AGENDA ITEM 3

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH NOVEMBER 2015

TACKLING POVERTY – A REVIEW OF COMMUNITIES FIRST, FAMILIES FIRST AND FLYING START PROGRAMMES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR K MONTAGUE)

AUTHOR: Derek James, Youth Engagement and Participation Service Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425512

1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   The purpose of this report is to outline to Members the findings and recommendations following a strategic review into the Council's approach to tackling poverty, specifically in relation to Communities First, Families First and Flying Start programmes.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1   Note the information contained in the report and the findings of the review.

2.2   Approve the creation of one Tackling Poverty Service: restructuring Communities First immediately with a phased approach to follow bringing all tackling poverty programmes together under one tackling poverty service.

2.3   Authorise the Service Director, Public Health and Protection, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, to commence the restructuring process for Communities First: to include a strategically commissioned "core offer" of intervention/activity across all eight Clusters, but retaining an element of local flexibility through the Community Involvement budgets and local engagement staff in accordance with the specific proposals set out in paragraph 7.9.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   In increasingly austere times "one of our biggest challenges and opportunities is to make the sum of our actions greater than their parts by integrating poverty programmes properly" (Welsh Governments Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016).

3.2   Whilst the review found good individual features across the three programmes, the overarching theme emerging from the review is that there are clear opportunities to improve the coordination of approach at a strategic level and on the ground, and release revenue resources to be reinvested to ensure best value and better outcomes.

3.3   To ensure the greatest impact is made to improving outcomes for children, young people, families and communities most in need, it is essential that these programmes and core functions are aligned as closely as possible.

3.4   A 5% cut in the Communities First budget for 2015/16 was achieved by not filling posts and reducing staff training budgets. As it is anticipated that there will be further cuts to the programme ranging from **5%-20**%, trying to sustain the existing service delivery arrangements is not a viable option.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   On the 14th May 2015, 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.

4.2   This decision was in response to the 5% budget cut to the Communities First grant for 2015/16 by Welsh Government. As it is anticipated that similar levels of cuts are forthcoming over the next couple of years, the current delivery model is unsustainable. In addition to this, there is also a need to review current arrangements going forward to take account of:

- The introduction of a shared outcomes framework in 2015/16 to better align the Communities First programme with Flying Start and Families First.
- The potential European Funded Communities4Work and Inspire to Work programmes.
- A recent Welsh Government Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (2015) which found evidence of inconsistent implementation of policies and programmes at a national and local level, and suggests that more can be done to improve the join up of programmes and improve the coordination of approach on the ground to maximise resources.

4.3   In relation to Tackling Poverty, the Welsh Government's aim, as provided for in its Programme for Government, is "reducing poverty, especially persistent poverty amongst some of our poorest people and communities, and reducing the likelihood that people will become poor".

4.4   The Welsh Governments Tacking Poverty Action Plan (TPAP) sets out the programmes designed to focus on protecting those most at risk of poverty and exclusion due to the effects it has on poorer education, health and behavioural outcomes for individuals. The Tackling Poverty Action plan has three overarching aims of:

- Preventing Poverty
- Helping people into work
- Mitigating the impact of poverty

4.5   Whilst the TPAP contains a wide range of programmes aligned to these overarching aims, the principle programmes specifically aimed at reducing poverty are Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.

4.6   These programmes formed the basis of the review with a focus on analysing the relationship between the different programmes in terms of process, design and delivery.

5.   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.1   The Council receives significant investment from the Welsh Government to deliver the Communities First, Families First and Flying Start programmes. The combined budget for the three tackling poverty programmes delivered in RCT during 2015/16 was £15,796m.

Programme	Total £000's
Communities First	4,937
Families First	3,885
Flying Start	6,974
Total	**15,796**

5.2   The review has identified a number of key areas that have emerged from interviews with programme management, front line staff and documentary analysis. These common key factors are highlighted below and explored in further detail.

