

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

15TH DECEMBER 2016

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TACKLING POVERTY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS – PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR J. ROSSER

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on progress made since the report to Cabinet of 24th November 2015, that set out the recommendations following a strategic review into the Council's approach to tackling poverty. This included:

- The creation of one Tackling Poverty Service that brings the tackling poverty programmes and the commissioning of services together to support their integration for greatest effect.
- The restructuring of Communities First to include a strategically delivered “core offer” of intervention/activity across all eight Clusters, but retaining an element of local flexibility through community involvement activity and local engagement staff.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council's Corporate Self Assessment and a strategic review into the Council's approach to tackling poverty identified the need to improve the integration of poverty programmes for greatest effect. It is therefore essential that Cabinet Members are kept up to date on the

progress being made since the report to Cabinet of 24th November 2015.

- 3.2 Furthermore, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee both identified this area of work to be included within their Work Programmes. As such, this report was presented to the Scrutiny Committee's on the 8th and 14th November respectively, to scrutinise the progress made to date.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 During May 2015, the Cabinet agreed to a review of the Communities First programme, as part of a wider examination of Rhondda Cynon Taf's strategic approach to tackling poverty. The review took place during the summer of 2015, reporting to Cabinet on 24th November 2015.

- 4.2 The review found that better integrating the three Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty' programmes of Flying Start, Families First and Communities First, and ensuring the programmes are aligned with the core business of the Council, would improve the strategic direction and the impact of services "on the ground". This should, in turn, lead to better outcomes for children, young people, families and communities most in need.

- 4.3 To achieve this, the review identified a number of key areas that required attention and strengthening:

- **Strategic direction and governance:** there is a need for an overall approach that sets a clear strategic direction, vision and governance arrangements for tackling poverty programmes across the Council.
- **Programme infrastructure (co-ordination and consistency):** the development of a robust infrastructure to support the integration of poverty programmes for greatest effect.
- **Effective system of monitoring and review:** strengthen the performance management and management information systems to provide the capacity to quality assure to gain best value for money and demonstrate the fullest impact for service.
- **The targeting of hard to reach groups:** the development of effective systems to ensure services are targeted at those in greatest need.

- 4.4 As a result, in November 2015, the Cabinet approved a restructure of the Communities First programme as part of the immediate implementation of the findings of this review, with a phased approach

to follow bringing the other 'Tackling Poverty' programmes together under one service.

5. **PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 5.1 Since the report to Cabinet on 24th November 2015, a considerable amount of good work has been undertaken in a short timescale.

Strategic direction and governance

- 5.2 A coherent and structured approach to 'tackling poverty' in Rhondda Cynon Taf requires an oversight of approach to ensure that links are being made to national legislation; core Council services and existing local programmes are aligned and co-ordinated, and that emerging opportunities are identified.

- 5.3 The governance model developed to support this new approach is already contributing to the delivery of these principles. This includes the following elements being implemented:

- 5.4 **A single Rhondda Cynon Taf wide governance forum** that provides the strategic direction and oversight of approach to developing and delivering provision. The 'Generating Wealth Board' provides the strategic direction for the commissioning and monitoring of Communities First, Families First, Flying Start and the ESF Communities For Work and Inspire to Work programmes.

- 5.5 **A single tackling poverty outcomes framework** that has created a robust infrastructure to support the delivery of an outcome focused approach upon which collective effort can be measured across all programmes and Council mainstream services.

- 5.6 The framework is structured around four high level strategic outcomes spanning the main aims of the tackling poverty programmes. The outcomes focus on supporting people in need/poverty to:

- **Outcome 1:** Achieve good educational outcomes.
- **Outcome 2:** Realise sufficient income and obtain work that pays.
- **Outcome 3:** Achieve a thriving and a healthy future.
- **Outcome 4:** Live in a safe and secure environment.

- 5.7 This formal structure is influencing strategic management decisions, subsequently effecting actions at an operational level leading to a planned programme of delivery that avoids duplication and optimises resources for greatest effect.
- 5.8 **A single coherent Communities First Strategy** has been developed that has replaced the eight plans that clusters have previously produced. The strategy outlines how the revised Communities First programme will work in practice, but linked to the other tackling poverty programmes, core services and its partner organisations. The strategy also shows how the programme has been restructured to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.
- 5.9 The single plan has been approved by Welsh Government and is now being shared with other local authorities **as an example of good practice**. The Communities First Plan is attached for your information as Appendix 1.

Programme infrastructure (co-ordination and consistency)

- 5.10 To develop a robust infrastructure to support the integration of poverty programmes for greatest effect the following progress has been made;
- 5.11 A new **Communities and Prosperity Service** has been established that brings Communities First, Families First, Substance Misuse and the commissioning aspects of Flying Start services together under one management arrangement.
- 5.12 The service provides the strategic leadership and operational capacity to develop and integrate these programmes for greatest effect.
- 5.13 The development of **a single commissioning team** as part of the Communities and Prosperity Service to secure a suite of provision of both community based activity and specialist intervention across the County Borough against the single tackling poverty outcomes framework. This is ensuring that all commissioned provision is focused on outcomes as part of a whole authority picture rather than the commissioning of services or provision within the confines of individual funding streams.
- 5.14 The implementation of the **new Communities First Programme**. The review into the Communities First programme recommended a service design that takes the best aspects of what was being delivered and promotes a more consistent, co-ordinated and strategic approach across all Clusters.

5.15 In order to achieve this, the programme has now been restructured based on the following **three elements**:

(1) A targeted local community engagement approach to support early intervention and prevention for those identified as being most at risk and in need of support.

5 frontline posts (1 Lead Officer and 4 Community Engagement Workers per cluster) have been created to provide an initial point of contact for communities in each cluster. These roles provide support for individuals and families identified through early identification processes which form part of a continuum of support. Initially, the targeted local community engagement approach has been focused on supporting individuals and families along a pathway to improvement that has been aligned to the overarching priorities set out under the core offer of services.

To ensure that staff are well informed in targeting support and activities at these individuals and ultimately demonstrate that the people who need support most are being engaged, the Community Engagement Workers are currently providing support as part of:

- The Children's Services Vulnerability and Resilience Profiling pilot, which identifies families that have low levels of resilience and in need of support – project evaluation currently being undertaken.
- The RCT Adult Services Single point of access and supporting people experiencing social isolation.
- The Universal Credit roll out to support people to access online services and budgetary support.
- A single point of referral system for partners to refer individuals in need of engagement support as part of a pathway to accessing core offer specialised/intensive intervention.
- Self referrals from individuals who present at Communities First Offices or where issues are identified through universal engagement activities.

In line with an asset based approach to community development and the Social Services & Wellbeing Act, Community Engagement Workers work with these identified individuals, listen to their aims for the future and support them to achieve their outcomes. This might be providing one-to-one mentoring support for someone as they visit an existing local specialist service in the community for the first time; supporting them to 'step-up' or 'step-

down' from a service as they move towards reaching their goal or assisting them to reconnect with their community, family and develop their self-confidence through universal engagement activities (see below).

To support staff with this change in role, all Community Engagement Workers attended a comprehensive training programme which focused on the delivery of a 1 to 1 asset based approach.

(2) A programme of local Universal Community Engagement Activity that facilitates community involvement and progression

A flexible Community Involvement budget has been allocated to each Cluster to support the delivery of Universal Engagement Activities. These activities are designed to support the involvement of service users in their community and plays a part in the wider strategically commissioned projects as part of a pathway to improvement i.e. pre-engagement, feeder or step up activities. All Clusters now submit quarterly engagement plans for approval through the central team prior to delivery taking place.

Current activities include family engagement activity, community group support, campaigns and promotions, job fairs, confidence building sessions, basic skills/essential skills support, and volunteering opportunities. **Local engagement forums** will be launched in November and initially used to support phase two of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act consultation process as well as widening community and service user participation within the programme.

(3) A core offer of strategically commissioned provision.

Pooling activity resources across clusters has led to more joint commissioning of activity and the development of a comprehensive core offer of provision that forms part of a whole programme and local authority picture. The core offer of provision continues to contribute towards the three themes of the Communities First programme: '*Prosperous*', '*Learning*' and '*Health*'. All provision can be directly accessed by each cluster which has ensured equity in service delivery across all Communities First areas.

