

REPORT TO: Community Planning Implementation Group

MEETING DATE: 4 September 2008

BY: Executive Director of Environment, East Lothian Council

SUBJECT: Annual Report of Community Planning Groups –
Local Economic Development Reference Group and
East Lothian Social Economy Partnership

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide CPIG partners with an overview of the 2008 activities of the Community Planning groups, namely the Local Economic Development Reference Group and the East Lothian Social Economy Partnership

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

Local Economic Development Reference Group (LEDRG)

- 3.1 The LEDRG was established in January 2006 under the revised Community Planning structure as the successor to the Enterprise & Skills Forum.
- 3.2 The group has now representatives from the Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, East Lothian Tourism Forum, Scottish Enterprise, Careers Scotland (representing Skills Development Scotland), Queen Margaret University, JobCentre Plus and the East Lothian Learning Partnership as well as from a number of East Lothian Council departments, chaired by Susan Smith, Economic Development Manager.
- 3.3 Discussions have centred around strategic issues relating to the development of the East Lothian economy with particular focus on the More Choices More Chances agenda in 2008. It is hoped that representation from the business community can encourage local businesses to offer appropriate employment to school leavers.

- 3.4 In May 2008 a presentation was given to the LEDRG on the early stages of development of the new Scottish Government initiative, Skills Development Scotland. One of their policy strategies aims to improve skills in the workplace by stimulating increased demand for skills from employers.
- 3.5 Representation as detailed above ensures that the private sector and their complementary public sector agencies are engaged in debate and discussion surrounding economic development issues under the auspices of the Community Planning framework in East Lothian.

East Lothian Social Economy Partnership (ELSEP)

- 3.6 Social enterprises are businesses that have a social purpose with any profits generated going back into addressing these social aims. They are likely to be community owned and often work either on a geographical or themed basis.
- 3.7 The ELSEP was set up in 2005 to give strategic support to social enterprise development in East Lothian, as per national policy, in order to help local existing and aspiring social enterprises identify the support they need, whether access to funding, business development support and procurement possibilities.
- 3.8 ELSEP comprises representatives from East Lothian Council, ELVON, Communities Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, the East Lothian Business Association (now the Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce) and the East Lothian Social Enterprise Network.
- 3.9 The activities to date, primarily funded by the EQUAL programme in Scotland, include mapping work, the development of a local strategy, three events (the most recent being a joint event with Midlothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders in November 2007) and support for the local network.
- 3.10 The development of the local Social Enterprise Network brings together the more experienced social enterprises with those new to income generation. ELSEP will continue to link this work with practical strategic support where needed.
- 3.11 The launch of the 'Better Business: a Strategy and Action Plan for social enterprise in Scotland' earlier in 2007 sets the future agenda and it is likely that there will be financial support from the Government to help develop this strategy.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Community Planning engagement at sectoral level.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial - within existing resources
- 5.2 Personnel - staff time to support
- 5.3 Other - none

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 None

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