Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Part 2:
Community Strategies and Planning

Collaborative Community Planning

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

For further information on this guidance, or on community planning, then please contact:

Local Government Strategy and Performance Branch
Department for Social Justice and Local Government
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park 2
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

E-mail: communitystrategies@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 029 2082 5800

Further details on community strategies can be found at:
www.wales.gov.uk/communitystrategies

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Chapter 1
Integrating Strategy and Delivery

1.1 This document is one of a pair, along with **Part 1 Guidance on Wales Programme for Improvement**. Together, they set out how local authorities and their partners should best implement the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. That Measure has two substantive parts - Part 1, which deals with improvement and business planning by local authorities and National Park authorities, and Part 2, which deals with strategic community planning by local authorities and a range of public-sector partners.

1.2 We have separated this guidance into two documents because the audiences for each are different. But the two are closely interlinked, and it is absolutely essential to understand how and why that is so if the new system is to work effectively at the local and national levels.

Linking the concepts

1.3 There are two basic concepts or principles of public management involved here:

- **Improvement** is concerned with the short term. It is a process by which organisations (in this case, local authorities and National Park authorities) determine what their priorities are, and plan, monitor, manage and report their activities on an annual basis so as to achieve them. Before the Measure became law, this process was, for local government, regulated by Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 - 'best value' regime. But virtually all public bodies will be required to follow a broadly similar process.
- **Community planning** deals in much longer timescales. Under this process, local authorities and their partners establish a 10-15 year strategic vision for improving local citizen and community wellbeing. It necessarily deals with much longer-term and often much more complex and intractable problems and priorities than the improvement processes described above. Before the Measure became law, this process was regulated by Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000.

1.4 Despite the obvious differences between improvement and community planning, **neither of them works properly in isolation from the other**. Improvement that is not grounded in a longer-term strategic vision, and which does not aim to realise that vision, quickly becomes a sterile exercise in chasing performance targets for their own sake, often without an adequate sense of what matters most to local people and communities. Conversely, community planning which does not generate visible, shorter-term beneficial changes for local areas can readily

degenerate into a purposeless process of formulating vague aims and aspirations that will never be properly realised. It is one of the most important aims of the Measure, and of this guidance, to correct both of those failings by joining the two processes together more effectively.

1.5 We believe there are several reasons why those connections have not been robust enough up to now:

- There is too much of a gap between the annual improvement cycle and the 10-15 year community planning timetable. That gap is partly filled by medium-term statutory plans, such as Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategies and Children and Young People's Plans. But these necessarily cover only some of the objectives of local authorities and their partners.
- Improvement under the 1999 Act has been perhaps too concerned with measurable performance data and with reform to authorities' business processes. The emphasis is perhaps too much on improving the performance of authorities as organisations, rather than on the positive effect they can have on what matters at the local level and beyond.
- For local authorities, improvement and community planning are governed by entirely separate statutory regimes and reporting requirements. In many cases, this has not unreasonably led to their being allocated to separate parts of their organisations.
- Other public bodies are not necessarily or consistently involved in community planning. While many good examples of effective partnership working exist, community planning remains in law, and often in practice, primarily a matter for the local authority. It is right that local authorities provide co-ordination and leadership, in line with their democratic mandates. But they can achieve little in the longer term without full and effective input from others.

Linking in Practice

1.6 Both of the guidance documents describe ways in which we aim to remove or minimise those problems. In general, though, improvement and community planning should inform, and be informed by, each other. We would expect that:

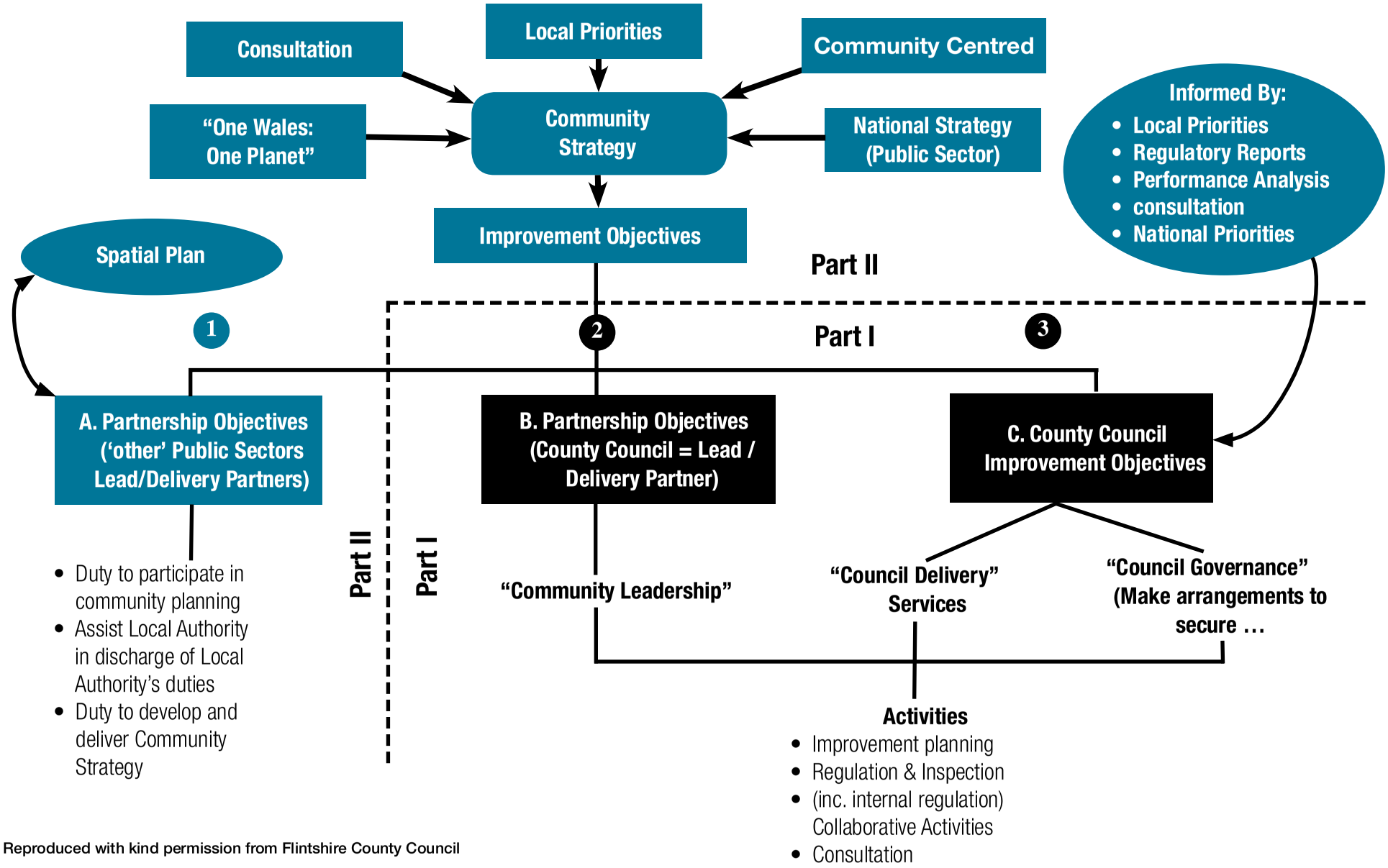
- Improvement should take full and proper account of the strategic vision as set out in the community strategy. This provides the frame within which many short-term improvement priorities should sit. Although there will be other such priorities which do not, either because they are too short-term or too confined to one organisation, they should at least not conflict with the community strategy.
- Community planning should be based both on an understanding of what appears reasonably deliverable by a local authority and/or its partners, and on continual monitoring of how effective that delivery is. If and when it becomes clear, from shorter-term information, that community planning objectives are not deliverable or no longer relevant, those objectives should change.

1.7 In more detail, and as required by the Measure, this means that:

- A community strategy should include a set of actions which local authorities and their partners publicly commit to carrying out over the short to medium term.
- Those actions should be grounded in a full understanding both of priorities and actions that can be taken within a 10-15 year period and of the scope for local partners to realise them. These priorities and actions may be taken with a view to protecting or enhancing well-being over even longer timescales (for example, to mitigate the effects of climate change. That may involve difficult choices: all public bodies are subject to legal, policy and resource constraints on their freedom to act.
- Local authorities and National Park authorities should develop appropriate improvement objectives accordingly. These will clearly contribute to the "strategic effectiveness" improvement aspect, but other aspects, in particular fairness and sustainability, may be particularly relevant.
- Other public bodies should also integrate community planning actions into their business planning processes, by formulating appropriate objectives, in line with their existing (and continuing) different roles and accountabilities.
- Delivery of those objectives should inform the continuing development of community planning. All partners should, individually and collectively, consider the delivery and relevance of community planning actions, as part of the process of monitoring implementation. If it becomes clear that one or more partners are unable to carry out community planning actions, or that those actions or the objectives to which they relate have become irrelevant or less important, partners should consider amending them.

1.8 In outline, the whole system thus resembles figure 1 (overleaf).

Local Government Measure



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Chapter 2
Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

2.1 Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 a local authority must initiate, and having done so, maintain and facilitate a process known as community planning. The local authority should have a leadership role in this process and should be supported by their community planning partners.

