

LMC/2012/July /Paper 2

## Local Management Committee

Subject: **East of England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)  
Competitiveness Programme 2007-20013**

### ***Minutes from April 2012 LMC meeting***

Report by: **Nina Cunningham, Manager Programme Management team, DCLG**

Contact: **0303 444 6413** [nina.cunningham@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nina.cunningham@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

#### **Summary**

This paper provides the a summary of the key points made in April LMC meeting

#### **Summary of Key Points**

- The Programme Delivery action plan which sets out key actions to help achieve a number of key targets including N+2 2012, was agreed.
- It was agreed that the programme Management paper should be reviewed so that the information is clearer.
- Revisions were agreed to the TOR for the ERDF CDG and General Improvement Group and revisions to the Technical Assistance Strategy.
- The East of England Annual Implementation Report for 2011 was agreed.
- A discussion was had in relation to how the LEPs could best access ERDF funding. It was agreed that a proposal from the LEPs would be taken to the next LMC.
- Paul Witcombe provided a useful update from the Herts LEP.
- LMC members were encouraged to respond to consultation in relation to the next ERDF 2014-2020 programme.
- Project showcases were provided for the following projects: Centre for Disability Studies, TGSE, Theatre Zinc and Southend Eco Hub.

#### **Recommendation 1: LMC to approve the April 2012 LMC minutes**

## **Local Management Committee (LMC)**

### **Draft Minutes of meeting 27 April 2012 Held at the Centre for Disability Studies, Essex**

Chair	Neil O'Connor	DCLG
Deputy Chair	George Kieffer	Haven Gateway Partnership
Members	David Morrall	DCLG
	Michael Large	EEBG
	Angela Rowney	Luton CFO
	Andrea Stark	Arts Council
	Paula Grayson	Equality & Diversity chair
	Adrian Cannard	EELGA
	Ian Gregory	BIS Local
	Jason Middleton	New Anglia LEP
	Zoe Manning	University of Essex
	Laurie Heseldon	TUC
	Lorraine George	South East LEP
	Glenn Athey	GCGP LEP
	Paul Witcombe	Hertfordshire LEP
	Geoffrey Van Orden	MEP
Officers	Alastair Rhind	DCLG
	Nina Cunningham	DCLG
	Tom Davies	DCLG
	Howard Partridge	DCLG
Observers	Caroline Ricketts	Office of Geoffrey Van Orden MEP
	Maria Parslow	Office of Vicky Ford MEP
	Sarah Murray	Brussels office
Apologies	Tim Hutchings	Herts Chambers of Commerce
	Kathy Pollard	Liberal Democrat deputy leader of Suffolk CC
	Cllr. Graham Butland	EELGA (Con)
	Mark Mitchell	COVER
	Merja Toikke	EC DG Regio
	Bob Blake	South East & East of England Summit Skills
	Andy Wood	New Anglia LEP
	Guy Mills	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Stuart Agnew MEP	
	Vicky Ford MEP	
	David Campbell	
	Bannerman MEP	
	Cllr Roy Davis	Luton

## **Item 1 Introduction and apologies**

1. LMC chair Neil O'Connor opened the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Neil reminded any new LMC members to sign the Nolan rules declaration document if not done so already which was available from the PDT staff. Neil confirmed that there were no declarations of interests made at this stage.

## **Item 2 Minutes of the LMC meeting on 20 January, paper 1**

2. The January 2012 LMC meeting minutes were approved as a true and fair record. For future meetings, Neil O'Connor advised members that any comments / changes should be e-mailed to the ERDF secretariat in advance of the meeting so that minutes can be signed off at the meetings.
3. **Decision: LMC sign off for January minutes**

