

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL IN SCOTLAND, ENGLAND AND WALES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide the Committee with a broad overview of neighbourhood renewal arrangements in Scotland, England and Wales. The paper examines the framework for neighbourhood renewal in each of the jurisdictions and explores a number of other relevant issues such as governance arrangements, target setting and progress monitoring, and the allocation and management of budgets.

SCOTLAND

THE STRATEGY

1. The framework for regeneration and neighbourhood renewal in Scotland is set out in '[Better Communities in Scotland – Closing the Gap](#)', published by the Scottish Executive in June 2002¹. The central aim of the strategy is to tackle the inequalities between communities by narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged communities and the rest of Scotland. The strategy recognised that an important vehicle in achieving this aim was the network of **Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs)** throughout Scotland.

THE DELIVERY MODEL: SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS

2. Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) were established in 1999 as a key part of the social justice policy agenda in Scotland. There were 48 Social Inclusion Partnerships, of which 34 were area-based initiatives and the other 14 thematically-based partnerships (e.g. health; young people; black and minority ethnic communities etc.). Thematically-based SIPs focused upon the social exclusion of specific social groups rather than specific areas of deprivation².
3. SIPs were multi-agency partnerships comprised of representatives from, for example, Local Authorities, Health Boards, further education providers the private sector, and local voluntary and community bodies. They were monitored at national level by Communities Scotland and funded through the Social Inclusion Partnership Fund.

¹ Scottish Executive (2002) Better Communities in Scotland – Closing the Gap. The Scottish Executive's Community Regeneration Statement.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/46729/0031676.pdf

² Communities Scotland (2007). Learning Lessons from Thematic Social Inclusion Partnerships. www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/pubcs_017193.pdf

4. However, it was recommended in *'Better Communities in Scotland – Closing the Gap'* that SIP funding and the role of SIPs in tackling poverty and regenerating local communities, be integrated into new local **Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)**. Each local authority area in Scotland has a CPP facilitated by the local authority and whose membership comprises of key public, private and community organisations in that area.
5. In 2004, the Scottish Executive established a **Community Regeneration Fund** to replace the Social Inclusion Partnership Fund and the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund. The CRF is focused on the most deprived 15% of areas identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. The new CPPs had to set out, through three-year Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs) how they intended to use the new Community Regeneration funding, alongside their own resources, to deliver specific regeneration outcomes³. The rationale for this was to move away from project-based funding and to ensure that local regeneration takes place within the wider strategic context of community planning so that core services and core budgets were working together.
6. The process of integration between SIPs and CCPs began in 2003/04. However, before the formal integration process could begin, each CPP had to demonstrate that it was ready to integrate SIPs into their community planning framework through the submission of a 'Statement of Readiness'.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

7. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 provides the legislative basis for **Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)**. It places a statutory duty on local authorities to initiate and facilitate community planning through the creation of Community Planning Partnerships. The Act also places a statutory duty on other agencies to engage in community planning on different levels, i.e.:
 - **Local authorities** – have a duty to initiate, facilitate and maintain Community Planning;
 - **Core partners** (e.g. health boards, enterprise networks, police, fire and regional transport partnerships) – have a duty to participate in Community Planning; and
 - **Scottish Ministers** – have a duty to promote and encourage Community Planning⁴.
8. Each CCP has strategic Community Planning board. In many of the CPPs the Board is chaired by a senior local councillor and membership consists of senior executive representatives from local statutory bodies (e.g. police, health and social care, transport etc). The size of CCP boards and the degree to which private sector and community and voluntary sector participate can vary between local authority areas⁵. For illustrative purposes, Table 1 provides some background information on Glasgow Community Planning Partnership.

³ Communities Scotland website:

www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_008070.hcsp#TopOfPage

⁴ Information extracted from the Community Planning website -

www.improvementservice.org.uk/community-planning/about-us.html

⁵ Audit Scotland (2006) Community Planning: An Initial Review. www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2006/nr_060616_community_planning.pdf

9. Day to day performance management for community planning priorities is usually delegated from the CPP board to theme groups (e.g. community safety, health, community regeneration, employment and lifelong learning, environment and transport) and/or other local structures. CPP boards play a key role in holding these groups to account for their progress against action plans.
10. In a review of CPPs in 2006, Audit Scotland maintained that CPPs have developed highly complex structures. For example, an audit of partnership working in North Lanarkshire CPP revealed that 53 different groups were working within the CPP, some of which were supported by further groups. The Audit Scotland report highlights that one of the objectives of the community planning legislation was to help to rationalise structures. However, in 2006 Audit Scotland concluded that CPPs had not helped to rationalise the number or complexity of partnerships in any significant way⁶.

