

Communities First Guidance 2007



communities *first* cymunedau yn gyntaf



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

FOREWORD

This is a key stage in the development of the Communities First Programme.

It is six years since the Welsh Assembly Government launched the Programme with the intention of giving local people the opportunity to play an active role in shaping the future of their community. Much has been achieved in the period since, with Communities First Partnerships set up all over Wales and bringing together local people with the organisations which can help them bring about local regeneration.

For the original Communities First areas, it is true to say that the Programme's establishment phase is now over. Partnerships have set themselves up on a stable footing, have achieved a local profile and are starting to work productively with the organisations responsible for delivering services locally. The evidence is there to see all over Wales.

In the next phase of Communities First the Assembly Government expects to see further progress in terms of "programme bending" – the process whereby the service delivery organisations ensure that mainstream programmes and funds are targeted on Communities First areas and are delivered in ways which are responsive to the needs identified by the Communities First areas.

Improving the delivery of local services in line with community aspirations is key to the success of Communities First. The Assembly Government, its agencies, local authorities and other key partners are committed to developing programme bending as Communities First moves forward.

The other major development facing the Programme is the prospective inclusion in the Programme of up to 46 new areas from 1 April 2007. Following consultation on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005, in August 2006 key stakeholders in 46 areas identified by the Index as being among the 10% most deprived in Wales were invited to apply on behalf of those areas for inclusion in the Programme. The closing date for applications was 30 March 2007.

The process of moving forward across the original 142 Communities First areas and welcoming 46 new ones throws up many challenges. After six years, there is a wealth of experience, expertise and goodwill within the Communities First areas and partners organisations which will help meet and overcome those challenges. The new Communities First Guidance attempts to pull together our shared lessons and experiences to offer a solid framework which will guide, but not direct, all the Communities First players as we move forward along our different paths.

The new Guidance was inspired by the increasing calls from those involved with the Programme for up-dated, more comprehensive and more practical Guidance covering the range of issues which Communities First areas face. Those calls were supported by the Report of the Interim Evaluation of the Communities First Programme (November 2006) which concluded that revised Guidance was needed to address emerging policies and reflect changing priorities. This document aims to meet those needs.

A first draft of the new Guidance was circulated for consultation among those involved with Communities First. Over 70 responses were received, with many useful suggestions for amendment and additions. This revised version supersedes the previous Communities First Guidance issued in September 2001 (with revisions in October 2002). The previous general Guidance is now obsolete.

The Assembly Government would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation process leading to this revised Guidance.

We hope you will find the new Guidance useful and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Communities First Unit
Communities Directorate

March 2007

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDANCE

The Revised Guidance is designed to support the work of the Communities First Partnerships, not constrain the excellent and innovative work being undertaken throughout Wales.

Much of the detail in the Guidance is necessary, for example, to ensure approaches adhere to the principles of the Communities First Programme and to satisfy financial probity requirements. It is important, however, to remember that the detail, although necessary, should not get in the way of the aims of the Programme.

To help in this, the wording in the Guidance has been chosen as follows:

- Use of the term “**should**” denotes where any variation from the described procedure should be first discussed with your Regional Implementation Team, or
- Use of the term “**may**” is merely a suggestion based on good practice.

The detail in the document reflects the fact that the audience for the Guidance is primarily Communities First Coordinators and officers of local authorities, Grant Recipient Bodies and other support organisations. It is expected that Communities First Co-ordinators will be able to use the document to inform, guide and support Partnership Members on a wide range of matters.

Duplication is included throughout the document to reduce the need for cross-referencing, and to provide as much relevant information in one place as possible.

The Revised Guidance will evolve with time, reflecting the evolution of the Programme. Where additional areas of guidance are appropriate, we will provide these where possible by means of supplements or circulars. For example, we are developing Guidance on the relationship between Communities First Partnerships and Community Councils.

If you have any specific questions your Communities First Regional Teams or the Communities First Support Network will be able to help you best implement the Guidance in your local area. Their contact details are:

Head of Mid and

South West Wales team – Sian Thomas (based in Carmarthen) - 01267 225352

Head of North Wales team – Carys Thomas (in Caernarfon) - 01286 662330

Head of South Wales and Valleys team A – Glyn Howell - 01685 729288

Head of South Wales and Valleys team B – Dawn Mould - 01685 729304

Head of South Wales and Valleys team C – Sonia Hancock - 01685 729280

NB – the South Wales and Valleys teams are based in Merthyr Tydfil

COMMUNITIES FIRST GUIDANCE: 2007

Foreword

How to Use this Guidance

	Page
SECTION A – SETTING THE SCENE	1
1. The Welsh Assembly Government’s Vision for Communities First	1
2. The Aims of Communities First	2
i. What is Communities First?	2
ii. The Aims	3
SECTION B – THE PARTNERSHIP BASICS	5
3. The Communities First Partnership	5
i. Make-up of the Partnership	5
ii. Partnership Agreement	7
iii. Selection of Partnership Members	9
iv. Selection of Community sector members	9
v. Councillors as representatives of the community sector	9
vi. Selecting representatives from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors	10
vii. Officers of the Partnership	11
viii. Election of Officers and Terms of Office	12
.	12
ix. Proceedings at Partnership meetings	13
x. Partnership sub-groups/task and finish groups	14
xi. Areas invited to apply for inclusion in August 2006	14
4. Encouraging Constructive Dialogue within Partnerships: Rules of Conduct for Partnership Meetings and Members	14
i. Dealing with internal disagreement	15
ii. Partnership Rules of Conduct	16
a. Meetings Processes	16
b. Conduct in Meetings	
c. Communicating with the community	
d. Communicating with partners	
iii. Assistance	17
iv. Unresolved Conflict	17
5. Legal Status of Communities First Partnerships	18
i. Example Organisational Models	19

SECTION C – OTHER KEY PLAYERS	21
6. The Grant Recipient Body	21
i. Qualifications for Grant Recipient Body Status	21
ii. Grant Recipient Body as Manager of Communities First Funding	21
iii. Grant Recipient Body and Decision-Making/Grant Payment Processes	22
iv. Virements	23
v. Responsibilities of Grant Recipient Bodies towards Partnerships	23
vi. Grant Recipient Bodies and Project Lead Organisations	24
vii. Grant Recipient Bodies and Host organisations (also known as Statutory Employers)	26
viii. Withholding Payment from Grant Recipient Bodies in breach of Communities First principles	27
7. The Responsibilities and Roles of the Local Authority	28
i. The Local Authority's Key Players	28
ii. Local Authority Membership of the Partnership	29
iii. Principles of the Local Authority's Involvement in the Communities First Partnership	30
iv. Role of Local Authority Elected Members	30
v. Role of a Cabinet Member	31
vi. Elected Members and the holding of office within Partnerships	31
vii. The Role of Local Authority Officials and appointing a Lead Department	32
viii. Local authority as provider of practical support for Partnerships	33
ix. Lead department meetings with Co-ordinators	33
x. Links with Community Strategies	34
xi. The Local authority as Grant Recipient Body	35
xii. The Local Authority as designated statutory employer (host organisation) of Communities First staff	36
xiii. Training for Local Authority elected members and officials	37
8. Welsh Assembly Government: The Role of the Communities First Unit	37
i. The National Policy branch	37
ii. The Regional branch	38
iii. Communities First Unit and the organisation of Co-ordinators' regional meetings	39
iv. Communities First Unit Contacts	40

SECTION D – COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS, PROGRAMMES BENDING, FUNDING AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITIES FIRST CO-ORDINATOR	41
9. Developing Community Action Plans	41
i. Why develop a Community Action Plan?	41
ii. Community Action Plan – Important Issues	42
iii. What the Community Action Plan is not ...	43
iv. How to start developing a Community Action Plan	43
v. Co-operation with other Communities First areas	45
vi. Community Action Plans and The Vision Framework	45
vii. Securing Funding for Community Action Plans	46
viii. Community Action Plans and Programme Bending/mainstreaming	47
.	47
ix. Community Action Plans and local authorities' Plan Rationalisation	47
x. Links to Community Strategies	47
xi. Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Action Plans	49
 Annex to Chapter 9: What sort of information should a Community Action Plan contain?	 49
10. Mainstreaming or “Programme Bending”	51
i. A Definition of Programme Bending	51
ii. Grant Schemes	51
iii. Funding of mainstream services	51
iv. Promoting Cultural change in service delivery	53
11. Communities First Funding Arrangements	54
i. Principles for Communities First funding	54
ii. Funding for Communities First Teams	55
iii. Specialist Development Officers working with Children and Young People	56
iv. Preparing an application	57
v. Costs eligible for Communities First funding	57
vi. Costs not eligible for Communities First funding	58
vii. Applications process, demonstrating accountability and compliance with terms and conditions of grant	59
viii. Transferring grant from one activity to another (“Virement”)	59
ix. Decisions on Funding and Management of Communities First funds	60
x. Monitoring	61
xi. Evaluation	63
xii. National Evaluation of the Communities First Programme	64
 Annex to Chapter 11: The Principles for determining Capacity Building within the Communities First Programme	 64

12. The role, employment and management of the Communities First Co-ordinator	67
i. Key Responsibilities of the Partnership Co-ordinator	68
ii. Over-arching Co-ordinators	70
iii. Employment of Partnership Co-ordinator	70
iv. Management Protocol for Partnership Co-ordinators	71
v. Statutory Employer acting on behalf of the Communities First Partnership	71
vi. Premises, linguistic profile of area, responsibility of Co-ordinator to Communities First Programme	72
vii. Regional Co-ordinators' Meetings	72
SECTION E – PRACTICALITIES	75
13. A Communications Strategy for Communities First Partnerships	75
i. Importance of Good Communications	75
ii. Key principles	75
iii. Partnerships' Communications Plans	76
iv. Publicising Membership and Meetings	77
v. Sharing Success and Good Practice	77
vi. Learning Lessons	78
vii. Contributions from Other Partners	78
viii. Links with the local media	78
.	
ix. Appointing a Partnership lead on Communications	79
x. Acknowledgements and use of logos	79
xi. Use of Welsh and English and other languages in all advertisements and notices	80
xii. Publication of Ministerial Decisions by the Assembly Government	80
Xiii. Visits by Communities First Unit officials	80
xiv. Regional Co-ordinators' Meetings	80
xv. Support, advice and Assembly Government reviews	81
14. Communities First and the Welsh Language	81
i. Policy Contexts: Iaith Pawb	81
ii. Complementary Strategies: Communities First and Iaith Pawb	82
iii. Role of all Assembly Government	82
iv. The contribution of the Welsh language to Communities First Actions	83
v. Actions	83
vi. Links to the six Vision Framework themes	85
vii. Support and advice	85
15. Communities First Partnerships and the Purchasing of Goods, Services, Consultancy or Research – “Procurement”	87
i. Why you need a formal set of rules and procedures	87

ii.	What is a contract?	87
iii.	Competitive tendering	89
iv.	Small contracts	89
v.	Placing of contracts – Good Practice	89
vi.	Avoiding conflict of interest	90
 SECTION F – SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS		93
16.	The work and role of the Communities First Support Network (CFSN)	93
i.	Role of CFSN	93
ii.	CFSN Organisations Including:	
	* Gwraidd	
	**Communities First Trust Fund	94
	 Communities First Support Fund for Excluded Groups	 100
 SECTION G – AREAS TO ADDRESS		101
17.	Involving Children and Young People in Communities First	101
i.	Principles	101
ii.	How Partnerships need to engage with Children and Young People	102
	a. Activities which build capacity and develop strategic links	102
	b. Inter-Partnership working	103
	c. Involving children and young people in decision-making	104
iii.	Actions	105
18.	Communities First and Older People	105
i.	Why Partnerships need to engage with older people	105
ii.	Older people representation on Partnerships	106
iii.	Involving Older People in Communities First	106
iv.	The Way Forward	107
	a. Project work leading to action/forward planning	107
	b. Inter-Partnership working	108
	c. Involving older people in decision-making	108
v.	Communication	109
vi.	Actions	109
19.	Promoting Race Equality	109
i.	Role of Communities First Partnerships in promoting Race Equality	109
ii.	Guidelines for CF Partnerships on Race Equality	110

i.	Role of Communities First Partnerships in promoting Race Equality	109
ii.	Guidelines for CF Partnerships on Race Equality	110
21.	Communities First and Health Improvement	111
i.	Health Inequalities	111
ii.	Health Promotion	112
iii.	Working with Health Challenge Wales	112
iv.	Developing Health Impact Assessments	114
22.	Communities First and People with disabilities	115
i.	Engaging with People with Disabilities and their carers	115
ii.	Organisations to contact for information, advice and support	116
23.	Economic Inactivity, Overindebtedness and Developing links with Jobcentre Plus Wales	118
i.	Credit Unions	118
ii.	The Work of Jobcentre Plus Wales	118
24.	Communities First and Childcare	120
i.	Communities First Partnerships and Childcare	121
25.	Links with Local Development Plans	121
26.	The Communities First Vision Framework	123

SECTION H – MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES WITHIN COMMUNITIES FIRST PARTNERSHIPS

	Page
Purpose of this Guidance Note	
1. Welsh Assembly Government’s Statutory Duty	1
2. History of Communities First Support Fund	1
3. Process for Future Funding in this Area	2
4. Eligible Activities Under New Arrangements	6
5. Contact Details	8
Annex A – The Legislative Context	9
Annex B – Needs Assessment for Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity Issues	12

SECTION A – SETTING THE SCENE

This section sets out the background to the Communities First Programme to give all those involved clear information on the overall vision for the Programme. It will provide direction to Communities First Partnerships when considering local priorities and actions.

This section will be of benefit to all parties.

1. The Welsh Assembly Government’s Vision for Communities First

1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government’s Communities First Programme exists to provide local people with opportunities to play an active role in shaping the future of their community.

1.2 It is founded on the principle that poverty and disadvantage are created by a complex number of factors, such as poor educational achievement, poor housing and environments, substance misuse, local job markets, benefit systems, stigma and perceptions about people and places etc. If we want to address poverty and inequalities then we must understand what the causes are. Communities First provides opportunities for people living in areas we term to be disadvantaged, and the agencies that deliver services in those communities, to examine the realities of poverty and to learn and work together to address it. Communities First is about people challenging the barriers, whether they be real or perceived, which prevent residents from fulfilling their own potential and from effecting change where they live. It is about supporting communities, groups and individuals to find their voices and use their skills and experiences to change, challenge, negotiate, persuade, and jointly plan for the benefit of their communities.

1.3 The vision is underpinned by key principles which include:

- Promoting social justice, creating an equitable environment where people believe in their personal power to change things for the better.
- The promotion of a culture in which diversity is valued and equality of opportunity is a reality.
- Local people must be involved in leading the Communities First process.
- A recognition that change requires time, and therefore the Communities First Programme is a long term investment in communities.
- Disadvantaged communities making a long lasting difference to the life of their community and to the systems, policies and institutions which contribute to their disadvantage.

1.4 It is over six years since the Communities First Programme was launched. Much has happened in those years and the programme has developed in many unexpected and interesting ways. The programme is embedded in 142 communities across Wales and brings together people from a huge range of backgrounds within those communities.

1.5 The activities taken forward under the programme have helped give people in Communities First areas a sense of common purpose, a sense of hope and a sense

of belonging. The programme is helping to re-awaken community spirit in many areas, once proud of their community institutions, where that spirit has long lain dormant, overwhelmed by decades of deprivation, decline and neglect. In other areas, which have never recognised themselves as communities, the programme has sown seeds, which need nurturing, but where people actually speak of themselves as a community for the first time ever.

1.6 There is more to be done. In Spring 2007, applications are being prepared and considered for 46 new areas, all experiencing high levels of deprivation, to be included in the programme. The inclusion of the new areas would mean that the programme covers some 20% of the population of Wales. We need to build on the solid foundations laid over the first years of the programme and move forward with enthusiasm, imagination and vigour to help local people achieve their vision for their community. We need to introduce the values and apply the lessons in the new areas.

1.7 The Welsh Assembly Government remains committed to working with local residents in taking forward the Communities First Programme. Local people are the essence of Communities First. We will continue to support, encourage and develop local people so they are able to express their collective vision for their community and are empowered to take the lead in achieving their vision.

1.8 The Welsh Assembly Government calls on all our partners to share these goals and to join us in taking forward this great endeavour.

2. The Aims of Communities First

“Our commitment now as a government is to make sure communities are empowered to regenerate themselves and tackle the social problems inherited by neglect and economic starvation. We want to ensure that all communities can share in the increased wealth and prosperity of Wales. The less well-off communities should be at the front of the queue to share in this prosperity.” Rhodri Morgan AM, First Minister for Wales (May 2003)

i. What is Communities First?

2.1 Communities First is the Welsh Assembly Government’s flagship programme to improve “the living conditions and prospects for people” in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales. The programme was launched in 2001 and was conceived as a long-term strategy to address the deep-rooted social and economic problems of those communities. The Assembly Government remains strongly committed to the programme, which is at the heart of all its policy and implementation strategies.

2.2 The Communities First programme is targeted at the most disadvantaged communities only. The original Communities First areas comprise the 100 most deprived electoral divisions in Wales (as identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation), 32 smaller areas (“pockets of deprivation”) and 10 sectoral initiatives (“imaginative proposals”). Every county and county borough in Wales has at least one Communities First area (and many have several). Approximately 18% of the population of Wales live in the original 142 Communities First areas.

2.3 Applications are currently being prepared and considered for 46 new areas, all experiencing high levels of deprivation as identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005, to be included in the programme. The inclusion of the new areas would mean that the programme covers some 20% of the population of Wales.

2.4 The aims of Communities First are ambitious. The fundamental premise is that the programme will enable and empower people living in a Communities First area to decide what is needed for their area's regeneration and then help them realise their ambitions. The success of the programme is entirely dependent on the active involvement of local people, but they need the support, encouragement and help of the public, voluntary and private sectors in their area. The ethos of Communities First is one of partnership working between local people and the authorities, agencies and other organisations which deliver the key services and support.

2.5 The areas included in the Communities First Programme have experienced social and economic disadvantage over many years – in many cases for generations. Each area has its own particular problems and the circumstances have left their negative imprints, visible and invisible, on the communities and on the lives of residents of those communities.

2.6 Communities First is not going to bring about change overnight and there is no quick fix. After six years much good work has already been achieved, but we need to ensure that we build on the foundations laid. We now have a sense of what has worked well or not so well and this Guidance draws on these experiences. The Assembly Government is committed to the Programme and believes that the inclusive, community-based approach is the appropriate way forward. The Interim Evaluation of the Communities First Programme by Cambridge Policy Consultants (published November 2006) endorses the Assembly Government's approach.

ii. The Aims

2.7 In practical terms, the Programme aims to achieve the following in the Communities First areas:

- To build confidence and raise the self-esteem of people living in the community.
- To increase the incomes of local people (including reducing costs of food, heat, credit etc.).
- To improve health and well-being.
- To encourage and improve education and skills training for work;
- To create jobs.
- To make communities safe, secure and crime free.
- To ensure public services are delivered in ways which are more responsive and more locally accountable.
- To improve housing and the quality of the environment.
- To encourage active citizenship.

2.8 These objectives are the guiding principles for activities undertaken within the Communities First Programme and are fundamental to the over-arching goal of building strong and sustainable communities.

2.9 Attaining our objective will entail a lot of hard work and, crucially, will require a collaborative, co-ordinated, multi-faceted and multi-sectoral approach. Partnership working is vital since no community, no authority and no agency will be able to bring about the scale of change envisaged by working in isolation. The principle of partnership working must be upheld at the national, local and community levels and function between all parties in all aspects of activity.

2.10 The key building block in the structure of Communities First is a local partnership, set up at the community level. The ability of a community to come together and work in a stable, inclusive and forward-looking partnership is an essential first step to achieving the objectives of Communities First. Whatever the input into an area from other organisations and agencies, without a functioning and effective community partnership, no Communities First area is likely to achieve a significant transformation in its fortunes.

SECTION B – THE PARTNERSHIP BASICS

This section sets out the mechanisms for the creation and development of a Communities First Partnership. The detail in this section reflects the range of queries that have been received on this area in the past.

This section will be of most relevance to new Partnerships. However, existing Partnerships may feel they would like to fine-tune their arrangements based on some of the good practice upon which this section is based.

3. The Communities First Partnership

3.1 The key principle of the Communities First Programme is that every Communities First area should have a Partnership which will enable local people to contribute, with partners, to the regeneration of their area. The Communities First Partnership will promote community engagement activity and must bring together local people from the community concerned. The involvement of local people must be complemented and supported by representatives from the organisations in the statutory, voluntary and business sectors which can help the local community achieve the desired transformation.

3.2 The benefits of co-operative working have been clearly evidenced by the Communities First Programme. Partnership working is intended to encourage solutions to shared difficulties, and further develop mutual understanding between partners. The achievement of the aims of the Programme will take time, reflecting how important the work of the Communities First Partnerships is in developing these vital mutually supporting relationships.

3.3 Some elements, which have been shown to increase the success of partnership working, include:

- Community involvement.
- Good working relationships and trust.
- Good quality information flows.
- Local sense of ownership.
- Clear sense of purpose.
- Skilled and committed staff.
- Facilitative management by the Grant Recipient Body.

i. Make-up of the Partnership

3.4 The Assembly Government recommends that the make-up of a Communities First Partnership adheres to the “three thirds” principle with one third of members drawn from the local community, one third from the statutory sector and one third from the voluntary/business sectors. This make-up is intended to strike a balance between participative democracy and provide support, experience and expertise to deal with any unforeseen difficulties.

3.5 The balance of members between the three categories may need to vary depending on local circumstances (eg a scarcity of local businesses), but the

members drawn from the local community should not be outnumbered by the number of members in either one of the other two categories. It is recommended that no category should have more than half the total membership of a Partnership.

3.6 The make-up of each category on the Partnership is for local determination but the following principles should apply in each case.

3.7 The **community** membership – there needs to be a broad range of representation from people living in the Communities First area. Members in this category could include local residents, representatives of local community organisations (eg residents' and tenants' associations, parents and toddler groups, Community Watch) and (other than in exceptional cases) local county, county borough or community councillors.

3.8 The membership from the community should attempt to be representative of genders, age groups, linguistic and minority ethnic groups, sexual orientation and people with disabilities within the community. This may not always be practical – residents from some groups may be reluctant to come forward for various reasons. Partnerships should try to make sure that the views of groups not represented through the community category are represented via the statutory or voluntary/business sectors.

3.9 The **statutory** sector - local authorities, local health boards, schools, the police, the fire service, Assembly and UK Government agencies and other publicly funded bodies have a significant part to play in helping Communities First areas achieve their objectives. The statutory sector bodies are responsible for delivering many of the key services which will tackle poverty and social disadvantage. Commitment from the statutory service providers and agencies is vital as is preparedness on their part to listen to and work with local Communities First Partnerships.

3.10 Statutory sector membership on a Communities First Partnership might be drawn from the range of public bodies. It might be appropriate for one body to have several representatives drawn from different parts of the organisation but responsible for delivering different services which will contribute to the Partnership's objectives. The local authority, for example, could usefully have representatives from several of its services such as education, social housing, community regeneration, arts and leisure. However, only one Partnership vote will be allocated to cover all local authority representatives in this case even if several are attending the same meeting.

3.11 It might not be necessary for some statutory sector public bodies, such as the Fire Service, for example, to commit themselves to full membership of Communities First Partnerships. In these cases there should be clear mechanisms for ensuring the public body engages and works with the Partnership on issues for which it is responsible and which impact on the community served by the Partnership. The opportunity for public body representatives to attend Partnership meetings on an occasional basis, to be members of Partnership working groups or to have regular meetings with the Partnership Co-ordinator are some options to consider.

3.12 The statutory sector representatives on a Communities First Partnership should normally be officials from the public organisations involved. Councillors or elected / appointed members of governing bodies may sit as statutory sector representatives on the Partnership, but only if they have been formally delegated to do so by their organisations. Thus a councillor from the Communities First area who is also a member of the Partnership should sit on the Partnership as a representative of the community sector – unless he or she has been formally delegated to represent the local authority on the Partnership. Where the councillor is the delegated representative of the local authority he or she must sit as a representative of the statutory sector.

3.13 The **voluntary** and **business** sector - national and local voluntary organisations have an important role to play in contributing to the success of Communities First. Membership of a Communities First Partnership will depend on local circumstances but it is strongly recommended that the local county voluntary council should be included. The voluntary sector generally has a long experience of partnership working, obtaining funding from a variety of organisations and delivering services from which Communities First Partnerships can benefit.

3.14 Local businesses or business outlets located in the area should be encouraged to take part in Communities First Partnerships as they can make a significant contribution by providing Partnerships with financial and management skills, advice, facilities and employment and training opportunities. They can also help by supporting and helping to develop community based enterprises.

3.15 It is worth stressing that, in return, there are clear advantages to businesses from being involved in the regeneration process. Communities First aims to deliver more confident and better skilled local people, an improved physical environment and lower crime rates - benefits which will be enjoyed by local businesses.

3.16 Communities First Partnerships should seek to involve as members representatives from the local chamber of commerce and local employers and businesses. Members might also be sought from other representative bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry, Business in the Community or the Federation of Small Businesses.

3.17 A Communities First Partnership could still operate without business representation, but it should be sought where possible. Imaginative or innovative methods of engaging business interests can be explored, for example, forging links without the requirement that business representatives attend meetings, etc.

ii. Partnership Agreement

3.18 Some Communities First Partnerships have sought and acquired legal status in their own right. Others remain informal organisations (in a legal sense) and have selected another body which has legal status (eg a local authority, housing association or county voluntary council) to act as grant recipient body to apply for and administer funding on behalf of the Partnership.

3.19 In all cases a Communities First Partnership should have agreed a “Partnership Agreement” (also referred to as “rules of procedure” or a “constitution”) which governs the arrangement of Partnership business and the selection of members and officers of the Partnership. The Partnership should seek to develop a Partnership Agreement as soon as it is in a position to do so. This development process will enable the Partnership to begin to understand how individuals interact with each other, and form a coherent approach for decision making in the future.

3.20 The Partnership Agreement should:

- state the name of the Partnership in both English and Welsh (and any other language which is appropriate given the linguistic composition of the area) and the geographic areas served by the Partnership;
- set out how the Partnership will work, including its powers, responsibilities and arrangements for reporting to local people, the Grant Recipient Body and the Welsh Assembly Government;
- state who is the Grant Recipient Body (i.e. an organisation with a legal status which can apply for and administer the funding on behalf of the Partnership);
- identify each member of the Partnership and the sector and organisation (if appropriate) they represent (to be updated whenever a new member joins the Partnership). This can be included in a published appendix if preferred;
- state why each partner is attending, e.g. as resident of the area, representative of local Senior Citizens Group, etc;
- define the methods of selecting members of the Partnership from each sector and the periods of office they will serve;
- set out that the Partnership will have officers – namely a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer (when the Partnership is managing funds) and any other as are deemed appropriate for the work of the Partnership;
- define the role of each officer of the Partnership, set out the method of electing each officer and the periods of office they will serve; and
- set out the regularity with which Partnership meetings will be held, including the holding of an Annual General Meeting.

3.21 The Partnership Agreement should provide a clear operational framework setting out the Partnership’s powers, responsibilities and patterns of accountability. Once this has been achieved and the Partnership is properly established according to the thirds principle, all members of the Partnership should sign the Partnership Agreement confirming that they are content to be part of the Partnership and support its activities. The Partnership Agreement should be reviewed regularly and revised to take account of any agreed changes or advice from the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.22 The Communities First Support Network is available to provide advice and support in drawing up a Partnership Agreement.

3.23 If Partnerships have not already done so, they should send a copy of their Partnership Agreement to the appropriate Communities First Regional Team in the Assembly Government’s Communities Directorate. The Regional Team should be

notified of all subsequent changes to the Partnership Agreement and sent a copy of the revised document as soon as possible.

iii. Selection of Partnership Members

3.24 Arrangements for the selection of members from the different sectors to serve on Partnerships differ between Partnerships. A certain amount of flexibility is acceptable, particularly with regard to representatives from the community. The selection methods for each sector should be agreed by the full Partnership (and set out in the Partnership Agreement), but the act of selecting the sector members should be confined to the sector concerned.

iv. Selection of Community sector members

3.25 Some Partnerships have drawn up systems of balloting with members elected directly by the community by secret ballot at designated polling places, by postal vote or at community meetings. Members may also be selected by community groups which are active within the Communities First area and are delegated to represent those groups on the Partnership.

3.26 In some areas, however, such formal processes are impractical and the community sector members may sometimes be those who simply turn up regularly for Partnership meetings.

3.27 Depending on the circumstances of the Partnership, any (or a combination) of these methods is acceptable, provided that the community sector members:

- clearly have a stake in the community (eg as a resident); and
- are representative of the interests and make-up of the community.

3.28 It is also important for the individuals concerned and for the wider community that there is clarity about (i) the reasons for each community sector representative being on the Partnership and (ii) how long he or she will serve. These details should be set out in the Partnership Agreement.

v. Councillors as representatives of the community sector

3.29 Local councillors from the Communities First area have the potential to play an important role in the organisation and strategic direction of Partnerships. Their experience of public life and their links to a variety of key service delivery agencies should be valuable resources for communities with little experience of community organisation or activism.

3.30 Experience has shown that Partnerships generally work best when the local councillors are constructively involved in them.

3.31 It is quite appropriate that councillors from the relevant county or county borough electoral division and community council ward should be included within the community sector of a Communities First Partnership. There needs to be a balance, however, so that the majority of community sector members are drawn from

residents and from local community organisations. A circumstance where a majority of community sector members are elected councillors (or other elected representatives) is not acceptable for a Communities First Partnership. The Partnership may seek to increase the number of community seats to ensure the balance is in favour of residents/community organisations,- even if this means that the community sector now has more than one third of the total number of seats on the Partnership (see paragraph 3.5 above).

3.32 Where a Communities First Partnership covers one single-member electoral division it is appropriate that the member for that division be invited to be a member of the Partnership. If the division is multi-member, the Partnership may choose to ask all the elected members to sit on the Partnership (subject to paragraph 3.31 above) but they may also ask them to sit by rotation.

3.33 Sitting by rotation would mean that: in a 2-member electoral division each councillor would serve two years in turn on the Partnership; in a 3-member electoral division, each would serve 1 year and 4 months in turn on the Partnership; in a 4 member electoral division, each would serve one year in turn on the Partnership. If the Partnership area comprises more than one electoral division, each division may be represented on the Partnership, with the rotation arrangement applying in any electoral divisions which are multi-member. In all circumstances the Partnership should provide safeguards to ensure no community interests are excluded.

3.34 Rotation arrangements may also apply to community councillors. It would depend on the total number of community councillors representing areas covered by the Partnership, but, for example, the Partnership may choose that no more than 2 community councillors should be members of the Partnership at the same time.

3.35 Where rotation arrangements apply, local councillors who are not currently members of a Partnership in their capacity as elected representatives should not seek membership as a direct representative of the community or of a community organisation.

vi. Selecting representatives from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors

3.36 The selection of Partnership members from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors is a matter for the sector concerned. The persons selected should be able to bring to their role experience and connections which will help take forward the work of the Partnership. The remit given each member from these sectors should also be spelled out in the Partnership Agreement, as should the period of office they will serve.

3.37 It may occasionally arise that the number of potential Partnership members from the statutory, voluntary or business sector exceeds the number of places available to that sector. In these circumstances the sector will decide amongst itself how the seats available to it may be allocated (subject to the process being agreed by the full Partnership and set out in the Partnership Agreement). That process might include rotation agreements or even a ballot among the constituent organisations and / or members of the sector concerned. If a ballot is staged it must be confined to the sector concerned.

3.38 It is not appropriate for the other sectors to be involved in determining who represents a particular sector on a Communities First Partnership.

3.39 Councillors or elected / appointed members of governing bodies should not normally be selected to represent organisations from the voluntary and business sectors.

vii. Officers of the Partnership

3.40 Each Partnership at its Annual Review Meeting, sometimes termed Annual General Meeting, should elect or nominate a Chairperson and select a Secretary. If the Partnership is responsible for managing funds – however small – it should also select a Treasurer. The terms of office of all officers should be renewed on an annual basis. The Communities First staff are available to support officers in their work as the Partnership deems appropriate.

Duties of Officers

3.41 The Partnership Agreement should set out the duties of each officer of the Partnership. These duties should include:

The Chairperson:

- Chairing over full meetings of the Partnership.
- Ensuring that meetings of the Partnership are conducted in accordance with the standards of behaviour set out in the Rules of Conduct.
- Acting and speaking as the formal figurehead of the Partnership at functions, meetings, events, etc.
- Exercising their responsibilities in a fair, inclusive, open and non-judgemental way.
- Supporting Communities First staff and volunteers.

