



# Social Economy Hub E-Newsletter

## February 2006 Issue One

### Good News!

Melville Housing Ltd's funding application to Communities Scotland to research the feasibility of a social economy hub for Midlothian has been successful.

Andrew Noble, Melville Housing's Acting Chief Executive said:

*"I'm delighted Communities Scotland have supported our application. This is great news for the social economy/voluntary sector and for the people of Midlothian. The project aims to provide permanent accommodation for a wide range of voluntary organisations in a modern, flexible environment."*



**Andrew Noble, Acting  
Chief Executive**

This newsletter has been produced by Midlothian Voluntary Action, and explains more about the proposed feasibility study.

### What is a Social Economy Hub?



**Norton Park**

A Hub houses a number of social economy/voluntary sector organisations under one roof. Although all the organisations have their own separate office space, there is potential for joint services such as meeting space, shared reception, photocopiers etc.

Examples of Hubs include Norton Park in Edinburgh (pictured left), and the Hayes Business Centre, which is being developed in Craigmillar.

### Why is it needed in Midlothian?

The Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian (SEAM) commissioned research on the needs and aspirations of social enterprises in Midlothian, which identified a number of premises issues. Following this, Melville Housing then co-ordinated a meeting and questionnaire which identified that 13 Midlothian organisations are currently in insecure premises, 7 in unsuitable premises and 6 looking for premises to expand their work in Midlothian. Between these organisations they would require space for 155 staff.



## What happens now?

The Feasibility Study will take place between now and the end of June 2006. It will identify the following:

- A suitable site for the project, with an option appraisal for both a new build, and a renovation of an existing building;
- Environmentally sustainable and high quality features of the Hub;
- Works cost benchmarking showing value for money;
- An appropriate legal and governance structure for the Hub;
- A business plan and funding package for building the Hub;
- Identification of how to maximise the benefits to disadvantaged communities e.g. through provision of training opportunities.



One of the first tasks will be the identification of up to four potential sites. We are working with Midlothian Council on this issue.

## How can I find out more?



We will be producing these e-newsletters at regular intervals throughout the Feasibility Study. The e-newsletter will be sent to everyone who has expressed an interest in the project to date, either by attending the meeting that was held at Melville Housing, or by filling in a questionnaire. If you have not received this e-newsletter directly, and would like to be added to the distribution list, contact Lesley Kelly on 663 9471 or at [Lesley.Kelly@mvacvs.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Kelly@mvacvs.org.uk)

## Who is involved in the project?

A number of organisations are involved in the Feasibility Study:

- Melville Housing Ltd is leading the Feasibility Study and, if the Feasibility Study is positive, will take forward the development of the Hub;
- Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association will be identifying and assessing the viability of sites for the new Hub and overseeing the design elements of the project;
- Midlothian Voluntary Action will ensure that the voluntary sector are involved in the design of the project;
- Communities Scotland is providing the funding for the Feasibility Study.

The Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian and Midlothian Council are supportive of the project.

