



LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

ESF CO-FINANCING PLAN

October 2007 to March 2011

7 January 2008

Contact

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1. Plan Overview

Introduction

As a Co Financing organisation, Luton Borough Council will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the regional ESF framework in Luton.

Having been in receipt of regeneration funding over the past six years, the regeneration agenda in Luton has been transformed in two ways – neighbourhood working and a VCS or third sector with considerable experience of delivery. Luton Borough Council has worked with the neighbourhoods and third sector organisations to build their capacity and support their development.

The Council has worked in six areas with the highest scores on the Index of Multiple Deprivation and carried out work in the areas that are just below that. This means that as a Co Financing organisation we have local knowledge and experience of working in those deprived areas and the ways which most contribute to reducing deprivation. We have examples where this intensive approach has worked, for example, school attainment and crime reduction in Marsh Farm.

Through the tendering process, we will be able to contract to deliver outputs in the Operational Programme and the ESF Regional Framework. We will be able to add value by our strategic involvement in Investing in Communities, so that our Co Financing Plan complements the Investing in Communities Business Plan. We will also be able to align our Co Financing Plan with Luton's Local Area Agreement, and with Milton Keynes South Midlands, Luton & South Bedfordshire plans.

Luton Borough Council as a CFO seeks to provide a role within the delivery of ESF that is distinctive to and complementary with the work of the other organisations. This will ensure that ESF can make the greatest impact and assist the greatest number of beneficiaries in the area.

The Luton Co Financing Programme will cover the unitary area of Luton, but will continue to have discussions with other Co Financers to ensure that our programme is complementary to theirs to ensure complete regional coverage.

1.1 Contribution to regional and national ESF Programme

The Luton Co-Financing Plan sets out proposals for co-financing ESF, and the strategic framework for ESF activity over the next three years. The particular focus of the 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 EESCP ESF Regional Framework priorities, and complement the Regional Economic Strategy and the Joint Economic Development Strategy for Bedfordshire and Luton. The priorities of Luton's Community Plan that support the LAA targets have also been taken into consideration.

1.2 Priority 1 – Extending Employment Opportunities

Activities to be supported

Local Authority involvement as a CFO allows a clear linkage between the distribution of ESF and the local democratic processes, for example through the involvement of elected councillors and scrutiny bodies. It will also provide linkages to key local organisations through its membership and leadership role within the Local Strategic Partnership. Luton Borough 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 ESF Operational Programme and ESF Regional Framework, we will focus on reaching smaller 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 and Community Learning (ACL), extended schools or other community regeneration activity.

Luton Borough 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 support along with other regeneration activities; working with individuals who are inactive and/or on Incapacity Benefit (IB) to support them on the pathway to employment. The specific Luton Borough Council activities will be at an 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.

Luton Borough Council will develop a joint or linked prospectus with Bedfordshire County Council to ensure sub-regional opportunities for joint projects are presented to our community. As the original plan was to assist providers and participants by ensuring our programmes and systems were harmonised as far as possible, the list below has been aligned with the priorities highlighted by Bedfordshire County Council's CFO plan.

Luton Borough Council seeks to base its support around the following activity:

Proposed Activity - NEET

- Skills Development activities – aimed at personal and skills development to enable progression to further work oriented training
- Pre-Neet work enhancing school college liaison and appropriate activities for those in danger of becoming Neet
- Innovative multi-agency liaison aimed at re-engaging Neet in deprived areas
- Small innovative projects aimed at assisting specific groups vulnerable to becoming Neet (e.g. young carers, teenage parents, those with physical and mental health problems)

Target outcomes, outputs and results (ESF)

| No. participants | % BME | No. re-engaged at end of project | % re-engaged at end of project |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 476 | 16% | 214 | 45% |