A Vice-Chairperson may also be appointed to carry out the Chairperson's duties in their absence.

The Secretary:

- Keeping a full and up-to-date Membership list and ensuring that the list is published.
- Setting dates and venues for meetings of the Partnership.
- Preparing the agenda for meetings, in consultation with the Chairperson and the Partnership Co-ordinator.
- Keeping and taking minutes of all Partnership meetings.
- Ensuring that all papers and any other information relevant to the business of Partnership meetings are provided and circulated to all Partnership members in good time for their discussion.
- Monitoring and collating reports on the work and progress of any sub-groups set up by the Partnership.

The Treasurer

- Supervising the financial affairs of the Partnership.
- Keeping accurate accounts which show all monies received and paid out by the Partnership.
- Presenting up-to-date reports on the Partnership's financial affairs and accounts at each ordinary meeting of the Partnership.
- Presenting an Annual Report of the Partnership's financial affairs and accounts at the Partnership's Annual General Meeting.
- Acting as a point of contact for the Grant Recipient Body.

Additional Roles

3.42 The Partnership may choose to appoint additional officers, for example a Communications Officer and allocate duties accordingly.

viii. Election of Officers and Terms of Office

3.43 The methods of election for each officer post should be determined by the Partnership, but be as representative as possible. The methods of election should be set out clearly in the Partnership Agreement.

3.44 The Partnership, in consultation with the community, should set a limit on the maximum number of annual terms of office any individual may serve in certain offices. The Assembly Government considers that no person should serve more than five annual terms (which need not be consecutive) as Chairperson. The Assembly Government should be consulted and its prior agreement obtained if it is proposed that an individual should serve more than five annual terms as Chairperson.

3.45 The Assembly Government considers that the maximum number of annual terms of office a person may serve as Secretary should also be five. The Assembly Government should be consulted and its prior agreement obtained for any proposed extension beyond the five annual terms.

3.46 Because of the specialist nature of the post (and the difficulty Partnership's might have in recruiting persons suitably qualified for the role) the Assembly Government considers that no maximum number of annual terms of office need apply to the post of Treasurer. Nevertheless, the term of office should still be subject to renewal annually.

3.47 The Assembly Government considers that the maximum number of annual terms of office a person may serve in any other officer post should be five. Exceptions may be made, with the prior agreement of the Assembly Government, if the post is of a specialist nature and there might be difficulties recruiting suitably qualified persons for the role. In these cases no maximum need apply, although the term of office should still be subject to renewal annually.

3.48 The Partnership should also set a limit on the maximum number of annual terms of office any individual may serve in all offices (other than that of Treasurer) of

the Partnership. The Assembly Government considers that no person should serve more than eight annual terms (which need not be consecutive) in all offices (other than that of Treasurer). The Assembly Government should be consulted and its prior agreement obtained if it is proposed that an individual should serve more than this number.

3.49 It is expected that the Partnership will ensure local residents are provided with support to enable them to take on officer posts as soon as possible. This is considered to be an important capacity building opportunity. Funding is available from the Communities First Programme for training of this nature.

3.50 Details of the conditions on terms of office should be set out in the Partnership Agreement.

3.51 No member of the Partnership may hold more than one office at the same time.

3.52 Officers of the Partnership may be drawn from any of the constituent sectors but conditions apply on the roles of elected members. These are set out in Chapter 7.

3.53 All officers of the Partnership should have the right to vote in Partnership meetings, except in circumstances where to do so might involve a conflict of interest. In the event of tied votes the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

ix. Proceedings at Partnership meetings

3.54 Meetings of the Partnership should be held at times and places convenient to the majority of members, be well publicised and be open to the public. There should be a structured agenda, published and distributed in advance and detailed minutes should be kept of all meetings and decisions.

3.55 The minutes of meetings should be sent to the relevant Communities First Regional Team in the Welsh Assembly Government as a matter of course.

3.56 Information on the outcomes of meetings including Partnership meeting action points, minutes and other Partnership activities should be circulated to the wider community, in appropriate and accessible formats and through various publicity channels. This must include formats accessible to people with sensory disabilities and to those whose first language is not English. Funding is available from the Communities First Programme to ensure this.

3.57 Partnerships should consider the appropriateness of making available interpretation facilities at Partnership meetings and any community meetings organised by the Partnership to facilitate the use of more than one language.

3.58 All minutes of Partnership Annual General Meetings, recording the decisions taken, should be sent to the relevant Communities First Regional Team in the Welsh Assembly Government as soon as possible after the meeting.

3.59 Funding is available from the Communities First Programme to reimburse expenses involved in ensuring proper representation from community representatives and local voluntary and community groups, including for child care and carers.

x. *Partnership sub-groups / task and finish groups*

3.60 It is appropriate for Partnerships to set up sub-groups or task and finish groups to examine particular issues or manage certain responsibilities. The setting-up, objectives, membership and proposed lifespan of such groups should be recorded in the Partnership meeting minutes.

3.61 Sub-groups and task and finish groups should report to the full Partnership on a regular and agreed basis. Reports agreed by the Partnership should be included in the Partnership meeting minutes. On this basis it is not necessary to publish notes of sub-group or task and finish meetings.

xi. *Areas invited to apply for inclusion in August 2006*

3.62 On 1 August 2006, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration wrote to key stakeholders in 46 areas across Wales inviting them to submit applications for the areas to be included in the Communities First Programme.

3.63 The Minister made clear that applications should be pulled together using local knowledge in consultation with all key stakeholders in the given area. The local communities and local stakeholders need time to consider the issues and to assess the fit of any new areas with existing community structures, including existing Communities First Partnerships in their area and neighbourhood.

3.64 Applications were invited by 30 March 2007. No timetable was set for the assessment of applications – the process will depend on the extent of existing community structures and the degree of engagement with the different stakeholders. The Assembly Government is prepared to be flexible and work with the prospective new areas to ensure that inclusion of new areas is achieved as effectively as possible.

3.65 In advance of formal admission to the Programme, the Assembly Government will consider and take a decision on whether and when structures and organisations in a prospective new area may be eligible to apply for Communities First funding for preparatory work. That decision will also cover eligibility for the Communities First Trust Fund and the Communities First (Music) Trust Fund.

4. Encouraging Constructive Dialogue within Partnerships: Rules of Conduct for Partnership Meetings and Members

Purpose of this Chapter

4.1 This chapter provides advice to Partnerships about the need to have working arrangements which ensure that all participants are treated fairly, are shown respect, are listened to and are given a fair hearing. The chapter also provides guidance on how to deal with conflict within Partnerships. For guidance on the related issue of Good Communications see Chapter 13.

Introduction

4.2 Communities First Partnerships bring together people from a range of different backgrounds, organisations and interests. Each person has his or her reasons for participating in or working with the Partnership. Some will be members of the community, seeking to represent the interests of their estate, group or sector; others will be officers of voluntary organisations representing particular interest groups such as older people, business or disabled people; and yet others will be involved as representatives of agencies delivering services with which the Partnership is engaging – or with which it should engage.

4.3 Given the range of interests, it is inevitable that there should at times be disagreement within Partnerships and between Partnerships and partner organisations. Localities, interest groups and individuals within the Communities First area may be competing for perceived priority and what may appear to be limited resources. Partnerships may be frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of support or responsiveness on the parts of key service delivery organisations. Service delivery organisations may be confused or frustrated by unrealistic expectations or a lack of clarity on priorities in the work programmes or Community Action Plans put forward by Partnerships.

i. Dealing with internal disagreement

4.4 The answers to many of the disagreements which arise in Communities First Partnerships are relatively straightforward:

- Good communication within the Partnership, with the community and with stakeholders / partner organisations.
- Good forward planning on work programmes and Community Action Plans, ensuring the beneficiaries, the delivery organisations and the Partnership are involved and informed at the outset.
- Individuals and organisations working together in an open and transparent way, showing respect for each other, being prepared to listen and offering explanations.

4.5 Communities First Partnerships should ensure that their meetings, activities and transactions are conducted in an open and transparent manner. Members of the community (and all members of the Partnership) have the right to participate in and to be consulted and informed about the organisation, membership and work of the Partnership.

4.6 Partnerships should encourage healthy discussion around issues. The expression of opposing views is not a bad thing in itself; a sensible discussion setting out the pros and cons for a course of action can help draw out a wider perspective of the issues, develop awareness of the different social, financial and political contexts of the different players and help establish priorities. Such debate is needed to enable Partnerships to draw up work programmes and Community Action Plans which reflect the concerns of their community, are owned by the community and are realistic and achievable.

4.7 It is important, however, that discussion within Partnerships does not become unhealthy, with people taking up positions which are inflexible, dogmatic or even aggressive. Partnerships which are notable for bickering, acrimony, splits and factionalism are neither attractive to join and work with, nor very productive.

ii. Partnership Rules of Conduct

4.8 Communities First Partnerships need to ensure that they conduct their business and activities in ways which develop consensus and are inclusive and respectful of others' points of view. Partnership members should bear in mind these principles and apply them at all times when on Partnership business. To ensure that people are clear about their responsibilities to each other, to the Partnership and to the community, it is strongly recommended that Partnerships draw up a formal written document, which sets out what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Communities First Co-ordinators should support community members to minimise any concerns when drawing up the document.

4.9 The written document, which might be termed "Rules of Conduct", "Standing Orders" etc., should be drawn up and agreed by the Partnership. There are organisations which will be able to help Partnerships draw up their "Rules of Conduct" – the Communities First Support Network, the local authority, the local County Voluntary Council for example – but it is important that the Partnership is fully involved in the process. Being involved in drawing up the Rules of Conduct will be a worthwhile capacity building exercise in itself, but will also enhance understanding and buy-in from Partnership members.

4.10 It is acknowledged that some Partnership members may already be bound by the rules of conduct from their own organisations.

4.11 The Rules of Conduct should support and complement the main Constitution or Partnership Agreement. The Rules may form an integral part of the Partnership Agreement or they could be a self-standing schedule or Appendix to the Agreement. The Rules should also link to the Partnership's Communications Plan, since good communications are central to ensuring that a Partnership is inclusive, representative and informed.

4.12 It is for Partnerships to decide how the Rules of Conduct link with the Partnership Agreement and the Communications Plan. There may be some overlap and duplication; that is not important provided the messages in the different documents are consistent and complement each other. Far better that important messages are repeated than be left unwritten.

4.13 Although the detail of the Rules of Conduct themselves are a matter for the Partnership, the Rules should reflect equal opportunities as a guiding principle, and set out clearly and unambiguously:

a. Meetings Processes

- The date of the Partnership's Annual General Meeting.
- The frequency of ordinary Partnership Meetings.

- The procedures for drawing up and agreeing dates, times, venues and agendas for the AGM and ordinary meetings.
- The timetable and procedures for publicising dates, times, venues and agendas for the AGM and ordinary meetings.
- The procedures for selecting members of the Partnership (if not covered in the Partnership Agreement).
- The procedures for the election of officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Lead) of the Partnership and the length of their terms of office (if not covered in the Partnership Agreement).

b. Conduct in Meetings

- The role of the Partnership Chair (or a deputy) at Partnership meetings.
- The rules of debate (eg requirements to address the chair, limits on length of speeches, limits on the number of times someone may speak).
- The availability of simultaneous interpretation facilities.
- The procedure for taking, recording and publicising decisions at Partnership meetings.
- The taking of minutes of Partnership meeting and their publication.
- Definitions of unacceptable behaviours (eg bullying other Partnership members, staff or volunteers; use of language or behaviour which is disorderly, discriminatory or offensive; speaking too long and denying others their voice; speaking repetitively or not being relevant; unruly interventions or behaviour; disregarding the authority of the Chair).
- Actions to be taken against persons displaying the unacceptable behaviours (eg exclusion from Partnership meetings).
- Rules for admitting the public or non-Partnership members to meetings.
- Rules for establishing and defining the work and life-spans of sub-groups or task and finish groups of the Partnerships (including Management Boards, if not covered in the Partnership Agreement).
- Rules for dealing with conflicts of interests.
- Rules for dealing with situations where individuals feel that they have suffered unacceptable behaviour.

c. Communicating with the community

- The procedures and timetable for drawing up the content of Partnership newsletters.
- The frequency of publication of Partnership newsletters and its distribution.
- Rules for community consultations (eg in what circumstances, who should do them).
- The language(s) to be used for communications.

d. Communicating with partners

- Description of the links the Partnerships has with the organisations which are key to delivering the Partnership's work programmes and Community Action Plan.
- The procedure for selecting the Partnership's representatives on strategic local partnerships such as the Community Strategy Partnership, the

Children and Young People's Framework Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership etc.

- Procedures for drawing up and publicising the Partnership's work programme and Community Action Plan.
- Procedures for involving partners and the community in the drawing up of work programmes and Community Action Plan.

4.14 Setting out as clearly as possible how the Partnership goes about every aspect of its business, should enable all those involved in or with the Partnership to understand:

- What the Partnership is seeking to do.
- How the Partnership is setting about achieving its objectives.
- How individuals and organisations can contribute to the process.
- The limits to what they can contribute.

4.15 Despite all these precautions, Partnerships may still find themselves pre-occupied by persistent disputes, disagreements or factionalism. In these circumstances, every effort should be made to persuade the various parties to come together, to discuss their differences and to try to reach an agreement which is acceptable to those concerned and enables the Partnership to move forward in keeping with the Communities First principles.

iii. Assistance

4.16 External and professional assistance may be needed by the Partnership to help bring together parties which are in disagreement. The external participant could act as facilitator for the meeting, be "honest broker" between opposing views and record resulting agreements. Several organisations are available to help Partnerships and to provide brokering or mediation in these circumstances – the local authority, the Communities First Support Network, or the county voluntary council should be able to help and advise.

iv. Unresolved Conflict

4.17 The Assembly Government will do all it can to enable Partnerships to find the help, support and advice they need when experiencing difficulties with long-running internal conflicts. However, the Assembly Government has a responsibility to ensure that funds made available under the Communities First Programme are used for the purpose for which they were intended. The Assembly Government will consider, in consultation with all the parties, withholding funding from Partnerships which are unable to resolve persistent or long-running conflicts which impede the work of the Partnership and the achievement of Communities First goals.

5. Legal Status of Communities First Partnerships

Introduction

5.1 As the Communities First Programme develops and Partnerships take on more responsibilities, their roles and organisational structures are becoming more formal. These developments are likely also to lead to increased potential legal liabilities for Partnerships.

5.2 To help Partnerships prepare for these enhanced roles, in 2004 the Assembly Government issued guidelines on options for organisational models that all Communities First Partnerships and grant recipient bodies should be following. The guidelines were developed following legal advice and detailed discussions with the Communities First Support Network and the Welsh Local Government Association. The following note summarises the main points of the guidelines, which are available in full on the Communities First Support Network's web-site http://www.communitiesfirst.info/uploadedFiles/Useful_Resources/Legal%20Guidance%20E%2010_09_04.pdf or from the Communities First Unit in the Welsh Assembly Government.

5.3 Some Partnerships may wish to move to incorporation. The Welsh Assembly Government suggests that Partnerships take full advice before undertaking this action, as it can be time-consuming and challenging. In addition, several partner organisations may be in a position and willing to draw down funding on behalf of the Partnership, reducing any need for incorporation. If a Partnership chooses incorporation, some examples of models are provided below. Whatever model is chosen should:

- Protect individuals from becoming personally liable for the actions of the Partnership.
- Provide appropriate legal and organisational structures for Partnerships.
- Define clear and good relationships between key organisations involved in the Communities First process.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of grant recipient bodies.

i. Example Organisational Models

5.4 Some example models are as follows:

5.5 **The “Non-incorporation” model.** This is the model most commonly followed at present, where the partnership is not legally incorporated. The membership and conduct of the Partnership should nevertheless be governed by an adopted constitution or Partnership Agreement. If the Partnership has no such governing document it should consult the Communities Directorate or the Communities First Support Network as soon as possible to obtain assistance in drawing up a constitution.

5.6 In these cases a pre-existing incorporated organisation, for example the county voluntary council, a local housing association or the local authority, acts as grant recipient and applies for and manages funds on behalf of the Partnership. Under this model, Partnerships should ensure that liabilities are covered by a non binding service level agreement or protocol between the Partnership and the grant recipient. This will set out the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

5.7 **The ‘collaborative’ model.** Under this model, responsibilities are split evenly between the grant recipient, which retains the role of fund manager, and the Partnership as an incorporated organisation. The Partnership would have to choose which of various legal structures under incorporation would best suit it. In most cases it is likely to be a company limited by guarantee, but the Communities First Support Network is available to support and advise Partnerships in choosing which is the best option for the situation of the Partnership.

5.8 Under the “collaborative “model, the incorporated Partnership could take on certain responsibilities such as the employment of staff, the holding of assets and the carrying out of the activities of the Partnership. A Collaboration Agreement (or Service Level Agreement) should be agreed between the Partnership and the grant recipient, setting out the rights and responsibilities of both the parties.

5.9 ***Incorporated model with grant recipient status*** - In this model, the Partnership is incorporated and fully formed legally, but also takes on all the responsibilities for managing the grant as well as employing staff, holding assets and carrying out the activities of the Partnership.

5.10 When a Partnership becomes incorporated, those in employment, for example with the local authority, may not be able to be directors or members of an incorporated body and would therefore be excluded from the incorporated organisation chosen for the Partnership. Also some people may simply prefer not to take on that responsibility.

5.11 To maintain the three thirds principle of Communities First, a formal arrangement will have to be made between those on the Partnership who also form the incorporated organisation and those on the Partnership who do not. This arrangement will depend on which model has been chosen and advice should be sought from the Communities First Support Network. This may lead to some variations on the Collaborative and the Incorporated with grant recipient status models, but there are clear examples of both in practice already and this should not cause Partnerships major difficulties.

5.12 There is no “best model” as far as the options for legal status are concerned. It is a matter for each Partnership to decide which is more suitable for them. None of the arrangements need be permanent; should a Partnership decide that the chosen model is not suitable, it is open for the Partnership to move from one model to another over time.

5.13 Whichever model chosen by a Partnership will not affect its access to funding.

5.14 Incorporated or not, the Partnership needs to make sure it is fully insured if it organises any event. This is made clear in all grant offer letters from the Assembly Government covering funding for events.

SECTION C – OTHER KEY PLAYERS

This section sets out the roles and responsibilities of Grant Recipient Bodies, Local Authorities, and the Welsh Assembly Government Communities First Unit.

Existing and prospective Grant Recipient Bodies and Local Authorities will find this section useful. It will also be of benefit to Partnerships wishing to optimise their relationship with all three bodies.

6. The Grant Recipient Body

Introduction

6.1 Communities First funding represents a substantial investment of public money in a Communities First Partnership. The Assembly Government, and in particular the Assembly Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, are held to account by the National Assembly for Wales and the taxpayer for that investment. The Assembly Government requires that the grants awarded in respect of Communities First Partnerships are managed so that it can be clearly shown that the grant has achieved the purpose for which it was intended and that all expenditure can be accounted for.

i. Qualifications for Grant Recipient Body status

6.2 The responsibilities of managing the Communities First grant require a range of budget, accounting and audit management systems and expertise which few Communities First Partnerships are likely to have, at least in their early years. The Assembly Government therefore requires that Communities First grants awarded in respect of a Partnership be paid to a designated “Grant Recipient Body”. The Grant Recipient Body must be a legally constituted body and must have in place established Human Resources, budget, accounting and audit systems with experienced staff to manage the processes.

6.3 A designated Grant Recipient Body might be the local authority, another statutory authority, development trust, or an established community or voluntary organisation. A Communities First Partnership which is a legally constituted body may apply to the Assembly Government’s Communities First Unit to take on the responsibility of Grant Recipient Body. The Partnership will need to demonstrate that it has sufficiently robust financial systems and experienced personnel in place to deal with both Human Resource and financial issues for it to be recognised as Grant Recipient Body by the Assembly Government.

ii. Grant Recipient Body as Manager of Communities First Funding

6.4 The Grant Recipient Body is answerable to the Assembly Government in respect of Communities First funding and is responsible for ensuring that the Communities First grant is spent correctly, on the purpose for which the grant was approved, and that the best possible value for money is obtained. The Grant Recipient Body must abide by the terms and conditions set out in the grant approval letter and will need to ensure that it submits quarterly claim and progress forms, in accordance with the instructions and timetable set by the Communities First Unit.

6.5 Grant Recipient Bodies should put in place accounting mechanisms which will clearly “ring-fence” Communities First grant and ensure that it is only used to fund activities /services which are outlined in the grant offer letter.

6.6 The Grant Recipient Body will need to satisfy the Welsh Assembly Government that propriety is being observed:

- In respect of all payments.
- In the handling of all public funds.
- In the approval of all expenditure.
- In the setting up and use of monitoring, project appraisal and finance systems.
- That an asset register is set up and kept for all capital items including computers.
- That a service level agreement is in place when the Grant Recipient Body hands money over to another organisation which is managing a specific approved project (project leads) or employing staff (Statutory Employers).
- That full and proper audit trails are being maintained for all funds.

6.7 Where it appears that Grant Recipient Bodies have not observed these requirements, Assembly officials may undertake a review of the processes and structures. If the review concludes that there are serious weaknesses the Assembly Government reserves the right to terminate the agreement to fund at any time upon written notice to the Grant Recipient Body as outlined in the Terms and Conditions.

iii. Grant Recipient Body and Decision-Making / Grant Payment Processes

6.8 Grant Recipient Bodies should ensure that all applications for funding are submitted on the appropriate application form as supplied by the Assembly Government’s Communities First Unit.

6.9 Decisions on Communities First funding will be made by the Assembly Government as quickly as possible. The aim will be to have a decision within 30 working days of receipt of a signed and fully completed application which includes *all* the required supporting information. Relevant supporting information includes receipt by the Communities First Unit of copies of relevant grant offer letters from other funding providers.

6.10 Once the Assembly Minister has taken the decision, an offer letter will be sent to the Grant Recipient Body within 10 working days of the decision. The offer letter needs to be accepted, signed and returned to the Communities First Unit within 10 working days. Full details of payment arrangements and terms and conditions of grant are provided to the Grant Recipient Body and to the Partnership Co-ordinator on approval of funding.

6.11 Payments will only be made when an offer has been formally accepted and claims submitted. The aim is for payments to be made to Grant Recipient Bodies within 15 working days of receipt of a fully completed claim. Communities First funding is paid in advance of expenditure.

6.12 Grant Recipient Bodies are responsible for collating and submitting the Annual Reports on behalf of their Communities First Partnerships. The terms and conditions attached to the grant approval letter establish that the Grant Recipient Body has a responsibility to ensure that the Communities First grant has been used for the purposes for which it was intended. The Grant Recipient Body will need to work with the Partnership to ensure that monitoring systems are built in from the outset to any project activity undertaken by the Partnership.

6.13 Failure to demonstrate that Communities First funding has achieved the intended objective, unless there is good reason, could result in the reduction, suspension or recovery of grant.

6.14 Where approved expenditure has been incurred by the Partnership or a third party organisation, the Communities First funds should be distributed by the Grant Recipient Body within 15 working days of receipt from the Assembly Government. Partnerships which encounter delays in the processing and passing on of funds through a nominated Grant Recipient Body are advised by the Assembly Government to contact their Regional Team in the Communities First Unit. The Regional Team will contact the Grant Recipient Body for an explanation.

6.15 Grant Recipient Bodies may neither use nor sanction the use of approved Communities First funding for purposes other than those specified in the grant approval letter.

iv. Virements

6.16 Communities First grant shall be used only for the purposes approved in the Assembly Government's grant offer letter. The offer of grant will contain a written description of the approval, which may contain additional conditions of grant unique to that offer, and a financial schedule of the approval. The schedule breaks down the award into headings that provide a general description of the activities that funding has been awarded to deliver.

6.17 The Grant Recipient Body (described as "grantee" in the offer letter) has the authority to vire funding, up to the limit of £5,000, in to or out of each activity heading, other than 'Salaries,' in any financial year, with no requirement for prior approval from the Assembly. Full details of the procedure for Virements are set out in Chapter 11. 29 – 11.34 below.

v. Responsibilities of Grant Recipient Bodies towards Partnerships

6.18 The designated Grant Recipient Body should make every effort to work openly and constructively with its Communities First Partnerships in the exercise of its responsibilities for those Partnerships and the provision of support in the delivery and implementation of Community Action Plans. A balance must be found between effectively supporting the Partnership without dictating its direction. The Guidance is written with this balance in mind.

6.19 The Grant Recipient Body should designate one of its senior officials to represent it on the Partnership. The name and post held by the Grant Recipient Body's representative should be recorded by the Communities First Partnership and

should also be relayed to the relevant Communities First Regional Team. The designated official (or a nominated substitute) should attend all Partnership meetings and should report to the Partnership at regular intervals on the activities which the Grant Recipient Body exercises on behalf of the Partnership – eg progress with applications, details of expenditure, budget forecasts etc.

6.20 The Grant Recipient Body's representative should advise the Partnership if in his or her opinion the Partnership is in any way not complying with the terms and conditions set out in any award of Communities First funding. The representative should also advise the Partnership if in his or her opinion the Partnership is not making sufficient progress in achieving the objectives of the Communities First Programme. The representative should notify the relevant Communities First Regional Team if he or she proposes to issue such advice.

6.21 There will be circumstances where the Grant Recipient Body is also a partner organisation within the Communities First Partnership as the provider of a key service – eg the local authority, local health board, housing association or county voluntary council. In these circumstances the organisation will need to handle its dual role very sensitively.

6.22 To other members of the Partnership, it may appear that the dual interests could give the organisation an undue influence over the work and organisation of the Partnership. It is important that Grant Recipient Bodies in this situation maintain a clear distinction between their roles. Different people should normally represent the organisation on the Partnership in the exercise of its Grant Recipient Body responsibilities and in relation to its service provider responsibilities, although the Partnership may allow a Grant Recipient Body with limited resources to send a single representative.

6.23 If two (or more) representatives are present from the organisation which exercises the responsibility of Grant Recipient Body, only one Partnership vote will be allocated to the organisation.

6.24 The Assembly Government considers that no designated representative of an organisation which is the Grant Recipient Body or Statutory Employer for a Communities First Partnership should hold any of the officer posts within that Partnership. A Partnership which wishes an exception to be made must make a case in writing to the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit, whose agreement must be obtained before the appointment may be confirmed.

vi. *Grant Recipient Bodies and Project Lead organisations*

6.25 There are several circumstances where Communities First funding is approved in respect of projects which are being undertaken for the Partnership by a legally constituted organisation which is not the Grant Recipient Body. The third party organisation (or "project lead" as they are often termed) may be a voluntary body that is incorporated or has charitable status or a statutory authority. The project lead will be delivering the approved project, but will receive its funding from the Assembly Government by way of the designated Grant Recipient Body for the Partnership. Equally the Grant Recipient Body may hold funds on behalf of unincorporated community groups to aid capacity building.

6.26 Even though the approved project is delivered by a third party organisation the project lead – the core financial relationship remains between the Assembly Government and the Grant Recipient Body. The Grant Recipient Body submits the application for Communities First funding for the project on behalf of the Partnership and the project lead. The Assembly Government's letter approving grant for the project is directed solely at the Grant Recipient Body, which is therefore responsible for meeting the terms and conditions set out in the letter in respect of the project lead's project.

6.27 It is the responsibility of the Grant Recipient Body:

- To agree and put in place a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the project lead covering all aspects of managing, monitoring and accounting for the project in question and the funding related to it.
- To ensure that the project lead complies with the terms and conditions of grant.
- To prepare (in consultation with the project lead) and submit to the Communities First Unit grant claims in respect of the approved project.
- To assist the project lead in the reconsideration and preparation of its accounts prior to submission for audit.
- To assist the project lead in the preparation of monitoring reports, which the Grant Recipient Body submits to the Communities First Unit.

6.28 If an approved project does not proceed or if it does not achieve the objectives which were intended, the Assembly Government may require the approved funds (or a portion of them) to be repaid. If there were no Service Level Agreement in place it would be the responsibility of the Grant Recipient Body to repay those funds – not the designated project lead. It is clearly in the Grant Recipient Body's interest to formalise its relationship with the project lead organisations on whose behalf it is drawing down funding.

6.29 The SLA may cover one or more specified projects or it may establish a relationship over a specified number of years and it should set out the following:

- The arrangements for the Grant Recipient Body to pass on approved funding to the project lead.
- The arrangements whereby the project lead makes payments in respect of approved expenditure and accounts for those payments.
- Details of the project lead's arrangements for the audit of approved expenditure.
- How the project lead will manage the project.
- How the project lead will monitor the project.
- How the project lead will report to the Grant Recipient Body to enable the latter to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities under the terms and conditions of funding.
- The mechanisms for dealing with disputes, including the use of arbitration.

6.30 Both the Grant Recipient Body and the project lead should put in place accounting mechanisms which will clearly "ring-fence" Communities First grant and ensure that it is only used to fund activities /services which are outlined in the grant offer letter.

6.31 In some exceptional circumstances the Grant Recipient Body will need to satisfy itself that a specific one-off project being carried out by a third party lead has robust financial systems and staff with the skills and experiences to perform the management, monitoring and financial roles. If the Grant Recipient Body is not satisfied that the project lead is able to take on these responsibilities, the Grant Recipient Body will need to retain the Communities First funding in its own Communities First restricted fund. The project lead will then need to send all invoices to the Grant Recipient Body, which the latter will have to approve and pay. The Communities First funds would have to be accounted for in the Grant Recipient Body's systems.

6.32 Retaining the Communities First funding would clearly entail much more input from the Grant Recipient Body. It is also not very desirable in terms of accountability, since the project lead would be making decisions about expenditure without any of the responsibility for the resultant payment or accounting for that payment. The Assembly Government will agree to this arrangement only if it can be shown that whilst the project lead may not have the capacity to administer all the financial responsibilities associated with the grant, steps are in place to ensure that it does acquire that capacity.

vii. Grant Recipient Bodies and Host organisations (Statutory Employers)

6.33 In some Communities First Partnerships, the statutory employer of the Communities First Co-ordinator and other support staff is a legally constituted body which is neither the Partnership nor the Grant Recipient Body. The third party organisation (or "host organisation" as they are often termed) may be a voluntary body that is incorporated or has charitable status or a statutory authority. The host organisation will be responsible for the staff, but will receive its funding from the Assembly Government by way of the designated Grant Recipient Body for the Partnership.

6.34 As is the case with project lead organisations, the Grant Recipient Body is ultimately responsible to the Assembly Government for ensuring that the Communities First funding approved in respect of staff employed by host organisations achieves the purpose for which it was intended.

6.35 Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the Grant Recipient Body:

- To ensure that the host organisation line manages effectively the Communities First Co-ordinator and other support staff, so that they perform their duties in respect of the Partnership.
- To ensure that the host organisation complies with the terms and conditions of grant.
- To prepare (in consultation with the host organisation) and submit to the Communities First Unit grant claims in respect of the approved expenditure.
- To assist the host organisation in the reconsideration and preparation of its accounts prior to submission for audit (although it is the responsibility of the host organisation to appoint its own accountant for this task).
- To assist the host organisation in the preparation of monitoring reports, which the Grant Recipient Body submits to the Communities First Unit.

6.36 If the Communities First Co-ordinator or the support staff do not achieve the objectives for which their posts received funding, the Assembly Government may require the approved funds (or a portion of them) to be repaid. It will be the responsibility of the Grant Recipient Body to repay those funds – not the designated host organisation. It is in the Grant Recipient Body’s interest to formalise its relationship with the host organisations on whose behalf it is drawing down funding.

6.37 No organisation should be designated to “host” the Communities First Co-ordinator and other staff if it does not have financial and personnel systems and expertise which are sufficiently robust to take on the responsibilities. It is recommended therefore that in all cases the Grant Recipient Body and the host organisation enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which sets out in clear terms each party’s responsibilities and obligations to each other.

6.38 The SLA should set out the following:

- The arrangements for the Grant Recipient Body to pass on approved funding to the host organisation.
- The arrangements whereby the host organisation makes payments in respect of approved expenditure and accounts for those payments.
- Details of the host organisation’s arrangements for the audit of approved expenditure.
- How the host organisation will manage the Co-ordinator and other staff.
- How the host organisation will monitor the work of the Co-ordinator and other staff.
- How the host organisation will report to the Grant Recipient Body to enable the latter to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities under the terms and conditions of funding.
- The mechanisms for dealing with disputes, including the use of arbitration.

