

PROGRESS IN PREPARING COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Background

1. The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on each local authority to prepare a Community Strategy, "to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and to contribute to sustainable development".
2. Community Strategies are overarching strategies that will influence all other plans and strategies relating to the county area and determine how the area as a whole, sub-divisions or local communities within it, develop over a 10-15 year period. Community strategies will also be key source documents for the Assembly in formulating its national policies and approaches.
3. Community Strategies have 3 components:
 - a long-term vision, which looks at outcomes to be achieved;
 - an action plan or plans, which outline how the long-term objectives are to be achieved; and
 - arrangements for monitoring and review.
4. The Assembly issued guidance on preparing Community Strategies to Local Authorities in August 2001. It sets out the process of preparing the strategies, but leaves a great deal of discretion to local authorities and their partners as to how strategies should be prepared. The key points of the guidance are:
 - authorities should have started preparing their community strategies in 2001 and the key components of the strategies should be in place before the local government elections in May 2004;
 - Community Strategies are shared documents. They are not the local authority's strategy. They should be prepared jointly by local authorities and their partners – the voluntary, private sectors, Assembly sponsored bodies and local communities;
 - It is up to local authorities to set up the Community Strategy partnerships to oversee the preparation of the Strategies. There is no definitive approach to the way in which partnerships should be structured, the bodies represented on them, or the way in which they should operate. This is a matter for local authorities and their partners to determine. The guidance states that partnerships should be balanced – not dominated by one sector - and reflect the diversity of local communities;
 - there should be a significant element of public and community participation and engagement in the strategy preparation process. The guidance emphasises in particular that it is important to involve young people and other "hard to reach" groups;
 - it is for local authorities and their partners to determine the issues covered in community strategies. They should reflect local needs, problems and aspirations.

Progress in preparing community strategies

5. Details of the progress made by local authorities and their partner bodies in preparing Community Strategies and the approaches adopted by them were obtained from a telephone survey of those officers responsible for preparing the strategies in each of Wales' 22 county/county borough councils. A summary of the responses is at Annex 1.
6. Authorities and their partner bodies have made good progress in preparing community strategies. The progress and approaches adopted however vary between authorities. Some authorities have already produced their community strategies and are in the process of revising them. These authorities began developing their strategies prior to the publication of the Assembly's guidance, following the agreement between the former Welsh Office and WLGA to start implementing the Government's modernisation agenda before the passing of the Local Government Act 2000. These authorities are now in the process of revising their Community Strategies along the lines set out in the Assembly's guidance. Some authorities have only recently started work on their strategies or have revised their initial approaches. All authorities anticipate that they will have their community strategies in place – either in draft or final form – by May 2004 as required by the Assembly's guidance.
7. Although the guidance does not specify a particular approach to preparing community strategies, most authorities and their partners have adopted an inclusive approach, involving the establishment of a wide partnership comprising key bodies within the locality and a smaller Steering Group or executive board to drive forward the plan preparation process. The Steering Groups or Boards range in size from 10 to 20, with an average size of 15. Similar organisations are represented on the wider partnerships and steering groups, usually representatives of the county councils, Assembly sponsored bodies, the voluntary and private sectors. Authorities and their partners have also adopted similar themes for their strategies, mostly based on the Assembly's 5 'Better Wales' themes - economic regeneration, environmental protection/improvement, education

and Life Long Learning, Health and Well being and community safety. The proposals for plan reduction in Wales outlined in Annex 1 to paper PC 15(2) are based on four to six themes under the community strategy.

8. In setting up their community strategy partnerships authorities have used existing partnership arrangements or established new mechanisms. The Vale of Glamorgan, for example, used its European Funding partnership to prepare its community strategy. Other authorities have used existing forums or partnerships to develop their key themes, setting up new arrangements where there were no pre-existing structures in place.

9. Authorities differ in their approaches to area partnerships. Monmouthshire and Caerphilly, for example, have established area conferences/forums each of which will prepare a separate strategy. These will feed into the county level community strategies. Authorities such as Cardiff and Blaenau Gwent, which cover smaller geographical areas, do not have sub county structures. Other authorities which cover wider geographical areas and do not have area structures engage with their town and community councils to elicit local views.

10. In preparing their strategies authorities and their partner bodies appear to have fully engaged the key local organisations operating in their areas. Community strategy partnerships, however, appear to vary in the extent to which they have consulted and engaged with the public. This can be a time consuming process. There is an indication that some partnerships are concentrating initially on getting their community strategies in place in time for the next local government elections and will delay the public consultation and engagement processes until the community strategy is revised.

