



Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel –
8 March 2022

Impact of Brexit on Rural Development Programme and Funding Update (Post-2023)

Purpose:	The report presents the Impact of Brexit on Rural Development Programme and Funding Update (Post-2023)'.
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For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 This report summarises briefly the impact of Brexit on the Rural Development Plan and post 2023 funding of the same.

2. Impact of Brexit on the Rural Development Plan

- 2.1 The current Rural Development Plan is part financed by the European Union through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and Welsh Government. The programme period is 2014-2020 with a further 3 calendar years permitted to December 2023 for final spend of funding allocations and completion of projects.
- 2.2 The programme in Swansea is coordinated by the Economic Development & External Funding team, working with external stakeholders through the Swansea Rural Development Partnership. The latter has been in existence since 2006, helping to manage successive iterations of the Rural Development Programme.

- 2.3 Previous versions of the programme in Wales operated both as a more general economic regeneration programme with local access to capital and revenue funding, and a strand of work referred to as 'LEADER' for revenue support to pilot new approaches to balanced rural economic and community development.
- 2.4 The current 2014-2020 phase has been limited to the LEADER strand of work, for which several funding windows have been run over the lifetime of the programme with a funding window currently open for a small number of new projects. 26 community projects have been supported to date, 10 of which are still active, and 16 have been completed. Programme spend to date is £970,107. The team also sign post potential applicants to other funding sources where applicable. Recent new projects include Gower Ambassadors project, Gower Pilgrimage Way and Festival, and Mapping Local Produce & Shorten Supply Chains in Rural Swansea. Further information on all projects can be obtained from the team, and regular e-newsletters are issued.
- 2.5 Post-Brexit the existing funding commitment from EU funds and Welsh Government is being honoured to December 2023. There is no direct impact on the existing funding mechanism which will continue in its current format until existing funding expires in December 2023.

3. Funding update

- 3.1 Under the EU 7 + 3 year funding cycles, we would now be in the 2021-2027 programme cycle with a new Rural Development programme either in place or having just been launched. Currently there is no specific provision for a replacement Rural Development programme. The only potential option available for a similar successor programme would be to submit projects with a rural focus under the emerging priorities of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This does not appear to ring fence any funds for rural development based on initial information available and would require design of new bespoke projects at regional or local level.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4.4 All projects and initiatives referenced in this report are subject to their own Integrated Impact Assessment.

5. Legal Implications

5.1.1 As this report is for information there are no additional legal implications falling on the authority.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 As this report is for information there are no additional financial implications falling on the authority.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None