6.39 Both the Grant Recipient Body and the host organisation should put in place accounting mechanisms which will clearly “ring-fence” Communities First grant and ensure that it is only used to fund activities /services which are outlined in the grant offer letter.

viii. Withholding Payment from Grant Recipient Bodies in breach of Communities First principles

6.40 The role of Grant Recipient Body is a key one in determining the success of the Communities First Programme. The Grant Recipient Body will need to maintain close relationships with the Assembly Government to which it is accountable for the funding it handles, with the Communities First Partnerships for which it acts and with the various project lead and host organisations with which it deals.

6.41 The roles need to be handled sensitively and in ways which are open and transparent. The Assembly Government considers that Grant Recipient Bodies should act in ways which support the principles of the Communities First Programme and which help build capacity, confidence and self-esteem among the communities the Programme is intended to assist.

6.42 The Assembly Government will not accept applications for Communities First funding from Grant Recipient Bodies which, in the view of the Assembly Government, have been exercising their responsibilities in ways which are not in keeping with the principles of the Communities First Programme. The Assembly Government will also consider, as a last resort, withholding approved funding if, in the view of the Assembly Government, a Grant Recipient Body has consistently failing to exercise its responsibilities in keeping with the Programme's principles.

7. The Responsibilities and Roles of the Local Authority

Introduction

7.1 The local authority has several important responsibilities and roles to play in supporting and working with the Communities First Partnerships within their area. The local authority is host to a wealth of experience and expertise which can be deployed beneficially to help a Partnership through its stages of development. In addition, the local authority can seek to minimise the barriers preventing residents fulfilling potential and effecting change, and support community led initiatives. Crucially, the local authority is responsible for many of the key services with which the Partnership will want to engage to deliver its work programmes and Community Action Plan.

7.2 The Local Government Act 2000 provided authorities with the power to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area. This power provides an important new tool for local authorities to improve quality of life and contribute to sustainable development within their areas. The responsibilities conferred on local authorities under these powers reflect what are likely to be several of the main priorities for Communities First Partnerships.

7.3 There is much to be gained on all sides by local authorities and Communities First Partnerships working together towards the shared goals of improving quality of life and promoting sustainable development. Additionally, working with the Communities First Partnerships enables local authorities to explain decisions that may be unpopular in the short term but lead to better outcomes for the community in the longer term.

i. The Local Authority's Key Players

7.4 Elected members and officials from the local authority will have differing levels and degrees of involvement with Communities First and with Partnerships, but key players will be:

- The elected member(s) for the Communities First Partnership area.
- The Cabinet member with responsibility for the service leading for the local authority on Communities First, for example Regeneration.
- The Cabinet members with responsibility for the services which the Partnership has identified as being important to its work programme or Community Action Plan.

- An elected member delegated by the local authority to be its official representative on a Communities First Partnership.
- Officials who provide day-to-day operational support to Partnerships, particularly if the local authority is the designated Grant Recipient Body for some or all of the Communities First Partnerships in its area.
- Officials in the departments responsible for the services which the Partnership has identified as being important to its work programme or community action plan.

ii. Local Authority Membership of the Partnership

7.5 The Assembly Government welcomes the involvement of local elected members in Communities First Partnerships. The member representing a Communities First area on the local county or county borough council should be a member of the Communities First Partnership. The Partnerships may choose, however, to set a limit of one councillor per constituent electoral division on the Partnership; rotation arrangements may apply if a constituent electoral division has more than one elected member [see para 3.32 above].

7.6 The elected members should normally sit as representatives of the community sector element on the Communities First Partnership, unless the elected member is a member of the Cabinet of the local authority or, if a backbench member, has been formally delegated to represent the local authority on the Partnership. In these two instances the elected member must sit as a representative of the statutory sector.

7.7 An elected member may not sit on a Communities First Partnership as a representative of more than one constituent sector. The elected member must declare in the Partnership Agreement which of the sectors he or she represents.

7.8 An official of the local authority may represent the authority on the Partnership, in which case the official must sit as a representative of the statutory sector. An official may not represent the authority if an elected member has been delegated to be the representative of the local authority on the Partnership – but an official may substitute if the elected member acting in this capacity is unable to attend the meeting.

7.9 Any number of officials from the local authority should be able to attend the Partnership to support the authority's representative (elected member or official). The local authority representatives should use their experience to ensure community representatives do not feel intimidated in this circumstance.

7.10 The local authority representative on a Communities First Partnership should be able to speak for the authority, give good and clear guidance on the authority's intentions and be able to secure a swift and informed response on behalf of the authority.

7.11 The local authority representative should have an empathy with the relevant community, and influence and respect within the authority.

iii. Principles of the Local Authority's Involvement in the Communities First Partnership

7.12 Local authorities have an important role to play in community leadership. Elected members and officials of the local authority should work with each Communities First Partnership to establish enduring linkages between the Partnership's work programme or action plans and the local authority's own strategies, particularly its community strategy.

7.13 Local authorities have a key role in delivering and improving services within Communities First areas and should work with Communities First Partnerships to bring those services in line with needs identified by the Partnerships.

7.14 Local authority representatives should support other Partnership members, particularly people from the communities themselves, to help them make an effective contribution.

7.15 Local Authorities should play a part in enabling effective consultation with local people, and with community, voluntary and other statutory agencies.

7.16 Local authorities may act as the Grant Recipient Body for a Communities First Partnership.

7.17 Local authorities are well placed to take on the role of statutory employer for Communities First staff (they need not be the Grant Recipient Body to do this).

iv. Role of Local Authority Elected Members

7.18 Experience has shown that Communities First Partnerships generally work best when the local elected members play a constructive part in them.

7.19 Elected members on Communities First Partnerships have several key roles to play whether or not they are also formally representing the local authority.

7.20 Elected members will have an experience of organisational processes, public speaking and policy making. At the early stages of a Partnership's development there may be only a limited number of other members with experience in these areas. The elected members should use their knowledge and experience to:

- i. help establish effective working procedures for the Partnership;
- ii. use their offices, surgeries and contacts to help publicise the Partnership and its work; and
- iii. help establish links with relevant departments within the local authority.

7.21 Elected members should also seek to deploy their knowledge and influence on behalf of the Partnership in other ways:

- To take an active part in devising and delivering the Partnership's work programme and subsequently its community action plan.
- To use their contacts to ensure that the relevant local authority departments, other partner organisations and key service providers are consulted and engaged at the earliest opportunity in planning the Partnership's work programmes.

- To involve other Partnership colleagues in the process of engaging constructively with the key decision makers in the service provider organisations.
- *As the elected member for the Communities First area* - to consult and listen to local people and to represent these views to the Partnership.
- *As a member of area and neighbourhood fora and committees within Communities First area* - to facilitate those organisations having a role in contributing to the work of the Communities First Partnership.
- *As a member of the Council* - to try to ensure that the policy making process within the Council takes into account the aspirations of the Partnership as expressed in its work programmes and community action plan.
- *As a representative of their Council on outside bodies, such as other programme and strategic partnerships* - to work with those bodies to help them understand the objectives of Communities First so they can reshape and target their policies and programmes to respond to the priorities of Communities First at the local level.

v. *Role of a Cabinet Member*

7.22 Where the local elected member is also a member of the Cabinet and sits on the Partnership as the delegated representative of the local authority he or she has added responsibilities:

- To inform the Partnership of the local authority's policy priorities in areas of relevance to the work programmes and action plan of the Partnership.
- To establish within the local authority what their views are on aspects of the Partnership's work programmes and action plan which are relevant to the local authority's responsibilities and to relay those views formally to the Partnership.
- To facilitate the engagement of the Partnership in the strategic policy making process of relevant departments within the local authority and in any relevant external bodies and other strategic partnerships with which the local authority is linked.
- To help ensure that the community strategy process within the local authority takes account of the activities and action plans of Communities First Partnerships in that area.

vi. *Elected Members and the holding of office within Partnerships*

7.23 Because of their experience in public life, elected members may make suitable candidates for holding post as officers of the Partnership in the early stages of its development. But Communities First is about empowering and enabling communities which are disadvantaged and where the residents may consider themselves to be powerless and unheard. Elected members should use their experience to build the capacity and confidence of their partnership colleagues. An element of that building process will be to encourage and facilitate non-elected members (ie non-councillors) to take over officer roles within the Partnership.

7.24 Accordingly, the Assembly Government expects that no later than six years from the date of the first approval of Communities First funding for a Partnership, all officer posts on that Partnership should be held by members who are not also elected members of a local authority, the National Assembly for Wales or any other elected body. The Assembly Government considers this progression to be an important step in the capacity building process within a Partnership and the Communities First Unit will be monitoring progress towards this objective. Partnerships should ensure sufficient support and development is available to allow individuals who are not elected members to take up officer posts.

7.25 If after six years, a Partnership still wishes to appoint elected members to officer posts within the Partnership, the Assembly Government will request a formal explanation. The explanation should set out why the Partnership believes individuals who are not elected members are not yet ready to hold officer posts within the Partnership. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, the Partnership could be deemed to be not achieving its capacity building objectives and be required to devise and implement a plan of action.

7.26 The Assembly Government reserves the right to withhold funding from Partnerships which do not demonstrate sufficient progress towards this important capacity building objective.

7.27 All elected members should bear in mind that the objective of Communities First is to empower and enable the people who live and work within the designated areas. Elected members should see it as their responsibility to help nurture, develop and involve the community members within the Partnership so that those members can take on the leading roles. Elected members should be careful not to use their experience or influence to dominate Partnerships, impose their own agendas or those of their local authority.

7.28 The Assembly Government will consider withholding funding in circumstances where the principle of the community leading the work of the partnership is not being adhered to.

vii. *The Role of Local Authority Officials and appointing a Lead Department*

7.29 Many officials within the local authority are likely to have responsibilities which bring them into regular contact with the Communities First Partnerships in the authority's area. Given that Communities First is likely to impact upon a range of policy areas within the local authority it is advisable that a single lead department is given responsibility for co-ordinating the authority's Communities First responses. If the local authority is also the Grant Recipient Body and/or statutory employer on behalf of one or more Partnerships the same lead department may exercise those responsibilities too.

7.30 If the local authority's delegated representative on a Communities First Partnership is an official, that person should be a senior official of the lead department within the authority. The official should be able to speak for the local authority, to be able to give good and clear guidance on the local authority's intentions and be able to secure a swift response on behalf of the local authority.

7.31 The local authority's representative on a Partnership will need to liaise closely with senior officials in other service departments within the authority to ensure there is a co-ordinated corporate response to the issues concerning a Partnership.

7.32 If there are a large number of Partnerships in a local authority, it is suggested that the local authority's lead representative should convene a permanent group of officials from relevant departments within the authority to consider on a regular basis the issues emerging from the Communities First Programme and Partnerships in their area.

7.33 The lead representative for the local authority may not always be the best person to respond in detail where the issue of concern is the responsibility of another department within the authority. In these cases, the lead representative may invite a colleague from the relevant department to respond or take the lead on behalf of authority.

viii. Local authority as provider of practical support for Partnerships

7.34 The local authority should offer as much support as it can to Communities First Partnerships and Co-ordinators within its area. This support may, of course, be offered in partnership with other organisations. That support can cover a range of different types of advice and practical support, such as the provision of:

- Training for Partnership members in organising and managing public meetings.
- Advice on drawing up Partnership constitutions (Partnership Agreements), Communications Plans and Rules of Conduct for Partnership Members.
- Access to local authority newsletters to publicise the Programme, Partnerships and activities.
- Advice and training in financial management.
- Advice and support for monitoring and evaluation.
- Opportunities for Partnership members to "shadow" local authority Cabinet members and senior officials, so Partnership members have a better idea of the work of one of their key partners and the different subject areas they cover.

ix. Lead department meetings with Co-ordinators

7.35 As a matter of course, the lead department for Communities First within the local authority should meet all Partnership and Overarching co-ordinators from within their area on a regular basis (at least quarterly). The meetings should be an opportunity to discuss strategic issues on a cross-county basis and, where the local authority is also the Grant Recipient Body and / or statutory employer, general staffing and management issues. The local authority representation at the meetings with co-ordinators should be drawn from all departments with an interest in whatever is being discussed or whatever is current within the Communities First areas.

7.36 The lead department should also consider organising or facilitating meetings between co-ordinators and representatives of other external organisations providing services at a strategic level with which local Partnerships may need to engage in preparing and implementing their work programmes and Community Action Plans.

x. Links to Community Strategies

7.37 Local authorities are required to work with their partner organisations and local communities to prepare Community Strategies for promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Community Strategies are overarching strategies that will determine how county areas as a whole, or specific parts of them, develop over a 10 - 15 year period.

7.38 The *Preparing Community Strategies Guidance*, issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2001, set out the three main components that a strategy should contain: a long term vision; an Action Plan, which outlines how the long term vision will be achieved; and arrangements for monitoring and review. The Assembly Government is planning to issue revised Community Planning Guidance for consultation in July 2007. This revised Guidance will take into account the recommendations of the Beecham report – *Making the Connections*, growing regional structures and other developments in the strategic policy framework in Wales.

7.39 The principal Beecham recommendations that will impact on community planning centre on the evolution of Community Strategy Partnerships into Local Service Boards and their development of Local Service Agreements. The Local Service Agreement will consist of a limited number of prioritised shared outcomes that partners will focus on achieving. Following consultation on the development of Local Service Boards and Local Service Agreements (undertaken between February and April 2007) a number of development projects will be rolled out from mid 2007.

7.40 The Welsh Assembly Government's response to the Beecham report *Making the Connections: Delivering Beyond Boundaries* also stressed the importance of 'putting citizens first and involving them in the design of public services is central to achieving radical change.' Communities First Partnerships will have an important role to play in achieving this commitment. The Partnerships are a ready vehicle to facilitate increased citizen engagement and have the mechanisms to allow local community priorities to feed into the local community planning structures.

7.41 The revised community planning Guidance will set out how the existing Community Strategy Partnerships will evolve into Local Service Boards (LSB) and how these Boards will subsequently develop, negotiate and agree the Local Service Agreements (LSA) with the Assembly Government. It is envisaged that this Local Service Agreement will form the core of an Action Plan that will sit behind the Community Strategy.

7.42 As Community Strategies set out the councils', and their partners', key priorities it will remain important that they fully consider the needs of Communities First areas and the Assembly Government's policy on the public service needs of deprived communities. That reflects local authorities' legal duty to consult and seek the participation of all appropriate local interests in preparing a community strategy, and it is important that such consultation and participation includes Communities First Partnerships.

7.43 In order to encourage seamless working between the county-wide and local levels it is important that Community Strategy Partnerships/Local Service Boards and Communities First Partnerships communicate and liaise frequently. How this is done will be a matter for local agreement. A possible approach would be for those local authority areas with many Communities First Partnerships to establish a formal liaison arrangement, such as a board, to enable the Communities First Partnerships to establish their collective views and to input to the Community Strategy process.

7.44 In those local authority areas where there are few Communities First Partnerships, the Community Strategy Partnership/Local Service Board should establish and maintain mechanisms that enable the views of Communities First Partnerships, and the wider community, to be heard. It is important that Communities First Partnerships and other community networks play a part in not only establishing Community Strategy priorities but also in delivering the agreed priorities.

7.45 All parties stand to gain from working with each other in the community strategy process:

- By involving the Communities First Partnerships, the local authority will have taken an important step in ensuring that the strategy reflects the views and aspirations of communities within its area, and so truly have a community component.
- Involvement in the community strategy process should give the Communities First Partnerships a better understanding of their council's key priorities, which the Partnerships may want to influence and/or contribute to in their own work programmes and Community Action Plans.

xi. The local authority as Grant Recipient Body

7.46 If the local authority is the designated Grant Recipient Body for any or all of the Communities First Partnerships in its area, it has an additional key function and responsibility over and above those which it has as one of the main providers of services.

7.47 The responsibilities of Grant Recipient Bodies generally are discussed in Chapter 6, but local authorities are among the organisations best placed to take on the role of Grant Recipient Body, since they should have the expertise, experience and systems in place to administer, monitor, account for and audit the large amounts of public money which are awarded in respect of individual Partnerships.

7.48 Local authorities are large and influential organisations, and like all such organisations can sometimes seem rather remote and unresponsive to community residents many of whom may never have previously been involved in public life.

7.49 The Communities First funding (and any from other sources) is awarded to the Grant Recipient Body, but is held on behalf of the Communities First Partnership. The Grant Recipient Body is answerable to the Assembly Government in respect of Communities First funding and should put in place systems which ensure that the funding is put to the purpose for which it was intended and can be fully accounted for.

7.50 The local authority should explain as clearly as possible the purpose of the systems set up and the responsibilities vested in it as Grant Recipient Body to the Partnership. Regular financial reports should be presented at Partnership meetings on progress with applications, details of expenditure, budget forecasts etc.

7.51 In circumstances where the local authority is also the Grant Recipient Body, the authority needs to handle that role very sensitively and not confuse it with its other role as the provider of key services. Accordingly, different Partnership members should represent the local authority (be they councillors or officials) as Grant Recipient Body and as a key contributor to the strategic work of the Communities First Partnership. Only one Partnership vote will be allocated to the local authority in this case.

7.52 It is important that Partnership members have confidence in the local authority both as Grant Recipient Body and as a strategic partner. The Assembly Government's Communities Directorate will undertake a review where it appears that there is a lack of confidence in the relationship.

xii. The Local Authority as designated statutory employer (host organisation) of Communities First staff

7.53 A Communities First Partnership which is not legally constituted in its own right will not be accepted as the statutory employer of the Communities First Partnership Co-ordinator or any other support staff. The local authority is well placed to take on this role, since it should have in place the experience, expertise and systems in Human Resources to enable it to exercise the range of responsibilities.

7.54 The responsibilities of a statutory employer in respect of Communities First staff are discussed in Chapter 12. Local authorities which take on the role should exercise their responsibilities with the level of sensitivity which they are asked to apply when they are the Grant Recipient Body (see above).

7.55 It is a matter for the local authority to determine where in its organisational structure line management responsibility for Communities First staff should rest, but line managers should be clear about:

- The purpose of the Communities First programme.
- The Partnership's work programmes and / or Community Action Plan.
- The roles of the Co-ordinator and other Communities First staff.
- The duty of the Co-ordinator and other Communities First staff to the Communities First Partnership.

7.56 The line manager is responsible for agreeing the work schedules of the Co-ordinator and other Communities First staff. The line manager must ensure that the Co-ordinator and other Communities First staff are engaged on taking forward the work of the Partnership and that there is no possibility of their being perceived to be agents of the local authority.

7.57 The Assembly Government's Communities Directorate will undertake a review where it appears that there is confusion about the roles of Communities First co-ordinators and other Partnership support staff.

xiii. Training for Local Authority elected members and officials

7.58 Local authorities working with Communities First Partnerships should consider very carefully the different roles their group of elected members and officials will play with the different Communities Partnerships in the area and consideration should be given to supporting elected members and officials through the provision of training and information.

8. Welsh Assembly Government: The role of the Communities First Unit

Introduction

8.1 Political responsibility for the Communities First Programme within the Welsh Assembly Government is vested in the Assembly Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, who is a member of the Cabinet.

8.2 The Assembly Government funds the Programme and provides leadership, coherence and strategic direction to the Programme. The seat in Cabinet reinforces the Assembly Government's commitment to Communities First and guarantees that Communities First receives due attention and priority in policy-making, budget-setting and decision-taking.

8.3 The Assembly Minister is answerable for all aspects of the Communities First Programme and appears regularly in the Assembly and its committees to report on the Programme's progress.

8.4 The Assembly Minister's responsibilities in respect of Communities First are administered by the Communities First Unit, which is part of the Communities Directorate. The Unit is responsible for providing a strategic all-Wales framework for the Programme, developing policy, managing the Programme budget, driving forward implementation, consulting partners, monitoring progress and evaluating the Programme. The Communities First Unit reports to the Assembly Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.

8.5 The Communities First Unit is made up of two branches: a National Policy branch which is responsible for developing and disseminating the long-term strategic direction of the Programme; and a Regional branch of 5 teams which is responsible for the implementation of the Programme locally and for supporting Communities First Partnerships and Co-ordinators in the day-to-day operation of the Programme.

i. The National Policy branch

8.6 The National Policy branch is responsible for:

- Developing and communicating a coherent strategic framework for the Programme.
- Ensuring that structures, procedures and practices across the Programme are consistent with the Programme objectives, but allowing degrees of flexibility to take account of local circumstances.

- Developing, reviewing, updating and issuing guidance, both generic and specific.
- Collating and sharing examples of good practice.
- Working with other Assembly Government policy divisions, agencies, public authorities, UK Government departments and the voluntary and business sectors to develop their awareness of, and contributions to, the Communities First Programme.
- Liaising with Communities First support organisations to ensure they are deployed effectively in support of Partnerships and Programme objectives.
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of Communities First at the national level.
- Developing and maintaining a coherent communications strategy for the Programme at a national level.
- Reporting on progress to the Assembly Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.

ii. The Regional branch

8.7 The Regional branch is responsible for the implementation of the Programme by:

- Providing advice and support to Communities First Partnerships and Co-ordinators on operational, funding, policy and planning issues for the Partnerships.
- Assessing funding applications for Partnership support costs and capacity building.
- Processing funding claims and monitoring expenditure of Partnerships.
- Receiving and assessing annual and progress reports from Partnerships.
- Making on-site visits to monitor progress.
- Advising Partnerships to help identify appropriate sources of funding and support other than from Communities First.
- Advising Partnerships on the preparation and content of Community Action Plans.
- Liaising with local representatives of the Communities First support organisations to ensure they are deployed effectively in support of Partnerships.
- Working with Partnerships and Communities First support organisations to resolve problems, disagreements or disputes within Partnerships and between Partnerships and other bodies.

8.8 The Regional branch is organised into 5 teams each with responsibility for different parts of Wales. The relevant Regional team should be the first point of contact for Partnerships and Co-ordinators for most queries, advice or information.

8.9 The 5 regional teams are:

Mid and South West Wales team – based in Carmarthen and responsible for all Communities First areas in Ceredigion; Carmarthenshire; Pembrokeshire; Swansea; Neath and Port Talbot; and South Powys;

North Wales team – based in Caernarfon and responsible for all Communities First areas in Anglesey; Conwy; Gwynedd; Wrexham; Denbighshire; Flintshire; and North Powys;

South Wales and the Valleys team A – based in Merthyr Tydfil and responsible for all Communities First areas in Caerphilly, Newport and Cardiff;

South Wales and the Valleys team B – based in Merthyr Tydfil and responsible for all Communities First areas in Rhondda Cynon Taff, Bridgend and Torfaen;

South Wales and the Valleys team C – based in Merthyr Tydfil and responsible for all Communities First areas in Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, The Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.

8.10 The Policy and Regional branches work together to ensure consistency in practice and policy across the Programme. Communities First policy-making is informed by experience on the ground – and that experience is channelled into the policy-making process via the Regional teams. New advice on procedures and policy from the Assembly Government will generally be communicated to Partnerships through the Regional teams.

iii. *Communities First Unit and the organisation of Co-ordinators' regional meetings*

8.11 The Communities First Unit funds the regular regionally-based meetings for Communities First Co-ordinators which take place two or three times a year. The agenda and arrangements for each meeting should be drawn up by the host Co-ordinator and the Communities First Support Network contact for the region. The relevant Communities First Regional Team is also available to offer support and advice. The meeting agenda must always be agreed with the relevant Regional Team before it is sent out.

8.12 The relevant Regional team(s) will attend the meeting together with representatives of the National Policy Branch. The purposes of the meetings are to:

- Identify and share good practice.
- Encourage consistency.
- Enable co-ordinators to identify concerns and problems.
- Encourage debate and discussion between co-ordinators and with partners.
- Communicate key messages and policy initiatives from the Welsh Assembly Government.
- develop shared strategic priorities.

8.13 Attendance at the meetings is a priority for **all** Partnership Co-Ordinators and Over-arching Co-Ordinators. The relevant Communities First Regional team should be informed in advance of any Co-Ordinators who are unable to attend the conference. Explanations will be sought in the event of any unexplained non-attendance.

8.14 Members of the Regional teams will visit all Communities First areas within their responsibility at least once a year. Members of the teams are also available to attend meetings of Partnerships as appropriate or if requested. Members of the National Policy branch may also visit Communities First areas from time to time – usually accompanied by members of the relevant Regional team.

8.15 The Communities First Unit also proposes to develop informal regional grouped meetings with local authorities and other key partners. The purpose of these meetings would be to discuss the strategic direction of the Programme and any common themes for or arising from the engagement of the organisations concerned.

iv. Communities First Unit Contacts

8.16 Contact details:

Head of Communities First Unit – Paul Dear
Head of National Policy branch – Gareth Thomas
Deputy Head of National Policy branch – Chris Gittins
Managers of Regional teams – Mary Davies; Alyn Owen, Peter Stalder
Head of Mid and South West Wales team – Sian Thomas (based in Carmarthen)
Head of North Wales team – Carys Thomas (based in Caernarfon)
Head of South Wales and Valleys team A – Glyn Howell
Head of South Wales and Valleys team B – Dawn Mould
Head of South Wales and Valleys team C – Sonia Hancock

Except where indicated otherwise the above staff are based in the Assembly Government's Merthyr Tydfil office.

SECTION D – COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS, PROGRAMME BENDING, FUNDING AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES FIRST CO-ORDINATORS

This section provides detail on three key areas of work for Communities First Partnerships and on the role of Communities First Co-ordinators. It provides Guidance based on good practice and financial probity requirements.

This section will be of particular relevance for established Partnerships, but is equally relevant for new Partnerships when discussing what they wish to achieve.

Organisations employing co-ordinators should consider the section covering Communities First Co-ordinators.

9. Developing Community Action Plans

Introduction

9.1 Communities First Partnerships should over time aim to develop a strategic Community Action Plan, which sets out the aspirations of the wider community, identifies the issues of concern and prioritises actions the community wishes to take forward to address those concerns.

9.2 In October 2005, the Assembly Government issued guidelines to Communities First Partnerships on developing Community Action Plans. The guidelines were developed by the Communities First Support Network in consultation with the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit and with local Partnerships. The following section summarises the main points of the guidelines, which are available in full on the Welsh Assembly Government's web-site:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/publications/c1stguidanceactionplans?lang=en> or from the Communities First Unit.

9.3 There is no blueprint for Community Action Plans. Each Partnership's plan will be different, as they will need to reflect the local situation. But there are some principles of good practice, which apply everywhere and will provide firm foundations for the development of the Community Action Plan. The advice which follows is intended as a practical tool to assist Partnerships with all stages in devising a useful plan.

i. Why develop a Community Action Plan?

9.4 At its simplest the Community Action Plan identifies a goal and a list of actions which will enable the community to reach that goal. The Plan should have two main audiences, the local community itself and the agencies and organisations whose help and support will be needed to deliver the actions set out in the Plan. The Plan should be written with these audiences in mind.

9.5 The purpose of a Community Action Plan is to share the vision of a community with a range of stakeholders. In particular the plan will need to show the aspirations and solutions identified by the local community on the basis of evidence

and their local knowledge. It should be a strategic broad-based document, which is developed and owned by a variety of people with a stake in the community. It should set out realistic actions and targets against which local people can review progress and decide whether things have improved. The Community Action Plan is not a one-off, and should be reviewed and developed over time.

9.6 A Community Action Plan should also be a key tool for a Communities First Partnership to make its case to the wide range of agencies and organisations that deliver services in its community. Most agencies that deliver services will plan their services and decide how money will be spent well in advance (sometimes a year or two ahead). If a Communities First Partnership wants to make suggestions for improved services or influence budgets, then having an Action Plan with a clear rationale and a clear set of priorities will be vital for making its case, as it will help the service delivery agencies to plan ahead.

9.7 The plan also has a useful role to play as a reference tool for potential funding organisations. If the plan properly reflects local aspirations and needs and is regularly reviewed it can be used as a basis to work with the funding organisations to develop more specific funding proposals.

9.8 The development of a plan is an achievement in itself for the Communities First Partnership and the wider community and signifies a milestone in successful joint working and capacity building.

ii. Community Action Plan - Important Issues

- The Community Action Plan should be owned locally, with contributions from the wider community and other key local agencies that deliver services in the community.
- Priorities within the plan should focus on directly addressing the root causes of poverty and disadvantage, including preventative work, and ensuring participation among those who are most marginalised.
- A Community Action Plan should give an overview with strategic priorities for action. At the outset the range of activities included in the plan may be focussed on only one or two areas but over time this will probably broaden. The activities may include only basic detail or initial outlines at this stage, but will require further development for making approaches to potential funders.
- Whilst the vision might be long term, priorities should be realistic and time bound.
- The Community Action Plan will change and develop over time, it does not have to address all issues at once. It need not, necessarily, be just one document or piece of work.
- The Community Action Plan should attempt to provide evidence of identified needs and opportunities.
- Community Action Plans should be accessible, easily understandable and clear to all; it may be necessary to go beyond the written word and be innovative if everyone in the community is to have the opportunity to be involved.

- The Community Action Plan need not be long and complicated to make it meaningful. Account should be taken of format, presentation, length and style if it is going to appeal to those who do not regularly read weighty documents. It can however signpost to further information.
- Accessibility formats and issues should be considered when drafting the Community Action Plan.
- The Community Action Plan should fully consider the sustainability of proposed actions.

iii. What the Community Action Plan is not...

9.9 A Community Action Plan is not a document which bids for funding. A formal bidding document would need very specific costings and detailed delivery plans. It might be useful to include a rough cost of some of the priorities as an indicator, but there is no need to detail the costs of each element. In any event, it is unlikely that Partnerships would have much idea of the detailed costs at the time of preparing the Community Action Plan. It is important to include information about who will lead on priorities in the Community Action Plan, but again detailed information about the delivery will not be needed at this stage.

iv. How to start developing a Community Action Plan

9.10 If a Community Action Plan is developed by an individual as a paper exercise and is simply “rubber stamped” by a Partnership, its impact and relevance to the wider community will be limited. Each Communities First area is working towards change every day. It is important to consider how the informal and formal consultations, the planning done by community organisations and partners, Partnership meetings and community events can be used as an ongoing process to inform and validate the development of a Community Action Plan. The process of developing a realistic plan should be dynamic and ongoing.

Involving community members

9.11 Participation by adults, children and young people is a critical issue at all stages of developing a Community Action Plan but the more ambitious and complex the plan, the more critical wider participation becomes. To have an impact on residents with the greatest needs, their involvement in understanding issues and developing solutions is vital. If the person devising the plan has no direct experience of a concern, then input is needed from those who do to ensure the problem can be effectively addressed.

9.12 To reach residents who cannot easily become involved, it is vital to offer opportunities for involvement at all stages, through existing community organisations, newsletters and other marketing/publicity tools, youth forums, community forums, consultations, and informal contact with community members. It may be worth considering using means such as videos, music, community notice boards, billboards, and displays in shop fronts to get information across and seek feedback and not simply rely on printed documents. Some Communities First Partnerships have found it useful to use agencies that deliver services in their community to reach residents who may be difficult to reach by traditional means. For

example using housing officers, health visitors, teachers, and police officers etc. to provide information and collect feedback from residents. In reality these processes will be going on anyway and it is a question of focussing them to support the greatest level of meaningful participation possible.

Involving agencies that deliver services in the community

9.13 If one of the primary purposes of the plan is as a statement of intent, as a summary of the priorities determined by local people it will undoubtedly involve influencing agencies that deliver services in the community, like the Council, Police, Health Board etc. Agencies that deliver services in the community should be part of the consultation, planning and prioritisation process. It is then more likely that they will contribute to, and not control the Action Plan and the Action Plan will be more successful in influencing their services. If agencies control the contents of the Action Plan then it is likely that it will reflect their organisational priorities rather than those of local people.

9.14 The Action Plan development process should consider addressing issues of relationships with agencies that deliver services in the community and measures to influence services more effectively. It is probable that as Communities First activities develop, negotiating with agencies that deliver services in the community will become increasingly important. This will need to be supported by committed and mature relationships between communities and services to allow the most marginalised residents' access to shaping services so that they are more effective at meeting their needs.

9.15 It may be necessary to talk to agencies not represented at the Partnership. For example, although the local authority may be represented by an officer or a councillor, if there are specific priorities about rubbish collections then the Partnership may need to work with the relevant department of the local council.

9.16 Partnerships should consider the advantages of co-operating with credit unions in their area (these operate throughout Wales) that can offer financial guidance and assistance and in many instances access to affordable credit. Income maximisation is critical and organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureaux offer advice on benefits, tax credits and pensions credits take-up and specialist debt counselling. These, and other bodies, such as banks and members of the Community Legal Service, will probably not sit on the Partnership but may need to be involved in developing plans.

