



## COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP EUROPEAN FUNDING BID

Board Meeting – 13 December 2007

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board the content of the CPP European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)/European Social Fund (ESF) funding application to the Lowland and Upland Scotland (LUPS) 2007-2013 programme.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Planning Joint Officers' (JOG) Group received a verbal report from the External Funding and Employability Manager of East Ayrshire Council at its meeting on 17 July 2007 in relation to the opportunities for an East Ayrshire CPP bid for ERDF/ESF covering the period 2008-2010. This was followed by the Core Partners' Group, at its meeting on 22 August 2007, remitting the JOG to sign off any potential bids to Europe as a result of the short time frame involved in the call for applications.
- 2.2 The JOG remitted the Improving Opportunities Working Group to develop an appropriate range of eligible partnership activities to be included within such a bid and identify the necessary range of match funding required to maximise the impact against the appropriate actions within the Improving Opportunities Action Plan 2007-2011.
- 2.3 The key partners undertook a period of intensive consultation to identify the widest range of projects, which could be included within such a bid. Subsequently, East Ayrshire Council, as lead applicant on behalf of the CPP, submitted a Stage 1 ERDF/ESF application by the deadline date of 5 October 2007.
- 2.4 The ERDF bid included dedicated Project Staff, comprising a Project Manager, an Employability Development Officer and a Job Brokerage Officer, to be located within the Planning and Economic Development Division of East Ayrshire Council, in addition to a Project Finance and Monitoring Officer to be located within the Community Planning and Partnership Unit. These staff are to be responsible for overseeing all aspects of delivery included within the project bids and reporting regularly to the CPP Board, East Ayrshire Council and the JOG. A Project Reporting and Management Structure diagram is included as Appendix A.
- 2.5 Copies of both bids and spreadsheets detailing individual project finances were subsequently circulated to all JOG members for information, consideration and comment. As a result, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport actively sought to become involved in the bid, together with Coalfield Community Transport, in an effort to improve transport linkages to address specific employment opportunities identified through Jobcentre Plus.

### 3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 ESEP (the Intermediate Administration Body) organised a series of Applications Seminars, which several of the partner organisations attended. It should be noted that the whole LUPS programme is significantly over-bid under the first round, with ESF Priority 1 almost 25% over-bid above the entire value of the seven year programme. Partners should be made aware that this bid, therefore, will be facing considerable competition and approval is by no means certain.
- 3.2 ESEP met with members of the Improving Opportunities Working Group on 18 November 2007 to give feedback on the Stage 1 applications and provide further guidance on completion of Stage 2. As a result of this feedback, two changes have been made to the original proposals:
- The Alternative Energy Scheme proposed by the Economic Development Service of the Council has been withdrawn from the CPP bid and will go forward as a separate application under ERDF Priority 2 – Enterprise Growth.
  - The JobRotation Trainee element of the JobRotation project contained within the CPP bid will now go forward as part of an Ayrshire wide ESF Priority 1 bid, submitted by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), to complement the Ayrshire wide ESF Priority 2 bid already submitted for the Company Beneficiary element of the project. East Ayrshire JobRotation will still contribute as a delivery partner in the overall framework of the East Ayrshire CPP bid.
- 3.3 All partners have been involved in further discussions on improvements to the overall project submission, as well as providing more detailed information on outputs, results and impacts expected from their own project delivery contributions. In addition, detailed costings for each element of delivery, together with anticipated match funding, have now been provided and signed off by relevant authorised signatories within each organisation.
- 3.4 As a result of these discussions, the decision has been taken to amalgamate the Working for Families, CONDUIT and Business Technology Training Centre (BTTC) projects, under the heading 'Back to Work Connections', in order to provide enhanced early engagement provision and better geographical coverage, as well as economies of scale through rationalisation of facilities utilised by the three former projects.
- 3.5 In addition, two capital projects are included within the ERDF element of the bid:
- One to provide co-location facilities for employability support services/agencies, in a purpose built/refurbished centre in the Kilmarnock area, where service delivery functionality will be in-built and significant economies in overhead costs could be achieved. The choice of location for such a centre will be heavily influenced by considerations of public transport and accessibility for the client groups using the centre.
  - Support in the Cumnock area to enhance existing training/learning and e-skills facilities and for the development of craft/workshop and training facilities through

conversion and refurbishment of existing buildings to support the developments associated with Dumfries House.