11. The strategies are prepared by relatively small numbers of staff. In most authorities responsibility for their preparation rests with corporate policy officers, who have other responsibilities. The level of staffing varies between authorities. Authorities such as Carmarthenshire have designated a community strategy team under a community strategy manager. Rhondda Cynon Taff and Neath Port Talbot have appointed area co-ordinators who are responsible for producing area strategies. Most authorities supplement their policy officers by using personnel from within the county/county borough council's service departments to progress specific themes or priorities. Some authorities have given additional resources to voluntary organisations to enable them to play a significant role in developing the strategy.

Issues highlighted by authorities

12. Authorities reported a number of issues relating to preparing the community strategies. These included:

- the lack of dedicated resources or budgets to prepare community strategies and the limited awareness of community strategies in many authorities' service directorates and amongst partner bodies. Some officers believed that the absence of a dedicated community strategy budget delayed the preparation of the community strategy. Some authorities have succeeded in securing funding for activities associated with the community strategy from their local partner bodies. Pembrokeshire, for example, has secured funding from its partners for a 10% residents' opinion survey and for advertising the community strategies consultation timetable in local newspapers. Welsh authorities have not followed the approach adopted in English authorities such as Herefordshire where the community strategy partnership is a separate organisation funded jointly by the community strategy partnership.
- Difficulty in engaging some of the Assembly's sponsored bodies in the community planning process. Some authorities reported difficulty in securing the attendance of Assembly agency staff at meetings of their partnerships or steering groups. This was attributed to the large number of community strategy meetings that agency staff are invited to attend. The Partnership Council has agreed to establish a ministerial group including representatives from local government, the Assembly's sponsored bodies and other statutory agencies to address these issues.
- Uncertainty about the relationship between community strategies and other Welsh Assembly initiatives such as the Health and Well being strategies. Some officers discerned a growing tension between local authorities and their partners and representatives of the health bodies on the relative priority to be accorded to community and the health and wellbeing strategies.
- the time involved in arranging for the collection, collation and sharing of information/data between partners.
- The problem of how to integrate the top down/bottom up approaches to community strategy preparation. This was seen to be a problem in most authorities but in particular by those authorities with area forums and strategies.
- The difficulty in engaging and consulting with the private sector, especially in those rural areas with a multitude of small employers that are not covered by representative bodies such as chambers of commerce.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Work Programme

13. Following the publication of the guidance on preparing community strategies, the Assembly established a Community Strategy Working Group under the aegis of the Partnership Council to promote community strategies and to monitor and review progress in preparing them. Most

of the Working Group's work to date has involved promoting the community strategies. Three seminars were held for authorities and their partners over the last year in Wrexham, Carmarthen and Barry with the objective of encouraging local networking and the dissemination of good practices. The working group also endorsed a future work programme. This includes arranging a joint national seminar in June/July to review the process of preparing community strategies, exchange experiences, including the issues raised by authorities during the course of this survey. The Assembly also intends to set up a community strategies website in conjunction with the WLGA and WCVA and produce a booklet which could be issued within authorities and to partner bodies to raise awareness about the community planning process. An additional objective of the Community Strategy Working Group is to determine whether the Assembly should review its guidance in the light of the experiences in preparing the strategies, produce advice on other issues such as engaging the private sector and data sharing, or issue separate guidance to the Assembly's sponsored bodies about their involvement in the community strategy preparation process. The Assembly's sponsored public bodies' remit letters require them to fully engage in the community planning process and to implement the agreed strategies. The WLGA has argued that there should be a duty of participation placed on the Assembly's sponsored bodies to contribute towards the community planning process. This is the approach adopted in Scotland.

14. Assembly officials are also in the process of establishing a framework for monitoring and evaluating the Assembly's Local Government Modernisation agenda. This will include the monitoring and evaluation of the current round of community strategies.

15. The Partnership Council's views are requested on:

- i. progress to date in preparing the community strategies;
- ii. the issues raised by authorities in paragraph 12;
- iii. the proposal for a national seminar in June /July and the other elements of the work programme; and
- iv. the desirability of continuing the working group for a further year.