## **A ERDF Competitiveness Programme, item 3 paper 2**

4. Two members raised a complaint about them not receiving all the LMC meeting papers via e-mail. David Morrall confirmed that the papers were sent and explained that there was perhaps an issue of the email size of resulting in it not reaching some in-boxes. David agreed that all papers would be PDF'd to ensure that this problem does not happen again.
5. David Morrall provided an overview of the Programme Management paper (paper 2) David confirmed that the take up of funds to date, including projects still preparing full application forms, stands at £86,532,218 or 90.29% of the programme allocation. The error rate for the East of England has slightly increased to 2.65% (from 2.56%) which is marginally above the required 2% required by the Commission. He reviewed the other government funding streams such as the Regional Growth Fund.
6. Geoffrey Van Orden asked a question about how he would like more information about what the money is being spent on – jobs or growth? Sarah Murray commented that the level of funding commitment is impressively high but she queried whether the project spend was on track? In relation to the Regional Growth Fund, she also queried why has there been a delay in the project applicant producing a business case for a Regional Transport project and why isn't there an alignment between the Regional Growth Fund and ERDF funding.
7. David Morrall responded to Geoffrey Van Orden that the outputs from ERDF projects are indeed the most important driver for the work which is covered pages 6 and 7. David confirmed that the paper does cover recently approved projects and confirmed that the level of uncontracted funding, for each PA was also included within the paper. In response to Sarah's query David clarified that in the case of priority axis 1, spend stands at about 50% while the performance for priority axis 2, is much better. David also confirmed that the PDT is unlikely to pursue further thematic bidding round calls as experience has shown that these require

a lot of additional resources to administer when compared with normal rounds. Howard Partridge highlighted how pages 10 to 12 of paper 2 show the programme outputs to address Geoffrey's question about the benefits of the programme.

8. In response to Sarah's RGF query, David confirmed that although the first round of the Regional Growth Fund was focused on larger businesses as the second RGF round was more focused on programme calls, there were more opportunities for using ERDF match funding.
9. Andrea Stark asked what the Local Management Committee members could do, in practical terms, to contribute to the alignment of resources. She gave the example of her organisation, the Arts Council, which is a national funder as a potential ERDF match funder. Neil O'Connor confirmed that the revised membership of the committee should ensure better engagement and expressed his desire for today's meeting to provoke ideas for improved coordination between LMC stakeholders and the ERDF programme. Andrea advised that the LMC should focus on identifying what the potential constraints for making full use of ERDF funding are.
10. Paula Grayson commented on the second result (female safeguarded jobs) on page 12 of Paper 2. She considered that the industry sectors supported by the current ERDF projects are generally those industries that are male dominated and so she highlighted that in the double dip recession, women, in particular, are suffering in the jobs market.
11. Ian Gregory suggested that in paper 2, the table of project information should include the outputs forecast for each individual project.
12. There was a detailed discussion about LEP engagement in ERDF and bringing forward projects for ERDF bidding rounds including a potential LEP focused bidding round and David Morrall concluded that the level of engagement that was needed was not ready yet. The LEPs present confirmed that they did not want a focused bidding round. To take this issue forward Jason Middleton agreed to produce a paper for the discussion at the next LMC meeting
13. **Action: New Anglia to produce a short paper on the synergies between the ERDF programme and LEP business plans for the next LMC meeting**
14. Paul Witcombe asked how spending for the ERDF programme has been affected by the loss of match funding from the regional development agency such as the Grant for Research and Development being transferred to the Technology Strategy Board. Paul also advised that a risk assessment and assessment of constraints should be carried out for each priority axis and commented that in his experience, bidding programmes tend to assess risks from the point of view of administering the programme rather than considering all the wider issues that can affect the programme. David responded to match funding query by confirming that a number of both pipeline and contracted projects were

experiencing problems with securing/retaining match funding which has resulted in the delays and requests for reprofiles.

