

2. ENSURING A CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH

Social Inclusion

2.1 Social Inclusion is one of three overarching themes adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government, and, alongside the principles of sustainable development and equality of opportunity, informs the work of every area of government.

2.2 At the heart of social inclusion is the issue of tackling poverty. While Wales as a whole grows more prosperous, there are still too many people who do not share in that prosperity. Every area has poverty, but there are particular concentrations in the Upper South Wales Valleys and in deprived inner urban and remote rural areas. The Welsh Assembly Government's policies and programmes need to address the underlying problems faced by both individuals and communities in moving out of poverty.

2.3 Poverty stems from having poorly paid or no work. While the unemployment rate in October to December 2002 was just 5.2 per cent of the economically active, Wales has a large number of people not employed and not seeking work who do not appear in these numbers. These are mainly people living on incapacity benefits of various kinds. This "economic inactivity" accounts for half of Wales' gap in economic performance against the UK as a whole. For Wales as a whole, the rate of economic inactivity amongst the working age has fallen markedly over the last year but remains nearly 3 percentage points above the UK average.

2.4 The Welsh Assembly Government's **Communities First** programme is a response to the problems of social exclusion. The programme is a long-term strategy for improving opportunities and the quality of life for people living and working in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. It is designed to regenerate deprived localities around Wales through enlisting a high degree of community support and participation and strong commitment from public sector bodies and voluntary agencies.

2.5 Whilst each area included in the Communities First programme has its own particular problems, experience suggests that there are some common themes that are fundamental to building strong communities. These include:

- building confidence and self-esteem of those living in the community;
- increasing the incomes of local people (including reducing the costs of food, heat, credit etc);
- improving health and well being;

- encouraging and improving education and skills training for work;
- creating jobs;
- making communities safe, secure and crime free;
- making changes to the way in which public services are delivered;

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- improving housing and the quality of the environment;
- building up ownership and control of assets; and
- encouraging active citizenship.

2.6 142 of Wales's most deprived areas are included in the programme. The eligible areas are the 100 most deprived electoral divisions as recognised by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 32 areas at sub ward level where pockets of deprivation have been identified and 10 Communities of Interest or imaginative proposals.

2.7 The Welsh Assembly Government has pledged significant resources for Wales's most deprived communities over a significant period of time. £83m has been made available between 2001-2004. Over £24 million has been allocated since 2001 for work at a local level. Nearly £14 million has been allocated over 3 years to support the implementation of the programme at the national level. This includes:

- £2.1 million for the Communities First Support Network - a consortium of 8 organisations which acts a "one stop shop" providing professional advice, support and information to Communities First Partnerships on issues including business development, financial planning and project development. The Network focuses on the delivery of services not readily available at the local level and is working closely with County Voluntary Councils and local authorities to provide a range of services that complement those already available.
- £2.1 million for other national organisations to carry out a range of activities to involve people with disabilities, young people, people from Black, Minority Ethnic communities and businesses in the programme. These include the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, Community Development Cymru, Princes Trust Cymru, the Black Ethnic Support Team and Business in the Community. Much

work has already been done by these organisations. For example, Business in the Community's (BITC) role is to involve the private sector in the Communities First process:

- £9 million for the Communities First Trust Fund. The Fund provides bureaucracy free small grants to a wide range of voluntary and community organisations for activities in Communities First areas. Between £10,000

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and £20,000 is available to each community each year. This money supports a wide range of activities through which local groups can contribute to the regeneration of their area. The Fund started in April 2002 and has already provided grants totalling almost £1m including:

2.8 In 2002, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities introduced the Community Facilities and Activities programme, an all-Wales source of funding for community and voluntary groups. The programme is designed to improve community facilities and promote community activities. Financial support is available for the conversion and refurbishment of facilities such as community centres and faith based community facilities. The scheme encourages the application of Communities First principles to areas not covered by the Communities First programme.

2.9 Funding of over £11 million has also been provided in 2002-03 to all local authorities in Wales to help provide better amenities for children and young people in Communities First areas. Grants are to be used towards the refurbishment or provision of outdoor static recreation equipment, construction of skateboard and biking parks and youth shelters; and secure public transport projects and cycling and walking projects.

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2.10 In reality, the sums of public money going into these communities will be much more, as many of the Assembly's funding programmes and those of other public sector agencies will be targeted at Communities First areas.

2.11 Good progress is being made on the implementation of the programme as Communities First starts to impact on the ground. Whilst each area is proceeding at its own pace and all are at varying stages of development, 75 embryonic Communities First Partnerships have been established. Much of the activity currently being undertaken is preparatory in its nature as communities begin the process of regeneration through consultation, building Partnerships and assessing needs.

