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European Focus

The Newsletter of Yorkshire and Humber's ERDF Programme 2007-2013

Digital Region Launched in South Yorkshire

South Yorkshire's future as the first truly *digital* Region has been launched. The region will benefit from a new superfast broadband network, the first of its kind in the UK thanks to £30 million of European investment alongside around £60 million from Yorkshire Forward, South Yorkshire's local authorities and the private sector.

The Digital Region project was launched in Sheffield on 17 July by Rt Hon Rosie Winterton, Minister for Regional Economic Development and Coordination and Minister for Yorkshire and The Humber.

The network is being built for the region by Digital Region Ltd in partnership with technology company Thales UK who are also investing in Digital Region. With speeds of more than 25mb of bandwidth, the network will enable the delivery of new and innovative services to the general public by Internet Service Providers using the network. For the public sector these speeds will be able to support a potential revolution in the delivery of public services, from social care to health and education services.

The launch introduced delegates from across the public sector to a host of opportunities made possible by superfast broadband. Potentially, these offer improved access to services for South Yorkshire people as well as opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings for the public sector. Examples of how the network can be used include technology for health authorities to monitor high-risk patients who need daily check-ups, and new multimedia facilities for schools.

Speaking at the launch, Minister for Yorkshire and The Humber, Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP said: "Digital Region is significant not only because of the size of the investment but because it sends a clear message that we are investing in the future and preparing for economic recovery. Digital Region impacts on every aspect of economic and social life in South Yorkshire. It ensures we are ideally



Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP, Minister for Regional Economic Development and Coordination and Minister for Yorkshire and The Humber speaking at Digital Region's launch

placed to harness the huge opportunities digital technology offers."

The Minister specifically thanked the European Commission for its continuing support for the region and its "incredibly important investment of £30 million ERDF in the project" and thanked all those in government, Yorkshire Forward, and local authorities who had worked in partnership to deliver this project.

Phil Coppard OBE, Barnsley MBC's Chief Executive is interim Chairman of Digital Region. He commented: "Today's launch has given us a chance to let people know what Digital Region will mean for them as well as what it will do, in a practical sense, for the whole of South Yorkshire. Over the coming months we plan to hold a series of events to showcase the network to a wide range of

...continued on page 2



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Digital Region (continued)

other audiences - this event was just the beginning of our engagement with future customers and beneficiaries of the technology".

Trevor Shaw, Executive Director of Finance for Yorkshire Forward and responsible for the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme, commented:

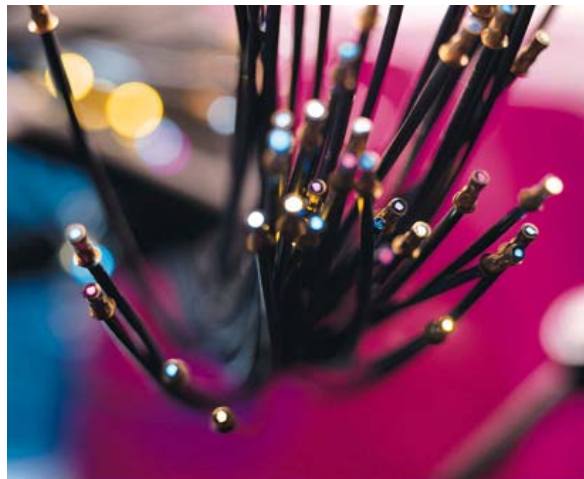
"Ensuring Yorkshire and Humber is at the forefront of digital technologies is a priority for the ERDF Programme in the region and a vital part of developing our economy. This is especially important in light of the current economic climate."

"Digital Region will help public services achieve cost savings and improve even further with the ability to access new multimedia tools. Businesses in South Yorkshire can look forward to being able to increase their competitiveness, develop new products and business models and use IT in a variety of different ways as a result of this groundbreaking project."

Digital Region Ltd has appointed an experienced team, led by Thales UK and including Alcatel-Lucent and KCOM, to build, manage and operate the state-of-the-art fibre-optic cable infrastructure.