2.2 Community planning is the process by which a local authority and its partners develop, define and deliver a set of priorities for improving local wellbeing over a 10-15 year period. The main principles of it are as follows:

(i) the emphasis should be on community planning as a continuous process, rather than the production of a community strategy as a static document;

(ii) that process entails all local partners deliberating on open and equal terms to reach a consensus about (a) objectives for improving social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the area over the next 10-15 years; and (b) the actions which will tend to deliver those outcomes and (c) who will undertake those actions;

(iii) that consensus should capture objectives and actions which are distinctive to the area and which have been discussed and negotiated with local citizens, communities and their leaders;

(iv) that consensus is documented and published, including what actions will be taken and by whom to deliver the outcomes - this is the community strategy. The local authority, on behalf of the participatory bodies, should account for these outcomes; and

(v) visible implementation of the strategy, and reviewing and accounting for progress in doing so, will be fundamental. Periodically, community planning partners should assess the progress they have made, individually and collectively, in discharging the commitments in the community strategy. This progress should be publically reported and it is recommended that it be the subject of a local scrutiny process.

Why revise the Guidance?

2.3 Part 2 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 repeals and replaces many of the provisions of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000, which required local authorities to produce community strategies following consultation with others. This guidance explains the terms of the new regime and how they might

be applied locally. It seeks to strengthen the role of the community strategy as the overarching plan for a local authority area because it integrates and adds value to action across organisational, sectoral and partnership boundaries. It also integrates and adds value across geographical boundaries by relating to the community strategies of neighbouring areas and its relationship with the Wales Spatial Plan. This can all be achieved by ensuring that community strategies get to the essence of local issues and problems by strengthening their own spatial dimension and targeting action where it is most needed.

2.4 We have decided to replace the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 for three main reasons. Firstly, that regime turned on the production of community strategies as documents. We think this emphasis was wrong: any serious attempt to address the many, complex and interacting issues that local communities face over the longer term should involve continuous processes of understanding, reflecting on, planning to improve, and actually improving, wellbeing. While community strategies will remain important, by encapsulating local partners' priorities and allowing them to be held accountable for them, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and this guidance places more emphasis on community planning as such a process rather than on the production of community strategies containing its conclusions.

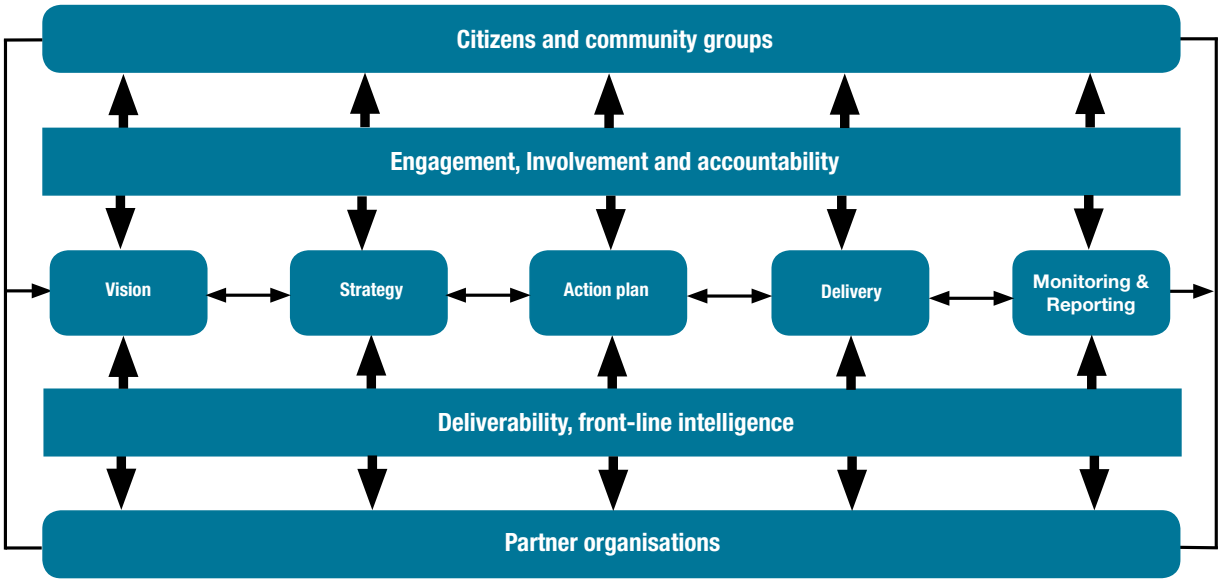
2.5 Secondly, the 2000 Act applied only to local authorities. While local authorities were under a duty to consult others as they saw fit, there was no requirement on other bodies to be involved in developing the strategy, still less in delivering it. This was a major weakness - the sorts of issues and challenges that need to be addressed over a 10-15 year timeframe are rarely within the remit of local authorities alone. The Measure instead creates a common duty to co-operate on all major local agencies.

2.6 Thirdly, and following from the previous points, for all the best intentions in community strategies, there was often only limited follow-through and delivery. We believe that strategic objectives which are not manifested in visible and shorter-term change are worse than useless - they raise expectations only to dismiss them, and diminish the credibility of the organisations involved. The Measure therefore also requires local authorities and their partners to identify and carry out actions which aim to realise community strategy objectives. To a large extent, the 2008 Local Vision anticipated these changes; but they now have legal force, and this guidance explains them more fully.

2.7 Local authorities in particular should refer to this guidance in conjunction with the new guidance on the Wales Programme for Improvement issued under Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This further emphasises the critical connections between strategic planning and service improvement.

Community Planning

Figure 2 - community planning process



2.8 Community planning is, fundamentally, about understanding, responding to and meeting the long-term needs of local citizens and communities and involving those citizens and communities in the development and design of the vision for better outcomes for the area and their delivery. The Measure, and this guidance, describes several formal elements to that process, such as producing and reviewing a community strategy and accounting for its delivery. However, the strategic improvement of local wellbeing cannot be reduced to a set of project steps or compliance requirements. There is also a need continuously to consider local needs, changing local, regional and national context and how the capacity to address them will be realised. This should be reflected in ways of working and priorities for action across, within and between community planning partners. This guidance is therefore only a skeleton - local partners are encouraged to apply and develop it in ways which best suit local needs and capacities.

2.9 Formally, the Local Government (Wales) Measure defines community planning as a process by which the authority and its community planning partners:

- Identify long-term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area;
- Identify long-term objectives in relation to the area for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
- Identify actions to be performed and functions to be exercised by the local authority and its community planning partners for the purpose of meeting those identified objectives in the community strategy.

2.10 Community planning is also the process by which local partners develop and deliver a community strategy. Local authorities are formally responsible for publishing the strategy but it should reflect a consensus among partners. A strong and credible community strategy depends on high quality community planning. It is the responsibility of the local authority to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning for their area.

2.11 Community planning is necessarily a local activity, grounded in the interests, concerns and aspirations of an area, its citizens and communities, and the capacity of local organisations to address them. Accordingly, the Measure gives very considerable flexibility to local partners to decide how to undertake community planning, and on identifying the objectives they will develop and pursue. The Welsh Assembly Government has no power to direct local partners in this regard, or as regards community planning generally.

2.12 This guidance aims to outline and clarify this flexibility, not to constrain it. It explains the options open to local partners and the sorts of decisions that need to be taken. But it deliberately does not suggest particular approaches or solutions, other than for illustrative purposes, nor does it require community strategies to cover particular issues or objectives. That would both exceed the Welsh Ministers' powers, and would be contrary to the fundamental purpose of community planning.

2.13 However, that also means that it is not possible to undertake effective community planning 'by the book' or by simply complying with a standard template or set of approaches. Local partners need to take advantage of the flexibility offered in ways which will best meet the needs of their areas and their own capacities to address them.

Coverage and status

2.14 This guidance aims to provide support and guidance to local authorities in initiating, maintaining, facilitating, and participating in community planning for their area. It provides guidance for community planning partners participating in the community planning process for their area. This guidance also aims to provide support and guidance to local authorities and their community planning partners in the development, delivery, monitoring, reviewing and reporting of a community strategy. Chapter 2 provides further detail on the identity and roles of community planning partners.

2.15 In this guidance:

- "[local] authority" means a county council or county borough council in Wales. It does not include other forms of local government such as town and community councils, nor related organisations such as National Park, fire and rescue or police authorities, all of which are dealt with separately in the Measure and in this guidance.

- "local partners" refers to a local authority and its community planning partners collectively, including any organisations which agree to participate as community planning partners without being under a legal duty to do so.
- "the Measure" means the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009;
- "the 2000 Act" means the Local Government Act 2000.

2.16 This guidance is statutory and is issued under section 45 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 insofar as it relates to the community planning process, and production and review of a community strategy: those under a statutory duty to be involved in these processes should have regard to it. This guidance is also statutory in relation to monitoring and implementing the objectives/actions of a community strategy.

2.17 Any guidance contained in this document not relating to the above is not statutory and we have included it for advisory purposes only.

Chapter 3
Community Planning: Membership and Structures

Defining Community Planning Partners

3.1 As noted above, effective community planning requires collaboration between a local authority and other local agencies. The Measure designates the main such agencies as community planning partners and sets out in broad terms what is required of them. Overall, the local authority and its community planning partners should participate in community planning and assist the local authority in the discharge of their duties relating to community planning.