The single outcomes framework, strategic plans and needs assessments have been used to support the development of the

core offer to ensure programmes are outcome focused and that interventions are complementary and add value to current provision delivered through Families First, Flying Start, Supporting People, ESF funded programmes and mainstream Council services. For each core offer activity, robust proposals were developed and submitted to the commissioning steering group for review, challenge and approval.

The below table outlines the core offer of provision that has been commissioned to date against each of the programme themes - A more detailed breakdown of all core offer provision can be found in Appendix 2.

Theme		
Prosperous	Learning	Health
Employability Courses (25+)	Adult Education Accredited courses	Targeted Physical activity sessions: STARS
Employment Routes programme (25+)	Essential skills provision	Targeted support to access universal physical activity sessions at leisure centres
Work Clubs: job search, updating CV's.	Parenting and family programmes	Low level mental health support programmes i.e. Valley steps and Cwm Taf recovery college
Barriers to work fund: available to tackle final barriers to work	Family Learning	Reducing risks: issue based youth work
Young people's employability programme	Sport Coaching Courses	Friday Night Football
Digital inclusion: Digital Fridays		Healthy lifestyle programme tackling different health related issues.
Financial inclusion: open access and targeted advice services		
Food banks		
Fuel Poverty: cluster NEST Surgeries		

In terms of programme delivery, a combination of old programme activity and new core offer provision was delivered during quarter 1 of this financial year to support the transition into this new approach. During quarter 2, all core offer provision became fully operational with the exception of the commissioned Leisure and Youth Service physical activity programmes which are due to be launched in quarter 3.

- 5.16 These **three elements** have been designed so that there is a clear pathway of support for service users. A typical pathway would support a participant to access a progression of support which allows them to reach their goal and move on from the programme. All core offer provision has been commissioned with this in mind.
- 5.17 The impact of this new co-ordinated approach and combined efforts with a range of partner organisations, is already most clearly visible in the design and delivery of the **commissioned Adult Education “Prosperous” and “Learning” theme programmes**. By taking a strategic approach to the development of provision under these themes it highlighted the need for Communities First funding to be aligned to support the Council’s identified shortfall in relation to employment support for adults over the age of 25.
- 5.18 As a result, a comprehensive employability programme has been developed to provide sector specific employment pathways that add value to current Adult Education and voluntary sector services and fills a gap in current provision across the Communities First clusters. Combined with the implementation of the Communities First 1 to 1 targeted support and Universal Engagement Activities, this approach now provides **a single coherent employment pathway for all adults** across the Communities First clusters. For example:

Phase 1: Referrals in (early identification)

Individuals identified and referred in by Job Centre Plus and partner agencies for those individuals not eligible for the Communities for Work programme.

Phase 2: Pre-engagement support

Following a referral, 1 to 1 targeted support is provided by Community Engagement Workers to conduct initial screening to identify needs and support required. Mentoring and access to Universal Engagement Activities is available if individuals are in need of low level support to help improve their confidence before progressing onto more formal activities.

Phase 3: Gathering skills and knowledge

Essential skills 1 to 1 support is provided by Adult Education tutors to build an individual's confidence prior to a referral onto a more formal course. On-going mentoring and support is provided by the Communities First Community Engagement Officer throughout this process.

Phase 4: Developing employability

This phase aims to develop employability skills through the progression onto more formal Adult Education employability courses that include elements of confidence and team building, customer service skills, digital literacy, health and safety, food hygiene and first aid. Job search and CV writing support through Communities First commissioned Work Clubs, delivered by the voluntary sector, also supports this phase of the pathway.

Phase 5: Formal employment routes programme

This phase aims to develop employability skills further with individuals progressing onto a relevant Employment Routes Programme that supports their employment goal. Sector specific qualifications and employment routes linked to RCT Labour Market opportunities are available, such as; Care domiciliary/NHS, Retail, Hospitality, Administration, PTS and SIA training. Employers have been directly involved in both the planning and delivery of this specific phase of the programme with a guaranteed interview for employer vacancies on offer if the course is successfully completed. Work experience is guaranteed if an immediate job offer is not made.

- 5.19 This approach is already proving to be successful with good outcomes being achieved since the programme became operational. During the first two quarters of 2016/17; **123 adults** have entered employment and **253 adults** have gained an employment related qualification.
- 5.20 In addition, as a result of the strategic commissioning and collaborative approach now being taken to inform service delivery, significant economies of scale and a release of resources has enabled the Adult Education department to refocus core resources to target areas outside of Communities First clusters. As a result, this programme is now available to **all adults** across RCT regardless of where they live.
- 5.21 Our strong focus on employability and learning has been highlighted as a key strength by Welsh Government and is very much in line with the future direction of travel at a National level. Whilst we have sharpened our focus on employability and learning, our recent quarter 2

monitoring and compliance visits to other core offer provision has identified a number of positive outcomes already being achieved. This includes;

- **462** individuals supported to maximise their benefits and realise sufficient income.
- **66** individuals being able to better manage and reduce debt through receiving financial information or advice.
- **29** individuals directly supported by Community Engagement Workers to access food banks.
- **35** individuals with improved basic IT skills through our digital inclusion programme.
- **364** parents currently engaged in parenting programmes – outcomes to be reported in quarter 3/4.
- **39** individuals reporting that they are feeling more positive about their mental wellbeing through our low level mental health support programmes.

Effective systems of monitoring and review

- 5.22 Good progress has been made to strengthen the performance management arrangements across the tackling poverty programmes. This includes;
- 5.23 The introduction of **a new performance and contracting monitoring framework** and **staff handbook** that has resulted in internal audit reporting that there has been significant improvement in the way data is collected and evidenced, specifically in relation to the Communities First programme.
- 5.24 The development of **a single commissioning team** that has pooled support staff and grant resources across programmes into one team. A number of roles have been amalgamated to ensure consistency in approach and that there is sufficient capacity to effectively review and challenge delivery and performance.
- 5.25 Furthermore, the team functions and commissioning approach has been developed in line with the new RCT Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management strategy with staff roles designed based on the different stages set out within the commissioning cycle i.e. establishing need, planning, review and contract management.
- 5.26 The development of a **single management information system** across the Communities and Prosperity Service. The service is working with the Education System Improvement Team to implement Capita One as the single management information system across all tackling poverty programmes. The system is now ready to be piloted across

Communities First as part of phase 1 with the intention that it is rolled out across all poverty programmes in 2017/18.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Overall, good progress has been made in implementing the findings of the tackling poverty review. The changes and developments that have been introduced are all consistent with Welsh Government's direction of travel and its national Communities and Tackling Poverty alignment project which is establishing how far Flying Start, Families First and Communities First could be simplified, streamlined and where possible integrated.
- 6.2 However, whilst good progress has been made, on the 11th October the Cabinet Secretary for Children and Communities made an Oral Statement on Resilient Communities during which the Minister stated that he is "minded to phase out the Communities First programme whilst establishing a new approach to meet the challenges of the future".
- 6.3 What this actually means is not yet known until we receive further guidance from Welsh Government. However, the changes we have made as a Council to the Communities First Programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf put us in a strong position to inform Welsh Government's review and shape the future programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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COUNCILLOR J. ROSSER**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TACKLING POVERTY REVIEW
RECOMMENDATIONS – PROGRESS REPORT**

Background Papers

Cabinet report – 24th November 2015

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC

Communities First Single Plan

2016-17

1. Introduction – Why a single Communities First plan?

- 1.1. Tackling poverty is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, with a high level of commitment from Elected Members, officers and frontline staff to minimise and mitigate the impact of poverty.
- 1.2. 'Poverty' is a multi-faceted and complex issue, relating to income, opportunity, access to services, confidence and aspiration. As such, 'tackling poverty' is not only a task for one service, but an important matter for the whole Council, other public services, the private sector, voluntary sector and, importantly, the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.3. There is already excellent work taking place in Rhondda Cynon Taf to tackle poverty across the Council, its partner organisations and in communities. As well as core services focussed on education, employment and opportunity, three large Welsh Government programmes also operate within the County Borough (Families First, Flying Start and Communities First) which aim to tackle poverty and mitigate its impact.
- 1.4. This single plan has been developed to set a clear direction and vision for tackling poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly in relation to how Communities First fits in with core services and other programmes.
- 1.5. The single plan has also been put together following a review into the Council's approach to 'tackling poverty' in 2015. The headline recommendation from the review was to:

"Establish a single coherent tackling poverty approach across the Council, that will mitigate and minimise the impact of poverty."
- 1.6. The review also found that an over-arching single plan was needed to achieve this by helping:
 - People to understand the value their role contributes in the wider context of tackling poverty.
 - Council services and partner organisations to understand the variety of actions being taken in services across the Council to tackle poverty, which will assist in aligning and co-ordinating services effectively.
 - Adopt a coherent and effective approach to tackling poverty for Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.7. Officers across partner organisations are currently working together to phase in a single, coherent tackling poverty programme. The first significant step has been to restructure the Communities First programme and refocus the service design that takes the best aspects of what's currently being delivered and promotes a more consistent approach across the eight Communities First clusters in the County Borough.
- 1.8. This plan outlines how the revised Communities First programme contributes to the vision for tackling poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf, which is a critical thread through the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020, which states the Council's vision is:

"For a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all."

The vision is also underpinned by a focus on the following three priorities:

- i. People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.***
- ii. Place - creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.***
- iii. Economy - building a strong economy.***

And, in order to achieve this vision and work together on achieving the priorities, the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 states the Council will:

- **Provide essential services well;**
- **Help people and communities to help themselves;**
- **Build a sustainable County Borough; and**
- **Live within our means.**

1.9. This plan aims to help people to see their place in this, outlining how a coherent approach to tackling poverty through the Communities First programme will work in practice, but linked to the other tackling poverty programmes of Families First and Flying Start, core services provided by the Council and its partner organisations and other grant funded initiatives. The plan also aims to show how this approach links to the wider national, regional and local agenda for tackling poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. Review of Tackling Poverty and a new model for Communities First

2.1. During May 2015, the Cabinet agreed to a review of the Communities First programme, as part of a wider examination of Rhondda Cynon Taf's strategic approach to tackling poverty. The review took place during the summer of 2015, reporting to Cabinet 24th November 2015.¹

2.2. The review found that better integrating the three Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty' programmes of Flying Start, Families First and Communities First, and ensuring the programmes are aligned with the core business of the Council, would improve the strategic direction and the impact of services "on the ground". This should, in turn, lead to better outcomes for children, young people, families and communities most in need.

2.3. The research element of the review found that there is no single way to tackle poverty, but a number of common themes were identified in successful approaches, such as:

- High levels of political and officer commitment;
- The involvement of external stakeholders;
- High levels of co-ordination across departments;
- Adopting poverty as a cross-place priority;
- A clear strategy and implementation plan;

¹ Cabinet Report (24th November 2015): '*Tackling Poverty - a review of Communities First, Families First and Flying Start programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taf.*'

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2015/11/24/Reports/AgendaItem3TacklingPoverty.pdf>

- Embedding poverty considerations in strategy;
- Institutional arrangements: the creation of dedicated institutions or systems of governance helps the development process;
- An asset-based approach to community engagement (one that provides opportunities to recognise and grow people's capabilities, and actively support them);
- A clear line of responsibility and accountability;
- An outcome based approach to commissioning;
- An effective system of monitoring and review.

These themes prompted recommendations to change the way Communities First is delivered in Rhondda Cynon Taf and work towards a single tackling poverty approach.

2.4. During their meeting in November 2015, the Cabinet approved a restructure of the Communities First programme as part of the immediate implementation of the findings of this review, with a phased approach to follow bringing the other 'Tackling Poverty' programmes under one service.

2.5. As highlighted by the themes above, the review found that the most effective way to design a programme of services is through combining both a 'strategic approach with local buy-in from those putting the approach into practice on the ground. This requires strong leadership, but also commitment and an understanding of the service deliverers and their critical role in the wider programme.

2.6. As such, the strategic approach of the new service model for Communities First is achieved through one single delivery plan for the eight Communities First clusters across the County Borough. A 'core offer' of service, common to all eight clusters, will be centrally commissioned by the team to help ensure a consistent approach and better value for money.

2.7. This 'core offer' of services will aim to ensure that Communities First staff support people to access lower level or higher level activities in their locality already provided by the Council or other partners. The aim is to free up Communities First staff from directly delivering services to people, allowing them to develop relationships with individuals, understand their community and the personal / professional connections that already exist and help people to engage with each other and appropriate services.

2.8. To fulfil this crucial role in their communities, each cluster will have flexibility locally on how the 'Community Involvement' budget is spent, with the aim of staff determining the best ways to build relationships locally and provide engagement activities relevant to their community area.

2.9. The new service model is based on Communities First staff being **a lynch-pin of the community**, who are actively linking people with appropriate services and providing a support role for people to become more resilient, self-confident and, ultimately, improve their lives i.e. frontline staff will support members of the community to help themselves.

3. How the new model for Communities First contributes to national legislation

3.1. The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

3.1.1. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFG) puts a duty on public bodies in Wales to secure the long-term wellbeing of the population. 'Wellbeing' encompasses factors like social life, economic status, health, cultural wellbeing and a person's environment.

3.1.2. The Council, and other public bodies in the area, will need to publish a Wellbeing Statement in 2017 that shows how they are contributing to seven national wellbeing goals (see below picture). As a collective, some local public sector organisations will also produce a 'Wellbeing Plan' in 2018, which will replace the [Single Integrated Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf, 'Delivering Change'](#). These organisations will make up a 'Public Service Board', which will guide collaboration at the most strategic level of the organisations across Rhondda Cynon Taf.



3.1.3. These 'Wellbeing Goals' are for everyone in Wales to work towards, but public bodies must also show that they are making decisions and taking actions to support these goals. The role of public bodies is to build community capacity, using the power that people and communities have already got to help them on an individual level, and as a collective, in becoming more sustainable and resilient against things like poverty, environmental issues (like flooding or pollution) and personal crises.

3.1.4. The WFG Act requires public bodies to demonstrate that, in everything they do, they are thinking of the long-term effect of their actions, aiming to prevent problems from getting worse or happening in the first place, working together with other organisations to provide integrated services and involving people in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services. Public organisations, like the Council, will be inspected and audited to make sure they are following the law.

- 3.1.5. In order to do this, public services and the voluntary sector will need to think far more about the place in which people live and how this contributes to their wellbeing; i.e. how connected is the community to other amenities, how can the environment people live in help to improve people's health or economic status; rather than taking a 'blanket-approach' to provision across a County Borough.
- 3.1.6. Staff within Communities First, and the other Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty' programmes, already help people and communities to use the power they have, specific to their community and place. By their very nature, these programmes are also about working together to prevent problems from getting worse and involving people in delivering services.
- 3.1.7. It will be important within the new service model that Communities First staff understand the vital contribution they are making to improving social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of people and places through the new experiences they can provide. Staff will frame their work with the Act in mind, making clear links in their written records of progress, so that everyone understands this approach and works in the same way.
- 3.1.8. Communities First will also play an important role in the success of the Public Service Board, to be established from April 2016, by responding to the priorities of the Public Service Board in their community. Some of the priorities arising from the Public Service Board will require engagement with particular communities, connecting people with others and helping people to deliver on their ideas; which is a role that Communities First staff will play within this service model.
- 3.1.9. Communities First staff will be able to feed in issues that they are experiencing in their service delivery to the central support team and Cluster Managers. If the team are unable to resolve these issues, they will report these to the 'Generating Wealth Group' for further examination. The Generating Wealth Group can then refer issues to the Cwm Taf Strategic Partnership Board and, finally, the Public Service Board if required (*More detail of this structure is provided in Section 5 - Governance*).

