis | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | Big Lottery opt-in Call issued Q2 2015 Grant awards from Q4 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to engage and effectively work with target groups• Appropriateness of support in raising aspirations• Additionality relative to existing provision | | |
| Expected number of awards | To be issued as multiple large scale grants through consortia arrangements . anticipated scale of awards to be confirmed through ongoing discussions with Big Lottery | | |
| Target beneficiaries | Northamptonshire wide but with a focus on areas with high levels of poverty and social exclusion | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | TBC | 600 |

Section 6 - Priority 4: Growing the Rural Economy

Strategic Context

Northamptonshire is a predominantly rural County with over half the population living in areas classified as rural. This emphasises the need to consider the specific needs of rural businesses and residents in the development of any strategy for the NEP area. While some of the challenges faced by rural areas mirror those of the county as a whole (for example the need for effective infrastructure, to support the growth of micro and small businesses and invest in skills development), in some instances tailored responses are required to address the needs of rural businesses and communities to enable them to make a full contribution to economic growth.

There is recognition that economic diversification will be important to support rural areas to take advantage of new opportunities and grow. While steps are being taken in this direction, further support is necessary to help rural communities to both consider and implement diversification opportunities, including those associated with the visitor economy and the growth of small businesses from across a variety of sectors.

The County has a series of important rural assets including natural assets such as the Nene Valley and strong heritage. This element of the programme aims to build on these strengths and explore new opportunities to ensure that rural areas thrive and support county wide growth ambitions in a manner that is appropriate to the context.

Implementation Approach

All EAFRD activity will be commissioned through open calls, administered in accordance with DEFRA guidance. Calls will clearly state the rural criteria to be applied to individual funding awards⁸ to ensure resources are targeted.

Support will be available across all eligible sectors and in the majority of cases will seek applications at a county level. All activities will be selected to add value to the Rural Development Plan for England and for both DEFRA supported LEADER programmes for Northamptonshire. Rural communities will also be encouraged to access support under the ERDF and ESF priorities with EAFRD resources to focus on specific rural area activities that cannot be or are not being supported through these routes. The eligible area for support is shown in Appendix 2.

In accordance with EAFRD guidance, the £2.2m of funds will be matched at source by government. Private sector match funding contributions will also be sought from applicants. Reflecting national guidance, the minimum project grant value will typically be £35,000.

Whilst an initial programme of activities has been developed as set out below, flexibility will be retained under this strand of the programme to allow any potential new areas of activity (for example targeted broadband investments⁹ and diversification support) to be supported during the latter part of the programme, following receipt of further guidance.

Allocations

The proposed breakdown of Priority 4 funding by article, activity and timing is shown overleaf.

⁸ Rural businesses and communities will also be encouraged to access support under the ERDF and ESF elements of the programme. Further rural specific needs will be supported under the EAFRD element.

⁹ Subject to the outcome of national mapping to identify remaining hard to reach areas.

| European Allocation by Funding Stream and Thematic Objective | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | Activity | Total allocation £m | Allocation to 2018 £m |
| EAFRD | | | |
| Art 36 Tourism | Support for Quality Rural Tourism | 0.25 | 0.15 |
| | Tourism Promotion | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | <i>Art 36 total</i> | <i>0.35</i> | <i>0.25</i> |
| Art 20 Business | Support for Increasing Rural Business Productivity | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| | Business Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| | Grant Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs | 0.45 | 0.25 |
| | Support for SMEs to grow | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| | Energy Efficiency for SMEs | 0.25 | 0.15 |
| | <i>Art 20 total</i> | <i>1.9</i> | <i>1.0</i> |
| EAFRD total | | 2.2 | 1.25 |

Activities

The following activities will be commissioned to support Northamptonshire's rural areas to diversify. An initial tranche of six calls (accounting for £1.25m EAFRD) will be issued under two headings to reflect the priority intervention areas identified in the ESIF. As noted above, further elements of activity may be added during the latter part of the programme, following release of further guidance.

Support for tourism activities

| Support for Quality Rural Tourism | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | Investment in a variety of potential forms of visitor infrastructure to support Northamptonshire to attract visitors, ensure there is a high quality offer and increase dwell time which in turn will support an increase in expenditure within the local economy. This activity recognises that there is scope to improve the offer and that investment will be required to support Northamptonshire to compete in an active market place, if it is to maintain and/or expand visitor numbers and the sector's contribution to the rural economy. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate the case for their proposal with a variety of schemes to be considered that can demonstrate an impact on the quality of the rural tourism offer within the scope of programme parameters. Examples may include new visitor attractions, expansion or improvement of existing facilities and the development of supporting infrastructure needed to support a growing tourist trade. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 7.5 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £0.25m EAFRD | £0.15m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match to be identified by bidders, anticipated to be from private sector sources | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing financial viability post support• Evidence of need/demand (including forecast visitor numbers) The additionality of proposed activities/investments | | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards | | |
| Target sectors | Tourism sector | | |
| Beneficiaries | Micro and small rural businesses in the tourism sector | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | ESIF total | 2014-18 |
| | Jobs created | 100 | 35 |

| Tourism Promotion | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------|---------|
| Overview | This call will invest in activities to coordinate marketing activities across Northamptonshire's tourism offer. This will include actions to promote key destinations and supporting attractions/facilities, to highlight what the county has to offer, support attractions to promote their services together and encourage longer duration visits. | | |
| | A range of marketing mediums are expected to be considered in shaping a final programme of activities, including: | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Digital media . including websites and social mediaPrint media . including the potential for coverage in both local and national mediaTelevision and radio . including both local and national channels | | |
| | Bidders will be required to propose an intended mix of activities and justify their selection and the coverage they anticipate it will secure. | | |
| | Although proposals will be invited County wide, activity is expected to include a focus on/be linked to Destination River Nene which recognises the strength of the green visitor economy with activities to publicise both existing and new tourism assets. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 16.3 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 | |
| | £0.1m EAFRD | £0.1m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additionality• Evidence of cross-organisation working/number of attractions to be included | | |
| | Appropriateness of the proposed approaches | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target sectors | Tourism sector | | |
| Beneficiaries | Micro and SME rural businesses in the tourism sector | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | ESIF total | 2014-18 |
| | Jobs created | 100 | 35 |
| | Number of cooperation operations | 2 | 2 |