15. Geoffrey Van Orden advised that the LMC forum should offer strategic direction about what the ERDF money is being spent on rather than getting tied down in bureaucratic processes. Neil O'Connor responded that the decision to split the LMC meeting agenda into 2 halves (programme issues and local issues) was intended to address the issue.
16. Sarah Murray commented that the ERDF programme has supported a wide range of projects and that, in future, the ERDF programme needs to work better at the coordination of its activities with central government initiatives such as the Regional Growth Fund, the Growing Places Fund and Enterprise Zones. She also expressed concern about the Department for Communities and Local Government's restructuring proposal to replace the three Heads for the East of England, the South East and East Midlands Programme Delivery Teams with just one Head of these three teams, stating that this would have negative impacts of the east of England programme leaving very little resource to delivery of head of team responsibilities. Neil O'Connor confirmed that this proposal was still at an early stage and no decision had yet been made the future management arrangements for the PDT's involved.
17. Michael Large suggested that for the ERDF programme, a 'sales' perspective should be adopted and he saw the main challenge to be obtaining match funding from grant applicants. He advised that the key problem that needs addressing is the high level of pipeline projects which fail to progress to full business case applications. He requested that when there are delays in moving from outline to full business case, there needs to be an appropriate investigation and rigorous follow up by the PDT.
18. Jason Middleton on offered an explanation for why pipeline projects are not being converted into ERDF business case applications - in the current economic climate, there is less staff capacity and expertise from local authorities / LEPs to develop ERDF projects. He advised that there needs to be better prioritising of projects by the ERDF team and the local authorities / LEPs.
19. Andrea Stark commented that with the abolition of the Regional Development Agency, there is loss of capacity to align strategic priorities and stated that the LMC offers one of the few alternative forums that are capable of achieving this.
20. For the issue of addressing the problem of pipeline projects not progressing to business case applications, Howard Partridge advised LMC that the PDT is demanding a deadline for grant applicants to submit application forms.
21. David Morrall provided an overview of the 'Programme performance delivery action plan' on pages 17 to 20 of paper 2 which includes a number of measures to help ensure that N+2 2012 target is met. David explained the proposed measures within each of grant stages which aim

to ensure that claw back can be minimised and spending is maximised through such measures as improved promotion of the programme, emphasis on ensuring grant eligibility and compliance in the early stages, applicants use of the MCIS database and robust approaches to appraisal and monitoring. David commented that while progress had been made on programme outputs, continued effort was needed to ensure that OP outputs were met by December 2015 deadline.

22. The Chair commented that the for the recent 'End to End' audit for the ERDF programme in the east of England, the auditors concluded that the systems in place for managing the programme are robust.
23. George Kieffer asked whether consideration should be given for offering additional ERDF funding to existing successful ERDF projects. David agreed that this is permitted under the programme rules and that due consideration will be given to requests coming forward from existing projects.
24. David Morrall requested a member of LMC to volunteer as a champion for N+2 to provide a contact for focusing on spending and delivery issues and involvement in the General Performance Improvement Group meetings. The chair endorsed this proposal and saw it as an important role for doing some work outside of the LMC meetings. Jason Middleton mentioned the reminder e-mail that the Programme Delivery Team had sent to ERDF project managers about the N+2 issue in the autumn and he considered that this type of communication from the secretariat is a useful way of achieving N+2 improvements. As no member of the committee volunteered to become the N+2 champion, David agreed to continue to inform the group on N+2 activity
25. Geoffrey Van Orden asked whether it would be advantageous to review the meeting minutes of the monthly CDG meetings or alternatively receive from the PDT a summary of the CDG meeting decisions in 'real time'. He considered that if this was done, it would offer the advantage of shorter Programme Delivery papers. David Morrall responded that this additional level of work would place excessive demands on the ERDF secretariat to address the issue. The chair proposed the introduction of a one page summary of CDG decisions within the Programme update paper to help LMC members. David Morrall considered that this information is already on the Programme Delivery update paper but agreed that in the future, it could be presented more explicitly. Geoffrey also commented that he would prefer to see a more clearly figure for the amount of ERDF funding remaining within the programme.
26. **Decision: The Chair declared LMC's approval for the programme performance delivery action plan. It was also agreed that the next programme update would take into consideration the comments made by members.**
27. The Chair advised that agenda papers 3 (CDG terms of reference), 4 (General PIG terms of reference) and 5 (TA strategy) are information papers that are related to the change in the managing authority of the programme moving from EEDA to the DCLG and should be approved.