3.2. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act

- 3.2.1. The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWB) is about changing the way people receive health and social care. In the same way as the WFG Act, the SSWB Act aims to help people to avoid things getting worse and to become more resilient in dealing with their own problems.
- 3.2.2. For people who need health and social care, and their carers, the Act also aims to involve them more in their treatment, giving them more voice and control with regards to the services they receive.
- 3.2.3. The Act is a big change to how people have worked in the past and will mean more people are helped in their own community through low-level activities, with the aim of reducing the number of people going into high-level Social Care or hospital.

This will require professionals to listen carefully to how people see themselves and their future, and what they are aiming to achieve.

- 3.2.4. Rather than presuming that people need help from the Council's Social Services or the Health Board, professionals can help more people by giving advice about what action people can take themselves to achieve their aims and prevent their condition from getting worse e.g. taking exercise, connecting with neighbours and family, accessing local community groups or receiving a low-level service.
- 3.2.5. As such, this Act will require more communication within communities and social networks to be reinstated or built from scratch, so that people can rely on each other more as neighbours, family members and friends, rather than looking to services that are likely to be too high-level for their needs. In the communities that are part of the Communities First programme, Communities First staff are lynch-pins of the area and will play a significant role in helping people to come together.
- 3.2.6. In order for more people to access low-level help on their doorstep, rather than receiving specialist, high-level services, there needs to be more things in the community that can be flexible to helping people too. This includes regular, informal community activities like a walking club or youth club, and more permanent places for people to go like wellbeing hubs, community buildings and social enterprises. Helping the community members themselves to connect, grow their ideas and create something is called 'building community capacity' in the Act.
- 3.2.7. Communities First staff will need to work together with their communities to foster this change. Within the new service model, dedicated members of staff will engage with the community every day and they are likely to come into contact with people who need different levels of support from health and social services. Not only can the staff take action to support people in accessing the right kind of help, but the intelligence they will gather from listening to people will be very useful to all of the organisations working in the area to understand what's working well and where the gaps could be in building community capacity.

3.3. Tackling Poverty Action Plan (TPAP) 2012-2016

- 3.3.1. The tackling poverty actions and targets within the TPAP supplement the delivery of the Welsh Government statutory Child Poverty Strategy and build on other complementary strategies and plans. The TPAP provides a holistic focus for services that aim to prevent or mitigate the impact of poverty. This vision prioritises food poverty; in work poverty; childcare; action to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform; and housing and regeneration.
- 3.3.2. The TPAP highlights the alignment of tackling poverty programmes, such as Communities First, Flying Start, Families First, Jobs Growth Wales, Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Pupil Deprivation Grant, credit unions, advice services and health initiatives, as key to the realisation of this vision. As such, robust, formalised links to such programmes have been built into the Communities First programme delivery, to support the progression of this agenda.

3.4. Delivering Change: Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan

3.4.1. Delivering Change is the Council's Single Integrated Plan (SIP), which replaces a number of community services based partnership plans and brings them altogether under one vision; People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe, healthy and prosperous.

3.4.2. The prosperity priorities in Delivering Change are centred on 'people' and 'place.' It is these priorities, too, that form the basis of the Communities First ethos.

3.4.3. Delivering Change outlines strategy for 'bringing it all together;' means of addressing cross-cutting priorities across the Council. The key ways that Delivering Change sets out for achieving this have clear links with Communities First principles of working, notably:

- **An early intervention/prevention focus;**

The need to prevent those issues that we have identified as from occurring in the first place, or find ways of intervening early where problems have begun to happen in a family or to an individual or community

- **A need to target resources locally;**

Ensure that we coordinate actions and join up our work as much as possible, where it adds value for residents and suits the needs of the local community

- **A skilled workforce; and**

A motivated and skilled workforce across all of our organisations is essential

- **Sustainable development**

Acting in the long-term interests of people

3.4.4. Community based work, focussing on specific local areas in need can have a very positive impact across our priorities. The SIP makes specific reference to Communities First in supporting delivery of the priorities.

3.5. Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Plan 2016-2020

3.5.1. The Communities First structure supports delivery of The Way Ahead; the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 and the principles of working outlined therein, notably the provision of essential services well. While not a statutory service, the Communities First ethos is intrinsically linked to key ways of working across public services, establishing it as an essential service in the delivery of 'on the ground' community engagement. The structure also supports the principle of helping people and communities to help themselves, with Communities First staff working with individuals and communities to achieve better outcomes.

3.5.2. Under the redesigned, integrated and efficient local services priority, the Corporate Plan commits to the Council's making a significant change in its approach to early

intervention and prevention. The Tackling Poverty Review and subsequent restructure of Communities First relates directly to this priority.

3.5.3. In relation to the development of more involved and resilient communities, the Corporate Plan identifies as key:

- Greater community participation, engagement and involvement;
- Working with residents to increase self-sufficiency, reduce reliance on statutory services and make the best possible use of community strengths; and
- A new relationship with residents that enable them to be independent and resilient.

3.5.4. Through the brokerage role Communities First will make a significant contribution to this Council wide priority.

3.5.5. Specific Communities First projects (e.g. employability) also relate to specific Corporate Plan priorities.

4. How the new model for Communities First contributes to local programmes or services

4.1. There are already many resources being put into programmes and services in Rhondda Cynon Taf seeking to tackle poverty and generate wealth. The aim of this single plan is to make sense of this, plus direct and combine resources.

4.2. This section identifies some of the strategies and programmes across the Council and partner organisations to tackle poverty and how, within the new service model, Communities First staff will contribute to this overall picture.

4.3. Firstly, it is crucial that staff working in Communities First understand their role as part of overall tackling poverty approach in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Unlike other programmes and services, Communities First staff will not be delivering a specialist service relating to a person's health, wellbeing or learning. They will be supporting that person to take the **steps on that pathway to improve their own outcomes** by being the lynch-pin of communities, supporting people to connect with each other and to attend any appropriate activities or services.

4.4. To achieve this role within the new service model, staff will be supporting people who have been identified and referred to the Communities First programme for engagement in services. Communities First cluster staff will use their knowledge to link to the existing local specialist services currently offered in the area and also refer to the new 'core offer' of services that will be commissioned to satisfy any gaps through the current local specialist services.

4.5. As such, the 'core offer' has been commissioned by looking at what the Council and its partner organisations currently do to tackle poverty in the wider sense, and identifying where there might be a need for a step-down or step-up service in a pathway of improvement.

4.6. This will be co-ordinated by a restructured Communities First central support team. In order to support the staff within clusters to identify the right people in their communities and link them to the right support, the central support team will now use evidenced approaches to provide cluster staff with a caseload of people for them to proactively contact and engage - more detail is provided in Section 6 - Service Delivery.

4.7. The local strategies and programmes set out below are examples of some of the actions being taken across the Council and partner organisations to tackle poverty and how, within the new service model, Communities First staff will help people to access different activities in practice.

4.8. The Communities First core offer structure supports the delivery of a number of projects which link, thematically and operationally, with the strategic priorities of other Council and wider partner services.

4.9. Digital Inclusion

4.9.1. The Communities First structure supports the cross cutting strategy within the Council and contributes to wider agendas where appropriate. These are priorities that will need to be considered by us all to support delivery of our priorities.

4.9.2. Delivering Change sets working together to encourage and enable residents to gain the confidence, skill and access to equipment to get online and make the most of digital technology as a priority, which is also highlighted as a key commitment of the Generating Wealth in RCT (ESF and Prosperity) Board); to encourage people to get online and make the most of digital technology.

4.9.3. The Communities First digital inclusion project has cross cutting links with a number of other projects across the programme, as well as with wider programmes across the Council and partner organisations.

4.9.4. The digital technology project will be delivered by a network of volunteers, in collaboration with Digital Communities Wales, with an initial focus in work clubs and developing across a wider remit. This links to another Generating Wealth commitment; to support people to get a job and stay in work.

4.10. Adults Services and Children's Services

4.10.1. According to the Cabinet report from the Group Director for Community and Children Services, the revised operating model for RCT Children's Services will enable children, young people and families to access appropriate support as early as possible, to help maintain their quality of life, prevent problems escalating and reduce the demand for high cost, specialist support services.

4.10.2. The Communities First structure will support the new model by contributing to the improvement of capacity to coordinate preventative and early intervention services through its low level community engagement function.