- 3.6 Total eligible project costs for the ESF bid are £7,625,094 resulting in a request for grant of £3,068,327 (40%) to support a total of 2,950 participants, with a target of 1,186 into employment, 1,045 into education/training and the remainder gaining increased employability skills, as a result of the projects involved. Total CRF/Partner/other match funding required is £576,000 over the life of the programme.
- 3.7 Total eligible project costs for the ERDF bid are £3,245,677 resulting in a request for grant of £1,251,093 (39%) to support 527 people back into work, provide direct assistance to 171 enterprises and create 21 net new jobs. A total of 1,700 square metres of training/business space will also be created/refurbished. Total CRF/Partner and other match funding of £756,059 is required over the life of the programme.
- 3.8 The Improving Opportunities Working Group met on Thursday 1 November 2007 to consider the content of the application. It was confirmed that the target beneficiaries for all of the partners would be in line with national and local priorities, lone parents, young people (More Choices, More Chances), older people and those on Incapacity Benefit, with an emphasis on those facing multiple deprivation and residing within the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) areas. However, scope existed to support beneficiaries falling into one of these categories outwith the ROA areas, given that European funding is being requested to add volume and value to the work currently being undertaken, and address issues that cannot be tackled by existing funding streams alone.
- 3.9 The Improving Opportunities Working Group agreed to recommend the content of the bid to the JOG for approval.
- 3.10 It was further noted that as JobRotation will now be the subject of a separate but complementary bid, a further allocation of CRF funding would be requested in addition to the figures presented at 3.6 and 3.7 above. The new structural fund programmes have made this a difficult project to fund and East Ayrshire Council has increased its contribution in an effort to support the funding gap which currently exists. At the time of writing, it is anticipated that the JobRotation project will be seeking approximately £70,000 per annum from CRF funding as a minimum to make the existing model viable. The partners agreed that this was a very worthwhile project and the Improving Opportunities Working Group would wish to see it continue, if possible. Other match funding from New Deal and Training for Work is also being explored to contribute to eligible trainee costs.

#### **4. ACTIONS PROGRESSED**

- 4.1 The following actions have been progressed to complete the Stage 2 submission:
- All hard copy Financial Annexes duly signed by relevant authorised signatories returned by 2 November 2007.
  - All Job Descriptions for staff included within each project bid submitted by 6 November 2007. (New posts subject to job evaluation)

- Approval by the Council's Corporate Management Team on 5 November 2007.
  - Approval by the Community Planning Joint Officers' Group on 6 November 2007.
  - Sign off by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Support and the funding bid submitted on 23 November 2007 to meet the required deadline.
- 4.2 The Scottish Executive organised an information session specifically in respect of CPP bids on 7 November 2007 to be attended by one representative only of each CPP. Lesley Arnott, then the Council's External Funding and Employability Manager, who had lead responsibility for the preparation of the CPP funding bid, represented East Ayrshire at the session.
- 4.3 The West of Scotland European Forum sought an extension to the original CPP submission deadline of 9 November 2007 and, at the above meeting, it was agreed that the timeframe for submission of CPP bids would be extended to 23 November 2007, which provided an opportunity to further enhance East Ayrshire's bid.
- 4.4 Interim arrangements were agreed, with Alan Neish, as Lead Officer, supported by Sharron Kilday of East Ayrshire Council as financial contact, to cover the period when the current lead officer post is unfilled, in order to co-ordinate the subsequent actions resulting from the Stage 2 submission:
- Technical checks will be undertaken by ESEP and it is anticipated that requests for further information will be made in mid December 2007, with responses required back by 9 January 2008.
  - Partners will require to confirm **all** match funding, in writing, by 31 March 2008. Once the results of the spending review are announced and Council and CRF budgets are confirmed, any resulting changes to the bids will require to be communicated to ESEP as soon as possible.
  - Partnership Agreements based on those provided by the Colleges, as used for the EQUAL programmes, require to be finalised. Drafts are to be provided for each partner organisation, with a view to agreeing a final version, which can be signed before any approved activity is commenced.
  - Nominated representatives for the Steering Group and Project Groups should be identified in order that they can be convened prior to 1 January 2008 to agree interim working arrangements.
- 4.5 The Improving Opportunities Working Group also considered the process for contingency plans related to ongoing employability support, in the event that European funding is not approved. It was agreed to convene a meeting of a small sub-group of the Improving Opportunities Working Group to consider options in late December 2007/early January 2008.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The Community Planning Partnership Board is requested to:

- i) note the content of the ERDF and ESF bids as outlined above, which were submitted by the deadline date of 23 November 2007; and
- ii) otherwise, note the content of the report.

**Gwen Barker**  
**Community Planning and Partnership Manager**  
**30 November 2007**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP  
IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUND PROJECT 2008-2010**

**Project Management Structure**