3.2 Under Part 2 of the Measure, the following are community planning partners:

- community councils;
- fire and rescue authorities;
- Local Health Boards;
- NHS Trusts;
- National Park authorities;
- police authorities; and
- chief constables.

3.3 Each authority's community planning partners are all of the above bodies any of whose areas fall within the local authority's area. However, in some areas overlapping boundaries and the existence of multiple organisations of the same type may cause problems. See the annex to this chapter for more information on this.

Other bodies

3.4 Under the Measure, only the bodies listed above have the legal status of community planning partners. However, under section 44 of the Measure, local authorities and their partners have a duty to consult with a number of other bodies as part of the planning process. As a bare minimum this ought to include representatives of local business interests and the third sector[1]. Local partners

[1] This is a specific requirement of s44(2)(c)-(d) of the Measure. While making private-and third-sector bodies statutory community planning partners would exceed the powers of the National Assembly for Wales, we would in practice expect both sectors to be fully involved in community planning across Wales.

may also wish to consider consulting other public bodies such as higher and further education institutions, JobCentre Plus, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Ministry of Defence, where such bodies are responsible for issues of particular local interest. These are again matters for local discussion and agreement.

3.5 In all such cases, local partners may wish to invite other bodies to become involved in community planning to any extent that seems useful. They may, by agreement, become community planning partners to all intents and purposes, or they may be engaged only on particular issues or at particular times. However, there can be no compulsion in these cases: other bodies participate in community planning by invitation, not under a legal duty.

Role of community planning partners

3.6 Local authorities and community planning partners have three main duties under the Measure:

- to develop the vision, objectives and actions which together from the community strategy;
- to carry out those actions to implement the community strategy that fall within their remit; and
- to engage with, and account to, local citizens and communities for the above.

3.7 Each of these is covered in later chapters of this guidance. Fundamentally, though, community planning partners will be responsible for demonstrating the benefits of coordinating actions across organisations to deliver better outcomes more efficiently and effectively. In particular, partners should actively encourage local people and organisations to become involved in setting a vision for their areas, setting the direction of local authorities' and other agencies' policies and priorities, getting appropriately involved in the delivery of the community strategy and participating in democratic decision-making. It will be essential to ensure wide local 'ownership' of the process.

3.8 The community leadership of local authorities is reflected in the duty of local authorities to facilitate the community planning process. However, the development and delivery of specific strategies and themes within the community strategy partnership should be a shared task. The leadership role should be carried out by the organisation best placed to discharge this role. Participating partners should be encouraged to lead on appropriate themes. For example, in tackling crime - and the fear of crime - which is a key strategic theme for many areas, police representatives may lead the Community Safety Partnership with the support of, for example, local authority colleagues in housing and social work, and the voluntary sector.

Partnership Structures

3.9 Local partners obviously need to establish and maintain common and agreed structures for carrying out their duties. We recognise that existing community strategy partnerships and/or local service boards have already established some, or all, of the conditions necessary for successful community planning, and that these will vary according to local needs. We also recognise that the trust needed to underpin partnership working, the active engagement and involvement of local communities, and the arrangements to support fully developed strategies take a considerable time to develop and then maintain.

3.10 However, effective partnership working should not be taken for granted; and while the terms of the Measure do not differ greatly from what was accepted as best practice under the 2000 Act, local partners should not automatically assume that current arrangements remain fit for purpose. There will need to be effective communication, forward planning and performance management between the overarching strategic partnership, the statutory partnerships (children and young people's partnership, community safety partnership, health, social care and wellbeing partnership) and the other key local thematic partnerships. Arrangements should also be put in place to ensure robust and effective communication between relevant regional partnerships including Wales Spatial Plan Groups.

3.11 Community planning processes and relationships should continue to evolve and be refined. In particular, partnerships need to:

- regularly evaluate their effectiveness and adjust their membership and working arrangements accordingly; (see Advice Note on Partnership Rationalisation.)
- ensure that the development and implementation of community strategies becomes firmly embedded into partners' managerial cultures, corporate, resource and business planning, and budgetary decisions;
- ensure continued and strong community participation and involvement in the preparation and implementation of strategies;
- ensure that engagement is coordinated across partnerships and where possible within organisations;
- ensure there is a coordinated process for evidence collection to underpin the development of strategies, that is capable of being sensitive to changing circumstances and that analysis of this evidence is shared across and between partnerships;
- look for opportunities to work with other partnerships either on a geographical or thematic basis;
- ensure there are effective performance management arrangements in place, including arrangements for scrutiny and;
- ensure that the strategies reflect relevant regional priorities including the Spatial Plan.

Local Service Boards

3.12 The purpose of local service boards (LSBs) is to enable existing public service organisations to work together more effectively. Their role is to support, encourage and pursue joint working where it will mean better outcomes for citizens, based on ambitious joint planning, delivery of services and preventative action. As such, LSBs may well be the most suitable means for undertaking community planning.

3.13 The local service board should set an example of innovative, citizen-focused leadership at the heart of the local partnership and delivery system by:

- being the driver for the delivery of local cross-sector public service outcomes as set out in the community strategy and other local plans;
- providing leadership for the strategic partnerships within each local area, ensuring the effective operation of the whole local partnership system, streamlining it where necessary and ensuring effective collaborative delivery - pooling resources where appropriate;
- working with other LSBs on collaborative projects, taking responsibility for learning and sharing their experience and being the focus of innovation; and
- taking responsibility for ensuring effective communication and integration with the work of regional partnerships such as the Wales Spatial Plan groups.

Citizens First

3.14 This requires the local service boards to evidence, through the engagement and research upon which the community strategy is based, the citizens' experience of services, and take the lead in solving problems and removing barriers to integrating delivery across sectors. This means joining up systems, behind the scenes, for the citizen, not expecting the citizen to do the hard work of joining up for themselves.

3.15 This includes: integrating services and streamlining systems, as well as eliminating waste, including unnecessary processes. The focus should be on both pooling resources to support integrated service delivery for citizens and pooling expertise, for example, citizen engagement and knowledge management. The latter is essential to ensure that, agreed priorities for action are based on a shared, trusted evidence base[2].

3.16 Local service boards and local delivery agreements are a means for creating more coherent public services at a local level and challenging the provider based approach which can leave citizens lost and exasperated. The Welsh Assembly Government is part of each local service board to ensure that any national barriers to local joining up can be tackled.

[2] The Wales Audit Office (WAO) is part of a national stakeholder group which is helping to inform the development of the local service board and the WAO is convening a group to consider potential governance issues.

3.17 The local service board should evaluate its own effectiveness from the start and, then on a regular basis - the local service board system should be catalytic, organic, adaptive and permeable to learning from experience from outside its own boundaries. Scrutiny will play an important role in providing constructive challenge to both the operation and effectiveness of the projects taken forward.

Understanding citizens' priorities

3.18 The work of the local service board should be based on a thorough understanding of citizens experience of public services, and their aspirations for their area, as identified in the community strategy and other statutory plans, as well as, when appropriate, direct engagement with citizens. The role of the local service board in this respect is not to duplicate the work of other partnerships and/or organisations, but to identify where it needs to add value, including through joint projects expressed in the local delivery agreement.

3.19 Local delivery agreements should set out the joint actions that partners will take to achieve better outcomes for citizens, across organisation boundaries. They will identify change projects that need leadership, problem-solving, support and challenge by the local service board. The local delivery agreement is a matter for local determination but its projects should be a sub-set of the community strategy action plan and ideally LSBs should work towards the local delivery agreement encompassing the whole of the action plan.

3.20 The local delivery agreement should therefore encompass projects grounded in the community strategy that require the commitment of organisations to integrate delivery and pool their resources to do so. The outcomes for citizens, through better resource utilisation, milestones and timelines should be set out. A limited number of performance indicators, including measures of citizen satisfaction, should be included to track the impact of the project.

3.21 Local service boards should always consider whether joint projects with other areas would add value for citizens, working through a multi area agreement. In addition, local service boards should always seek to share learning on issues of mutual interest.

Learning and Sharing

3.22 The Welsh Assembly Government has begun facilitating a number of learning networks to share expertise on health and social care integration, climate change, sustainable development and information sharing/knowledge management. Other networks will be developed as further projects emerge so that all local service boards can take advantage of this work.

3.23 Welsh Assembly Government Spatial Plan Ministers meet with the local service boards in their area twice a year to discuss the local delivery agreement and the work of the local service board in the context of the Spatial Plan. This also provides a valuable opportunity for local service boards to share their experience and learn from that of others.

Structures, membership, governance and accountability

3.24 Local partners vary greatly in size and role, from local authorities and health bodies responsible for critical public services and with many thousands of employees to small community councils with very few. The practical extent of involvement in community planning, and the structures and processes that local partners adopt, need to reflect that.

3.25 There is no one-size-fits-all local service board structure. However, in light of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the responsibilities placed on the statutory community planning partners, each LSB should review its arrangements (initially and then periodically) to ensure that those partners are able to fulfil their statutory functions. Structures and governance should be designed to enable the local service board to fulfil its role, and should be flexible enough to accommodate the fact that different organisations might need to be involved at different times, dependent on the issue or project being addressed. The governance approach adopted should take into account relationships with other partnerships, and how shared priorities should be reflected in the corporate plans of partner organisations.