Proposed Activity - Employability

- Pre Entry Provision – targeted support for unemployed and economically inactive adults in the most deprived communities, particularly BME, 50+, and those facing multiple disadvantage and those in areas of high unemployment.
- VCO Training – volunteer training to improve the employability and capacity of VCO organisations and social enterprises, helping volunteers develop their roles and responsibilities, the organisations to manage people and resources effectively, and to attain required quality standards.
- ESOL with employability – for BME and migrant communities particularly those not able to attend traditional college course, some because of health conditions. Courses to include ESOL, literacy, employability skills and specifically targeted courses. This will focus on community based stand alone courses that will link to other provision e.g. that funded through IIC. (This will be differentiated by its community focus from English courses run through other CFOs.)
- Learning disabilities including mental health – projects improving the employability of individuals with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems, including “job readiness” training, plus coaching support and mentoring during the first few months of employment.

Target outcomes, outputs and results (ESF)

| No. participants | % BME | No. in work on leaving | % in work on leaving |
|------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 498 | 18% | 124 | 25% |

Target Groups

Priority 1 has as its broad target groups 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 ESF Regional Framework, particularly

- 14-19 year olds who fall into the NEET category or who are a risk of becoming NEET
- Homeless, black and minority ethnic groups (including gypsies and travellers, and recently arrived migrants)
- Lone and other disadvantaged parents.

There will also be activities 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 Luton where individuals often suffer multiple disadvantage.

Geographical targeting

We will aim to target activities at some of the most disadvantaged areas and estates in the borough where individuals often suffer 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.

This activity contributes to Luton's Local Area Agreement particularly with regard to helping adults and young people achieve their full potential through education and training, and reducing the percentage of young people in Luton aged 16-18 years old not in education, employment or training. It will help to stimulate a net growth in jobs in the local economy, and help to take people off the unemployment register, especially in the key Luton wards.

Quantified Outputs – Priority 1

Figures below relate to both ESF and match funded participants.

Outputs

| | |
|--|-----------|
| a. Total participants | 1,301 |
| b. No. and % unemployed ¹ | 503 (39%) |
| c. No. and % economically inactive ² | 322 (24%) |
| d. No. and % NEET or at risk of NEET 14-19s | 476 (37%) |
| e. % with disabilities or health conditions ³ | 18% |

¹ Based on ESF regional framework target numbers expressed as % of total regional figure applied to non Neet participants

² As above

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| f. % lone parents ⁴ | 12% |
| g. % aged 50 or over ⁵ | 18% |
| h. % from ethnic minorities | 16% |
| i. % female | 51% |

Quantified Results – Priority 1

| | |
|---|-----------|
| a. No. and % in work on leaving ⁶ | 182 (14%) |
| b. No. and % in work 6 months after leaving ⁷ | 221 (17%) |
| c. No and % economically inactivity participants engaged in job search activity or further learning ⁸ | 144 (45%) |
| d. No. and % of 14-19 year old Neets or at risk of Neet, in education, employment or training on leaving ⁹ | 214 (45%) |

Contribution to other regional targets

This activity will contribute to the Regional Economic Strategy, Goal One: A skills base that can support a world-class economy, and in particular “Increasing employment rates in disadvantaged communities”.

1.3 Priority 2 – Developing a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce

As indicated by the Appraisal Panel, Luton Borough Council will apply for funding for Priority 2 at a later date when future funding becomes available.

1.4 How this activity complements other CFO provision

Prior to Luton Borough Council being awarded Co Financing status a number of meetings were held with representatives from other CFOs. Since then other CFO plans have been produced and it is felt that the focused nature of the Luton Borough Council proposals, its emphasis on outreach and the close

³ Based on 22% ESF regional framework target figure for 19+ age group and 10% estimate for Neet group

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

⁵ Total % for non-NEET participants

⁶ Based on Regional Target figure of 22% for 19+ age group and estimate of 0% for Neet group (% 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)

⁹ Based on Regional Target figure of 25% for Neet group (% refers to total beneficiaries)

linkages with mainstream council activity will ensure that the activities in the prospectus will remain distinct from those of the other co-financers, except for those of Bedfordshire County Council.

