

**Minutes**

**Date:** Friday 27 October 2000

**Time:** 10.00am to 12.30pm

**Venue:** North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, Wrexham

**Attendance**

*Members*

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Ann Jones, Chair    | Vale of Clwyd    |
| Alison Halford      | Delyn            |
| Gareth Jones        | Conwy            |
| Christine Humphreys | North Wales      |
| Tom Middlehurst     | Alyn and Deeside |
| John Marek          | Wrexham          |
| Alun Pugh           | Clwyd West       |
| Peter Rogers        | North Wales      |
| Janet Ryder         | North Wales      |
| Dafydd Wigley       | Caernarfon       |

*In attendance*

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| David Adamson | Social Inclusion Branch, National Assembly for Wales |
|---------------|--|

*Wrexham People in Communities*

|                     |                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Paul Roberts        | Chief Economic Development Officer |
| Dr Simon Pemberton, | Area Initiatives Manager           |
| Rebecca Perry       | Project Co-ordinator               |

*West and South West Rhyl Strategy*

|              |                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| John Killion | Project Leader, Community Agency |
|--------------|----------------------------------|

*Capel Curig Rural Integrated Project*

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Shân Ashton | Community Development Unit, Bangor University |
|-------------|---|

*Secretariat*

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Adrian Crompton | Committee Clerk        |
| Howell Rees     | Deputy Committee Clerk |

## **Introduction and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the North East Wales Institute for Higher Education for their hospitality. Apologies had been received from Dafydd Elis Thomas, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Karen Sinclair and Rod Richards.

### **Item 1: Report back from previous meeting** - NWR 06-00(p1), NWR 06-00(p2)

1.1 The Chair reminded the Committee that at the meeting on 14 July it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the First Minister drawing attention to the key points raised by participants at the Bangor meeting on Objective 1. The First Secretary had replied and a copy of the letter was provided at annex 2 to paper NWR 06-00(p1).

1.2 It had also been agreed to write to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee and the Finance Secretary about crime and disorder. A copy of the Finance Secretary's reply was provided at annex 3 of paper NWR 06-00(p2) and the list of funding initiatives with a crime reduction basis referred to in the letter was at annex 4. The list was welcomed and it was agreed that the Chair should write again to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee to bring the list to that Committee's attention.

#### *Action point*

1.3 Chair to write to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee drawing attention to the list of funding initiatives linked to crime reduction - **Chair and Secretariat** (a copy of the letter sent is at annex 1)

### **Item 2: Communities First** - NWR 06-00(p3)

2.1 The Chair said that in April, the National Assembly issued a consultation paper - '**Regenerating our most disadvantaged communities - 'Communities First**'. The paper set out the Assembly's vision for the future of the most deprived communities in Wales and how they can be regenerated. This meeting was a chance for those with an interest in community regeneration to inform this process.

2.2 **David Adamson** introduced the paper (NWR 06-00(p3)) drawing out the key points.

2.3 **Paul Roberts** explained briefly Wrexham County Borough Council's approach to regenerating communities. **Simon Pemberton** provided more details on the People in Communities project based on the Brynteg and Southsea estates. The main lessons that had been learned were that it took time to establish effective partnerships and that long term funding was essential. A copy of the presentation is attached at annex 2.

2.4 **John Killion** made a presentation on the West and South West Rhyl Strategy. The West Rhyl ward

was one of the most deprived in Wales and faced a range of problems. Community groups were working to address many of these through a range of projects. He too stressed the importance of long-term funding, solutions coming from the community itself and the support of the statutory agencies.

2.5 **Shân Ashton** made a presentation on the Capel Curig Integrated Rural Project. The problems this rural community faced related mainly to access to services, employment and housing. The community was addressing these through projects designed to create jobs for local people including mountaineering, rural diversification and historical and environmental interpretation centres which made the best use of the local environment and resources. It was often difficult to contact the right person in statutory agencies and to gain their interest. Rural areas suffered many similar problems to urban areas but different answers were needed.

2.6 The Chair then opened the discussion to the floor

2.7 **Councillor Darren Miller** , Towyn Town Council asked if Denbighshire County Council had provided support for the West and South West Rhyl Project. He said that Towyn Town Council had received little support from the County Council and he was concerned about the possible effect of bids for funding.