Support for micro and small and medium sized enterprises within the rural area

| Support for Increasing Rural Business Productivity | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|---------|
| Overview | <p>A package of skills development and training is required for rural businesses to help support the development of key skills that can promote business growth. NEP does not wish to be prescriptive in either the topic coverage or methods of delivering activity. Proposed support packages will be identified by bidders and the final package will be determined by and agreed with the successful bidder (with evidence of how subjects have been selected and delivery methods identified).</p> <p>Given currently identified skills needs the package is however anticipated to include training in the fields of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sales and marketing• e-commerce• financial management <p>Each of these topics (and additions identified by bidders) will support businesses to effectively position themselves in the market and manage their activities. An element of consultation with the rural business base is anticipated to be required to shape the package further.</p> | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 1.1 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-2018 allocation | |
| | £0.6m EAFRD | £0.3m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match to be identified by bidders, anticipated to be from private sector sources | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | <p>Specific tests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of businesses to benefit• Quality and appropriateness of the training offer plus value for money <p>Deliverability</p> | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award preferred but may potentially appoint multiple bidders | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus | | |
| Beneficiaries | SME rural businesses | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Number of participants in training | 150 | 75 |
| | Number of training days | 3,000 | 1,250 |
| | Number of operations | 15 | 6 |

| Business Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | A package of advisory services will be offered to SMEs to support diversification activities. Although bidders will have the flexibility to propose an intended focus of activity (based on evidenced need) and methods of delivery, provision is anticipated to include support needs associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of new products and services• Access to finance• Access to markets• Opportunities for cross-business working• Sales and marketing strategy All support will complement the LEADER programme and will offer practical guidance to help SMEs to develop new ideas and go on to implement them. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 2.1 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £0.3m EAFRD | £0.15m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additionality, including value added to LEADER activities and mainstream business support services• Quality and appropriateness of the support offer plus value for money Number of businesses to benefit | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus | | |
| Beneficiaries | Micro and SME rural businesses | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | ESIF total | 2014-18 |
| | Number of beneficiaries advised | 40 | 20 |
| | Number of operations supported | 40 | 20 |

Grant Support for Micro Businesses and SMEs

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| Overview | Many small businesses struggle to identify financing that is accessible to them and is offered on acceptable terms. A rural business grant scheme is proposed to offer small scale grants for investments that can make a noticeable difference to their operations and outlook. This call will invite micro businesses and SMEs from across our rural communities to apply for grant support for investment in business infrastructure. All investments will respond to a growth opportunity that can only be unlocked with infrastructure investment, with EAFRD funding to be shown to be the funder of last resort and evidence of the difference that investment will make to business performance and growth to be demonstrated. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 4.2 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £0.45m EAFRD | £0.25m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role of investment in supporting growth Additionality of support | | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus | | |
| Beneficiaries | Micro and SME rural businesses | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | ESIF total | 2014-18 |
| | Jobs created | 40 | 15 |
| | Number of operations of support for investment | 10 | 5 |

| Support for SMEs to Grow | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|---------|
| Overview | Many businesses require support above and beyond that offered by mainstream business support services in order to identify and implement opportunities that will deliver growth. A rural community specific call is proposed to secure a programme of intensive support and coaching. The programme will be available to rural businesses with recognised growth potential with support to be tailored to individual business needs. Activity under this strand will be aligned with potential investment opportunities available through LEADER, for example to support rural businesses to explore new ways of working or markets. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 6.4 | | |
| ESIF allocation | ESIF total allocation | 2014-18 | |
| | £0.3m EAFRD | £0.15m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additionality and alignment with the LEADER programme• Appropriateness and value for money of the support package Evidence of ability to engage growth potential businesses | | |
| Expected number of awards | Single award (single contractor appointment proposed to provide tailored support packages) | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus | | |
| Beneficiaries | Rural SMEs with recognised growth potential | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | ESIF total | 2014-18 |
| | Jobs created | 40 | 15 |
| | Number of beneficiaries | 40 | 15 |

| Energy Efficiency for SMEs | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Overview | The energy efficiency agenda is widely recognised but too few businesses have the knowledge, skills and capacity to implement effective change. A county wide programme of support will be offered to assist businesses to understand opportunities to increase their energy efficiency and put them into practice, contributing to both energy conservation and productivity/efficiency objectives to generate a combination of economic and environmental benefits. | | |
| Thematic objective | EAFRD Measure 7.2 | | |
| ESIF allocation | Total ESIF allocation | 2014-18 allocation | |
| | £0.25m EAFRD | £0.15m EAFRD | |
| Match funding | Match funding to be identified by bidders | | |
| Commissioning approach and timescales | EAFRD open call Call issued Q2 2015 | | |
| Selection criteria | Specific tests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additionality above other sources of business support• Deliverability of proposed approaches Scale of potential benefits/value for money | | |
| Expected number of awards | Multiple awards | | |
| Target sectors | No sector focus | | |
| Beneficiaries | Rural SMEs | | |
| Target outputs | Outputs | | |
| | | Total ESIF | 2014-18 |
| | Jobs created | 40 | 15 |
| | Number of operations supported for small scale infrastructure investments | 50 | 20 |

Section 7 - Early Actions

NEP and partners have positioned Northamptonshire to be ready to deliver as soon as the Operational Programme has been finalised and LEP level allocations are confirmed. We therefore have an ambitious programme of activity planned for 2015/16 that will allow us to launch our programme and achieve early benefits that contribute to our overall ambitions.

Local Programme Milestones

While the Northamptonshire programme's milestones will be determined in large part by those associated with the national programme, steps are being taken to map out our preferred programme of activity. Key dates (based on our understanding of the national position and local aspirations for a prompt start) are:

- National programme signed off: TBC 2015
- NEP allocation and targets confirmed: TBC 2015
- Technical Assistance support confirmed: Spring 2015
- First ESIF Committee meeting (not in shadow form): Spring 2015
- Opt-in negotiations conclude: phased through to Summer 2015
- Commissioning commences: March 2015
- Initial supported activities go live: Summer 2015

Securing Technical Assistance

A Technical Assistance statement has been prepared to set out NEP's proposals to ensure the robust and compliant delivery of the ESIF Strategy. The proposal is for Technical Assistance to support two blocks of activity, as outlined below.

| Proposed Technical Assistance Activities |
|---|
| Project development and capacity building |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project development support for applicants to ensure that compliant outline proposals are brought forward• Growth sector project development support to develop clusters of projects in the NEP's accelerated growth sectors¹⁰ and new and emerging growth sectors• Advisory support at the full application stage (ensuring no duplication with managing authority functions)• Working with Civil Society networks to support the involvement of voluntary, community and social enterprises• Support to effectively engage hard to reach groups in the programme• In exceptional cases, start up support for the East Midlands Financial Instrument |
| Fund promotion and publicity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for partners to raise awareness and communicate programme and project activities• Promoting cooperation, networking and the exchange of best practice both within the programme and with other LEPs and other EU programmes• Promotional events to launch the programme, publicise bidding rounds and share programme achievements |

An early allocation has been requested to ensure that the programme is in a strong position to proceed. A formal response to an expected call for Technical Assistance will be prepared to reflect the points above.