3.26 It is essential for partners to discuss, and create a governance approach which is capable of supporting the delivery of the agreed outcomes. Each approach should reflect local circumstances but share a number of key aspects. In particular, a local service board should:

- integrate and orchestrate the local system of collaborative public service planning and delivery, and not act as a stand alone partnership;
- bring together the leaders of local organisations, from across the public and third sectors with the responsibility for citizen focussed improvement of joined up services; other partners, for example from private sector, may be involved depending on local circumstances and priorities;
- concern itself with the delivery of shared, agreed priorities as expressed in the local delivery agreement;
- strengthen the local system of collaborative planning and delivery, including the community strategy;
- include accountability arrangements to a wide range of community groups and citizens including, for example, annual reporting and scrutiny.

3.27 Individual membership and representation on partnership structures, including the LSB is a matter for each participating organisation. The Measure does not set out any formal requirement that the chief executive or similar must attend to fulfil the duties in relation to community planning[3]. However, it is strongly suggested that those attending need to be able to speak authoritatively for their organisations and to commit them to agreed courses of action. Again this strongly suggests nominating officers of sufficient seniority with a strategic and holistic understanding of their organisation, its resources, challenges and commitments. It is unlikely that organisations will comply effectively with their duty if they are represented only by middle managers or specialists who are not empowered to contribute fully to discussions. Local partners should also seek to maintain continuity of membership, and to avoid recourse to substitutes or replacements except where strictly necessary. In the case of the local service board its role as the collaborative leadership group for the local area suggests that representation should be from amongst the organisation's senior management team or board.

3.28 Corporate governance is the framework of accountability, to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions and lead and control their functions to achieve their objectives.

3.29 As a public service leadership team, working within partner bodies' governance and accountability arrangements, local partners will need to agree partnership governance arrangements that ensure clarity about:

- delegation and reporting back to partner bodies;
- agreeing joint projects: how board proposals will be taken forward within organisations' decision making and planning processes;
- how any disagreements will be resolved.

3.30 The Governance Advice Note identifies a set of governance principles that will help boards and other partnerships keep the focus on the citizen, and transcend organisational boundaries.

3.31 Formal partnership structures and processes are just one issue to be considered. Of far greater importance is how local partners turn the commitments they have given into action. Communication in and between partner organisations at all levels, not just the top, should be addressed as part of the development, review and maintenance of the local service board system; as should be how the agreements and commitments given by partner organisations will be reflected and driven as part of those organisations' financial and business planning processes. Translating shared outcomes into joint delivery should form part of developing the whole system of community planning.

[3] This also applies to the police, notwithstanding the fact that the Measure confers the relevant functions on the Chief Constable. This is for technical legal reasons; there is no need for the Chief Constable to attend personally, and no reason why the police could not be represented by another suitably senior officer with responsibility for policing in the area concerned.

3.32 Local partners' ultimate accountability is to the citizens of the area. Local partners should report publicly, at least every two years, on their work and the quality and performance of public services in its area. Accountability should also be considered to wider stakeholder groups that might not form part of the local service board itself or other relevant partnerships. Scrutiny should form an important aspect of the reporting and accountability arrangements of local service boards (see Chapter 6).

Where to go for support and ideas

3.33 The Local Service Board Route Map 2008 'Local Service Boards in Wales: Realising the Potential' provides further information and advice and is available on the Welsh Assembly Government's website: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/localserviceboards/keydocs/routemap/;jsessionid=p1nNKmzJKychy58QL7nR3LChJQCrJFV41yLhR2H1kZpTzZYjzpd9!-327878142?lang=en

Geographical Coverage

3.34 The Local Government (Wales) Measure should not prevent local authorities and their partners from taking or encouraging action outside that area which would improve the well-being of citizens and communities within it. This recognises the fact that community planning can and should take place at various levels and across boundaries: many of the issues likely to be addressed by community strategies will not be unique to one area and will transcend its borders. The Wales Spatial Plan will help to identify particular issues where joint working may be helpful. For example in relation to regeneration, where some deprived communities exist next to each other in neighbouring local authorities. To be most effective community planning will need to take place at different geographical levels, both beyond a local authority's boundary and for areas or communities within it, as well as for the area as a whole. The important point is that strategies should be developed in ways which best suit the needs of the communities they are designed to serve, rather than the administrative convenience of service providers.

Membership issues

This annex provides more detailed guidance on identifying community planning partners in areas where boundaries do not coincide and/or there are multiple partners of a particular type.

Boundary issues

Organisational boundaries do not necessarily coincide and this may cause problems where two organisations' areas only overlap slightly. For instance, the boundary of the Brecon Beacons National Park extends into the area of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council such that around two square miles of the Council's area, consisting of largely uninhabited moorland, fall within the National Park.

In cases like these, the bodies concerned should exercise common sense and come to an agreement about the level of involvement in community planning. While the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is, in law, a community planning partner of the Council, that does not mean it could or should engage in community planning in Blaenau Gwent to the same extent as other agencies; or that it should engage as much in Blaenau Gwent as in other areas with more territory within the National Park.

Multiple bodies

It is equally possible that a local authority's area will include more than one body in each category. This will most obviously be the case with community councils, of which there are over a hundred in some local authority areas. Again, each such body is, legally, a community planning partner; but those involved should again come to sensible arrangements about how this works in practice. It is, for instance, perfectly lawful for (say) all the community councils in an area to be represented at meetings by one or more agreed representatives, although special care and further processes would be needed to ensure that such representatives could speak authoritatively for all those they represented. Again, it is up to local partners to agree a sensible and practical mechanism.

By contrast, when one body (such as a police authority or fire and rescue authority) covers multiple local authority areas, we would expect that body to contribute to community planning in all of those areas, subject to reasonable constraints on resourcing.

Chapter 4
Setting objectives and actions

Shaping the vision

4.1 One of the basic purposes of community planning is to develop a long-term strategy for the area and all its population based on a thorough analysis of needs and priorities, and opportunities for addressing them. That should generate a 10-15 year vision for improving local social, economic and environmental wellbeing, and contributing to sustainable development.

4.2 Freedom to determine that vision in the light of available evidence and intelligence is fundamental. It is not the place of this guidance, or of the Welsh Assembly Government, to require the inclusion of particular themes or objectives. This chapter rather sets out the processes that we consider local partners should follow, and some of the issues that they are likely to face.

4.3 In determining their vision, local partners may wish to consider the following critical questions:

- What is the current state of the area - what are the main issues, problems and citizen and community aspirations that need to be addressed?
- To what extent are these likely to persist in the foreseeable future?
- What is known about likely future trends over this timeframe, whether demographic, socio-economic or environmental?
- Where there are gaps in knowledge, what can reasonably be done to solve them?
- To what extent will partners be able to address current and future issues over a 10-15 year timeframe, and to what extent is that best done jointly?
- In light of the above, how far does the current community strategy provide a valid basis for developing a refreshed and revised vision for improving wellbeing?

4.4 This greatly simplifies what is necessarily a complex and drawn-out process of gathering and analysing intelligence, formulating priorities and developing a shared vision. However, keeping these questions in mind should yield a vision which:

- is firmly grounded in evidence, and in the particular needs and characteristics of the area, having a clear relevance and sense of place;
- focuses on issues and trends of long-term importance;
- is jointly deliverable, including issues which local partners have the shared capacity and commitment to address.

4.5 By contrast, it can be too easy to be distracted from the core purpose of community planning, and to develop "visions" which are anodyne, not obviously relevant to the area or particular communities within it, include short-term problems rather than long-term priorities, or are likely to prove undeliverable. Such visions are not worthwhile: they serve only to raise expectations unrealistically, and ultimately diminish the credibility of the organisations responsible.

4.6 Community planning should also inform, and be informed by:

- the national priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government (and the UK Government for non-devolved issues);
- regional priorities, including those of Spatial Plan groups and regional partnerships/boards;
- community strategies for neighbouring areas (including, where relevant, areas of England); and
- plans or strategies for areas, towns, communities or neighbourhoods within the local authority's area; including those which community and town councils or Communities First Partnerships may develop.

Discounting issues

4.7 A community strategy cannot realistically cover every issue that may be relevant to a local community: it should focus on issues where partners, either collectively or individually, can add value over the longer term. It is perfectly possible even for issues of critical local importance not to be reflected in the strategy, particularly if they are short-term and/or lie wholly within the remit of one organisation. Partners should avoid relying solely on the perceived importance of an issue as the criterion for inclusion in the strategy. Local authorities and their partners should therefore seek to draw together the views of their communities and engage with them to identify a number of broad priorities or themes. In doing so, they will also need to take account of how their community strategy might contribute to regional and national priorities.

4.8 As well as reflecting the views of local communities, the community strategy priorities should be based on a proper analysis of needs, using existing data from all partners, and where appropriate, research. This may include assessing the potential impact of different proposed actions or packages of measures on, for example, the environment, economy or health of an area. Such research may occasionally suggest courses of action different from those which the community supports. In such situations, local authorities and their community planning partners will need to take account of all of the evidence available before they determine how to proceed. Opposition from sections of the community should not preclude action if partners believe that it is in the best interests of the area, and they can adequately account to the community at large for that decision and its implementation.

4.9 Perhaps most importantly, some otherwise legitimate issues may be beyond the scope or capacity of local partners acting jointly to address. They may, for instance, more properly be tackled at a regional, all-Wales, UK or international level. Alternatively, legal, accountability or resourcing constraints on local partners may preclude effective action in the foreseeable future. More detail on this is below.