The Managing Authority has provided written information with regard to the following issues:

- the timetable for submitting the Plan;
- the Priorities that the Plan will cover;
- the amount of ESF funding likely to be available at Priority level;
- the period of ESF funding;
- the delivery timescale;
- the outputs and results required to contribute to Operational Programme and regional ESF framework targets.

Luton Borough Council will collaborate with all other CFOs 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, wherever possible.

We have worked closely with Bedfordshire County Council CFO and the majority of our activities are mirrored in their plan, so that those wishing to tender could do so either for Luton participants, Bedfordshire participants or for both.

2. Funding and added value

2.1 ESF Funding by priority and year.

| | Priority 1 | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Year | Match Funding | ESF |
| 2007 | nil | £30,000 |
| 2008 | £455,000 (Supporting People) | £455,000 |
| 2009 | £455,000 (Supporting People) | £455,000 |
| 2010 | £455,000 (Supporting People) | £425,000 |
| 2011 | £24,954 (Supporting People) | £24,954 |
| TOTAL | £1,389,954 | £1,389,954 |

Complementarity between ESF and Match and Contribution to Priority Activities

All activity funded by Luton Borough Council to be used as match funding will be awarded through open and competitive tendering, and will deliver eligible activities to the identified priority target groups under the programme 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. With regard to the use of the Social Services budgets for training and supporting individuals with specific needs, it is intended that the ESF be used to give more focussed and targeted assistance to the 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 ESF 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, 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 to Employment, which reduces the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training, and concentrates on 14-16 year olds, preventing them from becoming Neet. Our ESF activity supports the entire 14-19 year target group within Luton, supporting the Connexions service and its mainstream budget with returns to local authority control in April 2008. The second strand is Adult Skills, and the elements outlined in this plan are based on the needs base from IIC and complement this area of the IIC 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.

It is intended that all the projects supported by ESF will run alongside mainstream Luton Borough Council provision and that every opportunity will be taken to ensure mutual understanding and knowledge and release synergies between projects of the different funding types

Complementarity between ESF and Match

As indicated in the section above relating to match funding, by focussing 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 is 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 programme.

2.2 Administration costs:

The table below shows the estimates of the annual costs to administer the Luton Co Financing Plan:

| | |
|--|--|
| European Officer | |
| 816 hrs x £37 per hour (inc on costs & overheads) | £30,102 |
| Funding Assistant | |
| 120 hrs x £27 per hour (inc on costs & overheads) x 2 | £6,480 |
| Legal and procurement expenses | £500 |
| Conference and meeting expenses (e.g. room hire, refreshments) | £500 |
| Travel and office expenses | £744 |
| | £39,712 |
| Total | = £39,712 per year x 3.5 years = total £138,995 |

2.3 Added Value of ESF Activity

As well as contributing to the ESF Operational Programme and the ESF Regional Framework, the Luton ESF Co-Financing Plan will add value in a number of different ways to existing domestic expenditure of both Luton Borough Council and other partner organisations, in addition to the monies that are being used as public matched funding. It will help towards meeting the targets of the Local Area Agreement, to meet the needs identified by the Investing in Communities partnership and the Community Plan, 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 shown. 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 | 327 | 974 | 1,301 |
| No. Ethnic Minorities | 65 | 143 | 208 |
| No. NEET | 0 | 476 | 476 |
| No. 50+ | 97 | 137 | 234 |
| No. disabled or health conditions | 126 | 108 | 234 |
| No. female | 140 | 523 | 663 |
| No. positive outputs on leaving | 0 | 214 | 214 |
| No. in work on leaving | 58 | 124 | 182 |

3. Project Selection and Tendering Arrangements

Tendering Methodology

Luton Borough Council tendering methodology will take place as follows:

- Following the approval of this Co Financing Plan, a steering group will be set up to oversee the Co Financing Programme. The steering group will consist of relevant partners, voluntary/community sector representatives and business representation. It will link to Luton's Local Public Service Board.
- A Prospectus will be drawn up which covers: tendering arrangements, appraisal criteria and accountability. A further supplementary document will be issued advising on 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 relevant forums, partnership groups and networks.
- We anticipate issuing tender packs in 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 Bedfordshire County Council as soon as possible after 17 January, the most likely date being 23rd January 2007.

