

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 th June 2018
Subject:	Communities First Annual Report
Purpose of Report:	To report on Communities First activities and performance during 2017/18 and outline plans for 2018/19
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr. Gwilym O Jones
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Alun Mummery
Head of Service:	Ned Michael
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Local Members:	

1 - Recommendation/s

- 1.1 That the members acknowledge the performance of Mon CF during 2017/8 in the delivery of the final year of Communities First.
- 1.2 That the members decide whether Mon CF should continue to report to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee following the closure of the Communities First Programme by Welsh Government.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 Communities First supported the most deprived communities in our society. The work delivered by Mon CF under the Communities First Programme targeted those people who suffered multiple barriers to employment with a view to improving their situation. This directly supports Objective 1 of the Council Plan 2017-2022 which seeks to support residents to reach their full potential, improve the quality of their lives and their wellbeing. Mon CF delivers a range of training for those with poor skills to help improve their employability and works closely with local businesses to ensure that clients have the skills that employers are looking for.
- 2.2 The Communities First Programme has also supported 3 workstreams within the Housing Service Business Plan:
 - Prepare for the implementation of Universal Credit Roll out in Dec 2018
 - Improve income collection levels Year on Year

- Developing and implementing an action plan from the external homelessness review to ensure business improvement.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [**focus on customer/citizen**]

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [**focus on value**]

3.3 A look at any risks [**focus on risk**]

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [**focus on performance & quality**]

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[**focus on wellbeing**]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

4.1 The Local Authority has been the Lead Delivery Body for the Communities First Programme and has been responsible for the achievement of targets which have to be reported to Welsh Government.

- How has Mon CF performed over the last financial year compared to the targets set?
- Do the programmes which are being delivered in the current year still align to the Local Authority's Corporate Plan?
- What is the risk to the Authority of continuing to work in partnership with Mon CF to deliver Communities for Work Plus, Communities for Work and the Legacy Funding?

5 – Background / Context

1. Background

1.1 Communities First has been delivered by Mon CF Ltd since the programme was reorganised by Welsh Government in 2012. It was one of the main Tackling

Poverty Programmes funded by Welsh Government aimed at improving the prospects of people living in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales.

- 1.2 Communities First delivery has taken place within the most deprived wards in Anglesey namely: Morawelon, Holyhead Town, Maeshyfyd, Kingsland, Porthyfelin 1, London Road in Holyhead and Tudur Ward in Llangejni.
- 1.3 On the 14th February 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children announced that the Communities First Programme would be phased out by March 2018. The decision was made following a period of engagement with Communities First staff, community members and supporting partners and stakeholders across Wales.
- 1.4 2017/18 became a transition year prior to closing the Programme and the funding allocated to the delivery of Communities First in 2017/18 was cut to 70% of the previous years' level. £463,540 was awarded and as a result Mon CF Ltd had to make two members of staff redundant, whilst another 4 staff were moved to other projects.
- 1.5 As well as the Communities First Programme, Mon CF also delivered LIFT as one of nine pilot areas across Wales. LIFT was an employment support programme tackling workless households. LIFT in Anglesey has worked with 402 individuals and moved 144 back into employment over the life of the scheme. LIFT also came to an end on 31.3.2018.

2. 2017/18 Delivery

- 2.1 Housing Services working in partnership with Mon CF were keen to retain as much Communities First service delivery during 2017/18 and the decision was taken not to withdraw services prior to March 2018. Across Wales many Communities First offices were closed and staff made redundant with only skeleton staff and limited services remaining.
- 2.2 In June 2017, the Authority submitted a plan to Welsh Government outlining the focus for service delivery and how Communities First would be phased out over the year with a view to closure on March 31st 2018.
- 2.3 The plan outlined 4 key areas for delivery:
 - Core Employment Support - supporting those people who were not eligible for LIFT or Communities for Work back into employment, training or education.
 - Self-Employment Support – supporting people to become better equipped to become self-employed.
 - Community Vocational Academy – providing employment related training, basic skills, qualifications and intensive mentoring support for those people who are furthest away from the labour market on their journey back into work.