Partnership Council Secretariat

January 2003

ANNEX 1

PROGRESS IN PREPARING COMMUNITY STRATEGIES: AS AT 7 JANUARY 2003

Authority Progress

Anglesey Anglesey established a Steering Group of 18-20 members in March 2002 to oversee the preparation of the community strategy. The Steering Group includes three representatives from: elected members of the council and town and community councils, and three from each of the following thematic partnerships: crime and disorder, health and well being, children and young people, the environment, education and lifelong learning, voluntary and community, and economic regeneration. It also includes a number of external advisors. The Steering Group meets monthly and has organised a series of workshops, such as an information day for town and community councillors, seminars on the role of the voluntary sector in community planning and a development day for Steering Group members. Anglesey also has a county forum which meets twice a year. Its main purpose is to provide an arena where communities, groups and organisations come together to discuss issues relating to the community planning process.

The Steering Group has issued a consultation paper – "A vision and framework for our community plan" – which outlines proposals for a possible vision for the county, key strategic themes, possible indicators and a proposed structure for a wider community strategy partnership, county forum and community planning team. The consultation is set to last until March 2003. Information from the consultation exercise will inform the process of developing the action plan. It is envisaged that the Strategic County Partnership will be established by July 2003. It is hoped that the action plan will be launched soon afterwards.

Blaenau Gwent Blaenau Gwent adopted a community strategy for the period 2001-4, prior to the publication of the Welsh Assembly Government's guidance, "Preparing Community

Strategies". The strategy did not conform to the requirements of the guidance, for example it did not contain a long term vision for the area. A Steering Group of 10 key partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors has been established to review the plan in the light of the guidance. A separate forum of major partners has also been established, comprising a total of 56 partner bodies. Blaenau Gwent has no separate area committees/partnerships. The authority has 10 Community First partnerships which contribute to the community strategy. Blaenau Gwent intends to have its community strategy in place by April 2004.

Bridgend Bridgend has established a key partners group, comprising of 18 organisations drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The group is based on the authority's Objective 1 group. A sub group of the key partners group has been tasked to re-examine the membership and role of the key partners group and to recommend how the community planning process can be expedited. It will examine the key stages, determine which sub groups should be established and the organisations which should be represented on them, and develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

An audit of partnerships has already been undertaken. The sub group is expected to report by June 2003. Bridgend hopes to have its community strategy in place by January 2004.

Caerphilly Caerphilly has agreed objectives for its county wide draft community strategy. These were discussed at a standing conference of organisations operating in the county borough area in October 2002. The standing conference was set up in November 1999. Area plans have also been prepared for each of Caerphilly's seven areas, which are based on UDP areas. Each of these areas has a separate forum comprising representatives of the agencies and organisations working in the area such as the police, health groups, Citizens Advice Bureaux and other legal service providers, community partnerships, tenants and residents' associations and local councillors. The forums are chaired by borough councillors and meet twice a year. They send delegates to the borough wide community forum. To date there are also 20 community partnerships at community and town level, primarily in Community First areas. Caerphilly is currently preparing the first draft of its community strategy. Caerphilly hopes to have completed the draft in time for the next round of area forums in April. The draft strategy will then be issued for wider consultation. The area plans are to be revised in the light of the 2001 census information as it becomes available. The partnerships have begun to develop local action plans, which are consistent with the area plans, and will be reflected in the borough wide strategy. Caerphilly hopes that the community strategy will be finalised by the end of 2003 or early in 2004.

Cardiff The Cardiff Community Planning Partnership and its structures were established in late 2000 and included social, economic, environmental and community council commissions. The first commission meetings were visioning events and the ideas that emerged, together with the results of a survey of household opinions undertaken within the council's newspaper, "Capital Times", were used to develop an initial draft of the community strategy. The draft Community Strategy was discussed, amended and ratified at an all day Capital Congress in December 2000, in a mixture of workshops and plenary debates. This was attended by 100 organisations. A number of performance and quality of life indicators/targets were developed in 2001 and these were considered at the second Capital Congress in December 2001.

Cardiff has established an Implementation Group of twenty organisations to oversee, at a strategic level, the community planning process and develop its agenda. It has agreed priorities for 2003. These include the development of an action plan allocating responsibility for implementing the Community Strategy and outlining the arrangements for consulting the wider partnership.

Cardiff does not have area committees. It is developing mechanisms to ensure that the community strategy mechanisms are delivered at the local level and that local communities are able to influence the strategy. These mechanisms will include Community First area partnerships and a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for other wards in Cardiff. Cardiff intends to have its community strategy in place by the end of 2003.