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 initial appraisal of projects will be carried out by pairs of assessors drawn from Luton Borough Council officers together with a panel of stakeholder representatives including: the voluntary and community sector, local stakeholder groups, other CFOs, the sub-regional economic development partnership together with an independent observer from GO East. Projects will be rated red, amber or green.
- From those selected, a second stage appraisal will be carried out by Luton Borough Council representatives and will take into account the following issues for each project / range of project applications submitted:

Strategic Level Appraisal Issues

- The spread of provision across Luton;
- 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 Vision 2012 and Community Plan.
- 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 provide equal opportunities policies and return full and satisfactory answers to the appropriate questions before appraisal on plan content.
- 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 Officer Group 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 received 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 council's requirement 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 financier. Therefore, additional systems and record keeping will be maintained. These will be based on Bedfordshire County Council's 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 beneficiary;
- the ESF eligibility criteria which relate to beneficiaries 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 European Commission 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 31st December 2020 unless otherwise notified by the managing,

At all stages we will align our processes and deadlines with those of Bedfordshire County Council.

Tendering compliance with National 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 Procurement (EC Directive 2004/18/EC) and the Statutory Instrument 2006/5 – The Public Services Contract 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. This covers provisions and implementation respectively.

4. Provider Funding and Monitoring

Formulation of Contract Costs

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

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.

Organisations will be contracted by Service Level Agreements which detail grant conditions, payment schedules and monitoring requirements. Applications exceeding £30,000 will undergo a comprehensive technical appraisal to consider other options, and particularly assess risk. Review of provider performance will take place every three months, carried out by the project officers. The visits will confirm adequate MI collection together with the opportunity to confirm quality of delivery of the project. 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 European Officer, 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 CFOs.

The project officers will help the provider through the process and help to develop internal capacity within the provider. Assuming that the Luton CFO

Plan is aligned with the Bedfordshire County Council CFO Plan, then the project managers will have regular quarterly meetings with the ESF Co-financing Manager at Bedfordshire County Council, which will include the exchange 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 Luton Borough Council ESF Co-financing staff who will pass these through the council authorisation system for subsequent 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 council's Partnerships & Funding 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 managers will also interview participants on an ongoing basis as part of their monitoring activities. At least annually, the Council will examine and assess how effectively the review system operates.

Quality standards and the addressing of ALI recommendations

Luton Borough Council 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 Luton Borough 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 Luton Borough Council activities the Co-financing activities will be the subject of regular audit by the council's internal auditors in compliance with the usual Luton Borough Council audit processes and procedures. Currently local authority CFOs are not required to subject themselves to external audit. Luton Borough 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 monthly or quarterly basis, and will be required to be able to support these with documentation that demonstrates project expenditure and outputs. (Note – it is planned to use the Bedfordshire

County Council's bespoke online management information system for this, either on their platform or copied onto the LBC platform). 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 Bedfordshire County Council's on-line MI systems, and it is anticipated that it will be possible for this information 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 Bedfordshire County 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.