- Strategic direction and governance
- Programme infrastructure
- Co-ordination and consistency

- Effective system of monitoring and review
- Targeting hard to reach groups

Strategic direction and governance

5.3 The commitment to tacking poverty is a priority for the local authority, with a high level of commitment from elected members, officers and frontline staff. However, there is currently no overall strategy that sets a clear strategic direction and vision for tackling poverty programmes across the Council. Whilst a wide range of plans identify tackling poverty as a priority there is no overarching plan that amalgamates the relevant actions into one single tackling poverty plan with a clear set of agreed outcome measures.

5.4 Limited strategic direction and the lack of coherent governance arrangements to support collaborative working across these programmes, combined with two separate management and service delivery arrangements, has resulted in programmes being compartmentalised within specific departments or services.

5.5 There is currently no effective and identifiable central support service that provides the high level co-ordination that is needed for all three tackling poverty programmes. Therefore, their effectiveness and potential for wider application is being limited and undermined by the current arrangements with development focused around individual programme areas rather than encompassing a more holistic approach to tackling poverty.

5.6 Closer links between programmes will present opportunities for some of the evidence based approaches to tackling poverty, delivered through Families First, being extended across all Communities First areas. Currently, specialised activities are being delivered by Community First staff that may fall outside their area of expertise.

5.7 Communication between senior officers has recently improved through the development of a '3 Programmes Collaboration group'. However, the different planning cycles set by the Welsh Government and the lack of capacity to provide effective central coordination to Communities First makes it a real challenge to organise joint working with other programmes and Council services.

5.8 Whilst co-ordination between programmes at a senior level is improving there are still challenges in relation to the communication between programme practitioners on the ground. At a community level the effectiveness of partnership and cross programme working varies significantly across the different geographical areas. The current arrangements are informal and inconsistent.

5.9   However, where good formal arrangements have been made across programmes the added value is substantial. This is particularly noticeable when Communities First staff act as brokers of services. For example, Communities First staff engage with potential beneficiaries of the service, educate them to want to receive support and generate a referral which results in them obtaining specialist help. This way of working, with a focus on developing community resilience, was identified by partners as being key but currently lacking across all areas.

5.10   Due to the current set up of Communities First with a large proportion of staff time allocated to direct delivery to achieve the set outcomes, this model of brokering services has been difficult to replicate across all Clusters. To achieve this brokerage role across all Clusters, front line staff will need to be freed up from the direct delivery of specialised provision.

5.11   The recent Local Service Board development in area based approaches to partnership working has the potential to provide the operational framework in which these tackling poverty programmes can operate, at a local level, to address many of the challenges identified above.

Programme infrastructure

5.12   According to research the key to addressing the gap between strategic and operational partnership working across programmes is a robust infrastructure to support agreed outcomes via integrated service provision. The lack of infrastructure to support joint working across the three tackling poverty programmes is impeding the development of opportunities that exist if the programmes were more closely aligned and a formal structure for bringing programmes together was implemented.

Co-ordination and consistency

5.13   The absence of a consistent central support infrastructure across all three programmes has led to significant inconsistency in the way the programmes operate and are governed.

5.14   The Welsh Government states that the most effective approach to designing provision achieves a blend of approaches, combining a strong top-down element to a strategic focus on linking activities to outcomes, with gaining local buy-in to ensure activities are suited to the local community. Whilst there are examples of this approach across Families First and Flying Start, mainly due to the strategic approach taken to commissioning provision, the current grass roots nature of developing Communities First delivery plans and limited strategic

direction, factored in with a small central team, means that this is not being achieved. Significant inconsistency in approach within and across programmes is evident leading to significant duplication of activities with other poverty programmes, core Council services and voluntary sector provision.

5.15   Where programmes have managed to implement a strong co-ordinated and consistent approach to designing and delivering services, greater success has been achieved. For example, a clear overarching success in the delivery of commissioned projects through Families First has been through the effective alignment and co-ordination of projects with other core Council services.

