

**COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS AND EUROPEAN FUNDING – A NEW APPROACH**

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Scottish Government is preparing guidance on the management of European Structural Funds and Rural Development Funds which creates a new role for Community Planning Partnerships.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1** The CPP Management Committee identifies a cross-partner sub group to develop a strategic approach to establishing the ERDF/ESF project plan, including a consultation process.
- 2.3** This issue is raised at the next full Community Planning Partnership meeting.
- 2.4** The Funding Hub is the mechanism used to identify match funding opportunities once the draft plan is prepared.

**3. DETAIL**

- 3.1** Delivery mechanisms for the 2007-13 European funding programmes are now being established by the Scottish Government. Specific guidance is being prepared which gives CPPs a specific role in the delivery of those funds.
- 3.2** CPPs will be expected, via the Local Authorities, to submit a programme of projects to the Highlands and Islands ERDF and ESF programmes, which deliver agreed CPP strategic objectives. Projects will be subject to an assessment and approval process, which once complete will identify ring fenced funding for each CPP Programme. The programmes will be specifically targeted at the measures 'Enhancing Peripheral and Fragile Communities' (ERDF) and 'Increasing the Workforce' (ESF) (see attached Annex A) and will be of a minimum £50,000 project size..
- 3.3** The Scottish Government expects the CPP plans to be submitted by 'early' 2008, allowing implementation to proceed by the end of the year.
- 3.4** Whilst this presents an excellent opportunity to access funding for a suite of CPP priority actions, there are significant challenges presented by the short timescale, particularly as the

plans are expected to include detailed costings, match funding and planning approval. It is anticipated that these parameters will be discussed at the Programme Monitoring Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September, which is attended by Council leaders (a verbal update will be given at the 3<sup>rd</sup> October meeting)

- 3.5** In order to prepare a project plan for submission, the CPP will have to consult closely with all potential project sponsors and assess project compatibility with the CPP Strategy. This will ensure both transparency in the CPP approach and the best possible outcome in terms of quality, deliverable projects. The Council, as designated responsible authority will lead on this. Decisions will have to be taken about the extent to which the partnership will support public sector-led projects from within the partnership or present opportunities for inclusion in the plan to local organisations, such as village hall committees, who will have aspirations to access the funds. Decisions will also have to be taken on the prioritisation of project type within the broad CPP strategic objectives, given that the budget will have an overall, but as yet unknown, restriction.
- 3.6** A cross partner sub group will be required to undertake this piece of work
- 3.7** Close working with the Rural Development Partnerships such as the emerging LEADER Programme and the Rural Project Assessment Committee will ensure that these European funds complement one another. Close liaison with the Funding Hub will ensure that projects are submitted to the most appropriate fund.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1** This provides the CPP with a new challenge, which will require a specific focus on the direction that the CPP would like to see funding directed.

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#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Annex A: Highlands and Islands Measure 3 ERDF and Measure 1 ESF.