Carmarthenshire Carmarthenshire has set up a Community Strategy partnership – the Community Strategy Forum – comprising 32 members. It has also established an Executive Board or Steering Group of 15 key partners. This is a decision making body, comprising the local authority, voluntary sector, Police, local colleges, the WDA, and business sector, the Environment Agency, ELWA, and the health bodies. Carmarthenshire also has a number of area committees comprising elected members. Although the area committees predate the community strategy they may input to the strategy preparation process. Carmarthenshire also has a number of theme groups which take forward aspects of the Community Strategy. Carmarthenshire intends to consult on its interim plan in February. It intends to publish the Community Strategy at the end of 2003.

Ceredigion Ceredigion has established a partnership comprising of 20 organisations, including the WDA, Ceredigion Voluntary Organisations, Environment Agency, NHS, the Objective 1 Partnership, CCW, ELWA, etc. It produced a draft Community Strategy following the Ceredigion 2020 day in January 2002. The draft Strategy is based around 5 themes – Economic Regeneration, Stronger Communities, Active Wellbeing, Learning for Life, and High Quality Environment. Ceredigion has consulted town and community councils on the draft strategy and has run a Democracy Week, which featured the community strategy. It has recently set up a Community Strategy Steering Group, which is scheduled to meet for the first time in January 2003. The Steering Group will finalise the second draft of the Community Strategy. Ceredigion hopes that the Strategy will be in place by the end of 2003.

Conwy Conwy held an event in September 2002 for senior members of partner organisations. The meeting agreed to develop a community strategy and to work towards establishing a Community Strategy Partnership for Conwy. A Strategic Agency Group of officers from the public agencies, local voluntary council, and local colleges has been set up to oversee the community strategy process (some 15-20 organisations). Conwy does not currently have a wide community strategy partnership. There are partnership mapping and visioning exercises underway involving liaison with town and community councils and young people to establish how they would wish their areas to develop. A Conwy Community Strategy visioning day was held in October which attracted representatives of community and voluntary groups and young people from schools. The Strategic Agency Group is in the process of developing key themes produced during the visioning day. They should be finalised, following consultation with the wider community, by April 2003. Conwy is in the process of investigating the possibility of setting up a Citizens' Panel in partnership with other statutory agencies. The Panel will contribute to the Community Strategy process. Conwy envisages that the Community Strategy will be in place by September 2003.

Denbighshire Denbighshire has set up a Strategic Board to oversee the community planning process. It comprises representatives of 14-20 organisations. It is not yet fully constituted as it will include representatives of area partnerships, which are in the process of being set up. The first meeting of the Strategic Board is scheduled for February 2003. It is anticipated that the Board will meet monthly to consider operational matters, including the arrangements for consulting on the draft community strategy. Denbighshire intends to set up four area partnerships and has appointed four Area Partnership Managers. Discussions are underway to identify who should sit on the area partnership boards. Denbighshire intends to consult on the vision for the county area in May/June 2003. It anticipates that the draft Community Strategy will be ready by early Autumn and that the consultation exercise will be undertaken in the late Autumn. Denbighshire believes that the Community Strategy should be in place by May 2004.

Flintshire Flintshire established a Steering Group for its Local Strategic Partnership in June 2002, following seminars of local organisations in October 2001 and May 2002. Work is underway to establish a wider partnership. Invitations have been sent to 300-400 representatives to attend a partnership conference in February. It is hoped that this will meet annually. The Steering Group has identified 9 key themes- caring and healthy communities, sustainable communities, learning communities, safe communities, thriving communities, inclusive communities, creative communities, modern communities, and connected communities. The partnership conference will consider the key themes and how they could be taken forward. The council has conducted an audit of partnerships and proposes that the key

themes should be taken forward by existing partnerships where they exist. Flintshire intends that a draft community strategy would be available by December 2003. The consultation exercise is programmed for early in 2004. Flintshire anticipates that the final strategy would be in place by April 2004.

Gwynedd Gwynedd established an interim partnership in 2001. It has now formalised that process by establishing a Steering Board of strategic agencies – statutory and voluntary. Private sector representation has been secured through the Economic Development Partnership. The partnership is supplemented by a number of sub partnerships dealing with key themes such as economic development, education, children and young people, community safety etc. The steering board of 12, comprises of two representatives from each of the sub-partnerships and additional members from the voluntary sector, Gwynedd's sustainability group and representatives of town and community councils. It will hold its first official board meeting in January 2003. The local authority has appointed a community strategy manager who will be responsible to the Partnership Board and has made additional resources available to fund the plan preparation process. The community strategy manager will begin work in January 2003. A county wide Forum has been established. The first meeting of the Forum was held in Porthmadog in November 2002 . Further meetings are proposed for early in 2003. An interim community strategy should be available by June and the final strategy by March 2004.