5.16   The only central commissioning identified in the Communities First Programme was carried out by Welsh Government who directly commissioned the Citizen Advice Bureaux to ensure that every Cluster across Wales has a consistent approach and offer to financial advice services. This approach ensured consistency and a core offer of provision across the programme that adds value to existing tackling poverty programmes and core Council services. This was seen by most as an effective approach to providing provision across the programme. Further opportunities exist within the current programme for much of the Communities First and Flying Start provision to be commissioned centrally utilising the processes already established through Families First.

5.17   Improving the central capacity to provide greater co-ordination and consistency across Communities First can be achieved by pooling resources across programmes. Even though the programmes have different criteria, a number of the roles to enable this to be successfully undertaken are very similar and are currently in existence across all areas. This provides opportunities for some roles to be combined and in other cases for teams to come together to provide additional support and co-ordination i.e. monitoring and evaluation, finance, administration and business support and programme co-ordination.

5.18   The recent developments to the planning and commissioning arrangements for Families First have resulted in a new Strategic Planning and Commissioning Group. The aim of this new group is to provide effective inter-agency governance arrangements for Families First, Flying Start and Communities First. This provides an opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach to planning and delivery processes with the aim of optimising resources to improve outcomes, and increase the level of early intervention support at an early stage of difficulty before a more specialised statutory support is needed.

Effective system of monitoring and review

5.19   Whilst there are good individual features within each of the programmes, the outcome frameworks set by the Welsh Government have been developed slightly differently and in isolation to each other. This has led to a lack of consistency in evidencing outcomes across all programmes, therefore identifying and evidencing joint contributions towards an outcome is not possible.

5.20   It's also clear that the level of accountability placed on providers varies and although each programme has some level of performance management and management information system in place, this is not coordinated or compatible with the other programmes. The capacity to quality assure to gain best value for money and demonstrate the fullest impact for service users is not being fully utilised.

5.21   Recent developments within the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate in integrating management information systems through a single system, Capita One, provides an opportunity for these programmes to utilise a single system to capture outcomes and engagement levels that support information sharing and multi agency working going forward.

Targeting hard to reach groups

5.22   The way in which hard to reach groups are targeted across the three tackling poverty programmes various significantly and for some is a considerable challenge. There are no multi-agency systems for information to be shared across programmes for identifying those at risk, and no formal integrated referral systems.

5.23   The current approaches range from formal mechanisms through Families First such as vulnerability profiling and Careers Wales data, to informal mechanisms through Communities First where the identification of particular groups tends to be subjectively identified by staff rather than data led.

5.24   The emphasis on targets and outputs with Communities First, combined with the application of a RAG (red, amber, green) approach to measuring progress increases the likelihood of targeting provision to achieve a green status. Based on the evidence available it is reasonable to suggest that this has led to the population of Cluster areas as a whole being targeted at the expense of targeting the very hardest to reach in these areas. Therefore the approach is not entirely person centred but more programme funding led.

5.25   The current Communities First model also seems to facilitate a culture where individuals become too reliant and dependant on the front line

staff for support and advice. This finding contradicts the new Social Services delivery model for Rhondda Cynon Taf which is focused on minimising dependency thus supporting the new Social Services and Well being Act and its fundamental principle of promoting people's independence to give them stronger voice and control.

Review conclusion

5.26   Overall, whilst there is evidence of some good individual features across the three programmes, the overarching message emerging from the review is that there are clear opportunities to improve the coordination of approach at a strategic level and on the ground, releasing revenue resources to be reinvested to ensure best value and better outcomes.

6.   POTENTIAL STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

6.1   The clear priority arising from this review is to establish a single coherent tackling poverty programme across the Council that will mitigate and minimise the impact of poverty.

6.2   The above findings present the case for this change and the benefits that will arise from establishing a single coherent tackling poverty programme across the Council. To make the required changes the following options have been considered:

- **Option 1: Status Quo –** Communities First, Families First and Flying Start continue to operate within the existing arrangements i.e. as separate services.

- **Option 2: Communities First is restructured only**, with commissioning activity aligned to the new Children and Young People Early Intervention and Prevention Strategic Planning and Commissioning Group.