The launch coincided with the start of building work that has begun and with a phased implementation programme, which will be fully completed in around three years to cover the entire South Yorkshire region.

Digital Region which places South Yorkshire at the forefront of Digital Britain, is wholly owned by Yorkshire Forward and the four South Yorkshire local authorities of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. It will bring 25mb+ broadband to over 97% of South Yorkshire, including 550,000 homes and 1.3 million people.



Unlike the majority of projects that are appraised and approved in the region, the size of the ERDF investment has meant that Digital Region required detailed appraisal and direct approval by the European Commission. Commission approval was given in December 2008 and the Treasury provided HM Government approval in its Budget statement earlier this year. Digital Region was the first such major project to be approved in the 2007-13 ERDF programmes in the UK.

In a separate announcement, Digital Region Ltd announced that it has appointed Maureen Donnelly as its new Chair, and David Holt as CEO. Both appointees bring a wealth of experience in the telecoms sector. In her new role Maureen will provide leadership and clear strategic direction to the Digital Region board, and ensure that Digital Region supports the South Yorkshire strategic economic priorities through new broadband technologies.

As the CEO for Digital Region, David will provide executive leadership of Digital Region, and be responsible for developing effective policy, delivering on business objectives, and exploiting the new technology to create real benefits for communities in South Yorkshire.

Annual Implementation Report 2008

The European Commission has approved the Programme's Annual Implementation Report for 2008. The report was submitted at the end of June following the Programme Monitoring Committee's approval. The Commission first checked that it contained all the information so that it complies with European regulations then examined it to assess its quality. It has been approved without the Commission raising any issues with the Programme managers.

The report, which covers the programme's implementation, between January and December 2008 can be downloaded from Yorkshire Forward's website at www.yorkshire-forward.com/about/our-funding/erdf/programme-progress





Guidance Update

New and updated guidance has been added to the ERDF Programme's website. There is new guidance setting out the eligibility for ERDF funding of actions to support Employability in deprived areas and new guidance around Timesheets for staff working on ERDF funded projects.

The guidance that outlines the responsibilities that funded projects have for publicising the ERDF contribution to their activities has been updated. Project developers and

those managing contracted projects are encouraged to refer to the latest guidance rather than rely on what might be outdated file copies.

Guidance is available from:

<http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/about/our-funding/erdf/applying-for-funding/guidance>

Science City York

The European Commission has approved Science City York's major project application. European regulations stipulate that projects requiring more than €50 million in public funding (the combination of ERDF and national public match) have to be individually examined and approved by the European Commission. The project, Science City York Embedded Space and Technology Transfer, is a nationally significant transformational improvement to the assets and strategic potential of the region's Science City through expansion of the University of York.

The project will facilitate substantial opportunities for the University to work with business, linking ground-breaking research from the University with businesses in the region to increase innovation and maximise economic growth. The project also connects with a significant new business strategy by the Government's Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) involving specialist grow-on space for SMEs and R&D collaboration, together with two nationally significant bio-refinery projects focussing on

the University's and FERA's world leading expertise.

By 2014, the project will create around 90 new businesses, 685 new jobs and safeguard a further 800 jobs. The project will develop around 11,000m² of new business floor space including a 'hub' building on the University site to provide the 'heart beat' for the wider Science City York project, linking 'spokes' in the Leeds City region and in North Yorkshire to a catalyst for change led by two of the primary research institutions in the north of England.

Now the Commission has approved the ERDF investment of £19.7 million, the project contract is being developed and is expected to be signed in the near future.

Science City York Embedded Space and Technology Transfer is the second major project in the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme to be approved following South Yorkshire's Digital region project's approval in December 2008.

CREATE & Innovate

Leeds City Council has received £247,563 ERDF to undertake a project, CREATE & Innovate, that supports the successful delivery of the ERDF Programme in Leeds City Region. Drawing resources from Priority 5: Technical Assistance which allows funding for activities that increase the quality and achievements of the Programme, the project has two strands: CREATE and Innovate.