¹⁰ Defined as high performance technologies, logistics, food and drink, creative and cultural.

Schedule of Calls and Opt In Commissioning

Within the above programme, key milestones will relate to the commissioning of local programme activities to enable investments to begin. Our proposed programme of initial activities is provided below with further development and iteration to occur once the programme is live and further guidance is received from programme partners (e.g. opt-in organisations and DEFRA for EAFRD activities). It is anticipated that activities commissioned through the SFA opt-in agreement and ERDF national calls will be the first to go live.

| Proposed 2015/16 Commissioning Activity | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| ERDF | | | | | | | | |
| Activity | TO | Commissioning | 3 year allocation | Q1 2015 | Q2 2015 | Q3 2015 | Q4 2015 | Q1 2016 |
| Northamptonshire Innovation Programme | TO1 | ERDF open call | £2.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| SME Digital Improvement | TO2 | ERDF open call | £0.75m ERDF | | | | | |
| SME Competitiveness | TO3 | ERDF open call | £2.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| Enhancing International Trade | TO3 | ERDF open call | £0.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| Supporting High Growth Potential SMEs | TO3 | ERDF open call | £0.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| Securing Manufacturing Growth | TO3 | ERDF open call | £0.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| Supporting SME Resource Efficiency | TO4 | ERDF open call | £0.8m ERDF | | | | | |
| Low Carbon and Energy Revolving Fund | TO4 | ERDF open call | £1.5m ERDF | | | | | |
| ESF | | | | | | | | |
| Activity | TO | Commissioning | 3 year allocation | Q1 2015 | Q2 2015 | Q3 2015 | Q4 2015 | Q1 2016 |
| Workforce Skills Programme | TO10 | SFA opt-in | £3.0m ESF | | | | | |
| Local Responsiveness Fund | TO10 | SFA opt-in | £0.4m ESF | | | | | |
| Enterprise Skills Development | TO10 | SFA opt-in | £0.6m ESF | | | | | |
| Northamptonshire NEET Support | TO8 | SFA opt-in | £0.3m ESF | | | | | |
| Support for the Unemployed | TO8 | DWP opt-in | £1.5m ESF | | | | | |
| Northamptonshire Community Grants | TO9 | SFA opt-in | £0.3m ESF | | | | | |
| Return to Work | TO9 | Big Lottery opt-in | £1.5m ESF | | | | Grants | |
| Support for Troubled Families | TO8 | DWP opt-in | £0.4m ESF | | | | | |
| Support for Carers | TO8 | DWP opt-in | £0.7m ESF | | | | | |
| Support for Self Employment | TO8 | DWP opt-in | £0.5m ESF | | | | | |
| EAFRD | | | | | | | | |
| Activity | Sub-Measure | Commissioning | 3 year allocation | Q1 2015 | Q2 2015 | Q3 2015 | Q4 2015 | Q1 2016 |
| Support for quality rural tourism | 7.5 | EAFRD open call | £0.15m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Tourism promotion | 16.3 | EAFRD open call | £0.1m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Support for increasing rural business productivity | 1.1 | EAFRD open call | £0.3m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Business support for micro businesses and SMEs | 2.1 | EAFRD open call | £0.15m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Grant support for micro businesses and SMEs | 4.2 | EAFRD open call | £0.25m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Support for SMEs to grow | 6.4 | EAFRD open call | £0.15m EAFRD | | | | | |
| Energy efficiency for SMEs | 7.2 | EAFRD open call | £0.15m EAFRD | | | | | |

Section 8 - Project Calls and Selection Procedures

Commissioning Approaches

Activity will be procured through three core approaches:

- ESF opt-in arrangements;
- National ERDF calls; and
- Local commissioning through calls for projects.

The proposed approach for each priority activity area is shown in Sections 3 to 6. All calls will be issued for a period of three years.

To comply with Government guidance and ensure our local priorities are satisfied the core process for each approach will be as follows:

Project Calls

This route will produce open invitations for projects through a two stage application process . outline and full. Calls will be issued at set points through the programme in accordance with this Implementation Plan and later stages of programme planning.

Call specifications will be prepared by the Managing Authority with input from NEP where appropriate, to ensure they satisfy local requirements. The issue and assessment process will then follow national business process guidelines, ensuring that a robust process is followed. The ESIF Committee will play an important role in helping to publicise the call, assessing proposals against local priorities and the wider portfolio of supported activities and endorsing the findings and final selection based on technical appraisals.

This approach will apply to delivery of the ERDF (including the recently announced national calls) and EAFRD elements of the programme with potential to also apply to elements of ESF delivery during a later phase of activity, if expenditure occurs outside the opt-in arrangements.

ESF Opt-Ins

Much of the ESF programme will be delivered through agreements entered into with opt-in organisations approved by the Managing Authority. The agreements we are currently in the process of negotiating will clearly set out:

- Agreed working arrangements and specific roles and responsibilities;
- The scale of funds to be invested;
- The scale and nature of outputs/results to be delivered as a result;
- Local input to the development of service specifications; and
- Reporting arrangements.

Our work on Procurement Initiation Documents (PIDs) is confirming the local steer we would like to achieve (where possible) and sets out the level of funding we intend to invest and outputs we expect to achieve through each activity.

Calls will be issued through agreed opt-in partner processes. Clarity has been secured around SFA commissioning and Big Lottery, but arrangements remain to be confirmed with DWP with appropriate commissioning arrangements to be agreed as soon as possible.

The NEP on behalf of the Local Area Committee will then remain in regular contact with opt-in organisations to monitor performance and ensure that local requirements are satisfied. Break clauses are being built in to ensure any issues can be addressed, including through alternative delivery routes during a later stage of the programme where necessary.

Anticipated Timescales

Reflecting work undertaken to date to develop the detail of our programme and our push to begin delivery as early as possible, our latest estimates are for calls for initial activity to be made during the following dates:

| Target Initial Call Dates by Fund and Approach | |
|--|------------|
| ERDF | |
| Local commissioning | March 2015 |
| National commissioning | March 2015 |
| ESF | |
| SFA opt-in | TBC 2015 |
| DWP opt-in | TBC 2015 |
| Big Lottery opt-in | June 2015 |
| EAFRD | |
| Local commissioning | June 2015 |

Early calls to be issued under each fund and call route are outlined in Section 7. Regular contact will be maintained with partner organisations to ensure that we can deliver to this programme wherever possible.

