



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2ND JULY 2013

SUBJECT: RESTRUCTURING OF COMMUNITIES FIRST PROGRAMME

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny of the changes to the Communities First programme and associated staff re-structure.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report outlines

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Communities First Programme has been fully integrated with the development of Caerphilly's Single Integrated Plan
- 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 was initially the Welsh Government's strategy for improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales, 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 A consultation on the future direction of the programme commenced on the 5th July 2011 and ended on 26th Sept 2011. The WG's vision being that from April 2012 Communities First would become a community focused programme to support the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda. The key features in the proposals were:
- 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).

4.4 The focus of the programme was replaced by three strategic outcomes:

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

4.5 The new 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.

4.6 Proposals for the future direction of the Communities First programme post March 2012 were submitted to and agreed by Cabinet on 20th September and 13th December 2011.

4.7.1 The original staff structure in Caerphilly was 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 significant changes were unnecessary to ensure the needs of the new programme are met. The staff resource, however, did need to be aligned to the new strategic objectives of the revised programme.

4.7.2 The full application was submitted to the Welsh Government in June 2012 and Caerphilly CBC was the first area in Wales to receive Ministerial approval in October 2012. A transition period took place initially until January 2013, but due to WG delays was extended until 31st March 2013. The new programme commenced on 1st April 2013.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Equality and diversity is embedded throughout the delivery of the CF programme. All projects take into account disability, age, religion, gender, human rights, race and sexual orientation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Communities First programme is fully funded by the Welsh Government.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Communities First funded thirty-eight members of staff across a number of departments in CCBC. In addition there were six members of staff within Groundwork Caerphilly and a further 9 members of staff with GAVO. A staff re-structure was required to accommodate the delivery requirements of the new programme. However, training and support was provided to ensure existing staff could undertake new roles within the team and all posts were ring fenced to existing Communities First staff.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 All comments from consultees have been included in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Members note the content of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To explain the changes to the Welsh Government Communities First programme and associated re-structure.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Map of CF areas
Appendix 2 Staff structure