

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

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Title: Edwin Hart – Report to SJ&R Committee – 20 October 2005

1. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005-10-05

The new Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation was published on 30 September. It replaces the original index, which was produced in 2000.

The new Index differs from the old one in that it includes a new element of deprivation, relating to people's physical environment (and so added to measurements of income, employment, health, education, housing and access to services), and it goes down to a smaller spatial scale.

The change to smaller areas addresses one of the main criticisms of the 2000 Index. In the new Index, Wales is divided into 1,896 areas, called Super Output Areas (standard census areas across Wales and England), all of which have roughly the same number of people (about 1,500). The previous Index used the 865 electoral divisions and thus compared areas which had populations ranging from 1,000 up to 20,000. In the larger areas used in 2000, there was a possibility of pockets of deprivation being sometimes masked by a higher level of affluence in other parts of the area. Under the new Index, the larger wards are sub-divided into several smaller areas, each of which now registers its own score in the Index. The new Index will thus help identify pockets of concentrated deprivation within areas which otherwise appear to be less deprived.

The Assembly Government will take time to consider all the implications, particularly in relation to the Communities First programme which is our flagship strategy for combating disadvantage and deprivation.

I propose to invite the communities themselves and the programme's other key stakeholders to consider the new Index and to submit their views on how we might take the programme forward.

The Assembly Government will also continue to undertake its own analyses and, informed by the views submitted by stakeholders, we will draw up clear proposals on which we will consult formally. We will discuss the outcomes of the consultation with the communities and their key local stakeholders and work

through the implications with them.

We have always made clear that the Communities First programme is a long-term strategy, with a commitment of at least 10 years to help local people turn round decades of deprivation.

I hope to be in a position to agree a way forward by around the summer of next year, in time for the next budget planning round.

I arranged for Assembly Members to receive a technical briefing on the new Index, covering its methodology, baseline information and other technical matters, on Wednesday 12 October from the officials in the Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate who were responsible for pulling it together.

2. Child Poverty Strategy

As Members will know, I have asked my Deputy Minister, Huw Lewis AM, to lead on the development of an Implementation Plan to achieve our goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020. Work on that has now begun and Huw, along with supporting officials, will be discussing the outline Plan with key stakeholders over the coming weeks.

The Implementation Plan will apply across Ministerial portfolios, as so many of the actions already in place or needed to achieve our target are spread across Assembly Government Departments. The Plan will seek to maximise the work already being undertaken, draw all the various strands together and set an ambitious programme for change. Importantly, it will also seek to tie in Assembly Government activity to targets and milestones so that progress can be effectively reviewed and measured over time. In addition, the Plan will take account of lessons learned from elsewhere, particularly those countries which have been successful in reducing or eradicating poverty in childhood.

We hope the draft Implementation Plan to be ready for consideration by the Children and Young People Cabinet Sub Committee in the New Year. Committee will, of course, have sight of the Plan and I will keep you fully informed of progress in this fundamental component of our broader strategy to improve quality of life and combat poverty.

3. Community Facilities and Activities Programme

The Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP) is a grant scheme operated by the Welsh Assembly Government to help community and voluntary organisations provide facilities or carry out activities which will promote the regeneration of communities.

Total level of approvals

Since its launch in 2002 the CFAP has committed £27.904m to 348 projects. Over 1000 applications

worth £91.305m have been received.

15 July 2005 bidding round.

Applications from 151 organisations requesting £18.067m in grant aid over 3 years were received. I have approved 27 projects worth £4.407m over three years including:

- Five projects supporting social enterprises:
 - Ceredigion, the Small World Theatre
 - Flintshire, Refurbs Flintshire- Furniture and White Goods Refurbishment
 - Conwy, Towyn Under 5s Playgroup
 - Conwy, Abergele Youth Action Café Ltd
 - Powys, the SIREN wood-working shop
- Six projects based in Community First areas but benefitting nine Community First areas. These are the Gap and CVC grant projects in Swansea, Weston Spirit in Merthyr, Elim Community and the Cascade Church projects in Caerphilly and the Somali Integration project in Cardiff.
- Two projects for which CFAP is providing match funding for Objective 1 projects. These are:
 - £69,754 towards the Small World Theatre in Ceredigion attracting £743,185 in EU grant;
 - £197,007 for the Weston Spirit project in Merthyr providing residential courses for socially excluded young people securing Objective 1 funding of £171,011.