9.17 The Assembly Government published a Review of Over-Indebtedness in 2005 and this is a useful reference document for partnerships, copies of which are available from the Community Enterprise and Financial Inclusion Unit of the Assembly Government or at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/publications/overindebtedness>.

v. Co-operation with other Communities First areas

9.18 Where there are a number of Communities First communities close together, or where there are a number of Communities First areas in one local authority, Partnerships should always consider co-operating over certain pieces of work, (although not in developing their Action Plan itself). There will be benefits for everyone in a wider approach in terms of shared learning, economies of scale, pooling resources and increased levels of influencing power.

9.19 Where there are common issues, the Assembly Government will encourage areas to work together to take an overview. This may avoid a lot of areas developing the same projects without reference to one another. Also if a Partnership approaches a service provider with a project which has been developed across several areas it may help the cause.

9.20 The co-operative approach should be reflected in the development of Local Authority wide Community Strategies. The importance of ensuring that Communities First priorities are fed into their development are outlined later in this chapter in the section on **Links to Community Strategies**. However, it is recognised that this may not always be possible due to local factors and one approach will not suit all areas.

vi. Community Action Plans and The Communities First Vision Framework

9.21 The Communities First Vision Framework was developed to encourage a holistic approach to tackling poverty and disadvantage. It provides a broad range of potential aspirations, but communities must determine the route to achieve them in their own way.

9.22 Consideration must be given to all aspects of the Vision Framework during the lifetime of the Programme, but it is recognised that in the early stages of developing an Action Plan it may be necessary for a Partnership to focus in the first instance on a number of key issues. This may be because of the need to respond to pressing needs identified by the local community or because the Partnership is still developing its links with the range of organisations responsible for providing and planning key services.

9.23 Accordingly, when Communities First Partnerships are first developing their Action Plans they need not feel under pressure to address immediately the Vision Framework in its entirety if this is not appropriate. As Partnerships gain experience and self-confidence, and develop their links with the range of service provider organisations, they will be able to expand the scope of their Actions Plans to address each of the six themes in ways appropriate to the needs of the local community.

9.24 It remains the objective that, over the course of the Programme, the Community Action Plan should address all the themes raised in the Vision Framework.

9.25 Local concerns will no doubt include many of the key themes in the framework; others may emerge which do not fit neatly under any of the individual headings - such as debt and money problems, support for young parents, cultural

diversity – but address aspects of a number of the headings. This is not a problem. Partnerships can always illustrate how projects address different aspects across the Vision Framework after they have been developed, rather than trying to squeeze them into the six different headings as they develop them.

9.26 Some areas have chosen to concentrate initially on what is locally believed to be most crucial, such as community safety, debt or health/well-being. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that, to start with, a bottom up approach, where a few issues are prioritised, is more successful than spreading resources so thinly that little impact is felt.

9.27 It is important to bear in mind that an Action Plan should be fit for purpose and will need to reflect the complexity of activities being undertaken. A plan outlining a wide range of activities developed over a long period is likely to be longer and more detailed than one developed in a Partnership's early days.

vii. Securing Funding for Community Action Plans

9.28 As stated earlier, the Community Action Plan is not a funding bid but a statement of intent and priorities for action. To attempt to make a Community Action Plan into a funding bid would lead to a level of detail which would make it long and too complex for far reaching community endorsement. Equally, it may well contain actions, which do not require financial resources (such as negotiating better relationships with a service provider). It can however be a very useful tool to support funding applications which are made to support specific goals set out in the Community Action Plan. These specific applications for funds can be made to a variety of grant givers, such as local councils, local health boards, the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies etc based on the project's fit with funding criteria.

9.29 Some Communities First areas have secured funding from a variety of sources without having a Community Action Plan in place. A Community Action Plan is not currently a precondition of funding; however, in order to develop a clear vision for what Communities First is intended to achieve in a given community, developing a Community Action Plan is a logical and necessary part of ongoing development.

9.30 Funding from Communities First Programme monies is intended to fund the staff and support costs of Communities First Teams and community capacity building. The bulk of Community Action Plan related funding applications should therefore be funded by monies other than those provided by the Welsh Assembly Government's Communities First Programme.

9.31 Communities First monies will not be used to fund activities which may be funded from mainstream programmes. There are a variety of other sources of funding available to support Community Action Plans from grant schemes and mainstream programmes administered by, for example, the Assembly Government, local authorities, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and the European Union's Structural Funds and local health boards.

9.32 Partnerships may consider sharing good practice from successful applications, either informally or through the Communities First Support Network.

viii. Community Action Plans and Programme Bending / mainstreaming

9.33 A key issue for the successful delivery of the Communities First Programme is the active engagement of mainstream programme resources in Communities First areas. It is essential that the main (or “mainstream”) services and programmes of the Assembly Government, its agencies, local authorities and all other key partners are prioritised or ‘bent’ to favour the most deprived areas, as identified in the Communities First Programme.

9.34 Programme bending requires a strong and lasting commitment across the Assembly Government, its agencies, local authorities and other key partners to ensure mainstream programmes are delivered in response to the needs identified in the Communities First areas. The means by which programme bending is being developed across the key service provider organisations is set out in Chapter 10 below.

9.35 Partnerships will need to involve prospective mainstream funders at the earliest opportunity in developing the Community Action Plan and will need to work with those funders to ensure that projects comply with the criteria governing their funds.

ix. Community Action Plans and local authorities’ Plan Rationalisation

9.36 Towards the end of 2005, the Assembly Government agreed Plan Rationalisation proposals that will over the next 3-5 years see the Assembly Government no longer asking Welsh local authorities to each submit 32 separate plans. Plan Rationalisation will reduce the administrative burden that Assembly places on local authorities and their partners through planning requirements. At the conclusion of the plan rationalisation process, there will remain only four statutory plans that local authorities and partners are required to produce - the Community Strategy, the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy, the Children and Young People’s Plan and the Local Development Plan. These should be interlinked and cross-refer to one another.

9.37 In responding to plan rationalisation, local authorities will need to decide how to plan to ensure that strategic goals are implemented and monitored in their area. They may choose to address this, by developing their own commissioning plans or by broadly maintaining current planning arrangements but ensuring that they are aligned with the four statutory plans or by ensuring that issues are addressed by the four statutory plans or a combination of the above.

x. Links to Community Strategies

9.38 Local authorities are required to work with their partner organisations and local communities to prepare Community Strategies for promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Community Strategies are overarching strategies that will determine how county areas as a whole, or specific parts of them, develop over a 10 - 15 year period.

9.39 The *Preparing Community Strategies Guidance*, issued by the Assembly Government in 2001, set out the three main components that a strategy should contain: a long term vision; an Action Plan, which outlines how the long term vision will be achieved; and arrangements for monitoring and review. The Assembly Government is planning to issue revised Community Planning Guidance for consultation in July 2007. This revised Guidance will take into account the recommendations of the Beecham report – *Making the Connections*, growing regional structures and other developments in the strategic policy framework in Wales.

9.40 The principal Beecham recommendations that will impact on community planning centre on the evolution of Community Strategy Partnerships into Local Service Boards and their development of Local Service Agreements. The Local Service Agreement will consist of a limited number of prioritised shared outcomes that partners will focus on achieving. Following consultation on the development of Local Service Boards and Local Service Agreements (undertaken between February and April 2007) a number of development projects will be rolled out from mid 2007.

9.41 The Assembly Government's response to the Beecham report *Making the Connections: Delivering Beyond Boundaries* also stressed the importance of 'putting citizens first and involving them in the design of public services is central to achieving radical change.' Communities First Partnerships will have an important role to play in achieving this commitment. The Partnerships are a ready vehicle to facilitate increased citizen engagement and have the mechanisms to allow local community priorities to feed into the local community planning structures

9.42 The revised community planning Guidance will therefore set out how the existing Community Strategy Partnerships will evolve into Local Service Boards (LSB) and how these Boards will subsequently develop, negotiate and agree the Local Service Agreements (LSA) with the Assembly Government. It is envisaged that this Local Service Agreement will form the core of an Action Plan that will sit behind the Community Strategy.

9.43 As Community Strategies set out the councils', and their partners, key priorities it will remain important that they fully consider the needs of Communities First areas and the Assembly Government's policy on the public service needs of deprived communities. That reflects local authorities' legal duty to consult and seek the participation of all appropriate local interests in preparing a community strategy, and it is important that such consultation and participation includes Communities First Partnerships.

9.44 In order to encourage seamless working between the county-wide and local levels it is important that Community Strategy Partnerships/Local Service Boards and Communities First Partnerships communicate and liaise frequently. How this is done will be a matter for local agreement. A possible approach would be for those local authority areas with many Communities First Partnerships to establish a formal liaison arrangement, such as a board, to enable the Communities First Partnerships to establish their collective views and to input to the Community Strategy process.

9.45 In those local authority areas where there are few Communities First Partnerships, the Community Strategy Partnership/Local Service Board should establish and maintain mechanisms that enable the views of Communities First Partnerships, and the wider community, to be heard. It is important that Communities First Partnerships and other community networks play a part in not only establishing Community Strategy priorities but also in delivering the agreed priorities.

xi. Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Action Plans

9.46 One of the key roles of the Communities First Partnership is to monitor progress of the Communities First Programme in the local area. In order to do this effectively, it will be important that there are clear targets, indicators of success, a timescale and a way of evaluating achievements. This need not be over complex, but if a plan is to be a living document and regularly updated, then Partnerships will need to have a way of checking whether success has been achieved. Partnerships should use the Annual Report to keep the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit fully informed about progress in taking forward Community Action Plans.

9.47 Community Development Cymru (CDC) has produced a guide to evaluating community development activities. CDC is a constituent member of the Communities First Support Network and CDC contacts can be found in the chapter of this guidance describing the work of the **Communities First Support Network**.

Annex to Chapter 9

What sort of information should a Community Action Plan contain?

The Vision

Developing a community vision is primarily about getting as wide a group of stakeholders as possible to consider what they wish to achieve over the longer term. It can be difficult to get people to focus a long way into the future, and sometimes asking, "what will success look like" can seem more real. Creating a vision for the future is useful as it provides a common goal to work towards, it may be done through a variety of means, using community-visioning techniques, ongoing consultations with a variety of interests in the community, pictures etc.

Brief description of the area

Here it is important to explain the characteristics of the community, talk about the background of the area and give the reader an insight into the critical things that local people feel, know and say about their community.

Brief description of the Communities First Partnership, an analysis of community participation and how the Partnership relates to the wider community

The structure of the Partnership should be explained and a summary of representatives provided. It is useful to consider how the Partnership fulfils its role of community leadership, consultation and accountability. It is important to discuss how the Partnership relates to the wider community and detail the mechanisms for wider community participation in Communities First. Here you may also wish to mention the levels of organised community activity through groups or organisations and how they relate to Communities First.

Process for developing the Action Plan, including community and service provider involvement

Detail of how the plan was developed.

Brief analysis of need and how it was identified

This may summarise the key findings of research/consultations and any participative work you have done to identify key priorities. It will be necessary to consider the needs of adults, children and young people in the priorities. This can also include research that has been conducted by other organisations, such as the Local Authority or local voluntary council, or information from the Office of National Statistics (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>). Selected anecdotal evidence may be useful to highlight key concerns and set them in context. Statistics may prove useful to provide background and demonstrate levels of need and to represent a baseline but it is best to be selective and summarise key data rather than use pages of statistics, which can detract from the point.

A useful source of statistics for the plan is the publication *Communities First – A 2001 Baseline* which was published by the Assembly Government in 2006. This is a report which provides a statistical baseline for each of the existing Communities First areas as at 2001 – the year in which the Programme was launched. The report consists of individual Communities First area profiles with details of how these were produced. The report can be found on the Assembly Government website: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/comm-first2001/?lang=en>

Additional potentially useful reference sources are the publications relating to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 (WIMD 2005). The Multiple Index is a measure of deprivation at the small area level and draws on information regarding:

- Income.
- Employment.
- Health.
- Education, Skills and Training.
- Geographical Access to Services.
- Housing.
- Physical Environment.

The Index is a relative measure of an area's deprivation not an absolute measure. The Index may be viewed on the Assembly Government's website at: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/wimd2005/?lang=en>

Key priorities for action; if applicable, a brief outline of measures to achieve priorities and who will lead on them

Priorities may be broad but may also contain a few actions that are well developed. Give a brief description of what each action is intended to achieve and some information about the scope of the project, key partners, how it is likely to be implemented and the timescales involved. It is also useful to think about how work to meet the priorities may be monitored at the outset so you may include a brief summary of how the project will be monitored and what you will look for in terms of success.

10. Mainstreaming or "Programme Bending"

i. A Definition of Programme Bending

10.1 A key issue for the successful delivery of the Communities First Programme is the active engagement of mainstream programme resources in Communities First areas. The Communities First Programme has an annual budget of £34 million as at 2007-08. That sum, in itself, is insufficient to lift the Communities First areas out of poverty. It is essential that the main (or "mainstream") services and programmes of the Assembly Government, its agencies, local authorities and all other key partners are prioritised or 'bent' to favour the most deprived areas, as identified in the Communities First Programme.

10.2 The need for programme bending requires a strong and lasting commitment across the Assembly Government, its agencies, local authorities and other key partners to ensure mainstream programmes are delivered in response to the needs identified in the Communities First areas. Programme bending can be implemented in a number of different, but equally effective, ways.

ii. Grant Schemes

10.3 Policies or strategies which are dependent for their delivery on specific grant programmes should be the easiest to bend to favour deprived communities and to make more accessible to particular communities. If the policy or strategy is able to address issues relating to the causes or effects of poverty, social exclusion, disadvantage or discrimination then the criteria for related grant programmes should prioritise the areas where those factors are most apparent – the Communities First areas. The degree of prioritisation will depend on the thrust of the policy and the area where it is targeted, but the priority of Communities First areas should be acknowledged even in local authority areas where there are but one or two Communities First areas.

iii. Funding of mainstream services

10.4 The funding for the delivery of mainstream services within communities or wider localities can be more difficult to programme bend since existing provision and

priorities already in place may not have been planned with regard to the needs of the Communities First areas. Nevertheless if Communities First is to bring about the regeneration of the most deprived areas, the organisations responsible for delivering services in those areas need to prioritise the Communities First areas in the long-term planning and allocation of resources.

10.5 Service providers have many demands on their resources. The baseline information and data from *Communities First – A 2001 Baseline* (published by the Assembly Government in 2006; see: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/comm-first2001/?lang=en>) and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/wimd2005/?lang=en>) can be used to demonstrate to these agencies the level of need in particular areas and, therefore, aid their planning.

10.6 It should be recognised that programme bending in favour of Communities First areas need not require resources or facilities to be targeted exclusively at the areas themselves. Some programmes, such as transport provision, business estates, education, training, sport and arts facilities can be geared towards benefiting residents of Communities First areas but the planning of such services cannot always happen at the individual area level. Planning at a more strategic level, say at local authority, may serve to avoid destructive competition for resources between Communities First areas.

10.7 The Assembly Government, in drawing up its budget proposals, already requires Welsh Assembly Government policy departments to justify new spending proposals in terms of how that spending will help take forward the Communities First Programme. Supporting the objectives of Communities First is a key criterion for agreeing new expenditure within the Assembly Government.

10.8 Officials in departments across the Assembly Government meet together on a regular basis to identify how existing and future policy can be developed to prioritise Communities First areas. The Communities Directorate, the lead department for the Communities First Programme, also has regular bilateral meetings with other Assembly Government policy departments to advise on how policies and programmes for which those departments are responsible can be tailored to address the needs of the Communities First areas.

10.9 All Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) are formally required, as a condition of their annual budget allocation, to prioritise Communities First areas in their own programmes. The Communities Directorate has regular bilateral meetings with officials from ASPBs to advise on how that requirement can be implemented through the ASPB's own programmes. ASPBs needing advice on how best to respond to the Communities First Programme should contact their "sponsoring" policy division in the Assembly Government or the Communities Directorate.

10.10 The Communities Directorate will also identify issues and priorities raised by Partnerships and drawing them to the attention of relevant Assembly Government divisions, ASPBs and other bodies as appropriate.

iv. Promoting Cultural change in service delivery

10.11 The third important element of programme bending may involve little or no investment of funds. Communities First is about the organisations providing services recognising that sustainable regeneration is about working with the communities concerned – not doing things to them. The programme offers an opportunity for the organisations to engage with and involve the communities in the planning and delivery of services in their area. Doing so successfully offers the prospect of maximum buy-in and ownership of the regeneration process among the community.

10.12 Communities First is about working in partnership with the community and organisations providing services should take full advantage of the mechanisms offered them under the programme to engage with and involve the local community. The Communities First Partnership is a key forum for discussing and determining community priorities, but Partnerships are also a means of reaching out into the wider community, by way of Communities First newsletters, meetings, activities and consultations.

10.13 The process for successful engagement between community and service provider is two-way. It requires maturity and responsibility on both sides. Communities First Partnerships should actively seek out the organisations which can help them take forward the regeneration of their area and involve them as soon as possible in the drawing up of partnership work programmes and Community Action Plans. Doing so will enable the organisation providing the relevant service to advise on how to plan ahead, to contribute to implementation and to ensure that expectations are realistic in terms of budget, funding sources, timetables and partners. The organisation providing the service should be as open as possible in its dealings with the Partnership and the community. That openness should extend to explaining any limitations on the organisation's ability or capacity to respond to the Partnership's requests.

10.14 Programme bending is about harnessing the best of local energy and identity and linking it to the strategic perspective of service providers, ensuring that aspirations and outcomes are not narrowly parochial.

10.15 Hitherto, public sector organisations have had, in effect, to programme bend to pay for the consequences of poverty, social exclusion, disadvantage and discrimination, in the form of increased crime figures, low educational achievement and the impact on the economy or poor health and its drain on NHS resources. Communities First is an opportunity to change that emphasis so that programmes are bent to pay for the eradication of those problems. Communities First is an opportunity we should not miss.

11. Communities First Funding Arrangements

i. Principles for Communities First funding

11.1 The Assembly Government's annual budget for the Communities First Programme is £34m as at 2007-08. The purpose of this funding is to provide money to support:

- i. the development of Communities First Partnerships; and
- ii. the work of Partnerships in building capacity among community residents.

11.2 Communities First funding was never conceived to be a primary source of capital funding for local community regeneration projects. In the past, the Communities First Programme has funded a small number of important local capital projects but these have been in exceptional circumstances. The Communities First Partnership and the Grant Recipient Body have been able to show that (i) the capital project would make a significant contribution to the Communities First objectives; and (ii) that there was a funding gap which Communities First could fill without substantial outlay.

11.3 This type of expenditure cannot be sustained in the future. Communities First simply does not have the resources to present itself as a high level funding programme across so many Communities First areas. Funding for capital activities is available elsewhere – for example from the dedicated grant schemes and mainstream programmes administered by or on behalf of the Assembly Government (including the Communities First Trust Fund), local authorities, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and the European Union's Structural Funds.

11.4 Henceforward Communities First funding will focus on the sustainable development of Partnerships rather than capital intensive projects. The concentration of funding will be on capacity building within communities, community development work and co-ordinator/administrative support for Partnerships. The purpose of such funding will be to enable and empower communities so they have the self confidence, the expertise and the experience to engage with the organisations which provide the services which will help deliver community regeneration.

11.5 There has been a tendency in more established Communities First Partnerships to side-step Partnership building and community development and go straight to service delivery. This does not lay the foundations for sustainable community development – it merely introduces another tier of administration. A focus on capacity building in the Community Action Plan can be used to support the development of sustainable service delivery by enabling the community to better evaluate and communicate their needs to influence service providers.

11.6 Other than in unique local circumstances, the Assembly Government does not consider that Communities First Partnerships should be involved in service delivery, unless they are involved as partners in initiatives designed specifically to build capacity or programme bend within the community. Some Communities First Co-ordinators and Partnerships may need to re-define their roles within the local

community so that they focus on supporting capacity building and, as the Partnerships develop, to be a service facilitator/negotiator (rather than a service deliverer).

11.7 Accordingly, Communities First funding will support local level capacity building in order to stimulate externally funded regeneration and mainstream programme bending. This process should result in sustainable community involvement, sustainable change in the culture of service deliverers and community economic development as part of a wider regeneration strategy.

ii. Funding for Communities First Teams

11.8 The Assembly Government has no plans to set a limit for individual applications for funding, but the budget implications of having 142 Communities First areas (as at 1 March 2007) means that the situation must and will be kept under regular review.

11.9 It is clear that Communities First Partnerships will continue to need to be supported by a co-ordinator. As Partnerships become more established, increase their membership and develop their profile in the community and with service provider organisations, the Co-ordinator will probably need to be supported by a core team of community development and administrative/finance workers. Communities First will continue to provide funding for such posts at an individual Partnership level.

11.10 The Programme has also provided funding for some Communities First Partnerships to employ specialist development workers – in the fields of business development, youth work, healthy living, environment, sport, tourism development and the arts for example. Such workers may have the potential to develop capacity within a Partnership in many useful and different directions, but the Communities First Programme does not have the resources to fund the provision of such officers at an individual Partnership level.

11.11 With the exception of development worker posts involving working with children and young people, the Communities First Programme will consider funding specialist development worker posts in exceptional circumstances only. Cases will be considered only if the following minimum criteria apply:

- The specialist development worker is shared between several Communities First Partnerships.
- The specialist development worker is engaged exclusively in activities which are designed specifically to build capacity among community residents in all the Partnership areas involved.
- The Partnerships can clearly demonstrate that the nature of the post for which they request funding does not come within the scope of funding schemes and programmes administered by the mainstream providers of funding in the subject area or geographic areas concerned. This may be an opportunity to achieve programme bending and/or develop a match funded bid.

11.12 Meeting the above minimum criteria is no guarantee that the Communities First Programme will fund the post for which funding has been requested. Any application received will be considered on its merits.

iii. Specialist Development Officers working with Children and Young People

11.13 As part of the Assembly Government's broader strategy to eradicate child poverty, great emphasis is placed on the need to engage with, involve and support children and young people in the Communities First Programme.. The needs of children and young people are relevant to each of the six themes in the Communities First Vision Framework and Partnerships are expected to build on existing activity and to develop their work on behalf of children and young people in an increasingly strategic way.

11.14 In recognition of this emphasis, the Communities First Programme will continue to consider applications to fund specialist development workers who are engaged in work with children and young people, where:

- In every case where practical, the specialist development worker should be shared across more than one Communities First Partnership, for example if the Partnerships are in close proximity. However, all applications will be considered on their own merits.
- The specialist development worker is engaged in activities which are designed to build capacity, increase community awareness and develop social responsibility among the children and young people involved.
- The activities for which the specialist development worker is responsible are set clearly within a strategic framework set out in the Partnerships' work programmes and / or Community Action Plans.
- The specialist development worker is engaged in activities which will develop sympathetic ways of involving children and young people in the decision-making processes of the Partnerships, including capacity building for adults to engage with children.
- Children and Young Person friendly documents will be produced.
- Training for CF Co-ordinators will be undertaken on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The specialist development worker will work with the Partnership Co-ordinators to develop and strengthen linkages with the main deliverers of services for children and young people, including the relevant Framework Planning Partnerships, Children's Partnerships, and Young People's Partnerships. This reflects that this issue requires joint ownership and working.

11.15 It is essential, however, that all specialist development staff, especially youth workers, work in operational Partnership with local youth provision. Any Partnership which attempts to deliver the services of such posts in isolation of the mainstream service will have their funding reviewed by the Assembly Government.

iv. Preparing an application

11.16 Communities First Co-ordinators should consult the relevant Communities First Regional team before any work is done on an application for Communities First funding. An expression of interest will need to be completed as soon as possible using the appropriate form supplied by the Communities First Unit – only outline information about the proposed project is required at this stage.

11.17 The Regional team should be informed as soon as possible about the planning of a work programme for the Partnership; this is particularly important if the work programme is one which will need external funding.

11.18 All Partnerships proposing to embark on the process of drawing up or reviewing a Community Action Plan should always contact the relevant Regional Team at the outset of the process.

11.19 The Regional Team will be able to advise on:

- Elements of the work programme or Community Action Plan which may be eligible for Communities First funding.
- Possible sources of mainstream and other funding, including the Big Lottery Fund.
- The service delivery and providing organisations and agencies with which the Partnership might need to work in order to achieve its objectives.
- Sources of technical or specialist support (such as the Communities First Support Network, the local authority or the County Voluntary Council) the Partnership might need to call upon to help achieve its objectives.

v. Costs eligible for Communities First funding

11.20 Eligible costs include:

- Salaries and on-costs for a Partnership Co-ordinator.
- Salaries and on-costs for community development, finance and administrative support workers attached to a Partnership.
- Office costs for the Communities First team.
- Newsletters and other approved communication tools (eg web-site).
- Partnership meeting costs.
- Recruitment costs.
- Community consultation costs.
- Community networking costs.
- Community based and community organised events arranged by the Communities First Partnership which will help foster community cohesion and community identity.
- Training and development of Communities First team and Partnership members.
- Welsh/English and English/Welsh translation and Welsh/English interpretation costs.
- Translation and interpretation costs for other languages.

- Community-based projects, including social enterprise, which demonstrate that they will help build experience and expertise within the community – ie capacity building (see below).
- Small scale applications in Communities First areas which focus on training and building the capacity of local people to deliver information and advice services in their communities, e.g. through local advice agencies or credit unions.
- Specialist development worker salaries and on-costs in the circumstances described above.
- Costs for travel and subsistence, child care and carers when associated with the above.
- Where appropriate, over-arching co-ordinators, management, administrative or finance related posts within the Grant Recipient Body / employing organisations.

11.21 Applications will need to demonstrate how the expenditure will contribute to capacity building and enable the Partnership to move on to develop relationships more generally with key service delivery and service providing organisations. The criteria are not intended to preclude innovative projects.

vi. *Costs not eligible for Communities First funding*

11.22 Ineligible costs:

- Capital works projects such as new buildings, extensions to buildings, street lighting, skateboard parks, or feasibility studies for any of these.
- Costs which should be funded from mainstream sources available from elsewhere; for example, works to local authority owned premises.
- Expenses for Partnership members (other than travel and subsistence, child care or carers for time spent in respect of attending conferences, training and development, etc which permits participation in these).
- Recompense for volunteers' notional loss of earnings.
- Any activity that leads to significant income generation on the part of the Partnership itself (eg sale of advertising in Communities First funded Partnership newsletters), although small scale, quantified, income generation projects aimed towards the sustainability of the Partnership will be considered.
- Purchase or leasing of vehicles.
- Intermediate Labour Market Models, Credit Unions, Community Safety Wardens, CAB Advice Services, Welfare/Benefits Rights Advice Services, Alternative Education Initiatives for school aged children, Direct Health Service Provision (eg Health Visiting), Generic Post 16 employment training, Police Community Support Officers and Community Wardens.

11.23 Exceptions to the above exclusions may be made in cases of small-scale projects clearly directed at building capacity among community members. However, the activity must furnish community members with new skills, experiences, knowledge or information that will benefit the wider community.

11.24 See Annex 1 to this section for a description of the types of activities which qualify as capacity building.

vii. Applications process, demonstrating accountability and compliance with terms and conditions of grant

11.25 Applications for funding must be submitted on the appropriate application form as supplied by the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit.

11.26 Partnerships and Grant Recipient Bodies must ensure that the Communities First grant is spent correctly, on the purpose for which the grant was approved and that the best possible value for money is obtained. The Grant Recipient Body must abide by the Welsh Assembly Government's grant terms and conditions. A breach of conditions could result in reduction, suspension or recovery of grant.

11.27 Partnerships and Grant Recipient Bodies must ensure that the Communities First objectives set out in their application for any approved funding are achieved. Failure to do so, without good reason, could result in reduction, suspension or recovery of grant.

11.28 The Assembly Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration approves all grant applications. The Assembly Minister is the only person in whom legal authority has been vested to make such approvals and under no circumstances may Communities First Partnerships or Grant Recipient Bodies use approved Communities First funding for purposes other than those specified in the grant offer letter.

viii. Transferring grant from one activity to another ("Virement")

11.29 Grant shall be used only for the purposes approved in the Assembly Government's grant offer letter. The offer of grant will contain a written description of the approval, which may contain additional conditions of grant unique to that offer, and a financial schedule of the approval. The schedule breaks down the award into headings that provide a general description of the activities that funding has been awarded to deliver. The Grant Recipient Body (referred to in the offer letter as the "grantee") has the authority to vire funding, up to the limit of £5,000, in to or out of each activity heading, other than 'Salaries,' in any financial year, with no requirement for prior approval from the Assembly.

11.30 There is no limit on the number of virements that can be made in any financial year, into or between headings, provided that the total amount does not exceed £5,000 into or out of any single heading. The grantee can vire up to £5,000 out of the salary heading in any one financial year but no virement can be made into the salaries heading. This is to ensure that no increases to existing staff salaries or new staff posts can be financed other than by additional funding applications to the Communities First Programme Implementation Teams.

11.31 All virements must be recorded on the Communities First Claim Form (CF3). There is no longer a requirement to also complete a CF3D 'Summary of Virements for the Financial Year'.

11.32 It will no longer be possible to request the virement of allocated finance to create a new service or activity that was not approved in the original offer of grant; and it will no longer be possible for the Assembly to approve individual or cumulative virements of over £5,000.

11.33 The responsibility for determining whether a virement is compatible with the description of the activity heading vired into rests with the grantee. Failure to do so could result in qualification letters being issued by the external auditor or independent accountant, which could subsequently result in the recovery of grant.

11.34 If there is any uncertainty over compatibility and eligibility, the internal audit policy of the host organisation must be used as the primary reference point with additional reference to the application, offer letter, acceptance of offer and the Assembly's own programme guidance. The Assembly Government's Communities First Regional Teams will no longer appraise and advise on the eligibility of individual virements.

ix. Decisions on Funding and Management of Communities First funds

11.35 Decisions on Communities First funding of applications will be made by the Assembly Government as quickly as possible. The aim will be to issue a decision letter within 30 working days of receipt of a signed and fully completed application which includes all the required supporting information. Relevant supporting information includes receipt by the Communities First Unit of copies of relevant grant offer letters from other funding providers.

11.36 In order to prevent double funding the Grant Recipient Body will need to provide evidence of the funding, including the amount, which has been sought and obtained from other funding providers. Bids can be submitted while awaiting match funding decisions. In these circumstances, decisions by the Assembly Government may be made subject to obtaining match funding letters. It is intended that this will help Partnerships receive quicker overall decisions, and encourage match funding.

11.37 Once the Assembly Minister has taken the decision, an offer letter will be sent within 10 working days. Payments will only be made when an offer has been formally accepted and claims submitted. The aim is for payments to be made to Grant Recipient Bodies within 15 working days of receipt of a fully completed claim. Communities First funding will be made available in advance of expenditure, unless for existing capital projects when grant is paid on receipt of invoices. Further details on payment arrangements and terms and conditions of grant are provided to the Grant Recipient Body and to the Partnership Co-ordinator on approval of funding.

11.38 Payment of Communities First grant can only be made to the nominated 'Grant Recipient Body' (which may be the Partnership if it has been properly constituted as a legal entity and has decided to take full responsibility for applying for, spending and accounting for the various monies). A nominated Grant Recipient Body might be the local authority, another statutory authority or an established community or voluntary organisation.

11.39 The Grant Recipient Body should ensure that grant is administered correctly. Funds should be distributed by the Grant Recipient Body within 15 working days of receipt from the Assembly Government. Partnerships which encounter delays in the processing and passing on of funds through a nominated Grant Recipient Body should contact their Regional Team in the Communities First Unit.

11.40 Grant Recipient Bodies should put in place accounting mechanisms which will clearly “ring-fence” Communities First grant and ensure that it is only used to fund activities /services which are outlined in the grant offer letter.

11.41 The Grant Recipient Body and the Partnership will need to satisfy the Welsh Assembly Government that propriety is being observed:

- In respect of all payments.
- In the handling of all public funds.
- In the approval of all expenditure.
- In the setting up and use of monitoring, project appraisal and finance systems.
- That an asset register is set up and kept for all capital items including computers.
- That full and proper audit trails are being maintained for all funds.

11.42 Where Grant Recipient Bodies and / or Partnerships have not observed these requirements, an investigation of the processes and structures by Assembly officials may be undertaken. If the investigation concludes that there are serious weaknesses the Assembly Government reserves the right to terminate the agreement to fund at any time upon written notice to the Grant Recipient Body as outlined in the Terms and Conditions.

x. Monitoring Procedures

(Please see the Communities First Application and Annual Report documents for further detailed information.)

