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<b>Meeting &amp; Date:</b>	Joint Strategic Economic Committee Meeting – 14 February 2017		
<b>Subject:</b>	European Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014-2020		
<b>Attachments:</b>	None		
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<b>Papers are provided for:</b>	Approval <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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### Summary & Recommendation:

#### General Report

ESIF programmes have reopened to calls after the recent hiatus following the EU-referendum. Calls for projects under the rural growth programme and ERDF low carbon have been published. Local specifications for the next call rounds for both European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are in development.

The technical assistance project has begun its activities to support and publicise the ERDF programme. The sub-Committee will have a busy year, advising government on the strategic fit of proposals bidding for the remaining ERDF and ESF allocations, and advising on rural business grant applications. It will meet in April, July and November.

#### Programmes

##### European Social Fund (ESF)

Swindon and Wiltshire is now contracted, deploying £12m of funding, (almost 75% of the ESF allocation). The SWLEP is agreeing the reporting and monitoring regimes for the provision with co-funding organisations and supporting an integrated local delivery infrastructure by working closely with both local authority partners to ensure coverage is maximised and the provision is visible and accessible.

In summary Programme performance figures are:

<b>ESF – Committed funds</b>		Allocation	Contracted amount	% of allocation contracted	Remaining allocation <sup>1</sup>
<b>Priority 1</b>	Inclusive Labour Markets	£9.07m	<b>£7.75m</b>	85%	£1.32m
<b>Priority 2</b>	Skills for Growth	£7.85m	<b>£4.89m</b>	62%	£2.96m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£16.92</b>	<b>£12.64m</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>£4.28m</b>

### **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

In late December 2016, three calls valued at £5m ERDF for Low Carbon projects were launched, calling projects to deliver (a) Energy Efficient Businesses, (b) Enabling Renewables and (c) Low Carbon Built Environment. The calls close on 17 February 2017.

The ERDF already has projects committed for over £6m of support, including the under construction Porton Science Incubator and health and life science hub, the SME Growth project linked to the Enterprise Network and regional projects for manufacturers, growing exports and business innovation. The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub is working to bring together ERDF and ESF projects to ensure integrated support for SMEs with events in planning.

In summary Programme performance figures are:

<b>ERDF – Committed funds</b>		Allocation	Committed to contracts	% of allocation contracted	Remaining allocation <sup>2</sup>
<b>Priority 1</b>	Research & development	£6.72m	£4m	59%	£2.72m
<b>Priority 3</b>	SME Competitiveness	£4.78m	£2.21m	71%	£2.57m
<b>Priority 4</b>	Low Carbon Economy	£5.43m	£0m	0%	£5.43m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£16.95m</b>	<b>£6.21m</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>£10.72m</b>

<sup>1</sup> Subject to future iterations of £:€ exchange rate.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to future iterations of £:€ exchange rate and change request by Skills Funding Agency.

## **Programme developments**

### **Rural Growth Programme**

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has published [national calls](#) and local businesses are now able to apply for capital grants to support a range of growth projects. Grants are available to food processing businesses, rural tourism accommodation providers and visitor attractions, and for business developments linked to natural capital.

The SWLEP is organising a [Rural Business Grants](#) event (in Devizes 8 February 2017) to help businesses apply for grants. John Mortimer will chair the event which will feature an RPA applicants' workshop, sessions on local priorities, the LEADER programme and will be joined by local providers of business support and workforce skills support.

### **Technical Assistance project**

Swindon and Wiltshire is now receiving additional support for the ERDF programme. A small team is being assembled to publicise and promote the opportunities from the funding and to support further development of the programme. Activities to date have included holding an ERDF low carbon calls information session with the Managing Authority and attended by 20 businesses. Interest has been strong and indicates a healthy pipeline of proposals. The technical assistance project will continue to support low carbon project development with delivery commencing in late summer.