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Bedfordshire
county council

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ESF CO-FINANCING PLAN

October 2007 – March 2011

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Bedfordshire County Council

Co-Financing Plan October 2007 to March 2011

Contribution of the plan to the implementation of the Operational Programme and the Regional ESF Framework

Elements to be delivered by Bedfordshire County Council

This plan sets out the proposals for co-financing ESF, and the strategic framework for ESF activity over the next three years. The particular focus of Bedfordshire County Council (Council) will be to support organisations delivering to disadvantaged individuals in deprived areas.

Activity will be supported under Priority 1 – ‘Extending Employment Opportunities’, although the Council is also an approved Co-financing Organisation for Priority 2 - ‘Developing a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce’. We will look at opportunities to co-finance under this Priority as they present themselves later in the programme.

All activities will align with the regional priorities contained in the Operational Programme for England and the ESF Regional Framework priorities and complement the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Joint Economic Development Strategy (JEDS) for Bedfordshire and Luton. The priorities of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy that support the LAA targets have also been taken into consideration.

PRIORITY 1

Activities to be supported

The Council as a CFO will provide a role within the delivery of ESF that is distinctive to and complementary with the work of the other Co-financing organisations. This will ensure that ESF can make the greatest impact and assist the greatest number of participants in the area.

In line with the needs identified in the Operational Programme and ESF Regional Framework, we will focus on reaching smaller local pockets of deprivation and need (both community and place). The Council will use ESF to enhance and add value to other work in promoting opportunities and access to employment - be it Investing in Communities (IiC), Local Area Agreements (LAA), Adult & Community Learning (ACL), extended schools or other community regeneration activity.

The Council has a distinctive role to offer, and this is best linked to other services that the Council provides; engagement with the most vulnerable and hardest to reach and encouraging them into “inclusion” and on the pathway to training and employment; working in small pockets of deprivation, provision of tailored support along with other regeneration activities; working with individuals who are inactive to support them on the pathway to employment. The specific Council activity will be focused on an earlier stage than the majority of those we understand to be targeted by the regional CFO’s; focusing on those at the earlier part of the journey to employment, and getting them ready to undertake specific skills training, consequently some of the proposals will be resource intensive and have comparatively low anticipated job outcomes, but will lead to progression.

Following the successful appeal by Luton BC for co-financer status Bedfordshire will seek to develop a joint prospectus, with separate sections to ensure sub-regional opportunities for delivering projects in both areas are presented to our community. Thus providers can tender to Luton or this Council, or both. As the original Plan was to assist providers and participants

by ensuring our programmes and systems were aligned as far as possible, we have reviewed the list below in line with the priorities highlighted by Luton.

The Council currently seeks to base its support around the following activity:

Proposed Activity – NEET (not in employment education or training)

The Council intends to use approximately £1.1m of the budget to address the needs of 14-19 year olds who are either NEET or who are at risk of becoming NEET.

It is intended to commission a number of projects focused on key parts of this broad target group as follows:

- A brokerage scheme matching those with low qualifications but job ready with appropriate employers
- Engagement project – aimed at personal and skills development to enable progression to further more work oriented training
- Pre-NEET work enhancing school college liaison and appropriate activities for those at risk of becoming NEET
- Innovative multi-agency liaison aimed at re-engaging NEET group in deprived areas
- Small project/s of targeted activity not currently available in the sub region aimed at assisting particularly vulnerable groups within the NEET cohort (e.g. young carers, teenage parents, those with mental health problems)

Target outcomes, outputs and results (ESF)			
No. Participants	% BME	No. Re-engaged at end of project	% Re-engaged at
700	16%	315	45%

Proposed activity - EMPLOYABILITY

The Council intends to use the £928,000 it has been allocated under this strand to fund projects within the following areas of identified need:

- **Work Experience and placement.**
Training and work experience through Trading Standards Approved Traders.
- **Learning Disabilities**
Projects aimed at improving the employability of individuals with learning disabilities.
- **Pre-entry Provision**
Targeted support to unemployed and economically inactive adults in the most deprived communities, particularly BME, 50+, those facing multiple disadvantages and those in areas of high unemployment. Work to complement and link with IiC programme.
- **VCO Training**
Volunteer training to improve employability and capacity of third sector organisations. This will concentrate opportunities on local community based VCOs and social enterprises.
- **ESOL with Employability**
For BME and unemployed migrant communities, concentrating on reaching out to those not able to attend traditional College courses, some because of health conditions. This may also include ESOL and literacy plus employability skills. We will focus on community based stand alone courses that will link to other provision e.g. that funded through IiC.

