

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

POLICY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY REGENERATION - EMERGING ISSUES

Issue

1. To seek the Committee's views on the issues which are emerging from the work to date on the policy review of community regeneration.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to consider the issues set out in the annex and to identify any others they feel should be included as a result of the evidence received to date.

Timing

3. In the light of the Committee's views on emerging issues, a further session will be held in the summer term to discuss the Committee's response to these issues. This will lead to a paper on the committee's recommendations for community regeneration.

Background

4. As part of its policy review of community regeneration, the Committee has undertaken a written consultation exercise as well as holding oral consultation sessions with a number of organisations. To date it has visited two practitioners in South East Wales.
5. There are plans for further work on the review, including one further oral evidence session and a series of visits to community development groups in each of the remaining three economic regions in Wales. Nevertheless, certain issues have emerged from the work to date and it would be helpful to seek the Committee's views on them at this stage.
6. This approach will enable the Committee to keep to the timetable for the review set out in paper LGH-11-01 (p.6), which the Committee endorsed in July 2001.

POLICY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY REGENERATION

EMERGING ISSUES

Questions

What is Community Regeneration?

How can the integration of decision making by statutory, voluntary and community bodies be moved forward?

How may the existing funding mechanisms be streamlined?

General Points of Agreement

An holistic approach is essential to community regeneration.

The active involvement and participation of local people and communities is a fundamental component of any initiative aimed at regeneration.

The need to develop stable, long term funding is critical.

QUESTIONS RAISED AS A RESULT OF CONSULTATION

Financing of Policies and Programmes

If targeting of funding is necessary to tackle deep rooted disadvantage, may this result in funds being taken away from other areas. This may be particularly problematic for geographical areas that exhibit many indicators of deprivation but are not eligible for Community first funding or for work that focuses on particular groups of people?

The 60 or so funding initiatives identified include many that are available to specialist organisations. Many of these activities may make a contribution to community regeneration, but may not exist to do so. Should such funds be integrated into a streamlined community regeneration budget, which could result in existing support being withdrawn?

Is access to existing funding regimes sufficiently transparent for voluntary and community

organisations to be able to benefit?

Are deadlines for applications appropriate (i.e. neither too long nor too short)?

Are applications for funding dealt with expeditiously by the sponsoring bodies?

Should greater flexibility be introduced in relation to minimum levels of local contribution or matched funding to create the opportunity for newer and smaller community organisations to participate?

Is there a tendency for funding bodies to favour the larger, more visible and established community groups and projects?

Should funds be accessible to regional and national organisations - which may find it particularly difficult to access funds that are distributed locally?

Is there a case for ring-fencing some local authority and ASPB funds to ensure they reach the voluntary and community sectors?

Is the total level of funding for a portfolio of community regeneration policies in Wales sufficient to draw favourable comparison with other UK administrations?

Should the principle of "Community Chests" be developed further?

Partnerships

What is the National Assembly's role in community regeneration? Is it sufficiently well established?

What is the role of Assembly Sponsored Bodies in the regeneration of Welsh Communities? Will close co-ordination of the activities of these organisations be of benefit to marginalised and disadvantaged communities?

Why are Partnerships successful in some cases, but not in others? i.e. what builds a successful partnership?

Do additional resources need to be provided to allow community and voluntary organisations to participate fully in partnership schemes? Is there sufficient emphasis on "capacity building" to allow for this and to allow groups to manage themselves effectively and efficiently?

Is the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 basis for partnership too rigid? Does it bring about its own bureaucracy,

insofar as every one has to discuss everything? Does it result in the process becoming more important than the outcome?

The Role of Local Authorities

What is the role of local authorities in the regeneration and social inclusion agenda? How may this best be developed?

As the main service deliverers, do local authorities have a "leadership" role in the development and implementation of projects, or should they assume the position of "equal partner"?

What is the role of elected councillors in the regeneration process?

What part can Town and Community Councils play in regeneration initiatives?

How may Local Authorities be persuaded of the skills, experience and commitment of community and voluntary groups?

Do local authorities have the necessary expertise to work with voluntary and community groups? Are they too often driven by bureaucratic imperatives which may not allow for grass route development? Are they prepared to take risks?

In areas where the Community perception of local authorities is poor, what needs to be done to improve this perception?

The role of the Voluntary Sector

How can the various voluntary organisations contribute?

What part can/should the voluntary sector play in service delivery?

Are the various voluntary groups sufficiently proactive in disseminating information to communities?

How may the independent and innovative approaches often displayed by members of the voluntary sector best be utilised for the benefit of the regeneration process?

Does the Voluntary sector have the capacity to carry out these additional responsibilities?

The Role of Communities

What support is necessary to ensure that community groups are at the forefront of regeneration and change?

What is needed to develop the skills, ideas and enthusiasm that is prevalent within communities? How can we re-assure the worth and value of the community participation and persuade that their involvement is necessary to change?

What barriers exist that may lead to the disenfranchisement of Community groups?

What may be done to develop the relationships between the statutory sectors and community groups?

Learning and Training

What part can "community learning" in its various different guises, play in community regeneration?

Are the systems and structures by which learning is resourced, suitable to developing learning communities?

Does the accreditation and qualifications framework adequately serve those who learn through other than the traditional means?

What may be done to overcome the paucity of trained community regeneration personnel and teachers? What measures could be adopted to attract those with practical training in the field into teaching training opportunities

Is there need of a strategic approach to increasing appropriate and relevant training opportunities in community development? How flexible should this be?

Is the lack of flexibility in the welfare benefit system, a barrier to training opportunities?

Other factors

Are the necessary support services in place to allow for regeneration?

Are the various groups, the elderly, the young the disabled and black and ethnic minorities

being neglected in the development of the community regeneration process?

What consideration is given to the Welsh Language as a force for regeneration?