Table 1: Glasgow Community Planning Partnership⁷

The Glasgow Community Planning Partnership was established in 2004 and is made up of a number of key public, private and community organisations many of which are required by law to participate in community planning.

The Glasgow Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board consists of: Glasgow City Council; Glasgow Housing Association; NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde; Strathclyde Fire and Rescue; Strathclyde Police; and, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. The Board is chaired by the Deputy Leader of Glasgow City Council and it is reported that each organisation on the council is represented at the 'highest executive level'. The Board meet three times per year.

In addition to the work of the overall Glasgow CPP, there are ten local CPPs across the City, each with its own Board with a degree of delegated decision making powers within local boundaries. These partnership boards provide membership opportunities to a broader range of strategic partners including Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, Jobcentre Plus, Culture and Sport Glasgow, five Local Regeneration Agencies, local residents, and representatives from the further education sector etc. Each local partnership board also has a Community Reference Group (CRG) consisting of representatives from community based organisations. The CRG aim to give a voice to local residents.

The Glasgow CPP has a 'Memorandum of Understanding' which commits the partnership to, amongst other things, develop a clear and long term vision for the city that sets out joint priorities, performance indicators and targets.

11. The Audit Scotland report further highlighted that some difficulties arose from the new partnership governance arrangements. For example, the different boundaries, accountabilities and financial regulations in partner organisations can make community planning and joint working difficult. The operational boundaries of statutory partners usually differ from those of the local authority and the Audit Scotland report suggests that this can lead to additional bureaucracy and delays

⁶ Ibid, p17.

⁷ Information extracted from the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership website, www.glasgowcommunityplanningpartnership.org.uk/

in decision making. Additionally, for statutory bodies involved in more than one CPP (e.g. police and fire services, NHS boards and enterprise networks) there can be considerable demands on senior managers of such bodies to prepare for and attend different CCP meetings⁸.

12. The Audit Scotland report also highlighted that the various bodies represented on CPP boards are accountable to different accountability structures and that this can have practical implications on how CPPs function and can also create tensions between community planning partnerships. For example, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and regional transport partnerships are accountable to locally elected members (and ultimately the community through elected representatives). NHS Boards are accountable to Scottish Ministers and ultimately to the Scottish Parliament.

MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION OF BUDGETS

13. The most significant source of funding available to CPPs was the **Community Regeneration Fund (CRF)**, £318m over a three year period (2005-2008) was allocated to CPPs to improve Scotland's most deprived areas. However, the range of other funding streams available to CPPs is complex; for example in 2005/06 the Audit Commission estimated that the Scottish Executive provided at least 42 different funding streams totalling around £685.1 million intended to be spent through partnership working. Each funding stream usually has its own application process and monitoring and reporting arrangements. Audit Scotland suggests that whilst it is important to maintain control over public funds, this system increases the bureaucratic workload of partnerships and creates an administration burden on the lead agency responsible for managing the funds⁹.

14. CRF funding ended in 2008 and has been replaced by the **Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF)**, a new ring-fenced fund aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation across Scotland¹⁰. The fund, totalling £435m over 3 years, is allocated to CPPs to enable them to 'tackle area based and individual poverty and to help more people access and sustain employment opportunities'. The aims of FSF are three-fold:

- Regeneration of disadvantaged communities;
- Tackling poverty by helping vulnerable people and groups; and
- Overcoming barriers to employment.

15. Allocations of the fund are informed by objective evidence of levels of need in each area, using the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006](#)¹¹. This takes into account both concentrations of multiple deprivation and patterns of individual deprivation. The fund is allocated to CPPs and it is for them to decide how they wish to allocate resources locally to meet their priority outcomes.