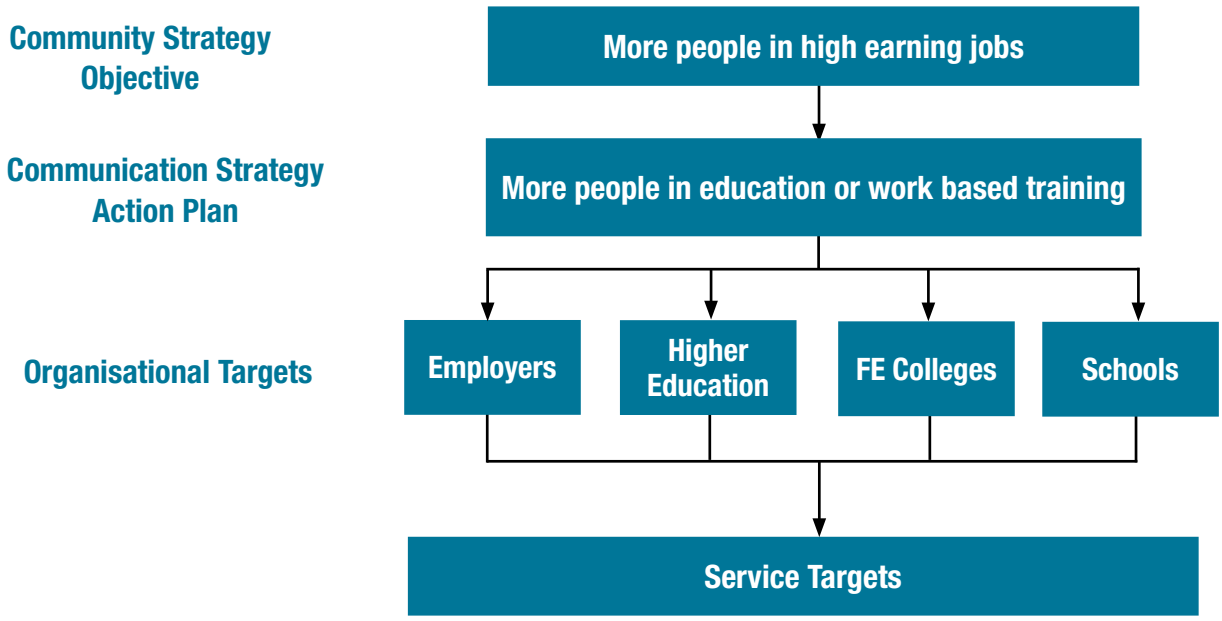
Formulating actions

4.10 Having agreed on the vision and objectives, local partners then need to develop a set of actions which will give visible effect to them over a shorter (maybe 3-5 year) timescale. This is a fundamental difference from the old regime: community planning must have a strong and clear emphasis on delivery, rather than just on developing a strategy.

4.11 Those actions should clearly be ascribed to one or more of the community planning partners set out in the Measure 2009, including community and town councils. The community strategy should not only shape the local authority's financial and business planning processes but also those of all its community planning partners. While all partners will each have priorities which are not set out in the community strategy (perhaps because they are more short-term or more specific), they should all at least ensure that none of these serve to undermine or obstruct delivery of community strategy objectives.

4.12 Actions should flow logically from the objectives that partners have identified. They should make an obvious and optimal contribution to attaining that objective, ideally with specific milestones or targets. Figure 2 gives an example of this; see chapter 5 for more guidance on monitoring delivery.

Figure 2 - translating objectives into actions and targets



4.13 Section 43 of the Measure requires local partners to take all reasonable steps to deliver community planning actions which fall to them. It is therefore absolutely essential that those actions are actually and practically deliverable by the organisations concerned. In this context it is vital to note that all public bodies are subject to numerous externally-imposed constraints on their actions - for instance legal duties, resource limitations and accountabilities to other parts of government.

4.14 Community planning and the actions that it generates do not and cannot override those other more specific duties and accountabilities. Instead, they need to be formulated with those constraints in mind. Each local partner should constantly be conscious of its freedom to act when formulating the strategy and action plan, and should raise possible concerns about deliverability at an early stage.

4.15 For instance, National Park authorities are required by law to act in accordance with their Management Plans; in some cases, they and other local partners will also be subject to specific duties under section 62(5) of the Environment Act 1995, relating to land use in National Parks. That remains the case, and there is no point in local partners pursuing possible courses of action which would breach these requirements.

4.16 The position of police authorities and police forces also merits further mention here. Policing is of course not a devolved matter, and police bodies are and will remain accountable to the UK Home Office. Nothing in the Measure or in this guidance changes or challenges that. However, police bodies should still be able to exercise their local and operational discretion in ways which deliver community strategy actions and contribute to community planning objectives, provided those have been formulated as outlined above. Other non-devolved bodies which, by agreement, become involved in local community planning (such as JobCentre Plus and the Ministry of Defence) will of course be in a similar position.

Underlying Principles

4.17 In addressing the aims and objectives and key characteristics described above, community planning partners should keep in mind the statutory purpose of community strategies: to promote economic, social and environmental well-being. They should thus ensure that community strategies positively contribute to themes including:

- **prosperity:** building and sustaining a diverse, competitive, high added-value economy, with high quality skills and education, that maximises local prosperity while minimising demands on the environment;
- **social inclusion:** building safe communities and meeting housing needs, tackling poverty, including in particular child poverty, and poor health (including health protection), and providing people and their communities with the means to help themselves and break out of the poverty trap;

- **protecting the environment:** enhancing pride in the community, supporting biodiversity, promoting local employment and procurement, and helping to minimise waste generation, and energy and transport demands.
- **spatial issues:** defining what each of these themes means in a local context is at the heart of community planning. Where possible community strategies should include an analysis of key issues within the local area, using mapping where relevant to identify particular communities or neighbourhoods where there are specific issues that need to be addressed. Analysis of community strategies to date has highlighted that many lack the local distinctiveness. An advice note on how to incorporate spatial issues into community strategies is being developed and will be available on the Welsh Assembly Government's website.

4.18 Defining what each of these themes means in each local context is at the heart of community planning - as is identifying and pursuing the means of addressing them. However, there are some other key considerations that local partners will wish to bear in mind in making these decisions.

Sustainable Development

4.19 The Welsh Assembly Government has a statutory duty to make a scheme setting out how it proposes to promote sustainable development. The Measure reiterates the terms of the 2000 Act in requiring that community planning should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. Community planning partners should therefore set sustainable development and the integration of social, economic and environmental priorities as a key principle of their community strategies.

4.20 The Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development scheme One Wales; One Planet and the UK's shared framework for sustainable development, One Future Different Paths set out the definition and principles of sustainable development. In particular, One Wales: One Planet confirms that sustainable development is the central organising principle of the Assembly Government, and that we will encourage and enable others to embrace sustainable development as their central organising principle. It sets our vision of a sustainable Wales where, within the lifetime of a generation, we use only our fair share of the earth's resources, reducing our ecological footprint to the global average availability of resources, and that we become a fairer and more just society. It emphasises the need for coordinated action to achieve:

- a resilient and sustainable economy that is able to develop whilst stabilizing, then reducing, its use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change;
- Safe, sustainable attractive communities in which people live and work, have access to services, and enjoy good health and can play their full role as citizens;

- Healthy, functioning ecosystems that are biologically diverse and productive, and managed sustainably;
- A fair, just and bilingual Wales, in which citizens of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to determine their own lives, shape their communities and achieve their full potential.

4.21 The main issues to delivering sustainable development through community planning include:

- minimising resource use through developing and encouraging sustainable consumption and production;
- minimising greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change effects that may occur in the future;
- tackling social issues that contribute to deprivation, poor health and inequality of opportunity;
- developing a sustainable economy that is resilient to changes in the global economy and makes the transition to a low carbon, low waste society;
- local action to improve and enhance people's environments;
- developing innovative methods of participation that are inclusive.

4.22 We published in September 2008 a Sustainable Development Advice Note to support action in this area. In particular it stresses the need for community strategy actions to be "joined up" in a way which actively helps and encourages people to change their behaviour so that their lifestyles become more sustainable.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

4.23 It is unlikely that a community strategy would need a SEA but this needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis. Ultimately, under the SEA Regulations[4] it is the responsibility of the local authority to consider whether an environmental assessment is needed for their community strategy. Each local authority should consult with its own legal advisors and take the decision in light of the content of their particular community strategy. More specific advice and guidance on Community Strategies and SEA is included in "A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive" - the definitive UK guidance that we recommend in all cases. This can be found the Welsh Assembly Government's website together with other information, guidance on SEA, here: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/sea/?lang=en

[4] The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (S.I 2004/1656).

Climate Change

4.24 Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing the world. There are two strands to addressing climate change: tackling its causes by cutting emissions of greenhouse gases and preserving stores of carbon (mitigation); and responding to impacts of unavoidable climate change that is the result of previous emissions (adaptation).

4.25 Communities across Wales can play a role in tackling both these challenges. As part of this process, all the community planning partners at a local level should look to:

- consider ways to encourage emission reductions from public service facilities and vehicles, homes, businesses, transport and other sources;
- identify how the impacts of climate change such as an increase in flood risk, pressure on water resources in summer, the risks of fire, increased thermal discomfort in buildings, health problems in summer, and habitat and species change could be addressed in their community;
- raise awareness of climate change and the actions that each of us can take to address its causes and consequences; and
- promote local sustainable procurement throughout Wales.