11.43 The community itself, the range of funding organisations and the Assembly Government will want to be able to check that the activities funded and the work undertaken under the Communities First Programme have contributed to the overall regeneration of the area concerned. Good monitoring and evaluation are the essential tools which will enable Partnerships to demonstrate whether activities are being delivered effectively and are having the right impact in the community.

a. Monitoring

11.44 The Communities First Partnership is responsible for overall monitoring at a community level and should include details of its monitoring proposals in its applications for funding. All funding organisations will expect Partnerships to monitor progress on all projects funded. Funding organisations will want to be reassured that the agreed outcomes are delivered, and that public money (be it from Communities First or other sources) is being used properly. It is a continuous activity throughout the lifetime of the Programme.

11.45 Partnerships must report annually to the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit on progress of any activity funded from the Unit. Progress demonstrated in the Annual Report will be assessed against the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) targets identified in the applications for Communities First funding and any other conditions of funding as set out in grant offer letters and terms and conditions of funding. Monitoring reports should also show how the Partnership and community have learnt from previous experience or the experience of other Communities First Partnerships and how things have changed as a result of the activity.

11.46 Copies of any monitoring or annual progress reports must be made available before submission to all Partnership members for approval. Progress reports must be submitted via the Grant Recipient Body to the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit.

b. Monitoring for other funding organisations

11.47 Partnerships will also need to set up monitoring and reporting arrangements for the elements of their work programmes and Community Action Plans which are funded by organisations other than the Communities First Unit. The arrangements should normally be set out in the applications for funding to those organisations, but are a matter for the Partnership, the Grant Recipient Body and the funding organisation concerned.

c. Monitoring the wider impact of work programmes and Community Action Plans

11.48 The impact of projects within work programmes and Community Action Plans will often be felt much wider than among the beneficiaries of the project itself. As Partnerships start developing more ambitious work programmes across a number of Vision Framework themes, they will need to set up monitoring systems which capture the wider impact of the work undertaken. This process will be essential as they move on to develop a Community Action Plan.

11.49 The wider monitoring systems need not be over-complex, but it will be important that there are clear SMART targets, indicators of success, a timetable and a way of evaluating achievements set out in the original Communities First application. The timetable should identify key stages in the process of the work programme / Community Action Plan's development and outcomes to be achieved at each stage. The anticipated outcomes should try to identify the wider impacts of the project.

11.50 A manageable process for monitoring and reporting on overall progress should be introduced. Partnerships should provide some form of annual report (perhaps an oral report to the Partnership's Annual General Meeting supported by a published written document) on work programmes and Community Action Plans, which will demonstrate progress against set objectives and highlight successes. Where progress is slow against particular objectives proposed in the initial application, an explanation and revised forward programme should also be provided.

11.51 The acceptance of innovative and accessible annual reporting systems (such as video or theatre performances) will be subject to agreement by the regional teams that the reporting system meets the monitoring requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government, although these should not replace the Annual Reporting structure in full as the information is required to assist monitoring of whole programme.

11.52 The wider monitoring proposals should relate to local circumstances and could cover: developing community residents for skill acquisition and jobs; improving the physical environment, housing and community facilities; encouraging active and healthy lifestyles and addressing other factors that affect health; activity within communities; and ensuring a safe and crime free neighbourhood.

d. Baselines

11.53 In order to measure the extent to which the projects and services proposed within applications are being delivered, it is important to establish the current position (a “baseline”) for each activity/service of the work programme or Community Action Plan against which future progress can be measured. For example, under “business and jobs”, it would be useful to establish the levels of unemployment in the community. For annual reporting purposes, it will be important to ensure that the baseline can be updated on an annual basis in order to show progress towards achieving this objective.

11.54 The Research and Information Unit of the Assembly Government’s Social Justice and Regeneration Department has undertaken an exercise to establish baseline indicators across the range of programme themes for areas included in the Communities First Programme from the outset. The indicators have been published. Copies are available from the Research and Information Unit (Jemma Francis (01685) 729131, e-mail: jemma.francis@wales.gsi.gov) or from <http://www.wales.gov.uk/socialjusticeandregeneration>. The Research and Information Unit is available to assist Partnership Co-ordinators in identifying baselines relevant to their circumstances. For further information contact the Unit on 01685 729128 or jemma.francis@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

xi. Evaluation

11.55 Evaluation is vital to assess and improve the impact of work programmes and Community Action Plans. It differs from monitoring in that it looks critically at what has been achieved as a result of Communities First and also at why things went well or not so well. It must be an integral part of the way in which both work programmes and Community Action Plans are managed and Annual reports are presented.

11.56 Project evaluation should happen throughout the duration of the project and not just at the end. It should look specifically at the impact of individual projects. It should consider to what extent the targets set out at the application stage of the project have been met, and provide evidence that the project has been responsible for the changes that have been demonstrated. The comparison of the baseline information with the targets that were set out in the initial project application will provide a clear measure the impact of the project.

11.57 It is possible that other programmes may have contributed to the impact. Where this is the case, it should be clearly set out. If, however, the project was not successful, it will still be important to show what has been achieved from the course of action.

11.58 Evaluation of work programmes and Community Action Plans is broader and based on an update of the 'baseline' information. The Assembly Government will also use this data, and evaluation information, to assess the impact of the Programme at a national level.

11.59 The Communities First Unit and its partners will bring together Partnerships and Communities First Co-ordinators from time to time to discuss progress and successes and failures so that everyone has the opportunity to learn from each others' experiences.

11.60 Partnerships may wish to consider seeking help on how to carry out evaluation from the Communities First Support Network (in particular Community Development Cymru [CDC] one of the constituent organisation's within the Network), the local authority, a local academic institution, voluntary, community or other organisation.

xii. National Evaluation of the Communities First Programme

11.61 The Communities First Unit funded a national evaluation of the Communities First Programme which has been undertaken by Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC). The evaluation involved CPC consultants looking at individual Partnership case studies, working with Co-ordinators, Partnership members and community residents from across the Programme areas and staging in-depth interviews and seminars with officers from support and partner organisations. The sum of these activities is a clearer picture of issues and trends across the Programme as a whole which has helped inform the development of policy at the Assembly Government level. The final evaluation report was published in November 2006. A copy is available at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/c1stinterim?lang=en>.

11.62 For further advice on reporting, monitoring and evaluation see "Communities First - Co-ordinators Guidance" July 2002, and "Evaluating your Community Development Activities" Community Development Cymru 2003.

Annex to Chapter 11

The Principles for determining Capacity Building within the Communities First Programme

A11.1 This section sets out the basic principles which the Communities First Unit will apply when determining whether an activity is eligible for Communities First funding on the basis of its contribution to building community capacity and laying solid foundations for long-term change.

Background

A11.2 Capacity building is a continuing process of learning by doing. It involves supporting people in whichever way is most appropriate to question why things are as they are, to find information and build the skills to challenge and change things.

A11.3 Building the capacity of local residents is about helping them develop the ability to participate in the regeneration of their communities, to lead some activities and to help influence the things which affect them (including the delivery of local services and drawing down funds for their community). People come with a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills that need to be built upon and not ignored.

A11.4 Capacity building is also about sustainability: after individual projects have finished what will sustain the momentum of community regeneration are the skills, ability and confidence that local people have learned and developed through their involvement in the process hitherto.

Communities First context

A11.5 The Communities First Programme is about a process of supporting communities to determine their own needs and play an active part in shaping the future of their community. It is about enabling them to develop the confidence, knowledge, skills and experience to take independent action.

A11.6 Capacity building is an essential part of the regeneration work in Communities First areas. Capacity building work is needed at all levels with the communities, community workers and community organisations involved. It will enable people to participate in community activities, partnership working, fundraising, consultations, and planning to try to improve their local quality of life. It should involve attempts to consult and engage the widest possible numbers of people in a community. Without capacity building, the process of community regeneration may be dominated by professionals, elected members or small unrepresentative groups of residents.

A11.7 Capacity building in Communities First areas is likely to be a gradual and incremental process. Communities need to be supported to undertake small scale projects whereby they plan, manage, and deliver or co-deliver activities and services. The process should allow community members to learn and grow at their own, albeit challenging, pace. The process will generally involve five levels of community involvement:

- Information.
- Consultation.
- Deciding together.
- Acting together.
- Supporting independent local initiatives.

A11.8 The last two levels require a higher level of participation and community involvement and so demand more of community members. Consequently they require more support and more investment of time, effort and resources.

A11.9 Many of the services and activities organised by agencies involved with Communities First Partnerships will be very valuable and may contribute indirectly to building capacity, but the Communities First Programme will fund only those activities which are clearly focused on community participation and action. Investing in physical infrastructure does not build capacity in itself; it is the process of learning about how to decide priority, plan jointly, manage and implement which is the most valuable.

A11.10 It is not the activity *per se*, which determines whether it is building capacity, but the way it is designed and carried out. The community must be involved in making the decisions and the processes must clearly contribute to learning and skill development.

A11.11 The following criteria will be applied when considering applications for Communities First funding of capacity building:

- Community members must be involved in identifying the capacity building activity as a priority for their Partnership. Applicants must show how the community has been involved in the prioritisation process.
- The activity must entail gradual and incremental growth, whereby people learn as they go along and grow skills to play their role in shaping their community.
- Applicants must demonstrate clearly how the activity will help community members to achieve the objectives set out in their Partnership's work programme or Community Action Plan.
- The activity must furnish community members with new skills, experiences, knowledge or information or develop existing ones.
- The activity must help boost self-esteem and confidence among community members.
- The activity must benefit the local community in terms of growth in their collective skills to participate effectively.
- The activity must be focused on involving members of the local community. The beneficiaries may be people already involved with the Communities First Partnership or people from the wider community, but the applicant must demonstrate how participants will be able to share the benefits of their involvement with the wider community.
- The project must demonstrate how it will address the barriers to community involvement and engagement.
- The emphasis of the activity must be about developing people rather than places.
- Community members should be in control of the activity, or it must be shown that there will be a progression from a passive role to an active one in terms of planning, management and delivery of the activity.
- The activity should help promote a sense of shared responsibility and ownership.
- The activity should support members of the community to better understand and take an active role in shaping the future of the community.
- The activity may contribute to communities changing the nature of services or the way that services are delivered in their community.

- The activity may contribute to the community drawing down funds which will benefit the wider community.
- The activity may be a formal educational process which involves talks, seminars and training.

A11.12 In addition:

- All alternative sources of funding (eg Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, county voluntary councils) must have been explored and exhausted before Communities First funding is sought.
- The activity must demonstrate value for money.

12. The role, employment and management of the Communities First Co-ordinator

Introduction

12.1 The role of the Partnership Co-ordinator is key to the success of a Communities First Partnership. Communities First funding is available from the Assembly Government so that every Communities First area has a Co-ordinator working in the area and with the Partnership. Some Communities First areas have a Co-ordinator working exclusively in that area; other Communities First areas have come together and share a Co-ordinator. The second arrangement tends to apply where the Grant Recipient Body undertakes an over-arching co-ordination and support role.

12.2 The precise nature of the Partnership Co-ordinator's work will depend on the stage of development within the community and on the development needs faced by the Communities First Partnership. The list of responsibilities which follows may seem long and heavy, but it covers the range of tasks a Partnership Co-ordinator will have to take forward from the setting up of the Partnership through its various stages of development. For Partnership Co-ordinators working in long-established Partnerships some of the tasks will be historic. Even in these cases, however, it is worth remembering certain key principles in case circumstances change and the Partnership becomes destabilised for some reason.

12.3 Most Partnership Co-ordinators are able to delegate a range of tasks to other members of the Communities First support team such as dedicated community development workers, administrative support workers and finance officers. As Partnerships mature many of the more representational and liaison type activities will be shared with Partnerships members who will have been assigned specific roles or tasks on behalf of the Partnership, for example as Partnership Communications Officer or in negotiating with local strategic service partnerships.

12.4 Partnership Co-ordinators should also make as much use as possible of the specialist and generic information and advice available from the range of support organisations and partners working with the Communities First Programme. These include the Communities First Support Network, the County Voluntary Council and the local authority.

i. Key Responsibilities of the Partnership Co-ordinator

12.5 These are:

a. Structures which need to be in place from the very outset of the Partnership, but the Partnership Co-ordinator must monitor to ensure that the principles are upheld thereafter:

- To help establish a Communities First Partnership made up on the three-thirds basis, comprising the community, statutory and business / voluntary sector representatives.
- To develop arrangements which enable people from all sections of the community to be actively involved in the selection and regular renewal of their Partnership.
- To brief new Partnership members on their roles and responsibilities.
- To prepare, with the assistance if need be of external support organisations (eg the local authority, the County Voluntary Council, the Communities First Support Network), a constitution and rules of conduct for consideration and approval by the Partnership.
- To provide support to local community organisations/groups to enable them to join the Partnership and contribute to its work.

b. Devising an evidence base, so the Partnership has a clear picture of the community it represents:

- To arrange a community audit of the area to establish a picture of the community, identify its aspirations and assess what resources and disadvantages exist within it.
- To incorporate evidence from other sources into the audit.
- To present the evidence provided by the audit to enable the Partnership to formulate a clear vision, objectives and targets for its work.

c. Helping the Partnership to develop its strategic work objectives and publicise its activities

- To support the Partnership in defining and carrying out its role and responsibilities;
- To develop arrangements to enable people from all sections of the community to participate in capacity building projects and to contribute to the development of the Partnership and its Work Programmes and Community Action Plan/s;
- To work with the Communities First Partnership to:
 - Devise its Work Programme and Community Action Plan/s.
 - Identify and forge long-term sustainable links with mainstream service providers such as the local authority, the local health board, the Department for Work and Pensions, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies, the Wales European Funding Office and others.
 - To actively seek to establish working links with the organisations which are responsible for the key services which will contribute to the

regeneration of the area and to engage with them about the delivery of those services.

- Establish a process for linking the work of the Communities First partnership into that of other local strategic planning partnerships such as the Community Strategy Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership, the Children and Young Peoples Framework Partnerships and the Older Peoples Strategy Partnerships.
- To devise and implement a Partnership communications strategy which ensures that the community is kept informed about the work of the Partnership, its membership, the conduct of its business and how they can become involved.

d. In respect of seeking funding for the Partnership's activities:

- To map the potential resources which may be attracted to the area, from a range of sources.
- To identify and apply for funding from sources other than the Communities First Programme (such as UK and Assembly Government bodies, business, charitable trusts and funds) for the Partnership's agreed work programmes and Community Action Plan/s.
- These activities may be undertaken by working with other organisations with expertise in this area.

e. Management type duties:

- To provide regular monitoring and progress reports to the Partnership, the Welsh Assembly Government and to funding bodies as required and to ensure that all projects and activities taken forward in the name of the Partnership are done so in accordance with stated policy objectives.
- To line manage and set work schedules for any other Communities First support workers attached to the Partnership.
- To act as a referee for applications to the Communities First Trust Fund (if the Partnership Co-ordinator is content to take on this role).
- To receive applications for the Communities First Trust Fund for information purposes. (In cases where the Partnership Co-ordinator [or Partnership] is aware of the potential for misappropriation of funds or where they are sure that the group has no local presence the Partnership Co-ordinator should make it known to the grants assessor in the Wales Council for Voluntary Action).

f. Developing own knowledge, skills and experience for the benefit of the Partnership and Community

- To establish links with other Communities First Partnerships to share experiences and exchange good practice.
- To attend briefing and training events organised by the Communities First Support Network.
- To attend the regional co-ordinators' meetings arranged two or three times a year by a host co-ordinator in conjunction with the Communities First Support Network on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

ii. Over-arching Co-ordinators

12.6 Some Grant Recipient Bodies have Co-ordinators, funded by the Communities First Programme, who will have over-arching responsibilities covering several Communities First areas and Partnerships within the area for which the Grant Recipient Body is responsible.

12.7 The Over-arching Co-ordinators will not have day-to-day contact with the Partnerships within their area. Their role is to provide a strategic and co-ordinated perspective to Communities First activities and developments across a wider area than that of a single Partnership. They should, however, maintain close working links with all Partnership Co-ordinators within their area and be available to provide support and advice whenever needed.

12.8 Over-arching Co-ordinators have an important role to play in the process of developing long-term strategic links with the organisations responsible for providing key services. It may not be feasible for the service providers in an area with many Communities First Partnerships to meet or engage with individual Partnership Co-ordinators on anything but an occasional basis. The Over-arching Co-ordinators will be a much smaller group and should be able to offer a wider, more strategic perspective of issues, priorities and aspirations in the areas they cover.

12.9 The Over-arching Co-ordinators should be particularly well-placed to lead for their Communities First Partnerships in discussions with the local strategic planning partnerships such as the Community Strategy Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership, the Children and Young Peoples Framework Partnerships and the Older Peoples Strategy Partnerships.

iii. Employment of Partnership Co-ordinator

12.10 There are legal responsibilities involved in being an employer. Communities First Partnerships which are not themselves legally constituted are not able to be the legal employer of the Partnership Co-ordinator or any other Communities First staff. Legally constituted Partnerships may take on the role but should consider carefully before doing so, since it will require a range of Human Resources expertise and systems to be in place to exercise all the responsibilities.

12.11 In many cases, the grant recipient body is likely to be the organisation best placed to employ the Partnership Co-ordinator and other staff on behalf of the Communities First Partnership. Alternatively, the management of the Partnership Co-ordinator and other staff may be taken on by any legally constituted organisation which is associated with or a member of the Partnership. In all circumstances an officer in the employing organisation should be designated to be the Line Manager for the Partnership Co-ordinator and (through the Partnership Co-ordinator) other Communities First Team staff.

12.12 The responsibilities of the statutory employer in respect of the Partnership Co-ordinator and other staff include:

- Ensuring an open recruitment process.
- Ensuring that all job adverts are displayed in Welsh and English.
- Arrangements for payment of all salary and expenses costs.
- Health and Safety issues.

- Disciplinary and grievance issues.
- Public liability and insurance cover.
- Performance monitoring of the posts.
- Reporting on performance.
- Day to day line management.
- Professional support in the way of training and development.

12.13 An organisation should have structures in place which enable it to deliver these responsibilities effectively before it accepts the role of statutory employer.

12.14 Where the statutory employer is not the Communities First Partnership, the Partnership Co-ordinator's line manager should meet designated representatives of the Partnership on a regular basis to agree and report on a work schedule for the Partnership Co-ordinator and his / her team. The schedule should be drawn up on the basis of the Partnership's agreed work programme or community action plan.

12.15 Unless there are matters regarding performance monitoring, discipline or grievance, the Partnership Co-ordinator should also attend and participate in the work schedule meetings. The line manager is responsible for ensuring the Partnership Co-ordinator is aware of his or her work priorities and the Partnership Co-ordinator should report to the line manager on progress in taking forward the work schedule.

12.16 The Partnership or individual members of the Partnership should not interfere in the direct line management of the Partnership Co-ordinator. If the Partnership is the statutory employer there should be a single designated officer of the Partnership who will exercise the line management responsibility. That person should be able to demonstrate that he or she has relevant experience of line managing personnel.

iv. Management Protocol for Partnership Co-ordinators

12.17 Partnerships and statutory employers should agree a Management Protocol which sets out clearly the responsibilities and procedures for:

- Managing the Partnership Co-ordinator.
- Setting out his or her work programme.
- Monitoring and reporting on performance.

12.18 The Partnership Co-ordinator should be consulted on the protocol and given a copy once it has been agreed. Any changes to the agreed protocol agreed between the Partnership and the statutory employer should be made in the full knowledge of the Partnership Co-ordinator.

v. Statutory Employer acting on behalf of the Communities First Partnership

12.19 Where an organisation other than the Communities First Partnership is the statutory employer, it is important that that organisation bears in mind that it exercises that role on behalf of the Communities First Partnership and that the funding is derived from the Assembly Government. The Partnership Co-ordinator

and any Communities First support workers are not agents of the employer organisation. They are in post to take forward the work of the Partnership – not that of the employer organisation.

vi. Premises, linguistic profile of area, responsibility of Co-ordinator to Communities First Programme

12.20 It is recommended that the Partnership Co-ordinator be based in the community he or she serves to help raise and maintain profile and accessibility. Partnerships and employers may decide to place the Partnership Co-ordinator and the support team in accommodation shared with another existing organisation within that community that is able to provide ongoing support and guidance. This is an acceptable arrangement, but care must be taken to ensure work responsibilities and the public perception of roles are not confused. The resource implications of co-location should be met by the Partnership from its Assembly Government funding.

12.21 In all cases, recruitment advertising must be bilingual in Welsh and English. In addition, Partnerships and employers should take into account the linguistic profile of the area when drawing up the job specifications for the Partnership Co-ordinator's post or for members of the support team. In areas where the Welsh language is widely spoken in the local community, consideration should be given to whether the ability to speak, read, write and/or understand Welsh should be a requirement for the post.

12.22 The Partnership Co-ordinator should bear in mind at all times that he / she is responsible in the first instance to the line manager based in the statutory employer and only through that person to the Partnership. The Partnership Co-ordinator is not a member of the Partnership but an official, employed by virtue of Assembly Government funding, to carry out duties defined by a Communities First Partnership in accordance with the objectives of the Assembly Government's Communities First Programme.

12.23 Members of the Partnership should not ask the Partnership Co-ordinator to undertake activities that are not consistent with the objectives of the Communities First Programme.

vii. Regional Co-ordinators' Meetings

12.24 The Communities First Unit funds the regular (two or three times a year) regionally-based meetings for Communities First Co-ordinators. Each meeting is hosted by a Partnership Co-ordinator from a Communities First area in that region. The host Co-ordinator should always liaise with the local Communities First Support Network contact for that region to organise the meeting and to draw up an agenda. The meeting agenda must be agreed with the Communities First Unit in advance of its distribution.

12.25 The Assembly Government considers Co-ordinators' meetings to be a valuable opportunity to communicate messages about strategic issues and policy initiatives and will work to ensure these benefits are realised. The meetings offer an opportunity for co-ordinators to inform the Assembly Government about concerns at the local level. They also provide a mature environment in which to share the lessons of good – and unsuccessful - experiences.

12.26 Attendance at the meetings is a priority for **all** Partnership co-ordinators and over-arching co-ordinators. The relevant Communities First Regional team should be informed in advance of any co-ordinators who are unable to attend the conference. Officials from the Assembly Government's Communities Directorate will also attend the meetings.

12.27 The regional meetings also provide an opportunity for co-ordinators to air their views and identify potential weaknesses in the Communities First Programme – and to do so under rules of confidentiality and non-attribution. Co-ordinators should not make adverse public comments (for example to the media) about the operation of the programme or any aspect of the work of their Partnerships.

SECTION E – PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

This section is intended to provide detail on three areas of work undertaken by Partnerships to support their objectives: Communications, the use of the Welsh Language, and Procurement. The Communities First Support Network can offer assistance in all these areas. It is intended that detail on additional areas will be available in the future in the form of supplements or circulars.

This information will be of benefit to all Partnerships.

13. A Communications Strategy for Communities First Partnerships

i. Importance of Good Communications

13.1 Good communication is central to the success of Communities First at the national and local level. It needs to be considered in the planning of all Communities First Partnership activities, be they, for example, Partnership meetings, community events or the drawing up of work programmes and action plans.

13.2 Good communication is important because:

- It is central to the delivery of a service which is focused on engaging with and involving the widest possible community.
- Residents of the community need to be aware of the opportunity offered by Communities First and how they can contribute to the regeneration of their community.
- It encourages community engagement.
- Views and contributions need to be sought on Partnership membership, organisation and the planning of work programmes and action plans.
- A range of sometimes complex messages needs to be communicated in a straightforward and accessible form, appropriate to the target audience, using suitable and effective communication channels.
- The absence of good communication will result in a poorly informed Partnership and an uninformed and confused community.
- Communities will gain confidence from learning of their successes and will be able to build on and learn from their experiences.

13.3 These notes have been produced to help Partnerships consider the importance of communications and develop practical tools to enable them to communicate effectively.

ii. Key principles

13.4 Partnerships should:

- Work to promote honest, open, two-way communication – within the Partnership, with the community and with other partners.
- Promote and create a continuous listening, consulting and involving environment.

- Factor communications into the planning of Partnership activities from the outset - not as a 'bolt-on' considered at the last moment.
- Ensure that all communication (spoken, written, electronic or other) is simple, clear, easily understood, relevant, appropriate, equally accessible to the whole community.
- Demonstrate community leadership through effective and positive communication.
- Ensure that effective communication is the responsibility of *all* Partnership members not just the Co-ordinator, the Chair or a person appointed to lead on communications.

13.5 To assist with this process every Partnership should develop a Communications Plan which establishes good communications as a priority for the Partnership and sets out the means by which that objective will be achieved.

iii. Partnerships' Communications Plans

13.6 Partnership should develop a communications plan, the contents of which will:

- Show how the Partnership will communicate effectively to the community the purpose, membership, activities and events of the Partnership.
- Set out the mechanisms by which the community will be able to inform the Partnership of the community's views and priorities.
- Facilitate and enable the community's understanding of and participation in the work of the Partnership.
- Describe how the Partnership will respond to the specific needs of the community in respect of language.
- Ensure that communications materials and resources are provided in forms that meet the needs of disabled people, members of black, minority ethnic groups, older people, children and young people.
- Confirm the use of a variety of media including where possible information and communication technologies.
- Demonstrate how the Partnership will inform and help promote links with all current and potential partner organisations, including the Welsh Assembly Government.

13.7 All communications should seek to improve awareness, understanding and support for Communities First and the Partnership's work, to profile events and to communicate information. Developing a communications plan involves working with all the partner organisations and the community.

13.8 A typical communications plan should identify:

- Clear communication aims and objectives.
- The target audience.
- The messages to be conveyed.
- The methods to be used.
- The budget.
- Who is responsible for the activity.
- How performance will be evaluated.

iv. Publicising Membership and Meetings

13.9 Integral part of every Communities First Partnership's obligations is publicising the membership, meeting arrangements and work of the Partnership. The Partnership should make clear its commitments to do so in its communication plan. Every Partnership should set out clearly either in its constitution or its communications plan:

- The date of the Partnership's Annual General Meeting.
- The regularity of standard Partnership meetings.
- How and when notices of meetings, venues and agendas will be published.
- How and when minutes of meetings will be published.
- The means of publicising how people from the community and other sectors can become members of the Partnership.
- The means of publicising which sector and / or organisation each member of the Partnership represents.
- Arrangements for ensuring meetings and information about meetings are accessible to people with disabilities.

v. Sharing success and good practice

13.10 An important element of Communities First is learning from experience. With so many Communities First areas across all parts of Wales, there is a wealth of experience to share and learn from. Awareness of the need to publicise and share success and good practice should be an integral part of every Partnership's communications plan. Additionally, it is important that the local community and Partnership take due credit for all the work they are undertaking.

13.11 Publicising a successful activity will:

- Help generate interest in the community.
- Help develop confidence and self esteem among activity participants.
- Encourage other partnerships or organisations to undertake similar activities.
- Stimulate other Partnerships and organisations to seek advice and guidance from the original Partnership on staging similar activities (and helping others by teaching them to do something is a worthwhile experience in its own right).
- Promote awareness of the Partnership's existence and activities among other Partnerships and organisations and so help develop working links.

13.12 The Assembly Government encourages and makes available funding and support to facilitate the publication and sharing of success and good practice. The means available to Partnerships include:

- The local Communities First Partnership newsletter.
- The local Communities First Partnership website.
- The Communities First Bulletin (produced by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action [WCVA] on behalf of the Assembly Government).

- *Partner* - the quarterly national Communities First newsletter (produced by the WCVA on behalf of the Assembly Government).
- The Communities First Support Network website.
- The Communities First Support Network Helpline.
- The regional meetings of Communities First co-ordinators.

13.13 To which might be added:

- Articles for the local press (Welsh, English and other languages as appropriate).
- Items for local and community radio stations (Welsh, English and other languages as appropriate).
- Articles for the local authority's own newsletters and community news web-pages.
- Articles for other community newsletters and web-sites.

vi. Learning lessons

13.14 Communities First encourages the taking of managed risks. On occasions, despite the best of efforts, some activities or practices may not bring the expected results or anticipated success. This will be disappointing but Communities First is a learning process and, provided the experience is handled sensitively, Partnerships can learn from failure almost as much as they can from success.

13.15 Partnerships should have in place an evaluation system which enables them to assess why a project or a process did not achieve the expected results. It is important that Partnerships consider assessments produced in these circumstances and take the opportunity to learn from the experiences. Partnerships should not be afraid to share their unsuccessful experiences and lessons learned with other Communities First Partnerships.

vii. Contributions from Other Partners

13.16 Partner organisations on Communities First Partnerships will have their own means of communicating their messages and activities to the public. Many local authorities produce regular newsletters which are distributed throughout the local authority area. They will also have web-sites and can make available information display points in a range of venues including libraries, leisure centres, community education centres, schools etc. These provide valuable outreach into Communities First areas and beyond. Every Communities First Partnership should encourage its partner organisations to make use of their own communications outlets to publicise their contributions (and those of others) to the work of Communities First.

viii. Links with the local media

13.17 Partnerships should seek to develop links with the local press and other media, such as local radio stations and community web-sites. The local media are potentially very valuable vehicles for publicising the work and successes of Communities First Partnerships and for informing and engaging with the community across a range of events and activities.

ix. Appointing a Partnership lead on Communications

13.18 Communities First Partnerships should consider designating one of their members to take responsibility for devising a communications plan and for co-ordinating links with the local media. This would help ensure that a Partnership's communication outputs are consistent, co-ordinated and avoid duplication. However, the successful implementation of an effective communications strategy must be the responsibility of *all* Partnership members not just the person who leads on the activity.

13.19 The Partnership's lead person on communications will need to ensure:

- That the Partnership's communications plan is consistent, coherent and comprehensive.
- That appropriate languages are used reflecting the local community.
- That appropriate tone of language is used.
- That the Partnership's communications plan is reviewed and up-dated as need be.
- That everyone takes on their responsibility for communicating effectively.
- That the communication plans does not become media focused as opposed to customer focused. The aim is to communicate with the community; the media is merely a tool, and one among many, available to achieve that goal.
- That the communication plan seeks to actively promote Health Challenge Wales and its branding.
- That any evaluation of activities measures the success of the activity rather than the actual communication itself.

x. Acknowledgements and use of logos

13.20 Logos and formal public acknowledgements are useful tools for raising the profile of the Partnership, the Communities First Programme and the opportunities they present. For these reasons all advertisements, publicity, newsletters and information materials issued by or in the name of a Communities First Partnership *must* acknowledge the involvement of the Communities First Programme. The acknowledgement should also make clear that the Programme is an initiative of the Welsh Assembly Government. This requirement applies whatever the subject of the communication, be it an announcement of Communities First (or other) funding, a notice of a Partnership meeting or an advertisement for a Communities First funded post. All such communications should use both the Welsh Assembly Government and the Communities First logos. These logos must be no smaller in size than that of any other logo used on the communication.

13.21 Every Communities First Partnership must publicise (eg in its newsletter) the award of all funding made in respect of its activities (whether directly to it or to a Grant Recipient Body) and acknowledge the source and purpose of the funding.

xi. Use of Welsh and English and other languages in all advertisements and notices

13.22 All public notices and advertisements, for jobs and events, issued by or in the name of a Communities First Partnership should be fully bilingual in Welsh and English and, where necessary, reflect the community's needs in respect of other languages and reaching people with disabilities through accessible formats. In addition:

- All Partnerships should have both Welsh and English names, or a name which is acceptable in both languages.
- All wording in logos and “strap lines” used by a Communities First Partnership should be either bilingual or there should be separate Welsh and English versions; where there are separate versions it is not acceptable to use those in one language only in any public notice or advert.
- All Communities First Partnership newsletters should have and should display a bilingual title.

xii. Publication of Ministerial Decisions by the Assembly Government

13.23 The Assembly Government is bound by its Freedom of Information commitments to demonstrate the basis on which Assembly Ministers have made their decisions. The Assembly Government publishes on its web-sites details of every grant decision taken together with the facts and factual analysis upon which Ministers took their decisions. The award of every Communities First grant made by the Assembly Deputy Minister for Regeneration is published in the Decision Report section of the Assembly Government websites at www.information.wales.gov.uk.

13.24 The Assembly Government reserves the right to publicise the Communities First Programme, the amount of any Communities First grant approved to a Partnership and the details of what the grant was approved for in such ways as it considers appropriate.

xiii. Visits by Communities First Unit officials

13.25 Members of the Communities First Regional Teams will visit all Communities First areas within their responsibility at least once a year. Members of the teams are also available to attend meetings of Partnerships as appropriate or if requested. Members of the Communities First Policy branch may also visit Communities First areas and Partnerships from time to time – usually accompanied by members of the relevant Regional Team.

xiv. Regional Co-ordinators' Meetings

13.26 The Communities First Unit funds the regular (two or three times a year) regionally-based meetings for Communities First Co-ordinators. Each meeting is hosted by a Co-ordinator from a Communities First area in that region. The host Co-ordinator should always liaise with the local Communities First Support Network contact for that region to organise the meeting and to draw up an agenda. The

meeting agenda must be agreed with the Communities First Unit in advance of its distribution.