Merthyr Tydfil Following advice from District Audit, Merthyr Tydfil has reassessed its approach to preparing its Community Strategy. The authority is preparing an action plan to chart the steps it intends to take to produce the strategy. Merthyr Tydfil has identified its key partners and intends to set up a partnership in early 2003.

External consultants have been engaged to raise awareness, develop the capacity of elected members and officers of the local authority to participate in the community planning process, and carry out community consultations. Merthyr Tydfil intends to produce its Community Strategy by March 2004.

Monmouthshire In July 2001, Monmouthshire established a steering group to oversee the community planning process. The Steering Group is made up of the main public sector agencies, including the county council, Assembly sponsored bodies, community and voluntary sector representatives. The Steering Group have agreed six key themes which will provide the framework for the Monmouthshire Community Strategy and the four area community plans.

Four area conferences were held in November 2001 to establish communities' views about the future of their local areas. Draft profiles have been developed for each of the four areas using internal council data and information from partner bodies. Draft area plans were launched at a further round of area conferences in July 2002. The draft area plans have been reviewed following comments made at the local area conferences and have been further considered by partner organisations and discussed at the annual voluntary sector network meeting in December 2002. The draft plans will be further discussed at Area Committees in March 2003. Monmouthshire intends that the final documents will be published in early 2004.

Neath Port Talbot Neath Port Talbot launched its community plan in January 2002. It was endorsed by 75 partner bodies from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors. Most of the work on the community plan was undertaken prior to the publication of the Assembly's guidance. The annual community plan partnership seminar was held in October 2002. Definitions, baselines, milestones and targets (to 2006) were agreed for indicators under each of the priority themes – economic prosperity, education and lifelong learning, better health and well being, environment and transport, crime and disorder. The partnership has agreed to set up a Steering Group of key partners based on the thirds principle. The Steering Group will meet two or three times a year to drive forward the Community Strategy and monitor progress.

Existing partnership groupings where they exist are being used to progress key themes. Neath Port Talbot does not have area committees. Community planning has started in the Community First areas, which will input to the borough wide plan.

Newport Newport prepared its community plan before the publication of the Welsh Assembly's guidance. The plan was prepared in consultation with local organisations and communities and focused on four strategic priorities - economic development, community development, health and community safety. The Council decided in May 2002 to prepare a corporate plan for the authority setting out its strategic aims and objectives and ensuring links with the themes set out in the Welsh Assembly's "Better Wales" document. The corporate plan was published in May 2002 following consultation with key local partnerships, agencies and the public.

The corporate plan provides the basis for a set of core objectives concerned with sustainability, inclusion and equalities. These will be further developed within a revised Community Strategy process linked to the improvement agenda and the priorities identified by partners and the community.

Newport intends to set up a strategic partnership during 2003, based on existing partnership arrangements and consultation mechanisms. The authority has deferred the development of the strategic partnership and community strategy pending the local outcome of the NHS reforms in order to develop the new "Health and Well Being Strategy". Newport intends to have its Community Strategy in place by Spring 2004.

Pembrokeshire Pembrokeshire has produced its draft Community Plan. It is to consult on it from 6 January to 7 April. The draft plan has been informed by surveys of residents, young people and a seminar with town and community councils. Pembrokeshire has a Community Planning and Leadership Partnership comprising of representatives of 13 organisations – the County Council, National Park, fire, police, local college, WDA, NHS Trust, CCW, Environment Agency(Wales), Milford Haven Port Authority, local health group, ELWA and Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services. The partnership has 5 sub-groups: developing vibrant communities, improving communication links, delivering economic growth based on local need, encouraging people to reach their potential, and promoting a clean environment. The sub-groups will continue to develop the detailed indicators and targets for the plan from January. Pembrokeshire hopes to have its Community Plan in place by Summer 2003.

Powys In October 2002 Powys set up a Steering Group comprising officers of the key bodies operating in the county to prepare the Community Strategy. The first meeting of the full partnership group, comprising of thirty-nine members, is scheduled for January. Powys also intends to set up local area forums in each of its fifteen planning areas. The area forums are scheduled to meet in January/February. Powys also intends to set up a number of thematic partnerships dealing with issues such as crime and disorder, health and well-being, learning communities, environment and economic development. The Steering Group will determine which themes should be pursued, using existing partnership arrangements where these exist. A mapping exercise of existing partnerships and strategies is currently being commissioned. It is intended that the draft Community Strategy should be in place by March 2004.