28. Revisions to the General PIG terms of reference mostly reflect the changes from the RDA to DCLG but also include a change of membership and role of the former performance improvement group which will aim to ensure that N+2 and OP targets continue to be met.
29. Paula Grayson asked what is the level of local authority representation at the GPIG meetings? David Morrall responded that although it would vary depending on the project that was being reviewed however Local representation would be taken from a LEP, LA and representative from EELGA .
- 30. Decision: the Terms of reference for the GPIG were accepted**
31. Neil O Connor advised the group that some changes had been made to the CDG terms of reference which included changes in membership to reflect a greater level of LEP representation and changes in the managing authority of the programme moving from EEDA to the DCLG.
32. Ian Gregory proposed that he would like a BIS local representative at CDG meetings and proposed Pete Northover as a potential representative.
33. Sarah Murray commented that for the CDG terms of reference, the proposal is to move from ten local authority representatives to five Local Enterprise Partnership representatives and so she questioned whether there is sufficient local input. David Morrall responded that EELGA will also be represented at CDG and so he considered that there would be enough of a local input. Jason Middleton mentioned that in his role at New Anglia LEP, he regularly attends meetings with Norfolk and Suffolk County Council representatives and so is able to offer that local aspect to his contributions at CDG meetings.
- 34. Decision: the Terms of reference for the CDG were accepted. It was also agreed that A representative from BIS local could attend CDG.**

#### **Item 4 ERDF Annual Implementation report 2011, paper 6**

35. David Morrall outlined the importance of this report which reviews delivery for the previous calendar year. He informed LMC that the report must be submitted by the end of June 2012 as required by EU regulations. David Morrall asked LMC members if they felt that anything else should be included in the AIR report. David Morrall confirmed that the report had been signed off by both the Equality and Diversity and the Environmental and Sustainability sub groups. David commented that the report is rather lacking in content about the regional economic position due to the absence of EEDA which, in the past, were able to provide the update and so he requested any support in terms of data from the LEPs in this regard. He mentioned that the only alternative is to resort to expensive data sets.
36. Sarah Murray commented that the AIR is useful for comprehensively showing the broader programme activity but she felt that it needs firstly some conclusions, recommendations, an executive summary and a page outlining the challenges that the programme faces; secondly she

advises writing a letter to the managing authority (DCLG) summarising these recommendations and challenges. David Morrall responded that the AIR is more of a historical 'look back' document rather a forward looking document to be used proactively to justify a request for change.

37. Jason Middleton highlighted that the Local Enterprise Partnerships are also missing the role of the regional observatory and Insight East, regional structures and access to national indicator sets to demonstrate the baseline economic position for their local areas and the means to capture the demonstrable impacts of their work. He would also appreciate it if his LEP's disappointment about this loss of information could be fed back to central government. Paul Witcombe agreed and said that the Hertfordshire LEP has a staff resource of two and a half people and so it barely has capacity to spare one day for his attendance at LMC meetings, let alone servicing the ERDF secretariat for LMC activities.
38. On the issue of economic data, Andrea Stark asked whether the new BIS business survey would be a useful source of information for the Annual Implementation report. Ian Gregory replied that he would address this in his slot on the agenda about this subject.
39. Adrian Cannard stated that there had been a DCLG consultation (which had just closed) about economic data sets.
40. Action: The chair invited LMC members to e-mail any drafting comments that they may have about the report to the ERDF secretariat
41. **Decision: The 2011 AIR was agreed by LMC.**

