

Newsletter 45: 4th July 2008

This is part of a fortnightly series of newsletters that will help explain the process and progression of the Convergence Programmes for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The newsletters will contain the most up to date information about Convergence as it evolves over the coming months. **Updated information will appear in bold blue type.**

CORNWALL WORKS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Opportunities through social enterprises

Cornwall Works for Social Enterprise is one of the three new Department for Work and Pensions programmes developed through Jobcentre Plus with investment from the European Social Fund. Over the next three years the programme will engage and inspire 1,500 jobless people to gain the skills, abilities and experience they need to secure sustainable work using the resources and innovative opportunities available through Cornwall's leading Social Enterprises.

Partner organisations

Led by Cornwall County Council, the delivery partnership includes Fifteen Cornwall, Eden, Pentreath, Rezolve Kernow, The Real Ideas Organisation (RIO), Cornwall School for Social Entrepreneurs, Citizens Advice Bureaux and DMT Business Services. Individually the Social Enterprises will provide motivational support, training and work experience, with underpinning advice, guidance, volunteering opportunities and linkages to mainstream provision through CAB and DMT Business Services. However, collectively, this programme gives partners the opportunity to develop unique and highly motivational opportunities across the partnership and all are excited by this prospect.

Cornwall School for Social Entrepreneurs

Overall, Cornwall Works for Social Enterprise builds on the best and offers opportunities to develop new ideas and opportunities. The Cornwall School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) is the "baby" of the partnership and will be the seventh SSE to operate in the UK. Inspired and developed by the late Sir Michael Young, a social entrepreneur who founded a wide range of organisations including the Open University and Which? Magazine, the SSE enables people to develop their business ideas through a unique combination of just-in-time support, action learning and use of expert witnesses. The first intake will be in Penwith, with the aim to broaden activity across Cornwall as the School becomes established.

Carolyn Webster
European Funding and Programmes Manager
Jobcentre Plus

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CONVERGENCE

First ERDF Convergence investment

The European Regional Development Fund Convergence Programme is to invest in improvements on the Truro-Falmouth branch line to double train services. Further information can be found at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1400.htm.

Why did Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly qualify for Convergence?

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly gained Convergence status when the European Union's budget for 2007-2013 was decided. At that time the most up to date figures (an average for 2000-2002) showed that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Gross Domestic Product (GDP, a measure of wealth creation) was less than 75% of the European Union average, allowing this area to qualify for Convergence. If the measurement was done again today we would no longer qualify. The latest data shows that in 2005 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's GDP per head was 77% of the EU average.

Focus of ERDF Convergence Programme

The ERDF Convergence Programme will focus on business support, modern economic infrastructure and increasing innovation and research and development. The majority of activity in this Programme will be commissioned, so there will be very limited opportunities for bidding into the Programme. Commissioning teams have begun to identify and develop investments and once they have been tested and agreed the activity will be commissioned.

ESF Convergence Programme

The European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence Programme, which allocates c. £133m to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, will focus on tackling barriers to work, improving workforce skills, and research and graduate activity. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)/Jobcentre Plus will deliver investments via competitive tendering. Further information can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/provider-procurement/esf-procurement/ and www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/european_social_fund.asp.

Department for Work and Pensions investments announced

The Department for Work and Pensions has announced its first three European Social Fund Convergence Programme investments which will encourage people into work. Working Links (Employment) Ltd and Cornwall County Council will manage the investments which will be delivered through Jobcentre Plus. Further information can be found above and at www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/european_social_fund.asp.

Learning and Skills Council investments

The Learning and Skills Council has agreed a number of investments which will focus on raising skill levels in the workforce in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Further information can be found in the 'Update from the Learning and Skills Council' in Convergence Newsletter 44, 20 June 08, at www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-convergence/newsletters.htm.

ESF newsletter

An e-zine, 'ESF at Work', is available at www.esf.gov.uk/news/e-zine/.

European investment in the Convergence Programmes

European investment in the ERDF and ESF Convergence Programmes:

	£	€
ERDF	c. £311.4 m	c. €458 m
ESF	c. £133.3 m	c. €196 m
Total investment	c. £444.7 m	c. €654 m

Rural Programme in the South West

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) allocates Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly c. £55m (EU investment plus UK match-funding) for the

socio-economic parts of the Programme. Investment will be channelled into demand-led bids into the Programme (e.g. for farm diversification or adding value to produce); commissioned projects (strategic investments to deliver key support); and support for community-led development.

- Commissioned investments More information about commissioned investments being developed by the Rural Programme will be made available at www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-convergence/post2006_faq.htm.
- Contacting the Rural Programme The main portal for contacting the Programme is the Rural Development Gateway at www.sw-ruralgateway.info. Further information is also available from www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/index.htm and www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm.
- European Fisheries Fund Programme The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Programme has allocated £7.3 million to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. A consultation was held until 27 June 2008 to help develop of the UK's EFF Operational Programme. Until the Operational Programme is complete, the Marine Fisheries Agency is seeking expressions of interest from those who would like to access the Programme. Further information can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/marine/fisheries/grants.htm , www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/naturalenvironment.htm and www.mfa.gov.uk/.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

- The detail of the Fisheries Programme Work is underway in the Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA) to develop the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Operational Programme.

More detailed information about Convergence, links to key organisations and websites can be found in the 'Convergence' section of the Objective One website www.objectiveone.com.

Information is also available from the Partnership Office's helpline on 0800 028 0120.