

## **AGENDA ITEM NO 7**

**REPORT NO 153/15**

### **ANGUS COUNCIL**

#### **DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – 14 APRIL 2015**

#### **INTERREG NORTH WEST EUROPE PROGRAMME – PROPOSED FUNDING APPLICATION**

#### **REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

### **ABSTRACT**

This Report informs the Development and Enterprise Committee of proposed Angus Council involvement in the INTERREG North West Europe Programme 2014 – 2020 and the development of funding application to participate in a project being led by partners in Altena in Germany for a social innovation project and seeks approval to submit the funding bid.

### **1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Approve the continued work for the submission of the stage 1 Interreg bid;
- (ii) Note that if successful at the initial stage that a further report will be brought to committee seeking approval to proceed with Stage 2 and the proposed match funding.

### **2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit.
- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant

### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The INTERREG North West Europe (NWE) Programme is a transnational European Territorial Cooperation Programme funded by the European Union. The NWE Programme involves Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and parts of France, Germany and the Netherlands. The ambition and overall vision on the future territorial and socio-economic development of the NWE area is: "To be a key economic player in the world and create an attractive place to work and live, with high levels of innovation, sustainability and cohesion".

3.2 Through our membership of the East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC), an opportunity was identified for partners across the NWE to submit a note of interest in a project focused around delivering social innovation in areas of deprivation. Altena in Germany has already identified unused local authority buildings (former schools) which will be redeveloped into community cafes, and the process of redevelopment will be done in close cooperation with the community and other stakeholders. Altena will be the lead partner for the project and will play the main coordinating role.

3.3 Angus Council officers identified that the project was closely related to the Brechin Charrette, a community participation event carried out in February 2015, and that there are many

parallels between Altena and Brechin, in that both places are towns which have suffered from a decline in population and a loss of manufacturing industries.

- 3.4 To date, Angus Council and Falkirk Council have expressed an interest in the project. There could be an opportunity for bringing another Council on board at a later date, depending on the available budget. An initial meeting was held in November 2014 in Altena, Germany attended by the ESEC Policy and Partnerships Officer on behalf of the interested ESEC members and who gave a brief presentation to outline the area and links to the overall aims of the INTERREG programme.

#### **4. CURRENT ACTIVITY**

- 4.1. A further meeting was held in Dortmund in February 2015 where partners were asked to commit to the bid and provide more detailed information which included developing links between the projects and giving detail of activity, costs, delivery agents and administration. Discussions were held on developing the transnational aspects by tying the projects together (via a series of best-practice workshops and conferences over the next three years), a requirement of the INTERREG NWE programme.
- 4.2 The initial interested Scottish partners are Angus and Falkirk Councils who will be classed as one partner in Scotland. Falkirk Council will assume the role of the lead in the Scottish partnership and will have responsibility for overseeing the broader partnership requirements and administration.
- 4.3 The first call for the project application will open in April/May 2015, and the lead partner (the town of Altena) will submit a short version of the bid which outlines the strategic fit of the project to the INTERREG objectives. A decision on the success of this application will be decided within six months. If successful, the partnership will be awarded €30,000 for preparation costs and must then submit the bid for second step in November 2015 (expected). This bid must be an in-depth application including final details of the projects, budgets and partnerships. If successful, notice will be given from March 2016.
- 4.4 The project will be required to be developed and rolled out via agreed work packages: 1) To assess concepts for operating community assets (integrated approaches, programmes, necessary spaces), 2) To implement different kinds of organisations and operational models to guarantee the sustainability of the community assets 3) To develop models of open Social Innovation with regard to different stakeholders. In addition, the project will also implement a communications strategy to raise the awareness of the potentials inherent in social innovation and sustainable community assets.
- 4.5 In parallel with this work there has been a Charrette in Brechin which aimed to identify areas of development, innovation and regeneration the results of which link closely with the funding available under this NWE programme. A meeting was held with officers in Communities to outline potential activity to be funded from which it was decided to focus on providing a development worker whose primary objective to create a development trust/Community Interest Company that can take forward a number of the actions highlighted by the Charrette. This includes actions to further develop the visitor economy, support growth orientated businesses, focus on health and wellbeing, through improving links between the open green spaces and linking up the path network, extend town centre living, and develop capacity for the community to take on ownership or management of vacant town centre buildings on a sustainable basis.
- 4.6 A project team has been discussed and to reduce duplication this will be part of the Charrette working group which will be established in due course. This group has representatives from across the council services and the local community.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 Following the submission of the expression of interest it is now essential to develop the detail of the activity that will be carried out in Brechin. This will involve developing more detailed budget breakdowns, staff roles and responsibilities. More information will be required for the

stage 2 submission in November 2015 if stage 1 is successful. An update will be submitted to committee at this point.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Development Costs**

Partners have been asked to commit to development costs of the programme which will be reimbursed if the bid is approved. These costs are €3,000 to be split between Falkirk and Angus i.e. a contribution of €1,500 which has been accounted for in the economic development revenue budget for 2014/15.

6.2 In the lead up to submitting the stage 1 application a budget will be drafted in line with the proposed concept. Initial work has begun with council officers and the community to identify potential match funding sources based on a project worth just under €150,000.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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