2.12 Within the preparatory stage much capacity building work is already being taken forward. This early work will enable a sound basis for supporting the development of Capacity Building Plans which will ensure that individuals and the many agencies involved have the necessary skills to implement the programme.

2.13 Examples of work already underway include:

2.14 In 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government will be commissioning research to evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of the Communities First programme. This research will evaluate its effectiveness in terms of outputs, process, outcomes and impact on the regeneration of deprived communities in Wales at the national, local and community levels. The outputs from the research will be used to inform the further development of the Communities First programme and the Assembly Government's wider community regeneration policies.

2.15 Another area which is also impacting on policy development in this area is the Local Government and Housing Committee Review of Community Regeneration. The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities has accepted all of the recommendations of the first part of the Review, many of which are focused on the accessibility of funding for community groups. Assembly officials are developing a scheme to support a variety of community development initiatives and will be consulting with community organisations before it is finalised.

2.16 The second part of the Committee's Review has focused on capacity building. Although this report has yet to be published, Assembly officials are undertaking preparatory work towards developing a national training framework for community development, which will also look at issues of accreditation. Work is also underway to develop a bursary scheme for the capacity building of individuals and organisations, which will also provide support for caring and transport costs.

2.17 Social inclusion has strong links with the Government themes of sustainable development and equality. These two values are both written into the Government of Wales Act which created the Assembly and have legal force.

Sustainable development

2.18 Sustainable development demands that the economic, social and environmental issues are considered and that policy responses are found which address all these factors at the same time. In the past in many of the poorer areas of Wales, old industries were pursued with little concern for environmental or social impacts. Programmes like Communities First provide opportunities for innovative local approaches which can serve economic, environmental and social ends. These have a strong base in Wales in existing community based activities such as the Local Agenda 21 sustainable development work first begun after the Rio Earth Summit.

2.19 The First Minister attended the Johannesburg UN Summit on sustainable development in September 2002, where the main theme was making the linkages between sustainable development and world poverty. In preparation for this visit a major conference was held in Cardiff where community groups, environmental groups and development groups got together to share views and say what was important to Wales. Proceeds from this conference funded solar panels in a community scheme in a Johannesburg township.

2.20 Wales is leading a European Sustainable Development regional network which has identified the problems of areas of old heavy industry and of rural depopulation as among the themes on which it will work together to share experience and find new solutions. At Johannesburg, Wales also helped found an international network of regions committed to sustainable development which will provide opportunities to make new links with developing countries.

Equality

2.21 Equality of opportunity requires that we think of the impact of policies for different groups. Groups within society can face particular aspects of social exclusion due to deliberate or unintentional discrimination, and women, children, disabled people and ethnic minorities are most affected by issues of poverty and lack of opportunity. Simply providing the same service to all does not mean that everyone can have equal access to those services, whether because of age, disability, gender or race.

2.22 This year has seen considerable progress in building equality issues into the work of the Assembly as a whole, with, in particular, the adoption of its Race Equality Scheme. This is due to be reviewed during 2003 and will involve a major consultation exercise on the assessment of Assembly policies

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and functions and a revised scheme. The results of this consultation will help

shape Assembly policies and functions to ensure they meet the needs of BME communities and commence an ongoing dialogue with those communities.

2.23 A number of positive steps are being taken by the Assembly to promote equality of opportunity, including:

- **Outreach** - attempting to increase engagement with marginalised groups throughout Wales. These groups have traditionally been overlooked where contact has been primarily with established community groups and organisations. Work in hand includes

the Assembly providing opportunities for workshadowing, secondments, and traineeships for people from BME communities;

- **Consultation** - there have been 2 roundtables established - one for BME communities (chaired by the Assembly's Permanent Secretary) and one for public sector bodies (chaired by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities). Capacity funding has also been provided by the Assembly to four key voluntary bodies to enhance the effectiveness of the Assembly's consultation arrangements the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA), the Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual Forum Cymru Disability Wales and the Wales Women's National Coalition;
- **Public Appointments** – the Assembly's public appointments procedures have been reviewed to assist in creating a more diverse representation on public bodies;
- **Policy Making**- a review of the Assembly's policy making procedures to produce effective tools for policy development has ensured that equality is built in from the start. The Assembly is also committed to the principle of using minority languages in instances when it is both practical and appropriate to do so and is committed to increasing their use as much as possible. In addition to publishing all public documents bilingually, publications in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Somali have been produced.
- **Access** – There have been improvements across a range of access issues. Including greater accessibility of information, improvements have been made to physical access to Assembly buildings, especially at the regional offices.

Well Being In Wales

2.24 Inequalities in health often start from childhood because of difficult economic circumstances, poor quality environments and fewer opportunities for developing skills and accessing employment. These disadvantages affect health and well being. Over and above the demand on health and care

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services, ill health has a huge impact on individuals and their families, on businesses and on the economy.

