

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

PROGRESS MADE TO DATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITIES FIRST

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee and seek its views on the progress made to date on the implementation of the Communities First programme.

Summary

2. The Communities First programme was launched in June 2001, when the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities announced the first tranche of Communities that were eligible under the programme. Since that time, the programme has progressed quickly. A detailed account of the progress made so far is attached at Annex A.
3. The key points are:
 - The areas eligible for inclusion in the programme have been announced;
 - £10.3m was allocated in 2001-02 under the Community Purposes Budget to a support a range of activities under the Communities First, People in Communities and Sustainable Communities programmes;
 - generic guidance has been published;
 - 36 Communities First Partnerships have been, or are nearly, formed;
 - a Communities First Support Network, involving a range of organisations, has been established to provide support to Partnerships;
 - a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is being developed; and
 - a Communications Strategy is being developed to promote Communities First.

Background

4. 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,
 - fulfil a long term commitment to providing resources.
5. The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, in her written and oral reports, provides regular updates to the Local Government and Housing Committee on progress being made under the programme.

Recommendation

6. The Committee is invited to note the progress made to date on Communities First and comment on its future development.

Communities Directorate
May 2002

PROGRESS MADE TO DATE ON COMMUNITIES FIRST

Aim

1. Communities First aims to tackle poverty in the most deprived communities in Wales. The target in the Welsh Assembly Government's Plan for Wales is:

'to bring the prosperity of our least well off communities closer to that of our most prosperous – by 2010.'

2. Communities First is based on the principle that community renewal should meet the needs determined by the communities themselves. It is designed to operate through local partnerships, focusing on building the capacity and confidence of communities and the empowerment of local people.

Consultation

3. The vision for Communities First was set out in a consultation paper published in April 2000. A second consultation paper setting out more detailed proposals was published in December 2000, with a closing date of 15 March 2001.

Announcement of Eligible Communities

4. In June 2001, the Minister for Finance Local Government and Communities announced the first tranche of communities to be included in the programme. Further areas were announced in October 2001. The eligible areas will be reviewed in due course. A list of eligible areas is attached.
5. Communities First now covers the 100 most deprived communities in Wales as identified (at electoral division level) in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. A further 32 smaller communities (pockets of deprivation at sub electoral division level) are also included. In addition, 10 communities of interest or otherwise imaginative proposals are eligible for support under the programme.

Preparatory Funding

6. The Community Purposes budget (which covers Communities First, People in Communities and Sustainable Communities) has a total of £64.92m from 2001-02 to 2003-04. The budget will be reviewed in 2002-03, in light of expenditure patterns.
7. In July 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government invited organisations the opportunity to apply for funding for preparatory activities. In 2001-2002, £1,226,568.80 was spent on preparatory funding. Activities are essentially preliminary and can include, for example, the appointment of Development Workers, the provision of training for local people and allowances to compensate for childcare and travelling costs; and local marketing activities.

Publication of Communities First Guidance

8. The Communities First Guidance was issued in September 2001. It was informed by formal and informal consultation and will be regularly updated in the light of experience. It describes the main principles and the arrangements for establishing Partnerships and making Communities First work through Capacity Building and Community Action Plans. The guidance sets out a framework for developing action plans featuring the key issues to be tackled if communities are to be successfully regenerated. These are jobs and business, education and training, environment, health and well being, active community and community safety. The Guidance is the catalyst for getting Communities First up and running. It is being supplemented by specific guidance for Communities First Co-ordinators and local authorities.

Progress on the establishment of Partnerships

9. It is anticipated that 132 Partnerships will be established. So far, 36 Partnerships have either been formed, or are nearly formed.
10. Funding applications have yet to be received from Communities First areas in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Denbighshire. Contact is being made with the relevant local authorities to encourage them to take Communities First forward in their areas.

Support for the Communities First Support Network

11. The Welsh Assembly Government is supporting a consortium of 8 organisations known as the Communities First Support Network. The Network provides professional advice and support to Partnerships as they are established and develop. In the main, it is developing training programmes, facilitating networking and providing advice on a range of issues including business development, financial planning and project development.