2.8 **Councillor Bryan Evans** , Gwynedd Council said the Llyn peninsular suffered from similar problems to Capel Curig. Agriculture was suffering and tourism weakening. Fuel stations and post offices in rural areas were closing. The road infrastructure was in a poor state and there was no hope of attracting industry to the area.

2.9 **Emlyn Williams** , Conwy County Borough Council had prepared a paper for Committee Members on targeting economic development on communities. A copy is attached at annex 3. Access to services in rural areas was difficult and the Assembly needed to look at targeting community regeneration measures.

2.10 **Councillor Peter Douglas** , Rhyl South West, Denbighshire County Council said that the biggest hurdle for community regeneration was the attitude of local authorities and voluntary agencies who delivered services. Those organisations had to become more responsive to communities' needs.

2.11 **Councillor Pat Larsen** , Gwynedd Council said that some rural villages were dying as young people moved away because they could not find housing or jobs locally. No new housing was being built. In Dinorwig the local primary school had closed and bus services were very infrequent. Gwynedd Council was developing its community strategy and had to find answers to these concerns.

2.12 **G Francis Roberts** , Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council said that a clear indication was needed that the Assembly was taking a more strategic view regarding the whole question of funding the various programmes. There were currently more than 60 funding streams for Community Regeneration that needed to be targeted and rationalised. The County Voluntary Services Councils were expected to undertake their role as an intermediary and umbrella body and the Assembly also wanted them to carry out consultation with 'hard to reach' groups. However the Assembly was not providing adequate resources

for them to meet their responsibilities and the issue of funding the County Voluntary Councils had to be addressed.

2.13 **Janet Williams** , Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, Wrexham Branch said there was a legacy of ill health from polluting industries in the Wrexham area. Because they brought jobs, new polluting industries were being directed to deprived communities. The effect on health had to be recognised and addressed.

2.14 **Edith Thomas** , Chair of South Denbighshire Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee welcomed the funding for community regeneration but said that local authorities could not cope with current workloads. In Denbighshire housing benefit claims from May were only now being dealt with. More examples could be provided.

2.15 **John Talbot** was concerned about the lack of connection between Communities First and economic development. Social problems were a consequence of economic failure and there needed to be a policy connection between Communities First and broader economic strategies.

2.16 **Barbara Roberts** , Flintshire Voluntary Services Council welcomed the Communities First Initiative but said the consultation process needed to be more meaningful. The time allowed for responding was too short for voluntary bodies and there were too many strategies and overlapping funding sources. Application forms were too complicated and full of jargon. She praised the advice and support provided by Flintshire County Council's Social Inclusion Unit staff but said there were too few of them. She added that the needs of communities of interest needed to be considered as well as communities defined geographically.

2.17 **Councillor June Marshall** , Gwynedd Council and the Bangor Regeneration Partnership said that one of the main messages from the meeting was that local people must be involved in community regeneration. The Partnership had applied for an Objective 1 grant but the application form was complicated and full of jargon. As a consequence the funding process was not accessible to ordinary people.

2.18 **Councillor Meirick Davies** , Denbighshire County Council referred to the preparation of unitary development plans and said housing must be provided in rural areas. The cost of making a planning application was too high and the Assembly should consider whether the charges were fair. He added that Objective 1 funding should be made available to reopen rural shops that had closed and that funding for community projects had to be provided on a long term basis.

2.19 **Brian Thirsk** , Sylfaen said that communities had aspirations but without the necessary skills could not access funds.

2.20 **Ron Tyrer** , Holyhead Town Council said that Holyhead had some of the most deprived communities in Wales. It was ridiculous that such poverty should exist in a rich country like Britain. Too much money was being spent on inward investment. A strategy was needed to identify deprived

communities and funding made available to elected representatives on county and town councils who best understood their communities' problems.

2.21 **Councillor Selwyn Roberts** , Flintshire County Council said that over £90 million went to sport in Wales but very little went to sports clubs in deprived communities. He was involved with a local cricket club and he asked how funding could be targeted on such clubs.