13.27 The Assembly Government considers Co-ordinators' meetings to be a valuable opportunity to communicate messages about strategic issues and policy initiatives. The meetings offer an opportunity for co-ordinators to inform the Assembly Government about concerns at the local level. They also provide a mature environment in which to share the lessons of good – and unsuccessful - experiences.

13.28 All co-ordinators are expected to attend their regional meeting.

xv. *Support, advice and Assembly Government reviews*

13.29 It is in the interests of all Partnerships to follow the principles set out above. Good communication, both within a Partnership and between the Partnership and the community it serves, will make a significant contribution to achieving many of the objectives of the Communities First Programme. The Communities First Support Network and the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit are available to provide advice and assistance to Partnerships if they are struggling to achieve good communication.

13.30 Any Partnership which appears not to attach sufficient priority to promoting good communication may be considered to be undermining the principles of the Communities First Programme. In these circumstances, the Assembly Government may undertake a review and invite the Partnership to develop a plan of action. Failure to address issues identified in a review may be considered by the Assembly Government to be a breach of the terms and conditions of funding, which could result in the reduction, suspension or recovery of grant.

14. Communities First and the Welsh Language

i. Policy Contexts: Iaith Pawb

14.1 The Communities First Programme is but one of several cross-cutting policies which underpin and inform the strategies and programmes of the Welsh Assembly Government. *Iaith Pawb: the National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales* confers a similar status on the Welsh language. The Assembly Government is committed to creating a truly bilingual Wales where “people can choose to live their lives through the medium of either Welsh or English and where the presence of the two languages is a visible and audible source of pride and strength” [*Iaith Pawb* – Foreword].

14.2 According to the 2001 Census, 20.8% of the population of Wales (about 580,000 people) speak Welsh and English. About 28.4% (800,000) have some Welsh language skills.

14.3 The prominence of the Welsh language differs markedly between different parts of Wales and those differences are reflected in the areas which make up the Communities First Programme.

14.4 Nevertheless, there is no part of Wales which does not have a local Welsh speaking constituency. The increased provision in recent decades of Welsh medium and bilingual education means that there are significant numbers of Welsh-speaking children and young people and Welsh-language community organisations and societies in all parts of Wales.

14.5 The Assembly Government acknowledges the right of people in Wales to use the Welsh language in all throes of life and believes it is the responsibility of organisations within Wales to acknowledge and facilitate the individual's right to do so. In accordance with these commitments, the Assembly Government is committed to giving due attention to the Welsh language within the Communities First Programme.

ii. Complementary Strategies: Communities First and *laith Pawb*

14.6 The Assembly Government's Welsh language and Communities First strategies complement and support each other. Both are long-term commitments and both encourage and promote community-based strategies and initiatives. Stronger and sustainable communities in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas will help maintain the language as part of the fabric of everyday life in Wales; encouraging Communities First Partnerships to increase their use of the Welsh language will open up social, cultural, educational, training and business opportunities for communities all over Wales. Likewise, in areas where use of the Welsh language is not as predominant, Communities First Partnerships can play a key role in creating the circumstances in which use of the language can develop and flourish within the community and so build on the gains made thanks to education policies.

iii. Role of all Assembly Government partners

14.7 The Assembly Government expects all its agencies and all its partners to play their part in taking forward *laith Pawb* and contributing to the creation of a bilingual Wales, together with promoting equal opportunities. Communities First Partnerships are key partners of the Assembly Government in taking forward the Communities First Programme.

14.8 As such, the Assembly Government expects that all Communities First Partnerships will contribute in their own ways to the goal of achieving a bilingual Wales.

14.9 The scope of a Partnership's contribution will certainly depend upon the linguistic circumstances of the area concerned. Partnerships must, however, recognise that they do have obligations in respect of using the Welsh language:

- To residents of their community who are Welsh speaking.
- To the Assembly Government, which, under *laith Pawb*, is committed to a policy of mainstreaming the Welsh language in the conduct of all its business and to involving all its agencies and all its partners in that process.

iv. The contribution of the Welsh language to Communities First

14.10 The Assembly Government believes that involving Welsh language / cultural organisations and promoting the use of the Welsh language are effective means of achieving Communities First objectives and of adding value to the work undertaken. By engaging with Welsh language / cultural organisations and using Welsh and operating bilingually, Partnerships can:

- Increase the confidence and self-respect of Welsh-speakers and Welsh-speaking communities.
- Increase the range of opportunities to develop social and vocational skills.
- Contribute to the well being and quality of life of all community members.
- Offer economic opportunities in the way of jobs, business creation and marketing benefits.
- Improve the quality of public services.
- Promote participation and encourage active citizenship.

v. Actions

14.11 Mindful of the different circumstances of the Welsh language across Wales the Assembly Government is not laying down a package of uniform requirements for the use of the Welsh language in every single Partnership.

14.12 There are, however, a number of requirements which all Partnerships should observe:

- All Partnerships should have both Welsh and English names, or a name which is acceptable in both languages.
- All public notices and adverts, for jobs or events, should be fully bilingual in Welsh and English.
- All wording in logos and “strap lines” used by a Communities First Partnership should be either bilingual or there should be separate Welsh and English versions; where there are separate versions it is not acceptable to use those in one language only in any public notice or advert.
- All Communities First Partnership newsletters should have and should display a bilingual title.
- All community audits undertaken by Partnerships should include a simple language profile (for example to identify numbers of Welsh speakers and Welsh medium and bilingual social groups and institutions in the area).
- All community audits should seek to find out the aspirations of the local community (Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking alike) and how to develop the wider use of Welsh within the community – and these aspirations should be reflected in the Partnership’s Community Action Plans.
- All Communities First Partnerships should build links with Welsh speaking social clubs and institutions.
- All Communities First Partnerships should engage with the local *Menter Iaith* (Community language Initiative – see below) for advice and support on how best to develop use of the Welsh language and, where appropriate, how to operate bilingually.

14.13 Partnerships must report on actions taken to promote a bilingual Wales in their Annual Report. This will be monitored. The Assembly Government will consider withholding funding related to any of the above activities if it appears that a Partnership does not meet the minimum requirements set out above.

14.14 Communities First Partnerships must also consider:

- Providing interpretation facilities for Partnership meetings and for public meetings to allow equal opportunity for English and Welsh speakers in the community to contribute to Partnership business (a service which should be made available for English speakers in Partnerships where the language of business is Welsh).
- That minutes, meeting papers and other business literature are available in both Welsh and English.
- That the Communities First Partnership newsletter is fully bilingual (ie the articles as well as the title) or includes an article in the Welsh language as a regular feature (with summary in English for non-Welsh speakers).
- Whether the ability to understand, speak and/or read and write Welsh should be a requirement for certain advertised posts – particularly where the post-holder will be dealing with a large number of Welsh speakers.
- Staging events or other locally tailored activities through the medium of Welsh or staging an event in English or another language which will allow a greater knowledge and understanding of the Welsh language and the culture it supports.
- Building links with local Welsh language social groups, clubs and institutions and inviting them to participate in and contribute to the work of the Partnership.

14.15 The extent to which Partnerships adopt the suggestions listed in the paragraph immediately above will depend upon the linguistic mix of the area in which they are located. In those parts of Wales where Welsh is widely spoken in the community, the Assembly Government would expect use of the Welsh language to be part of the everyday business of the Partnership (making sure that steps are also taken to ensure that Partnership business is also accessible to non-Welsh speakers in the community). Elsewhere, even in areas where Welsh is not so widely spoken, all Partnerships, if they are to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities, must consider and should try to embrace the suggestions.

14.16 The Welsh Language Board states that exceptions can be made where:

- It is a clearly established meeting where all those in attendance speak only one, and the same, language;
- Nobody wishes to receive translated papers;
- If staff or volunteers are unable to provide a service in Welsh.

14.17 Practical advice and support is available to help Partnerships increase their use of the Welsh language (see list of organisations below) and Partnerships are encouraged to draw on this help as much as possible. Encouraging a Welsh-speaker to produce an article in the Welsh language (perhaps with help) for publication in the Partnership Newsletter could do wonders for that person's confidence and self esteem and do likewise for that of other Welsh speakers in the area.

vi. Links to the six Vision Framework themes

14.18 An increasing attention to Welsh language issues is not a cosmetic addition to Partnership workloads. The activities and requirements will add value in real terms to the objectives of Communities First. In terms of the 6 themes identified in the Communities First Vision Framework:

- The Welsh language will add value to a business in terms of cultural identity or attracting commerce.
- The opportunity to use the language of their choice in their dealings with service providers can impact positively on the quality of life of people of all ages.
- Welsh language voluntary organisations can contribute substantially to the area's social life.
- Language can be a key factor in working with victims of crime.
- Many parents may want support in raising their children to be bilingual.
- There are close links between an area's environmental and social heritage and the Welsh language – place names, local history and legends

vii. Support and advice

14.19 Communities First Partnerships should not need to work in isolation in trying to make their contribution to increasing the use of the Welsh language. The Assembly Government has ensured that there is a range of organisations dedicated to providing practical advice and support across all issues regarding bilingual practice. All the organisations are briefed to ensure that they provide support and advice which is sensitive to the needs and capacity of the Partnership with which they are dealing.

14.20 The Assembly Government urges Partnerships in all parts of Wales to liaise closely with the support agencies listed below to plan strategically and effectively, to minimise duplication and error and to maximise outputs.

14.21 Sources of support and advice include:

The **Regional teams** of the Communities First Unit of the Welsh Assembly Government – will advise on the nature and scope of requirements affecting Partnerships, will advise on sources of practical help and support and will monitor activities through the regular progress report system and in community action plans.

The **Welsh Language Board / Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg** - the strategic planning body for the Welsh language funded by the Assembly Government has agreed with its partner organisations to work with and to provide advice and support to Communities First Partnerships. The Board will also contribute directly where its Language Action Plan areas overlap with Communities First areas (Amlwch, Bangor, Pwllheli, Pen Llŷn, Machynlleth / Dyfi Valley, Fishguard-Pembrokeshire, Ammanford, Newport). The Language Action Plan areas have been targeted specifically with a view to bringing organisations and the local community together to focus upon increasing the use of Welsh at the community level. Language Action Plan development officers and volunteers will be able to advise on all aspects of operating

bilingually and developing the use of Welsh in Communities First Partnership-related activities. Contact details for local development officers are available from the Board.

Mentrau Iaith – (Community Language initiatives) – almost all parts of Wales are served by a Menter Iaith (with the exception of Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Newport and Monmouthshire). The *Mentrau Iaith* are community-based voluntary organisations which work with and are funded by the Welsh Language Board, together with other funders. The Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board consider the *Mentrau Iaith* as having a key role in supporting Partnerships in increasing their use and awareness of the Welsh language and are required to engage with Communities First Partnerships. The *Mentrau* will be a key source of practical advice and expertise – for example about the availability of translation and interpretation facilities, the appropriate use of Welsh in business, social and advertising literature. The *Mentrau* can act as brokers for the Welsh language and other Welsh language groups and as a means of attracting Welsh speakers to participate in Communities First. The *Mentrau* can also deliver a range of activities and services where Welsh-medium provision is unavailable, e.g. after-school and school-holiday clubs for children and young people.

Menter a Busnes – the enterprise company is a member organisation of the Communities First Support Network and is engaged in that capacity specifically to provide support on Welsh language issues to Partnerships directly or indirectly. Menter a Busnes works closely in providing strategic guidance on Communities First to the *Mentrau Iaith*. Menter a Busnes also produced the booklet “*Community Speak: Communities First and the Welsh language*” which offers practical advice to Communities First officers and co-ordinators.

Other Welsh-language Organisations

14.22 There are a number of voluntary national organisations that operate through the medium of Welsh and which provide a range of social and educational opportunities at the community level. Most prominent among these are Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh League of Youth), Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (Welsh-medium Playgroups’ Association), Merched y Wawr (Women’s Social Clubs) and Young Farmers’ Clubs. Involving these organisations in Communities First activities will offer the opportunity to reach out to significant numbers of Welsh-speakers of all ages. The Urdd especially will allow children and young people to capitalise on the extensive resources in terms of activities and facilities of what is by far the biggest youth organisation in Wales. Communities First Partnerships in all parts of Wales are urged to engage with the Urdd and the other organisations with a view to involving them in the work of the Partnership.

Other sources of advice

14.23 Most local authorities have Welsh Language Scheme officers who might prove a useful point of contact for Partnerships. For example, they could offer advice on the level of Welsh language provision offered by the local authority.

15. Communities First Partnerships and the Purchasing of Goods, Services, Consultancy or Research – “Procurement”

Introduction

15.1 Whilst most Communities First Partnerships have a Grant Recipient Body dealing with the financial side of their affairs, they may themselves occasionally become involved in “procurement” - the purchasing of goods, services, consultancy or research - albeit on a small scale.

15.2 The Communities First Partnerships should always bear in mind that the money at their disposal to make purchases or pay for services is derived from public funding and so carries with it responsibilities to ensure value for money, openness and fairness in the ways the money is spent.

15.3 In circumstances where Communities First Partnerships are likely to be involved in procurement they should first consult their Grant Recipient Body. The Grant Recipient Body will have a set of rules and procedures of its own to ensure that its procurements are conducted in ways which ensure value for money, openness and fairness. The Communities First Partnership will need to work with the Grant Recipient Body to adapt the latter’s procurement rules and procedures to suit the circumstances of the Partnership. In making any adaptations, care must be taken to ensure the principles of value for money, openness and fairness are maintained.

15.4 Once suitable rules and procedures have been drawn up and agreed with the Grant Recipient Body, the Communities First Partnership will need to formally adopt them. The adopted rules and procedures should be published (for example as an Appendix to the Partnership Agreement and on any web-page run by the Partnership). A copy of the procurement rules and procedures should be available for inspection in the office of the Partnership Co-ordinator.

i. Why you need a formal set of rules and procedures

15.5 Communities First Partnerships should bear in mind that their actions and decisions when making purchases or buying services on behalf of the Partnership will be open to close scrutiny, both formal and informal.

15.6 Partnerships will be spending public (ie taxpayers’) money, for which, ultimately, the Assembly Government is answerable. All the financial business of a Partnership is liable to external audit. The weight of audit scrutiny will fall on the Grant Recipient Body, which is responsible for managing the funds approved on behalf of the Partnership and its activities. Nevertheless, all Partnerships which are responsible for spending a budget, however small, must ensure that they have financial processes in place which are open, transparent and well documented.

ii. What is a Contract?

15.7 Communities First Partnerships should always consider how external observers might perceive how any purchase of goods or services by the Partnership has been handled. All such purchases involve the Partnership entering into a contractual relationship.

A contract is 'a legally binding agreement between two or more parties' and may be either:

- A contract by deed.
- A simple contract.

15.8 *Contracts by Deed* are those contracts which, to be legally binding, are required to be signed, affixed with a seal and exchanged i.e. signed, sealed and delivered. *Simple Contracts* are used everyday e.g. buying clothes, buying food, travelling by bus, purchase of stationery, purchase of personal computers.

15.9 Buying goods and services involves the creation of simple contracts. Legally, simple contracts do not have to be in writing but for the purposes of evidence and accountability it makes sense to have a record. Simple contracts can be created, amended or terminated:

- In writing.
- By word of mouth.
- By the action of the parties.

15.10 It must be remembered that simple contracts may be legally created by word of mouth, over the phone or at a meeting. There is a risk of unwittingly making commitments during meetings with a contractor or potential contractor. When a Communities First Partnership undertakes oral negotiation of contracts it must be on the basis that the outcome of the negotiation is subject to the written agreement and will not be treated as legally binding until such agreement is received by the contractor.

15.11 The placing of a contract by a Communities First Partnership involves the spending of public funds which may generate discussion and interest within the Partnership and / or within the community. Partnerships must have in place procedures and documentation which are robust and which will ensure that decisions about the placing of contracts should not be mis-interpreted or can be readily defended if challenged.

15.12 The procurement rules and procedures drawn up with the Grant Recipient Body should ensure that Partnerships have guidelines for drawing up, agreeing and recording the letting and management of any contract they enter into. It is in every Partnership's interests and for their own protection to do so. The guidelines should cover at least the following:

- The procedure whereby the Partnership approves a contract.
- Who within the Partnership has authority to sign a contract.
- The sizes of contract below which no competition will be required (see below).
- The procedures to be followed when the size of the contract is sufficient to require a competition.
- The management and monitoring of all contracts.
- The procedures for creating and keeping written records on file of quotations received, the decision process and the placing of each contract;
- The procedures for dealing with potential conflicts of interest involving members of the Partnership.

iii. Competitive tendering

15.13 It is a standard rule that most contracts involving the spending of public money should normally be the subject of competitive tendering. The point of any competition is to ensure that that value for money is obtained by placing the contract with the most suitable supplier in the market for the goods and services being purchased. Where contracts are subject to competition it is normal that written quotes are obtained from at least three suppliers using an invitation to quote letter.

iv. Small contracts

15.14 It is recognised that for small contracts a competitive tender will not be required. The Grant Recipient Body's own procurement rules will specify the size of contract below which no competition is required – but that might still be rather high in relation to the budgets likely to be directly available to Communities First Partnerships. The level set for Partnerships should be a matter for discussion with the Grant Recipient Body; the Assembly Government considers that the contract level below which no competition is required should never be higher than £999.

15.15 Even where no competition is required, procedures must be in place to demonstrate how a contract was awarded. At the very least, a quotation, in writing, must be obtained from the single supplier. The written details should specify the nature of the service or works, the company name and address, the price quoted and the date of quote. The quotation should be placed and kept on a file. The order should be placed using a Purchase Order.

v. Placing of contracts – Good Practice

a. Separation of Duties

15.16 Where possible, it is good practice to separate the following duties:

- The financial authority to incur or commit expenditure.
- Placing an order or awarding a contract.
- Certifying the receipt of goods and services.
- The authorisation of payment.

This helps to ensure that funds are protected and that all staff and officers involved in the exercise are protected against any suspicion of financial impropriety.

b. Purchasing ethics

15.17 These are concerned with the standards of conduct of those involved with purchasing of goods and / or services. Using the guidelines below will help to ensure that the actions of those involved in the purchasing process are not misinterpreted as being directed to personal gain.

15.18 If involved in these processes, individuals should:

- Maintain an unimpeachable standard of integrity in all their business relationships.
- Foster the highest possible standards of professional competence among their staff.
- Make the best use of the resources for which they are responsible;
- reject any business practice which is or may reasonably be thought to be improper.
- Ensure that dealings with suppliers are at all times honest, fair and even-handed.
- Promote and support ethical procedure at all times through appropriate systems and procedures.
- Refuse any gifts or generous hospitality other than items of intrinsic value or modest hospitality.

vi. *Avoiding conflict of interest*

15.19 It is possible that Communities First Partnership members, or persons connected with them (such as relatives, business partners or friends) may wish to tender for a contract being offered by their Partnership. This is acceptable, but Partnerships will need to make sure that they conduct the transaction openly and transparently.

a. *Action*

15.20 If a Partnership member, or any person connected with them, has an interest in any of the potential bids for a contract offered by a Partnership:

- That member should declare that interest in writing to the Chairperson of the Partnership (or another senior officer of the Partnership if the Chairperson is the member concerned), copied to the Partnership Co-ordinator.
- That member with an interest should remove themselves from any discussion about the contract and take no part whatsoever in any of the tender procedures.
- The Partnership should consider how its purchasing guidelines should be applied to ensure not only that the procedure is fair to all bidders but can be seen to be so also.
- If, according to the Partnership's guidelines, the contract would normally be subject to a single tender procedure, it is recommended that the Partnership should nevertheless seek written quotes from at least two other suppliers.
- Every stage in the procedure should be recorded formally and the records retained on file and be made available for inspection.

15.21 No person connected with a Communities First Partnership should advertise his or her position in that Partnership as a marketing tool for the sale to other Communities First Partnerships of any product or service which the member has developed through his or her role on their own Partnership.

Conclusion

15.22 The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure:

- That there is fairness and propriety in the spending of public money.
- That the integrity of the Partnership is not undermined in the eyes of the community which it serves.

15.23 Further advice and guidance on procurement issues will be available from the Grant Recipient Body. The relevant Assembly Government Communities First Regional Team, the Communities First Support Network, Local Authority and local County Voluntary Council are also available to help and advise.

SECTION F – SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

This section is intended to provide detail on the support available to Communities First Partnerships. Independent support is available to all those involved in the Communities First Programme and everyone should feel free to call upon it.

This section will be of benefit to all parties.

16. The work and role of the Communities First Support Network (CFSN)

i. Role of CFSN

16.1 Eight voluntary sector organisations which receive funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to support Communities First grouped themselves together to form the Communities First Support Network (CFSN). The network was expanded when the Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils (WACVAC) became members. The CFSN provides Communities First Partnerships and other partner organisations involved in the Communities First Programme with a wide range of help and support.

16.2 The CFSN operates according to two key principles

- That its work should complement rather than duplicate support provided at local level.
- That it provides a “joined-up” service between the different member bodies to reduce duplication and offer a better service to Communities First Partnerships.

16.3 Communities First Partnerships should contact the CFSN team if they need advice on:

- Training, including for marginalised groups or local authorities and members.
- Legal structures and governance issues.
- environmental and physical projects.
- The development of community businesses.
- Welsh language issues.
- Involvement of Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- Funding programmes.

16.4 Information sharing is also very important so that Communities First Partnerships can exchange ideas and good practice and find out about new developments. With this in mind, the CFSN offers news and advice via the Communities First Bulletin, the quarterly *Partner* Newsletter and its Free Phone Help Line and web-site.

16.5 For further information please contact either the Free Phone Help line on 0800 587 8898 or enquiries@communitiesfirst.info or visit the website at www.communitiesfirst.info

ii. CFSN Organisations

16.6 The 9 organisations comprising the Communities First Support Network are:

a. Amcan

an IT based social enterprise which specialises in providing advice and support on information management and e-commerce issues within the social economy in general.

Contact Amcan for advice in preparing:

- Web/intranet/extranet support services.
- Social and/or community audits.
- Social enterprise business/development plans and internal reviews/evaluations.
- Bid writing/project management.

Contact details for Amcan: 01558 823689 or 01633 793071.

b. Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSN Wales)

an organisation dedicated to providing a voice within the voluntary sector to represent the views of Black and Minority Ethnic people on issues that concern them. The BVSN Wales works with communities to find solutions to prejudice, discrimination and racism.

Contact BVSN Wales for:

- Advice on how to identify the views, interests and needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people within your communities.
- Support for work which combats social exclusion and supports capacity building for the Black and Minority Ethnic people within your communities.

Contact details for BVSN Wales: Telephone: Cardiff 029 20 450068

c. Community Development Cymru (CDC)

CDC is an all-Wales member-led independent organisation for paid and unpaid community development practitioners working across a range of sectors in a variety of settings. Among other things, it aims to promote community development at all levels throughout Wales and to strengthen support for community development workers and others engaged in community development.

As part of the support it provides to those working in community development across Wales, CDC employs two Mentoring and Support Officers, funded by the Assembly Government, specifically to provide support to the Communities First Programme; one in North and Mid-Wales, one in South and West Wales. In addition to providing general advice and information on community development, these

officers can work in a more intensive way, over a short and long term period with individual partnerships. This work might involve advice and guidance, support at partnership meetings, providing information training etc.

Staff and members of Communities First Partnerships are welcome to contact CDC for support, including:

- Direct support for Communities First Partnerships.
- One-to-one mentoring and support for co-ordinators.
- Awareness raising for partnerships for core Communities First work i.e social exclusion, anti poverty, participation.
- Access to the Gwraidd Fund* .
- Advice on how to involve the local community in the work of the partnership.
- Guidance on how to participate in, or develop community-based networks and organisations which will help articulate the views of the community and contribute to taking forward the work of the partnership.
- Support for grassroots community development work.

* **Gwraidd** is a scheme (set up by CDC with European Union Objective One funding) to support people living in Communities First areas (which must also fall within the Objective One programme area) to develop their confidence and skills so that they can take an active part in their community. The scheme offers both funding and support and is aimed at marginalised groups. The maximum grant available is £3,000.

CDC also welcomes new members.

Contact details for CDC:

Head office (Newtown)	Tel: 01686 627377 e-mail: Cerys@cdc.cymru.org
South Wales (Mentoring & Support)	Tel: 01443 409755 john@cdc.cymru.org / bill@cdc.cymru.org
North Wales (Mentoring & Support)	Tel: 01766 513415 eleri@cdc.cymru.org

Or visit: <http://www.cdc.cymru.org>

d. Development Trusts Association Wales (DTAW)

a national network of community enterprise organisations. DTAW has the goal of assisting the creation of a sustainable development trust in every community in Wales that wants one. Development trusts are community owned and led organisations, working in towns, cities and rural areas, combining community-led action with business expertise. They aim to bring about social, economic and environment renewal, creating wealth in communities and keeping it there.

Contact DTAW for:

- Support for setting up development trusts.
- Help for existing development trusts.
- Advice and help to persuade others to support development trusts.

Contact details for DTAW –
www.dtawales.org.uk

or contact Peter Williams, the Director of DTA Wales at
peterwilliams@dtawales.org.uk or on 029 2019 0260.

DTAW's Postal Address is:
35b Albert Road
Penarth
CF64 1BY

e. Groundwork

is a UK wide federation of 48 charitable trusts working in many of the most disadvantaged areas in the country to bring together people, places and resources from all parts of the community in effective long-term partnerships. Its purpose is “to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action”.

There are 4 Groundwork Trusts in Wales operating in Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff; Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot; Caerphilly; and Wrexham and Flintshire. They are supported by Groundwork Wales which helps the local trusts work more closely together, act as a common representative voice and develop Groundwork in Wales.

Contact Groundwork for:

- Environmental advice.
- Support for volunteer activities which will help create better, safer and healthier neighbourhoods by enhancing local areas.
- Environmental education youth and arts projects.
- Creating training and employment opportunities.
- Developing footpaths and cycle routes.
- Developing green tourism.
- Supporting community economic regeneration.
- Development of and support for a variety of community enterprises including Biomass fuel development, ILM and community furniture recycling.

Contact details -

website www.groundworkwales.org.uk

or contact:

executivedirector@groundworkwales.org.uk or on 01443 844866.

Groundwork Wales
20 Centre Court
Main Avenue
Treforest Industrial Estate
Treforest
Pontypridd
CF37 5YR

f. Menter a Busnes

is a non-profit-distributing company limited by guarantee established in 1989 in response to the need for developing the economic potential of Welsh speakers.

Menter a Busnes is working in partnership with Wales' foremost language planning agency Iaith Cyf on the Communities First Programme to ensure that the interests and needs of Welsh speakers are recognised and represented in Communities First activities

Contact Menter a Busnes for:

- Advice on use of Welsh in Partnership business and in publications.
- Advice on how to encourage Welsh speakers to become involved in activities and Partnership business.
- Advice on availability of local Welsh language support services (particularly your local *menter iaith*).
- Advice on how Welsh language activities can contribute to achieving the objectives of the Communities First Partnership.

Contact details:

<http://www.menterabusnes.com/english/3/home.html;jsessionid=8E8FE5BAF1528B808F6DC1CDB5970977>

Llyr Huws Gruffydd on 01352 707830 or llyr@menterabusnes.co.uk

g. The Wales Co-operative Centre

has established over 800 co-operative businesses in Wales. The Communities First Programme funds a Development Officer within the Wales Co-operative Centre to provide support to Partnerships throughout Wales.

Contact the Wales Co-operative Centre for:

- Comprehensive business advice.
- Support to partnership on organisational structures.
- Developing personalised Memorandum and Articles of Association for company registration.
- Training courses.
- Legal registration to both new and existing co-operative and credit union businesses.

Contact details for the Wales Co-operative Centre:

Web-site – www.walescoop.com

Tricia Morgan 029 20 556192 tricia.morgan@walescoop.com

Glenn Bowen 029 20 556153 glenn.bowen@walescoop.com

h. Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

is the national umbrella body and voice for the voluntary sector. It represents, campaigns for, supports and develops voluntary organisations, community action, and volunteering in Wales. Its services are available to all voluntary and community organisations in Wales.

As a member of CFSN, WCVA prepares and publishes the Communities First e bulletin and *partner*, the Communities First Newsletter; runs the Communities First Helpline; organises the annual Communities First conference; and delivers a seminar programme designed to promote good practice in Communities First. WCVA, through Participation Cymru, also offers specialist advice, training and support on participatory working to Communities First Partnerships and organisation in Communities First areas.

WCVA administers the Communities First Trust Fund for the Assembly Government.

Contact WCVA:

- If you want to receive copies of the e bulletin or *partner* or to submit information or articles for either.
- For details of the Communities First Support Network Helpline.
- For information about the annual Communities First conference.
- For details of, and bookings for, the seminar programme.
- For advice, training and support from Participation Cymru.
- For information about the Communities First Trust Fund and for an application pack**.

**** The Communities First Trust Fund** is a scheme funded by the Welsh Assembly Government aimed at small community led organisations in Communities First areas in Wales. The fund is managed by the Communities First Support Network and administered on its behalf by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The purpose of the scheme is to support any type of activity undertaken by small community organisations which involves local people in the Communities First areas and which benefits their community. The activities must provide some measure of economic, environmental, social or cultural benefit for people living in a Communities First area. There is no minimum amount of grant but £5,000 is the maximum any group can access from the Trust Fund in any financial year.

Contact WCVA via the Communities First Support Network Helpline on 0800 587 8898 or enquiries@communitiesfirst.info. Alternatively, you can contact us at the WCVA Helpdesk on 0870 607 1666, email help@wcva.org.uk or visit the website at www.wcva.org.uk.

i. WACVAC (Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils)

WACVAC is the network of County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) in Wales.

CVCs are core funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to provide support to the full range of voluntary and community organisations in their county. CVCs have a membership of local voluntary organisations from which their management boards are drawn.

All CVC's provide a common menu of support services as agreed with WAG. These include:

- Support and development of organisations
 - Organisational development e.g. project development, business planning.
 - Training.
 - Information.
 - Funding advice.
 - Legal advice.
 - Volunteering.
- Liaison and representation of sector
 - Structured relationship with local statutory agencies through Compacts.
 - Representing the sector local multi agency partnerships.
 - Supporting sector representatives on local multi agency partnerships.
 - Supporting local regeneration strategies.
- Most CVCs have developed particular areas of specialisms or expertise through the acquisition of project funding e.g. marketing, ICT support, private sector links and others.
- Some CVCs have obtained distinctive Communities First funding from WAG for capacity building support and/or networking and participation work.
- Each CVC has a liaison point with CFSN which in some cases has led to very productive joint working and as suggested in the CFSN Business Plan it is intended to build on this relationship by comprehensive joint working relationships in as many areas as possible.

j. The CFSN Co-ordination Team

The CFSN Co-ordination Team is responsible for ensuring that the different members of the Network work in a collaborative manner and provide effective joined up services. The Co-ordination Team is also responsible for producing guidance material on a range of community development issues relating to Communities First and for liaison with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Contact the Co-ordination Team for:

- Advice on how to access any of CFSN's services.
- Generic support for Partnerships (e.g. roles and responsibilities, capacity building and action planning and community involvement).
- General Communities First queries.

Telephone: Cardiff 029 20 556190 or email help@communitiesfirst.info

SECTION G – AREAS TO ADDRESS

This section provides detail on areas to address, dependent on the needs and aspirations of the local community. Therefore, certain parts of this information may not be relevant in all Partnership areas.

The detail is intended to support Partnerships as they turn their attention to these areas. It is understood that resource constraints may dictate when these areas are considered. It is intended that supplements or circulars covering further areas will be available in the future.

This section will be of benefit to all Partnerships.

17. Involving Children and Young People in Communities First

Introduction

17.1 It is a core aim of the Welsh Assembly Government that all young people in Wales should be given every chance to fulfil their potential. Tackling child poverty is a fundamental component of the Assembly's broader strategy to improve quality of life and extend opportunity to every community in Wales. The Communities First Programme plays a key role in eradicating child poverty and provides an opportunity to reach out to children and young people in the most disadvantaged areas of Wales to help give them a better start in life and to support the most vulnerable.

i. Principles

17.2 Involving and supporting children and young people are key objectives of the Communities First Programme. All Communities First Partnerships are expected to develop and take forward work programmes and eventually sustainable action plans which address the themes set out in the Communities First Vision Framework. The needs of children and young people are relevant to each of the six themes in the Vision Framework: jobs and business; education and training; environment; health and well being; active community and community safety. In devising their work programmes and strategies Communities First Partnerships should consider the specific needs of children and young people under each theme on behalf of and with children and young people.

