

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE**

### **COMMUNITIES FIRST – CONSIDERATION OF FINAL POLICY FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE**

#### **Purpose**

1. To seek the views of the Committee on the final Communities First guidance that has been issued to local partnerships.

#### **Summary**

2. The guidance, attached at Annex A, is for use by individuals and others within a variety of organisations, which have different skill levels and background experience. It attempts to be user friendly and responsive to the views expressed over a lengthy consultation period.
3. The guidance:
  - Is flexible, to take into account the varying circumstances across Wales;
  - Sets out what a Communities First partnership must do, provides information and gives examples of best practice, and suggests further points that a partnership may wish to consider;
  - Has a Community Vision Framework – which sets out the issues for the community to focus on. These issues can be used to set targets for monitoring progress;
  - Provides examples of Community Action and Capacity Building Plans;
  - Gives an example of a model job description for a Communities First Co-ordinator;
  - Is User Friendly;
  - Will be updated regularly.

#### **Background**

1. Communities First is based on the principle that community renewal should meet the needs determined by the communities themselves. It is designed amongst other things to:

- involve communities;
- deliver outcomes which lead to sustainability;
- strengthen partnerships that work towards the development of healthier communities; and,
- represent a long term commitment to providing resources.

1. The vision was set out in the consultation paper published in April 2000. A second consultation paper setting out detailed proposals was published in December 2000. The results of the consultation exercises were analysed and incorporated into the draft guidance.
2. The proposed framework for the guidance was discussed at LGH Committee on the 4 July 2001 and members were particularly appreciative of the intention for the guidance to be written in easy to read format. The framework formed the basis of the draft guidance that was subsequently discussed at four focus group meetings held across Wales, involving members of the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. It has also been discussed with WLGA. The feedback on the draft guidance was generally positive and many of the comments made were included in the final version. The guidance was issued electronically at the end of September and is available on the Assembly's website. We expect it to have been published in hard copy (in a ring binder) before the meeting. A Welsh language version will be available soon.
3. We recognise it will be necessary to issue more specific guidance for local authorities and Communities First Co-ordinators. This will be done as soon as possible.

## **Recommendation**

4. The Committee is invited to comment upon the final guidance document. Although it has been published, it is a living document and will be regularly reviewed in the light of experience. Any comments members make will be considered as part of this process.

**Communities Directorate**

**October 2001**

