



New Sandfields Aberavon

**nsa**  
Sandfields Aberafan Newydd

**New Sandfields Aberavon's (NSA's) response to:**

*'Communities Next - Consultation on the future of the Communities First programme.'*

Charity No. 1088934

Company No. 3674953

Chair: Gary Roberts

Director: Ian Isaac MBA



## **Respondent Details**

### **Name:**

Christine Esposito.

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### **Job Title and Organisation (if applicable):**

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Please indicate whether you are responding:

As an individual                       On behalf of an organisation or group – The NSA Board of Director Trustees, The NSA Communities First Partnership and Staff.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group, please indicate which of the following best describes the organisation or group that you represent:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Health Board              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NHS Trust                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> CVC                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Business                              | <input type="checkbox"/> National Voluntary Organisation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Community or Voluntary Group |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities First Partnership      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state) _____                    |  |

## **Background – Development Director/Co-ordinator:**

We were extremely proud to be asked to organise the launch of the Communities Next Consultation document which was held at Aberavon Community Centre on 30<sup>th</sup> January with Leighton Andrews, Deputy Minister for Regeneration and Dr Brian Gibbons, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. Leighton Andrews indicated in his speech that it was no accident that NSA had been chosen to host the event as we are already delivering outcomes.

The 'One Wales – A progressive agenda for the government of Wales (p:29)' sets the scene for Communities Next by stating that it will be, '...building on programme achievements while establishing robust and demonstrable outcome benchmarks and sound practice and evaluation methodologies for planned programmes, (for example, Communities Next). It also states that, 'We will work together to develop Communities First into its Communities Next phase.' NSA was involved in the consultation for the 'Community Empowerment in Practice – Lessons learned from Communities First' document written by Professor Dave Adamson and Dr Richard Bromiley because of our model of governance. This is our Partnership's strength in that it has merged with the GRB to form an even stronger platform on which the Communities Next agenda can be rolled out. If Partnerships do what that document recommends then it is already well on its way to delivering Communities Next.

NSA has been chosen to be part of the Wales Audit Office audit of Communities First, 'Is Communities First value for Money?' We have already undertaken research locally by taking away WAG funding for the Communities First Team from the funding brought in to the community. This resulted in the sum of the community being better off by £1.6m. We are also part of the CFSN's 50 case studies research on good practice and what has made a difference in communities. We are eagerly awaiting the results of both as it is hoped that good practice will be celebrated at all levels. Professor Dylan Jones, writing in the Western Mail on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 stated that, '...There have been notable successes, such as New Sandfields Aberavon, which has been extremely successful in delivering projects that make a real difference to its community. Not surprisingly, this innovative organisation was recently named as the only social enterprise to be featured in last year's Fast Growth 50 list of the fastest growing businesses in Wales.'

Tackling child poverty is high on the list of priorities for our community as children living in all three wards were identified by DWP data as being more than twice the national average for children living on benefits. Funding and targeted match funding must be made available to the community projects such as STRIDES, PC Care and our other community projects which go a long way to ensuring the parents and guardians of these children leave behind the benefits culture for good.

The WAG states that Social Enterprise is key to making Partnerships sustainable. NSA already has a Social Enterprise strategy but WAG needs to

employ full force encouragement to all agencies in its support of it. With regard to Local Service Boards, (this will be covered in greater detail later) and its 'LSB's – The Third Dimension' document, (p: 60, item 3.d) where it states that it will launch a code of practice on public consultation and engagement – it needs to ensure that Partnerships, which are representative, are seen to be the conduit both to and from citizens in the community. At present a lot of information about what is going on in communities is being missed by the 'sectors' current perspective and approach which in turn leads to apathy. At the time of the Local Government elections this is even more pertinent.

### **The consultation event:**

A Communities Next consultation event was held in Aberavon for staff, Partnership and Board members on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008 to look at the questions posed in the consultation document. There were 48 people in attendance on the day. Those that were unable to attend on the day submitted written responses to the questionnaire, and some gave verbal comments. Also, two consultation events were attended, one at the Liberty Stadium and one at NPTCVS. Under each question we have put both the comments, (bullet points) and Executive Directors view, (in ***bold italics***).