16. Progress is tracked through Single Outcome Agreements (see next section for further details on SOAs). Initiatives supported by the fund are driven by local circumstances and priorities in each area. They range from employability and

⁸ Ibid, p10.

⁹ Ibid, p14.

¹⁰ The Fairer Scotland Fund replaced seven funds – Community Regeneration Fund, Community Voices Fund, Working for Families Fund, Workforce Plus, More Choices More Chances, Financial Inclusion Fund, and Changing Children's Services Fund.

¹¹ See www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/

financial inclusion initiatives in Dundee, a shopmobility service in East Ayrshire, a benefits uptake and fuel poverty advice for the elderly project in Falkirk, to a mentoring support project to help 'looked after' young people in Renfrewshire. The Fairer Scotland Fund is ring-fenced until March 2010 to allow all CPP priority outcomes linked to regenerating communities, tackling poverty, and overcoming barriers to employment to be fully embedded within SOAs¹².

TARGET SETTING

17. A significant number of CCPs set and monitor area targets through **Single Outcome Agreements** (SOAs). SOAs resulted from the Concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) (November 2007) which set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and Local Government, based on mutual respect and partnership¹³. Each CPP SOA is based upon **15 'National Outcomes'** (see Table 2) which were agreed in the Concordat. CPPs are expected to commit to supporting progress at national level through improvement in outcomes at local level.
18. The Scottish Government has developed a set of **45 'National Indicators'** (see Table 3) to track progress towards outcomes which include explicit targets. Local Government has developed a **'Menu of Local Indicators'**¹⁴ that CPPs can select from to monitor progress at a local level. This is a 'live' menu where the scope and coverage of indicators will expand over time to support the ongoing development of SOAs. The menu includes links to relevant national data sources (e.g. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Scottish Household Survey etc.) which can be used at local authority level. However, CPPs are free to use other local indicators they feel are relevant to their outcomes (e.g. locally generated qualitative information such as residents' and services' user's views of the quality of life in local areas)¹⁵.

Table 2: 15 National Outcomes¹⁶

1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

¹² Information extracted from www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/fairer-scotland-fund

¹³ From 2010 it is anticipated that all Community Planning Partnerships will become responsible for producing Single Outcome Agreements.

¹⁴ Improvement Service (2008) Menu of Local Outcome Indicators (Version 3) www.improvementservice.org.uk/core-programmes/single-outcome-agreements-/

¹⁵ Improvement Service (2008) SOA Development and Self Assessment Toolkit. www.improvementservice.org.uk/core-programmes/single-outcome-agreements-/

¹⁶ Improvement Service (2008) Single Outcome Agreements: Guidance, Format and Indicators for Scottish Local Government. www.improvementservice.org.uk/core-programmes/single-outcome-agreements-/

6. We live longer, healthier lives.
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
10. We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Table 3: A Selection of the 45 National Indicators and Targets¹⁷

<p>Indicator 10: Decrease the proportion of individuals in poverty.</p> <p>Indicator 16: Increase healthy life expectancy at birth in the most deprived areas.</p> <p>Indicator 18: Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions by 2011.</p> <p>Indicator 21: Reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among the under 75s in deprived areas.</p> <p>Indicator 27: Increase the rate of new house building.</p> <p>Indicator 28: Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live.</p> <p>Indicator 31: Increase positive public perception of the general crime rate in local area.</p>
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19. Each SOA should also include a number of '**Intermediate Outcomes**' which measure the shorter-term benefits and changes for citizens and the community resulting from the activities of an organisation or service over the medium term. Intermediate achievements are expected to lead to large outcomes in the long term.

PROGRESS MONITORING

20. The methods by which each CPP monitors and reports on progress against targets can vary. A significant number of CPPs have given a commitment to report progress on the Single Outcome Agreement annually via their websites¹⁸. Some groups, such as Aberdeen CPP, have given a commitment that each of lead partner will report on a six monthly basis demonstrating what action has and will be taken to deliver on each outcome, including identifying risks which might impede delivery¹⁹. Additionally, the vast majority of CPPs have their own

¹⁷ Ibid, p8-9.

¹⁸ The vast majority of CPPs have their own websites containing their SOAs and Community Plans (e.g. Glasgow CPP - www.glasgowcommunityplanningpartnership.org.uk/gcphome.aspx; Aberdeen CPP www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk).