2.25 In September 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government produced *Well Being in Wales*

(www.wales.gov.uk/subihealth/content/wellbeing/wellbeinginwales-e.htm). Building on the foundations laid by *Better Health Better Wales*, it provides a solid platform for even more joint

action to protect and improve people's health.

2.26 *Well Being in Wales* provides for local authorities and Local Health Boards to deliver Local Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategies. It highlights the importance of health and well being in everyday life, and of effective partnership working. It emphasises that everyone in Wales shares the same responsibility for health and well being. This includes both individuals and organisations, including all arms of local authorities, community and voluntary organisations, employers, and businesses. Local authorities have a major part to play given their community leadership role and the breadth and depth of their services.

2.27 *Well Being in Wales* takes further the Welsh Assembly Government's work to integrate action to improve health across all the Assembly's policy areas. It aims to develop action in:

- Economic Development - to improve arrangements to help people with health problems to stay in work or to return to employment.
- Education and Lifelong Learning - to establish learning activities in disadvantaged communities as part of a national nutrition strategy.
- Communities - to develop further the health components of Communities First and other local regeneration initiatives.
- Transport - to encourage people to build exercise into their daily travelling.
- Environment - to improve the way that health is taken into account as part of the planning process.
- Agriculture and rural affairs - by bringing farmers and food suppliers together with people from disadvantaged and isolated communities to improve the availability of fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables.
- Culture, sport and active lifestyles - to increase the levels of physical activity in disadvantaged areas.

2.28 Good progress has been made on building health into other policies and programmes. For example; in the *Communities First* and *Objective 1* programmes; in education through the *Welsh Network of Healthy Schools*

Schemes; and in strategies such as the National Economic Development Strategy *A Winning Wales*. Other strategies and frameworks such as the National Housing Strategy *Better Homes*

for *People In Wales*, the strategy for older people *When I'm 64 and More*, and the *Children and Young People's Framework* also feature action on health.

2.29 *Well Being in Wales* will be taken forward through an action plan to be produced early in 2003. The plan will draw on examples of good practice from around Wales to encourage local authorities, Local Health Boards, community and voluntary organisations, employers, businesses and individuals to take forward the health and well being agenda.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

2.30 The Welsh Assembly Government is working to ensure that everyone has access to ICT facilities and the opportunity to exploit these to improve their lives. The Assembly has identified the appropriate use of ICT as a key tool for personal, organisational and community development throughout Wales.

2.31 The e-Minister, Andrew Davies, launched *Cymru Ar-lein* on 22nd November 2001 (www.cymruarlein.wales.gov.uk). Its unique holistic approach provides a top level strategic vision for the whole of Wales, which is delivered through a "joined-up" partnership approach and by targeted actions. It directly supports the Assembly's social inclusion agenda through the key programmes in access, information, infrastructure and eDemocracy.

2.32 The Assembly is keen to encourage enthusiastic and dedicated leaders to demonstrate what can be achieved through ICT in a way that makes sense to local people. That is why a number of key activities specifically aimed at supporting communities have been initiated:

Access for All

2.33 An early development of *Cymru Ar-lein* is its **database of ICT facilities** across Wales. The database can be used to find the nearest ICT facility such as the local library, school or ICT learning centre. Implementation is being monitored to ensure that sufficient accessible centres are provided, particularly in deprived areas.

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2.34 The **People's Network**, which provides free computer and Internet access in public libraries, was rolled out in Wales during 2002

2.35 A proposed major **e-communities programme** under Objective 1. The programme's aim is to stimulate community regeneration through the application of ICT. It will expand the use of ICT learning centres and train individuals to use ICT as a tool to develop their communities, as well as providing technical frameworks for community websites. An e-Community website will enable local communities to promote their activities, interest groups, businesses and services and exchange local information, skills and goods. A number of pilot projects are already underway in Wales and the project is anticipated to begin in the third quarter of 2003.

2.36 The Welsh Language Board has compiled a comprehensive list of **computer software and other resources available in Welsh** which is published on the Board's website and regularly updated. (<http://www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk/techgwyb/rhestrmeddalwedd-c.html>) The Board also part-funded the adaptation of the **European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)** into Welsh.

2.37 The Wales Information Society (WIS) **Mobile Exhibition Technology Trailer** travels across Wales throughout the year. It aims to raise awareness of the potential benefits offered by ICT, particularly in more excluded and remote areas where such facilities are more difficult to access. The Trailer is equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology including broadband satellite, video conferencing and other facilities (0800 389 7665).

2.38 ELWa's pre-pilot **e-placement scheme** in Pembrokeshire in September 2002, which, subject to the outcome of evaluation, should lead to a larger number of pilots in 2003. This involves placing IT graduates at e-learning centres to ensure that the ICT skills needed to make such centres work are transferred to the community and do not disappear to more prosperous parts of Wales or the world.