### **Executive Directors Introduction:**

***Our Initial response is to welcome the change in direction for the work of CF Partnerships through Wales. There are many of the CN expectations that NSA and the CF Partnership in Sandfields and Aberavon feel is already part of the culture of CF delivery in this area.***

***Over the past 5 years the CF Partnership and the Grant Recipient Body have integrated debate, deliberations and delivery of a locally produced Capacity Building and Action Plan. It is known locally as the Sandfields and Aberavon Neighbourhood plan.***

***In the past 3 years the emphasis has been on project development alongside traditional community development. A management tool called the traffic light system ensures that all project ideas related to identified community needs are fed into the system. Red means the project idea is being looked into, amber means an application for funds or a task group has identified resources and funding and income generation streams to take the idea to the last phase which is green and the project is operational.***

***The project may be delivered by the Community Regeneration Company if it requires staffing and on going management or it may be delivered by a community group or club. There are also project ideas being considered for delivery by other 3<sup>d</sup> Sector companies and also ones that include the Local Authority or other statutory sector or business as project Partners.***

***In the past 3 years NSA has delivered communities first conceived projects mainly in the field of employment training through the £1.8m STRIDES initiative or the 250,000 PCCare Community IT project. Other projects driven by the CFP process has been a Social Enterprise Café project in the Afan Lido and the New Sandfields Aberavon Volunteer events - NSAVE project which brings together community groups, clubs and individuals for the annual Beach festival in July and the annual Xmas tree festival which between them attracts over 5,000 people every year.***

Prior to the event we asked what people understood by Communities First and Communities Next. Comments included:

### **What is your understanding of Communities First?**

*"Set up by the Assembly Government, to target the most vulnerable, disadvantaged people. Setting up projects to the benefit of these groups, apportioning funding to develop activities regenerating the economic and social strategy for at least 10 years. Targeting the 100 most deprived areas in Wales as identified by the WIMD2000."*

*"To improve your area. Make life easier."*

*"10 year WAG funded. Operates in areas of multiple deprivation. Aim is to help communities to regenerate themselves. First stage is capacity building."*

*"Communities First is a community based project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government aiming to re-generate the community. It is a 10 year project."*

*"Communities First is a project that targets the poorest areas in Wales and then with funding from the Welsh Assembly aims to bring support to these communities to give them the opportunity to improve their area."*

*"Where an organisation plans to create a neighbourhood where they will benefit from other experiences. That over the years there have been good ideas and plans that have benefited all areas in Sandfields and Aberavon. I am unaware of any project that has been started that has failed."*

*"A group that works in deprived areas to improve the community, making it better place to live."*

*"Communities First is a project designed to help the local community improve their own area and tackle areas such as high unemployment, crime, etc."*

*"In a nutshell, Communities First shows the community how to help themselves, e.g. health & wellbeing, youth, transport."*

*"Works to promote regeneration in deprived areas and works in partnership with other organisations to promote the community to help itself. It's funded until April 2009. its aim is to raise the capacity of disadvantaged groups to help themselves, raise self esteem, improve skills through their own efforts with help."*

*"WAG funded programme to help the hardest to reach and most deprived local people in the community."*

*"Communities come first."*

*"First and foremost for the community, it's needs and, where permissible, grants to help the groups concerned with whatever necessary. It's grown considerably after the first few years and is ever getting stronger."*

*"Funding for 2008/2009 projects (NSA) by WAG (Welsh Assembly Government). NSA target areas in less disadvantaged areas to promote benefits into these areas."*

*"Funding up to 2009 for NSA projects by WAG – to help target disadvantaged people living in Sandfields and Aberavon. This aims to raise the capacity of disadvantaged groups to help themselves, raise self esteem, improve skills through their own efforts with help."*

*"Funding up to 2009 for projects (NSA) by Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to help target disadvantaged people living in Sandfields and Aberavon. This aims to raise the capacity of disadvantaged groups to help themselves, raise self esteem, improve skills through their own efforts with help."*

*"Funded by WAG. In general Com 1<sup>st</sup> aims to support and improve the community."*

*"Where an organisation plans to create a neighbourhood where they will benefit from other experiences."*

*"To improve the area, making the area more safe."*

### **What do you know about Communities Next?**

*"Following the action plan and consultation period the 'Next' programme is the continuation process. Where Assembly, local authority, Health Authorities working together. In short, action, involvement, enablement with groups and partners identifying clear targets, achievable aims to break the circle of inactivity and deprivation is the goal."*