## **Item 5 National Evaluation work**

42. David Morrall apologised for not preparing a paper and provided a verbal update instead on the imminent national evaluation work by DCLG. It is a substantial piece of work which will evaluate the impact of the 2007-2013 ERDF programme to date and trends in the programme, achievements and offer an assessment of what has worked well to inform how the next programme for 2014-2020 is devised. David explained that each English region will contribute funding for the study from their individual Technical Assistance budgets. David commented that the geography of the next programme is likely to be different to the current programme. David relaid that a decision in relation to this aspect of next programme was due to be reached in the Autumn.
43. David Morrall alerted LMC members to the fact that the Technical Assistance budget should allow scope for work to be carried out (related to the next 2014-2020 ERDF programme) for co-financing evaluation work for the programme.
44. Andrea Stark asked whether the study will consider geographic and thematic issues. David Morrall responded that yes, it will cover these issues and will be covering the whole country.
45. Sarah Murray asked how much of the technical assistance budget will be devoted to such a study? David Morrall replied that the cost of the study



is forecast to be £150,000 (£75K TA) and so the cost will be split up between the nine regions (~£9K per region). Sarah Murray considered that Technical Assistance should only be given to DCLG centrally if there is enough for local partners to be able to access it for bottom-up evaluation and preparation activity. She asked for a proposal to be tabled at the next meeting. George Kieffer also suggested that TA could be used to commission Insight East to undertake this work and build on existing local intelligence. David Morrall responded that the technical assistance budget available for the ERDF programme is indeed a scarce resource as the East of England region is the second smallest recipient of ERDF funds. David confirmed that £9k was well within the TA budget and encouraged the LMC to agree to this proposal as the work is due to start imminently for completion in the autumn.

- 46. Decision: It was agreed to fund the study provided the TA Budget has sufficient funding to support this work.**

### **Item 6 Communications update, paper 7**

47. Nina Cunningham summarised the paper and the launch event for the Low Carbon Freight Dividend project in March which was attended by Baroness Hanham and Lord Berkley.

### **B Local Agenda, item 7**

48. George Kieffer introduced this section of the agenda and he considered that considerable progress is being made in what is still a rather new political and economic landscape. He thanked each of the LEP representatives for the economic update docs that they had submitted. He highlighted that all the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are now represented at the quarterly LMC and also the monthly CGD meetings (which he chairs) and urged the LEPs to contribute in influencing the development of projects. He considered that if the implication of their involvement means a change to the structure of bidding rounds and any other ERDF procedures he would welcome a discussion about this issue.
49. George Kieffer emphasised that he is particularly keen to get the subject of ERDF funding on to the agendas of LEP meetings because it is a valuable source of funding to contribute to achieving our shared ambition of economic growth. He commented that in terms of the provision of economic research data, it is a challenging area as LEPs do not have the capacity to provide this and also they struggle to have the capacity to write proposals for ERDF funding. He proposed that one solution to this problem could be that the ERDF PDT and LEPs jointly procure the expertise of Insight East in this area.

### **Hertfordshire LEP presentation**

50. Paul Witcombe outlined the LEP's vision, role and priorities. Its vision is to 'accelerate business-led economic growth in Hertfordshire'. The LEP's role is a strategic leader, investor, coordinator / facilitator and advocate.

Hertfordshire has been a successful county in attracting large companies to have bases: Glaxo Smith Kline, EADS Astrium and MBDA. The LEP's priorities are for encouraging enterprise, employment, skills, strategic infrastructure and securing investment. Its board consists of twelve members who include representatives from 5 businesses and 2 SMEs.