4.10.3. Communities First will contribute to RCT Adult Services service delivery priority 4; Actively encourage and support people who need care and support and carers who need support to learn and develop and participate in society, through formalised referral mechanisms between the programme and Adult Services First Response Team, assisting in the socialisation of service users under the information, assistance and advice priority of the SSWB Act.

4.11. As part of the restructure and on an ongoing basis, Communities First will work collaboratively with key Council services to ensure cross cutting projects are implemented wherever possible. For example:

4.11.1. RCT Community Cohesion Service

Communities First will work closely with the Council's Community Cohesion Service to realise outcomes (specifically Outcome 5) as outlined in the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan, which specifies the assessment of how those most at risk of living in poverty are being supported to achieve better outcomes. Robust signposting arrangements between the two services are currently being formalised.

4.11.2. RCT Strategic Partnership Commissioning Service

The Communities First model aligns strategically with Working Together to Reduce Harm, the WG's Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2016-18. The services are working together to explore the implementation of key action 26; Encourage community engagement in the planning, delivery and monitoring of services, including the potential delivery of substance misuse support through Communities First universal engagement activity function.

4.11.3. RCT Countryside Team

The RCT Countryside Team has listed making the best use of opportunities to link objectives to the preventative work of the revised Communities First programme, at a place based level under objective 6; Develop the potential for multiple benefits; of its Environment and Sustainable Development Q3 Action Plan.

5. Delivery of the Communities First programme: Governance & Staff Structure

5.1. GOVERNANCE OF THE NEW SERVICE MODEL

5.1.1. As highlighted above, the new service model for Communities First will combine a strategic approach focussed on linking activities to outcomes with local buy-in from those delivering the activities to ensure it is a model suited to the local community.

5.1.2. A coherent and structured approach to 'tackling poverty' in Rhondda Cynon Taf requires an oversight of approach to ensure that links are being made to national legislation; core Council services and existing local programmes are aligned and co-ordinated, and that emerging opportunities are identified.

5.1.3. The governance of the new service model links directly to these principles and consists of the following elements:

- **A single Rhondda Cynon Taf wide governance forum to reflect the shift towards a more strategic approach to developing and delivering provision.**

The Council has established a strategic 'Generating Wealth Group' in Rhondda Cynon Taf to provide the oversight required for the RCT approach to 'Tackling Poverty'. In order to do this, the group includes services from across the Council, with the function of co-ordinating effort, seeking opportunities to improve and challenging one another on their approaches to generating wealth. The group will provide strategic direction to the commissioning and monitoring of the Communities First programme.

The Council 'Generating Wealth Group' will link in to the Cwm Taf Strategic Partnership Board, which will report to the Cwm Taf Public Service Board (to be established as part of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act from April 2016).

The Cwm Taf Strategic Partnership Board will include senior directors from across partner organisations, with a role of solving issues that are difficult to resolve at a single-agency level or at a middle-management level of the organisations involved. Any significant issues or reoccurring themes arising from the Communities First central support team and clusters will be referred to the Generating Wealth Group and the Strategic Partnership Board to ensure opportunities to improve services are being taken.

- **A single coherent Communities First delivery plan that will reduce duplication and streamline the current eight plans that clusters have previously produced.**
- **A strategically commissioned core offer of specialised intervention based on need and what works across all eight clusters.**

The central team will co-ordinate a suite of commissioned services and activities across all clusters to ensure the right mix of provision is available that adds value to and does not duplicate existing services. Taking a strategic outcome focused approach to planning provision across clusters will lead to more joint commissioning of activity. As it stands, the current Communities First structure has resulted in clusters independently contracting the same or similar providers to deliver common activities i.e. CSCS card, Time Banking, physical activity programmes, essential skills. Introducing a single approach to commissioning/contracting services across the programme will result in significant economies of scale and a release of revenue and front line staff time that can be reinvested back into local community activity.

- **Reconfigure current cluster boards into local engagement forums to provide a flexible way for a diverse range of people, organisations and sectors to contribute appropriately and usefully.**
- **A flexible Community Involvement budget will be allocated to each cluster to retain local flexibility. This budget will support the delivery of engagement activities open to anyone within the community that will build relationships and build capacity within communities.**

More detail is provided in the Service Design and Delivery section.

5.2. STAFF STRUCTURE WITHIN THE NEW MODEL

5.2.1. The staff structure for the new service model reflects the ethos of this programme, with frontline staff expected to proactively engage with the community and act as **community connectors** - lynch-pins to the wider networks of people, professionals, activities and services in the cluster.

5.2.2. The following structure will fulfil this role:

- **Four cluster management positions (covering two clusters each) responsible for the direct line management of Lead Workers will be located within the Communities First central support team.**

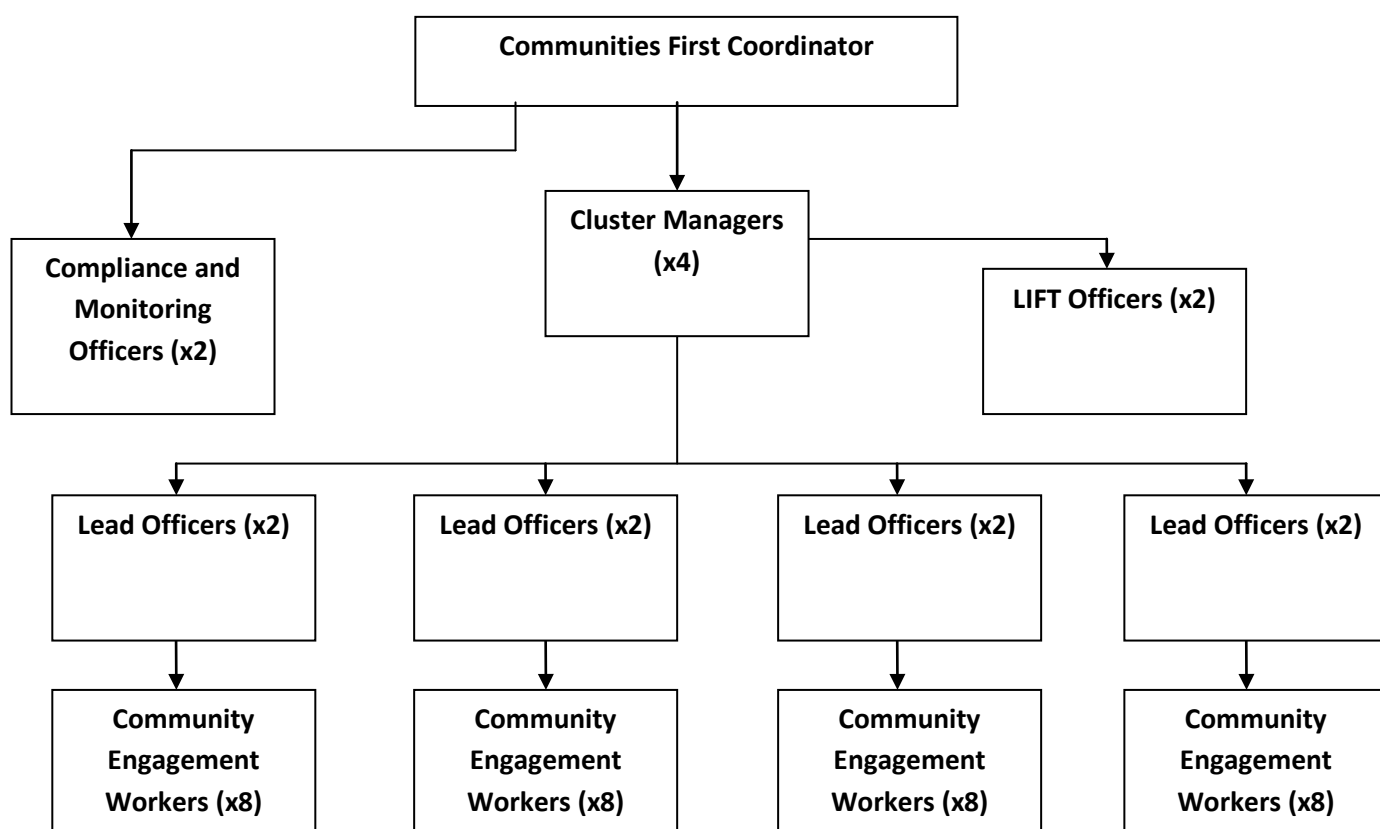
The revised cluster management roles will need to provide strong leadership and drive the principles of this service model across the eight clusters.

