

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

POLICY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY REGENERATION

Purpose

1. To consider the Committee's approach to the planned policy review of the role of community groups in community regeneration.

Summary/ Recommendations

2. The Committee is invited to consider the proposed approach to the review, as set out below.

Background

3. Following the completion of the Committee's work on the policy review of housing stock transfer, the Committee has indicated that it wishes to undertake a policy review of the role of community groups in community regeneration.

4. This paper sets out proposals for the Committee's approach to the review, which will then enable the Secretariat to develop a draft terms of reference and project plan. The suggestions in this paper are intended to help the Committee to decide how it wishes to take forward work on the review.

5. The Minister has proposed that the review should focus on the policies and programmes aimed at community regeneration which have been adopted by the National Assembly and its sponsored bodies, with a view to developing proposals for streamlining existing programmes and improving arrangements for their delivery.

6. It has been suggested by another Member that the review should be more wide-ranging, so that it would encompass all aspects of community regeneration. This would include capacity building, co-working, funding, structures developing action plans, delivering action plans, monitoring, evaluation, membership, responding to changes, the interface with statutory bodies and other groups, as well as the issue of overlapping strategies and pockets of funding. The suggestion here is that the Committee would aim to develop guidelines for community groups, as well as making more specific recommendations.

7. The Committee will need to decide whether to adopt a narrow or a broad focus to the review. The recently completed review of housing stock transfer suggests that a more focused approach works well, reflecting the experience more generally in Committee Secretariat. The relevant part of the Secretariat's guidance note on best practice in handling policy reviews, which was circulated to all Members on 12 February, states:

PREPARATORY WORK

Selecting a topic

4. Selecting a very broad topic can bring with it certain difficulties. It can be difficult to achieve a clear focus within the review; it will be less likely to have well defined outcomes; the review will naturally take much longer to complete, which may cause problems for the committee's work programme; a broad topic may raise expectations among interest groups which cannot then be met.

5. Selecting a more narrowly focused topic should make it easier to identify the key issues which need to be addressed, the outcomes to be aimed for, the information which needs to be explored and the key players who need to be interviewed.

8. The Committee will also want to ensure that its policy review takes account of the work which has already been undertaken on community regeneration in the context of *Communities First*, particularly the published review of best practice.

A possible approach

9. A possible way forward might be to adopt a phased approach to the review. Initially the review could focus on the policy and funding framework, in line with the Minister's suggestion. In the light of experience with this initial work, the Committee could consider exactly how it wishes to tackle the other aspects of the community regeneration agenda. The Committee might want the second phase of the work to tackle another specific issue, for example, capacity building. Alternatively, the Committee might then decide to adopt a more general approach.

10. The key point is that this approach would initially give a focused approach with a clear outcome, while leaving the Committee free to decide how best to take forward the remainder of the review.

Summary

11. For the planned policy review of community regeneration, the Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to adopt:

- A narrow focus on the policy and funding framework for community regeneration;
- A broader approach so that consideration is given to the wider community regeneration agenda;
- A phased approach, with an initial focus on the policy and funding framework, with subsequent phases to be determined as the review progresses.

12. Once the Committee's views are known, the Secretariat will draw up a terms of reference and a project plan for the review, for further consideration. The project plan will allow plenty of time for the Committee to hear the views of community groups themselves, in line with the views expressed by Members.

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