¹⁹ Aberdeen City Alliance (2008) Community Plan Update 2008 and Single Outcome Agreement 2008-2011.

dedicated websites which keep residents and other local stakeholders informed through the publication of SOAs, Community Plans and CPP Board minutes.

ENGLAND

THE STRATEGY

21. In January 2001, the Cabinet Office published '[A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy and Action Plan](#)',²⁰ which set out the Government's vision for neighbourhood renewal in England. The Strategy's main aspiration is that within 10 to 20 years time no-one in England should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live.

THE DELIVERY MODEL: LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

22. A central part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is the creation of **Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)**. A LSP is a non-statutory body that brings together the different parts of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors at a local level. The lead player in the LSP is the local council. LSPs are tasked with developing and implementing local strategies and setting local targets for improving outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS²¹

23. The majority of LSPs are non corporate bodies, although a handful are organised as companies limited by guarantee. As a result, the working relationships within the LSP and the governance arrangements are reflected in partnership agreements or other protocols.

24. As non-statutory partnerships, LSPs remain free to define their own constitutions and their own remit. However, an increasing weight of government expectation is placed on LSPs. Many of the individual partner bodies involved now have statutory duties to undertake as part of their partnership work. The **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007** introduced a new 'duty to cooperate'. This applies to many public bodies involved as partners on LSPs, and on the sub-partnerships or 'thematic' groups which feed into LSPs. Partners in the LSP need to agree targets in their Local Area Agreement (LAA), and identify individual or shared responsibility for meeting them.

TARGET SETTING & PROGRESS MONITORING

25. **Local Area Agreements (LAAs)** are three-year agreements, developed by local councils with their partners in a LSP. Each LAA is negotiated with the Government Office for the region, before being agreed and signed off by the Secretary of State. Within each area, LAAs are overseen by LSPs. The local authority is the lead partner in the LSP and the statutory 'responsible body' for the LAA.

²⁰ Cabinet Office (2001) A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy and Action Plan. Report by the Social Exclusion Unit.

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=85

²¹ Information in the 'Governance Arrangements' and 'Target Setting' sections are largely extracted from the Improvement and Development Agency website, www.idea.gov.uk/

26. LAAs are drawn up by 'upper-tier authorities', i.e. counties, unitaries, London boroughs. District councils are also involved in this process in that they are statutory 'named partners' in terms of requirements for consultation and co-operation. Therefore, developing an LAA in a two-tier area can be a complex process.
27. As part of the development of LAAs, a growing proportion of government funding streams are now combined in a single Area Based Grant (ABG). This funding is used alongside mainstream budgets to support the achievement of specific 'improvement targets' identified in LAAs. Each LAA includes up to 35 such targets, negotiated through the Government Office and subsequently designated by the Secretary of State.
28. The priorities and targets within each LAA are normally drawn from the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for the area. The SCS is a long-term vision (often 10 or 20 years) based on evidence and forecasts of economic, social and environmental trends. An SCS may go through several stages in its preparation and involve extensive consultation with local people.
29. According to the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) local councillors also have an active role to play in overview and scrutiny of LAAs, reviewing progress and calling to account those charged with delivering on targets. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has strengthened the role of councils in scrutinising the activities of local partners.
30. From 2008, councils and LSP partners are using a range of mainstream funds, coupled with the new **Area Based Grant (ABG)**, to resource the delivery of LAA targets. ABG is a general grant allocated by government to individual areas²².

MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION OF BUDGETS

31. 86 of the most deprived local authorities in England were identified as eligible for funding through the **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)**. To qualify for funding each area had to establish its own LSP. Indices of Deprivation are used to allocate funding to specific local authorities. £1.05 billion of NRF resources were made available during the period 2006/08²³.
32. In 2008, NRF was replaced by a new fund, the **Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF)**. This fund also incorporates the Department for Work and Pensions 'Deprived Areas Fund'. The WNF, will form a distinct element of the Area Based Grant (ABG). It will provide resources to local authorities to tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise in their most deprived areas. The fund will provide the basis for a new approach, recognising the need to tackle worklessness on a community wide basis and including those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and those on Incapacity Benefit. The total WNF of £1.5 billion will be allocated, with more than £450million in 2008-09, and over £500million in 2009-10 and 2010-11²⁴.