4.26 A Climate Change Advice Note is available to support action in this area.

Equality

4.27 Community planning is an opportunity to embed equality of opportunity (and human rights) at all stages. All local partners should involve all sectors of the population, and ensure that all communities are able to participate on an equal basis, by taking account of their different needs and interests. Putting citizens at the heart of the planning process, and engaging with them in the development, delivery and review of services will strengthen community strategies and support making policies a practical reality for citizens.

4.28 Community planning can make an important contribution to tackling social disadvantage. It can ensure that the needs of the most disadvantaged groups are taken into account in authority-wide strategies, by supporting more localised or specific initiatives, such as the local community action plans drawn up by Communities First Partnerships in the area.

4.29 The Welsh Assembly Government set out its commitment to equality in its Single Equality Scheme, to promote equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of age, disability, gender/transgender, race, religion or belief and non-belief and sexual orientation. The Equality Bill which is aimed to come into force in 2010 extends this to other “protected characteristics”. We would expect these principles to be embedded within the community strategies.

4.30 Inequalities in life opportunities arise even before a person's birth. It is vital therefore, that children receive the best start in life. It is also vital that everyone is given the opportunity to maximize their potential through life and that barriers that prevent that from happening are removed.

The Welsh Language

4.32 Community planning has the potential to ensure that linguistic regeneration becomes an integral part of community regeneration. Community strategies should plan adequately for the Welsh Language. This could be done in two ways:

- ensuring that the community strategy action plan content is consistent with partners' Welsh language schemes.

Secondly, and where the Welsh language is part of the fabric of a community:

- strategic and cross-sector planning to promote and facilitate language acquisition and use, ensuring that new policies and initiatives strengthen the linguistic viability of Welsh communities.

4.33 It is likely that all community planning partners will have their own Welsh language schemes. Given that, it is neither necessary nor desirable for community planning partnerships to develop or adopt their own schemes - but community planning should nonetheless have full regard to the partnership measures contained in schemes, and should in particular ensure that language issues are adequately mainstreamed.

4.34 The Welsh Language Board will, in collaboration with others, develop an Advice Note on community strategies and Welsh language issues to support continued learning in this area.

Community Strategies and Plan Rationalisation

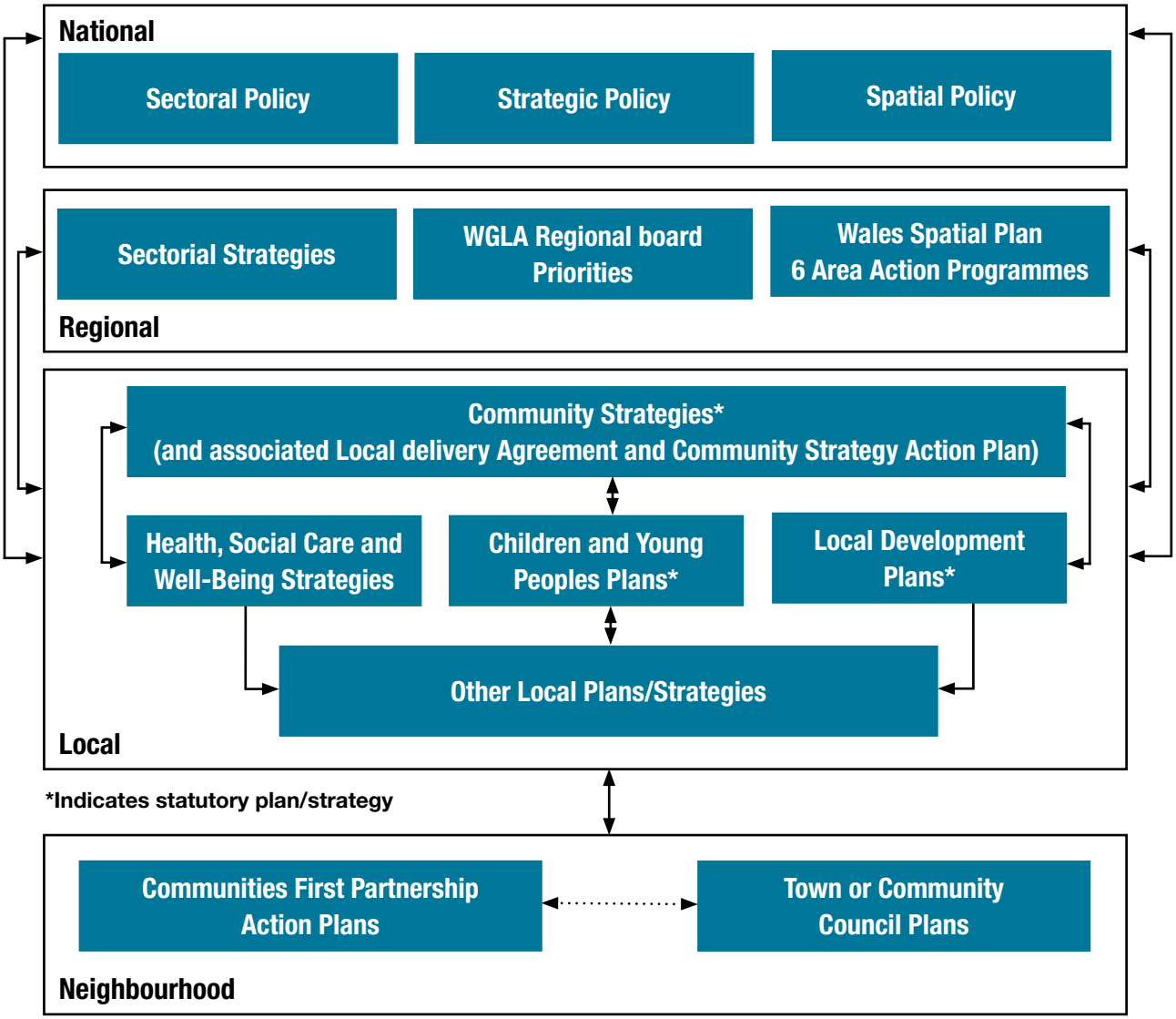
4.35 In late 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government agreed plan rationalisation proposals which will ultimately see the number of plans that local authorities have to submit to the Welsh Assembly Government[5] reduce from 32 at the time of the review to just four: (i) the Community Strategy; (ii) the Health Social Care and Well-being Strategy (HSCWBS); (iii) the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP); and (iv) the Local Development Plan.

[5] Plan rationalisation does not cover plans, strategies or schemes that are not the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government, such as Welsh language schemes and race equality schemes.

4.36 The community strategy should be regarded as the overarching strategy for the local authority area, setting the overall strategic direction and priorities, which should then be reflected within the other statutory and non-statutory strategies. During both their preparation and implementation, the four plans should be interlinked and cross-refer to one another, and their overall impact continually reassessed. It is important that all partners, stakeholders and the local community are clear how the rationalisation process will be taken forward at local level. Likewise the community strategy should not simply be an amalgamation of these plans or be used to 'fill in the gaps'. The community strategy should be more than the sum of its parts, adding value to the local planning system by providing the overall vision and direction and acting as a force for integration and reduction in duplication across plans and partnerships.

4.37 Plan rationalisation confers significant freedom in local planning structures and timetables, but does not remove the necessity to plan. There are many cross cutting issues, such as housing, which impact on all the four statutory plans. So where, following rationalisation, specific plans and strategies no longer have to be prepared, it is important that local authorities continue to ensure that strategic and operational goals are met and monitored. They may choose to do this by developing their own plans or by maintaining current planning arrangements aligned as necessary with the four remaining statutory plans, or by ensuring that the issues are addressed through the four statutory plans. Being clear on the chosen approach will enable them to demonstrate to regulators or others how they translate strategy into action and monitor progress. Fig 3. highlights the strategic planning framework.

Figure 3 - Strategic Planning Framework



Communities First

4.38 The Welsh Assembly Government's Communities First Programme exists to provide people in the most disadvantaged areas of Wales with opportunities to play an active role in shaping the future of their community. There is at least one Communities First area in every local authority area in Wales. The expansion of the Programme during 2007-08 (to include areas identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005) will bring the population coverage up to 20%.

4.39 Since a consultation exercise in 2008 the Communities First Programme has developed with an increased emphasis on delivering agreed outcomes for each Communities First area. One mechanism for doing this will be through the establishment of "Communities First Outcomes Fund". The Fund will consider applications from Communities First Partnerships that focus on specific outcomes across the themes of the Communities First Vision Framework.

However, a condition of grant is that match funding is provided form service deliverers. The whole emphasis on delivering outcomes will require close collaboration, both between organisations and across partnerships.

4.40 The Assembly Government recognises that many factors influence the generational cycles of poverty and these cannot be addressed in isolation. Local activity at a Communities First level should combine and connect with the four statutory local authority plans (community strategy; health social care and well-being; local development plan; and children and young people's plan) and regional strategic planning in the form of the Wales Spatial Plan and Strategic Regeneration Areas. Communities First now places a renewed focus on tackling issues of poverty and deprivation e.g. income maximisation, improving employability and child poverty.