51. There are four programme boards (each chaired by a LEP board member) for innovation & enterprise, investment & advocacy, strategic infrastructure and skills & employment. An example of good cross boundary working at the LEP has been the 'Carbon cut out' ERDF project – Broxbourne Borough Council invested in this project even though the investment was not focused on a business centre located within its local authority boundary.
52. Paul Witcombe considered that the business start up rate in Herts is actually quite high but the problem that the LEP faces is converting these existing micro businesses to become larger businesses. The county has lost 900 businesses in the recession. Large and medium sized businesses account for about a half to two thirds of jobs in the county. The LEP is looking to develop a life sciences network. The LEP board recently signed off approval for three projects under the Growing Places fund and this funding has enabled the LEP to unlock several initiatives. The LEP intends to revisit its own governance arrangements as they originally thought that they would have no money to spend. The steer from the Herts LEP board to officers is that they should focus on a limited number of activities. Paul considered that the Herts LEP is working well with the county council and district authorities on developing a planning board.
53. Paul Witcombe provided an update on the Herts ERDF superfast broadband project. The project lost their delivery partner and couldn't secure revenue funding and encountered a problem with State aid as the LEP do not have the capacity to apply for a separate state aid notification. The LEP board decided to withdraw this ERDF bid.
54. Geoffrey Van Orden asked what pots of funding the Herts LEP has available and why can't the LEP bid for funding from DCLG? Paul Witcombe replied that they received £4 million of funding from the Growing Places Fund but other than that, the LEP has received funds peripatetically rather than in any coherent manner. The Chair replied to Geoffrey Van Orden's question by saying that DCLG can not offer LEPs direct funding because they are constrained by the rules for the operating systems for funding LEPs and also ERDF rules mean that ERDF funds can not be used for the preparation costs of developing ERDF projects.
55. Laurie Heseldon said that he hoped that in the next ERDF programme, there will be a better alignment between the LEPs and other government funding streams. He requested a copy of Paul Witcombe's powerpoint presentation. The chair agreed to this request.
56. **Action: PDT to circulate Herts LEP presentation**

57. Sarah Murray considered that obtaining the conclusions and recommendations from all five of the LEP board meetings would be helpful to LMC members to identify each LEP's priorities. Commenting on the LEP updates, in particular, she said that she would like to see more economic intelligence data and not just reporting on their activities.
58. Howard Partridge commented that for Paul Witcombe's powerpoint slide on the subject of Innovation & Enterprise action plan activities – 'business incubator facilities', 'medium sized business growth', 'tailored support for key growth sectors', 'facilitating networking and securing R&D investment', all these areas have a very close strategic fit with the priorities of the ERDF programme.
59. George Kieffer invited verbal updates from the other LEP representatives at the meeting.
60. Jason Middleton stated that for the New Anglia LEP, the new Green Economy LEP pathfinder manifesto would be launched on the 11th of May and this will show links with the ERDF programme. The New Anglia LEP was asked by government to lead a Green Economy Pathfinder project, and to report back with recommendations on how best to achieve the successful transition to a green economy which is so vital to economic recovery and for helping SMEs and all businesses to compete and win in the global marketplace.
61. Lorraine George mentioned that there is a South East LEP funding meeting taking place next week to discuss funding opportunities.
62. Glenn Athey told the group about Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP's £16.1 million funds from the Growing Places Fund, the successful Alconbury Airfield Enterprise Zone bid, the LEP start up funds and capacity funding and also the LEP's plans to recycle loan funds. David Morrall complimented Glenn Athey for the quality of his economic update for the GCGP area.

## **Item 9 BIS local update**

63. Ian Gregory explained that the most recent (3rd) business monthly survey report came out on the 26 April. The survey of 3,000 businesses from across the country is based on changes to the output criteria. Ian considered that it's too early to make conclusions about the usefulness of this new, untested data. He summarised the February report as indicating that businesses are feeling more positive about the economy but those businesses in the East are feeling less confident. He said that he would send LMC members these monthly surveys and would appreciate their feedback.
64. **Action: Ian to circulate monthly business surveys to LMC members via the East of England PDT.**
65. Michael Large urged caution for trying to draw conclusions from such a survey and he gave the view that emphasising negative viewpoints in the media and the national news about the country being in a double dip

recession is a 'technical issue' but is having a very adverse affect on business confidence.