²² Improvement and Development Agency, www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=6908743

²³ www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=611

²⁴ Department for Work and Pensions (2007) The Working Neighbourhoods Fund. www.partnersinsalford.org/working-neighbourhoods-fund.pdf

WALES

THE REGENERATION PROGRAMME

33. '[Communities First](#)', which has been in operation since 2001, is the Welsh Assembly Government's long term regeneration programme aimed at 'improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales'.
34. The programme supports 132 spatially targeted community regeneration partnerships at electoral (ward) level or sub-ward level comprising of:
- The 100 most deprived electoral divisions as identified by the 2000 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD); and
 - 32 sub-ward 'pockets of deprivation'.

In addition to these, 10 projects of special interest were supported under the programme on the basis of the specific needs of identified groups (e.g. physical disability, victims of domestic violence, minority ethnic groups). Following a revision of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2005 a further 46 Lower Super Output areas were identified for support²⁵. The inclusion of these new areas means that the programme covers approximately 20% of the population of Wales²⁶.

THE DELIVERY MODEL: COMMUNITIES FIRST PARTNERSHIPS & GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS²⁷

35. The key delivery vehicle for 'Communities First' is local **Community First Partnerships**, each is supported by a team of community development workers. The Welsh Assembly Government recommends that the make-up of Communities First Partnerships adheres to a three thirds principle model with one third of members drawn from the local community, one third from the statutory sector and one third from the voluntary/business sectors. The members drawn from the local community should not be outnumbered by the number of members in either one of the two other categories.
36. Statutory sector membership on a Communities First Partnership may be drawn from a wide range of public bodies, e.g. local authorities, local health boards, schools, the police, the fire service, Assembly Government etc. Councillors or elected/appointed members may sit as statutory sector representatives on the Partnership but only if they have been formally delegated to do so by their organisation.
37. 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 (e.g. a local authority or a housing

²⁵ Adamson, D. & Bromily, R. (2008) Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Community First. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2157-community-wales-empowerment.pdf, p4.

²⁶ Welsh Assembly Government (2007) Communities First Guidance 2007. <http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/communityregendevelop/cfguidance07/guidancee?lang=en>, p3.

²⁷ The information in the following sections has been largely drawn from Welsh Assembly Government's (2007) Communities First Guidance 2007.

association) to act as a grant recipient body to apply for and administer funding on behalf of the Partnership.

38. In all cases a Communities First Partnership should have a 'Partnership Agreement' (also referred to as "rules of procedure" or "constitution") which governs the arrangement of Partnership business. Each Partnership must also, at their Annual General Meeting (AGM) elect a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Information on the outcomes of Partnership meetings, including minutes, action points and other Partnership activities should be circulated to the wider community in an accessible format.
39. 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. Guidance produced by the Welsh Assembly Government recommends that the lead department for Communities First in each local authority should meet on a regular basis (at least quarterly) with Community Partnership co-ordinators in their area to discuss strategic issues.

MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION OF BUDGETS

40. The **Communities First Trust Fund** was established by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2001, it is a fund to develop social capital in Communities First areas rather than as a strategic fund. The Fund distributes small amounts of funding for activities and projects to community groups and was designed to be 'red-tape busting' by reducing the application and evaluation paperwork associated with it. By doing this, the Trust Fund aimed to quickly and easily distribute funds to Communities First areas, thereby developing the feel good factor in areas that had suffered from long-term deprivation.
41. The Communities First Trust Fund is managed on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government by the Communities First Support Network (CFSN) and administered centrally by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) via a team of six staff members who manage an annual budget of over £3 million. Each of the existing Communities First areas has an annual allocation of funds for which community groups working within that area can apply. The 100 ward-based partnership areas are allocated £20,000 per year, as are the 10 communities of interest or imaginative proposals. The 32 areas that are classed as sub-pockets of deprivation are allocated £10,000 annually. The maximum size for an application is £5,000²⁸.
42. 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 Local Government, are held to account by the National Assembly for Wales. 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

²⁸ Welsh Assembly Government (2007) Evaluation of the Communities First Trust Fund: Research Summary. Research conducted by Wavehill Consulting,

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/research/cftrustfund/summary.doc?lang=en>, 2.

correctly, on the purpose for which the grant was approved, and that the best possible value for money is obtained²⁹.