12. The Network comprises of:

- Black Voluntary Sector Network
- Community Action Network
- Community Development Cymru
- Development Trusts Association
- Groundwork Wales
- Menter a Busnes
- Wales Co-operative Centre
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action

The Communities First Trust Fund

13. A clear message that came out of the consultation process was the need, under Communities First, for money to be directly released and accessible to the organisations that are working on the ground for the benefit of the community. To

ensure this occurs, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities announced, in December 2001, the launch of the Communities First Trust Fund.

14. The Trust Fund, which is now up and running, provides small grants to local community and voluntary groups in Communities First areas to support a wide range of activities by which local groups can contribute to the regeneration of their area. The Fund provides £9 million over 3 years (2001-02 to 2003-04). Each Communities First area and 'community of interest' supported under the programme is able to access £20,000 in each year. Smaller pockets of deprivation that are to be supported under the programme receive £10,000 in each year.
15. The Trust Fund is managed by the Communities First Support Network on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government and is administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Communities First

16. A working group has now been established to develop the all Wales arrangements for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Communities First programme. Representatives are drawn from Community Development Cymru, Community Development Foundation, Wales Co-operative Centre, Welsh Local Government Association, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, WEFO and several Divisions of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is envisaged that monitoring at the local level will feed into that for the programme as a whole.

Communications Strategy

17. A Communications Strategy for the Communities First programme is being developed. It will outline the Welsh Assembly Government's plans to promote the programme at the national and local level and will link to work proposed by key partners such as the Communities First Support Network.
18. The Communities First programme is presently being promoted in a number of ways:
 - press notices are issued routinely at significant stages;
 - the Communities Directorate is making regular presentations to various groups within Wales and throughout the UK;
 - a monthly bulletin is issued to key organisations and individuals on the programme's progress;
 - a public information leaflet has also recently been issued and circulated widely to improve the understanding of local people; and
 - a Communities First Website is being developed by the Communities Directorate and will link with a complementary site run by the Communities First Support Network.

Next Steps

Further Guidance

19. Further guidance is being developed for local authorities, in partnership with the WLGA, and for Partnership Co-ordinators. It is hoped that this will be issued by the end of June 2002.

Staffing

20. The Welsh Assembly Government is strengthening its Communities First Unit to administer the programme, ensure that swift funding decisions are taken, develop policy in the light of experience on the ground and “champion” Communities First. Regional teams are being established to ensure there is an identifiable and accessible local presence. These regional teams will work closely with the Communities First Support Network.

Drawing down other funding streams

21. Communities First is essentially about targeting relevant funding streams and other forms of support towards the eligible areas. The programme needs to be mainstreamed into the wider business of Welsh Assembly Government and other organisations in a cross-cutting way. The Community Regeneration and Social Inclusion Policy Board, chaired by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, is looking at how this can be best done. In particular, steps will need to be taken to ensure that all funding programmes are aligned to Communities First.

Communities First Programme

a. 100 most deprived areas

Blaenau Gwent CBC

Nantyglo
Tredegar Central & West + Sirhowy
Llanhilleth
Rassau
Cwmtillery
Blaina

Bridgend CBC

Llangeinor
Caerau
Bettws
Blackmill

Caerphilly CBC

New Tredegar + Tir Phil + Darran Valley
Aberbargoed + Bargoed + Hengoed + Gilfach
Twyn Carno + Darran Valley + Pontlottyn + Moriah + Abertysswg
Argoed
Aber Valley

Cardiff CC

Butetown
Ely + Caerau
Splott

Carmarthenshire CC

Glanymor + Tyisha
Llwynhendy
Felinfoel
Pantfynnon

Denbighshire CC

Rhyl West + Rhyl South West

Flintshire CC

Flint castle

Gwynedd Council

Peblig
Marchog
Talysarn
Bowydd & Rhiw
Barmouth
Pwllheli South

Isle of Anglesey CC

Morawelon
Holyhead Town
Tudur
Maeshyfryd
Amlwch Port
Porthfelin

Merthyr Tydfil CBC

Gurnos + Penydarren
Dowlais
Merthyr Vale
Bedlinog
Cyfarthfa

Neath Port Talbot CBC

Cymmer + Gwynfi + Glyncorrwg
Sandfields West + Sandfields East
Onllwyn + Seven Sisters
Ystalyfera
Briton Ferry West + Neath East
Pelenna