A degree of flexibility will be maintained over future calls to allow NEP and the local ESIF committee to assess the success of initial calls, consider the need for any changes to priority activities (to reflect changes in local circumstances whilst continuing to comply with overall programme objectives and regulations) and re-focus funds where necessary. All decisions will be agreed through defined management and governance procedures (see Section 9).

Local Input to the Call and Selection Process

NEP is working to gain the greatest value possible from ESIF investments and will take all necessary steps (working with national partners where appropriate) to ensure that funds are invested in those activity areas that are identified as high priorities and that they are focused to address local needs, whether contracted through local commissioning or our opt-in partners.

Ongoing discussions are also underway with opt-in organisations to confirm the scale of investment to be allocated, priorities to be delivered and the scale and nature of outputs required to satisfy local targets. Our anticipated programmes are outlined earlier in this plan and are expected to form a core element of Priority 3 delivery.

The level of local input in the process will vary by delivery partner. Throughout the proposed activities, potential priority selection criteria have been proposed to ensure that inputs can be provided where possible. We will remain in contact with partner organisations to confirm the nature of our engagement on a case by case basis but in broad terms, the scope for identification of local criteria is understood to be as follows:

- SFA . opportunity to identify some local criteria through the PID process;
- DWP . no opportunity to input;
- Big Lottery . opportunity to identify some local criteria through the PID process;
- ERDF national calls . limited local input proposed.

Completion of the stages above will conclude with the selection of final projects for support.

Selection Criteria

Robust and transparent selection criteria will ensure that eligible and locally appropriate activities are supported and that they demonstrate strong value. This process will be completed at a national level, reflecting the content of recent guidance, with local input to be provided as outlined above and under the ESIF Committee section of this plan. Preferred call specific criteria are also specified (where appropriate) in Sections 3 to 6.

ERDF and ESF

For ERDF and ESF projects, an initial set of checks will confirm that:

- The bidder is eligible to apply for Structural Funds grant;
- The proposed activity and expenditure is eligible for Structural Funds support; and
- The application responds to the needs/opportunities outlined in the call and the overall Operational Programme objectives.

Any proposals that fail to satisfy all three points will be excluded from further assessment.

All proposals that pass the tests above will be agreed with the Managing Authority for further assessment. The second assessment stage will consider:

- **Strategic fit:** contribution to the needs/opportunities of the call¹¹ and the objectives of the OP and the case for intervention, added value of activity and national policy fit.
- **Value for money:** on the basis of efficiency (unit cost of input to deliverable), economy (ensuring the inputs are the minimum cost for required quality) and effectiveness (contribution to outputs, results, impacts), in all cases demonstrating that investment will deliver additional activities and impacts.
- **Management:** the applicant's expertise, capacity and capability for both delivery and management in accordance with fund requirements and ability to meet financial requirements.
- **Deliverability:** availability (including evidence) of match funding and shows an acceptable level of risk, constraints and dependencies.
- **Procurement:** compliance with the funder's procurement requirements.
- **State Aid:** eligibility to receive the requested level of grant under State Aid regulations.
- **Publicity:** compliance of proposals with ESIF requirements.
- **Cross cutting themes:** shows a commitment and contribution towards the cross cutting themes.

In the case of the SFA opt-in contracts, NEP has expressed its desire to undertake a joint evaluation of proposals, where resources allow. Arrangements with other delivery partners will be confirmed as details emerge.

EAFRD

For EAFRD projects, selection criteria (to be determined by the Managing Authority but to include an element of local input) will include consideration of:

- **Eligibility:** ensuring compliance with programme regulations.
- **Need for public support:** to test that activity would not proceed in its absence and that it is an appropriate use of public funds.
- **Displacement:** to ensure that activity will not result in customers moving from one local business to another.
- **Value for money:** through comparison of the outputs to be delivered by the project compared to benchmark costs and those reported by other projects.
- **Sustainability:** through review of a business plan to demonstrate how forecast benefits will be sustained in the long term.
- **Deliverability/measurability:** to test that the proposal is realistic and that the proposed outputs are both deliverable in light of proposed activity and measurable.
- **Exit strategy:** for non-capital grants, a clear and realistic strategy is required to show how both activity and associated benefits will be sustained beyond the funding period.

¹¹ In the case of opt-in activities (where no call specification will be issued) the assessment will consider the alignment of proposed investments with local needs.

Section 9 - Management and Governance Arrangements

The ESIF Committee

Remit

The ESIF Committee has been established in shadow form since October 2014 (evolving from the European Programme Board) to ensure that NEP is in a position to start delivery once the programme has been agreed by the European Commission. Terms of reference have been prepared and agreed in accordance with national guidelines to ensure there is clarity around remit and membership. A code of conduct has also been accepted to ensure that there is transparency and fairness in all member activities.

The ESIF Committee's primary remit will be four fold:

- Providing guidance at the outset of calls to ensure activity responds to local needs and targets wherever possible;
- Securing local awareness and interest in the opportunities presented by ESIF investments (e.g. to include local bids and take up of services);
- Giving local insight to the contractor selection process;
- Retaining strategic oversight of programme performance.

Responsibilities

Through agreed arrangements, all Members should:

- Be empowered to speak on behalf of their sector and its constituencies, providing the agreed position in relation to issues discussed at meetings
- Have an understanding of the economic context in Northamptonshire
- Understand local investment priorities and have knowledge of the local conditions, needs and opportunities to bring forward operations that meet the strategy and objectives set out in the national Operational Programmes
- Be familiar with the Northamptonshire ESIF including Cross Cutting Themes and the outputs and results sought
- Work collectively to identify solutions or innovative ways to deliver Programme aims within EU Regulations
- Understand the strategic context for investment decisions taken and be able to take part in discussions around project investment
- Offer analytical input to the issues / investments under discussion
- Access a wider network for advice on specific issues.