- **Option 3: Create One Tackling Poverty Service:** restructuring Communities First immediately with a phased approach to follow bringing all tackling poverty programmes together under one tackling poverty service.

(Appendix 1 provides an analysis of the consideration of each option)

6.3   **The preferred way forward is option 3 with a phased approach** to pulling all three programmes together under one dedicated service.

6.4   This preferred option takes into consideration the research findings of the review which identified that although there is no single approach that will address all the problems of poverty, there are common

strategic areas that are associated with implementing tackling poverty programmes effectively. This includes;

- The creation of a dedicated department or system of governance to provide clear strategic direction and oversight.
- Providing high levels of co-ordination across departments.
- A strategic based outcome focused approach to commissioning specialised services.
- A targeted local community engagement approach to support early intervention and prevention.
- Effective systems of early identification, monitoring and review.
- A single overarching tackling poverty outcome framework.

7.   POTENTIAL COMMUNITIES FIRST OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

7.1   It is clear from the review that there are opportunities for Communities First to improve the co-ordination of approach at a strategic level and on the ground, and release revenue resources to be reinvested to ensure best value and better outcomes.

7.2   The service has been exploring options for how it can achieve the forecasted savings/cuts anticipated for 2016/17 and achieve the best possible service for the community within the resources available. To make the required changes, the following options have been considered:

- **Option 1:** Status Quo – Communities First current model of delivery remains as is and a reactive approach is taken to budget cuts upon formal notification from Welsh Government.

- **Option 2:** Restructure Communities First to include a strategically commissioned "core offer" of intervention/activity across all eight Clusters, but retaining an element of local flexibility through the Community Involvement budgets and local engagement through Communities First Staff.

- **Option 3:** As option 2 but the Council withdraws from the direct delivery of all Community First provision and refocuses its funding on support to the voluntary sector to deliver the entire programme for each Cluster.

(Appendix 2 provides an analysis of the consideration of each option)

7.3   For options 2 and 3 the model of delivery is reliant on establishing a set of front line Engagement roles within each Cluster and an additional 4 posts to provide a flexible resource, each post working across two Clusters in recognition of the geographical size differences and needs of individual Cluster areas. The options are also reliant on releasing

resources to be pooled into a central commissioning fund to be reinvested back into frontline specialised delivery, on a more strategic basis. The following options have been considered in relation to the number of Engagement roles across the 8 Clusters:

A) 20 posts – 2 per Cluster and 4 to operate flexibly across the eight Clusters
B) 28 posts – 3 per Cluster and 4 to operate flexibly across the eight Clusters
C) 36 posts – 4 per Cluster and 4 to operate flexibly across the eight Clusters

7.4   Based on the review of the current position, the Status Quo is not a viable option as the current delivery model is unsustainable. This reactive approach to budget cuts may also result in a salami slicing approach across individual Clusters, in isolation of each other, rather than taking a strategic view of the programme as a whole. This option would also not address the areas of improvement identified in the review.

7.5   Option 2 and 3 relate specifically to the research findings of the review and the need to re-design the programme to include:

- A strategic based outcome focused approach to commissioning specialised services.
- A targeted local engagement approach to support early intervention and prevention within communities.

7.6   For example, for the type of provision required to tackle poverty, specialist organisations are best suited to achieve the ultimate outcomes (core offer) whereas the role, and added value, of Communities First front line staff should be to engage with potential beneficiaries (initial targeted contact and engagement) of this service, build relationships, educate them to want to receive support and generate a referral or broker provision which results in them obtaining specialist help.

7.7   However, the preferred way forward is option 2b which will provide a strategic approach to commissioning activity across all eight Clusters, and includes a mix of both Council and Voluntary sector employed front line staff to provide local universal and targeted engagement. This option will also release the necessary funding required to achieve the anticipated cuts for 2016/17.

7.8   In implementing the preferred option there will be a need to restructure Communities First Council employees and review all current arrangements with the voluntary sector to inform future commissioning decisions.