*"Doing more money into the area."*

*"More focus on results/measurable outcomes. Project based."*

*"Communities Next is the next stage of Communities First. To monitor outcomes and projects for the future funding."*

*"Communities Next is the new phase of Communities First which is more target driven."*

*"Communities Next is just a stepping stone from Communities First that will embrace larger projects. It will be another five years for us to put other plans 'under our belts'. It will be money well spent!!"*

*"2<sup>nd</sup> phase."*

*"Communities Next is the next phase of Communities First."*

*"This is the second phase of funding where the Welsh Assembly have recognised deprived areas and have the knowledge to improve them."*

*"This is the next stage on and will hopefully help to provide employment through social enterprise to enable disadvantaged groups to become economically active. Both Communities First and Communities Next are funded by the Welsh Assembly and European funding."*

*"Next stage of Communities First – taking forward what has been identified in the community."*

*"Not a lot."*

*"A group of people with the understanding of what is needed in the community and as a NSA Board Member I am forever learning from day to day about Communities First and Next with great anticipation of a lot more."*

*To aid funding for 2009 onwards (10 years). This is the next stage to help partnerships to promote their future projects. The next phase of Communities First and will enable people to contribute to the regeneration of their communities in practical ways. Also to enable people to work together as a team, to set up social enterprises and be self sufficient and get back into the working environment."*

*"The next stage of Com 1<sup>st</sup> helping to keep the funding for NSA projects. It will hopefully provide employment – social enterprise – to enable disadvantaged groups to become economically active. Communities First / Next are funded by WAG and European funding."*

*"It's the next stage of Communities First to help keep the funding going. Helps to provide employment and social enterprise to enable disadvantaged groups to become economically active. Communities First and Next are funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and European funding."*

*"It's the new name for Communities First – more project based."*

*"That over the years there have been good ideas and plans that have benefited all areas in Sandfields and of course Aberavon. I am unaware of any project that has been started by C1<sup>st</sup> that has failed."*

*"The next stage – investing more money into the area."*

1. Do you agree that the programme should continue to be branded as "Communities First" at a local level with "Communities Next" relating to the framework for taking the programme forward at a national level?

- If there were two names there may be confusion, especially with residents.
- Some organisations, residents etc. may think that Communities First has come to an end and that it is a different programme.
- Possible it could be incorporated into the original eg, 'Communities First – the Next stage'.
- Would take a lot of time for the staff on the ground to go out and explain about the name change.
- Locally should remain as Communities First.
- Yes, I agree that the programme should be branded as Communities First because we are familiar with the concept and Communities Next should be related to the framework for taking the programme forward.
- Yes

2. What are the best ways to achieve the more outcome focused approach to the Programme?

- Looking at previous successes and evaluating and building from it.
- State what outcomes are going to be.
- Evaluate an individual's whole journey, (eg beneficiaries)
- General database for monitoring and evaluating.
- Evidence building.
- Analyse.
- Internal referrals to be recorded every time.
- Communication is key between support services.
- We need to raise awareness and publicise what the programme is trying to achieve.
- Set both quantitative and qualitative targets that are easily measurable.

***NSA adopts a traffic light system whereby all project ideas generated from the community, stakeholders or existing community projects via Themed development sub-groups are feed into the CF Partnership are subject to a traffic light system.***

***Red: The idea is logged and a pro forma is filled in and signed off by the Senior Management team of the GRB. CDO's are assigned to work on the feasibility of the project and draw it together and exhaust its possibilities involving the originators of the idea.***

***Amber: The project has been worked up to the point that***

***applications for funding or resources for the project are identified ready to go to the next stage:***

***Green: The project is ready to be handed over and made operational by the lead body for the project. The CDO's hand over control to the delivery partner or lead body.***

3. Is the Vision Framework, with the suggestions to revise it, the right tool to support community action planning?

- Themes are a good thing, and are specific to peoples needs.
- The themes often act as a tool to increase community involvement.
- Other themes that possibly could be added or included within the framework could be housing and sustainability.
- Shouldn't Child poverty be a national obligation rather than a C1st target?
- Yes, I think it is but it needs to be monitored and be flexible so that it can be updated if necessary.
- No, I think perhaps we have moved on from the vision framework as we know it, perhaps we now need a 'communities outcomes Framework, which will show tangible outcomes and critical success factors.