This will be differentiated from English courses run through other CFOs by its community focus.

- **Homeless Support**

Specialist activity assisting homeless through education to gain access to training and employment

- **Steps into Childcare**

Providing first rung training and employment opportunities for women from disadvantaged communities with level 1 & 2 OCN qualifications

Target outcomes, outputs and results (ESF)			
No. Participants	% BME	No. in work on leaving	% in work on leaving
670	16%	147	22%

1. Target Groups

We will target activities at those who are disadvantaged or excluded from both the labour market and society in general. Within this broad target grouping this Plan includes activities specifically focused on the target groups from the Regional framework i.e. 14-19 year olds who fall in the NEET category or who are at risk of becoming NEET; homeless, black and minority ethnic groups, including the Gypsy and Traveller population; lone and other disadvantaged parents. There will also be activity focused on persons with learning disabilities and Mental Health problems most of whom will be on sickness, disability and incapacity benefits. There will be activities targeted at the most deprived areas and estates in the county where individuals often suffer multiple disadvantage.

Geographical Targeting

We will target activities at some of the most deprived areas and estates in the county where individuals often face multiple disadvantage in accessing the labour market. We also plan to focus support onto the wards which have the highest concentrations of BME communities and those with the largest numbers of disaffected young people.

The activity contributes to Bedfordshire's LAA, particularly in regards to

- Supporting people suffering work limiting illness back into employment.
- supporting 16-18 year olds not in sustainable, full time, education, employment or training.
- decreasing rates of permanent and fixed-term exclusions

2. Quantified Outputs - Priority 1

These figures relate to both ESF funded and match participants

a. Total Participants	2000
b. No. and % unemployed ¹	715 (36%)
c. No. and % economically inactive ²	585 (29%)
d. No. and % NEET or at risk of NEET14-19s	700 (35%)
e. % with disabilities or health conditions ³	18%
f. % lone parents ⁴	12%
g. % aged 50 or over ⁵	18%
h. % from ethnic minorities	16%
i. % female	51%

3. Quantified Results - Priority 1

a. No. and % in work on leaving ⁶	286 (14%)
b. No. and % in work 6 months after leaving ⁷	338 (17%)
c. No. and % economically inactive participants engaged in job search activity or further learning ⁸	263 (45%)
d. No. and % of 14 – 19 year old NEETS or at risk, in education, employment or training on leaving	315 (45%)

How activity complements other CFO provision

It is felt that the focused nature of most of the Councils' proposals, with its emphasis on outreach and the close linkages with mainstream Council activity will ensure that the activities in this prospectus remain distinct from those of the other Co-financers.

Whenever possible the Council will collaborate with other CFO's operating in this sub-region to ensure consistent processes and procedures, access to independent advice and guidance for tenderers and joint information events to promote the ESF programme in the sub region.

We will continue our previous productive relationship with the other CFOs and will continue to work proactively with them to ensure that (as at present) there is synergy between the programmes as well as a clear differentiation. Communication at an operational level, together with involvement of local stakeholders is the best means of avoiding duplication.

The Council will remain in close contact with other CFOs, through the tendering and contracting processes, and intends to facilitate regular meetings with all successful providers in Bedfordshire once the contract process is concluded and full details of tenders are known. As indicated in our application for CFO status the Council plans to operate in a distinctive manner supporting, but different to, the work of the other CFOs.

¹ Based on regional framework target nos. expressed as % of total regional figure applied to non NEET participants

² As above

³ Based on 22% Regional framework target figure for 19+ age group and 10% estimate for NEET group

⁴ Based on Regional Target figure of 12% of all group

⁵ Based on Regional Target figure of 18% for total number of non-NEET participants

⁶ Based on Regional Target figure of 22% for 19+ age group and estimate of 0% for NEET group as their outcomes are recorded separately (% refers to total beneficiaries)

⁷ Based on Regional Target figure of 26% for 19+ group and estimate of 0% for NEET group (% refers to total beneficiaries)