Membership

A strong range of interests has been secured (as shown in the table below) to allow the programme to gain from the experiences of members with a range of skills sets and broad subject knowledge. Membership reflects the requirements to engage the breadth of partners specified in Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulations and the Code of Conduct on Partnership, and to be representative of the local population. Membership decisions have also taken account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with and without a protected characteristic.

| ESIF Committee Membership | |
|--|---|
| Cllr Andre Gonzalez De Savage, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (Elected Chair) | Jane Carr, Northampton Volunteering Centre (Voluntary & community sector) |
| Cllr Tom Beattie, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) | Anjona Roy, Rights and Equalities Council (Equalities and anti-discrimination) |
| Richard Woods, NEP (European Programme Office) | Professor Simon Denny, University of Northampton (Higher Education) |
| Melanie Crunkhorn, DCLG (ERDF Managing Authority) (Deputy Chair) | Karen Lewis, University of Northampton (Higher Education) |
| Amrik Singh, DWP (ESF Managing Authority) | Andrea Hughes, Moulton College (Further Education) |
| Michael Stubbs, DEFRA (EAFRD Managing Authority) | Danny Moody, Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Town and Parish Councils) |
| Naomi Green, BIS (BIS Local) | Emma Powlett, Powlett and Associates (Rural) |
| Steve Boyes, Northampton Borough Council (Local Authority) | Barry Davies, Davies & Co/North and West Northamptonshire LEADER Local Action Group Partnership (Rural) |
| Jon Hinde, Northampton Borough Council (Local Authority) | Daniel Curtis, Environment Agency (Environment) |
| Greg Ward, South Northamptonshire District Council (Local Authority) | Matt Latham, Environment Agency (Environment) |
| Ian Achurch, Northamptonshire County Council (Local Authority) | Simon Bovey, Local Nature Partnership (Environment) |
| Phoebe Edwards, EMBLTD (Private sector) | Jacqueline Moody, DCLG (Northamptonshire ESIF Committee Secretariat) |
| Lee Barron, TUC (Trade Union) | |

Meetings are also attended by a representative of the Skills Funding Agency, and the NEP Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer plus invited officers and individuals required to support the work programme, with all such attendances to be agreed by the Chair.

All members have been appointed for a three year term. A review in 2017 will provide an opportunity to refresh membership where necessary to reflect any changes in programme focus.

Ensuring Partner Involvement

Successful delivery of the ESIF requires NEP to work with a wide range of partner organisations with both local and national interests and knowledge. Partner engagement has been secured through our programme governance arrangements but will also be strengthened as delivery begins.

As examples we will work with partners to:

- alert them to contract opportunities;
- have them as project deliverers;
- secure anecdotal evidence of programme performance and any issues arising over time; and
- publicise opportunities for individuals and businesses to access support through the programme.

Key partners supporting programme delivery will continue to be engaged through the governance structure and invited to attend meetings as appropriate.

Opportunities for Cross-LEP Working

Our overlapping geography with the South East Midlands LEP¹² means that we need to carefully consider how we publicise and deliver the programme to ensure compliance and that businesses and individuals have a single point of entry to support. We are working collaboratively to develop new arrangements and intend to continue to do so as the programme goes live. For example, regular communication through the joint Delivery and Compliance Group will ensure there is no duplication of activity and that potential compliance risks are minimised. The terms of reference for this group are provided in Appendix 1.

We also recognise that there may be wider potential opportunities to secure value from working in partnership with other LEPs will continue to be considered. To date we have identified value in exploring a joint Access to Finance financial instrument with other LEPs in the sub-region, ensuring that we can secure activity on a sufficient scale to make it cost effective and efficient.

Over time there may be further cases where we wish to commission activity in collaboration with over-lapping/neighbouring LEPs in the future. For example in our PIDs to the SFA we have stated that although specifications have not been developed in collaboration with other LEPs (particularly where there are overlapping geographies), we would consider working together if common requirements have been identified. In these instances we would agree:

- Areas of common interest;
- Commissioning approaches (if outside the opt-ins);
- Any shared common requirements of delivery partners;
- The level of resource to be routed through the call; and
- Shared output targets.

Retaining Oversight of Programme Performance

Ensuring we secure greatest value and progress towards our ambitions will require regular and open review of performance, including targets achieved/progressed against and the effectiveness of ways of working. Whilst we recognise that NEP does not have any monitoring remit, we do wish to ensure that the performance of both individual contracts and the programme overall remains under regular review, allowing us to challenge performance where necessary and consider new delivery approaches in limited cases.

A series of processes and actions are proposed to ensure this occurs on a regular basis including:

- Programme performance will be a standing agenda item on the ESIF Committee agenda including consideration of any issues encountered and proposed remedial actions;
- Regular liaison with opt-in partners to reflect on progress and the inclusion of break clauses at the mid programme point to allow different approaches to be considered if necessary;
- Ongoing discussions with other national delivery partners.

¹² Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and South Northamptonshire sit in both the NEP and SEMLEP geographies.

Appendix 1- Governance Bodies' Terms of Reference

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ESIF COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

GOVERNANCE AND PURPOSE OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ESIF COMMITTEE

The Growth Programme Board is the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for both the ERDF and the ESF Operational Programmes in England. It will assume the formal role of PMC once the Operational Programmes for the relevant Funds are agreed by the EC.

The local sub-Committee, hereafter the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee, is responsible for the strategic oversight of local investments of both the Structural and EAFRD Growth Programme Funds and their operational delivery in line with the Operational Programme. It reports directly to the Growth Programme Board (PMC). The national PMC will be supported by a number of national thematic and functional subcommittees. The local sub-committees report directly to the PMC, but where relevant will be directed by the national sub-committees as remitted by the PMC.

OBJECTIVE OF COMMITTEE

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee is responsible for the development and delivery of the Northamptonshire ESIF strategy, ensuring that local strategic aims are considered alongside national strategic and operational objectives and that maximum impact is achieved through the Funds, thereby contributing to delivery of the overall national Operational Programmes. It is responsible for ensuring operational delivery of activity supported by the Funds, overseeing the development of an appropriate pipeline of proposals; agreeing investments; and monitoring performance against targets at the Northamptonshire level.

STATUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA ESIF COMMITTEE

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee is an integral part of the governance structure required to deliver the England 2014-2020 ERDF and ESF Programmes through its management of the Northamptonshire ESIF strategy and demonstrates England's commitment to delivery of ERDF and ESF Programmes and allocated EAFRD in the spirit of the partnership principle that is embedded in the Common Provisions Regulations.

The role of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee is detailed in the Implementing Provisions chapter of the England ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes. The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will act as a sub-committee of the Growth Programme Board (Programme Monitoring Committee), and on its behalf in any formally delegated areas of business.

Northamptonshire ESIF Committee decisions will be taken using a consistent and transparent process. Agreed minutes and relevant documents (such as details of calls, Opt-In arrangements, reports and case studies) will be published on a publicly accessible site or location. Reports and decisions agreed by the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will be reported to the Growth Programme Board (and/or its relevant national level sub-committees) and, where appropriate, the EAFRD PMC by the Managing Authorities. Decisions by the GPB and its sub-committees will be reported back to the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee.

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will set up and make publicly available a fair and transparent process for dealing with complaints.

These Terms of Reference form the basis for shadow operation of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee. Once the Operational Programmes for Funds for which local ESIF Committees are responsible are adopted by the European Commission, Terms of Reference and, thereby, the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will be formally ratified by the Growth Programme Board (as formal PMC).

