

## Growing Places Fund – Project Update

The Growing Places Fund round 3 process is currently being held to allow a full assessment of the options available for supporting economic recovery post COVID-19. As part of this assessment, SELEP are seeking to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the Growing Places Fund projects put forward for consideration as part of the current round of funding.

We would be grateful if you could complete the short questionnaire below regarding your Growing Places Fund round 3 project. We appreciate that it is likely to be too soon for you to have a complete understanding of how your project will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but any insight you can offer at this stage into the expected impacts on the project would be appreciated.

**Project name:** SEPIF - South Essex Productivity Investment Fund

**Questionnaire completed by:** Chris Burr

**Question 1:** In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the anticipated requirement for social distancing measures to be observed over an extended period of time, is your project still viable and deliverable?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If yes, please complete the remainder of the questionnaire.

**Question 2:** Please explain how your project will directly support economic recovery post COVID-19. Please identify those market sectors which will be specifically supported through delivery of the project.

The SEPIF project focussed on the delivery of c.£3,000,000 of loan funds specifically to support productivity improvement projects within SMEs.

Following the COVID19 pandemic, and the subsequent government financial support package for SMEs, we no longer feel that this is the right time to launch a new loan facility for SMEs.

Specifically, the government Corona Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CIBLS), is offering loans of between £50-250k with 12 month payment deferral and a relatively low interest rate. This closely mirrors the loan scheme that was due to be offered through the SEPIF scheme - and is accordingly, highly likely to reduce the market for the planned SEPIF loans.

Further, funding to plug the potential administration costs gap has not yet been forthcoming - which leaves a c.£150k hole in the project funding.

Both of these factors combine to mean that this is not the right time for the SEPIF project to be launched.

**Question 3:** Please indicate the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to affect the following areas of your project submission. It would be useful if you could provide a high-level explanation of any expected impacts.

- **Project scope:**

Reduced project scope ☐

Project scope unchanged ☐

Increased project scope ☐

Summary of expected impact on project scope (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **Total project cost:**

Reduced project cost ☐

Increased project cost (within available budget) ☐

Project cost unchanged ☐

Increased project cost (above available budget) ☐

Summary of expected impact on total project cost (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **Availability of match funding:**

Reduced match funding available ☐

Match funding available as per Business Case ☐

Increased match funding available ☐

Summary of expected impact on availability of match funding (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **Delivery programme:**

Accelerated delivery ☐

Delivery programme unchanged ☐

Delivery programme extended ☐

Summary of expected impact on delivery programme (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **Scale of benefits offered:**

Reduced project benefits ☐

Scale of benefits unchanged ☐

Increased project benefits ☐

Summary of expected impact on scale of benefits offered by the project (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **Repayment schedule:**

Accelerated repayment ☐

Repayment schedule unchanged ☐

Delayed repayment ☐

Summary of expected impact on repayment schedule (if applicable):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Please return the completed questionnaire to Helen Dyer, SELEP Capital Programme Officer at [helen.dyer@southeastlep.com](mailto:helen.dyer@southeastlep.com).

DRAFT