⁸ Based on Regional target figure of 45% for inactive 19+ group and estimate of 0% for NEET group (% refers to total beneficiaries)

Funding and Added value

All activity funded by the Council and used as match funding will be eligible activities under the programme and delivered to the identified priority target groups for the East of England. In particular the match funding is focused on providing employment and vocational support to the most vulnerable residents within the community, and the ESF provision will enhance and add value to this work. It will also extend the target areas and ensure a wider provision of similar services. The Social Services budgets for training and supporting individuals with learning disabilities and mental health issues used as match will be enhanced by ESF to give more focused and targeted assistance to the segment target group most able to progress to employment and thereby ensure a greater percentage move to active involvement in the labour market. This is in line with the Operational Programme and ESF Regional Framework.

Several elements of activity have been designed to complement and add value to other public funding initiatives in the area, in particular the Investing in Communities programme funded with mainstream EEDA funds, whose intervention leads have been consulted and involved in drawing up the priorities for this Plan. Of the four strands, three are particularly key to adding value to ESF activity. The first is Transition from School to Employment, which reduces the number of young NEET people, and concentrates on 14-16 year olds, preventing them becoming NEET. Our ESF activity supports the entire 14-19 target group within Bedfordshire, supporting the Connexions service and its' mainstream budget which returns to Local Authority control April 2008. The second strand is Adult Skills, and the elements outlined in this Plan are based on the needs base from liC and complement this area of the liC Plan. The third is Healthy Steps to employment aimed at bringing people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit back into the workforce. The elements of this Plan are designed to ensure inclusion of this key group.

With regard to the activity it is intended that the projects supported by ESF will run alongside mainstream Council provision to ensure more of our residents can be provided with help towards employment. Every opportunity will be taken to ensure mutual understanding and knowledge and release synergies between projects of the different funding types.

All match funding identified within the Plan has, or will be awarded through an open and competitive process.

PRIORITY 1

	Match Funding	ESF Funding	Total Funding
2007	Supporting people: nil Social Services Learning Disability (LD): nil	<u>£30,000</u>	<u>£30,000</u>
2008	Supporting people: £359k Social Services LD: £300k	<u>£659,000</u>	<u>£1,318,000</u>
2009	Supporting people: £359k Social Services LD £300k	<u>£659,000</u>	<u>£1,318,000</u>
2010	Supporting people: £359k Social Services LD £300k	<u>£659,000</u>	<u>£1,318,000</u>
2011	Supporting people: Social Services LD: £60k	<u>£30,000</u>	<u>£90,000</u>
Total	£2,037,000	£2,037,000	£4,074,000

Complementarity between ESF and Match

As indicated in the section above relating to match funding, by focusing on the access to employment and training of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the Community the Council will be complementing the work that is purchased using the match funding streams. It will allow a greater depth and breadth of provision to be made available to the target group of the match funding.

Contribution to Priority activity

All proposed activity will be in line with the indicative activities as laid out in the East of England ESF Regional Framework and therefore make a direct contribution to the activities of the priority

Administration costs

The current estimates of management and administration costs for the programme are £284,900 over 3½ years, representing 7% of the total Plan. An increase to the usual limit of 5% of total programme for administration has been agreed with DWP ESF Division to ensure the Plan's viability.

The schedule below sets out the current estimates annual costs attached to the administration and management of the proposed Co-financing plan

ESF Co-financing Manager	100% ESF	£38k + on costs	£42,000
Admin support	1.5 FTE	£24k +on costs	£26,000
		Contract help	£9,400
Travel & Subsistence			£1,500

Stationery, post, telephone	£1,000
Conference & workshop expenses	£1,500
Total	<u>£81,400</u>

£81,400 x 3.5 years = **£284,900**

(7 % of total Plan)

Description of added value of ESF

ESF will be used to add value in a number of different ways to existing domestic expenditure of both the Council and other partner organisations, in addition to the monies that are being used as public matched funding. It will be used to meet the targets of the LAA, to meet the needs identified by the LiC partnership and the Community strategy, but focuses on the targets described in the Operational Programme and ESF Regional Framework.

ESF will be used to add additional numbers to activities already being funded through these other funding streams, to provide additional outcomes and to broaden the type of activity being offered.