The EAFRD PMC will be the PMC for all EAFRD funds. The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will not be a sub-committee of the EAFRD PMC but will assist the EAFRD Managing Authority by performing the activities set out in the paragraphs below where those activities are relevant to EAFRD spend which is part of the EU Growth Programme.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ESIF COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will act in accordance with the regulations governing ESIF operations and as directed by the Growth Programme Board (PMC). It will support delivery of the Operational Programmes at the local level in the following ways, having due regard to the impact on equalities throughout in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and making recommendations as to mitigating measures, where appropriate:

- Develop and agree an Implementation Plan with the Managing Authorities (MAs) . a rolling plan reviewed annually setting out how the local ESIF strategy will be delivered and how it will contribute to the Operational Programmes, including any cross-boundary working with other LEP areas.
- Develop and agree with the MAs the entry routes into the Programme and how progress will be tracked, including (1) type of calls for operations, timing of calls, scope and fit with local priorities as identified in the Northamptonshire ESIF Implementation Plan; and (2) delivery through Opt-In organisations, and scope and fit with local priorities as identified in the Northamptonshire ESIF Implementation Plan. This will reflect a clear understanding of the types of project which will attract funding.
- Agree work with the MAs to develop local promotion and publicity for the opportunities that the Funds provide for economic growth. The MAs will also promote calls for investment as part of their MA function. Such promotion must be directed towards all relevant local partners and the Committee must monitor its effectiveness.
- Develop a pipeline of operations that meet local needs in line with the Operational Programmes, Northamptonshire ESIF strategy and Implementation Plan.
- Discuss and agree with the MA arrangements for oversight of procured provision with Opt-In organisations and wider engagement.
- Assess potential operations at outline and full application stage (including Opt-Ins) against the Northamptonshire ESIF strategy for their strategic fit, value for money, fit with overall ESIF objectives, alignment with relevant local strategies, policies and context and complementarity with interventions funded through local private and public sector sources in an open and transparent manner. Local intelligence will be provided by committee members and, with the agreement of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee, through written assessment focussing on the above. Any local assessments must use a methodology which is open, fair and transparent and agreed by the Committee.
- Use any local assessment and the MAs appraisal to make recommendations and agree with the MAs: the selection of operations and Opt-Ins, especially in regard to prioritisation, additional opportunities, and the fit with local needs.
- Agree oversight of delivery of operations and outputs, including working with Opt-In organisations to ensure alignment of procured and competitively selected provision with local priorities and leading discussions with the MAs where performance of operations at a local level is falling behind.

- Agree with the MAs the level and detail of information required to monitor the progress of ESIF implementation against spend, milestones, cross-cutting themes, outputs and results agreed in the Northamptonshire ESIF strategy and Implementation Plan, recommending remedial actions where necessary and relating progress to local indicators.
- Report progress and feed in to national processes as directed by the Growth Programme Board as appropriate (PMC).
- Inform and oversee programme evaluation as appropriate at the local level which will be agreed with and carried out on its behalf by the MAs, including a mid-term review in 2018, in line with the national Evaluation Strategy.
- Ensure there are clear governance and /or working arrangements agreed with the MA for the operation of CLLD and SUD within their local area where they are using these instruments to ensure that all activities supported by the ESIFs are complementary in planning and execution.
- Have the power to form partnerships with other ESIF committees where both Committees, including the MAs, decide this would be appropriate to secure the delivery of projects.
- Have oversight of delivery of programme objectives through Financial Instruments where investment in these has been agreed by the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee and receive reports on their performance.
- Fulfil other functions as appropriate commissioned by the Growth Programme Board or as outlined in the published business process and guidance.
- Propose major ERDF and ESF projects before submission to the Growth Programme Board. Major ERDF and ESF projects agreed at Growth Programme Board (PMC) level will be submitted for a decision by the European Commission.
- Consider and influence the contribution which other European programmes in the programme area are making to the overall strategy for the Structural Funds. Complementary actions between the ESI Funds Growth programme and other European programmes will be considered and pursued via the official routes as appropriate.

MEMBERSHIP

The composition of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will reflect the breadth of partners specified in Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulations and the Code of Conduct on Partnership, and be representative of the population of the geographic area covered by the Northamptonshire ESIF strategy. In putting together the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee, the LEP and government will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with and without a protected characteristic.

Members are:

- Cllr Andre Gonzalez De Savage, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (Shadow Chair)
- Cllr Tom Beattie, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Melanie Crunkhorn, DCLG (ERDF Managing Authority) (Deputy Chair)
- Amrik Singh, DWP (ESF Managing Authority)
- Michael Stubbs, DEFRA (EAFRD Managing Authority)
- Jan Pinkerton, BIS (BIS Local)
- Jacqueline Moody, DCLG (ESIF Committee Secretariat)
- Steve Boyes, Northampton Borough Council (Local Authority)
- Jon Hinde, Northampton Borough Council (Local Authority)

- Greg Ward, South Northamptonshire District Council (Local Authority)
- Ian Achurch, Northamptonshire County Council (Local Authority)
- Phoebe Edwards, EMBLTD (Private sector)
- Jane Carr, Northampton Volunteering Centre (Voluntary & community sector)
- Anjona Roy, Rights and Equalities Council Northamptonshire (Equalities and anti-discrimination)
- Matt Latham, Environment Agency (Environment)
- Daniel Curtis, Environment Agency (Environment)
- Simon Bovey, Local Nature Partnership (Environment)
- Lee Barron, TUC (Trade Union)
- Professor Simon Denny, University of Northampton (Higher Education)
- Karen Lewis, University of Northampton (Higher Education)
- Andrea Hughes, Moulton College (Further Education)
- Emma Powlett, Powlett and Associates (Rural)
- Barry Davies, Davies & Co/ North and West Northamptonshire LEADER Local Action Group Partnership (Rural)
- Danny Moody, Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Town and Parish Councils)
- Richard Woods, NEP (European Programme Office)

Stuart Parkes of the Skills Funding Agency and Jo Lappin and Sajeeda Rose of NEP will attend the meetings in an advisory capacity. The Board will also invite other officers and individuals to support their work programme as and when necessary, as agreed by the Chair.

TERM OF OFFICE

Membership will be for a three year term. The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will review its membership in 2017 to ensure its composition of skills remain relevant to investments still to come forward through the Programme. Where members leave before that time, representatives will be sought again from the sector/organisation they are representing. Membership will also be refreshed as needed to reflect any changes in relevant EU and national regulations (and policy) as directed by the Growth Programme Board (PMC).