2.22 **Councillor Ian Roberts** , Flintshire County Council said money had been spent on community regeneration in his ward. Community development was going well but lack of funding meant that a community development worker post had been lost. Environmental work completed a few years ago now needed money spent on maintenance but Flintshire County Council's standard spending assessment had been cut.

2.23 **Rhiannon Ifans** , a community councillor from Bethesda said that wages in her area were low. Outsiders on high wages were moving into the community but brought no benefits for local people. Wages for local people had to be improved so that the community could prosper. She also appealed for the Welsh language to be used whenever possible.

2.24 **Nigel Horricks** , Welsh Local Colleges Network, said that voluntary bodies were not represented on the Community Consortia for Education and Training. The voluntary sector had an important role to play in capacity building and funding was needed for training. Without representation the voluntary sector could not influence the planning process. George xx responded that he represented the voluntary sector on the Conwy and Denbigh CCET.

2.25 **Sion Aled Owen** , Cytun said he had been pleased to hear about the emphasis in Communities First on quality of life and building individuals' and communities' self confidence. The Churches in Wales were concerned that the spiritual needs of communities were met and should be included in community partnerships.

2.26 The Chair then invited the Committee to respond to the issues raised. The following points were made:

- the Assembly had to recognise that communities had to be enabled to help themselves. It also needed to ensure that funding reached the point where it could be used to benefit communities. The Assembly should use its powers to ensure that planning system was used to tackle the issues that had been identified;
- Communities First was about empowering and enabling communities to find their own solutions to their problems. The problems facing urban and rural communities were not dissimilar. Communities should be encouraged to identify their own needs and the Assembly and the agencies had to listen to communities and support them;
- it was clear that communities did not conform to ward or other administrative boundaries. The capacity building being undertaken in communities would be fundamental to Objective 1. Funding needed to be provided to enable communities to develop their skills with help from agencies. The

- Assembly needed to bring together its various strategies;
- there were many inequalities caused by poverty including access to health care and education. Communities First would make a welcome contribution but anti-poverty measures had to be embedded in main stream funding programmes;
  - the funding system was not right. There were too many pots of money and the Assembly must find a way of simplifying funding streams and communities' access to them;
  - communities moving ahead were those which worked together to identify solutions to their problems. That was a sustainable approach and could be supported by relatively small amounts of funding provided quickly, when it was most needed;
  - the Committee had heard a great deal of plain speaking at the meeting and the energy in the underlying frustration had to be harnessed for communities benefit. People were realising that if they made the effort, with appropriate support, they could improve their communities for the benefit of future generations. Unlike England there was nothing in the documentation about the role of the Church in partnerships and this point would be taken back to the Assembly. The way that community regeneration was funded had to be changed so that communities could be sure that funding would continue until projects were completed;
  - National Parks restrictions on development could lead to and overdependence on tourism. Sensitive development, supported by Objective 1 funding should be allowed in the National Park to bring business opportunities and affordable housing for local people.

2.27 The Chair invited presenters to respond to the points raised and draw out the main issues.

2.28 **David Adamson** said that in the past tackling overwhelming urban poverty in Wales had been the priority but now rural poverty also needed to be addressed. The Index of Multiple Deprivation was a better measure than previous measures but it was still essential to build on local knowledge to identify the communities most in need of assistance. Mainstream funding would bend to meet Community First projects and the move away from competition between communities, towards a more strategic approach, was essential.

2.29 **Simon Pemberton** said that it took time to set partnerships up and funding mechanisms should recognise that. Communities and the public sector agencies needed training on partnership working. Each partner brought different skills and resources that should be valued. The thirds principle of equal contributions from the community, voluntary and public sectors was established but less attention was paid to gender balance. At the moment, women often outnumbered men on partnerships.

2.30 **John Killion** said that pockets of deprivation often existed in affluent areas and these needed to be identified. Generally things were improving in Rhyl West but people with qualifications were still leaving and their skills were lost to the community. Monitoring and controls needed to be put in place to ensure that funding was being used properly.

2.31 The Chair thanked the speakers. The messages that community ownership of solutions and long term funding were essential would be taken back to the Assembly.