The matrix set out below clearly shows the relationship between the match funding and the activity supported by ESF. By dividing expenditure clearly between separate ESF and match projects the added value obtained from ESF expenditure can be clearly demonstrated. All the areas of activity indicated for ESF funding are new, and therefore all the associated outcomes are directly attributable to the impact of ESF.

All figures are estimates based on current projections for domestic budgets and indicative sums for the proposed ESF activity.

OUTPUTS, RESULTS, IMPACTS	Match	ESF	Total
No. Participants	630	1370	2000
No. Ethnic Minorities	101	219	320
No. NEET	0	700	700
No. 50+	113	121	234
No. Lone/disadvantaged parents	76	164	240
No. disabled	139	217	356
No. women	321	699	1020
No. positive outputs on leaving	267	598	865
No. in work on leaving	139	147	286

Project selection and tendering arrangements

Tendering Methodology

Information about the opportunities for providers to tender under co-financing will be widely disseminated as part of an on-going consultation and information process consequent on this Co-financing Plan being approved. A Prospectus will be widely circulated which lays out the tendering arrangements, appraisal criteria and accountability. A further supplementary document will be issued advising the timetable and arrangements for support and advice. The expectation is to have contracts in place during April 2008.

The Council will advertise the Invitation to Tender through press advertising, the internet, provider meetings, use of the Officer group, and other forums, partnership groups and networks. We anticipate issuing tender packs during January 2008 with a deadline for submitting applications, anticipated as Monday 25 February 2008. It is our intention to hold a joint launch event with Luton BC on 23 January 2008.

Project Selection

A wholly transparent, fair and equitable system for the selection of providers and activities under co-financing will be put in place. The Council will adopt the same forms and procedures already set up under the last Programme, and in particular the Red/Amber/Green system for initial eligibility.

There will be a two-stage process for project selection and appraisal. The initial appraisal of projects will be carried out by pairs of assessors drawn from Council Officers together with a panel of stakeholder representatives including: representatives from district councils, from the voluntary and community sector; from local stakeholder groups; from other CFO's; from the sub-regional economic development partnership, together with an independent observer from GO-East. From those selected, a second stage appraisal will be carried out by Council representatives and will take into account the following issues for each project / range of project applications submitted.

Strategic Level Appraisal Issues

- Geographical spread of provision ;
- Mix of provision – The Council aims to fund projects that reflect the diversity of the local provider infrastructure;
- Activities across the strategic priorities identified by the Council's Community Vision.
- Financial structure of projects and availability funding. Where there is a substantial overbid for available resources, an appraisal issue will be the flexibility that individual projects can offer and issues relating to value for money.
- Equal Opportunities: all projects will be required to return full and satisfactory answers to the appropriate questions before appraisal on plan content (see section on equal opportunities above).
- A question on Sustainable Development will be included in the tender documentation. Where all other aspects are equal and all requirements in the tender have been met, tenderers who have given a considered and appropriate response to the sustainable development question and can demonstrate a clear commitment to additional action as a result of using the guidance material will receive priority in the tender appraisal process over those who have not.
- Any other information relating to individual projects / organisations that the panel consider to be relevant to the effective delivery of the funding.

Project Level Appraisal Issues

The Council's project promoters, procurement team and the ESF Team will risk assess the lead organisation (and partners) to determine whether a proposed provider:

- can deliver the project as described in the project specification;
- has the resources to deliver the project(s) i.e. training resources, staffing levels and other relevant activities are adequate;
- how well the provider's financial and management accounting systems are developed and their capacity to conform to management information requirements;
- the providers previous knowledge or experience of delivering ESF or other externally funded projects;
- The financial strength of the provider. If the provider's financial statements show that the income earned by the provider from the project will be a high proportion of the provider's total income or liquid assets, then the Council will want to be satisfied that the provider has sufficient financial strength for the project;
- The ability of the provider to meet externally agreed quality standards.

For new providers, the ability to meet fully the Councils' requirements for service level agreements will be taken into account in the selection process. This includes capacity in

respect of: financial assurance (see above); quality of education and training and standards achieved by learners; leadership and management of quality and curriculum/training areas; quality assurance and continuous improvement; data management; health and safety and equality of opportunity.

For projects bidding for the Council's co-financing, the recommendations of the Appraisal Panel, including a report on all applications received and case papers for individual applications will be presented for approval in compliance with Council Standing Orders and the scheme of delegation agreed through the Council Constitutional Framework. To ensure transparency in project selection and appraisal, all stages of the process will be documented fully with a case file for each application available for inspection.

