

## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: 13 November 2013

Subject: **European funding update**

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### Recommendations:

SEEC Executive members are asked to:

- i) Note imminent EU funding opportunities across the South East.
- ii) Ensure individual councils are well engaged with LEPs to influence current development of priorities and ensure accountability of funding programmes.

## 1. Structural Funding opportunities

1.1 New EU Structural funding programmes for 2014-20 will bring together ERDF (economic) and ESF (social) funding to provide a total of around €400m (approx. £340m) of local opportunities across the South East. LEPs will set priorities with local partners, moving away from current South East-wide ERDF and national ESF management. It is expected there will also be a nationally-driven element to the new programmes drawing from these funds, which will need to be reconciled with local priorities. Provisional allocations announced by Government are:

South East LEP	€185.9m <i>[not all in SEEC area]</i>
South East Midlands LEP	€ 88.3m <i>[not all in SEEC area]</i>
Coast to Capital LEP	€ 67.3m
Enterprise M3 LEP	€ 45.7m
Solent LEP	€ 43.1m
Thames Valley Berks LEP	€ 28.7m
Oxfordshire LEP	€ 19.4m
Bucks Thames Valley LEP	€ 13.9m

1.2 Initial comparisons show a slight increase in funding across the South East compared to equivalent 2007-13 programmes, indicating Government listened to SEEC's message that previous allocations did not reflect the scale of the area's opportunities and challenges.

1.3 LEPs were asked to submit draft EU funding strategies to Government by October 2013. Agreement on final proposals is needed in the next few months if funding is to start as planned in 2014. These must link to LEPs' wider growth strategies that will underpin Growth Deals/access to the Single Local Growth Fund from 2015.

1.4 SEEC will continue to make the case to Government for councillor involvement in decision making for forthcoming EU funds at local and national levels to ensure democratic accountability and effective targeting of funds. Individual councils should ensure they are well engaged with LEPs to shape local EU funding plans so that communities and businesses get the most from forthcoming opportunities.

## 2. LEADER locally-led rural EU funding programmes

2.1 As highlighted at SEEC's AGM there is strong local support for rural LEADER programmes, funded through the EU's 2007-13 rural development fund (RDPE). These support community-led projects via Local Action Groups (LAGs) eg. grants for local businesses or community facilities. The Government has confirmed this approach will be supported in the future, making transition funding available where necessary to the South East's 14 LAGs to bridge the gap between current and 2014-20 rural funding programmes. The approach will also be rolled-out more widely through Community Led Development programmes within the 2014-20 Structural Funds (ERDF/ESF).