7.9   In developing this new form of service delivery, there will be a need to:

- Create a single Rhondda Cynon Taf wide governance forum to reflect the shift towards a more strategic approach to developing and delivering provision.
- Develop a single coherent Communities First delivery plan to replace the current eight individual plans in operation.
- Align Community First commissioning activity to existing Families First practice and the new Early Intervention and Prevention Strategic Planning and Commissioning group. This group will be responsible for ensuring the right mix of specialised provision/services is available within each setting that adds value to and does not duplicate existing provision (core offer).
- Allocate a flexible community involvement budget to each Cluster to retain an element of local flexibility. This budget will support the delivery of universal and targeted engagement activities with a focus on developing family and community resilience.
- Amalgamate current front line roles to create Engagement Officers (28 positions). These roles will be responsible for brokering and co-ordinating the right support to those identified through a formal early identification process. Staff will act as a bridge between services/provision and its potential users by making initial targeted contact and providing on-going community support post activity. The 4 posts operating across two Clusters will also have responsibility for developing capacity in the local voluntary sector in line with the RCT Together approach.
- Streamline Cluster management positions to create 4 management posts to reflect the move to a centralised commissioning model. These posts will each have responsibility for direct line management of Lead Workers within 2 Cluster areas and located within the Communities First Central Support team to provide more central support to the Communities First Co-ordinator.
- Streamline Lead Officer positions to create 8 posts across the clusters to reflect the move to a centralised commissioning model.
- Streamline administrative support to create 4 posts to reflect the reduction in the number of orders that will be required, due to the move to a centralised commissioning model.
- Centralise current activity budgets.
- Review all elements of current voluntary sector provision and re-commission where appropriate.

7.10   Whilst these overarching principles can be agreed, there will be a need to review how they are implemented on a Cluster by Cluster basis. This is to take account of the current staffing and delivery arrangements which are complex and vary significantly between Clusters. However, with the introduction of Communities4Work (3 additional posts per Cluster) alongside the proposed reorganisation of the Communities

First programme there will be a minimum of 7 frontline posts allocated to each Cluster. This will be sufficient resource to deliver this new model.

8.   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1   An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. Further information can be required during implementation as voluntary sector provision is reviewed and the core offer is developed.

9.   CONSULTATION

9.1   This proposal will necessitate the review of staffing levels within Communities First. The impact of the proposed changes on staff identified within the report will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed Managing Change Policy of the Council. Staff and trade unions would be fully consulted at the appropriate time.

10.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1   If implemented, the preferred option would release between **£1.252M and £2.673M based on 2015/16 Communities First allocation,** to be pooled into the central commissioning team to be reinvested back into frontline specialised delivery.

10.2   However, Welsh Government have notified Lead Delivery Bodies that there's the potential for further cuts ranging from **5%-20%.** Clearly this would impact on the level of funding released.

10.3   The implementation of the recommended option for Communities First could lead to some redundancy implications for existing staff. However at present it is not possible to quantify any specific numbers as there are new initiatives being introduced across the Council that will help mitigate any risk to staff e.g. the ESF Communities4Work programme will create a number of new posts within Communities First areas. In addition, there are currently a number of vacancies within the programme and some existing staff have also already expressed an interest in Voluntary Early Retirement or Voluntary Redundancy. Finally, in accordance with the Council's Managing Change processes, every reasonable effort will be made to minimise any redundancies that may occur throughout this process, by utilising redeployment opportunities across the Council.

10.4   Our obligation regarding redundancy payments to Voluntary sector staff as part of this service change will need further consideration in discussion with HR, Legal and Welsh Government.

11.   LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.

11.1   These proposals will contribute significantly to:

- Achieving a healthy, well educated, safe and skilled population.
- The preventative and early intervention action taken to reduce the number of people entering statutory services.
- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and its fundamental principle of promoting people's independence to give them stronger voice and control.
- The Local Service Boards area based approach to partnership working.
- The Sustainable Development Principle, specifically in relation to involving people, collaboration and prevention.
- Children Services new integrated service delivery framework.

12.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1   There are no legal implications arising from these proposals; however it will be necessary to consult with Welsh Government and ensure that any changes to the programme will be in accordance with the conditions attached to the offer of funding.