Through the CREATE element, project partners will co-ordinate ERDF activity, raise awareness of the Programme in localities and develop and maintain links with approved ERDF projects and sponsors across the Leeds City Region.

The ultimate aim is to generate ideas which would be suitable for future ERDF applications and increase the number of projects approved by the Programme.

The Innovate strand provides a dedicated resource to develop and conduct joint planning and co-ordination relating to the Innovation agenda, and will focus on making links between Higher Education-led projects.

CREATE & Innovate will help to increase the capacity of partnerships and develop consortium approaches to project applications.



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CITY CENTRE MARKET SUCCESS FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Sheffield entrepreneurs who have recently set up in business with the support of ERDF funded enterprise programme BiG: Make it Your Business celebrated 'being their own boss' with a market in the city centre on Saturday 18th July 2009.

The 'Be Your Own Boss' Showcase and Market which aimed to encourage other Sheffield residents to consider setting up in business, saw 35 newly established businesses trading on Fargate in Sheffield.

As well as a wide range of businesses from caterers to jewellers, staff from BiG: Make it Your Business and Sheffield City Council's First Point for Business service were on hand to provide information to anyone interested in setting up in business.

Sheffield City Council Leader, Councillor Paul Scriven who opened the market said: "I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the experiences of new business owners to see that they have achieved their dream of being their own boss. What this Showcase showed is no matter who you are or where you live you really can set up a business."

Casper Carr who showcased a unique spray painted clothing and accessories range said: "I have been working with BiG over the last year and they have helped give me control over areas of my business like book keeping and tax. It has meant that I can do these things for myself and save costs."

Yee Chan, of YeeKwan Honest Handcrafted Ice Cream & Sorbet said: "I have very recently set up in business, after meeting BiG through the First Point for Business service at Sheffield City Council. The Showcase event was very rewarding, especially as not that long ago running my own business was a dream for me, and it is great that it is now becoming a reality."

BiG: Make it Your Business recently celebrated its 300th business to start up and has over 1,000 people on the programme receiving support to help them set up in business. Another of those helped is Paul Wilson who has set up a community zoo business with support from the programme.

The programme is supported by the European Union. BiG: Make it Your Business received £4.6 million investment from the European Regional Development Fund as part of Europe's support for the region's economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme.



▲ Leader of Sheffield City Council, Cllr Paul Scriven with Paul Wilson who was assisted to set up a community zoo business by BiG: Make it Your Business



◀ Cllr Scriven with artist Caspar Carr



▶ Yee Chan of YeeKwan Honest Handcrafted Ice Cream & Sorbet with Sheffield Cllr Paul Scriven



Extra Bus Services in Dearne Valley

BUS services in the Dearne Valley have been beefed up in a bid to improve access to employment opportunities that exist in the area.

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) is paying for more services to run thanks to ERDF funding.

The extra services are part of a raft of initiatives, known as Access to Opportunities, aimed at increasing the travel options available to people looking for work, as well as helping those already in work, or simply looking to travel to the area for leisure pursuits.

The changes include new evening and Sunday journeys on the 220 service from Rotherham, through Wath, Manvers and Mexborough to Doncaster, and the 226 from Barnsley, through Wath and Manvers to Thurnscoe. Both services now run every 30 minutes on Monday to Saturday evenings and hourly on Sundays, with extra early morning journeys also introduced.

The 200 service from Mexborough, through Manvers and Wath, is now extended every 20 minutes via Cortonwood and Wombwell Station to Wombwell town centre.

Other initiatives being undertaken as part of the Access to Opportunities scheme include enhanced travel advice for people wishing to use public transport and a scheme called Wheels 2 Work, which provides motor scooters to people without their own vehicle who need to travel to places not served by public transport.

David Brown, SYPTe Director General, said: "In these difficult economic times it is important that we all do our bit to try to open up as many avenues for people trying to find work."

"These improved bus services will mean that more people will be able to access the Dearne Valley, where there are numerous business parks. In the next few months we will be rolling out other initiatives that we hope will give further help to people."

Key Fund Yorkshire Offers Grants to Attend Footsey 2009

Are you a charity or a community or voluntary organisation based in Yorkshire and the Humber and looking to diversify your income or become a social enterprise?