Note

It is assumed that the Luton and Bedfordshire CFO Plans will be able to be aligned, thus providing a better offer for organisations wishing to tender. A joint prospectus is planned which will contain activities and outputs that are common to both Bedfordshire and Luton as well as any activities that are solely for Bedfordshire or Luton. Applicants will then be able to bid for either Bedfordshire or Luton or both. Bedfordshire bids will be submitted to Bedfordshire County Council. Luton bids will be submitted to Luton Borough Council. It is anticipated that bidders wishing to cover both Bedfordshire & Luton will be asked to submit two copies of their bids indicating that they are bidding for both geographical areas. Successful delivery organisations for a "joint" bid will still have two contracts, one with each council, but will be able to organise delivery over the two geographical areas as best suits their organisation.

5. Cross Cutting Themes

Luton Borough 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 opportunities indicators for providers

5.1 Equality

The Council's approach to Equality is set out in the Luton Borough Council Corporate Equality Scheme 2006-2009. In October 2007, the Council achieved the Level 3 Equality Standard for Local Government.

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. An equalities gateway question/s will be included in the tender form. Best practise from other Co-financing organisations will be incorporated into the county Council systems as it becomes available

5.2 Sustainable Development

Luton Borough 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.

The Council will promote the understanding of sustainable development through its 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 the government Office for the East of England. 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

6. Implementation

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Milestone | Target date | | |
| Plan agreed | January 2008 | | |
| Prospectus (1) issued | January 2008 | | |
| Submission deadline | w/c 25 February 2008 | | |
| First Appraisal | w/c 25 February 2008 | | |
| Initial letters sent | w/c 25 February 2008 | | |
| Second Appraisal | w/c 17 March 2008 | | |
| Letters sent | w/c 17 March 2008 | | |
| Post tender negotiations | Early April | | |
| Contracts signed | April 2008 to May 2008 | | |
| Activity starts | | | |
| 10% | May 2008 | | |
| 30% | August 2008 | | |
| 60% | October 2008 | | |
| <u>Cumulative Number by:</u> | <u>Participants</u> | <u>Into work</u> | <u>Other results</u> |
| April | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| May | 50 | 0 | 5 |
| June | 100 | 15 | 10 |
| July | 250 | 26 | 20 |
| August | 325 | 34 | 20 |
| September | 300 | 57 | 25 |
| October | 350 | 104 | 31 |

Annex 1 – Finance

ESF by Year

Priority 1

| Year | NEET | Employability | Total ESF |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2007 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 30,000 |
| 2008 | 230,000 | 225,000 | 455,000 |
| 2009 | 230,000 | 225,000 | 455,000 |
| 2010 | 215,000 | 210,000 | 425,000 |
| 2011 | 18,424 | 6,530 | 24,954 |
| Total | 708,424 | 681,530 | 1,389,954 |

Annex 2 Targets and Outputs

Priority 1

| Target | Quantification |
|---|------------------|
| Outputs | |
| 1.1 Total number of participants | 1,301 |
| 1.2 Number and % of participants who are unemployed (a) Number (b) Percentage | a) 503 b) 38% |
| 1.3 Number and % of participants who are economically inactive (a) Number (b) Percentage | a) 322 b) 24% |
| 1.4 Number and % of participants aged 14 to 19 who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET (a) Number (b) Percentage | 476 (36%) |
| 1.5 % of participants with disabilities or health conditions | 18% |
| 1.6 % of participants who are lone parents | 12% |
| 1.7 % of participants aged 50 or over | 18% |
| 1.8 % of participants from ethnic minorities | 16% |
| 1.9 % of female participants | 51% |
| Results | |
| 1.10 Number and % of participants in work on leaving (a) Number (b) Percentage | a) 182 b) 14% |
| 1.11 Number and % of participants in work six months after leaving (a) Number | a) 221 b) 17% |

| | |
|---|--------|
| (b) Percentage | |
| 1.12 Number and % of economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning | |
| (a) Number | a) 144 |
| (b) Percentage | b) 45% |
| 1.13 Number and % of 14 to 19 year old NEETs or at risk in education, employment or training on leaving | |
| (a) Number | a) 214 |
| (b) Percentage | b) 45% |