***The vision Framework is the tool that has been used for the past 5 years and apart from some additions it is a good template to organise work around. We organise our sub groups with the community based on these themes. Whilst there are always going to be overlaps this tool appears to be fit for purpose.***

4. How should the "Outcomes Fund" be constructed to incentivise key stakeholders and encourage programme bending/mainstreaming?

- Funding should be per head.
- Extra Trust Fund.
- Local Services Boards should make sure the money is spent in the community.
- Partnership representation on LSB needed.
- Self interest of current membership.
- Write to chair of LSB.
- Making the connection team to find out their remit.
- Name and Shame.
- Shout loud.
- We need to benchmark outcomes and look for indicators to attempt to quantify the outcomes at our work. We need to build confidence and skills.
- Outcomes must be aligned so that they contribute to the strategic plans for the community (i.e. work of the LSB/local dev plan/children's plan/career plan & h&wb plan) We must look at what public money is coming into the community and for what, i.e. DAF/Conversance/C/grants etc so that the outcomes fund is used wisely and we avoid duplication and efficient /services/mainstream

***Fund a post that will examine the possibilities and scope for programme bending in each area from the point of view of individual CN Partnerships. The Post holder to have an outcome for brokering change in the direction of programme bending.***

***This post will not be effective as a county wide post as programme bending should be seen and requested from a community perspective of addressing mainstream needs by local access and by local engagement with mainstream services.***

5. What is the best way to achieve the desired balance between regeneration outcomes and community involvement (capacity building)?

- Hold regular community meetings, produce regular newsletters and turn out more publicity documents to keep the community fully informed of all project developments in their area.
- Important that decisions are made in a democratic way.
- Commitment from C1st staff and community members to these meetings.
- No limit to community involvement.
- Consultation remains ongoing to ensure the community is satisfied with the outcomes of the projects.
- Discussions need to be informed by community feedback and the needs and aspirations of the community. We cannot propose possible outcomes if there is a chance they will not be achievable.
- I don't think we will set robust rejuvenation outcomes with outcomes with out community involvement (Services provides working in the community) The diversity funds may help in finding hard to reach groups and encourage participation.

***Capacity Building takes on a different focus when projects are brought on stream. Activities designed to involve community members and to develop groups into more formal organisations, clubs into groups, individuals with a particular interest combining into clubs; are by their very nature on-going. Regeneration is about improving the built environment, availability of facilities, places to go to address needs such as economic inactivity, health needs etc. It is also about building new public spaces and buildings that have a direct link to the aspirations of those active in community development and community Regeneration.***

***Regeneration meets the needs and aspirations of the community whilst capacity building and involvement and participation prepares the way for community regeneration itself.***

6. What particular training or development needs are critical to ensuring that Communities Next is successful – and for whom?

- Quality marks to be achieved by Partnerships as a measure.
- Continuous personal development.
- Shadowing and mentoring off staff and projects workers.

- LSB need training in Communities Next.
- Occupational standards for staff and partners.
- WAG need to talk to other departments.
- Communication skills at all levels.
- Positive.
- Teach a man to fish.
- Soft skills.
- Equivalent skills.
- Any new employees or volunteers as well as the more experienced people need to have the training they need and it needs to be ongoing. Interaction between different Communities First groups would be useful as would funding for members to attain any necessary qualifications.
- All partnership members need training on perhaps monitoring performance issues. Development workers need to be refocused on perhaps projects design and implementation with an emphasis on outcomes. I think we also need to train/develop co-ordinators to measure what partnership members are contributing to the community – Financially or otherwise. This may help with the vision of programme bending. Local members need to have a more pivotal role between CF partnerships and L. A plans and actions.

**What:**

- Continuous personal development.
- Shadowing and mentoring off staff and projects workers.
- Communication skills at all levels.
- Positive.
- Soft skills.
- Equivalent skills.