**Item 3: Minutes of the 14 July meeting - NWR 05-00(min)**

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 14 July 2000.

3.2 The Chair said that the next meeting of the Committee would be held in Porthmadog on Friday 8 December. If the Committee agreed the main item on the agenda would be regional health improvement programme.

3.3 It was also proposed that the development of Ysgol Plas Bron Duffryn as a centre of excellence and the wider issue of autism services in North Wales should be discussed.

3.4 It was agreed that the Chair should write to the First Minister on the subject of electrifying the North Wales mainline and for his response to be discussed at the next meeting. A copy of the Chair's letter is at annex 4.

3.5 The Committee agreed to the Chair's proposal that she should write to the First Minister to invite him to the meeting on 8 December in view of his responsibility for the co-ordination of Assembly policy in North Wales.

**Secretariat**

**October 2000**

---

Annex 1

Image82.gif (50487 bytes)

Gwenda Thomas AM  
Chair of the Local Government and  
Housing Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay

**Pwyllgor Rhanbarth y Gogledd**  
**North Wales Regional Committee**  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

3 November 2000

Dear Gwenda

**Crime reduction**

I wrote to you on 1 August regarding crime and disorder.

At its meeting last Friday the North Wales Regional Committee received a note (enclosed) from Assembly officials identifying the various sources of funding available for crime reduction measures. Members felt that I should write again to recommend that this, and the note on acceptable behaviour contracts from Chris Ruane MP sent with my previous letter, be considered at a future Local Government and Housing committee meeting.

Yours sincerely

**Ann Jones**

Chair, North Wales Regional Committee

---

Annex 2

Presentation by Wrexham County Borough Council





Image83.gif (32872 bytes)

## **DEPRIVATION STATISTICS**

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Economic Inactivity                        | 44.5% of 16+ population       |
| 16/17 year olds NOT in full time education | 69.8% / Wrexham Average 42.6% |
| No access to car                           | 45.8%                         |
| In receipt of Housing Benefit              | 38.3%                         |
| Pensioners claiming Housing Benefit        | 64.8%                         |
| Dependant children / no wage earners       | 31.0% / Wrexham Average 18%   |

## **DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES**

- October 1998 - Successful bids announced, recruitment process begins for Community Development Co-ordinator
- January 1999 - Interim Partnership Board meet for the first time
- February 1999 - Community Development Co-ordinator appointed
- June 1999 - Needs and Skills Audit undertaken
- September 1999 - The Interim Partnership Board design an appropriate structure to take forward the further development and consequent implementation of the Strategic Action Plan
- November 1999 - Working Groups meet for the first time to develop areas of the Strategic Action Plan
- January 2000 - Draft Strategic Action Plan available for consultation
- March 2000 - Strategic Action Plan agreed and submitted to The National Assembly for Wales

## **OBJECTIVES**

**Objective One is an overarching objective, an objective that will be addressed in all areas of the action plan, that is;**

To develop local community capacity and activity through, supporting new groups to develop, support existing in expanding their capacity and provision and encouraging maximum community involvement in developing All aspects of the Strategic Action Plan to combat Social Exclusion.

**Objective Two, predominantly economic focused, addressing issues of training and employment and attempting to reduce the barriers faced in accessing them, that is to;**

Improve access locally to adequate training and employment opportunities, through the development of a locally based training venue, employment of a training development officer, and by encouraging a local enterprise culture.

**Objective Three looks at the issues of children, youth and families aiming to;**

Provide a holistic approach to the issues faced by children, youth and families in the villages of Southsea and Brynteg, through partnership working and community involvement develop and consequently implement an action plan addressing the needs as identified through further research.

## **Objective Four addresses the social issues of community life by aiming to;**

Improve the quality of life and the environment for all residents through addressing issues of Crime, Health, Housing and the Environment.