13.   NEXT STEPS

13.1   If the Cabinet support the recommended way forward, we will establish interim management arrangements to:

- Oversee the phased introduction of a single Tackling Poverty Service.
- Support the development of a single tackling poverty outcome framework.
- Develop the core offer of services to be commissioned across all eight Clusters based on need and in consultation with key partners.
- Review on a Cluster by Cluster basis, the current arrangements in operation and identify the most appropriate way forward.
- Review voluntary sector partnership agreements and re-commission where appropriate.

13.2   Immediate attention will be given to the restructuring of the Communities First programme with the aim of implementing a new model of service delivery from April 2016. The interim management group would then turn its attention to reconfiguring the wider tackling poverty programmes.

14   CONCLUSION

14.1   This report sets out the findings of a review into Rhondda Cynon Taf's strategic approach to tackling poverty, specifically in relation to Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.

14.2   Whilst there's good individual features across the three programmes, the overarching theme emerging from the review is that there are clear opportunities to improve the join up of these programmes, and release revenue resources to be reinvested to ensure best value and better outcomes.

14.3   To improve the co-ordination across programmes the report recommends a phased approach to pulling together all three programmes under one Tackling Poverty Service. The creation of a dedicated service will provide clear strategic direction, oversight and high levels of co-ordination that is needed to deliver poverty programmes effectively.

14.4   The report also sets out the proposal to make service changes to the Communities First programme to enable a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty whilst achieving the savings/cuts anticipated for 2016/17.

14.5   The preferred option for Communities First and the production of a revised operational model will address many of the barriers currently faced by the programme, and release resources to be reinvested to ensure best value and better outcomes. If implemented, the proposals would release between **£1.252M and £2.673M,** based on 2016/17 allocation.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH NOVEMBER 2015

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TACKLING POVERTY – A REVIEW OF COMMUNITIES FIRST, FAMILIES FIRST AND FLYING START PROGRAMMES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Background Papers

Welsh Governments Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016.

Officer to contact: Derek James, Youth Engagement and Participation Service Manager. Tel. No. 01443 444651

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APPENDIX 1: Options for Change

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Proposed
Option 1: Status Quo – Communities First, Families First and Flying Start continue to operate within the existing arrangements i.e. as two separate services.	Based on the review of the current position, the status quo, is not a viable option.	• Programmes continue to operate in isolation of each other but seeking to achieve the same ideals. • Two separate management and service delivery arrangements resulting in programmes remaining compartmentalised within specific departments or services. • The potential to maximise resources, achieve best value and better outcomes not fully achieved. • Expertise within different programmes not fully utilised across wider programmes i.e. commissioning, contract monitoring, performance management. • Overlaps and duplication in service delivery, administration and support remain. • The lack of consistency in relation to performance management, planning, impact measurements, commissioning and management information arrangements not fully addressed.	No

| Option 2: Communities First is restructured only, with commissioning activity aligned to the new Children and Young People Early Intervention and Prevention Strategic Planning and Commissioning Group. | • Communities First areas for improvement addressed but in isolation.
• Integration of Communities First commissioned activity with Families First and Flying Start.
• Support the move to a more preventative approach to the Communities First programme.
• Integration of separate planning arrangements.
• Scrutiny function for Communities First commissioned activity. | • As above | No |
| Option 3: Create One Tackling Poverty Service: restructuring Communities First immediately with a phased approach to follow bringing all tackling poverty programmes together under one tackling poverty service. | • As option 2 plus:
• The creation of a dedicated service to provide clear strategic direction and oversight.
• Provide high levels of co-ordination across programmes.
• A more integrated approach will reduce duplication of services.
• A more effective use of resources (economies of scale) and a more strategic approach to provision across the County.
• A single effective system of early identification, monitoring and review to demonstrate the fullest | • Period of change for staff | Yes |

	impact of the programmes. • Greater consistency across programmes relation to performance management, planning, impact measurements, commissioning and management information arrangements • A single overarching tackling poverty outcome framework. • This option fits well with the current thinking at Welsh Government.		

