

NEWS RELEASE

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Objective 1 Makes Billion Pound Breakthrough

As the Objective 1 Programme approaches its third anniversary since its launch in July 2000, it has today reached the billion pound mark for the total value of projects it has invested in.

So far the Programme has committed £367 million of the £700 million of European funds at its disposal. In order for a project to draw on European funding it must secure matching funds from the UK Government and the private sector so these European funds lever in investments of much greater value.

“Today we committed £658,000 to a building project in Dinnington. The £2.25 million Waterside Business Park being developed by Redwall Estates Ltd will provide office and hybrid work spaces with potential to house 166 jobs. This latest investment means we have committed our investment to £1 billion worth of projects in South Yorkshire,” said Objective 1 Director, Sylvia Yates.

“Halfway through the Programme period we have committed over half of the resources available to us. This is a major achievement.”

The Programme, like all European Structural Fund Programmes, is currently undergoing its mid term evaluation. Significant extra resources could come to South Yorkshire if it successfully meets the targets established for it by the European Commission at the outset.

“Early indications from the mid-term evaluation show that the Programme is on course to meet the criteria necessary to trigger the performance reserve which could be as much as £30 million” said Sylvia. “The Programme in South Yorkshire is well regarded by the European Commission and we have been asked to help share best practice across other Programmes later in the year. South Yorkshire will host a major European Commission conference to begin to do this amongst European funding programmes in October”, concluded Sylvia.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Objective 1 Programme in South Yorkshire is a £1.8 billion investment programme that draws on over £700 million from the European Union's Structural Funds that are provided to help Europe's poorest areas regenerate their economies and create jobs. South Yorkshire is one of those poorest areas with fewer businesses and fewer and less well-paid jobs than other European regions.

South Yorkshire was designated as an Objective 1 area, which is the highest category of European support, at the Berlin Summit in 1999 along with Merseyside, Cornwall and the Scillies and West Wales and the Valleys. The Objective 1 Programme in South Yorkshire was launched in July 2000 and runs until the end of 2006.

To date the Programme has committed over £367 million of European money to over 340 projects in South Yorkshire. Objective 1 funds are supporting the development of new businesses, helping businesses to innovate and grow, supporting the development of skills and training, supporting social enterprises, supporting the economic development of deprived communities in South Yorkshire, helping to bring forward the development of sites and premises for increased economic activity and helping to tackle both financial and transport bottlenecks that inhibit economic growth.

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