17.3 The Assembly Government has formally adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, based on which it has agreed seven Core Aims to underpin its policy and priorities for children and young people. Core Aim 5 requires that children and young people "are listened to, treated with respect and are able to have their race and cultural identity recognised." This and the other core aims are required to be reflected in the work of local Partnerships that have the function of setting jointly agreed priorities and objectives for delivery of all the relevant services for those aged 0-25 (see section on "Inter-Partnership working" below).

17.4 Many Communities First Partnerships are taking forward much good work on behalf of children and young people. As the Programme moves into the next phase, the Assembly Government wants to see Communities First Partnerships build on existing activity and to develop their work on behalf of children and young people in an increasingly strategic way.

17.5 The Assembly Government believes that if children and young people are truly to have a stake in the community in which they live they need to be involved in the decision-making and planning processes which affect their community. Communities First Partnerships need to develop mechanisms which allow children and young people to be consulted, to participate and to contribute in meaningful ways and ensure they receive appropriate skilled support through the process. This will include engaging with:

- Younger children.
- Harder to reach children and young people, for example young people not in education or training.
- Children and young people who reflect diversity in terms of languages, culture, ethnicity, religion, and specific needs.

ii. Communities First Partnerships engaging with Children and Young People

17.6 The Assembly Government expects Communities First Partnerships to focus on three levels of activity to achieve the objective of greater involvement of children and young people in the Communities First Programme:

a. Activities which build capacity and develop strategic links

17.7 The Assembly Government encourages Communities First Partnerships to take forward yet more activities involving children and young people. Good activity work benefits the children and young people involved, has a positive impact on the community and can help strengthen the Partnership by raising awareness, interest and involvement among the parents too.

17.8 Activities should not be mere self-standing one-offs; if Communities First is to have long-term impact the activities undertaken need to have sustainable outcomes and build capacity among the beneficiaries. The activities need to fit into a strategic framework which will clarify longer-term benefits for the participants and the community.

17.9 Funding bodies other than the Assembly Government's Communities First Unit may still consider funding one-off projects which benefit children and young people. As Communities First Partnerships develop, the Assembly Government expects them to demonstrate how activities will contribute to longer-term objectives for children and young people. The activities and objectives should be set out in the Partnerships' work programmes and action plans.

17.10 The Assembly Government expects Partnerships to be able to demonstrate that they are working with the authorities and agencies in their area which deliver key services for children and young people - with children and young people themselves involved in planning, developing and putting in place initiatives and monitoring impact.

b. Inter-Partnership working

17.11 A key linkage for Communities First Partnerships to develop is with the Framework Planning Partnerships (FPPs), Children's Partnerships (CPs), and Young People's Partnerships (YPPs). There is one of each of these three Partnerships in each of the 22 unitary authority areas in Wales and they are the key delivery mechanism for the Assembly Government's 0-25 agenda.

17.12 The three Partnerships are often collectively referred to as "the Triangle Partnerships" and they work together to ensure that provision and outcomes for children and young people improve through the effective joint planning, commissioning and delivery of services at local level. They involve local authorities and the key public and voluntary sector bodies in each local authority area. Membership of the Triangle Partnerships is normally 1/3 local authority, 1/3 other statutory sector, 1/3 voluntary sector.

17.13 The primary role of the Triangle Partnerships is to work collaboratively with children and young people to identify need, audit existing services, and to plan collaboratively on a multi-agency basis in order to focus partner agencies' existing mainstream resources on jointly agreed priorities, to eliminate duplication and fill gaps in provision.

17.14 Drawing on the expertise gathered in the Triangle Partnerships, local authorities are required to produce Children and Young People's Plans. These are plans which set out agreed headline objectives and targets for the services of all the partners dealing with children and young people in the local area. They should inform and reflect the Community Strategy for that local authority area, provide the Children and Young People's elements of health, social care and wellbeing strategies and inform the more detailed service-specific plans that sit beneath them.

17.15 The Children Act 2004 sets out to strengthen these planning Partnership arrangements, providing a statutory basis for co-operation between a local authority and key partner agencies to improve the well-being of children. The Assembly Government has indicated that it will use this power to give a statutory footing to the established Children and Young Peoples Framework Partnerships and Children's Partnerships which will rationalise their relationship with Young People's Partnerships that already have a statutory basis in the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

17.16 Section 26 of The Children Act enables the Assembly, by regulations, to require local authorities to provide a single plan for children and young people, to cover the services provided by all of the local authorities' partners – including the NHS. The Assembly will set out in regulations and guidance more detail about the planning requirements. This is in line with the Assembly Government's current programme to rationalise and streamline local authorities' planning requirements. The precise number of remaining plans will be a matter for consultation, though whatever the final number, it will represent a considerable easing of the planning burden.

17.17 Developing better links with the local Triangle Partnerships will help Communities First Partnerships develop a more strategic framework for their work with children and young people. It will also help ensure that the needs and views of

children, young people and their parents or carers from the most disadvantaged areas are fully represented in the work of the Triangle Partnerships and their planning processes and hence into the other strategic plans.

17.18 Examples of active participation, provided by the Communities First Programme, will also demonstrate the positive part that children and young people can play in the lives of their local communities and in making those communities richer. The organisations involved in the Triangle Partnerships, such as the statutory and voluntary youth service, have skills and expertise in working with young people and will be able to assist Communities First Partnerships.

17.19 In terms of funding, Communities First Partnerships can influence the priorities detailed in the local plans drawn up under the Cymorth Programme (Cymorth is the Assembly Government's Children and Youth Support Fund). Representatives of Framework Partnerships should meet annually with Communities First Partnerships within the local authority area, in good time to influence the disposal of Cymorth funds. The purpose of the meeting is for Communities First Partnerships to apprise the Framework Planning Partnership of their priorities for their areas, and conversely for the Framework Planning Partnership to explain their agreed priorities for children and young people in general, and for Cymorth investment in particular. The Cymorth Plan should take account of the Communities First priorities set out in the meeting.

c. Involving children and young people in decision-making

17.20 The Assembly Government expects Communities First Partnerships to work with children and young people in their area to agree on issues which need to be tackled, to jointly develop and support implementation of proposals for tackling them (including funding bids) and to jointly monitor their effectiveness.

17.21 All general community audits undertaken by Communities First Partnerships must demonstrate that they seek to ascertain the needs and aspirations of children and young people in the area.

17.22 Communities First Partnerships should work to develop links with established bodies which bring together children and young people from the area in a representative way, such as school councils and the local county youth forum. But Communities First Partnerships should take care to ensure that they also seek out the views and involvement of children and young people who may feel detached from such bodies.

17.23 Engaging with children and young people for this purpose is a skilled process. Older community members (acting with the best of intentions) can sometimes appear patronising or even dismissive of younger people. Children and young people will require training and support if they are to make a sustained and meaningful contribution. Adults involved in Communities First Partnerships may also need training, in terms of listening skills and an awareness of the importance of regular and meaningful feedback to children and young people.

iii. Actions

17.24 Communities First Partnerships should:

- Continue to undertake capacity building work and activities for and with children and young people.
- Set the capacity building work and activities within a strategic framework outlined in their work programme or community action plan.
- Base their work programme or community action plan on the relevant priorities set out in the Community Strategy and ensure consistency with the relevant parts of other partnership plans such as those for health social care and well-being, children and young people and community safety.
- Develop and strengthen linkages with the main deliverers of services for children and young people.
- Ensure that there are good links into the planning and commissioning activities undertaken by the local Triangle Partnerships.
- Consider organising occasional county-based meetings of co-ordinators from all the Communities First and Triangle Partnerships in that area.
- Use the Communities First Bulletin, *Partner* (the Communities First quarterly newsletter) and regional meetings of Communities First co-ordinators to share good practice about projects involving children and young people and establishing links with the Triangle Partnerships.
- Ensure community audits address the needs of children and young people.
- Establish links with local primary and secondary school councils and the local youth forum.
- Raise awareness generally of the need to involve children and young people in the decision-making process – and of the skills needed to do so effectively.
- Develop sympathetic ways of involving children and young people in the decision-making processes.
- Develop ways so children and young people get feedback on the outcome of their involvement as soon as possible after it has taken place.
- Put in place enduring and sustainable systems to ensure children and young people's involvement in future in all of the above areas of work, for example, considering setting up a children and young people sub-group or attendance at youth fora.

18. Communities First and Older People

i. Why Partnerships need to engage with older people

18.1 The importance of the engagement with and active participation of older people in developing policies and services is at the heart of the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Older People and its theme of 'Valuing Older People'. The Assembly Government considers the Communities First Programme to be a key vehicle to help achieve the aims of giving older people a stronger voice in society, promoting positive images of ageing and tackling discrimination against older people wherever it occurs.

18.2 From the outset of the Programme, the Assembly Government's Guidance has made clear that "[Communities First] Partnerships should make every effort to: apply and promote equality throughout their work by involving *people of all ages* and from ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, faith, disability and disadvantaged groups". The make-up of a Communities First Partnership will depend on local circumstances and levels of local interest, but older people are a key sector within any community and Partnerships should include a representative number within their membership.

ii. Older people representation on Partnerships

18.3 Older people representatives on Partnerships might be drawn from:

- Local community groups representing older people such as the Senior Citizens group.
- Local sheltered housing.
- Individual members from the local community.

18.4 The voluntary sector element on a Communities First Partnership could also include a representative from a local group of the national or regional voluntary organisations concerned with issues affecting older people. These organisations may also be in a position to help with encouraging participation by older people representatives.

18.5 Certain statutory authority members of a Communities First Partnership will also have an important contribution to make in terms of engaging with the interest of older people. The regular representative of the local authority, the health board, the police authority, the housing association, etc. may not have direct responsibility within their organisation for the delivery of services for older people – but they should have a direct line of communication to those who do.

iii. Involving Older People in Communities First

18.6 The Communities First Vision Framework sets out six themes to guide Communities First Partnerships in their work programmes and action plans: jobs and business; education and training; environment; health and well being; active community; and community safety. The Vision Framework identifies issues which might be addressed under the themes and, of particular relevance to older people, these include:

- "That there is a clear focus on helping people of all ages to find work".
- "That facilities exist to promote and provide access to life-long learning and continuing education at all levels and at places and through means which are acceptable to the community".
- "That transport facilities enable participation in economic and social activity".
- "That accessible, responsive and relevant health and care services and facilities are available to all sections of the community".
- "That the community has a forum in which the views of all people, young and old, are sought, listened to and acted upon".

- “That links are encouraged between people of all ages to benefit the wider community”.
- All the issues identified under the community safety theme are of relevance to older people.

18.7 In developing their work programmes and, particularly, when composing their action plans, Communities First Partnerships should consider the specific needs of older people under each theme they address.

iv. The Way Forward

18.8 As the Communities First Programme moves into the next, more strategic phase, the Assembly Government wants to see Communities First Partnerships build on project activity already undertaken and to develop their work on behalf of older people in an increasingly strategic way. Older people have a stake in the community in which they live and should be fully involved in the decision-making and planning of services which affect them and their community.

a. Project work leading to action/forward planning

18.9 There are already many good examples of Communities First Partnerships involving older people and taking forward activities which engage and benefit older people. Some Partnerships have been particularly active in promoting intergenerational practice and have set up groups which help bridge the gap between generations by organising activities such as World War Two street parties, intergenerational training and gardening clubs. Others run Time Banks which encourage and facilitate members of the community, young and old to share their skills and experiences with the wider community. A number of Partnerships have also been very active in enabling older people to take their concerns (for example about public transport) to the local authority and to work with the authority in achieving improvements.

18.20 As useful as these are, projects should not be mere self-standing one-offs; if Communities First is to have long-term impact the activities undertaken need to have sustainable outputs – so need to fit into a strategic framework which will clarify longer-term benefits for the participants and the community.

18.21 Funding bodies other than the Assembly Government’s Communities First Unit may still consider funding one-off projects which benefit older people. The Assembly Government expects Communities First Partnerships to demonstrate how activities will build capacity among older people and their carers and contribute to longer-term objectives for older people which should be set out in the Partnership’s own work programmes and action plan. The Assembly Government also expects Partnerships to be able to demonstrate that they are working increasingly with the authorities and agencies in their area which deliver key services for older people - with older people themselves involved in planning developing and putting in place initiatives and monitoring impact.

b. Inter-Partnership working

18.22 There is clear potential to encourage complementary linkages between Communities First Partnerships and the Older Peoples Strategy Partnership (OPSP) in their area. There is an Older Peoples Strategy Partnership in each of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales and they are the key delivery mechanism for the Assembly Government's Strategy for Older People.

18.23 The OPSPs bring together the local authority and the key public and voluntary sector bodies with an interest in older peoples' services in that area. The OPSPs' objective is to ensure that provision of services and outcomes for older people improve through the effective joint planning of services at local level. Each OPSP has an appointed co-ordinator.

18.24 Developing better links with the local OPSP will help Communities First Partnerships develop a more strategic framework for their work with older people. It will also help ensure that the needs and views of older people or carers from the most disadvantaged areas are fully represented in the OPSP's planning process and thence into other strategic plans.

18.25 One possible way of achieving better linkage would be for there to be regular joint meetings 2 or 3 times per year between OPSP co-ordinators and Communities First co-ordinators at, say, county level. The aims of such meetings would be to improve communication, co-operation and co-ordination of planning and resources. In time, the Assembly Government would expect the plans drawn up by OPSPs and Communities First Partnerships to become increasingly complementary.

18.26 Communities First Partnerships are encouraged to approach their local Older Peoples Forum and Champion to explore potential for working together. The Assembly Government will also seek to involve the National Partnership Forum for Older People and Age Alliance Wales in the development of the strategic national policy framework for Communities First.

c. Involving older people in decision-making

18.27 The Assembly Government expects Communities First Partnerships to work with older people in their area to agree on issues which need to be tackled and to jointly develop and support implementation of proposals for tackling them.

18.28 All general community audits undertaken by Communities First Partnerships must demonstrate that they seek to ascertain the needs and aspirations of older people in the area.

18.29 Communities First Partnerships should work to develop links with any established bodies which bring together older people from the area in a representative way, such as the local Older Peoples Forum. Partnerships should take care to ensure that they also seek out the views and involvement of older people who, for whatever reason, may feel detached from such bodies.

v. Communication

18.30 There are a variety of practical mechanisms which enable strategic messages and advice to be communicated to wider audiences: Communities First circulars, the Communities First Bulletin and Newsletter ("*Partner*") produced by the Communities First Support Network and the regular regional meetings of Communities First co-ordinators. These mechanisms also serve as vehicles for the exchange of experiences and good practice.

vi. Actions

18.31 Communities First Partnerships must:

- Continue to undertake project activity and capacity building work for and with older people and their carers.
- Aim increasingly to set this project activity and capacity building within a strategic framework outlined in the Partnership's work programme or action plan.
- Develop and strengthen linkages with the main deliverers of services for older people.
- Ensure that there are good links into the planning processes initiating from the local OPSP.
- Consider organising occasional county-based meetings of co-ordinators from all the Communities First Partnerships and OPSPs in that area.
- Use the Communities First Bulletin and newsletter and Communities First co-ordinators' meetings to share good practice about projects involving older people and establishing links with the OPSPs.
- Ensure community audits address the needs of older people.
- Establish links with local Older Peoples Forum and the local Older Peoples Champion.
- Raise awareness generally of the need to involve older people in the Partnership decision-making process.

19. Promoting Race Equality

Introduction

19.1 The Assembly Government is strongly committed to the principle that no one should be denied opportunities because of their race or ethnicity. The principle underpins all the strategic policies and programmes of the Assembly Government and is reinforced by the Assembly Government's statutory duty to promote equality.

i. Role of Communities First Partnerships in promoting Race Equality

19.2 The Communities First Programme has a key role in helping the Assembly Government achieve its aims in promoting equality. The principle of equality of opportunity is central to the philosophy of the Communities First Programme and Communities First Partnerships have a vital role to play in translating that principle into real achievement at the local level.

19.3 The Assembly Government expects that all Communities First Partnerships will contribute in their own ways to promoting equality of opportunity between people of different races and ethnicity.

19.4 Wales is a truly multi-cultural nation. It is important that we celebrate and cultivate our diversity and at the same time promote social justice and equality for all races and ethnic groups. We must do all we can to combat racism and the prejudice and inequalities which are derived from racism.

19.5 People from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds experience multiple levels of exclusion: they are more likely than others to live in deprived neighbourhoods, suffer poverty, be unemployed, suffer from ill health, and live in over-crowded and unpopular housing. Whilst they experience much of the same disadvantage as white members of deprived neighbourhoods, people from BME backgrounds suffer the additional consequences of racial discrimination and stereotyping across all dimensions of social, economic and cultural life.

19.6 As a result, members of BME communities constitute some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged across Wales, cutting across all areas of deprivation.

19.7 Whilst people from BME backgrounds have traditionally settled in urban areas in Wales, it is not just people living in cities and large towns who experience discrimination. Too often it is heard said that 'there are not black faces here', as if this meant that minority ethnic issues have no impact in small villages or rural hamlets. In fact, while there are cities and large towns across Wales with large concentrations of BME populations, the needs of black and minority ethnic people in rural areas and isolated communities are just as important for Communities First Partnerships in those localities to address.

ii. Guidelines for Communities First Partnerships on Race Equality

19.8 To help Communities First Partnerships across Wales address the issues arising from racism and discrimination, specific Guidelines on Race Equality have been drawn up and published. The Guidelines were devised under the leadership of the Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW), on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government and the Communities First Support Network.

19.9 The Guidelines were the product of one year of hard work from many individuals and organisations who carried out consultations and collected information from co-ordinators and other relevant agencies and individuals.

19.10 The purpose was to produce an accessible document that would provide Communities First Partnerships, Co-ordinators, Grant Recipient Bodies, local authorities and any other voluntary or statutory agencies involved in the programme with a better understanding of race equality and diversity issues.

19.11 To this end BVSNW put together a brief, employed two consultants and set up a steering group representing strategic agencies, policy makers, Communities First co-ordinators and BME community members. The following organisations were part of the group:

- Commission for Racial Equality.
- Race Equality First.
- North Wales Race Equality Network .
- Valleys Race Equality Council.
- Cardiff and the Vale NHS Trust.
- Community Development Cymru.
- Prosiect 'Cynnwys' Project.
- Communities First Support Network.
- Holyhead Town Communities First.
- Cardiff Communities First.
- Welsh Assembly Government.
- Castle Ward (Swansea) Communities First.
- Thornhill Ward (SW) Communities First.

19.12 As part of the process two consultation meetings were held (in North Wales and South Wales) with CF coordinators and other parties involved in the programme. Also case studies and examples of good and not so good practice were identified to help illustrate issues of discrimination and the realities of BME individuals and communities across Wales.

19.13 The document which was produced provides an essential, informative and practical tool for all involved with BME communities, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers. The Assembly Government urges all those involved in the Communities First programme to make full use of them.

19.14 Rather than try to summarise the content of what is a substantial piece of work, here is a link to the full document – the *Communities First Race Equality Guidelines 2006*:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/publications/cstra/ceequality?lang=en>

20. Communities First and Health Improvement

i. Health Inequalities

20.1 The root causes of ill health are varied and cannot be dealt with by focussing on illness alone or by defining health simply as an absence of illness. Creating a healthier nation is about much more than treating disease. People's health is affected by a number of health determinants, including the:

- General overarching socio–economic conditions in which they live including the economy, environment and culture.
- Their living and working conditions, or whether or not they have a job.
- Social and community influences and opportunities such as the support of family and a network of friends, as well as access to many public services e.g. health, care, education, housing, transport.
- Individuals' capacity: personal skills, knowledge and lifestyle factors.
- Given factors: age, sex, genes.

20.2 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to cross-cutting action across its programmes and to working in partnership to tackle health determinants and to reduce health inequalities. Some of the main factors which can lead to health inequalities are:

- Poverty and low income.
- Education.
- Unemployment or poor employment prospects.

20.3 Successful action in all these areas will make an important contribution to better health and well-being. Good health exists when people are confident that life is manageable and meaningful, and they have adequate resources – mental, physical, emotional, social and economic/ material to meet whatever demands are placed on them. Other factors that contribute to better health include being in a secure job, feeling part of a community, development of coping skills and opportunities for people to influence their environment. Action to revitalise communities can make a positive impact on people's health and well-being.

ii. Health Promotion

20.4 **Health Promotion** is the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. This process includes:

- How the community work collectively to remove barriers and create opportunities for both healthier communities , but also for individuals to develop healthy lifestyles within those communities.
- The collective and individual knowledge of and access to all local public services including: health, care, transport, leisure, culture, housing, benefits etc.
- The ability to collectively agree community needs and engage local facilities and services to work together with the community to improve the environment, services or facilities.
- Developing skills and gaining knowledge from supportive local statutory organisations to develop shared community responses to long term health improvement.

iii. Working with Health Challenge Wales

20.5 The Communities First programme is also about improving the Health and Well Being of the people in communities, and as such is one of the Welsh Assembly Government's contributions to Health Challenge Wales. This is essentially our national branding for better health activities and the national focus for action to improve health and well being.

20.6 It has six main themes covering the main causes of preventable ill-health: smoking; infections; accidents and injuries; substance and alcohol misuse; food and fitness; and mental health and well being. But its scope is wider than this, and encompasses the full socio-economic and environmental determinants of ill health.

20.7 As Wales' new national focus for everyone's efforts to improve their health and well being, *Health Challenge Wales* is particularly relevant to Communities First. It is already helping to recognise what is already being done locally to help people to improve their health but it is also stimulating new action. It is helping people to think

more about their health and usefully, from a community point of view, is a means of harnessing the work, services, expertise and resources of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors for joint action.

20.8 Health is improving in Wales but the pace of change is not fast enough. Ill health still has a major impact on people and their families, on our economy, and on our health services. Yet a significant proportion of the ill health we see around us can be prevented. Building on what's already been done, Communities First Partnerships can make an even greater contribution to people's health and well-being in Wales by helping to address the social, economic and environmental factors that affect it.

20.9 *Health Challenge Wales* is something new and different. It is not a programme or strategy in its own right but is about marketing good health to people of all ages and helping them to improve it. The idea behind *Health Challenge Wales* is simple. Organisations play their part by doing more to create the conditions and services (and information) that encourages and helps people to look after their health, and individuals play their part by doing as much as they can to improve their health and their children's health. Taken together, these will mean an even more co-ordinated and sustained effort to prevent ill health from occurring in the first place.

20.10 Although the Welsh Assembly Government has developed the concept and is contributing to action as part of its own response to the Challenge, it does not own *Health Challenge Wales*. The Challenge can be taken up - and owned - by all types of organisation and by individuals, families, and communities. It can therefore play an important part in the work programmes and Community Action Plans of Communities First Partnerships.

20.11 It is up to people and organisations to decide how they respond to the Challenge. Communities First Partnerships, with their involvement of community-based organisations and their outreach into the community are ideally placed to take forward the Challenge in their areas. Communities First Partnerships can organise local events and action to highlight the benefits of good health and the steps people can take to achieve better health. Such activities will reach more people with help to improve their health and, at the same time, will help to enhance the health component of the area's Communities First Community Action Plan.

20.12 There are clear benefits for Communities First Partnerships in using the Health Challenge Wales branding as it:

- Helps to raise the profile of activities, initiatives and programmes developed as responses to the Challenge.
- Acts as a signpost to the general public to activities and information about improving health and well being.
- Promotes shared responsibility for health and well being in Wales.
- Visibly demonstrates partnership working.
- Helps to stimulate new activities.
- Raises awareness of the wider determinants of health; and
- Focuses our efforts on the main causes of preventable ill health and the six themes of Health Challenge Wales: Smoking; Food and Fitness; Accidents and Injuries; Substance Misuse including alcohol; Infections; and Mental Health.

20.13 Organisations that use the Health Challenge Wales brand will be asked to actively improve health and well being by:

- Working together for a healthier nation.
- Involving all people, and encouraging them to make positive lifestyle changes.
- Making a contribution to better health and well being.
- Being prepared to use new opportunities to get the better health message across.

Contacts and further advice

20.14 To request copies of the Health Challenge Wales Action Pack, either:

visit the website: <http://www.healthchallenge.wales.gov.uk>

telephone: 0845 606 4050; or

e-mail: Health-challenge@wales.gsi.gov.uk

20.15 Sources of additional support:

- Wales Centre for Health for information / knowledge and support with provision of training for skills.
- National Public Health Service – support with advice, skills, knowledge and Health Impact Assessments.
- Local Government- Through Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Co ordinators or Health Improvement Co-ordinators local knowledge, support and networking. This will help ensure strong links to the Community Strategy.

iv. Developing Health Impact Assessments

20.16 As part of Health Challenge Wales, health impact assessment is also a useful way to help organisations inside and outside the health sector to identify the connections between their work and people's health and well-being. Health impact assessment uses a combination of methods and tools to look at projects, policies, and programmes to enable a judgement to be made on their potential effect(s) on people's health and well being.

20.17 Health impact assessment can help to:

- Ensure that the health consequences of decisions – positive and/or negative – are not overlooked.
- Identify new opportunities to protect people's health and identify new opportunities to improve health by building action into other local services, activities and developments.
- Identify and address potential health and well-being inequalities.

20.18 Health impact assessment is an approach that encourages and facilitates partnership and multi-disciplinary working, and the involvement of local people. It can also add value by providing opportunities for joint learning, discussion of plans and proposals, and bridge building with communities.

20.19 The Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU), funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, has been established to support the further development and use of health impact assessments. WHIASU is based in the Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics, which is part of Cardiff University's School of Health Sciences, and is funded to cover the whole of Wales.

20.20 The Unit, working in partnership with the Wales Centre for Health and the National Public Health Service Wales, is building links with Communities First Partnerships and is there to offer help and support in developing health impact assessment within Communities First areas. WHIASU has already worked with some Communities First Partnerships and individual projects, including: Neath Port Talbot Sandfields First; Wrexham Caia Park Partnership; Broughton Communities First Partnership; and the TOPIC House project in Townhill, Swansea.

Contacts

20.21 One of WHIASU'S key roles is to support the development and effective use of the health impact assessment approach in Wales through building partnerships and collaborations with key statutory, voluntary, community and private organisations in Wales. WHIASU can offer help and advice to Communities First co-ordinators and Partnerships. Further information and advice on how WHIASU can work with Communities First areas is available from:

www.whiasu.cf.ac.uk

or telephone on 02920 879161 or 01978 313664

20.22 Partnerships may also choose to invite their local Director of National Public Health Service to sit on the Partnership Board to provide help on the above matters. Details of the local Director can be obtained from:

general.enquiries@nphs.wales.nhs.uk

or telephone on 01443 824160

20.23 Additional consideration should also be given to links with Active Living Strategies, Sports Development and Flying Start Schools.

21. Communities First and People with disabilities

i. Engaging with People with Disabilities and their carers

21.1 Communities First Partnerships are charged with bringing together and representing all sections of the communities in which they are located. It is important that Partnerships make every effort to engage with and involve those who are being denied the opportunity to fulfil themselves or to participate fully in the lives of their communities. The Assembly Government considers the Communities First Programme to be a key vehicle to help reach out to people with disabilities to enable them to have a stronger voice in their communities, to promote positive images and to tackle discrimination.

21.2 The Assembly Government will work with Communities First stakeholders and organisations representing people with disabilities to further develop awareness and participation of people with disabilities in the membership and work of Communities First Partnerships.

21.3 Communities First Partnerships should make every effort to seek the views of people in the community who have disabilities and those who care for them. People with disabilities and their carers have every right to be consulted and involved in the work of their local Communities First Partnerships.

21.4 Communities First Partnerships should consider carefully what they may need to do to reach people with disabilities and their carers and how activities might need to be re-structured to accommodate them. Partnerships should ensure that meetings, venues, publicity, capacity building activities, etc. are fully accessible to people with disabilities, and marketed as such, and that the interests and concerns of people with disabilities and their carers are reflected in community consultations and in Community Action Plans.

21.5 Every Communities First Partnership should consult and seek to involve as members of the Partnership locally-based voluntary organisations working with and for people with disabilities (and / or local branches of national or regional organisations). Such organisations will be able to help in reaching out to people with disabilities living in the community and advise of activities which will enable people with disabilities and their carers to engage fully with the work of the Partnership. The local County Voluntary Council (CVC), Disability Wales (see below) and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) will be able to provide details of local organisations working with and for people with disabilities and their carers.

ii. Organisations to contact for information, advice and support

21.6 Two organisations which are important sources of general advice and information on issues relating to people with disabilities are:

Disability Wales

21.7 Disability Wales (DW) is an independent not for profit organisation established in 1972. They are an umbrella organisation of disability groups and allies from across Wales. Membership consists of three types:

- Full members: organisations/groups.
- Associated members: other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Individual subscribers: people with disabilities and supporters who are not members of a group/organisation.

21.8 DW aims are to:

- Promote the understanding, adoption and implementation of the Social Model of Disability throughout Wales.
- To remove all disabling barriers in society.

- To recognise and address the nature of multiple discrimination against people with disabilities including race, gender, sexual orientation, age, belief and language.
- To develop strong and effective organisations led by people with disabilities across Wales.
- To develop strong and effective organisations led by people with disabilities across Wales.
- To represent the views priorities and interests of Disability Wales members.

21.9 Support to member groups is provided via regional disability and access group network development, creating opportunities for information sharing, training and support. DW provide a Members' Information Service, including a website, DW News, (a bi-monthly magazine), and a telephone information service. DW also develop policy in consultation with their members on a range of disability-related subjects including access to transport, housing and the built environment.

21.10 DW receive both core and grant funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. They also run projects funded from various sources and in partnership with other organisations, which deliver their aims and objectives.

21.11 More information on Disability Wales can be obtained from their website: www.disabilitywales.org

The Disability Rights Commission

21.12 The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is an independent body, established by Act of Parliament to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities and promote equality of opportunity. They provide advice and information to people with disabilities, employers and service providers on disability related issues, including the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

21.13 In Wales, the DRC has two roles:

- Making sure the DRC's work is delivered effectively in Wales.
- Making sure the DRC understands and responds to issues which are particular to Wales.

21.14 DRC Wales produces policy statements and research on disability issues, and publications on rights and good practice for people with disabilities, employers and service providers. It will support legal cases to test the limits of the law and will provide an independent Disability Conciliation Service for people with disabilities and service providers.

21.15 The DRC in Wales work with a number of partners including the Welsh Assembly Government, other disability organisations such as Disability Wales and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

21.16 More information on DRC Wales can be obtained from their web-site: www.drc.org.uk/wales/index.asp

22. Economic Inactivity, Overindebtedness and Developing links with Jobcentre Plus Wales

Introduction

22.1 The Communities First areas are characterised by having a higher than average number of people who are on low pay, unemployed, have a long-term incapacity and / or are dependent on various forms of benefit support payments. Several of the people involved in the Communities First Partnership may themselves be experiencing some of these circumstances. Addressing these circumstances and the issues arising from them is likely to become one of the highest priorities of a Communities First Partnership.

22.2 The Communities First Vision Framework sets out a number of issues under the theme of *Jobs and Business* to help Partnerships focus their efforts in tackling the problems of economic inactivity. The implications of economic inactivity will vary in scale between Communities First areas, but its impacts will be felt across the range of social and economic conditions within the community - as represented within the other themes under the Vision Framework. Accordingly, as Partnerships mature, they will need to develop solutions which are integrated and cross-cutting in the ways they address the problems of the area.

22.3 It is fair to say that even the most established Communities First Partnerships have yet to address the hard-edged economic issues relating to the income of local people. Communities First Partnerships will be encouraged and supported in the development of both *maximising income initiatives* and in activities aimed at minimising debt within their community. These could include co-working with partners such as Jobcentre Plus Wales, Citizens Advice Bureaux and / or credit unions, local authority economic development departments, the Legal Services Commission on local initiatives; ensuring maximum take-up of benefits, tax credits and pension credits; council tax rebate etc through proactive awareness raising initiatives within the community; and active promotion of credit unions. Ensuring adequate child care provision for working parents is also an important aspect of this work.

i. Credit Unions

22.4 The Welsh Assembly Government encourages co-working and partnership between Communities First Partnerships and credit unions. In the first instance, if there is no local credit union, groups of Communities First Partnerships should consider acting as a nucleus for the formation of one. If a credit union is already operating locally, then co-working with Communities First, including on issues like premises, training and publicity, is strongly encouraged.

ii. Job-centre Plus Wales

22.5 Another key partner, potentially, for a Communities First Partnership in devising and implementing strategies to address economic inactivity and its impacts is Jobcentre Plus Wales.