Key Fund Yorkshire has grants available for aspiring social enterprises, to attend Footsey: the largest Social Enterprise Trade Fair in the UK, on Thursday 22nd October 2009 at Doncaster Racecourse.

Key Fund Yorkshire is offering:

- ▶ Free entry to the event; paid by direct grant to Footsey's organisers
- ▶ An additional set grant of £200 to cover travel expenses and any other out of pocket expenses
- ▶ Opportunities to attend exclusive tailored surgeries on topics such as Funding Needs and Financial Management and talk with proven social entrepreneurs
- ▶ Opportunity to visit exhibition stands from over 100 organisations
- ▶ Networking opportunities
- ▶ Opportunity to speak to Key Fund Yorkshire staff about grant and loan funding opportunities.



To apply for a grant to attend Footsey, please contact Kerry Chase on 0114 242 8909 or email kerry.chase@keyfundyorks.org.uk. Applications must be returned by 4pm on Friday 21st August. For more information about Footsey, please visit www.footsey.org.uk.

Considerable interest is expected so apply without delay. Preference will be given to voluntary and community organisations looking at enterprise activity and new start social enterprises that have not visited Footsey before and have not previously applied to the Key Fund for funding.



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Energy efficiency measures in low income housing

A single regional energy efficiency in low income housing project has been selected for ERDF support following the time-limited call for proposals. The project, Innovation Energy Yorkshire and the Humber, is being proposed by Community Energy Solutions and is seeking the entire £7.5 million ERDF available in the Programme.

Energy efficiency in low income housing is a new area for ERDF support that only came available when the European Commission introduced such measures to those eligible for ERDF support earlier this year as part of its package of programming flexibilities in response to the financial crisis.

The time limited call closed on the 30th June. Eleven proposals were received that sought, in total, around £28.5 million ERDF.

Carl Howard who manages ERDF investments in Priority 3:

Sustainable Communities which includes these measures said: "It was always recognized that partners would submit proposals requiring far more ERDF than the £7.5 million we have available. We assembled an expert panel to look at all the proposals and to decide which should be supported to develop their ideas into an eligible ERDF application."

"The panel that included local authority, housing and energy efficiency expertise met on 16th July and decided that Community Energy Solutions' proposal, of all those received, represented the best value, realizing significant economies of scale as it worked towards a regional approach that will lead to significant impacts across the region."

"Community Energy Solutions will now need to develop their proposal through all the necessary stages before it can be appraised and contracted" concluded Carl.

Capital Projects in Priority 3: Sustainable Communities

Twenty nine proposals were received in response to the time-limited call for capital proposals that closed on 30th June. The call within Priority 3: Sustainable Communities has generated ideas that are seeking over £37m of ERDF which is over six times the funds that are available.

An expert panel on 20th July examined the proposals alongside one another to evaluate which should be developed and proceed with their application.

Carl Howard, who led the panel said: "We looked at value for money, strategic fit and deliverability. The panel selected five proposals from Bradford, Doncaster, Hull and

Sheffield to go forward with development."

Carl went on to explain "Applications far outweighed the amount of cash available so competition for funding was fierce. The proposals which succeeded were the ones which could best demonstrate their economic impact in deprived areas."



ERDF's Carl Howard

Consultants Sought for Digital Opportunities Framework

Following the successful launch of Digital Region, (see story on page 1) Yorkshire Forward is seeking a suitably qualified organisation to undertake a short piece of work to assist it to develop a more joined up, strategic approach to ERDF activity for digital opportunities.

The successful applicant will bring together organisations in the region that are seeking to exploit the opportunities that Digital Region will provide with a view to developing new ideas for delivery of digital activities in line with each of

the priorities of the ERDF programme. The successful applicant will produce a framework of ideas that will lead into a number of ERDF proposals in line with the priorities of the ERDF Operational Programme

The official tender opportunity is being published on Yorkshire Forward's website at <http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/about/tenders> from Monday 10 August and responses are required by Monday 24th August.



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