

Audit Committee

AC(3)-13-09(p6) : 15 October 2009

Jeremy Colman Report

To note:

These are my personal observations on the Colman report as I've not had time to discuss the findings in detail with members of the Partnership.

I welcome the Auditor General's views that there are two complementary strands within Communities First that need to be delivered to make it effective in terms of the regeneration of deprived communities. He also recognises that these strands are complex and ambitious and rely on a co-ordinated approach to public service and funding.

To this end, I agree that this can only be possible through a robust approach to programme bending with the co-operation of all concerned at a local level. Subsequently, the roll-out of Local Service Boards at a county level has created the opportunity for Communities First to raise its profile and work in partnership with service deliverers'. Moreover, here in Ceredigion the Local Authority has been proactive in including and highlighting Communities First within the LSB which is an important step forward in realising our objectives. This gives us the opportunity to influence service delivery through prioritising Communities First areas and, especially through the potential of Outcomes Funding. In addition, the recent letter from the Welsh Assembly Government's Director General, Emyr Roberts, to the Chief Executives of Local Authorities, local health boards, agencies and public organisations in Wales is a good example of how to take the lead and be proactive...more of the same is warranted.

The recommendation within the report that the Welsh Assembly Government's own departments need to make Communities First a clearer priority is to be welcomed. I also agree that more support should be given to partnerships in order to develop skills in writing bids. This would be highly effective not only in terms of the Outcomes Fund but also in terms of accessing additional funding to the programme across Wales.

Bryn Jones

Communities First Co-ordinator

Penparcau and West Aberystwyth