

By email

Our ref: PreGuide

Your ref: N/A

12 April 2013

Dear LEP Chairs

STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUND STRATEGIES: PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

The 2014-2020 EU Structural and Investment Funds open up a new chapter in enabling greater opportunities for locally-driven, inclusive growth. For the first time, Local Enterprise Partnerships will have direct influence over most of these funds.

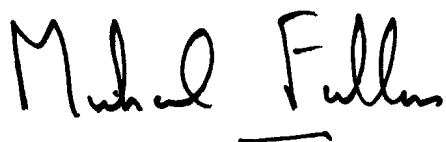
Over the last three years, the Government has set a clear path for greater devolution of decision making to a local level, enabling those who know best what works in their localities to deliver jobs and growth and a revitalised economy. That means local business leaders working with our world-class universities, civic leaders, civil society and other partners to identify where to invest and lever in vital private sector finance.

Therefore, for the 2014-2020 period we will be devolving the vast majority of the €6.17 billion of European Regional Development Funds and European Social Funds to Local Enterprise Partnerships in England, along with part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. This will form a new Growth Programme. We believe that with local knowledge and leadership, this vital source of investment can play an important role in exploiting enterprise, innovation, entrepreneurship and skills to boost local economies and long-term growth, and in promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

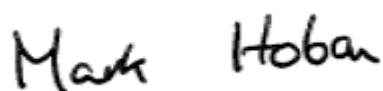
Local Enterprise Partnerships have said to Government that they want the next EU programmes to be designed to fit this ambition. They have also said that they need a more efficient and streamlined administrative model that enables them to deliver jobs and growth without unnecessary burdens and administrative complexity. So we have set out a new single England Growth Programme, and made a commitment to strip out layers of complexity in the application and management process. We have agreed that long-term stability is an essential ingredient of a successful EU programme over 2014-2020. So we intend to make allocations to your area for the full duration of this seven year period.

To implement this, we are asking that you provide us with a local investment strategy to set out how it is proposed to invest this money over 2014-2020. Further to our letter of 7 February 2013, we now want you to work with partners in your area to develop your priorities.

The attached guidance explains the outline model and administrative arrangements for the Growth Programme during 2014-2020 and invites you to begin developing your local investment strategies for this important new opportunity. We look forward to seeing these over the coming months and to having your ideas for a new phase of locally-led growth.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Fallon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Michael Fallon MP, Minister of State for Business and Enterprise (with UK responsibility for the Structural and Investment Funds)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hoban". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mark Hoban MP, Minister for Employment (with responsibility for the European Social Fund)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baroness Hanham". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Baroness Hanham, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (with responsibility for the European Regional Development Fund)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Heath". The signature is written in a cursive style.

David Heath, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food (with joint responsibility for the Rural Development Programme for England)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Benyon". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs (with responsibility for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and joint responsibility for the Rural Development Programme for England)