- **Two Compliance and Monitoring Officers responsible for the compliance and monitoring that ensures the Communities First programme deliver services in accordance with the grant terms and conditions and any contract service specifications, located within the central support team.**
- **Four Administrative Officers located within the Communities First central support team to be responsible for supporting the Communities First programme, in terms of providing effective, efficient administrative services, management information and budgetary support to enable effective delivery of the programme.**

- **Five frontline posts (1 Lead Officer and 4 Community Engagement Workers per cluster) to support the engagement and involvement of individuals within their communities via the delivery of a range of targeted and universal activities.**

These frontline staff will provide an initial point of contact for communities in their cluster. Through the central support team, they will also be provided with the necessary information to identify and proactively engage with individuals within their community needing support. They will be expected to listen to these individuals, understand their perspectives and their aims for the future and build a relationship that helps the individual achieve their desired outcomes. This might be by providing one-to-one information, advice and assistance; helping the individual to connect with their neighbours, families or friends; building the person's self-confidence by going along with them to a local activity or service for the first time and giving ongoing mentoring support to the person and their wider social network, where needed. These roles are not about doing everything for the individual, but about helping the individual to help themselves, just providing a nudge in the right direction or unlocking any barriers on the way.

Staff will be provided with the necessary information to help them identify and support those individuals within their community needing support - see Section 6 below.



6. Delivery of the Communities First programme: Service Design and Service Delivery

6.1. SERVICE DESIGN OF THE NEW MODEL

- 6.1.1. The review into the current approach to tackling poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf recommends a service design that takes the best aspects of what's currently being delivered and promotes a more consistent approach across the County Borough.
- 6.1.2. This is based on how members of the community connect with each other, are engaged in local services, how services are commissioned and how outcomes are measured. People will only engage and connect around the things they care about, which is dependent on the strength of the community (its capacity and resilience) and the place within which people live.
- 6.1.3. Tackling poverty requires building upon the strengths of a community and within this process, Communities First staff are lynch-pins of wider community activity, actively linking people to other people, appropriate services and providing a support for people to become more resilient and self-confident, in any aspect of their lives.
- 6.1.4. The Communities First programme is part of a wider approach to tackling poverty, involving the whole Council, other public services, the private sector, voluntary sector and, importantly, the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf. As such, this service design is based on a model of '**shared leadership**'.
- 6.1.5. In simple terms, 'shared leadership' means that the Council and its partner organisations are only part of the picture. Individuals, communities and professionals together are likely to achieve the best solutions. Sometimes, communities need support from professionals to develop ideas and solve solutions. Whereas other times, the best support professionals can offer is to listen to people, then let them develop their own solutions.
- 6.1.6. This approach is called '**asset based community development**', which means working from the standpoint that communities and the people who live there have already got a wealth of resources. Instead of focusing on their needs and what services are needed in a community; this approach focuses on the people who live there, the buildings that they use and how they connect with each other. There is still a need for service design within this to help communities develop, grow and realise their potential but it requires a different conversation with people, about what they can offer not what they need.
- 6.1.7. In order to do this, the new service design for Communities First in **involving the community within clusters** is based on the following three priorities:

- **A targeted local community engagement approach to support early intervention and prevention for those identified as being most at risk and in need of support.**

This is the element of the new service model that relies upon staff proactively engaging with people at risk of social isolation and in need of low level community engagement support to start them on the pathway/journey to improvement. This will be co-ordinated by the central support team who, using evidenced approaches for identifying people within the community, will receive referrals centrally and provide a list of contacts (a 'caseload') for Lead Workers to distribute to Community Engagement Workers within the clusters (*more detail is provided within the 'Service Delivery' section below*).

In line with an asset based approach to community development and the Social Services & Wellbeing Act, Community Engagement Workers will then work with individuals, listen to their aims for the future and support them to achieve their outcomes. This might be providing one-to-one mentoring support for someone as they visit an existing local specialist service in the community for the first time; supporting them to 'step-up' or 'step-down' from a service as they move towards reaching their goal or assisting them to reconnect with their community, family and develop their self-confidence through universal engagement (see below).

Lead Workers and Community Engagement Workers will need an understanding of how Communities First links to other local programmes and services to fulfil this role, as well as being able to refer people to the new 'core offer' of services that will be commissioned to satisfy any gaps through the current local specialist services.

- **The engagement and involvement of individuals within their communities via the delivery of a range of universal engagement activities and thematic based provision for specific areas of work.**

Universal engagement involves the engagement and involvement of individuals and families within their communities, via the delivery of a range of appropriate events and activities, suited to the local community. This could be identified by the Community Engagement Workers, in providing targeting engagement activity and working on building the strength of the community.

A flexible Community Involvement budget will be allocated to each Cluster to retain an element of local flexibility. This budget will support the delivery of universal engagement activities that supports engagement and capacity building within communities.

Universal engagement activities will also play a part in the wider strategically commissioned projects as part of a pathway to improvement, and be developed based on the information received through the early identification information as part of the targeted local community engagement approach.

- **Reconfiguring the current cluster board into local engagement forums to provide a less formal and flexible way for a diverse range of people, organisations and sectors to contribute to building the strength of the community and tackling poverty.**

Providing opportunities for professionals, members of associations, local residents and volunteers to come together on an equal footing to contribute their time, skills, knowledge and resources to the area will be vital in improving the wellbeing of each cluster. These forums will be dependent on place, and will link to both the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in seeking to improve the wellbeing of people and communities, and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, in helping to build community capacity.

The forums will seek to link people around the place in which they live and socialise, which is sometimes called 'place-based' or 'area-based' approaches, as people will often only engage and connect around the things they care about, which is often near to their front door. Simply, this is about bringing people together and working with the physical assets (buildings, land, services) and the skills of people to work on what the community wish to achieve.

Depending on what the community decides it wants to build upon to move forward, Communities First should help to build the relationships and engage residents, local associations and other partners, e.g. GP surgeries, pharmacies, Flying Start, Families First, voluntary sector services, local primary and secondary schools and community centres, in the local engagement forums.

6.2. SERVICE DELIVERY OF THE NEW MODEL

6.2.1. Based on the factors outlined within this strategy, Communities First staff play a critical role in translating the vision that Rhondda Cynon Taf is a ***County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all*** through the way they work in communities. As with the current programme, the new model will also seek to improve the wellbeing of people and communities, in line with the Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan '*Delivering Change*', which seeks to achieve the outcome of '***People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe, healthy and prosperous.***'

6.2.2. This section provides more detail on how the governance, staff structure and service design of the Communities First programme translates into delivery.

6.2.3. **A strategically commissioned core offer:** The delivery of the core offer of provision will be through commissioning other public and voluntary sector organisations to provide services that can be directly accessed by all Communities First clusters. All specialist activities previously undertaken by core Communities First staff will be gradually reduced. As mentioned above, the delivery focus for staff within the new service model will be in relation to engagement and community

building activities. All specialist provision and activities will be commissioned on a needs basis.

6.2.4. Both the commissioned core offer and the delivery of engagement activity outlined in the 'Service Design' section above will continue to contribute towards the three themes of the Communities First programme: 'Prosperous', 'Learning' and 'Health'. To support the identification of appropriate themes we have broken them down into more specific priority areas. These priorities are taken from the Communities First Outcomes Framework but takes into consideration current CF activity, commissioned activity by Families First, Flying Start, mainstream Council services, ESF funded programmes and the findings from the recent RCT poverty needs assessment.

6.2.5. These priorities will help organisations to understand the variety of actions being taken by Communities First to tackle poverty, which will assist in aligning and co-ordinating services effectively on the ground. The below table sets out these priorities under each of the Communities First themes.