All lead organisations that submit tenders will be contacted to inform them of the decisions taken. Successful applications will be published on the Council's website and in newsletters with the name of the selected providers and respective activities.

Accountability

The Council will be wholly responsible for all aspects of the projects, as both the sponsor and co-financer. Therefore, additional systems and record keeping will be maintained. These will be based on the existing bespoke online database and further developed with the provider in accordance with any new ESFD requirements and best practice as they are communicated.

The Council will enter into a formal agreement with all providers. This agreement will include:

- the ESF project specification as outlined in the project application and subsequent contract;
- the specific training objectives and outcomes for each participant;
- the ESF eligibility criteria which relate to participants and expenditure should be clearly explained within the agreement;
- the right of access to ESF records by representatives of Government Office, the Co-Financing Organisation, the ESF Unit, the EC or other officially designated body;
- the obligation to declare any income generated by the ESF project and its outputs;
- the need to maintain clear audit records and to use only actual eligible expenditure for information for annual reports or final reports when the project ends;
- details of a comprehensive management information system to make sure complete, accurate and up-to-date information can be used for monitoring the project and supporting the project closure report, backed up by written records; and
- the need to keep all ESF records until 31 December 2020 unless otherwise notified by the managing authority .

Tendering compliance with National & EU legislation

The Council's Co-financing Plan and its sub-contracting processes will comply, in respect to open and competitive tendering, with the EU regulations on Public Contracts (EC Directive 2004/18/EC) and the UK Statutory Instrument 2006/5 – The Public Contracts Regulations, 2006.

The UK Programme, 2007UK05UPO001, is authorised under Commission Decision C(2007) 3909 of 9 August 2007. The regulatory framework relating to ESF set by EU is contained in Council Regulation 1083/2006, 11 July, and 1828/2006, 8 December 2006. This covers provisions and implementation respectively.

Provider funding and monitoring

Formulation of contract costs

A key part of the project selection and appraisal process will be a detailed consideration of the funding requirements for each project.

Providers will be paid on an agreed contract cost basis, according to a profile agreed with them at the contract negotiation stage. Because the Council is unable to make funds available using national funding rates (formula funding) provider costs will be calculated from the budgets set out in proposals and assigned to agreed outcomes. In making their initial submission applicants will be required to demonstrate that all projected costs are ESF eligible.

Payment arrangements for providers

Payments will be made on achievement against a schedule of agreed milestones, outputs and outcomes, which will form a key part of the post tender negotiations. Advance funding of up to 30% of first years cost will be considered where potential cash flow difficulty can be demonstrated. The final 20% payment will be paid to providers on completion of a successful review of the closure of the project.

Monitoring arrangements for:

Quality Standards

- **Project delivery and outcomes**

The Council will monitor the providers to ensure a rigorous assessment of the providers' quality, equal opportunities policy, health and safety, financial viability and capability. This robust gateway, whilst not guaranteeing contractual performance, provides a very good cipher for ability to deliver.

In Bedfordshire organisations receiving more than £5,000 are contracted by Service Level Agreements which detail grant conditions, payment schedules and monitoring requirements. Applications exceeding £30,000 undergo a comprehensive technical appraisal to consider other options, and particularly assess risk. Review of all provider performance will take place every three months, carried out by the Project Officers. The visits will confirm adequate Management Information collection, together with the opportunity to confirm quality of delivery of the project. This is achieved in part by ad-hoc interviews with the participants. Deviations from planned performance will be addressed to ensure plans are brought back into line.

Performance indicators to be applied across all provision are being further developed to assess the relative performance of provision and ensure quality is maintained across all providers. Data will be collated and evaluated.

The Council will work with providers, particularly voluntary and community providers to help build their capacity to satisfy the requirements. This will be part of the on-going role of the ESF Co-financing Manager, in terms of ad hoc advice and guidance, but will also address these issues formally at the six monthly review. These reviews are to monitor the quality of provision. The outputs from performance reviews will be used to inform future planning in addition to identifying priorities for immediate action in existing contracts. It will enable identification of examples of good practice to share with other CFO's.