Minority Ethnic Organisations

- £110,000 for disabled access and building improvements to the Shree Swaminarayan Temple and community facility in Grangetown, Cardiff, and £231,498 revenue over three years for the Somali Integration Society project.

4. Physical Regeneration Fund

Development Funding (revenue)

The sixth bidding round for development funding closed on 30th July with a total of 12 applications received.

- I have approved three applications with grants totalling £230,000 over two financial years. These are:

- grant of £200,000 to prepare details for the refurbishment of the Gwyn Hall in Neath, a Grade II listed building;
- a £20,000 grant to help with the formulation of detailed plans for the integration of employment sites in Llangefni;
- A grant of £10,000 to help in the development of a public realm strategy and MasterPlan for Oxford Street in Pontycymmer.

Implementation Funding (capital)

The 2005 (second) bidding round for implementation funding closed on 30th July and a total of 40 applications were received totalling in excess of £31m;

- The outcome of this bidding round will be known shortly and the Chair will be informed of the projects approved.

5. Annual Report on the Voluntary Sector Scheme

The Assembly Government's Annual Report on the Voluntary Sector Scheme 2004/05 is to be debated in Plenary on 19 October. The Report provides an overview of progress in the financial year from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. It details how the Assembly and its partners are taking forward the requirements of the Scheme. The Report was discussed at the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council meeting on 13 June and went before this Committee on 6 July. It was to be the subject of a plenary debate on 13 July 2005 but this was postponed. Once the Report has been approved in Plenary, it will be published and circulated widely within the voluntary sector and to other key partners.

6. Corporate Challenge Wales

Our 'Corporate Challenge Wales' initiative will be launched on 20 October, at Gwydyr House in Whitehall. The joint hosts for this event will be myself, the First Minister, the Secretary of State for Wales, and Nick Ainger MP.

The aim of Corporate Challenge Wales is to increase all forms of corporate giving to the voluntary sector, including direct funding, employee volunteering and payroll giving. Currently the sector in Wales receives only some £2-3 million of the estimated £1 billion donated by companies across the UK. As part of the Challenge, we will be promoting the Assembly Government's willingness to work with business in this field, and we will be showcasing the unique opportunities that Wales offers.

The launch will be followed by a conference early in 2006, and by a series of events hosted by the First Minister, both aimed at key business people. It is also planned to hold a series of breakfast events aimed at Welsh businesses and managers of Welsh components of UK and multinational companies. These will run over a period of 18 months and are likely to focus around specific themes, probably ministerial portfolios, to bring together charities, companies and voluntary organisations with similar interests.

7. Social Enterprise Strategy for Wales

As Members know, the Social Enterprise Strategy for Wales was launched on 27th June. I have agreed to update the Committee at regular intervals on progress in implementing the Strategy. Since the launch the following progress has been made:

- arranged a State Aid seminar for local authorities and other public funding authorities in December 2005;
- agreed to the establishment of a Finance sub-group of the Social Enterprise Joint Working Group to look at a range of options for financing the sector including potential private sector investment and the development of a Community Development Finance Initiative in Wales;
- approved funding for Development Trusts Association Wales to support the continuing development of development trusts across Wales and to lead on specific Strategy actions such as promoting asset transfer and procurement opportunities for social enterprises and introducing social accounting tools across the sector to measure social value;
- approved a research study into the relationship between social enterprise and private sector small to medium enterprises under the New Ideas Research Fund;
- ensured recognition of the potential of social enterprise is included in the [Communities@one](#) guidance and the revision of the Communities First guidance;
- assessed Community Facilities and Activities Programme projects where social enterprise features;
- contributed to the final report on the UK wide Small Business Service survey on social enterprise;
- The Coalfields Social Enterprise Development Scheme launched in March. This partnership between Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Scarman Trust and Community Enterprise Wales operates a Grant and Loan Fund totalling £1.4 million. The 32 applications already received are worth £1.14 million. Average grant application of £35K. The first grant was approved recently, others will follow in October and November.
- secured agreement for Welsh social enterprises to participate in the Social Enterprise Visit Programme to see at first hand how others have overcome the challenges of running a social enterprise;
- drafting a Communications Strategy to better promote the sector and improved the Welsh Assembly Government website to include a distinct, accessible social enterprise page.