**Who:**

- Local Authority staff
- Local Elected members
- Local Health Board
- WAG - need to talk to other departments

***To reinforce the need to work in a different way to that in the past 5 years is now needed. Mentoring by experienced Community Regeneration practitioners is preferred to university type courses or large network meetings that feed the networkers rather than the networked.***

***We welcome training that reinforces a problem solving approach to project development engaging with key stakeholders throughout the process of practical project development.***

***There is also no substitute for Community workers going to the community rather than waiting for the community to come to them on a daily basis.***

7. How can we facilitate increased opportunities for partnerships to share their skills and experience with other areas?

- WAG needs to pay incentives for the ones which are performing so that they can act as consultants to the failing ones. This would feed into our Social Enterprise strategy of self earned income generation.
- Monitoring/evaluation/shadowing.
- Perhaps we need to meet on a monthly or two monthly basis, whenever or wherever possible to share ideas.
- Good Partnerships should be used as consultants to under-performing Partnerships.
- Job swap between Partnerships.
- 'Good Practice' type guide produced for Partnerships.
- Designated officer in each successful Partnership to act as a consultant/liaison offer.
- Partnerships should have standards that they must achieve, and inspected by an external body (similar to Estyn inspection, IIP etc)
- Look at duplicating/rolling out successful projects to other areas.
- Training for Partnership members should be made available on governance.
- Independent assessment of GRBs – identify best models (Local Authorities unable to access funding like DTA's)
- Examples of successful Partnerships shared through overarching co-ordinators.
- Awards for the best partnership.
- CFSN?

***If each Partnership put on One day a year that displayed their work and had market place type workshops throughout the day including visits to projects then this on its own would disseminate much more inspirational examples of good practice than Networking meetings for the Staff and key volunteers. If Other Partnerships were invited and the events programmed in over a year then good practice could be displayed on a monthly basis somewhere in Wales.***

8. Are the critical success factors identified here the right ones? Should any others be added?

- No one size fits all for partnerships – National Occupational Standards would inform progress.
- Critical success factors delivering identified projects in the community.
- Users groups.
- Agree with success factors.
- Residents from other C1st areas to NSA projects.
- Programme bending slow.
- Seamless provision – Sharon holistic.
- Pound for pound monitoring.
- Aims group Strides.
- Cross generation.

- I think they are and perhaps others could be added as they become identified.
- Not sure-where are they?

***The CSF's are a significant departure from the CF programmes outcomes and should present a challenge for every CF Partnership. Setting the targets in a realistic way rather than being ambitious will help practitioners on the ground achieve their agreed targets. Agreeing the baseline first is key to the setting of targets.***

9. Are the indicators of failing partnerships the right ones? Should any others be added?

- Do the sum! How much money has been brought in/people engaged with.
- Some key delivery organisations might not want to engage with Communities First!
- Are there tangible measurement tools for each indicator?
- Who will be responsible for the monitoring of these indicators? Overarching co-ordinator?
- As above and addressed accordingly. Perhaps the top down approach needs to be addressed.
- Indicators are reasonable but should not be looked at in isolation. Before any partnerships are dissolved more reasonability should be given to the local members who need to be accountable on behalf of the community for the loss of this invaluable initiative.

***Stakeholders and sample groups of residents should also be asked if they think the Partnership is effective and succeeding against a set of questions based on normal expectations of progress.***

10. Do you agree that discussion should be had on the issue of Communities of Interest/Imaginative proposals continuing to have direct funding from the programme? What is your experience of the Communities of Interest which have Communities First Partnerships?

- Most people were familiar with the Neath and Port Talbot domestic abuse partnership and some of their projects.
- It was felt that Communities of interest programmes should continue to have direct funding.
- It was suggested that they all ready to do a good job for the community and that they are already well established.
- It was also highlighted that those working in these areas were already skilled and highly experienced and it would be a shame to lose them.
- I agree that they should have direct funding but where possible they should cover a smaller area.

***This Partnership has had very little dealings with any of the above and therefore no impact can be assessed. It has always appeared an anomaly that such schemes have received significant amounts of funding outside of Partnership remits and that significant project***

***proposals to meet assessed community needs have been rejected on the basis that CF doesn't fund projects! (2001-7).***

11. Do you agree with the funding priorities identified in this document? In Particular, how can we ensure funding goes from support to frontline delivery in Communities First Partnerships?

