



## CABINET- 20TH SEPTEMBER 2011

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE COMMUNITIES FIRST CONSULTATION**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the response to the Communities First consultation and the proposed new structure for delivery.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report outlines Caerphilly County Borough Council's response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the future proposals for the Communities First programme.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Communities First Programme has been fully integrated with the development of the Caerphilly Community Strategy.
- 3.2 The Communities First programme contributes to the delivery of the priorities within Health Social Care and Well-being, Living Environment, Regeneration, Community Safety and Children and Young People's Partnership. As well as cross cutting themes such as 50+, Sustainable Development and Equalities.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Communities First programme is the Welsh Government's strategy for improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales, with the current phase funded until 31st March 2012.
- 4.2 It was introduced in 2001 with the aim of "raising the capacity of disadvantaged groups, people and organisations in the most deprived communities to develop activities and projects of communal benefit and to harness mainstream funding to deliver economic and social regeneration".
- 4.3 There are currently 16 Communities First Partnerships covering 19 Communities First areas (13 wards and 6 sub wards) in the borough with the addition of Trecenydd and Panside in 2008: (Appendix 1)
- 4.4 CCBC act as Grant Recipient Body (GRB) for 15 of the Communities First Partnerships and GRB for both Trecenydd and Panside. GAVO act as GRB for one Communities First Partnership (Rhymney) and their staff.
- 4.5 The current focus of the programme supports activities that deliver against the following priorities:

- Child Poverty;
- Community Safety;
- Health and Well Being;
- Education, Skills and Training;
- Environment;
- Jobs, Business and Income Generation.

4.6 The Welsh Government has committed to a continuation of the Communities First programme post March 2012. A consultation on the future direction of the programme commenced on the 5th July 2011 and will end on 26th September 2011. The WG's vision is that from April 2012 Communities First will be a community focused programme that will support the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda. The key features in the proposals are:

- Fewer, larger CF areas (clusters);
- Jointly determined geographical boundaries;
- Local area delivery teams for each cluster;
- A reduced number of Grant Recipient Bodies with standard central teams (the minimum practicable).

4.7 The current focus of the programme will be replaced by three strategic outcomes:

- Prosperous Communities (Economy);
- Learning Communities (Education and Skills);
- Healthier Communities (Health).

4.8 The programme aims to contribute, alongside other programmes, to narrowing the education / skills, economic and health gaps between our most deprived and more affluent areas. The programme will do this by:

- Supporting those individuals, families and groups of people who have the poorest education/skills, economic and health outcomes especially in places where deprivation is most concentrated;
- Increasing individuals' life skills, self esteem and self reliance, including their financial capability;
- Supporting and strengthening the local activities, which do most to tackle poverty and deprivation, with community organisations and communities themselves as key partners.

## **PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

4.9 In accordance with WG guidelines it is proposed that Caerphilly CBC should be the sole Grant Recipient Body for the programme, with a continued commitment to work with our partners.

4.10 It is important that the programme retains a clear focus on the most deprived areas, however, the WG recognises that it is unlikely that any single cluster will be composed entirely of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the most deprived 10% of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). Where a community falls outside this category there will be some flexibility to consider including these areas within the programme, but strong evidence will need to be provided to justify this, especially if the area falls outside the top 20% of the WIMD. The WIMD will not be the only tool for identifying areas, other considerations such as school catchment areas, location of health services and major employment centres will form part of the decision making process. The WG has also expressed a commitment to continue support for the existing Communities First areas.

4.11 The Welsh Government anticipate that there will be a maximum of four local area clusters / delivery teams per local authority area. Each having a population of between 10,000 – 15,000. Consideration will be given to more than four clusters should an exceptional case be made. In Caerphilly we currently operate five area teams to support communities with the following

populations:

Upper Rhymney Valley 1	(15,181)
Upper Rhymney Valley 2	(7,490)
Mid Valleys East	(7,490)
Mid Valleys west	(8,862)
Caerphilly Basin	(11,641)

- 4.12 A steering group of officers from across the Council has met to identify the possible areas for inclusion in the new programme using the 2008 WIMD. This process has identified new areas for inclusion in the programme and combined with the existing areas has resulted in a significant increase in the population of each cluster. Although some changes could occur with the release of the new WIMD on 31st August 2011. These areas have been grouped in line with the current Community Plan areas as follows:

Upper Rhymney Valley	(15,860)
Mid Valleys West	(20,300)
Mid Valleys east	(22,703)
Lower Islwyn	(10,082)
Caerphilly Basin	(17, 194)

As a consequence Caerphilly is proposing five area clusters for inclusion in the programme. (See Appendix 2)

- 4.13 Within the consultation document the WG has identified a proposed staff structure to facilitate delivery as follows:

Central Team

Programme Manager  
Deputy Programme Manager  
Monitoring Officer  
Finance Officer  
Policy and Programme Bending Officer  
Administration

Area Delivery Team

Cluster Manager  
Up to 5 Coordinator / Development Officers  
Finance and Monitoring Officer  
Administrator

- 4.14 The current staff structure in Caerphilly (Appendix 3) has always been based on an area, cross partner team, of officers with particular specialities. And it was, in part, the Caerphilly model that informed the future direction of the programme across Wales. As such it is considered that significant changes are unnecessary to ensure the needs of the new programme are met. The proposed structure (Appendix 4) will ensure the needs of the new programme will be met and despite an increase in population it is proposed that delivery will be managed with the existing staff resource. The staff resource will though need to be aligned to the new strategic objectives of the revised programme.
- 4.15 Whilst it is considered that this proposal meets the WG criteria, WG guidance clearly favours proposals to deliver their programme regionally, in line with the Simpson review. Should the proposed Caerphilly model not prove acceptable to WG then officers will develop a regional model for consideration by Cabinet at a later date.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Communities First programme has been funded by the WG. Given various statements

made in the consultation document, it must be anticipated that there will be some significant changes to the funding arrangements from April 2012. The precise financial implications cannot yet be determined.

## **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Communities First currently funds thirty-eight members of staff across a number of departments in CCBC. In addition there are six members of staff within Groundwork Caerphilly with Caerphilly CBC as the Grant Recipient Body and a further 9 members of staff with GAVO as their own GRB. There will be potential HR issues (TUPE, redeployment etc), however these cannot be clarified at this stage. Once WG provide clear timescales and a plan of delivery these cannot be addressed appropriately.

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 All comments from consultees have been included in the report

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Welsh Government be advised of the proposals and they be used as a basis for consultation with partners and the community.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To endorse the Council's response to the Communities First consultation

## **10. STATUTORY POWER**

- 10.1 Local Government Act 2000

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Cllr Ron Davies, Cabinet Member, Regeneration & Countryside  
Cllr Colin Hobbs, Cabinet Member, Performance, Property, Asset Management  
Cllr James Fussell, Cabinet Member, Human Resource

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Map of existing CF areas

Appendix 2 Map of proposed cluster areas and list of LSOA's

Appendix 3 Current staff structure

Appendix 4 Proposed staff structure