The project officers will help the provider through the process and help to develop internal capacity within the provider. The project officers will have regular meetings with the ESF Co-

financing Manager, exchanging information on the progress of individual projects. These meetings will review in particular the spend and outcomes performance, and the quality of the project with regard to the records, plans and general progress. Quarterly claims from the providers will be submitted to the ESF Co-financing Manager who will pass these to the Project Officers for verification and subsequent transmission to the Finance Team for payment. These claims will also be required to be supported with Management Information for formats and standards stated in the proposal and contract. Where any significant changes are identified the ESF Co-financing Manager will notify the Government Office immediately.

Follow up of participants will be carried out by the Council and the provider, where agreed in the contract. The Project Officers will also interview participants on an ongoing basis as part of their monitoring activities.

- **Quality standards and the addressing of ALI recommendations**

Council ESF provision has not previously been subject to ALI inspection. We will review with the providers their requirements and relationship to the Adult Learning Inspectorate and work with them to ensure these requirements are met and any recommendations addressed.

General Quality standards will be assessed by the Project Officers on their regular monitoring visits together with the experts of the sponsoring Council departments. All providers are expected to have in place internal monitoring and evaluation procedures the operation of which will form part of the monitoring visits from CFO staff. These will include regular feedback from programme participants.

- **Financial performance**

The financial performance of providers will be monitored and assessed in line with the schedule of monitoring visits and procedures outlined above with regards to project delivery and quality. These will be reported to Government Office at quarterly intervals and reviewed and assessed in line with the ESFD financial monitoring and audit processes and procedures.

- **Audit**

As part of the Council activities the co-financing activities will be the subject of bi-annual audit by the Councils internal auditors in compliance with the usual Council audit processes and procedures. Currently Local Authority CFO's are not required to subject themselves to external audit. The Council undertakes to comply with all Audit requirements of the new programme as they are advised by the Managing Authority.

How management information will be provided

Providers will need to submit claims on a quarterly basis through our bespoke online management information system, and will be required to be able to support these with documentation that demonstrates project expenditure and outputs. These claims will be used to compile the regular reports to the managing authority, and will be made available in whatever format that the authority requires. It is understood that this may be in the form of electronic data transfer.

How performance will be reported to the regional ESF committee

Performance information will be submitted by projects on a quarterly basis to support claims for payment. They will be verified by the monitoring visits by Project Officers. The information will be submitted via the Council's on-line MI systems, and it is anticipated that it will be possible for this information to be uplifted by the secretariat of the Regional Committee

(or appropriate other body) to provide an on demand performance report. However, it should be noted that details of any electronic data gathering system to be used by the ESF committee have yet to be published, and therefore no assessment of compatibility with the Council's existing systems has yet been possible. As contracting is due to occur very shortly after the approval of this Plan, it is likely that there will be a necessary period of transition before the final systems are in place.

Cross Cutting themes

The Council recognises the importance of embedding the cross-cutting themes into the delivery of this Co-financing Plan. This will be reflected in the project selection process (scoring and appraisal) and in delivery. It is also envisaged that specific targets under these themes will be built into the contracts for project delivery. These will be informed by the most recent available guidance on sustainability and the inclusion of Equal Opportunity indicators for providers.

Equal Opportunities

Equality of Opportunity is a priority area for the Council as part of its objective to foster inclusive communities. Progress is measured via two Best Value Performance Indicators. The first assesses progress in implementing the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) and the second assesses progress in implementing the Race Equality Scheme (BVPI 2b).

The Council has a duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to have due regard to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations. This duty is reflected in the need to publish and develop a Race Equality Scheme. This ensures equality impact assessments are built into all of its services, policies, consultation exercises and employment practices and monitored through its corporate systems. The Council is committed to implementing Equality of Opportunity in carrying out all of its various functions. All managers have responsibility for ensuring their service area:-

- **Considers and responds** to the needs of:-
 - People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
 - People with Disabilities
 - Women

Issues relating to faith, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age are also considered:

- **Consults** with the above groups.
- **Employs**, trains and promotes (where appropriate) people from the above groups.

Equality of opportunity should be an intrinsic part of day-to-day working and should help ensure appropriate services are provided to all sections of the community, and that the workforce, at all levels, reflects the community it serves.

The Council's approach is set out in the Comprehensive Equality Policy 2007 and the Race Equality Scheme Update 2004.