- Financial Inclusion including Pantri Pobl – soft touch support to help those improve financial literacy including personal budgeting and Discretionary Assistance Fund applications. Supporting the joint working with CAB in the provision of the Food Bank, ‘Pantri Pobl’.

A breakdown of the targets for each work area and the actual numbers achieved can be seen in Appendix 1.

- 2.4. 2017-18 was a critical year for Mon CF as both they and the Authority needed to ensure that they were sustainable as an organization going forward without Communities First funding. As a third sector organization the only way of ensuring this was to seek alternative funding streams.
- 2.5 In May 2017 the Local Authority was invited to submit an application to Welsh Government for £125,015 for Communities First Legacy Funding. This was to preserve the most effective elements of the former Communities First Programme.
- 2.6 There was also an invitation to submit a bid for £215K for a new Employability Grant, which is now known as Communities for Work Plus, to sit alongside the ESF funded Communities for Work Programme. Communities for Work Plus is based on the LIFT model and in Anglesey staff transferred from the LIFT Programme to Communities for Work Plus on 1st April 2018. The former geographical constraints of delivery were removed and Communities for Work Plus is now being delivered across Anglesey.
- 2.7 An approach was made to Magnox to support the costs of the Vocational Academy over a 3-year period to a value of £300K. This bid was recently approved.
- 2.8 Mon CF have also been successful in tendering to become a provider against various Training Frameworks including TRAC, OPUS, ACT and ADTRAC which means that they provide a range of training courses as a commercial provider.
- 2.9 There is an ongoing relationship with the People’s Health Trust who have chosen Mon CF as a provider of their Local Conversations Project in Holyhead. This funding looks set to continue for several years to come, at a value of £100K per annum.
- 2.10 A number of capital bids were submitted to secure funding to purchase, refurbish and extend the current offices in Market Street. All of the bids were successful and the offices were purchased at the end of March 2018 and are currently being extended to increase the office space and allow for more partnership working.
- 2.11. Housing Service is continuing to support a contribution of £15K towards the provision of financial inclusion as it is closely aligned with their Service Plan.

2.12 As it currently stands the revenue projection for Mon CF for 2018/19 is forecast at £1.1M, which is a similar level to that of previous years.

3. Future Developments

3.1 As Mon CF can now work to support residents into employment from across Anglesey there are plans to open an office base in Menai Bridge. They already have a presence in Holyhead, Llangefni and Amlwch.

3.2 Mon CF has been working with the Wales European Funding Office to provide a 'In Work Support Programme' targeting people who are in employment but are underemployed for example those who are in part time work or those seeking to improve their employment. This programme will start later this year and continue until 2022.

3.3 The Vocational Academy will be moving from its' current location in Penrhos Business Park to Holyhead town centre, to a building that has been recently purchased by Mon CF and is currently undergoing refurbishment.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

7 – Financial Implications

7.1 The budget that was allocated to Communities First, LIFT and the Communities for Work Programme has been fully spent with no underspend being declared to Welsh Government.

7.2 Alternative external funding sources have been secured to allow service delivery to continue across the Island in 2018/19.

7.3 The Council will continue to monitor expenditure through the Legacy, Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus Programmes in 2018/19 to ensure that services are delivered to budget.

7.4 Mon CF's budget forecast for 2018/19 is £1.1M of which Welsh Government funding via the Local Authority will total £453K.

7.5 Housing Service has agreed an allocation of £15K from its' budget to support the delivery of financial inclusion services.

8 – Appendices:

Appendix 1 - List of targets and results for 2017/18 service delivery.

Indicator	Target	Result
Transition Funding		
Number of individuals engaged in activities	250	259
Number of people completing work experience placements	30	17
Number of people entering employment	40	88
Number of people entering self employment	5	6
Number of people with improved basic and financial skills	30	73
LIFT Funding – no annual targets set for LIFT		
Number of people undertaking basic skills training	N/A	26
Number of people undertaking vocational training	N/A	44
Number of people completing work placements	N/A	17
Number of people completing preparation for full-time employment	N/A	10
Number of people into employment	N/A	24
Communities for Work		
Number of people engaged with the project	132	87
Number of people into employment	24	30

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

Welsh Government Transition Detailed Plan

Welsh Government Communities Transition and Strategy Guidance

Annual Monitoring Report