

WEST MIDLANDS ERDF LOCAL MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE 2007-13

Wednesday 11 January 2012

Item 8: Communications Plan and Activities Update

Objective

- i Local Management Sub-Committee members to note and endorse the revised European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Communications Plan for the period April 2012 to the end of the Programme.

Recommendation(s)

- i LMC Sub-Committee members note the revised documentation and endorse the Communications Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Structural Fund Implementing Regulation (*Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006*) was adopted on 8 December 2006. The regulation includes articles relating to the provision of information and publicity strategies and measures. Working in partnership with regional stakeholders, the Programme Delivery Team: West Midlands is the body responsible for the management of the programme and production and delivery of the Communications Plan.
- 1.2 The first version of the Communications Plan was approved in April 2008 by the European Commission and the Programme Monitoring Committee. Following this the plan has been reviewed and updated annually.
- 1.3 The Communications Plan has been revised to ensure the content is fit for purpose and reflective of the direction for the communications activities. In addition to this the plan also ensures that the current economic climate and impact on funding levels are taken into consideration.
- 1.4 Communication and publicity activities are of critical importance to the delivery of the ERDF Programme. The proposed measures and activities will raise the profile and awareness of the Programme with regional stakeholders and ERDF beneficiaries and provide assistance to meet all European Commission targets set.

2. Completed Activities Update

- 2.1 During 2011 – 2012 a suite of communication activities were delivered aimed at promoting and raising awareness of the West Midlands ERDF Programme. Full details are included in the Review Report which will be updated in March to cover the completed financial year. Key highlights will include:
 - Two partnership events on the consultation of the mid term evaluation
 - Establishment of a new website section (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/regenerationfunding/europeanregionalevelopment/westmidlands/>)
 - Updated promotional materials, including a Funding Guide, following transfer of the Programme from Advantage West Midlands to DCLG
 - A visit to Coventry in May by Communities Minister Baroness Hanham

- Production of a case study booklet for the projects supported to date
- Regular email updates and enewsletters to partners featuring latest news, Programme developments and project case studies
- Series of press releases and media activities completed on key approved projects and announcements
- Launch and use of social media channel Twitter to promote achievements and stories (<https://twitter.com/#!/erdfwmnews>)

2.2 In addition to the delivery of local activities, the West Midlands has played a key active role within the wider National DCLG ERDF Communications Network which was set up in July 2011. The West Midlands are leading the standardisation activities for publicity, have developed the strategy for the network, produced a toolkit for all teams to use and together with Yorkshire and Humber are responsible for updating all ERDF Programme website pages. This role will continue over the coming year.

3. Planned Activities

- 3.1 During 2012 – 2013 a full programme of activities are scheduled to be delivered. Full details of all activities can be viewed in the Communications Plan. Key activities include:
- A partnership event, capacity building workshops and a visit to the region by Communities Minister Baroness Hanham
 - Production of 'A Guide to Funding for Private Sector Businesses'
 - Annual Review 2012
 - Regular enewsletters and Programme Updates
 - Refreshed Case Study booklet
 - Media activities on key approved projects

Paper prepared by: Lynsey Cooke
Communications Manager

Paper presented by: Mark Foley
Head of the Programme Delivery Team: West Midlands

Date: January 2012