### **DEVELOPMENT 2000**

- Funding Bid submitted to develop a locally based Lifelong Learning Centre
- Consultation to inform children, youth and families action plan
- ESF Objective 3 bid for Capacity Building submitted
- Funding bid to develop a Community House submitted
- £6,000 secured to develop a community garden
- Sports and fitness consultation has begun
- Installation of 2 CCTV cameras
- Detached Youth Work Project
- Child Safety Scheme
- IT provision at Brynteg Library
- Small Grants Scheme
- Training Fund
- Young Persons seating/activity area
- Surestart kitchen equipment to aid parenting/healthy living support
- URBAN II Community Initiative

Image84.gif (8717 bytes)

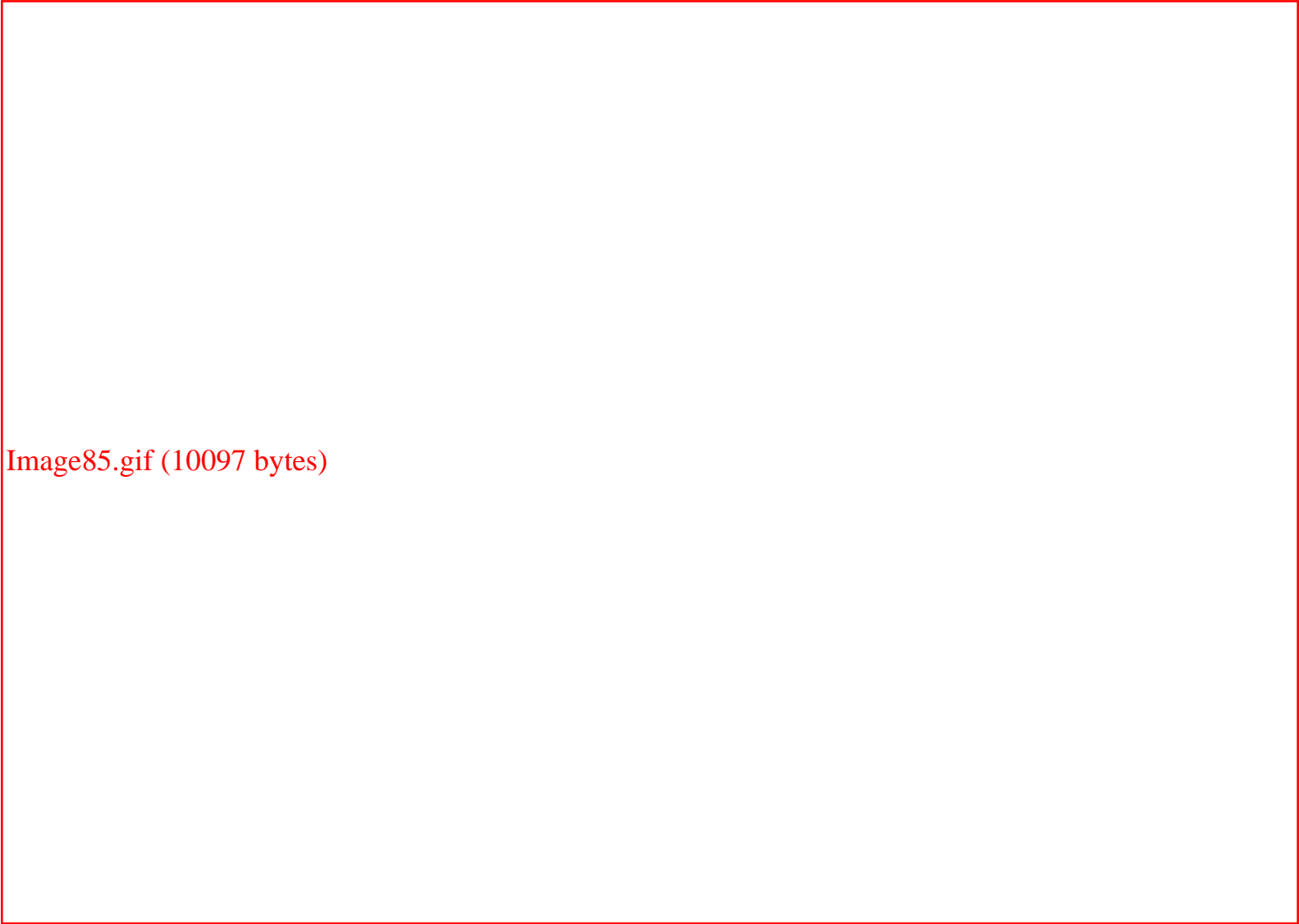


Image85.gif (10097 bytes)