The Council operates within strict guidelines with regard to Equal Opportunities, both in terms of its own internal practices and in respect to the activities it contracts. Equal Opportunity policies therefore form an integral part of the contracting process. Prospective sub-contractors will be expected to have in place their own equal opportunities policies, which match those of the Council, and to have systems and procedures in place to evaluate their performance against these, in relation to gender, race, age and disability and other project level criteria for other target groups. However, the Council accepts that some new providers will need more support in establishing these systems.

There are regional benchmark figures available for participation by gender, disability and ethnic minority, lone parents, 50+ and NEET. All providers will receive local benchmark

figures and will be required to monitor and report against these as part of their contractual obligations. Equalities gateway question/s will be included in the tender form. Best practise from other Co-financing organisations will be incorporated into the Council systems as it becomes available.

Sustainable development

The Council is fully committed to the principle of sustainable development, which involves fulfilling the economic potential of the East of England in ways which strengthen social inclusion and maintain and enhance the environmental resources upon which we depend.

The Council is demonstrating its commitment to sustainable development by actively pursuing its published environmental policy and maintaining its ISO14001 standard through EMS.

The Council will promote the understanding of sustainable development through our prospectus by signposting applicants to guidance material and the Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England available on the GO-East web site.

Providers will be required to answer the following sustainable development question on tender forms:

“Sustainable development involves considering how best to achieve a combined range of social, environmental and economic goals. Please consider and describe the extent to which your project will address each of the following elements:

- Providing opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential;
- Environmental enhancement and protection through project delivery;
- Providing the skills that business both demand and require, both now and in the future.

If you feel that one or more of these elements is not relevant to your project, you should explain why.”

Where all other aspects are equal and all requirements in the tender have been met, tenderers who have given a considered and appropriate response to the sustainable development question and can demonstrate a clear commitment to additional action as a result of using the guidance material will receive priority in the tender appraisal process over those who have not.

Sustainable development will be reviewed at least twice during the life of the provider projects as part of our monitoring process, including any provider commitments for action on sustainable development resulting from post tender negotiation, and any good practice identified will be shared with GOEast. This review will entail an audit of the processes and measures agreed with the tender to ensure that commitments are honoured and that there is an audit trail in place to demonstrate this. The review will form part of the providers contractual obligations for delivery and will be linked to the payment process.

Implementation for Year One

Milestone	Target date		
Plan agreed	January 2008		
Prospectus (1) issued	January 2008		
Launch event	23 January 2008		
Submission deadline	25 February 2008		
First Appraisal	w/c 25 February 2008		
Initial letters sent	3 March 2008		
Second Appraisal	w/c 17 March 2008		
Letters sent	20 March 2008		
Post tender negotiations	w/c 25 March 2008		
Contracts signed 10% 30% 60% 100%	April 2008 to May 2008		
Activity starts 10% 30% 60%	May 2008 August 2008 October 2008		
No. Participants by:		<u>Into work</u>	<u>Other results</u>
April	50	0	0
May	200	0	15
June	350	20	30
July	500	35	45
Aug	600	40	60
September	800	55	80
Oct (cumulative)	1100	65	100

Annex 1 output and results targets

ESF Requirement per annum

Priority	Employability	NEET	Total ESF
1			
2007	10,000	20,000	30,000
2008	304,000	355,000	659,000
2009	302,000	357,000	659,000
2010	302,000	357,000	659,000
2011	10,000	20,000	30,000
TOTAL	928,000	1,109,000	2,037,000

Annex 2 Targets and Outputs

	Framework %	Neet %	Match	Neet ESF	19+ ESF	All ESF	Total No.
Participants			630	700	670	1370	2000
Unemployed (non NEET)	55%	n/a	347		369	369	715
Economically inactive (Non NEET)	45%	n/a	284		302	302	585
NEET or at risk	20%	n/a	0	700	0	700	700
Disabilities or Health	22%	10%	139	70	147	217	356
Lone Parents	12%	12%	76	84	80	164	240
50 +	18%	0%	113	0	121	121	234
Ethnic Mins	16%	16%	101	112	107	219	320
Female	51%	51%	321	357	342	699	1020
In work on leaving	22%	0%	139	0	147	147	286
In work 6 months +	26%	0%	164	0	174	174	338
EA into further js or learning	45%	0%	128	0	136	136	263
NEETs re engaged	45%	45%	0	315	0	315	315