

VAL Briefing

LLEP Submissions Update



What is the LLEP?

Local Enterprise Partnerships are a statutory responsibility brought in by Government and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) was approved in October 2010. The membership is drawn from the local authorities, business community, universities and third sector.

The LLEP provides local government, the business community and other partners the opportunity to come together to lead economic development and regeneration activities and to drive forward economic growth. (Taken from the LLEP website)

LLEP Review Outcomes

During the last quarter of 2013 the LLEP undertook a review with the resulting strategy designed to establish both the shape of the LLEP and its style.

The Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) LLEP Board Member Steve Kendall submitted a response to the first draft of the strategy and based upon this and other responses the key outcomes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are:

- Restructured Executive Group to include Higher Education / Further Education and a VCS Representative.
- Delegate more decision making powers to speed up processes now that 'delivery mode' is in sight
- Formal and referenced recognition in the final Strategy Document regarding the positive role that the VCS bring to the LLEP. Specifically the reach into communities that VAL and the VCS offer.
- To encourage Community Ambassadors as an addition to the Education and Business Ambassadors to support and promote the work of the LLEP
- Recognition that the VAL representative, Steve Kendall provides both a VAL viewpoint and that of the wider VCS.

The views of the wider VCS are gathered through the discussion and actions of the VCS Sounding Board and the Economic Inclusion Forum.

This increased recognition of the valuable contribution the VCS makes to the local economy and its understanding of local communities and need is a significant step forward. The engagement Leicester and Leicestershire VCS has with the LLEP is being seen as a demonstration of good practice by the VCS in other areas.

European Union Structural Investment Fund (EU SIF)

Through the LLEP, Leicester and Leicestershire can apply to draw down significant funds of up to €110million from the European Union from 2014. The Fund is an amalgamation of previous funds, including the European Regional Development Fund and is aimed at making the process simpler.

The final submission has now been made to Government for consideration ahead of escalation to Europe. The allocation of spend for the 110million Euros and indicative activity included in the document make reference to the knowledge and skills of the VCS and are partly based upon the work of the VCS Sounding Board and the 13 VCS Representatives.

Match funding has been agreed throughout the submission from a range of partners including Skills Funding Agency, Big Lottery and Department for Work and Pensions. This means that the need to secure match funding has been addressed ahead of tendering processes.

Collaboration and partnership arrangements have been stressed by the LLEP as an important factor in delivering the necessary outputs and outcomes of the Fund.

The suggested activity has been kept flexible to reflect the 7-year life span of the programme.

Early 2015 is the likely timeframe for opportunities to tender creating a period for preparation across all sectors.

City Deal

Covering Leicester and Leicestershire the City Deal aims to secure £12m from Government to include match funding. Sign off is in a current process with roll out and delivery running in conjunction with the EU SIF.

The City Deal focuses on supporting the following cohorts into training and employment:

- Young people
- Adults furthest from the labour market
- Ex - offenders

Support will reach out to others through the breadth of services proposed.

Key delivery mechanisms of the City Deal are:

- Gateway – caseworker style support
- Increase in apprenticeships
- Those Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET's) – City focus
- Business Growth Hub
- Business signposting support

- Small and Medium size Enterprise grants programme

VCS core opportunities are linked to:

- The holistic services needed for young people and adults engaged with the Gateway and who are NEET
- Baseline support for those furthest from the labour market including soft skills, confidence building and IT support.
- VCS increasingly offering apprenticeships
- SME grants programme as the VCS is comprised of micro and small to medium sized enterprises

Growth Fund / Strategic Economic Plan

Accessing the Growth Fund from Government is not an assumption; the LLEP is required to submit a Strategic Economic Plan outlining how our areas potential allocation should be spent to achieve economic growth and employment.

The Growth fund has a potential value of £50m per annum for 5 years.

The Plan sets out how the Growth Fund, EU SIF and City Deal along with match will be spent:

- Developing Leicester and Leicestershire as a Place
- Developing Leicester and Leicestershire's Business
- Developing Leicester and Leicestershire's People

These are in draft a present and are subject to amendment through engagement with partners including the VCS.

What is non negotiable is the focus on employment readiness, retained employment, skills, social inclusion and supporting business development and sustainability. These all offer the VCS opportunities to deliver services and address people's needs.

VCS Sounding Board Activity

The VCS Sounding Board remains a pro-active group of VCS organisations who provide information and deliver intelligence to support the improved engagement with the LLEP. This includes the range of submissions and aspects of the LLEP's remit.

In the last 3 months the Board has achieved notable engagement and influence on behalf of the wider VCS with the LLEP and the EU SIF submission.

The current Action Plan for the Sounding Board has been developed through discussion and mutual agreement amongst Board participants.

The Board has an open membership and aims to be flexible in approach to ensure the sector is able to engage swiftly with opportunities to shape future significant spend across Leicester and Leicestershire. It does not have a formal schedule of meetings presently though it does feed directly into the Economic Inclusion Forum.

The Board is facilitated by VAL

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