

EX93. EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and setting out opportunities and challenges for the Council.

The European Commission (EU) adopted a partnership agreement with the UK in October 2014 on the use of European Union Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2014-20 to help tackle unemployment and boost competitiveness and economic growth through support for innovation, training and education. The ESIF in the UK are:-

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF); and
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The Scottish Government developed an Operating Programme for ERDF and ESF in partnership with local authorities and partner agencies and it is anticipated that £1.3bn of EU funding will be available across the programme.

Funds for the Operational Programme will be targeted through investment priorities known as strategic interventions. Of the 14 strategic interventions in the 2014–2020 Operating Programme, local authorities will have a lead partner role in 3, namely:-

- Business competitiveness;
- Employability pipelines; and
- poverty and social inclusion (enhanced employability pipelines)

The report highlighted the key responsibilities of lead partners together with the current position in regard to the 3 strategic interventions set out above.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) note the proposed structure and model of delivery for the new European Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014-2020;**
- (2) Falkirk Council acting as a lead partner in the strategic interventions outlined in section 2 of the report;**
- (3) in principle, provide the match funding required to access the maximum allocation available to Falkirk Council, subject to final decisions on resources to be made available as part of the budget setting process;**
- (4) authorise officers to proceed and submit the proposed programme of interventions as outlined in section 3 of the report;**
- (5) note the management and administrative requirements involved in delivering the programme;**

- (6) seek technical assistance support to ensure compliance; and
- (7) receive a full report once the programmes and national agreement have been finalised.