

Date: Friday 8 December 2000
Time: 10.00am to 1.00pm
Venue: Dyffryn Madog Arts Centre, Porthmadog

REPORT BACK FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Crime Reduction

1. At its meeting on 27 October the Committee agreed that the Chair should write to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee drawing attention to the list of funding initiatives linked to crime reduction. The Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee has replied indicating that the material has been circulated to that Committee. A copy of her reply is at annex 1.

Communities First

2. Following the discussion on Communities First the Chair wrote to the Minister for Finance and Communities setting out the main points of the discussion. The Minister for Finance and Communities replied on 16 November and copies are at annexes 2 and 3.

Electrification of the North Wales Mainline

3. 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 and the First Minister's reply are at annexes 4 and 5.

4. The Committee is invited to note the correspondence.

Committee Secretariat

December 2000

Annex 1

Ann Jones AM
Chair of the North Wales Regional Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

November 2000

Dear Ann

CRIME REDUCTION

Thank you for your letter of 3 November, together with the note on funding sources available for crime reduction measures.

I have arranged for this note, together with the material on 'Acceptable Behaviour Contracts' which you sent me previously, to be circulated to the Local Government and Housing Committee. I am also arranging for the Committee to give further consideration to community safety and crime reduction issues as soon as it can be fitted into the work programme.

Yours sincerely

GWENDA THOMAS AM
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

Annex 2

Image1.gif (50487 bytes)

Edwina Hart AM
Finance 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 Edwina

North Wales Regional Committee - Communities First

At its meeting last Friday the North Wales Regional Committee considered the development of the Communities First programme. Over 130 members of the public attended to give their views and several clear messages emerged that I should like to pass on to you. I hope that these can be fed into the consultation process.

There was general support for the proposal that actions under Communities First should be genuinely **community-led** . Although expert assistance from voluntary and public agencies is vital to support regeneration work, the efforts and ideas of local communities must be given priority.

Linked to this, there was support for the idea of **partnership working** . Such commitment must be genuine from all sides, not merely an exercise in legitimising the actions of dominant partners.

A strong message came across about the need for **clarity of funding**. In particular, the funding regime should be long-term, straightforward to access and co-ordinated. The Committee heard many people ask for an avoidance of jargon, a simplification and reduction of administrative procedure and the streamlining of overlapping programmes.

North Wales has many areas of rural, as well as urban, deprivation. Many at the meeting called for Communities First to **address the particular problems of both urban and rural areas** .

Yours sincerely

Ann Jones

Chair, North Wales Regional Committee

Annex 3

Edwina Hart AM

Minister for Finance and Communities

Our Ref: SF/00-3892

Ann Jones AM

Chair

North Wales Regional Committee

The National Assembly for Wales

16 November 2000

Thank you for your letter of 3rd November in which you set out the clear messages which emerged from the North Wales Regional Committee session on Communities First on 27th October.

I was pleased to say that the issues raised in your letter are entirely in keeping with our proposals for Communities First. As you know, we have consulted extensively on Communities First in order to get to the nub of the issues and to consider how best to implement a programme which will combat poverty and social disadvantage in the most deprived communities in Wales.

We made clear when we launched Communities First' on 31 March that the principles for the Communities First policy were that a non-prescriptive, community-centred approach to community regeneration was needed, targeted at the most deprived communities in Wales; that regeneration and community renewal should meet the needs and priorities identified by those communities themselves in order for renewal to be sustainable; and, that long-term commitment from the National Assembly, local authorities and other key agencies is required to promote real partnerships at local level.

The comments which you have relayed from those who attended the North Wales Regional Committee meeting are similar to those principles set out above and to the comments which we have already received through the consultative developmental seminars and discussion sessions across Wales. In addition to these we received 160 written replies which have been analysed thoroughly, and the ideas and comments they contained have helped to form the proposals which are to be set out in the second consultation document, which will issue shortly. In his presentation, I know that Dr David Adamson will have covered what our proposals are, however, to recap, our proposals are that:

- 100 of the most deprived communities in Wales should be identified, using a combination of the Index of Multiple Deprivation and local knowledge;
- the Assembly, and other partners, will make a long-term commitment to funding and otherwise supporting the communities participating in 'Communities First', both through a specific grant scheme and through the Assembly's mainstream Programmes;
- capacity building will be an integral aspect of the Programme, to ensure lasting and sustainable change is achieved;
- community partnerships will develop their community's vision (whether urban or rural) and plan its delivery; will manage, review and evaluate its implementation; and will engage with the community and local agencies to ensure that the local plan continues to meet local needs and priorities; and,
- progress should be measured by means of a system of benchmarking against a set of twenty-five

measures (covering the fields of economic activity, education and training, environment, health and civil society) which would be externally validated.

With particular reference to the concern that rural and urban deprivation needs to be addressed, I would stress that Communities First is a non-prescriptive programme which proposes to allow local determination of priorities for action by the community based partnerships that will be formed. The partnerships will determine local action plans which become the basis for funding. Clearly many communities will prioritise according to their own particular needs, whether they be a rural or urban community.

Finally, the second paper is to issue shortly, and I would urge you to consider it and let me have any further comments which may have on this matter.

Annex 4



Image1.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 8th December.

Yours sincerely

Ann Jones

Chair, North Wales Regional Committee

Annex 5

Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM MP

First Minister/Prif Weinidog

Our ref/Ein cyf: FM00101/00

Ms Ann Jones AM

The National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1NA

30 November 2000

Dear Ann

I am writing in response to your letter of 3 November 2000 about the electrification of the North Wales main line.

Electrification of this line is one of the long term aims of the Assembly Partnership Agreement. We will of course need to bear the value for money and affordability of any future investment in mind. The Environment, Planning and Transport Committee is currently seeking further evidence of the value for money case for these works. I understand from colleagues at Railtrack that the overall cost of the scheme is likely to be £130 million.

Linespeed aspirations through the Assembly funding upgrade work, would be applicable both to diesel and electric trains. Whilst electric trains have traditionally had better acceleration than diesel trains (essential for reducing journey time where the station spacings are already close on the line), with recent developments in technology, the acceleration of the new diesel rolling stock represents strong competition.

Railtrack's Network Management Statement 2000 is committed to further increases in line speed over the next six years to run tilting trains at speed up to 140mph to improve links with the West Coast Main Line, which will also benefit services on the North Coast Main Line running via Crewe.

Yours

Rhodri