ROLES WITHIN THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ESIF COMMITTEE

Successful delivery of funds within the EU Growth Programme will depend on close working between the MA and Local Enterprise Partnerships and wider partners. This will be based on a clear split of roles and responsibilities and the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will provide a formal basis for this relationship. For the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee, the LEP will convene local partners on a fully inclusive basis consistent with the good practices and principles in the European Code of Conduct on Partnership.

The Chair will be selected from amongst members of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee by consensus. The LEP will organise the selection process, supported by the Managing Authority. In the absence of a candidate or in the absence of a consensus decision being reached the ERDF or ESF Managing Authority will undertake the role of Chair until such a consensus is reached at which time the consensus candidate will take office and the ERDF or ESF Managing Authority representative will stand down into the Deputy Chair role.

The Managing Authorities are responsible for managing the Operational Programmes in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. The ERDF or ESF MA will act as Deputy Chair, unless the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee has appointed the Managing

Authority as Chair. The other Managing Authorities (ERDF or ESF and EAFRD) will be members of the committee.

All Members should:

- Be empowered to speak on behalf of their sector and its constituencies, providing the agreed position in relation to issues discussed at meetings
- Have an understanding of the economic context in Northamptonshire
- Understand local investment priorities and have knowledge of the local conditions, needs and opportunities to bring forward operations that meet the strategy and objectives set out in the national Operational Programmes
- Be familiar with the Northamptonshire ESIF including Cross Cutting Themes and the outputs and results sought
- Work collectively to identify solutions or innovative ways to deliver Programme aims within EU Regulations
- Understand the strategic context for investment decisions taken and be able to take part in discussions around project investment
- Offer analytical input to the issues / investments under discussion
- Access a wider network for advice on specific issues.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee chair will ensure members are aware of their obligations relating to data protection, confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Members will be required to complete a register of relevant interests (including pecuniary and non-pecuniary, personal or other interests, and declaring any gifts or hospitality received in their capacity as Member). Members will also be required to declare an interest in any agenda items where a decision is required and the decision may cause a direct material impact, financial or otherwise, either personally or to the organisation or institution they are representing. In such circumstances it will be a matter for the Chair to decide if the member can attend and/or contribute to the discussion, but Members may also choose to absent themselves for the duration of that discussion to avoid actual or any appearance of undue influence. Conflicts of interest should be identified to the Chair and minuted. At least once in every 12-month period, all Members must review the information relating to him or her contained in the register of interests and declare that the information is correct or make a further declaration if necessary. Members must also report any suspicions of fraud or malpractice to the Committee so that this can be escalated to the MA and GPB as appropriate.

The Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will objectively review proposals for their ability to deliver the aims of the Operational Programmes, the ESIF strategy and value for money, and their alignment with relevant national policies. The Managing Authorities cannot agree to the selection of operations that do not fit the Operational Programmes and/or are non-compliant with the regulations governing the Programme. They are obliged to overturn advice from the Committee to invest where a proposal cannot demonstrate compliance with EU Regulations or fit with the national Operational Programmes.

The Managing Authorities will not approve any operations that have not been agreed by the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee as meeting the ESIF strategy for which the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee is responsible. Collaboration is key to driving economic growth regardless of administrative boundaries, so the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee will commit to investigating opportunities for delivering activity in collaboration with other areas in England where sensible and appropriate.

Recommendations of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee in relation to individual investments remain confidential until such time as the MA informs members that a formal decision has been made.

DECISION MAKING

Decisions will be taken by consensus; by exception dissent from a majority decision will be recorded in the minutes. The Chair does not hold a deciding vote where consensus is not reached.

RECORDING MEETINGS

All meetings and decisions will be minuted. Minutes will normally be circulated no later than 10 working days after a meeting for approval by members (with a nil response taken as endorsement). Minutes will be agreed by the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee as confirmation of a true record of a meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Members must be able to attend regularly and be able to devote necessary time to any preparatory work. Members missing more than 30% of meetings in a twelve month period or three meetings in a row may be asked to step down by the MA in its role as Secretariat after consultation with the Chair.

Members unable to attend are not permitted to send a substitute unless the substitute has been agreed in advance by the Chair; it is suggested that all members should nominate a deputy for this purpose. Members who cannot attend may either write to the Chair through the Secretariat prior to the meeting expressing views to be taken into account, or mandate their deputy to give views on their behalf.

The organisation that the member represents shall be responsible for reimbursing any reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee by that member.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Meetings will typically take place quarterly, but may be required more frequently. Meeting dates for each calendar year will be provided in advance. The ERDF/ESF Managing Authority will provide the secretariat for the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee, managing dates, venues, minute taking, recording decisions and collating and circulating papers, working closely with the Committee and the Chair. Agendas will be agreed between the Chair and the lead Managing Authority. Members may propose agenda items via the Chair.

Papers will be electronically circulated a minimum of 5 working days in advance of a meeting. Any paper not so circulated will not be considered without a majority of the Committee agreeing to do so on a case by case basis.

The Managing Authorities will provide and present:

- Appraisal reports and recommendations
- ESIF level performance progress report, identifying any issues for consideration
- Messages from Growth Programme Board (PMC) and, where appropriate, its national level sub-committees
- Minutes of last meeting for approval; decisions will be made publicly available.
- Other items as agreed in advance with the Chair.

The Chair may, where necessary, circulate papers or proposals to members via the Secretariat for agreement by written procedures, with two weeks allowed for comment, unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. Nil responses will be taken as endorsement. It should be assumed that such comments will be considered unless Committee members are advised otherwise.

QUORATE

Meetings of the Northamptonshire ESIF Committee may proceed without a quorum of members present, but in those circumstances in principle decisions will be made for ratification at the next quorate meeting or in writing by the full Northamptonshire ESIF Committee. For these purposes a quorum is considered to be not less than 60% of the total number of Group members. It is for the Chair to be satisfied that the quorum constitutes a sufficient cross-section of member interests.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Where the Committee is unable to reach a consensus or is not acting in accordance with the Terms of Reference or the Code of Conduct, such that members wish to escalate this to the Growth Programme Board (PMC), the national level [Performance management] Sub-Committee will be the mechanism for resolving such disputes.