---

Annex 3




Image86.gif (16659 bytes)

**Targeting Community Development**

**Spatial targeting has been a major part of the way Community Economic Development is to be delivered within Priority 3 of the Objective One SPD.**

**Will this also be the case with Communities First, or any new initiatives developed by the Assembly?**

**If so is it the intention of the Assembly to be as narrow in its method of targeting?**

1. We would argue that the methodology used within the Objective One process is flawed, in that it has not led to partnerships being able to address the needs of their most deprived areas. In Conwy for example the method used produces a population threshold of 2830 to be targeted only at one ward. This completely ignored the fact that five other wards with a total population of over 18,000 were identified as being within the 40% most deprived in the Objective One area
2. Spatial targeting is necessary in identifying the areas of most need, and ensuring that the outputs of community development projects are measured for those target areas. Where it is wrong is in defining the project areas too tightly. Some community development projects need to involve the whole community, and in some cases the whole county, in order to allow a project to effectively deliver the necessary outputs to the target areas. Examples are credit unions and furniture recycling schemes that rely on all sectors of a community in order to deliver benefits to the target group.
3. Delivery of the necessary output to target groups is also ineffective when the index of Multiple Deprivation is taken as an overall ward figure, without looking at :-
  1. Individual components of the index. Tudno ward in Conwy for example is identified as being the 28<sup>th</sup> worst in Wales for child poverty, and 77<sup>th</sup> worst in Wales for income, but is not targeted for community economic regeneration under Objective One.
  2. Identifying pockets of severe deprivation within wards. A housing estate, which is identified under the "People in Communities" as suffering social exclusion in Conwy is situated within a ward that again, is not included for community regeneration under Objective One.
  3. Communities of interest, where people suffer social deprivation on a non-geographical basis. E.g. Disability,
4. Access to services seems to have been responsible for negating these values in the overall multiple index, but the same index of access seems to have completely failed to ensure that rural areas within the county with severe pockets of deprivation are identified. This is probably due to the fact that the access index is based on distance to service, and not people's ability to access services. Communities that are remote from services by geographical distance score highly in this index, even though they may have a frequent and reliable public transport link to those services, e.g. communities along the South Wales valleys. Availability of transport is a major issue in the rural areas, but has been ignored in developing this indicator. Even though it is accepted within the report that this Access index is relatively underdeveloped, it is taken into account twice in targeting community economic regeneration for Objective One.
5. It is important that the best use is made of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and that these indices are seen as a guide to targeting. Where flaws are identified, these should be investigated quickly, and the weighting of that index adjusted until a remedy is found. If we wait five to ten years before another analysis is undertaken we run the risk of basing all community regeneration on flawed

information.

Points to note:

1. Spatial targeting needs to take account of differing types of deprivation, rather than relying on one multiple index.
  2. Reliance on indicators must also be tempered with local knowledge and needs.
  3. Community Regeneration needs to be community driven.
  4. Holistic approaches must be accommodated where necessary to deliver the required output.
  5. Causes of rural deprivation need to be clearly identified, and where flaws in the index are identified targeting priorities need to be reassessed.
  6. There needs to be ongoing refinement of the Index of Multiple Deprivation with weaknesses identified and addressed.
- 

Annex 4

Image82.gif (50487 bytes)

Rhodri Morgan AM MP  
First Secretary  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay

**Pwyllgor Rhanbarth y Gogledd**  
**North Wales Regional Committee**  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

3 November 2000

Dear Rhodri

### **Electrification of the North Wales main line**

At its meeting last Friday North Wales Regional Committee members agreed that I should write to you, in your capacity as Minister with responsibility for North Wales affairs, with regard to the electrification of the North Wales main line.

The Committee noted with approval the reference in the partnership agreement to electrification of the North Wales main line and believes that the project can only realistically be achieved if it is supported by



Objective One funding.

I should be grateful to receive your response in time for the Committee to discuss it at its next meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Yours sincerely

**Ann Jones**

Chair, North Wales Regional Committee