



PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Board Meeting – 11 March 2004

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the proposed response to the issues contained within the independent sustainability reports prepared for three identified projects, namely, Coalfield Community Transport, East Ayrshire Strategy for Youth (EASY) and Investment in Drama, and report on progress in respect of the independent evaluation and sustainability study of yipworld.com.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 DTZ Piedad Consulting was appointed by the SIP Board in July 2003 to work with the following three identified initiatives in respect of sustainability issues specific to each:

- **Coalfield Community Transport**, in terms of prioritising and developing a range of proposals put forward by the voluntary management committee for future implementation;
- **East Ayrshire Strategy for Youth**, in respect of identifying potential funding sources and options available with a range of funders as well as exploring opportunities for expansion throughout East Ayrshire; and
- **Investment in Drama**, particularly in exploring the feasibility and, if appropriate, supporting the establishment of a local community business involving the Drama Trainees.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 The sustainability reports have been positively received by each of the identified initiatives. The conclusions and recommendations within the reports have reinforced the projects' own perceptions regarding options for sustainability and provide a co-ordinated approach that will assist in the implementation of future sustainability plans.
- 3.2 A summary of the main recommendations and each project's response to the issues contained within the respective reports are noted below.

Coalfield Community Transport

- 3.3 The options considered in the sustainability study offer significant potential to add to the long-term future of Coalfield Community Transport (CCT). In particular, it has highlighted that taking forward the following proposals could provide a sustainable income stream:

- establish a centre of excellence for road transport training in South West Scotland;
 - progress working in partnership with training providers in England to provide driver training;
 - pursue potential opportunities for minibus brokerage and co-ordination that will provide cost savings and increased service opportunities; and
 - secure funding for the part-time drivers.
- 3.4 Board members will, however, be aware that CCT continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, a situation, which provides constraints in driving forward the proposals at Item 3.3. To allow the project to build upon the sustainability study, in order to develop a more in-depth Business Plan and provide assistance in respect of applications to external funders, in particular, European funders, a further £5,000 is required.
- 3.5 The Scottish Executive Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) has recently approved core funding for 2004/05, thereby securing the part-time driver posts until March 2005. However, RCTI has subsequently requested that a 3-year funding application be submitted, providing a potential opportunity to link to the Regeneration Outcome Agreement. CCT currently intends to discuss the options regarding the required timescales with the Scottish Executive.

East Ayrshire Strategy for Youth (EASY)

- 3.6 The report from the consultant confirmed that the SIP element of funding would be a significant loss to the project, representing 36% of the project's total budget. A thorough investigation of external funding options for the EASY project was, therefore, undertaken by DTZ Pineda Consulting, which highlighted the significant potential offered by European funding. Consequently, project staff have been working with East Ayrshire Council's European Funding Officer to prepare a European Social Funding (ESF) Objective 3, Priority 1 – Raising Employability application.
- 3.7 An application for 30 additional places to the existing project, which will provide outreach services in identified areas of need in the SIP area, namely, Drongan, Dalmellington and Muirkirk, will be submitted to the Scottish Objective 3 Partnership on 26 March 2004. It is anticipated that a decision will be received in approximately six weeks. If successful, the outreach project will commence on 1 June 2004.
- 3.8 If a successful European bid is secured for the Coalfield Area, it will be followed by a further bid to allow an extension of the project into the non-Coalfield areas of East Ayrshire. However, expansion of the project beyond the SIP area will require significant commitment from partners in respect of match funding for a further European bid. A commitment from the SIP to this project beyond the initial funding period of 31 March 2005 will also be required.

Investment in Drama

- 3.9 The sustainability study concluded that there is substantial potential for the Investment in Drama project to develop into a community business delivering drama services in the local community and beyond. However, significant support, particularly in the early stages will be required from existing partners and other organisations to ensure that the business becomes a reality and remains sustainable. The production of a Business Plan will guide the project's transition to a community business and outline its future development.
- 3.10 East Ayrshire Council's Museums, Arts and Theatre section is currently in the process of developing a Business Plan, including its proposals, which are at an early stage, for use of the Baird Institute as an 'Arts' venue and the potential role of a community business within it involving the drama trainees.
- 3.11 Project staff continue to investigate how a community business can meet the needs of the community as well as ensuring appropriate support and expertise is available for the business to succeed. In addition, a meeting with the Scottish Arts Council is planned when the Business Plan has been produced to consider further funding opportunities to ensure project sustainability and a range of other potential funding sources are currently being explored.

4. SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION OF YIPWORLD.COM

- 4.1 The SIP Board previously allocated resources to commission an independent evaluation of yipworld.com to assist the project's voluntary Management Committee and East Ayrshire's Community Planning Partners in their consideration of the future sustainability of the initiative.
- 4.2 Following the appropriate procurement process, consultants from EKOS Limited Economics and Regeneration were appointed at the end of February to undertake the project evaluation and sustainability study.
- 4.3 It is expected that the research study will be completed by May 2004. The timescale for the project is:
- Appointment of Contractors February 2004
 - Stakeholder/Focus Group meetings completed 31 March 2004
 - Draft evaluation report prepared and available to the SIP 30 April 2004
 - Final evaluation report submitted to the SIP 31 May 2004
- 4.4 The project will be managed by the Community Planning and Partnership Manager, supported by the Community Partnership and Regeneration Officer. An Advisory Group, comprising representatives of the SIP and yipworld.com, will be established to oversee the evaluation process.
- 4.5 The total cost of the independent evaluation will be £10,000 and £4,000 has already been committed. The Board is, therefore, asked to complete the overall funding package by allocating a further £6,000 to this initiative.

5. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

5.1 Subject to approval, the financial allocations detailed in this report total £11,000 and are as follows:

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|---------------------------------|--------|
| • Coalfield Community Transport | £5,000 |
| • yipworld.com evaluation | £6,000 |

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i) notes the progress of the three identified projects in response to the issues identified within the sustainability reports;
- ii) agrees to provide £5,000 to the Coalfield Community Transport Group to allow the commissioning of independent support to prepare an appropriate Business Plan;
- iii) notes the commissioning of the evaluation and sustainability study of yipworld.com and agrees a further £6,000 to complete the funding package;
- iv) agrees to receive further updates in respect of sustainability issues at future meetings; and
- v) otherwise, notes the content of the report.

Gwen Barker
Community Planning and Partnership Manager
1 March 2004