Information for All

2.39 **Traveline Cymru**, provides local and national public transport timetable information, for bus, coach, rail, ferry and air travel through a national rate phone number, which is 0870 608 2 608. The Traveline Cymru web site went live in January 2003, through the main UK web [www.](http://www.traveline.co.uk)

traveline.org.uk which will then offer users a choice of entering their initial enquiry in English or Welsh. Work is in hand to translate the entire database into Welsh.

2.40 The **National Grid for Learning (NGfL) Cymru** was launched in January 2003. It will enable all school children to benefit from best practice in Wales by identifying and developing electronically based material in both Welsh and English and helping teachers and other education practitioners to share expertise (www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk)

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2.41 **Wales on the Web** – a project based in the National Library of Wales that has developed a searchable and structured online directory of websites about Wales - was launched on 7 November 2002. It offers a "safe" environment in which to surf the net and further development will be made in 2003 (www.walesontheweb.org)

2.42 **The Wales Sustainable Development portal** is being developed by the Sustainable Development Network Wales and WCVA. This will enable communities to share information about their products, services and activities. The demonstration site will include information on projects such as waste recycling, local food, charities, voluntary sector and European funded projects (www.sustainwales.com)

Infrastructure

2.43 The multi-million **Lifelong Learning Network (LLN)** was launched in October 2002 with the aim of providing broadband connectivity to all schools, learning centres and libraries in Wales – all of which are expected to be connected to the Lifelong Learning Network by the end of March 2003. Every citizen in Wales will also have free access to the LLN network by public access points in libraries and ICT learning centres.

2.44 The five year, £115 million **Broadband Wales** programme was announced by the e-Minister on 11 July 2002. It is the most significant Government investment of its kind in broadband in the UK (broadband is the term used to describe a wide range of technologies that allow high-speed always-on access to the Internet and other electronic services) (www.broadband.wales.gov.uk and www.wda.co.uk/broadband)

2.45 The Assembly Government has worked with Wales Digital College on the **eFro Broadband Wireless Project**, to provide broadband access for the rural community of Dyffryn Ogwen in North West Wales. It provides a concrete example of how wireless technology can be used to provide connectivity to rural areas and helps to build a business case for the utilisation of wireless technologies as a broadband solution in other parts of Wales (www.e-fro.cd)

2.46 As part of the **NHS Wales' Telecommunications 2000 Strategy**, the Welsh Assembly Government has launched *dawn₂*. A £20million investment will provide broadband connectivity to all hospitals in Wales - linking 550 hospitals, GPs and homeworkers with high speed broadband connectivity making it much easier for clinicians to share information and undertake remote diagnostics. Around 70% of General Medical Practices have already been connected.

2.47 A project is under way to improve the co-ordination of **Geographical Information Systems** in Wales. A GI strategy and action plan were launched in December 2002. GIS will provide an essential tool for aiding public sector

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policy development in Wales, enabling us to better address issues of social inclusion and equal opportunities. GIS also forms the basis of the Sustain Wales website (above) via which people can already contribute and share information.

Welsh Language

2.48 The Welsh Language Act 1993 established the principle that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

2.49 The Assembly's first Strategic Plan, *Better Wales* set out the Assembly's vision of fostering Wales' unique and diverse identity and the benefits of bilingualism. One of the priority areas was to extend access to, and awareness of, the Welsh language. *Better Wales* set a target to stabilise the proportion of Welsh speakers by 2003 and sustain the growth in the number of young people who speak the language. These objectives were confirmed in the *Plan for Wales 2001*.

2.50 The Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh language scheme, approved by the Welsh Language Board, specifies the measures it proposes to take to give effect to the principle of equality, and represents what is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable. The scheme demonstrates the Assembly's commitment to bilingualism in the delivery of services to the public.

2.51 The Assembly Government's vision for the Welsh language was set out in its policy statement *Dyfodol Dwyieithog: Bilingual Wales* in July 2002 with the aim of creating a truly bilingual Wales, where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of either or both Welsh or English. A comprehensive national action plan, *Iaith Pawb (Everyone's Language)* has now been launched which sets out the strategy and the commitment of resources by which the goal of a bilingual Wales could be achieved. *Iaith Pawb* will:

- ensure that the Welsh Assembly Government sets the policy agenda and provides strategic leadership in order to sustain and encourage the growth of the Welsh language;
- focus on policies and actions which promote economically and socially sustainable communities throughout Wales including those where Welsh is widely spoken within the community at large; and
- focus on the rights and responsibilities of individuals and continue to encourage individuals to learn Welsh and empower them to use the language in all aspects of life in Wales.