At the next meeting of the Social Enterprise Joint Working Group on 31 January 2006 members will be discussing:

- annual Social Enterprise Conference - Spring 2006;
- establishment of Sector Representative Body;
- mapping sources of financial and business support and report from the Finance sub group;
- recommendations on a Training Programme for the Sector;

- draft Communications Plan;
- involving Children and Young People.

8. Formation of an all Wales CDFI

At its October meeting the Social Enterprise Joint Working Group (SEJWG) revisited the subject of establishing an all Wales CDFI.

In England the CDFI sector is funded through the Phoenix Fund and in Scotland through Social Investment Scotland (a partnership of the Scottish Executive and four high street banks). We have, so far been unable to find a suitable funding model in Wales.

There are some positive developments in the sector. The Cylch recycling network has moved forward with plans for a CDFI to serve its membership. The Wales Sustainability Reinvestment Trust (WSRT) is now incorporated and my officials will meet WSRT representatives before the end of October to discuss how best we can help in its development.

There is also new potential for leveraging in private funding to make an all Wales CDFI a reality. At least two high street banks have shown interest in extending investment in social enterprise in Wales. It is too early to comment on whether this is the correct route to fund CDFI activity in Wales.

SEJWG has agreed to establish a Finance subgroup comprising of Finance Wales, WCVA, Wales Co-op Centre, DTA Wales, WSRT and Assembly Government officials. The group will start by re-examining the options for an all Wales CDFI, factoring in new developments and will report its findings to the next SEJWG meeting to be held on 31st January 2006.

9. Revisions within Social Justice & Regeneration Main Expenditure Group

The Committee will wish to note that the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services and I have agreed to revise the Revenue and Capital budget allocations within the Social Justice & Regeneration (SJ&R) Main Expenditure Group (MEG) for 2005-06, and to reclassify specified capital budget categories. These revisions will better reflect the operational needs across the portfolio. The

affected budgets are as follows:

Revised proportionate Revenue and Capital budget allocations have been agreed within the Budget Expenditure Lines (BELs) for: Stock Transfer/Community Mutual Support; Community Fire Safety; Rapid Response Adaptations Programme; Community Purposes; Town Centre Regeneration; Community Facilities Programme; Coalfields Regeneration Trust; Safer Communities Fund; and Social Economy. Details of the revised allocations are at annex A.

Furthermore, it has been agreed to reclassify the Community Facilities Programme (CFAP) budget as Public Sector rather than Private Sector Capital; and the Major Repairs Allowance capital grant budget being able to accommodate both Public Sector and Private Sector classifications.

The overall total budget within the SJ&R MEG remains unaltered by these adjustments.

10. Review of Housing Adaptations Including Disabled Facilities Grants.

The Committee may find it helpful to have an update on the progress we are making on implementing the recommendations in the recent review of housing adaptations including disabled facilities grants.

I am sure that the Committee will already be aware of the very important measure we have introduced to address problems for the parents of disabled children. The means-test for the parents of disabled children was abolished in Wales on 30 September. This change has been widely welcomed.

There were a number of recommendations to change the primary legislation and I have written to Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) asking them to consider these alongside the outcome of their review in England. My officials are continuing to pursue this with colleagues in the ODPM.

In the meantime there is much that local authorities in Wales can themselves do to implement a number of the recommendations. We have written to all local authorities reminding them of the measures they can already take to improve the delivery of help in line with recommendations of the review. We have encouraged them to introduce measures that would lead to less bureaucracy, streamlined delivery of grants, registers of adapted properties and carrying out smaller adaptations outside the formal DFG arrangements. We have also now changed the arrangements for the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to enable these resources to be used to fund adaptations to local authority properties. We have also drawn local authorities' attention to the importance of them allocating sufficient resources locally to meet demand for adaptations and their local priorities.

The review made a number of recommendations about the dissemination of information and sharing good practice. As a first step we have arranged seminars in November following which we will prepare new guidance, and publicity information and consider how best practice can best be shared between authorities and other interested organisations.

Officials are working closely with the Welsh Local Government Association's data unit in developing the new Performance Indicators recommended by the report. Local authorities are currently being consulted on the proposed new indicators.