66. Laurie Heseldon agreed that as the survey is representing only a small number of businesses, this survey is not very useful for drawing conclusions about the state of the economy. He recommended the monthly Bank of England agents survey reports as a useful summary of the state of the economy.

## **Items 10 -Cross cutting themes**

67. The Chair noted that items 10 Equalities Group paper as just information papers although he briefly offered opportunity for review to which no comments were raised.

## **Item 11 Cross programme**

68. For the next 2014-2020 ERDF programme, Sarah Murray spoke about how the European Commission published its common strategic framework that offered guidelines on the next programme and how there is a continuing debate about the budget. The Department of Business Innovation and Skills launched an informal consultation on 28 March 2012 to receive input on the partnership contract which will shape delivery of structural funds, rural development funds and maritime and fisheries funds in England from 2014-2020. The consultation closed on 27 April. BIS leads on the negotiation for the partnership contract, business case and plan.
69. For the operational programmes, she mentioned that in the previous week, there was a meeting of local stakeholders in the East of England about what they would like to see in the future programme. She commented that innovation, competitiveness amongst SMEs and low carbon economy are the three themes for the programme, proposed by the Commission and this aligns closely with the current programme in the East of England. She spoke about how the European Forum met last Friday to respond to the BIS consultation and so this was the reason for the late submission of her LMC paper. She summarised how her paper asks questions about the alignment of the Commission's priorities and machinery with the East of England's priorities and structures; new localised tools for investment, the administrative burdens and challenges; how to combine EMFF, ESF and rural funds with ERDF; and new financial instruments that could be applied to ERDF. She asked LMC to send her any responses as she has a few days grace to submit her response to BIS. She mentioned that the Europe International Forum formally signs this response off.
70. **Action: LMC members to send comments on the ERDF 2014-2020 programme to Sarah by 30 April 2012**
71. Geoffrey Van Orden commented that he was unsure which body is best placed to provide the response to BIS. Sarah responded that at a previous LMC meeting, it was agreed that the Europe International

Forum would be the best strategic body to offer a response (that includes LMC).

72. Angela Rowney considered that the themes of worklessness and skills should be addressed in the proposed priorities.
73. David Morrall mentioned that he intends to go to LMC meetings in other regions in England to consult on DCLG's response to the next ERDF programme with the intention of emphasising the importance of economic growth and using ERDF, ESF and other funding streams to complement each other. He promised to offer LMC members a fuller response to developments the LMC meeting in July. Ian Gregory mentioned that BIS local teams will also be disseminating updates about the next ERDF programme to partners across the country.

#### **Item 12- Low carbon venture capital fund**

74. Neil noted the Low Carbon Innovation Fund paper as an information paper. No comments were raised.

#### **Item 13 – RDPE update**

75. David Sillett provided a verbal update on the RDPE programme – common operating systems have now been established to manage the new RDPE products and services e.g. the Farming Forestry Improvement scheme for small grants. The Rural Economy grant is significant as it is for grants of over £25,000 – the 1st round closes the following week. It is focused on farming competitiveness (water, tourism and agrifood). Fifty three outline applications have been received and 28 came from organisations about reservoirs. David apologized for not issuing LMC members with a RDPE update paper.
76. Adrian Cannard asked if there are any RDPE activities that cross over / complement ERDF. David Sillett replied that his team do liaise with the ERDF team but that RDPE tends to invest in private businesses directly which is quite different to ERDF which offers grant to intermediaries on behalf of SMEs.
77. Angela Rowney confirmed that she would circulate her ESF paper to LMC members.

#### **Any Other Business**

78. The chair asked LMC members for volunteer hosts for the next LMC meeting on the 13 July. He mentioned the LMC induction meeting on the 3 May and encouraged LMC members to attend.
79. The meeting was followed by presentations about ERDF projects kindly delivered by Centre for Disability Studies, Theatre Zinc, TGSE and Southend Ecohub projects.

ERDF PDT, July 2012