DELIVERY AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The Delivery and Compliance Review Group will ensure that all ESIF related activity within the Northamptonshire overlapping geography (Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and South Northamptonshire) is effectively mobilised, delivered, and managed, and is compliant with all regulatory and audit requirements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Delivery and Compliance Review Group will:

Delivery

1. Collectively monitor the economic evidence base for the overlap geography to ensure that activity is commissioned in line with businesses and individual needs.
2. Review emerging investment proposals and ensure that there is sufficient public funding available to match these and sufficient interest and appetite to absorb these.
3. Produce commissioning frameworks/calls for ERDF and ESF bids and submit these to the NEP and SEMLEP European Programme Board for approval.
4. Develop mechanisms to deliver joint commissioning/calls for action, where these are clearly in the best interest of the end user.
5. Provide a mechanism to collectively consider delivery capability within the provider base, to avoid any organisation over extending its financial or delivery capability.
6. Review bids for ESIF funding to NEP and SEMLEP to ensure that there is no duplication of funding.
7. Develop and monitor a protocol which ensures that each LEP demonstrates the added value of its interventions.
8. Collectively monitor financial and output, outcome and results targets to ensure that these are being met and any under performance in the overlap geography is quickly identified and addressed.

Risk

9. Identify key compliance and delivery risks and report these to each LEP's respective European Programme Board, and where appropriate escalated to the main NEP and SEMLEP Boards.

Compliance

10. Develop programme monitoring and reporting arrangements that detail investment at the level of business and individual beneficiaries, to provide full visibility of all ESIF

related activity.

11. Review SME project and individual beneficiary lists from Opt-In agencies and direct applicants to ensure that there is no potential for double funding.
12. Develop arrangements to monitor State Aid and other regulatory requirements in the overlapping geography.
13. Review SME project and individual beneficiary lists from Opt-In agencies and direct applicants to ensure State Aid and other regulatory requirements.
14. Develop and implement shared intelligence arrangements for the performance management of Opt-In bodies and direct applicants.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership will consist of:

- NEP and SEMLEP European Programme Board Chairs (Co-Chairs)
- SEMLEP AND NEP Chief Executives
- NEP and SEMLEP Senior European Officers
- Senior Representative from Accountable Bodies for SEMLEP and NEP
- Nominated representatives of the Managing Authority

CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS

The Delivery and Compliance Review Group will be co-chaired by the Chairs of NEP and SEMLEP European Programme Boards. The Group will provide regular performance reports to each LEPs respective European Programme Board, highlighting any delivery and compliance issues.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Delivery and Compliance Review Group has a dual reporting line and is directly accountable to the European Programme Boards of NEP and SEMLEP.

MEETINGS

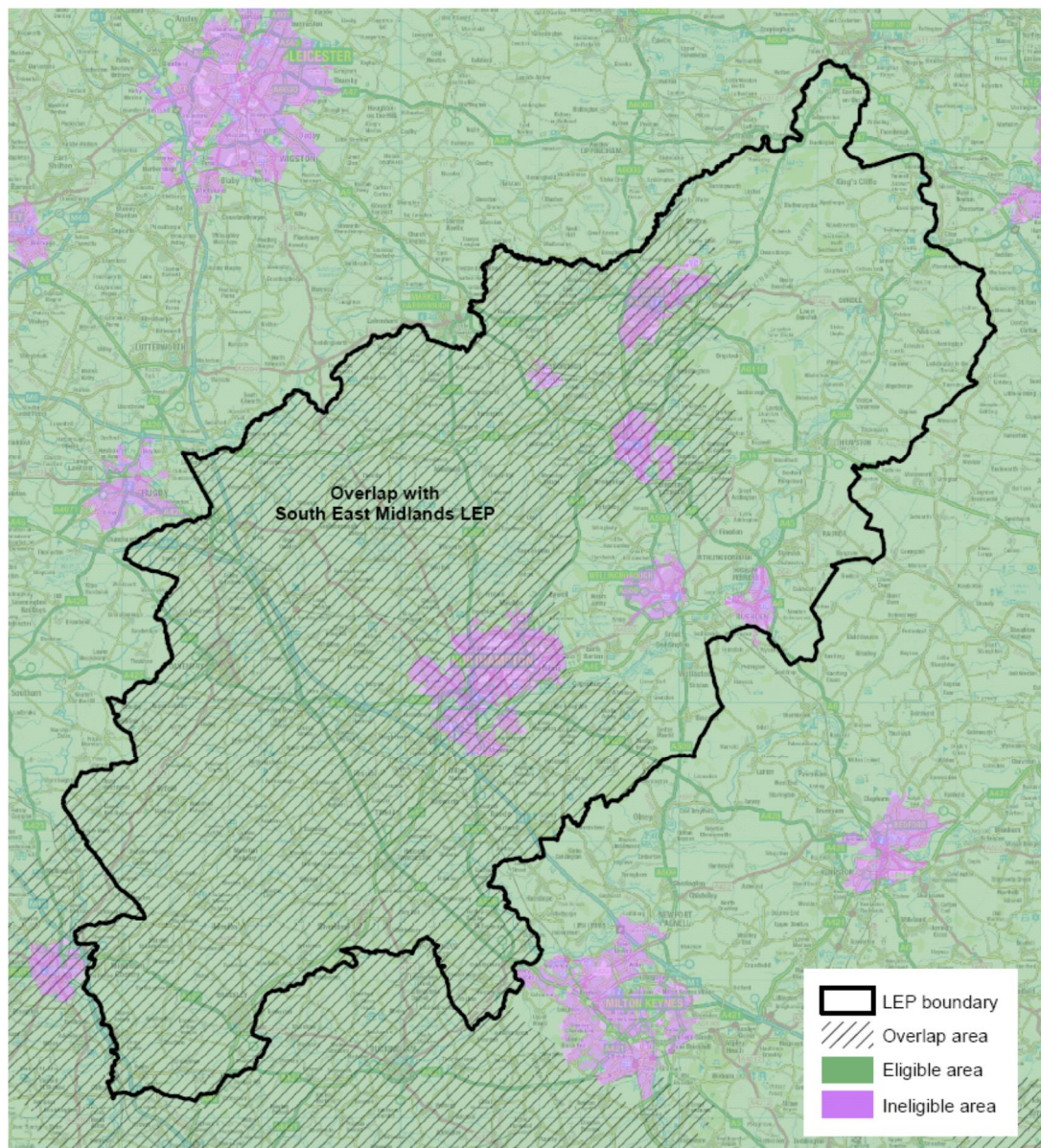
Meetings will initially take place on a monthly basis dropping to bi-monthly thereafter. The Co-Chairs will determine whether these need to occur more or less frequently as business determines.

Appendix 2 - Northamptonshire Area Eligible for EAFRD Investment



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Northamptonshire Areas eligible for EAFRD investment within Local Enterprise Partnerships



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Ordnance Survey Licence
No. 100022861
Rural Statistics Unit, Defra
rural.statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk

0 2.5 5 10 Miles

Source: Defra