

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ITEM NO

31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2016

**10**

Revised

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Bid for European Structural &amp; Investment Funds (ESIF) to extend the Rural SuDS project Countywide.</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To a) Inform members of the outline bid submitted for £600,000 of ESIF funding which would enable the Rural SuDS pilot project to be delivered Countywide with partners and bring additional Capital to invest in further works in the Stroud District. b) Obtain approval if the outline bid is successful to submit a full application for ESIF funding
<b>Decision(s)</b>	The Committee <b>RESOLVES</b> to a) Submit a bid for £600,000 for ESIF funding to extend the Rural SuDS project Countywide. b) Delegate authority to the Strategic Head (Development Services) with regard to delivering a successful bid project.  The Committee <b>RECOMMENDS</b> to Strategy and Resources Committee c) £50,000 of matched funding be set aside to support the wider bid to ESIF (or words to that effect)

<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation with the likely project partners, all other district councils, Glos County Council, Environment Agency, South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>As set out in paragraph 2.10 of the report, a bid was submitted to ESIF in January 2016 for the countywide Rural SUDS project.</p> <p>Stroud District Council would be the lead partner for the project and responsible for receiving funding from partner organisations and allocating funds to schemes. The council would need to ensure appropriate procedures and partnership agreements are in place to comply with ESIF guidelines and that compliance liabilities are 'passed on' to the relevant partner organisation.</p> <p>If the bid made to the ESIF is successful, the council would need to provide matched funding of £50,000.</p> <p>David Stanley – Accountancy Manager Tel: 01453 754100 Email: <a href="mailto:david.stanley@stroud.gov.uk">david.stanley@stroud.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Report author to comment on the Risk Assessment</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>There are no material legal implications arising from this report</p> <p>Alan Carr Solicitor Tel: 01453 754357 Email: <a href="mailto:alan.carr@stroud.gov.uk">alan.carr@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<p>Maria Hickman Private Sector Housing Manager Tel: 01453 754454 e-mail: <a href="mailto:maria.hickman@stroud.gov.uk">maria.hickman@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Chair of Committee</b>	<p><b>Note: This is only to be completed for reports that are going to meetings of the full Council.</b></p> <p>Councillor Chair of [Committee Name] Tel: Email: @stroud.gov.uk</p>
<b>Options</b>	Withdraw from Bid Process
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	As defined by ESIF regulations
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	<p>Appendix A –European Structural &amp; Investment Funds Overview</p> <p>Outline bid document</p>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under delegated authority in April 2014 SDC entered into an agreement with the Environment Agency to undertake a joint 3 year Pilot project to implement natural flood management techniques in the Frome catchment, to be known as the Rural SuDS project.
- 1.2 The aim of the project is to *'create a river catchment where water management is fully integrated into land management practices. Where public bodies, private companies and local communities work together to manage water within the landscape, creating valuable habitat for wildlife and people, and limiting flood risk downstream.'*
- 1.3 Project funding was provided for the 3 years by the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Project Officer Chris Uttley took up his post in May 2014.
- 1.4 Chris has been working in the catchment with local flood action groups, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, National Trust and private landowners to raise awareness, identify opportunities and source capital funding to implement works.
- 1.5 To date the project has worked with 4 sites owned by NGO's and 9 privately owned to achieve the following;
  - ◆ 90+ Large Woody Debris leaky dams built in three tributaries
  - ◆ 7 very large flood plain attenuation structures
  - ◆ 9 attenuation & deflection structures within seasonal flow channels
  - ◆ 12 off line field bunds
  - ◆ 6 large scarp erosion/drainage gullies filled with timber
- 1.6 The capital funding for these low cost flood prevention measures has been obtained from a variety of sources including Gloucestershire County Council, EA, SDC, National Trust, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and the land owners themselves.
- 1.7 Details on the projects completed to date can be found on the SDC website <http://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/flooding-and-drainage/stroud-rural-sustainable-drainage-project>
- 1.8 A 20 minute video was commissioned jointly with the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire which includes commentary from residents flooded in 2007 as well as demonstrating the work being undertaken. The video can also be viewed on the SDC web site <http://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/flooding-and-drainage/stroud-rural-sustainable-drainage-project/rsuds-video-rural-sustainable-drainage-natural-flood-management-in-the-stroud-valleys> and has already had over 2000 viewings both nationally and internationally.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 At the beginning of December 2015 DCLG published a call for outline application bids for European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) for European Regional Development funding (ERDF) for environmental projects to be delivered in Gloucestershire over a 3 year period commencing June 2016.
- 2.2 A brief overview of ESIF can be found at appendix A.
- 2.3 Bids had to be for a minimum of £500,000 up to a maximum of £600,000 and 50% match funded.
- 2.4 Consultation took place with current project partners and all other district councils to identify whether the required match funding of £500,000 to £600,000 could be raised within the County.
- 2.5 The South West Regional Flood & Coastal Committee have committed funding for the Project Officer post for an additional 3 years on the condition that in future a part of this role would involve facilitating and supporting Land Drainage Officers across Gloucestershire to develop similar small scale natural flood management works in other districts. £120,000 of this funding was identified as eligible for match funding.
- 2.6 Gloucestershire County Council identified £245,000 capital of funding available to be spent on projects across the County for match funding.
- 2.7 Further Capital match funding has been identified by the districts and a request has been made for £50,000 of SDC capital funds for match funding projects delivered in Stroud. SDC can expect to receive a return in investment of approximately £70,000 to £80,000 per annum, to spend on additional projects in the district.
- 2.8 Project management costs of up to 10% of the bid can be claimed back.
- 2.9 The full maximum bid limit of £600,000 was identified across the County to enable an outline project bid to be submitted to enable the Rural SuDS project to be rolled out across Gloucestershire.
- 2.10 Outline bids had to be submitted by the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 with successful bidders being invited to submit a full application at a later stage. Due to the short timescales an outline bid was submitted by SDC as the Lead partner under delegated authority. A copy of the outline bid document can be found at [http://www2.stroud.gov.uk/docs/environment/rsuds/docs/SDC\\_ESIF\\_Form-2-015\\_Outline\\_Application\\_Form\\_E-Claims.docx](http://www2.stroud.gov.uk/docs/environment/rsuds/docs/SDC_ESIF_Form-2-015_Outline_Application_Form_E-Claims.docx).
- 2.11 We are waiting on a response from DCLG as to whether this bid will pass onto the next stage of full submission and there are no published time scales for this process other than the funding is available from June 2016.

### EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS OVERVIEW

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are the European Union's main funding programmes for supporting jobs and growth. Nationally an ESIF Growth Programme for England 2014-2020 has been agreed, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

A Growth Programme Board involving representatives of government departments, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), voluntary and community sectors, the private sector etc oversees the national programme, supported by national level thematic and operational sub-committees. Operational Programmes have been developed to outline eligibility criteria and ensure that European funding is aligned with government aspirations for locally driven growth. Programmes will be delivered across the 39 LEP areas in England, with each area having developed an ESIF strategy - [www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/Our-Priorities/Our-Vision](http://www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/Our-Priorities/Our-Vision) - outlining local development needs and priorities in relation to the overall programme. An ESIF sub-committee has also been formed in each area to advise on local project calls, applications and some aspects of implementation while each LEP has also been notionally allocated funding, for Gloucestershire LEP this totals around £38 million. Supporting investment in innovation, businesses, skills and employment, funds require co-financing and must be used in addition to existing national funding.

A wide range of organisations can apply to deliver projects including local authorities, registered charities, higher/further education institutions, voluntary/community organisations and others from the public or private sector.

All funding opportunities for the ERDF programme and the majority of the ESF funding are made available on the GOV.UK website [www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds](http://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds) Gloucestershire has published calls related to Tourism, Manufacturing support, Export support, Environment and Resource Efficiency and Information and Communications Technology.

Minimum project values for calls are normally around £500K. Investment is intended to make a significant impact on local growth with applications expected to demonstrate appropriate scale and impact. Further information on ESIF at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds/european-funds-european-structural-and-investment-funds](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds/european-funds-european-structural-and-investment-funds)