Officials are also liaising with colleagues in Health and Social Care on taking forward recommendations that have a cross-cutting dimension. Where the recommendations covering Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are concerned, I expect to be considering the advice of my officials in the very near future. I will provide another update for the Committee when further progress has been made.

11. Involvement of Young Peoples Partnerships in local homelessness strategies

At the meeting in July members expressed concern over the lack of involvement of Young Peoples Partnerships in local homelessness strategies. The majority of strategies had not shown any clear connection or contribution from the YPPs in addressing youth homelessness, although this was expected in our statutory guidance.

Since then my officials have contacted all authorities to ascertain the current position on engagement with YPPs. The responses indicate a general improvement in the situation. It appears that most authorities now have a representative from the local YPP on the homelessness forum, or a housing representative on the Youth Forum. Many youth organisations are involved in the homelessness partnerships, and new initiatives are emerging such as education on prevention and joint work to connect with children in homeless families through the Keeping in Touch Strategy. However a few authorities still have no firm links with the YPPs. From 2006/7 the Welsh Assembly will set the audit of the housing needs of young people as a priority action area for YPPs, and we expect this to lead to better joint working and provide an important contribution to the planning of homelessness services for young people. I will write to the Chair with a summary of the current position in each authority

12. Substance Misuse Action Plan Fund – Capital

In October 2004 I announced an additional £11m to fund a new substance misuse Capital Programme for 2005-2008. £3m is available in 2005-06, followed by £4m in each of the subsequent two years. These resources are allocated on a regional (police force area) basis in accordance with the Substance Misuse Action Fund funding formula.

The Committee will wish to note that I announced the first tranche of capital schemes being supported under the Assembly Government's Substance Misuse Action Fund at Emroch House, Port Talbot yesterday (19 October 2005). The 17 schemes that have been approved are listed at Annex B. A further 10 proposals are still being developed and I will keep the Committee informed of progress on these and all subsequent new bids.

Community Safety Partnerships were invited to submit bids against the following criteria:

- Focus on improving the capacity, access and/or quality of treatment facilities through the creation of multi-agency bases, residential treatment and detoxification centres, increasing GP shared care participation, youth facilities, mobile outreach and day-centres;
- Demonstrate collaborative ventures between partnerships on a regional or multi-regional basis;
- Based upon a sound assessment of local need and reflects priorities in action plans and,
- Demonstrate how any revenue consequences are to be funded.

All proposals were assessed by an internal panel of officials using a pre-set scoring system. Specialist advice from the Assembly's Health Professionals was taken as appropriate. Annex C contains a summary report by region of bids received.

13. Substance Misuse Action Plan Fund – Revenue Expenditure

In October 2004, I announced an additional £1.6m revenue resources to be made available for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) as part of the Substance Misuse Action Plan Fund (SMAPF).

CSPs were required to submit their plans detailing how the additional funding was to be used with the emphasis on quantifying how it increased access to treatment services. A summary of that information by CSP is at Annex D.

All CSPs (excluding Monmouth and Torfaen) have received approval for their expenditure proposals. Monmouth and Torfaen have been engaged in protracted negotiations to secure additional alcohol services. Both have received "approval in principle" pending the submission of a final expenditure plan covering additionality and value for money for the new alcohol service.

In summary, over 1600 additional treatment places have been created as a result of increasing CSP allocations by £1.6m.

14. Update on Domestic Abuse Issues

As promised at an earlier Committee meeting I have circulated to members the National Probation Service's interim domestic abuse policy.

At the last Domestic Abuse Working Group meeting held on 13 September 2005 the effectiveness of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes was discussed. It was noted that all 4 Welsh Probation areas are running perpetrator programmes which is targeted at high risk offenders. The Probation Service expects to work with around 500 perpetrators across Wales in the first year. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children reported that their perpetrator programme is being changed and they will be focusing on working with perpetrators with access to children and young people. Overall the Working Group felt that more could be done in Wales in relation to perpetrator programmes. This matter will be discussed further at the November domestic abuse training seminars for Community

Safety Partnerships. These events will be held in Mold and Swansea.

At the same Working Group meeting the representative from the police presented his findings related to the effects of alcohol on domestic abuse incidents. The findings were presented in table form with no commentary. The Working Group agreed that a summary report needed to be prepared before the results could be sent to the Committee. This work is ongoing and I would expect it to be completed in November 2005. I will circulate the report to the Committee as soon as it is available.