TARGET SETTING: COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

43. Guidance developed by the Welsh Assembly Government recommends that each Communities First Partnership should 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 which the community wishes to adopt. The Guidance document states that,

“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”.

44. The guidance further states that this need not be overly complex, but that if a plan is to be a living document and regularly updated, then Partnerships need to have a way of checking whether success has been achieved. The guidance stresses that 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.

MONITORING PROGRESS

45. 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, the guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government states that it is important that there are clear targets, indicators of success, a timescale and a way of evaluating achievements. The Welsh Assembly Government has produced a 2001 statistical Baseline report in which each area can identify priorities and set targets. The Welsh Assembly Government also provides partners with advice and links to other statistical sources in which to set targets and monitor progress (e.g. Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation³⁰).
46. In terms of disseminating widely the impact and progress of Communities First Partnerships, the Welsh Assembly Government published in June 2008, [‘Making A Difference: Good Practice in Communities First’](#)³¹, a comprehensive document which showcased best practice and the achievements amongst partnerships in a range of areas such as jobs and business, lifelong learning, environment and housing, community safety etc.

²⁹ Welsh Assembly Government (2007) Communities First Guidance 2007.

³⁰ Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/wimd/?lang=en>

³¹ Welsh Assembly Government (2008) Making a Difference: Good Practice in Communities First. <http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/communityregendevelop/making/guide.pdf?lang=en>

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: COMMUNITIES FIRST NEXT STEPS³²

47. In January 2008, the consultation document 'Communities Next: taking communities forward' was launched. The document set out proposals for the changes the Assembly Government believed were needed to the Communities First programme. The consultation closed on 1 May 2008. The consultation included responses from a range of sources including Local Authorities and Communities First Partnerships and were broadly supportive of the suggested way forward, i.e. that Communities First should have a clearer focus on practical regeneration initiatives and on tackling poverty, particularly child poverty and income generation. The Welsh Assembly Government has also expressed a commitment to further develop Communities First into an outcomes focused Programme, with a greater proportion of resources targeted at front line delivery and less on administration and support.

48. The new phase (running for 3 years from 2009) will include the following changes:

- **Failing Partnerships:** arrangements will be set in place to identify and target support for partnerships which are struggling to make an impact locally;
- **Critical Success Factors:** the Programme will develop a set of criteria for success which will provide a consistent and stable point of reference for Partnerships to aspire to and be measured against;
- **Vision Framework:** the new revised Framework will re-state the key themes for the work of Partnerships and be used to help set priorities, identify partners and the actions necessary to tackle those priorities;
- **Partnership Funding:** more proportionate and consistent staffing and funding arrangements will be developed, taking account of population sizes. Although the majority of existing posts and activities will continue for at least a further three years, some current funding arrangements will not be renewed after April 2009.

49. From 1 April 2009, Communities First Partnerships will also provide support through a new fund, the **Communities First Outcome Fund** which will be divided into two categories:

- **Core Funding** - To provide a core staff team and overhead costs to support CF Partnerships to deliver their local Programme; and
- **Outcomes Funding** – To develop and deliver new activities, services and projects for the benefit of CF Communities.

50. Applications can be submitted for activities and services that benefit one or more than one Communities First area within a county or county borough area, and also across county areas. Applications must be linked to the Work Programmes and Action Plans of one or more Communities First Partnerships. The Fund will normally provide up to a maximum of £300,000 for up to a three year period. The minimum value of an application is £5,000 in a financial year, and £25,000 over 3

³² Information extracted from the Welsh Assembly Government Communities First webpage, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/communitiesfirst/faq/?jsessionid=Q1MsJH7pT9s2kC2nzfc2XZf94Qd5WKw9sRQ2WRTJHNJzdwbwDnRT!335850833?lang=en>

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years. Proposals must be able to demonstrate outcomes achieved and positive change/improvement for the community/in the community receiving funding³³.

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³³ Welsh Assembly Government. Communities First Programme Funding – Guidance and Factsheet. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/communitiesfirst/publications/outcomes/?lang=en>