4.41 However, partnership working and community engagement remain fundamental to the Communities First Programme. Communities First Partnerships have established structures for engaging with local citizens. It is important that when developing and delivering the community strategies required under the Measure that these structures are utilised.

4.42 While community planning covers the whole local authority area, the Communities First Partnerships focus on the specific needs of smaller areas. There will need to be links between the two, since community planning can be a way for Communities First Partnerships to make vital links to other strategic themes, including the delivery of mainline services, and to other deprived neighbourhoods. Equally, we would suggest that the Communities First partnerships should help to shape the community strategy, in particular to ensure that it adequately reflects the needs of deprived communities.

4.43 Thus, as community strategies set out the overarching key priorities for a local authority area, it will remain important that they fully consider the needs of Communities First areas. This reflects the local authority and community planning partners' legal duty to consult and seek the participation of all appropriate local interests in preparing a community strategy. It is important that such consultation and participation includes Communities First Partnerships.

4.44 To encourage seamless working between the local authority-wide and community levels it is important that community planning partners and Communities First Partnerships communicate and liaise frequently. How this is done will be a matter for local agreement but we consider that it is vital that it takes place. A possible approach would be for those local authority areas with many Communities First Partnerships to establish a formal liaison arrangement, such as a board, to enable the Communities First Partnerships to establish their collective views and to input to the community strategy process. The county-wide Communities First Overarching coordinators should also be involved to help develop links and facilitate communication.

4.45 In those local authority areas where there are few Communities First Partnerships, the overarching strategic partnership should establish and maintain mechanisms that enable the views of Communities First Partnerships, and the wider community, to be heard. It is important that Communities First Partnerships and other community networks play a part in not only establishing community strategy priorities but also in delivering the agreed priorities.

Children and Young People's Plan

4.46 The children and young people's plan (CYPP) is the defining statement of strategic planning intent and priorities for all children and young people's services in a local authority area. In this respect it acts as the reference point for all other plans. The community strategy, should, where appropriate, refer to the agreed priorities and commitments set out in the CYPP.

4.47 Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes, Shared Planning for Better Outcomes and Safeguarding Children: working together under the Children Act 2004 give advice the on coordination of planning across Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Children and Young People's Partnerships, Health Social Care and Well-being Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships, where there is a common core membership of statutory partners (for an outline structure, see Annex 1 of Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes).

Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy

4.48 Community planning should make a major contribution to improving the health and well-being of the local population and tackling inequalities in these areas. They should draw on and complement each area's Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy (HSCWBS). The local authority and the local health board are jointly responsible in law for the planning of services which promote the health and well-being of the community, and the delivery of appropriate treatment and care as an integrated concept. They discharge this responsibility through preparing and implementing the HSCWBS. Statutory guidance on preparing the next round of HSCWBSs, which cover the period 2008/09 - 2010/11 sets out the aims as:

- addressing the full range of issues that affect people's health, social care and well-being, addressing the broad public health agenda at local level to achieve health gain targets through the most appropriate and effective local response;
- improving the provision, quality and delivery of and access to more integrated NHS, local government, 'third sector' and private sector services and other functions which affect health, social care and well-being, giving full recognition to the need to develop bilingual services;

- establishing a stronger basis for planning, investment, commissioning and performance review at the local level; and
- promoting joint delivery of the vision.

4.49 The HSCWBS should provide a coordinated response to all the policy objectives and requirements relating to health and social care services in the local area. Although it will be the primary mechanism for defining the local response to Health Challenge Wales, the Children and Young People's Plan and the community strategy itself should also reflect the importance that the wider determinants of health and public health have on the health and wellbeing of the nation. The development of Our Health Future, the Public Health Strategic Framework for Wales, is currently being considered by the Minister for Health and Social Services. Depending on the outcome, the HSCWBs will need to reflect our themes and priorities for public health and wellbeing which feature in Our Healthy Future. The importance of prevention and early intervention nationally and locally will be a strong theme of Our Health Future.

4.50 The NHS in Wales has changed significantly since October 2009, with the introduction of the new Local Health Board structure. Local Health Board (LHBs) will no longer be co-terminous with local authorities. However, the statutory duty jointly to prepare HSCWBs remains and new guidance will be issued in due course to support the development of the next round of these documents, which will cover the period from April 2011.

4.51 Local Health Boards and Public Health Wales will be active participants in the local Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnerships and will work in partnership with local authorities and other local agencies and stakeholders on issues of public health and health promotion.

Local Development Plan

4.52 Land use and how it changes has a major influence on local quality of life and citizens' sense of place. Development plans have been statutory requirements for many years under the Town and Country Planning Acts. Local authorities in Wales, along with the National Park Authorities (which also have planning functions) will be changing from Unitary Development Plans to Local Development Plans under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Local Development Plans will start being adopted around Wales from 2010 onwards and should take the Wales Spatial Plan into account. A robust evidence base underpinning Local Development Plans will be critical to demonstrate that plans satisfy the tests of 'soundness' and can be adopted.

4.53 Development plans and community strategies need to be complementary. In preparing revised community strategies account will need to be taken of policies and proposals in any adopted development plan. Once a community strategy is published, the development plan will provide the means to take forward

those elements of the strategy that concern land use or physical development. Along with the Wales Spatial Plan, community strategies should set the overarching strategic policy framework for the Local Development Plan which:

- provides the strategic land use expression of the shared vision of how an authority area will develop, change or be conserved;
- delivers the land use aspects of the shared vision over a 10 to 15 year period; and
- sets out monitoring indicators to be reported every year.

4.54 As part of the first stages of preparation of the Local Development Plans, local authorities are required to agree and adopt a Community Involvement Scheme, which sets out how local communities, third sector organisations, the business and public sectors and the Welsh Assembly Government should be engaged in the process. Depending on timing, the Community Involvement Scheme should reflect or inform the local authority corporate approach to community engagement. Where the timing is favourable, joint engagement in developing the community strategy and development plan is possible and recommended.

4.55 Local Development Plans will be monitored on an annual basis and a full LDP review is required every four years after adoption. The Welsh Assembly Government Local Development Plan policy is set out in LDP Wales (2005) and technical guidance in the LDP Manual (2006). The Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (2006) sets out policy guidance on the content of LDPs.

Wales Spatial Plan

4.56 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and keep under review a Spatial Plan. The current plan, People, Places, Futures, The Wales Spatial Plan - 2008 Update, was adopted by the National Assembly for Wales in July 2008. It sets out the important spatial issues for Wales in the future and in doing so aims to:

- Set the context for local and community planning;
- Influence where money is spent by the Welsh Assembly Government through an understanding of the roles of and interactions between places;
- Provide a clear evidence base for the public, private and third sectors to develop policy and action.

As well as an overarching national section, the plan identifies six distinct Spatial Areas, each with its own Area Strategy. The Area Strategies set out a regional vision and priorities that will help to provide an important context for community strategies.

4.57 In each Area the Spatial Plan Area Group is responsible for developing and delivering the strategies. Each local authority has a representative on the Area Group and the work overall is coordinated by an Area Manager employed by the Welsh Assembly Government. Both the local authority representative and the Area Manager should be key contacts for those preparing and implementing the community strategy and supporting the Local Service Board. Membership of the Area Groups is contained on the Wales Spatial Plan website www.wales.gov.uk/walespatialplan.

WLGA Regional Boards

4.58 An important element of the local government response to the Welsh Assembly Government's public sector improvement strategy "Making the Connections" was the formal constitution of four Regional Partnership Boards in Wales. The objective of constituting the Boards was to meet the challenge of rising public expectations of service improvement by changing direct service delivery patterns and back-office support. Through collaborative working, councils can deliver improvements in the quality of their services.

4.59 Many local authority services have a regional dimension and others require a critical mass for efficient service delivery that is bigger than the size of some Welsh councils. Regional partnership board arrangements provide a focus for planning the delivery of such services at the regional level that may then lead to joint commissioning or procurement.

4.60 The Boards give strategic direction to joint working policy at a regional level in Wales, initiate specific projects and monitor their progress. The Boards consist of local authority Leaders and Chief Executives and are supported by representatives of particular professional groups as appropriate. Boards have been established in South East Wales, South West Wales, North Wales and Central Wales. The Central Wales partnership also includes other councils with significant rural populations.

Other National Strategies

4.61 Local partners should consider the priorities set out in a range of national strategies, and as appropriate, play a role in delivering the objectives and priorities contained within these strategies; examples include the National Housing Strategy, Rural Development Plan for Wales and the Environment Strategy for Wales. The Environment Strategy for Wales (2006) articulates a strategic vision for the environment for the next 20 years. It sets out desired environmental outcomes under six themes - addressing climate change, sustainable resource use, distinctive biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes, the local environment, and environmental hazards. An Advice Note has been developed to support work in this area.

4.62 The Government of Wales Act 2006 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare a strategy on how they propose to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh Language and to report on it annually. Separately the existing national action plan for a bilingual Wales is Iaith Pawb. Community strategies should look to contribute to the delivery of the strategic aims. This might include developing initiatives to secure language transfer with families to enable more 3 - 4 year olds to speak Welsh, strategies to increase access to Welsh medium education, or the creation of new opportunities for young people to socialise in Welsh. Use of Welsh in the community and the condition of the language at community level is key to its future. In areas where Welsh is part of the fabric of society, different planning approaches and projects are required and we need to measure their effects.

