

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

PROPOSALS FOR EVALUATING COMMUNITIES FIRST

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee about proposals for evaluating Communities First.

Summary

2. The research specification for evaluation of Communities First, the Welsh Assembly Government's long-term programme aimed at reducing poverty and helping to improve the lives of people who live in the poorest areas of Wales, has been agreed by an external advisory group.

Background

3. Arrangements are being put in place to commission work to evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of Communities First. Such an analysis will assess the impact the programme has had on the regeneration of deprived communities in Wales at the national, local and community levels and be used to inform the on-going policy development of the programme and the Welsh Assembly Government's wider community regeneration policies.
4. The objectives and anticipated outcomes from the evaluation are as follows:

Objective

To analyse the effectiveness of Communities First in respect of its intended outcomes and broader effects.

Outcome

An assessment of the overall effectiveness of the programme in addressing poverty and social disadvantage in Wales's most deprived areas and an analysis of whether the success or otherwise of Communities First in particular areas is attributable to the programme.

To advise on the ongoing development of Communities First.

Ongoing advice to inform the development of a flexible and responsive Communities First programme.

To assess the effectiveness of Communities First in influencing the delivery of support programmes and mainstream services in a targeted and co-ordinated way to meet communities' identified needs.

Identification of the barriers and challenges to "targeting", "joining up" and "bending" existing public sector programmes and services and advice on how difficulties could be overcome.

To identify successes and failures together with contributing factors.

An assessment of what works and what does not to inform dissemination activities and the development of the Communities First programme and the Welsh Assembly Government's wider community regeneration policies.

To evaluate the impact of Communities First at local, regional and national levels, giving consideration to value for money.

A value for money assessment and an assessment of what activity has taken place, how money has been spent and the impact of that expenditure.

To assess the effectiveness of the processes at national and community levels.

An assessment of how successfully the programme is being implemented and identification of areas for improvement.

5. Expressions of interest have been invited. Decisions will be made on the tender list early in the New Year. It is intended to appoint a contractor before start of the next financial year.

Cross-cutting themes

6. Social inclusion is a guiding principle of the Welsh Assembly Government strategic plan (*Plan for Wales 2001*) alongside its commitment to equality and sustainable development. Communities First is the Assembly Government's flagship programme for tackling poverty and social disadvantage in the most deprived areas in Wales.

Recommendation

7. The Committee is invited to note that arrangements to evaluate the Communities First programme are being put in place.

Communities Directorate

November 2002