<u>Theme 1 - Prosperous</u>		
Priority 1 - PC1: Helping people to develop employment skills and find work/PC2 – Reducing youth unemployment and disengagement	Priority 2 - PC3: Promoting digital inclusion	Priority 1 – PC4: Financial inclusion (improving financial capability, managing debt and raising income)
<u>Theme 2 - Learning</u>		
Priority 1 - LC4: Lifelong learning in communities	Priority 2 – LC5: Improving adult life skills	Priority 3: LC3 – Family Learning in the early years
<u>Theme 3 - Healthier</u>		
Priority 1 – HC2: Promoting physical wellbeing	Priority 2 – HC3 Promoting mental wellbeing	Priority 3 – HC5: Reducing risks

6.2.6. In order to reduce duplication, identify new opportunities and adopt this new service design, a single commissioning team for the programmes relating to tackling poverty will be introduced. The team will ensure clearer links are made between programmes and the 'core offer' of services, which will assist Communities First staff in being able to see the **pathways** available in helping people to help themselves. The Generating Wealth Steering Group will assist the team in making decisions and provide a partnership perspective for commissioning activity.

6.2.7. **A central support team staff structure and a targeted local community engagement approach:** in order for the new service model to focus on engagement and building the strengths of the community, Communities First staff will need to identify and proactively contact people identified as at risk of social isolation or in need of a form of support.

6.2.8. In order to co-ordinate this, the central support team will receive referrals through a number of means to put together a caseload of local people that Communities First Engagement Workers can attempt to proactively engage with and support on a one-to-one level in achieving whatever outcomes they are aiming for to improve their lives. All cases will be considered in terms of time and resources required on an individual basis, which will inform the full caseload.

6.2.9. Initially, the targeted local community engagement approach will be focused on supporting individuals and families along a pathway to improvement that is aligned to the overarching priorities set out under the core offer of services. To ensure the right people are being targeted and engaged the following mechanism will be used:

- **Vulnerability and Resilience Model (pilot project)**

Families identified as having medium levels of resilience and in need of low level community based support, through the piloting of the Vulnerability Profiling and Children's Services project will be supported by Communities First.

- **RCT Social Services Single Point of Access**

Under the Social Services & Wellbeing Act, the RCT Adult Social Services 'Single Point of Access team' will provide information, advice and assistance via a single point. Community Engagement Workers will work with service users identified by **Adult Services Single point of access team**, to provide low level community engagement support and information, advice and assistance for individuals experiencing social isolation.

- **A single point of referral system to support the early identification of individuals in need of engagement support**

Community Engagement Workers will work with individuals experiencing engagement difficulties, identified by Flying Start, commissioned Families First provision, partners (such as Health, Job Centre Plus, Housing) and internal Council services, as part of a pathway to accessing appropriate specialist/intensive intervention i.e. TAF, parenting programmes.

Referrals will also be received where service users are coming out of a more intense package of support and require a 'step down' into low level community provision.

- **Job Centre Plus: Universal Credit recipients**

During March 2016, Universal Credit will be initially rolled out in RCT. In the first instance Universal Credit will be available to single person, non-householders (new claimants) only. Full rollout will be completed by 2020. Once Universal Credit claimants have been identified (approximately 60 estimated), the Department for

Work & Pensions will share this information to the central support team, so that engagement opportunities may be explored as standard and referrals to Work Clubs, Citizens Advice Bureau and other information/opportunities to support access to online services and budgetary support.

- **Self referrals**

Low level community support will also be provided to service users who self-present or where issues are identified through universal engagement activities. These cases are reported back centrally by Community Engagement Workers, in order to ensure a balanced caseload.

6.2.10. Making use of a tested approach to early identification of people most at risk and disadvantaged will ensure staff are well informed in targeting support and activities at these individuals and ultimately demonstrate that the people who need support most are being engaged. Furthermore, the formalisation of all referral pathways into the programme also ensures clarity and consistency of arrangements across all clusters.

6.2.11. Upon receiving their 'caseload' from the central support team, Community Engagement Workers will proactively engage with the identified individuals or families. In delivering this, Community Engagement Workers will need a strong knowledge of the community and the people who live there. It may be that people within their caseload simply need support to connect with other people in their community, such as their family, a neighbour or friends. Put simply, the Engagement Workers will need to understand what the individual wishes to achieve to improve their wellbeing and support the person to overcome anything that has been stopping them from doing so and help them to see the value in connecting with others.

6.2.12. **Universal engagement activities and thematic based provision for specific areas of work:** delivering appropriate events or activities suited to the community, involving the engagement and involvement of individuals and families. This universal engagement is low level activity and could be identified by the Community Engagement Workers. A Community Involvement budget will be allocated to each cluster for this purpose.

6.2.13. The activity should be linked to the following national and local initiatives:

- Referrals to voluntary sector providers and support for community groups to take on buildings or develop a service (through the 'RCT Together' programme);
- Linking the activity of communities to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act seven wellbeing goals. This would include helping people to improve their health, social connections, economic wellbeing, cultural experiences and accessing the environment and green space around them for health, social and economic benefits.
- Family engagement activity, linked to the themes for delivery;
- Campaigns/promotions (including contribution to identification of need) in partnership with internal Council services and other partner services;

- The provision of buildings / IT facilities for internal Council / other partner services, where appropriate;
- Job fairs;
- Supporting access to themed provision and commissioned 'core offer' services;
- Local engagement forums;
- Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme, delivered in partnership with Save the Children;
- Your Future First employability programme;
- Coordination of time-banking / volunteering;
- Any other appropriate engagement activity (subject to central support team approval).

6.2.14. Universal engagement will be delivered (or developed where necessary) as a step down provision from statutory and non-statutory services but also as part of a pathway to accessing more specialist services.

7. The Measures of Success in Delivering the Communities First Plan

7.1 Outcomes of service delivery will be monitored and challenged through the Communities First framework and RCT's single outcomes framework for tackling poverty. This means that programmes will share outcomes, recognising that they all contribute to achieving a common goal through delivering a small part of a bigger picture.

7.2 Results based accountability (RBA) scorecards have been put together for the local targeted engagement approach, universal engagement programme and the services commissioned through the core offer. Each scorecard has established a range of outcome measures, linked to the Communities First outcomes framework, to measure progress and record the contribution they are making towards the overarching priorities.

7.3 The information collected as part of this process will be invaluable when evidencing the journey and pathway to improvement for an individual or family. Each scorecard also shows the contribution the Communities First programme will make to local and national priorities and policy.

COMMUNITIES FIRST CORE OFFER OF PROVISION 2016-17

Theme: Prosperous

RCT's Tackling Poverty Outcome	Achieving good educational outcomes Realise sufficient income and obtain/progress in work that pays			
Priority	Priority customer groups	WG Approved Single Plan: Core Offer Provision	Approved Provider	Outcome measures
Helping people to develop employment skills and find work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed working age people • In work, low income families • Families claiming employment related benefits • People claiming carers allowance 	Employability Courses: e.g. customer services skills, digital literacy, health and safety.	Adult Education	CF/SOF: No of people entering employment SOF: No of people completing an employment related course
Reducing youth unemployment and disengagement		Employment Routes programme: e.g. PTS Course, Care Domiciliary/NHS, and Hospitality.	Adult Education	As above
		Barriers to Work fund: access to 'Barriers to work funding' will tackle final barriers to work or training where no other provision is available, e.g. transport, clothing for employment or employment interviews, tools for work, pre-employment childcare (this compliments C4W support for those identified as being long term unemployed i.e. over 12 months and was identified by Welsh Government as good practice within current Communities First delivery).	Forms part of the Adult Education employability support package	As above
		Work Clubs: provides local cluster support in accessing employment, such as job search skills, updating CV's, improving interview techniques and providing employment brokerage.	Existing voluntary sector providers	As above

