

East Midlands Urban Development Fund – securing growth and competitiveness

The East Midlands Urban Development (EMUDF) has been set up using funding from *emda* and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The East Midlands is the first region in England to take advantage of new ERDF flexibilities to get an Urban Development Fund (UDF) up and running.

The EMUDF allows *emda* to make funding work harder for the region and generate a greater return on investment for the taxpayer. Investment will take the form of equity, loans or guarantees rather than traditional grants, supporting projects with the potential for financial return. These returns, along with the original capital investment can then be reinvested into further schemes to bring real economic benefits to the region over the long term.

This will ensure that the capital base of the fund continues to grow and generate a return on investment over the next 10 years.

Support for innovation, science and technology facilities

The fund will support regionally significant innovation-related projects that demonstrate:

- How they will create the right physical environment to help stimulate innovation, research and development – such as science parks, innovation premises, or high tech employment floorspace.
- Strong links with the four priority sectors identified in the Regional Economic Strategy – healthcare and bioscience, sustainable construction, transport and food and drink.
- Additional high quality employment opportunities.

Property and finance specialists, King Sturge Financial Services, will manage the fund and engage with public and private sector partners to identify development opportunities.

The EMUDF is the most recent addition to *emda's* support package helping the region's economy through the challenging economic times. It will help create the right environment for innovation, and facilitate much needed investment in capital development as the region moves into recovery and future economic growth.

The EMUDF can also be expanded as required after the initial investment phase.

South Shirebrook Regeneration, Derbyshire, East Midlands

Shirebrook Colliery in Derbyshire closed in the early 1990's. The site was cleared and left derelict. Following the closure of the colliery the town of Shirebrook went into rapid economic decline as it led not only to the removal of the principle employer in the town but also removed much of the underpinning to the social structure of the town. Further to this the employment aspirations of the community were severely impacted.

In 1996 ownership of the 130 hectare site was transferred from British Coal Property to English Partnerships (EP) and the site became part of the National Coalfields Programme (NCP). In 1999, with the formation of the RDAs, the site was transferred to the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*).

The first stage in the regeneration of the site was to create a project partnership with local stakeholders, including both the County and District Councils and utilise this partnership to ensure that local requirements and aspirations were clearly defined and understood. Following this a strategic site masterplan was developed and agreed along with an economic appraisal to seek funding to bring forward the project.

The principles of the plan were to provide employment land through the creation of a 38 hectare Business Park, around 850 new houses to fill housing market gaps in the town, along with associated new and upgraded infrastructure. The aim was to attract new investment from the private sector into the area, create an estimated 2000 new jobs in a sustainable environment and provide aspirational housing in the town to reduce the drift of skilled people from the area. Approval for the initial phase of funding of £24m was gained in 2001 and a further £18m to expand and complete the project was secured in 2004.

Work commenced on site in 2001 and was completed in 2006. The new business park attracted a significant amount of market interest. At present around 37% of the total anticipated employment space (165,000 sq m) has been built and around 1,100 jobs have been created.

A significant proportion of this is due to the fact that *emda* were able to attract Sports World International, now Sports Direct, to the site and encourage them to purchase a large percentage of the site, 25 hectares, to establish their new central headquarters on Brook Park. This development will eventually provide around 120,000 sq m of warehousing space and 150,000 sq m of office space as well as a retail training centre. This development alone is predicted to bring forward more than 1,800 new jobs, across a range of skill levels, and involve an investment from Sports Direct of over £80m.

The underlying ethos behind the development has been to ensure that the employment opportunities it generates directly benefit the local workforce and new residents to the town. This in turn will increase the economic viability of the town and attract new investment leading to improvements in the town centre, services and the general environment.

In order to enable this *emda* have been working with other partners, in the main Bolsover District Council, The Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT), The Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership and the Housing and Communities Agency to facilitate other regeneration work including:

- developing local training opportunities;
- improving access to work opportunities for local people;
- the funding of a sustainable development strategy for Shirebrook;
- the funding of a community arts strategy for Shirebrook