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Appendix 2: Options for change

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages/Impact	Proposed
Option 1: Status Quo – Communities First current model of delivery remains as is and a reactive approach is taken to budget cuts upon formal notification from Welsh Government.	• Priorities for delivery continue to be identified locally to address need. • Would respond to anticipated future cuts as and when required and on receipt of guidance from WG so avoiding making changes now and then again in the near future. • Safeguarding of staffing and voluntary sector arrangements in the short term. • Able to use savings from current vacancies to support anticipated future cuts to the programme. • Opportunity for some staff to move to the Communities for Work programme.	• Continue to deliver the programme with little or no strategic fit. • Clusters continue to operate in isolation of each other but seeking to achieve the same ideals. • The potential to maximise resources, achieve best value and better outcomes not fully achieved. • Lose the opportunity to influence and inform anticipated changes and cuts to the programme by WG. • Inconsistent staffing structures and resources across Clusters will remain. • Inequity and inconsistencies of the type of provision across Clusters. • Local determination for making future cuts to the programme delivery will have differing levels of impact on staffing, project costs and arrangements with current voluntary sector organisations. • Risk to funding for some community assets/premises. • Much focus will remain on having to deliver targets rather than community	

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		engagement and activities. • No opportunity to commission in evidence base services where gaps identified. • Aligning Communities First with Families First, Flying Start and Council services will remain difficult if current programme structure remains the same.	
Option 2: Restructure Communities First to include a strategically commissioned "core offer" of intervention/activity across all eight Clusters, but retaining an element of local flexibility through the Community Involvement budgets and local engagement through Communities First Staff (a mix of both Council and Voluntary sector employed front line staff).	• Option in line with areas associated with implementing tackling poverty programmes effectively**.** • Release of resources to develop a strategic based outcome focused approach to commissioning specialised services now required to deliver the high level outcomes under the new Communities First programme. • Approach ensures resources are targeted at those individuals in need, and services that are a priority and at the right stage to have maximum effect on outcomes. • Ensures all providers go through a robust selection processes to ensure quality assurance and	• Potential redundancy costs to the Council due to whole service re-organisation of staff required including the disestablishment of existing posts and the creation of new amalgamated roles. • Increased focus on 1 to 1 targeting may impact on the level of wider engagement activities delivered within Clusters. • More focused approach may reduce the capacity to support some existing historical arrangements i.e. large scale community events. • Move to an outcome focused approach to delivery may impact on the number of individuals engaged in the programme.	YES

	value for money. • Front line roles refocused in line with staffs main area of expertise i.e. community engagement resulting in better engagement with individuals, providing opportunities for people to take more control over their lives and increasing social capital by supporting people to help each other. • Integration of Communities First commissioned activity with Families First and Flying Start. • Integration with wider Council strategic approach to service delivery i.e. NEETs etc. • Support the move to a more preventative approach to the Communities First programme. • Integration of separate planning arrangements. • A more effective use of resources resulting in economies of scale through increased purchasing power. • Greater consistency across Clusters in relation to performance management, planning, impact measurements, commissioning		

	and management information arrangements. • Equity of future 'core' staffing resources across Clusters which will refocus Council resources to have a consistent and more targeted supporting role within communities • Flexibility to change service delivery and budgets in line with emerging priorities or need.		
Option 3: As option 2 but the Council withdraws from the direct delivery of all Community First provision and refocuses its funding on support to the voluntary sector to deliver the entire programme for each Cluster.	As option 2 but: • Achieves a greater release of resources through restructuring staffing arrangements across both the Council and voluntary sector. • Greater equity of staffing resources across Clusters. • Accountability for line management of staff and delivery of high level outcomes the responsibility of the voluntary sector.	As option 2 but: • Potential for recruitment process to become complicated depending on future employing organisation. • Bigger impact on Council staffing structures as currently employ nearly twice as many staff as voluntary sector, including potential redundancy costs. • Possible TUPE implications between various organisations.	