	<p>Young People’s employability programme: supports young people aged 16-25 years into education, training or employment. Delivery of an 8 week ‘Fortitude through the Arts’ programme across all Clusters to support young people into education, training or employment through building confidence and using the arts/creative industries as a tool to build transferrable skills.</p>	Cultural Services	As above and: SOF: No of young people supported to progress onto FE, HE or training
	<p>Developing People: a development place to be offered to participants, who will receive mentoring and a package of tailored interventions to enable them to deliver physical activity opportunities on a voluntary or employment basis.</p>	Leisure Services	SOF: No of people supported to progress onto FE, HE or training CF/SOF: No of people gaining a qualification
	<p>Sport Coaching Courses: the delivery of Nationally recognised courses for Young People to support them into employment or college courses. Young ambassador courses specifically aimed at young people identified as being most at risk.</p>	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: No of people gaining a qualification SOF: No of people supported to progress onto FE, HE or training
	<p>Your Future First programme: the delivery of a co-ordinated and dedicated service that will address the multiple needs and support the engagement of young people aged 16-24 into education, employment and training.</p>	Supporting, Engagement, Employment and Training Team	CF/SOF: No of YP supported into employment SOF: No of YP supported to progress onto FE/HE or training CF/SOF: No of YP gaining a qualification
Promoting digital	<p>The digital inclusion project: The plan focuses on 3 specific areas for development, namely Digital Fridays,</p>	Communities First Engagement Workers	CF: Number of people gaining basic IT skills

inclusion		<p>Learning Pathways and Digital Champions (Volunteering). The digital inclusion project also has cross cutting links with a number of other Communities First projects (i.e. support to access online job searches in work clubs).</p>	and library staff	<p>SOF: Number improving their digital literacy</p>
Financial inclusion (improving financial capability, managing debt and raising income)		<p>Open access information and advice services: provision provides an independent source of advice, advocacy and representation to vulnerable people living within the eight Communities First Clusters in Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>	Citizens Advice Cymru	<p>CF/SOF: No of CF clients reducing/managing debt</p> <p>CF/SOF: No of CF clients supported to access the benefits they are entitled to</p>
		<p>Intensive targeted outreach support programme: provision targeted directly at those going through financial hardship and crisis focusing on income maximisation and financial inclusion.</p>	Cynon Taf Community Housing Money Matters project	<p>CF/SOF: No of CF clients supported to access the benefits they are entitled to</p> <p>CF/SOF: No of CF clients reducing/managing debt</p> <p>CF/SOF: No of clients feeling more positive about their mental wellbeing</p>
		<p>Access to Food Banks: Each cluster supports the identification and access of eligible clients to food banks.</p>	Communities First Engagement Worker	<p>CF: Number of people accessing food banks</p>
		<p>Fuel Poverty: Each cluster to support individuals to access appropriate information and advice through the Housing Energy Efficiency service and individual cluster NEST surgeries.</p>	Communities First Engagement Workers	<p>CF/SOF: Number of people who know how to access help and support</p>

		All Clusters have identified a fuel poverty champion.		CF: Number of people reducing/ managing debt
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Theme: Learning

RCT's Tackling Poverty Outcome	Achieving good educational outcomes			
Priority	Priority customer groups	Core Offer Provision	Approved Provider	Outcome measures
Lifelong learning in communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with no qualifications Adults with poor literacy and numeracy levels (below level 2) Adults who are long term unemployed 	Accredited courses: The delivery of formal accredited courses across all eight clusters.	Adult Education	CF/SOF: No of people gaining a qualification
Improving adult life skills	As above	Essential skills provision: the delivery of essential skills provision across all eight clusters to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial screening of all participants One-to-one initial support Roll on/roll off provision at Work Clubs and community venues Some family learning provision (also links with below priority). 	Adult Education	CF/SOF: Number of people with improved literacy and numeracy skills
Family learning in the early years	As above	Parenting and Family programmes: To support the delivery of the following Flying Start parenting and family programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family links Welcome to the world 	Community Engagement Workers/existing voluntary sector providers	CF: No of parents who complete a parenting course

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incredible years. 		
		<p>Family learning: to support families to interact, develop literacy skills, and be creatively active through the delivery of storytelling workshops for parents and children.</p>	Cultural Services	<p>CF/SOF: Number of people with improved literacy and numeracy skills</p>

Theme: Health

RCT's Tackling Poverty Outcome	Achieve a thriving and healthy future Live in a safe and secure environment			
Priority	Priority customer groups	WG Approved Single Plan: Core Offer Provision	Approved Provider	Outcome measures
Promoting physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are socially isolated People with a sedentary lifestyle People who are obese or overweight People who smoke and their families People who have substance misuse or alcohol issues People with mild – moderate mental health issues 	<p>The promotion of physical wellbeing has cross cutting links with a number of other Communities First projects and will be delivered across the programme (e.g. themed youth drop-in sessions or themed parenting sessions on obesity, healthy eating, etc.), as well as more focused physical activity programmes.</p>	Leisure Services and YEPS core offer commissioned programmes to be delivered across Communities First areas.	<p>CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity.</p>
	As above	<p>Support to access recreation service (STARS) – delivery of a twelve week programme of physical activity sessions, providing a community based intervention service.</p>	Leisure Services	<p>CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical</p>

				activity CF/SOF: number of people feeling more positive about their wellbeing
As above	Support to access universal leisure services (PALS) – four week programme of physical activity sessions which provide individuals with a training plan and an induction into the Fitness suite within their local Leisure Centre.	Leisure Services	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity CF/SOF: number of people feeling more positive about their wellbeing	
As above	Sustainable Physical Activity Classes – delivery of a twelve week programme of sports sessions for 1 hour per week: Bronze, Silver and Gold programmes offering a variety of activities.	Leisure Services	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity CF/SOF: number of people feeling more positive about their wellbeing	
As above	Early bird: delivery of a 6-10 week ‘early bird’ programme of physical activity sessions for YP before registration in both Pontypridd High School and Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. It has been proven that similar projects have had a positive effect on levels of fitness, behaviour, concentration and attainment in school.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity	

As above	Family Activity Events: one event during February half term in a Leisure Centre in Cynon and one event in March at Dare valley aimed at supporting young people and families to participate in Physical activity. Young People will be targeted through vulnerability profiling across all CF cluster areas.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity
As above	Friday Night Football: delivery of a diversionary activity on Friday Night to tackle anti-social behaviour, engaging with various community partners & cluster areas and link with PCSOs. Recommended pilot – Rhondda wide Friday Night Football (1 session in each valley per month).	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity
As above	Healthy Lifestyle: delivery of a ten week programme providing fitness classes and information around all aspects of a healthy lifestyle. Over the ten week period, sessions will tackling different health related issues i.e. Diet, Smoking, eat well plate, healthy eating on a budget.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity
As above	RCT Girls Events: delivery of promotional events to encourage girls to take up opportunities to participate in physical activities and join local clubs. The programme will run in the Pontypridd cluster and will be specifically aimed at young girls identified as Amber/red on VP data living in Communities First areas within the cluster.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity
As above	LAC: delivery of a programme that will offer young people an opportunity to get a free induction at local Leisure Centres. 263 (11-25) looked after children who live in Communities First areas in RCT will be targeted through local schools.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity

	As above	Mums, Bums & Tums: delivery of a 10 week physical activity pilot programme at Rhondda Sport Centre for young mums (32 young people). The aim will be to create a support group within these sessions which can continue after the programme has ended, will give young mothers an opportunity to remain active and support them to bond with baby/child.	Youth Engagement and Participation Service	CF/SOF: number of people who engage in physical activity or increased physical activity
Promoting mental wellbeing	As above	The promotion of mental wellbeing has cross cutting links with a number of other CF projects and will be delivered across the programme (e.g. themed youth drop-in sessions or themed parenting sessions on mental health awareness/education and arts/cultural activity), as well as more focused, low level mental health support programmes.		CF/SOF: Feel more positive about their wellbeing
	As above	Low level mental health support programmes: allows the signposting of clients into existing short programmes aimed at improving client’s mental wellbeing.	Cwm Taf University Health Board (Cwm Taf Recovery College)	As above
	As above	Low level mental health support programmes: to deliver open access Stress Control and Mindfulness programmes in venues across all eight Communities First clusters.	Valleys Steps	As above
	As above	Low level mental health support programmes: to support adults to build confidence, learn new skills to develop resilience and mental Wellbeing. Delivery of a 12 week programme of creative sessions in museums, galleries and archives, led by professional artists for people with mild to moderate mental health issues.	Cultural Services	As above