- Funding should be per capita. Match funding should be automatically given to C1st partnerships that are working on convergence funding bids. Funding should go to partnerships NOT the support agencies so that we can buy in whatever we need at a local level, not blanket coverage which is wasting money.
- Already in Partnership/relationship with police/schools etc.
- Attending development sub group meetings.
- The SAVE task group more involved and volunteers delivering services in the community.
- Involving local press/media.
- Metro national magazine on buses-trains advertising.
- Write to Evening Post – blow our own trumpet.
- Big Issue.
- Word of mouth.
- We have to ensure that volunteer groups are aware of funding and members need to ensure that funds are spent as per application.
- Yes I agree with the principles and also agree that some funding should be supplemented in areas with large population sizes. On size does not fit all perhaps since social/economic indicators should also be used especially if we are starting to concentrate on issues such as child poverty.

***In the main the document is addressing the need to direct funding towards sustainable frontline delivery and project development. The new outcomes fund should look to create sustainable initiatives rather than one off demonstrations.***

***For this to take place the funding would have to be recurring for the 4/5 period of CN and be in sufficient amounts to meet project development needs.***

***In terms of Convergence funding. If Communities next funding were to be provided as clear match funding then projects can become virtually twice the size or have much bigger impact on meeting community needs.***

12. How can we achieve the desired link between Communities First Action Plans and Community Planning (i.e. the inclusive development of the Community Strategy)?

- Recognition by the LA etc., they should be referring to our plans and cross-referencing.
- Adequate staff.
- Mapping - ensure no duplication.

- Active consultations with the community and groups.
- Utilise existing groups/beneficiaries.
- Consult and work in partnership with other communities 1st areas.
- Programme bending.
- Collaborate working
- Liaising and working with local schools.
- Public Consultations
- Local community plan developed and the information feed into Communities First action plan and vice versa.
- Prove needs
- Co-ordinators need to know what is available in each C1st areas to feed into other strategic plans.
- We need to have regular and meaningful dialogue with all parties.
- It is vital that C1<sup>st</sup> is represented at director level in LSB boards where all decisions relating to communities/services and funding are made.

***Strategic planning by its very nature needs to ensure that it is not prescriptive. Those who write the plans sometimes adopt short term aims or scheme/project development objectives as strategic ones. Plans including action plans need to be identified as part of key strategic goals. The means to achieving these goals need to remain flexible so as to enable innovation and bottom up community approaches to delivering action plans as well as county wide or Wales wide initiatives.***

13. How we ensure Communities First Partnerships are linked into the Local Service Board structures in their areas?

- We are in the voluntary sector but the local CVC can't possibly represent us because of the volume of work that is being undertaken in this community! We need representation of our own by someone who knows exactly what we do.
- Partnership representation on LSB needed.
- Possible self interest of current membership of LSB, not representing all organisations in their sector.
- Making the connection team to find out their remit.
- Name and Shame.
- Shout loud.
- By working together, encouraging local democracy, responding to the needs of the community and integrating services. Removing barriers and delivering effective public services.
- See no 12 (before my time)

***Local Service Board structures are new and should not be seen as yet another delivery Partnership. It will be obvious that it will be mainly LA led and therefore the onus is on the LA to seek to be more inclusive of community interests.***

***Within NPT the Voluntary sector is represented by CVS. This needs to be extended to include the community sector itself and have direct representation from CF Partnerships perhaps on a zoned basis***

***i.e. (1) Afan Valley, Port Talbot and Sandfields/ Aberavon (2) Neath, Briton Ferry (3) Dulais, Amman and Swansea valley.***

***This type of wider spectrum of third sector representation exists in the Regeneration Partnership.***

14. What are the most effective ways to facilitate constructive interaction between Communities First Partnerships and their local elected members?

- More actively involved with community and Partnership.
- Commitment should be shown when attending quality meetings.
- Responsibility may put people off from being members of the partnership.
- Emphasis to prospective partnerships members what will be expected of them. Clear structure of member's role
- Support of resources available within NSA
- Active recruitment.
- Some elected members need to be more active on their Partnership.
- Not to be there just because they have to.
- Partnership members should work more closely with NSA staff.
- We, along with elected members, need to learn new skills and acquire extra knowledge. Training and development is essential.
- Local elected members need a (concrete) role within communities next. There needs to be specific roles and responsibilities that the elected members will undertake to ensure that partnerships are kept informed of the direction of travel for the community, i.e. children's plan- what does that mean for this community. Who is responsible for additional childcare places etc?