Newport CBC

Pillgwenlly
Tredeggar Park
Bettws
Ringland

Pembrokeshire CC

Pembroke: Monkton
Pembroke Dock: Llanion

Powys CC

Ystradgynlais

Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

Pen-y-waun
Maerdy
Tylorstown
Glyncoch
Llwyn-y-pia
Penrhiwceiber
Treherbert
Cwm Clydach
Rhydfelen Central
Gilfach Goch
Mountain Ash West
Cymmer
Ynysir
Trealaw
Aberaman South
Tonyrefail West
Pen-y-graig

Swansea CC

Townhill
Blaenmaes/Portmead, part of Penderry
Penlan, part of Penderry
Graigfelen
Castle

Torfaen CBC

Trevethin + St Cadocs & Penygarn

Wrexham CBC

Plas Madoc
Queensway + Caia Park
Gwenfro

b. Sub Wards

Blaenau Gwent

Garnlydan
Parts of Six Bells
Parts of Abertillery

Caerphilly

Lansbury Park
Gelligaer/Penybryn
Graig-y-Rhacca
Trinant/Pentwyn
Tiryberth/Glanynant
Cefn Forest

Ceredigion

Perparcau & West Aberystwyth

Conwy CBC

Tudno, parts of Tudno + Mostyn
Chester Avenue Estate, part of Kinmel Bay

Flintshire

Holywell Neighbourhoods
Higher Shotton Estate
Bryn Gwalia Estate

Merthyr Tydfil

Treharris village
Trefechan
Troedyrhiw

Monmouthshire CC

North Abergavenny, parts of Lansdown + Cantref + Priory

Neath Port Talbot

Pantyffynnon
Fairyland
Brynbryddan and Penllyn

Newport

Alway Estate
Somerton Estate
Parts of Stow Hill
Parts of Gaer

Powys

Oldford Estate

Swansea

Parts of Bonymaen
Clase / Caemawr

Torfaen

Thornhill

Vale of Glamorgan Council

St Thompson community, part of Castleland
Part of Gibbonsdown

c. Imaginative Proposals

Blaenau Gwent CBC

Community	Area covered
Ebbw Vale (Communities affected by the Corus Steel Closures)	Ebbw Vale South + Ebbw Vale North
Cwm (Communities affected by the Corus Steel Closures)	Cwm

Cardiff CC

Community	Area covered
Black, Minority Ethnic community of interest	All of Cardiff

Carmarthenshire CC/ Neath Port Talbot CBC

Community	Area covered
Amman Valley (Cross local authority border community)	Lower Brynamman + Gwaun Cae Gurwen (NPT CBC) + Quarter Bach Llynfell Brynamman (Carmarthenshire CC)

Ceredigion

Community	Area covered
Upland villages in Tregaron area	Parts of Melindwr, Lledrod, Tregaron + Llangeitho

Flintshire

Community	Area covered
Rural North Flintshire neighbourhoods	Mostyn, Ffynnongroyw, Gronant

Gwynedd

Community	Area covered
Rural community of interest	Llyn Peninsula (Aberdaron, Botwnnog + Tudweiliog)

Neath Port Talbot

Community	Area covered
Domestic Violence community of interest	All of Neath Port Talbot

Newport

Community	Area covered
Black, Minority Ethnic community of interest	All of Newport, with initial focus on Maindee

Pembrokeshire

Community	Area covered
Young people community of interest	All of Pembrokeshire, initial focus on Neyland West, Garth and Milford Haven

Powys CC

Community	Area covered
Dyfi Valley ("Necklaced" rural communities)	Llanbrynmair + Glantwymyn/Cadfach + Machynlleth