Rhondda Cynon Taff Rhondda Cynon Taf produced its community plan in April 2000, prior to the publication of the Assembly's guidance. The plan was recently revised and is about to be subject to public consultation. The closing date for comments on the draft plan and the proposed community planning process is April 2003. It is intended that the draft plan will be agreed by the community strategy partnership by June 2003. An opportunity will be given to the thematic, town and area partnerships to comment further on the draft plan. The date by which the final strategy will be prepared is to be decided by the community strategy partnership in January.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's community strategy partnership was established in September 2002. It comprises representatives of the community/voluntary, public and private sectors appointed using the thirds principle. Each sector has nine representatives. Rhondda Cynon Taf has

experienced problems in securing private sector representation on the partnership. It intends to hold a "Top Ten Employers" event in the new year to emphasise the importance of the Community Strategy to the private sector.

Rhondda Cynon Taff is also establishing twelve area based partnerships. The membership of the partnerships will be similar to that of the strategic partnership. It recruited six area coordinators in September. It also proposes to adopt a policy and partnership framework comprising five key themes – regeneration, environmental protection/improvement, education and lifelong learning, health and well being and community safety. Where possible existing partnerships will be used to take forward these themes. The themes will be subject to the community strategy partnership's approval.

Swansea Swansea has established a Community Planning Alliance, comprising eighty public, private and voluntary sector organisations to contribute to preparing the community strategy. It has met twice to date. A Steering Group of twenty members has been established to drive the Community Strategy preparation process. A draft strategy is in the process of being prepared by the Steering Group. It will be published in March 2003 and consultation on it will take place in 2003/4. It is anticipated that the final Community Strategy will be in place by May 2004.

Torfaen Torfaen has set up a Steering Group of 15 primary partners- the police, health, voluntary and private sectors and community councils. It does not have a wider partnership. Torfaen and its partners have adopted a three stage approach to preparing their community strategy. First, a topic based approach covering issues such as health, housing, economic development, leisure etc. Sub partnership groups based on existing partnerships or working groups will be used to take forward work on these themes. Second, an area based approach focusing on 6 area partnerships. The area partnerships will examine local needs and opportunities, the services provided there and how the areas should develop in future. Third, linking the thematic and area approaches by focusing on specific user groups such as young people and the elderly, and examining cross cutting issues. Decisions have not yet been taken on how to engage the public in preparing the strategy or by when it will be produced.

The Vale of Glamorgan The Vale of Glamorgan issued its draft plan for consultation in December 2002. Comments are requested by March 2003. It intends that the final strategy would be in place by April 2003. The Vale of Glamorgan used its European funding partnership as the basis of its Community Strategy partnership. It comprises representatives of some 150 organisations. There is a Management Board of 18 which is currently chaired by the council's leader. The Management Board comprises – Barry College, WDA, Business in Focus, UWIC, The Vale Health Group, Age Concern, YMCA, The Vale Community Voluntary Service, Police, Wales Co-operative Centre, Citizens Advice Bureaux, PRAXIS, Cardiff Chamber of Commerce, Vale Voluntary Service etc. The Vale has experienced difficulty in securing private sector representation on the Management Board.

Five task groups have been established to progress the key themes – economic regeneration, life-long learning, community safety, health and well being and environmental improvement. Each of these task groups is chaired by a non council officer. The Vale of Glamorgan has no formal area based structures – town and community councils are used to solicit local views.

Wrexham Wrexham has established a Community Strategy partnership, comprising of eight organisations – the county council, voluntary sector, local health groups, NHS trusts, local colleges, Chamber of Commerce and Police. The fourth meeting of the partnership took place in October to consider an audit of existing strategies, services and cross cutting policies. The audit process will be used to identify possible key themes for the Community Strategy. The

emerging themes include: Economic Priorities- business growth; more and better job opportunities; developing tourism. Social Priorities- improving health and well being; investing in young people; ensuring a safer environment; tackling poverty and supporting social inclusion; enhancing culture and leisure opportunities. Environmental Priorities- protecting and improving the countryside, promoting and improving Wrexham's urban environment and developing an integrated transportation system.

The themes will be subject to consultation in January/February 2003, following which a draft strategy and action plan will be prepared. Wrexham hopes to have its Community Strategy in place by September 2003