***Where elected members hold cabinet positions in their respective councils that they should be direct members of the CF Partnership itself. Other elected members should be involve din any task groups or any themed development groups that exist within respective Partnerships.***

***The principle of open engagement with the Partnership is key to involvement, not having to wait to be asked or be nominated. There is always work to be done in community development and room enough for many participants from many agencies. The need to co-ordinate such representative activity is a key role for Co-ordinators.***

15. How should we develop the role of Communities First Overarching Co-ordinators to contribute to the aspirations of Communities Next?

- Overarching co-ordinators can't set our priorities – the GRB is our employer.
- Partnerships should be given a budget to buy their time when and if needed to avoid duplication.
- Tokenism at 4 meetings a year.
- Who is it?
- Should be a valuable Role to be aware of what projects are being

developed in each C1st area.

- Monitored both ways, both parties know what is being done.
- Adopt best practises.
- Should be aware of all the projects going on in communities 1<sup>st</sup> areas and share best practice between them.
- Be involved with key local services that deliver in communities 1<sup>st</sup> areas (eg LHB and LA).
- Should work to the same objective and together.
- Over-arching Co-ordinator should actively visit C1st projects at least on a quarterly to 6 monthly basis.
- Make themselves known to the staff/community within C1st projects.
- We need to compile evidence more consistently and more meaningfully. Perhaps there should be a measurable monitoring process so that the experience of Communities First can inform the aspirations of Communities Next.
- Definitely a role in developing joint projects as well as mentoring and advice, If we can do Wales spatial planning. I'm sure we can do L.A joint projects. I.E transport

***With the new emphasis on practical outcomes rather than networking, consultation and capacity building it would appear that overarching work can be carried out at CF Partnership level. Partnership can be encouraged to put on demonstrations of exemplary work to facilitate any over arching support they may require. Sometime overarching work has helped the smaller struggling Partnerships these could be merged with the nearest CF Partnerships in terms of management and accountability.***

16. What are your views on the Communities First Trust Fund and Communities First (Music) Trust Fund? How should they be taken forward as part of Communities Next?

- Excellent marketing tools for the C1st programme
- Good income generation for NSA projects, through room rental, sales, equipment etc.
- Amount awarded should be per capita not per ward.
- Recipients of the fund should engage more with Communities First programme, eg attend meetings, become a member.
- Groups receiving funding should be more answerable to the local C1st Partnership.
- Local Partnerships should have more influence over the decision of a grant. Possibility administered locally.
- Training for community groups on governance, (bid writing, consultancy, chairing meetings, treasurer etc) this could be delivered by local partnerships.
- Question to be added to the application form on how the project seeking the funding, fits into the Communities First Partnerships Action Plan, how they are helping to achieve their targets.
- Both funds should be combined.
- The community group could contribute to the overall cost of the

project. Possibly 5-10%

- I think that the CFTF fund and the CFTF for music are vital to the local community in assisting small scale or perhaps larger scale community based activities. Emphasis should be put on practical action e.g. job creation, training, child poverty and the environment etc. We also need to engage with the private sector tapping in to their expertise.
- Money could have been better utilises now that we are into the outcomes monitoring.

***The CF Trust fund is a valuable income stream for smaller community groups. We as a Partnership have had little benefit from the Music Trust Fund.***

17. Is the timeline realistic and achievable?

- Time between guidance being produced and applications for funding being submitted (2 months) might be a bit tight, worth bearing in mind that it is the holiday period.
- I think it is both realistic and achievable but they need to be monitored closely and perhaps updated if needs be.
- Yes

***It is our considered view that the timeline is achievable it just takes a different way of working and different mind set to project development and outcomes. Even if results in the first year are uneven, by year 2 all will have caught up and be achieving in a totally different atmosphere of community action and project development addressing the needs of our communities in terms of Child poverty, economic inactivity as well as increasing the levels of community groups and clubs self help activity.***

***Many of the ingrained inequalities may remain such as not have the job opportunities in the right areas or recurrent anti social behaviour resulting from successive generational family dis-functioning and alienation from opportunities available. In the long run Communities First/Next will have laid the foundation for preventing much of the economic inactivity and helping addressing anti social behaviour and activity by targeting the areas most in need.***

Please use this box to include any other comments about the Communities Next consultation that you have not been give the opportunity to express in the questions above.

