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**COMMUNITIES FIRST ANNUAL REVIEW 2015/16**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To receive the Communities First Annual Review 2015/16, attached at **Appendix A**, and discuss the way forward for Communities First in 2016/17.

**Background**

2. Communities First was introduced in Wales in 2001, as the Welsh Assembly Government's flagship programme to improve the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales. The most deprived communities in Wales were identified, and local authorities were charged with establishing Communities First partnerships, consisting of local residents, local authority representatives, other statutory sector representatives and community and local business representatives. The Communities First programme sought to achieve '*programme bending*', ensuring that money and support from various public programmes and organisations was directed to Communities First areas.
3. In July 2009, the Wales Audit Office published a report which concluded that the Communities First programme had made some advances but that the programme was '*unlikely to deliver its broader objectives without a more robust approach to programme bending*'.<sup>1</sup> The report made a number of recommendations regarding the way in which the Welsh Assembly Government managed and monitored the overall Communities First Programme and encouraged local authorities to programme bend.
4. Following receipt of the Auditor General's report, the National Assembly for Wales' Public Accounts Committee undertook its own review of Communities First. Its report was published in February 2010 and the conclusions and recommendations

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<sup>1</sup> Wales Audit Office, 'Communities First' report, July 2009

reinforced those of the Auditor General. Following these reviews, the Welsh Government decided that Communities First should continue to have a geographic focus concentrating on the 10% most deprived communities in Wales and should support the Tackling Poverty agenda but brought in the following changes, from April 2012.

- a. Increased emphasis on ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals, families and groups in these communities are supported.
  - b. Focus on three main outcome areas: Health and Well Being; Education and Skills; and Economy and Employment.
  - c. New outcomes based performance management framework to allow for monitoring of progress in delivering the required outcomes.
  - d. Structured around 'clusters', which comprise approximately 7-10 Lower Super Output Areas<sup>2</sup>.
  - e. Each cluster has to develop a three year Delivery Plan that uses an outcomes performance management system to demonstrate delivery of the required outcomes. The Delivery Plan must be endorsed by the Local Service Board and existing Communities First partnerships.
  - f. Each Cluster must develop a Community Involvement Plan and will receive dedicated funding to enable community involvement.
  - g. Each cluster to have a Local Delivery Team that will normally consist of at least eight staff, funded by the Communities First programme.
  - h. Sitting above the Cluster is a Lead Delivery Body that has *'overall responsibility for ensuring good governance and accountability throughout the operations of the Cluster'*<sup>3</sup>.
5. A report on the future of the Communities First programme in Cardiff was taken to Cabinet on 20 September 2012. The recommendations, which were approved in full, were:
- a. Cardiff Council takes on the role of Lead Delivery Body and is the grant recipient body.
  - b. Four new clusters be established as follows:
    - i. Cardiff West (Ely, Caerau and Fairwater).

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<sup>2</sup> Lower Super Output Areas were first built using 2001 Census data and have been updated following the 2011 Census. They have an average of roughly 1,500 residents and 650 households. Measures of proximity (to give a reasonably compact shape) and social homogeneity (to encourage areas of similar social background) are also included.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- ii. BRG - Butetown, Riverside and Grangetown.
  - iii. STAR - Splott, Tremorfa, Adamsdown and Roath/ Plasnewydd.
  - iv. ECLP – Llanrumney, Trowbridge, Llanedeyrn and Pentwyn.
- c. The Local Delivery Teams for each cluster will be based in third sector organisations.

### **Annual Review 2015/16**

6. The Communities First Annual Review 2015/16 is attached at **Appendix A** and provides:
- a. An overview of Communities First (*pages 3-5*).
  - b. An overview of Communities First in Cardiff (*pages 6-8*).
  - c. A summary of programme bending that supports Communities First in Cardiff (*pages 9-11*).
  - d. Performance highlights 2015-16 (*pages 12- 20*).
  - e. Activity by Communities First cluster (*pages 21-60*).
  - f. Next Steps (*pages 61-64*).
7. Members' attention is particularly drawn to **pages 12-13, Appendix A**, which detail the headline performance outcomes achieved by Communities First in 2015/16, by bullet points and infographic. The following pages provide more information on the specific activities that have led to the achievement of these outcomes. Members are also able to see trends over the period 2013-2016, when this iteration of Communities First was implemented.
8. The Next Steps section (*pages 61-62*) provides details on Communities for Work, which complements the work of Communities First, and started on 1 April 2016. It also states that, this year, a steering group has been established to recognise all relevant employability parties with the aim of ensuring consistent information and advice is available across Cardiff for those seeking work.
9. The Next Steps section (*page 63*) provides an overview of how Communities First fits with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, via its community involvement strand and details that, this year, the aim is '*to progress the community involvement framework against the community involvement model to report on how effective the awareness, engagement and participation methods are for helping*

*people to become better off, to the community members who are empowered and the groups and individuals who start to lead and co-deliver on services in their area.'*

10. The final page of the report (page 64), details the ambition to align national and local anti-poverty initiatives in order to deliver a coherent range of services and address poverty. The report states that the approach being taking is *'to ensure tackling poverty is a cross-cutting theme, with the establishment of a multi-agency Tackling Poverty Working Group that will oversee the integration, alignment and reporting of national and local anti-poverty programmes.'*
11. The conclusion, (page 64), states that *'Cardiff Council will continue to monitor Communities First delivery and as part of this, will be monitoring performance and spend closely to ensure that the funding used is fully utilised to ensure maximum impact.'*

## **Way Forward**

12. At the meeting, Councillor Peter Bradbury (Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise) may wish to make a statement. Sarah McGill (Director, Communities, Housing and Customer Services), Jane Thomas (Assistant Director, Communities and Housing) and Louise Bassett, (Partnerships Delivery Team Leader) will also be in attendance to answer Members' questions.

## **Legal Implications**

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure

Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

14. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to consider the information provided in the report and **Appendix A**, and to consider whether they have any comments, observations or recommendations to make to the Cabinet.

**DAVID MARR**  
**Interim Monitoring Officer**  
**30 June 2016**