

**European Commission: Call for Proposals for Social Policy Innovations
Supporting Reforms in Social Services****Report by Mary Smith, Director Education Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

To confirm support for the resubmission of a proposal under the above European Commission funding stream as a partner with the Improvement Service, Edinburgh University and the Midlothian Community Planning partnership .

2 Background

2.1 The Improvement Service approached Midlothian Council to offer the opportunity to partner with them, the University of Edinburgh (as an evaluation agency) and other members of the Community Planning Partnership to submit a bid to the above European Commission Innovation Fund. The deadline for submission was set as 28 August 2014. Only one national demonstration project was likely to succeed from Scotland, and a total value of up to 3 million Euros over a 3 year project period was potentially available.

2.2 In a very short space of time a draft proposal was brought together by all the partners, and approved at the Community Planning Board. The submission was also approved by the Cabinet on 26 August 2014.

The bid set out:

- an intention to adopt a co- production approach to working with local residents
- to develop projects focussed on the existing results of neighbourhood planning in the three target areas of Woodburn, Mayfield and Gorebridge
- four individual 'outcome gap closing actions' , linked to the Single Midlothian Plan outcomes and approaches as follows:
 - i *Localising access to customer transactions with public and community services in Woodburn through a 'one stop shop' access point in Woodburn Drive thus reducing the gap in local access as part of a capacity building approach*
 - ii *Developing locally accessible economic development/ employability services thus reducing the economic outcome gap in a co- productive approach*
 - iii *Developing local 'preventive' health and care condition management approaches thus reducing the health outcome gap in a co- productive approach*

iv Developing early years interventions thus reducing the educational attainment gap in a co-productive approach

- 2.3** After considerable delays, the decision was not announced until October 2015 and our bid was not approved. However, feedback from the EU Innovation Fund was that, the partners could re-submit a bid and review the timescales in which we could deliver such a project. The partnership Group has agreed that a resubmission should be made to the EU Innovation fund, which is available annually.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The EU innovation Fund will 'match' fund successful bids and the Council funding of £334,198 plus the Improvement Service funding of £22,880 will provide a total project budget of £1,780,948 over a three year period.

The Council's match funding element will be met from existing staffing and operational budgets. The staffing and other resources identified will be dedicated to the project for its duration.

3.2 Risk

The main risk is that we are unsuccessful again in our bid to the European Innovation Fund. However, the challenge of closing the outcome gap without additional resources is significant and risk of failing can be ameliorated by this project.

Previous area based approaches across Scotland to reducing outcome gaps have not been sufficiently successful either as a result of trying to;

- address only one of the complex of interrelated multiple deprivation issues by single agencies
- or as a result of failing to take sufficient account of local people's own strengths and preferred approaches
- or by failing to work directly enough with families/ individuals most affected by disadvantage

The innovation fund proposal provides an opportunity to address these risks.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ✓ ☐ **Community safety**
- ✓ ☐ **Adult health, care and housing**
- ✓ ☐ **Getting it right for every Midlothian child**
- ✓ ☐ **Improving opportunities in Midlothian**
- ✓ ☐ **Sustainable growth**
- ✓ ☐ **Business transformation and Best Value**
- ☐ **None of the above**

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The proposal aims to address all three priorities using the three approaches of prevention, capacity building/ co- production and localising access.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

With the support of Edinburgh University as an evaluation partner, and working in partnership with the Improvement Service, measurement of impact will be built into the proposal from the outset. Success criteria will include at their core any reductions in outcome gaps experienced by the areas against Midlothian averages.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This proposal is about working with communities to develop preventative approaches

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This proposal is about engaging and working with local communities and partners to ensure that they are involved in creating new ways of working.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

Reducing outcome gaps will benefit all members of equality protected characteristic groups resident in the target areas. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken within each element of the co – production design stage. Evaluation processes will include assessment of actual impact on equality groups achieved.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Reducing outcome gaps and localising access to services will reduce journeys and the carbon impact of these; reduce unnecessary transactions and failure demand conserving resources, and increase the social and economic sustainability of the three target communities

3.10 IT Issues

New technologies will be required to support localising access to services and more work will be undertaken in this area if we are successful in this bid.

4 Recommendations

Council is recommended to endorse resubmission by the Council and its Partners of a bid in response to the European Commission's call for Proposals for Social Policy Innovations Supporting Reforms in Social Services as set out in this report.

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Report Contact:

Name Alasdair Mathers Tel No 0131 271 3438

alasdair.mathers@midlothian.gov.uk