***It would be impractical of us to comment on every aspect of the consultation document much of which correctly evaluates the history of the programme hence the emphasis on practical outcomes in the Communities Next phase.***

***The following response is directed at selected parts of the document and the relevance section number is annotated:***

***We welcome the consultation in particular the development of an evidence base (3.5.3) "Robust approaches to gathering information and data to demonstrate clear outcomes from activities and services provided, acknowledging the input and support of Partners." It is necessary to appeal to Partnerships to apply a proactive approach towards working with residents, groups, clubs and Partner organisation and other stakeholders.***

***Staff employed in the Communities First Partnerships should have an approach towards engaging with people and organisations to achieve desired outcomes. Project management is about either managing people or systems or both. In any event a 'can do' attitude is more desirable than an attitude of excuses why agreed community project development tasks are not being implemented.***

***4.1 The vision for Communities next. We particularly welcome the emphasis on ... "seeking to empower people in communities through active citizenship to engage with and find solutions for their communities". This bottom up approach has to be supported by local institutions adopting an open door approach that isn't risk averse when it comes to providing local solutions to identified needs in the community. Far too often projects fall at the first hurdle when receiving advice from officers from various agencies.***

***In 4.1.2. of the consultation " we want to see a real translation of power and wealth to people in the poorest communities... recognise the need to strengthen sustainability of community organisations, co-operatives and the third sector – organisations which help people become empowered and achieve more direct influence of issues facing their communities...to encourage asset transfer to social enterprises, development trusts... be consistent with the 'Third Dimension' the [WAG] strategy for supporting the Third Sector in Wales".***

***The above section is most welcome in that it validates what many community based organisations have been trying to do for the past 20 years but with mixed success.***

***Far too often Local Authorities have been reluctant to see asset transfer as part of a positive Community Regeneration process seeking instead to control and own the process for themselves. Few LA's have a meaningful asset transfer policy for community regeneration. Many are reluctant to sell land and buildings for Community Regeneration purposes beyond initial gestures.***

***Policies for sale of LA land are tied up with market values and maximising income from such sales which are Govt. policies of the 1980's/90's working their way through the system. Becoming market-driven is a barrier to community regeneration and asset transfer. Competing agenda's such as Social Housing builds and***

***private treaty arrangements, selling land to the highest bidder, are major obstacles to asset transfer for community Regeneration purposes within the Communities first and now the 'Communities Next' programme context. This response is not to deny that the sale of land on market conditions and to maximise a commercial income isn't prudent ways of generating LA income. It is however a potential barrier to asset transfer for community Regeneration purposes particularly those directly aimed at tackling child poverty and social deprivation including tackling issues of economic inactivity in communities.***

***4.1.5 We welcome the new emphasis on ... "A new focus on tangible regeneration outcomes and achievements" New Sandfields has always described itself as a sustainable regeneration organisation. Its practical work is in community regeneration. We have converted a number of disused, underused premises and delivery employment support and training opportunities whilst engaging with the residents of the community in their groups, clubs and societies bring these together in key community annual events such as The Sandfields Aberavon Beach Festival. We have also converted a former block of six flats that had been associated with itinerant drug abuse and vandalism. The conversion has resulted in the establishment of the Headquarters of NSA housing 10 staff in Ty Arian, Silver Ave, Sandfields.***

***"Stronger links to the Assembly Government's wider agenda for regeneration and its policies such as child poverty." Following on from the above response, our projects aim to tackle child poverty by offering alternatives to young mothers and children in new support and training opportunities in collaboration with the 2 Comprehensive schools and organisations working with young people in the area.***

***"Maximising the benefit of New European structural funds for Communities first Areas" NSA is very involved in engaging with those who experience economic inactivity. By expanding the Sustainable Training Initiative Developing Employment Skills – STRIDES project NSA will seek to make a significant contribution towards linking Communities First funding and activities towards economic development and community regeneration within the Convergence funding frameworks. Real Employment Training opportunities and real jobs and growth within Community Regeneration is possible if organisations like NSA are given the support towards asset transfer and potentials for working in Partnership with lead agencies such as the Local Authority, Local Health Group, Police, and Fire services.***