22.6 Jobcentre Plus, an agency operating under the Department for Work and Pensions, brings together services, formerly provided by the Employment Service

and Benefits Agency, for all people of working age. This includes the provision of a single point of delivery for advice and support on benefits (including Jobseeker's Allowance; Incapacity Benefit; Income Support; and the Social Fund) and job opportunities.

22.7 The key areas of work for Jobcentre Plus are :

- Making benefit payments (to some 325,000 people throughout Wales).
- helping people into jobs (so helping in the wider agenda of creating a better society, through reducing social deprivation, criminal behaviour, etc).
- helping employers in Wales to recruit and retain workers, and to develop their businesses.

22.8 This important strategic and operational interface with employers, jobseekers, and claimants of a range of benefits puts Jobcentre Plus Wales in a unique position to contribute to the Welsh Assembly Government's social and economic policy objectives. The activities of Jobcentre Plus Wales make a vital contribution to a wide range of the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and programmes, in such areas as lifelong learning; economic development; community regeneration; housing; health; transport; and childcare.

22.9 The **Head Office for Jobcentre Plus in Wales** (containing the Business Development Unit) is based in Cardiff, and, as of 31 October 2005, there are four Jobcentre Plus Districts in Wales, as identified below (with the location of the main District Office also listed):

- **South Wales Valleys District** (Merthyr Tydfil), covering the former districts of Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf and Eastern Valleys.
- **South East Wales District** (Cardiff), covering the former districts of Cardiff and the Vale and South East Wales.
- **South West Wales District** (Llanelli), covering the former districts of Swansea Bay and West Wales.
- **North and Mid Wales District** (Wrexham), covering the former districts of North West Wales and Powys, and Wrexham and North Wales Coast.

22.10 It is important that Communities First Partnerships develop a good understanding of the work and services of Jobcentre Plus and a good working relationship between them will benefit both parties and the communities themselves:

- Jobcentre Plus is one of the main sources of advice and support on several of the issues which will concern many residents of Communities First areas. Communities First Partnerships are ideally placed to publicise the work and services of Jobcentre Plus and to facilitate contact between the agency and its customers.
- Communities First Partnerships offer Jobcentre Plus an effective means of reaching out to and involving the communities in devising and implementing key initiatives designed to tackle the problems of the very areas the agency is committed to serving.

- Communities First newsletters, community meetings, staff and premises provide an infrastructure and resource which could usefully be put at the disposal of Jobcentre Plus to help the agency reach out into the communities and communicate details of its strategies and support mechanisms. This could be an important contribution to helping the agency achieve its objectives for the benefit of community members.
- Jobcentre Plus will be crucial partners in any strategy a Communities First Partnership seeks to devise to address economic inactivity. In the event of their proposing to devise such a strategy, Partnerships should seek to engage with Jobcentre Plus as soon as possible.

22.11 If they have not already done so, Communities First co-ordinators are encouraged to make contact with their local Jobcentre Plus District. This can be arranged through the Jobcentre Plus Business Development Team (tel: 029 20 348498). The agency welcomes the opportunity to work with Communities First Partnerships. If need be, the Assembly Government will facilitate the process by organising introductory meetings and briefings at a regional level. Local authorities should also be involved; they will have an important role in supporting and sustaining the relationship between partnerships and the agency – many of a local authority's services and responsibilities under economic development, health and well-being, etc also contribute significantly to the work of countering economic inactivity.

23. Communities First and Childcare

Introduction

23.1 In November 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government published its updated and forward childcare strategy "Childcare is for Children" which will build on our achievements to date in developing childcare in Wales. The new childcare strategy sets out the vision of childcare as part of the modern welfare state, available to all parents who need it and delivered by qualified professionals, dedicated to serving the development needs of the children in their care.

23.2 The Childcare Strategy supports three broad objectives:

- To ensure that all childcare supports the developmental needs of children in Wales.
- To ensure that childcare is widely available and affordable, to enable parents to train or work and thus raise levels of economic activity in Wales.
- To provide childcare so that parents can have flexibility and choice in how they balance family, work and other commitments within their lives, and in doing so promote gender equality within the workforce.

23.3 This strategy sees the objective for children's development as paramount, not least because it sees investment in childcare as delivering significant long term returns to society, including a better skills base amongst young people. Childcare is recognised as being crucial to wider Assembly Government policies such as equality of opportunity, tackling poverty and economic inactivity, and supporting the Welsh language.

23.4 The childcare strategy will be funded in the main from the Cymorth – Children and Youth Support Fund. The strategy highlights a number of initiatives that the Assembly Government is taking to promote childcare, including the Flying Start Initiative, the Genesis Wales European Social Fund project and the Torfaen childcare pilot.

23.5. "Childcare is for Children" contains a combination of social and economic measures, with 19 specific and timed actions. These include actions on regulation, the needs of disabled children, local authority duties, the workforce, information for parents, links with Communities First and the needs of ethnic minority communities. The Strategy looks forward to an expansion in quality childcare provision as a result of the measures and actions contained within it.

i. Communities First Partnerships and childcare

23.6 The Welsh Assembly Government has long recognised that in disadvantaged areas, it is more difficult to sustain formal childcare. A large part of the reason is that parents do not perceive it as affordable. Nevertheless, the provision of childcare in these areas offers families a route out of poverty. This is why the Cymorth grant; the development of integrated centres; and the Genesis Wales childcare programme; all concentrate resources on these areas. In all these cases, the engagement of local communities will be critical to the success of the initiatives.

23.7 This revised guidance reiterates that Communities First Partnerships are already able to apply for childcare costs as funding of last resort or where the service is not currently available.

23.8 Communities that Care, an independent charity, is working as part of the CWLWM (Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually) project with Communities First Partnerships, testing out models for supporting the Partnerships to ensure that well evaluated childcare and early years interventions are embedded in their plans.

24. Links with Local Development Plans

24.1 Local authorities are required to work with their partner organisations and local communities to prepare local development plans which set out the local planning authority's proposals and policies for future development and use of land in its area and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). In preparing a local development plan the local planning authority is required to prepare a Delivery Agreement which has two parts:

- A timetable for producing the Local Development Plan.
- a Community Involvement Scheme which explains how developers, the public and interested groups can contribute to plan preparation. This also explains how the authority will deal with the responses and what feedback the authority will give to the responses.

24.2 The Assembly has to agree the Delivery Agreement once it has been approved by the local authority. It would be of benefit to the local planning authority to engage with and involve all Communities First Partnerships in their area. If the Communities First Partnership is not involved in the process it may wish to contact the local planning authority to seek information on the development plan and request to be involved in the process. The Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure that Communities First Partnerships are included in the agreed Delivery Agreements.

24.3 Further information, including a public guide to the process, on the LocalDevelopment Plan process can be found on the Assembly website:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/depc/epcpublications/PlanPubs/Devplans>

COMMUNITY VISION FRAMEWORK

The Communities First Vision Framework was developed to encourage a holistic approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. It provides a broad range of potential aspirations, but Communities First Partnerships must decide the route to achieve them in their own way. As Partnerships develop they will need to consider all aspects of the Vision Framework. For practical reasons, however, as Partnerships build up membership, experience and contacts it may be necessary to focus on the most pressing local issues and address only some themes in the first instance.

When Communities First Partnerships are first developing their Action Plans they need not feel under pressure to address immediately the Vision Framework in its entirety if this is not appropriate. The Vision Framework is intended to be a guide not a straightjacket. As Partnerships gain experience and self-confidence, and develop their links with the range of service provider organisations, they will be able to expand the scope of their Actions Plans to address each of the six themes in ways appropriate to the needs of the local community. It remains the objective that, over the course of the Programme, the Community Action Plan should address all the themes raised in the Vision Framework.

Although the themes are set out in columns so that the range of issues that need to be tackled are clearly identified, they are closely related to each other and need to be addressed in an integrated and “cross-cutting” way. In addition, accessibility and inclusion should be considered under all themes.

JOB AND BUSINESS	EDUCATION AND TRAINING	ENVIRONMENT	HEALTH AND WELL BEING	ACTIVE COMMUNITY	CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
1A: That a full advice and support structure exists to enable the creation of jobs and the development of job opportunities in the private and social economy sectors.	2A: That schools, colleges and training agencies provide educational and training opportunities to all, regardless of ability, race, faith, age, ethnic	3A: That there is a clean and pleasant physical environment, free from litter and industrial heritage scars and supporting a diverse wildlife that the community can	4A: That the community has a shared responsibility for health by responding to <i>Health Challenge Wales</i> and takes action to help people to look after their health and	5A: That the community is empowered to engage freely with the local and national democratic processes. 5B: That the	6A: That the police and other criminal justice agencies are fully involved in the Communities First process. 6B: That Community Safety

<p>1B: That there is a full range of support services for the growth of private, community and social enterprises.</p>	<p>background, gender, sexual orientation or disability.</p> <p>2B: That facilities exist to promote and provide access to life-long learning and continuing education at all levels and at places and through means which are acceptable to the community.</p>	<p>enjoy.</p> <p>3B: That there are safe play and recreational areas for children and people of all ages.</p> <p>3C: That housing is of an acceptable standard and is repaired and maintained with reasonable responsiveness to need.</p> <p>3D: That transport facilities enable participation in economic and social activity.</p> <p>3E: That the community plays an active role in the promotion and maintenance of a clean, pleasant and healthy environment</p> <p>3F: That the</p>	<p>wellbeing.</p> <p>4B: That positive health and wellbeing is encouraged and supported.</p> <p>4C: That all health services and community facilities are appropriate and accessible to all sections of the community.</p> <p>4D: That it is recognised that all other policies and programmes have a potential impact on health and wellbeing and this impact is considered and maximised.</p> <p>4E: That new opportunities to improve health and wellbeing are routinely identified. Including the identification of</p>	<p>community has in place developed and well used channels of communication with the various elected and public bodies.</p> <p>5C: That a community partnership exists which involves key service providers, the voluntary sector and community members.</p> <p>5D: That there is a culture which encourages volunteering through formal and informal processes, including mutual assistance schemes such as Time-banks.</p> <p>5E: That the</p>	<p>Partnerships are fully engaged to ensure a multi-agency response to addressing the underlying causes of crime.</p> <p>6C: That the area is free from the fear of crime and disorder,</p> <p>6D: That effective community based, intelligence-led policing is in place.</p> <p>6E: That plans exist to prevent substance misuse by tackling offending.</p> <p>6F: That plans exist to offer support or treatment to those who want to change their behaviours.</p>
<p>1C: That activities are undertaken to promote local trading, exchange and wealth circulation within the area.</p> <p>1D: That there is an advanced ICT infrastructure to support business development and commerce.</p> <p>1E: That there is a clear focus on helping people of all ages to find work, including self-employment.</p> <p>1F: That there are accessible and</p>					

<p>affordable transport services and infrastructure available to widen employment and business development opportunities.</p>	<p>2D: That appropriate training and development opportunities exist to enable real community participation in the local regeneration process.</p>	<p>community and agencies make every effort to respect others needs in relation to noise, disputes, litter dumping and care of animals.</p>	<p>issues that could have a negative impact on health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>community has a forum in which the views of all people, young and old, are sought, listened to and acted upon.</p>	<p>6G: That road safety and traffic control strategies are developed and implemented in partnership with the community.</p>
<p>1G: That there are community generated links to agencies and businesses which help provide opportunities for those of all ages who have difficulties in finding employment.</p>	<p>2E: That people of all ages are actively encouraged to develop skills that will help them find work and participate in learning, training and development throughout life.</p>	<p>3G: That the community and agencies support action to reduce the risks to health from environmental pollution, including tobacco smoke and other air polluters.</p>	<p>4F: That health and social care advice, support and information is easily accessible; tailored to the needs of all age groups in the community; and takes account of people's language and cultural preferences.</p>	<p>5F: That systems are in place to ensure that disabled and older people can play a useful role in regenerating their communities, for example, by overcoming barriers and engaging with consultative fora.</p>	<p>6H: That "secure by design" issues are addressed.</p> <p>6I: That safety in the home is promoted by partnership of all relevant agencies.</p>
<p>1H: That members of the community have access to financial services and are encouraged to circulate income within the community.</p>	<p>2F: That schools, colleges, training agencies, local authorities and the voluntary sector work in</p>	<p>4G: That Communities First Partnerships ensure engagement with key health service planners and providers.</p>	<p>4H: That the barriers that prevent people from leading a healthy lifestyle are identified and that action is taken</p>	<p>5G: That all people regardless of their age, gender, race, faith, ethnic background, sexual orientation or disability are encouraged to participate in community activities and</p>	<p>6J: That anti-social behaviour is tackled through effective partnership working.</p> <p>6K: That the community and agencies work with youth offending teams to develop schemes to encourage young</p>

	<p>partnership to provide a wide range of learning and training opportunities for the adult population.</p> <p>2G: That facilities exist to train and build confidence through arts, sports and cultural activities.</p> <p>2H: That access to training in and through ICT is provided at all levels.</p> <p>2I: That there are accessible and affordable transport services and infrastructure available to widen educational opportunities.</p>		<p>to remove them.</p> <p>4I: That action is taken to tackle the wider determinants of health , that is the underlying social, environmental and economic factors that impact on community health and wellbeing are addressed.</p> <p>4J: That contraception and sexual health advice / services are accessible to all members of the community, particularly those most vulnerable to teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV; and that they take account of cultural, language & disability issues.</p>	<p>volunteering in positive ways.</p> <p>5H: That the community has access to advice and guidance on the range of help and benefits available to increase the incomes of local people.</p> <p>5I: That links are encouraged between people of all ages to benefit the wider community.</p> <p>5J: That opportunities exist to enable people of all ages and backgrounds to attend and participate in arts, sports and cultural activities.</p> <p>5K: That the</p>	<p>people to lead crime-free lives.</p> <p>6L: That appropriate links are made with local domestic violence fora to ensure that people suffering from domestic violence know where to go for help.</p>
--	---	--	---	--	--

			<p>4K: That nutrition advice is available to enable people to follow healthy and balanced diets.</p> <p>4L That fresh and affordable produce is available locally to help people to adopt healthy and balanced diets.</p> <p>4M: That community residents have access to affordable exercise, cultural and leisure facilities and are actively encouraged to participate in physical and cultural activity.</p>	<p>community has the opportunity to use and access various forms of Information Communications Technology (ICT) with the aim of achieving, and raising levels of, digital inclusion – promoting social inclusion through the use of technology.</p>	
--	--	--	---	---	--

Communities First Guidance Note

**Mainstreaming Equality and
Diversity Issues within
Communities First Partnerships**

Purpose of the Guidance Note:

This Guidance note details how Communities First Partnerships should facilitate and mainstream equality and diversity and human rights issues within their Partnership. It then details how future funding will be provided in this area to help facilitate the process.

The Note:

- Explains the Welsh Assembly Government's statutory duty in this area;
- Details the history of the Communities First funding support on equality and diversity and human rights;
- Outlines the process for how the future funding will be provided to facilitate and mainstream equality and diversity and human rights issues; and
- Provides an outline of the types of activities that should be considered for funding by Partnerships.

1. The Welsh Assembly Government's Statutory Duty

- 1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of Welsh life regardless of age, disability, gender, language, race, religion and belief or sexual orientation. The Assembly Government also has a duty to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, the social and economic life of Wales. It also has specific duties in respect of the Welsh language.
- 1.2 Key to taking forward this agenda is the “mainstreaming” of equality, diversity and human rights. This is about the integration of respect for diversity and equality of opportunity principles, diversity and human rights issues into strategies and practices into the everyday work of the Welsh Assembly Government and the bodies it funds. This means that consideration of all equality related issues should be embedded into all aspects of the work of the Welsh Assembly Government and the bodies it funds. We recognise that mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a process that will lead to a better understanding of the diverse needs of the people of Wales. Mainstreaming is not about just having specific, isolated, projects, on (in this case) equality, diversity and human rights issues, it is about how the whole issue is integrated.
- 1.3 Communities First Partnerships have a key role in ensuring that equality and diversity issues are mainstreamed within their work as they are funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 1.4 Anecdotal evidence suggests that the engagement of excluded individuals and groups in Communities First Partnerships has been variable. Under Communities First, it is vital that contributions are valued from everyone across society. It is therefore vital that work is taken forward to ensure that all Communities First partnerships operate in an inclusive way. In order to take work forward on this important agenda, we are therefore looking to develop this area to ensure that Partnerships mainstream equality, diversity and human rights issues.
- 1.5 Communities First Partnerships also have responsibilities under legislation and they should be aware of them. More details on the legislative context can be found at Annex A.

2. History of the Communities First Support Fund

- 2.1 To date, the Welsh Assembly Government has funded six national organisations with four of them specifically working to help support Partnerships' mainstream equality, diversity and human rights issues and engage with excluded groups when taking their work forward. These organisations were:
 - Business in the Community*;
 - Princes Trust Cymru;
 - Mediation Wales*;

- Royal National Institute for the Blind;
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf; and
- The Black Ethnic Support Team (BEST).

*Those with the * were not funded specifically to help take forward equality, diversity and human rights issues.*

- 2.2 The work of these organisations in supporting Communities First Partnerships was reviewed in 2006. The review looked at what support we had in place for Partnerships already; undertook some research into its effectiveness and looked at the needs of Communities First Partnerships.
- 2.3 The Review concluded that the support arrangements for the Communities First Partnerships have been adequate during the early years of the Communities First Programme. However, as the programme has moved on, the support requirements were changing as partnerships develop. The main finding of the review was that more support is needed as the support provided by the six support fund organisations was not sufficient to meet future needs. For example, no funding was given to support the engagement and mainstreaming of disabled people.
- 2.4 The Welsh Assembly Government could not fund the full range of support needed using the approach above as it would use a disproportionate level of funds to the overall Communities First budget. Therefore, the review recommended that future support must be refocused in order to provide a range of support which can be accessed by partnerships dependent on their needs.
- 2.5 As the funding for the above organisations has come to an end, the Welsh Assembly Government has been considering how arrangements can be taken forward to ensure that equality and diversity issues are mainstreamed within Communities First Partnerships.

3. Process for Future Funding in this Area

- 3.1 Based on the outcome of the review, the Welsh Assembly Government has decided that future funding in this area will be allocated to Communities First Partnerships so they can look at how equality and diversity issues are mainstreamed. This is in line with the main principle of the Communities First Programme which is to empower communities to take responsibility for bringing about change in their area.
- 3.2 It should be noted at the outset that that we do not expect Communities First Partnerships to cover all equality and diversity issues in one go. They should undertake a phased approach to mainstreaming the issues, based on the priorities of Partnerships and the evidence of need based in the self assessment form at Annex B – more detail on this later.

Levels of Funding

- 3.3 It has been agreed that an additional £5,000 will be allocated to each Communities First Partnership from 2008/09 onwards to support the mainstreaming of equality and diversity issues (**note – details of how the process will work this financial year (2007/08) is below**). The £5,000 must be ring fenced to support this purpose only. However, it does not mean that this is the only expenditure that should be spent on mainstreaming equality and diversity – it is there to act as a catalyst to support the whole of the funding stream. The whole issue should run through all of the work of the Partnerships.
- 3.4 The money will be added to the budget line of each Communities First Partnerships (from 2008/09) as part of the funding they receive from their relevant Welsh Assembly Government Communities First Implementation Team.
- 3.5 The money should then be drawn down as part of the normal claims process undertaken by Communities First Partnerships. In terms of reporting, Partnerships will be expected to show how they have taken forward work in this area as part of their annual reports.
- 3.6 The stages that should be followed when considering the specifics of what activities/ways of working should take place are detailed below.

First Stage

- 3.7 The first stage in the process is that co-ordinators from each Partnership should undertake a self assessment of what they are currently doing to mainstream equality and diversity issues within their Partnership. This should then form the evidence base for how Partnerships are going to take work forward in this area.
- 3.8 The **attached form** at Annex B entitled “Needs Assessment for Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity issues” must be completed as part of this process, particularly to show the baseline from where Communities First Partnerships are starting. The whole Partnership should be involved and the form must be signed by the relevant signatories.
- 3.9 If you have any queries on this process, you should contact Alyn Owen in the Communities First Policy Team at the Welsh Assembly Government. Alyn is on secondment from Merthyr CBC and is on hand to provide any help and support in relation to pulling together your form.

Second Stage

- 3.10 We would advise that Partnerships do not work in isolation when attempting to mainstream equality and diversity issues particularly as joint working between Partnerships can lead to economies of scale and greater community benefit on these issues.

- 3.11 The Welsh Assembly Government therefore recommends that the second stage in the process involves a meeting between all Communities First Co-ordinators in the local authority area taking place. The aim of this meeting should be to discuss the support requirements of individual Partnerships in relation to mainstreaming equality and diversity which are detailed in their respective “needs assessment” forms - drafted by each Co-ordinator. It should be remembered that Partnerships are encouraged to take a phased approach to this and are not expected to cover all equality and diversity issues immediately.
- 3.12 Co-ordinators should decide if there are areas where the support needs of Partnerships match. If there is a situation where Partnerships within the same local authority area identify the same/similar issues around mainstreaming equality and diversity issues, then consideration should be given to joint working.
- 3.13 Before Co-ordinators/Partnerships take any work forward, Alyn Owen in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Communities First Policy Unit must be contacted to be made aware of the proposed work. Alyn will be able to inform discussions on these more strategic proposals. In doing this, he will seek advice from the appropriate, local, regional and national organisations.

Joint Working

- 3.14 In order to encourage working between Communities First Partnerships on this issue, the Welsh Assembly Government has been considering providing additional funds to support imaginative joint working proposals which impact on a number of Communities First areas.
- 3.15 It has been agreed that if at least 4 or over 50% of Communities First Partnerships in a local authority area propose to work together on taking forward mainstreaming the equality and diversity issues, then the Assembly Government will consider “topping up” the amount of funding required for the project.
- 3.16 As stated in 3.13 above, Alyn Owen in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Policy Unit needs to be contacted to offer advice on any proposed joint working proposal. Alyn will seek advice from the appropriate, local, regional and national organisations in order to inform comments on the proposal and consider issues around providing additional funds.

Third Stage

- 3.17 When it has been agreed as to whether Partnerships are taking forward work individually, jointly or whether there are elements of both, the attached “needs assessment form” must be sent to the Alyn Owen Welsh Assembly Government’s Communities First Policy Unit for information.

- 3.18 The identified work should be taken forward by the Partnership(s) and accounted for along with other funding provided by the Welsh Assembly Governments' Implementation Teams.
- 3.19 The Assembly Government's Communities First Policy Team, of which Alyn is part, will monitor the work being undertaken throughout the year. Formal monitoring will be undertaken as part of the normal Communities First Implementation process – through the Annual report.

Process for this Financial Year (2007/08)

- 3.20 The text above talks about the process from 2008/09 where £5,000 will form part of the budget line given to Partnerships to enable them to mainstream equality and diversity issues.
- 3.21 However, we recognise that this year the situation is different, particularly as we are now into the financial year and Partnerships budgets are set. In addition, Partnerships have all received the monitoring forms and we recognise that a lot of staff resources will be spent on completing them this year along with your annual reports. Therefore, Partnerships are not expected to undertake additional activities (detailed later) on mainstreaming equality and diversity issues this financial year. However, if you are already undertaking some work in this area, please continue to do so.
- 3.22 We do not however want to discourage Partnerships from undertaking specific additional activities on mainstreaming equality and diversity issues (in line with this Guidance), should they want to, this financial year.
- 3.23 Therefore, for this financial year only, if Partnerships want to undertake activities in this area they should submit a single bid to the Communities First Policy Unit (c/o Alyn Owen). The bid can be up to a **maximum of £5,000** and should be submitted on the form at Annex B to this Guidance, along with a covering letter showing a breakdown of the associated costings.
- 3.24 The bid will be considered by the Welsh Assembly Government Minister and, subject to approval, you will be provided with the necessary offer letter. As this is the start of the process under the new arrangements we expect the focus of bids will be on supporting audits of existing provision in order to provide a baseline for future work.
- 3.25 All of the work must be undertaken this financial year. Therefore, there will be a closing date of 30th November 2007 in order to ensure that offer letters are sent out in good time for completion of activities.

Working with National/Regional/Local Organisations

- 3.26 In developing any proposals, the Welsh Assembly Government wants to ensure that the work that has been undertaken by previous funded organisations and also others (both local, regional and national) is not ignored. The Assembly Government feels it is key that the arrangements

developed by Partnerships should allow and encourage Partnerships to commission support from relevant organisations with the necessary expertise including national organisations which have received Communities First funding as well as others.

4. Eligible Activities under the New Arrangements

- 4.1 Any work undertaken in this area must make sure that it does not lose the fact that it should be underpinned by the Human Rights agenda and, more specifically, Equality and Diversity.
- 4.2 In taking the work forward, Partnerships must ensure that the work contributes to the mainstreaming equality and diversity issues across the 6 Welsh Assembly Government themes (below). In the future, the Welsh Assembly Government is developing a multi-strand approach which is aimed at ensuring that all inequalities are considered in a holistic way.
- 4.3 The work being undertaken should be phased and Partnerships should not try and cover all equality and diversity issues in one go, although it goes without saying that some may be interrelated.
- 4.4 The Welsh Assembly Government themes are in the bullets below. There is no particular order in which Partnerships should aim to address the themes.
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sexual orientation

Note: The Welsh Language is woven through all of the above themes.

- 4.5 The work taken forward could relate to either working with individuals or groups. Communities First Partnerships must consider which is the most appropriate way to ensure equality and diversity issues are mainstreamed into their Partnership and the activities they will be taking forward. Examples of types of work include working with individuals or groups with mental health issues.
- 4.6 A range of activities should be considered and they all must clearly relate to mainstreaming equality and diversity issues and also fit within the above Welsh assembly Government themes.
- 4.7 The types of activities that could be funded include :
 - Training for Communities First Partnerships, staff and small community groups on specific issues relating to equality and diversity;
 - Costs of undertaking an audit of existing work on mainstreaming equality and diversity issues;

- Costs of inviting experts to advise partnership members of equality and diversity issues
- Visits to other partnerships and similar organisations within Wales who have undertaken positive work in this area
- Work with other Partnerships / Organisations in an area
- Support for a worker to work on mainstreaming particular equality and diversity issues (only as part of a joint application)
- Buying in support or training
- Focus group meetings to discuss issues around engagement
- Mentoring
- Disabled access
- Childcare costs/provision to support engagement of hard to reach groups
- Provision in community language which is not English
- Promotion of the participation of under-represented groups

Please note, we recognise that the above list is not exhaustive

4.8 Eligible costs to help Partnerships undertake the above activities could include:

- Purchase or hire of equipment to ensure access/participation at meetings etc....
- Publicity Materials / Flyers to highlight specific issues on equality and diversity
- Costs of meeting room hire or transport costs to support engagement
- Costs of a specific post aimed at mainstreaming equality and diversity issues (only as part of a joint application)

Please note, we recognise that the above list is not exhaustive

4.9 In considering the types of activities you propose to undertake, you should ensure that they lead to the broad outcomes below.

- Partnerships are more inclusive
- Individuals and groups feel more included
- Increased awareness of Equality and Diversity issues in the community
- Increased cultural awareness of members of staff and Partnership members
- Improved sensitivity/confidentiality on specific issues.

4.10 We have outlined the fact that you need to make sure that the work undertaken is in line with the broad outcomes above. However, you must ensure that any activity undertaken is in line with the new reporting systems and contain specific SMART targets.

4.11 The work will be monitored as part of the Communities First implementation process.

5. Contact Details

The process is being managed within the Welsh Assembly Government by Alyn Owen. Alyn is on secondment to the Welsh Assembly Government from Merthyr County Borough Council.

Alyn Owen
Communities First Support Fund Manager
Welsh Assembly Government
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

Tel: 01656 729289

E-mail: alyn.owen@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

The Legislative Context.

The ***Human Rights Act 1998*** sets a framework underpinning equality. It provides a direct means to challenge discrimination on further grounds of language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status, insofar as area of human rights is activated. The inclusion of 'other status' means that these grounds are not exhaustive and are likely to be extended by case law over time.

The equality agenda is also underpinned by a large body of other legislation, which includes:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2006
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Equality Act

The Equality Act received Royal Assent on 16 February 2006 and it will:

- Establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and define its purpose and functions;
- Make it unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions;
- Enable provision to be made for prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions;
- Create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men ('the gender duty'), and prohibit sex discrimination and harassment in the exercise of public functions.

The ***Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*** came into effect in April 2001. It amends the Race Relations Act 1976 to impose a general duty, and a series of specific duties, on specified public bodies in Britain.

The general duty requires that, in carrying out its functions, the Assembly shall have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial

discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

A series of specific duties has also been created which require public authorities to establish a proactive approach to race equality. This includes preparation of a Race Equality Scheme, which should set out the Assembly's arrangements for:

- listing all functions, policies and proposed policies assessed as
- relevant to the general duty;
- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies
- the promotion of race equality;
- monitoring policies for adverse impact on the promotion of race equality;
- publishing the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring;
- ensuring that the public have access to
- information and services provided by the Assembly;
- training staff in connection with the general and specific duties; and
- reviewing the assessment of functions, policies and proposed policies every 3 years.

The Gender Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2006, with effect from 6 April 2007, amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, creating a general gender duty which will require public bodies, when carrying out functions of a public nature, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women; and
- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment.

The Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) is intended to drive forward a culture of positive change across the public sector and in doing so remove many of the barriers disabled people encounter in their daily lives. The DDA 2005 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 so as to impose a general duty on public authorities, when carrying out their public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

In addition, those public authorities deemed to have a significant impact on the lives of disabled people, including the Welsh Assembly Government, will be subject to a specific duty requiring them to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights. The UK ratified the convention in 1991.

The convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights. These include:

- Special protection measures and assistance
- Access to services such as education and health care
- Develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential
- Grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding
- Be informed about, and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner

All of the rights in the convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination.

The **Welsh Language Act 1993** embeds the principle that the English and Welsh languages should be treated on the basis of equality, and applies to all providers delivering services in Wales, including service providers based outside, but operating within Wales.

The **Government of Wales Act 1998** moved beyond equal treatment legislation to an unprecedented legal duty by requiring such a proactive approach for government. Consequently, it must:

- make arrangements with a view to securing that its functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people (Section 120)

The new **Government of Wales Act** will continue our duty to promote equality of opportunity. Section 77 of the new Act states that Welsh Ministers must make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that their functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people.



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

ANNEX B
COMMUNITIES FIRST SUPPORT FUND

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY AND
DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Partnership Name.....

***under Section 126 of the Housing Grant, Construction &
Regeneration Act 1996***



communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

**Communities First Unit
Communities Directorate
Social Justice & Regeneration Department
Welsh Assembly Government**

May 2007

Contents:

Section 1: Contact Details
Section 2: Existing Needs
Section 3: Future Priorities
Section 4: Endorsement

This form should be returned to:

Alyn Owen
Communities First Policy Unit
Communities Directorate
Welsh Assembly Government
Merthyr Tydfil Office
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

E-mail: alyn.owen@wales.gsi.gov.uk

SECTION 1: CONTACT DETAILS

Communities First Area:	Local Authority Area:
Name of person submitting the application: Representing:(please provide name of organisation and contact details) Address: Postcode: Telephone No: Mobile No: Fax No: e-mail address:	Name of Communities First Partnership Co-ordinator: Address: Postcode: Telephone No: Mobile No: Fax No: e-mail address:
Name of Communities First Partnership: Chair: Address: Postcode: Telephone No: Mobile No: Fax No: e-mail address:	

SECTION 2: EXISTING NEEDS

Please explain how your Communities First Partnership is currently mainstreaming equality and diversity issues across the 6 Welsh Assembly Government themes below, with specific reference to what engagement takes place with the relevant community groups:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion and belief

- Sexual orientation

People and communities will not fit neatly into one category and interrelationships should be recognised. The Welsh Language should be considered alongside every theme.

Please remember that this is a **needs assessment** so we recognise that you may not be undertaking work on all themes. However, this information should be used as an evidence base for taking work forward.

SECTION 3: FUTURE PRIORITIES / FUNDING APPLICATION FOR 2007/08

1. Highlight the key areas of work that you will be taking forward to mainstream Equality and Diversity issues across the main Assembly Government themes?

(Please outline each project/activity in turn)

2. Please detail what groups have you consulted with across the different themes? For example, what “umbrella” and other groups have you identified to work with?

SECTION 4 : ENDORSEMENT

Please ensure that the hard copy is signed by the following people and sent to Alyn Owen at the Welsh Assembly Government's Communities First Policy Unit, Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil.

The Communities First Co-ordinator:

Signature -----

Name in Block Capitals -----

Date -----

Nominated representative of the Grant Recipient Body:

Signature -----

Name in Block Capitals -----

Date -----

The Communities First Chair

Signature -----

Name in Block Capitals -----

Date: -----