Action Outside an Authority's Boundary

4.63 While community planning relates specifically to each local authority's area, it may also address issues outside those boundaries, if that action contributes to well-being in their own area. Some of the issues that concern local communities will be best tackled by action at a regional level. This might mean that such action will depend on the Spatial Plan or WLGA regional board structures and/or a number of authorities working together to take action in one area that benefits each of their communities. In some cases, there may be communities that, while outside an authority's boundary, are particularly dependent on that authority for access to services.

4.64 Local authorities that lie on, or close to, the border with England should ensure that community planning takes account of any relevant needs and priorities of neighbouring English communities and local authorities, and of any reliance that citizens and communities in their areas have on services provided in England and vice versa. English county, district and unitary authorities are also obliged to produce community strategies, and a collaborative cross-border approach to community planning may thus be feasible and desirable.

Chapter 5
Formulating and publishing the strategy

5.1 Once a local authority and its community planning partners have reached a consensus on their community strategy objectives and actions, a local authority should produce a community strategy capturing that consensus.

5.2 Local partners are free to decide on how to go about reaching that consensus, and to determine when it has been reached. In doing so, though, they should bear in mind that community planning should be a process of exploration and discussion, not negotiation. The objective should be to develop a shared understanding of local needs, grounded firmly in the available evidence and the views and aspirations of citizens and communities and how to meet them, not to accommodate the separate operational outlook of individual partners. Processes which either merely assemble individual partners' perspectives or which involve a majority overriding the legitimately-held reservations of the rest are not encouraged. In particular, and as chapter 3 notes, individual partners' capacity to act (and constraints on acting) need to be fully reflected.

5.3 It is acknowledged that it could take some time for that consensus to be reached, but once it is, the local authority should capture it in a published community strategy. The agreed strategy should be promoted as the key strategic, spatial strategy for the local authority area and processes should be in place to ensure that other local strategies and plans support and are complementary to its delivery or do not undermine it. The same consideration should be given to neighbouring community strategies and appropriate regional plans, in particular the Wales Spatial Plan. It is our belief that promotion should include ensuring, for example, that all stakeholders, elected members, citizens and communities are aware of the published strategy and have appropriate opportunities to engage with its delivery.

5.4 There is no statutory deadline for producing community strategies but we would expect them to be in place during 2010. They should be reviewed by the local authority and its community planning partners at least every four years to consider the progress made in meeting their objectives and actions. As a result of the local authority and its community planning partners may consider it appropriate to amend the community strategy objectives and actions or possibly agree to new ones. If this is the case the authority should amend the community strategy and republish it as soon as reasonably practicable.

Content of a community strategy

5.5 A community strategy should have 6 basic components:

- a long-term vision (10 to 15 years) for the area focusing on the outcomes that partners aim to achieve;
- a prioritised action plan identifying shorter term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of the long-term vision;
- a clear, shared and equal commitment from community planning partners to implement the action plan, and proposals for doing so;
- arrangements for monitoring, scrutinising and accounting publicly for the implementation of the community strategy action plan, and for periodically reviewing the community strategy;
- arrangements for coordinating the work, and actions, of the community planning partners, local service boards and the other key thematic partnerships towards delivering their objectives;
- details of how the community strategy is complementary to neighbouring strategies, details of any joint projects and how the strategy has been developed in the regional context as set out in the Wales Spatial Plan (this process should also work in the reverse).

Format of a community strategy

5.6 Local authorities are free to publish community strategies in any style and format that they choose, but should bear the following points in mind:

- Although the duty to publish lies with the local authority, the community strategy is effectively the joint work of all local partners. Authorities should ensure that community planning partners agree fully with the content and format prior to publication.
- Authorities can use any title they choose. There is no need to use the title "community strategy" provided that it is clear that the document discharges the local authority's duty to publish one. Including a form of words such as "This is the community strategy for [name of area], prepared and published by [name of local authority] in accordance with section 39 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009" would suffice for these purposes.
- The community strategy should be authoritative and clear about both objectives, actions and the evidence collected to enable the development of both. Anodyne, unsubstantiated or unconvincing aspirations and statements should be avoided.
- The strategy should be widely accessible. Excessive technical detail should be avoided or published separately. Authorities and their partners should also consider publicising or summarising the strategy by other means such as newsletters or similar publications.

- Local authorities may wish to consider subdividing strategies (or publishing separate documents) for different parts of their areas, and/or for different community groups. This may be particularly relevant for large and/or diverse local authority areas. However, the overall intention for the whole area should remain clear in such cases.
- Publication should normally include both paper and electronic copies, in both Welsh and English unless an authority's Welsh language scheme permits publication in one language only. Strategies might also usefully be publicised in other languages (where there is a significant minority presence in an area) and in formats such as Braille, large print and audio.
- Publication does not amount to engagement with stakeholders, citizens and communities on the agreed strategy. Authorities and their partners should consider how to make the published strategy meaningful to these groups to promote broad awareness, ownership and interest in its delivery and progress.

Chapter 6
Monitoring, reporting and review

Delivering the Community Strategy

6.1 It is vital that local people are engaged in the development, and where appropriate delivery of the community strategy but, to maintain legitimacy and accountability, it is equally vital that they are kept informed about its delivery. This includes: keeping people informed about the reasons why particular decisions or actions were taken (or not taken), reporting on the outcome of the community planning process - and, later, on the progress that is being made. This reporting process should take account of the role of elected members through the scrutiny process.

6.2 Local partners should consider how best to achieve effective reporting of performance, both between the partners and partnerships, the local community and, as appropriate scrutiny committees. Issues to consider include: the manner in which the local strategic partnerships have involved their communities in the decision-making process, and the preferences of communities themselves. However, it is important that reporting should be clear and understandable and that all sections of the community should have ready access to it.

6.3 It is for overarching strategy partnership to decide how best to meet both their own need for performance information and its frequency, and also the best format or formats for reporting to the public. A summary report should be produced, or updated, at least every two years. This report should contain a broad restatement of the long-term aims of the community strategy and a balanced summary of delivery and its effectiveness since the last report in terms of:

- the progress that has been made on delivering the community strategy outcomes and the well-being of communities;
- progress that has been made in carrying out community planning actions, including those which form part of the local delivery agreement;
- a summary of what action local partners are taking to address potentially negative developments; and
- future plans for engagement and accountability in relationship with communities and other stakeholders and, the scrutiny arrangements for the coming year.

6.4 It will be important to avoid unnecessary duplication of the existing reporting requirements for local authorities and other bodies. Reports need only include sound evidence of progress from any relevant source. However, they could also usefully act as 'signposts' to the detailed activity being taken by each partner body by indicating sources of more detailed information on their performance (such as WPI Improvement Plans, corporate plans, health authorities' Performance Assessment Frameworks and so on).

6.5 Equally, reporting should be honest and balanced, and should avoid presenting an unduly positive view. Many sound community strategy objectives will only be deliverable in the longer term, and progress may, in the early years, be slow or imperceptible. Partners should nonetheless avoid any tendency to focus, or report only, on 'quick wins' or on what can be demonstrated in the short term.

Making delivery happen

6.6 Local partners will need to establish robust systems for monitoring progress on the community strategies, ensuring that the activities identified in the action plan are carried out effectively. This is not simply a data collection exercise; it should be evaluative, reflective and result in action to celebrate success and address under-achievement. It should ensure that lessons are learnt from what is working well and what is not.

Performance management systems

6.7 It is important that performance management is based around a constructive dialogue between those partners delivering community strategy projects. Any supporting monitoring systems should involve local partners and the wider community. The nature of the arrangements will be a matter for the overarching strategic partnership to decide but the arrangements should be clear to all, agreed and adopted by all those with a stake in delivery. For example, one approach is to establish a series of multi-agency groups to monitor or manage the delivery of specific activities identified in the action plan, or to monitor progress against the goals and priorities identified in the community strategy. In order to minimise overlap or duplication, whatever systems are established they should be clearly linked and coordinated with the existing monitoring systems established around other key plans, strategies or policy areas.

6.8 Good performance management arrangements are essential to improve efficiency and service outcomes for citizens. Effective delivery of the community strategy will require the building of a performance management culture across organisational, and sector specific, boundaries. Before local partners can manage performance they should be able to measure it and compare performance of relevant services in similar areas. Each partner organisation will need to establish what action it

will take to contribute to the delivery of the community strategy priorities and to manage risk accordingly. **Ffynnon**, the pan-Wales performance management system, is one system for managing performance, projects and risks across organisational boundaries.

6.9 Whatever arrangements are agreed locally, it is important that they enable the partnership to readily identify the progress made and the areas where action looks like being ineffective and where objectives are in danger of not being met. Partnerships will be expected to take prompt and decisive action to address any areas where objectives are in danger of not being met. Likewise it is important that local partners can identify and celebrate improvement in services and outcomes for citizens.

Measuring delivery

6.10 In order to establish effective monitoring arrangements, partnerships will need to consider how they will measure progress. Community planning will have identified specified outcomes for the medium to longer term, as well as shorter-term actions to realise them. It follows that progress should be monitored against those outcomes, rather than focusing on inputs or efficiency measures. The monitoring process should provide a means to bring together data collected by a range of bodies into a single, accessible summary.

6.11 Local partners already have a range of performance management systems and indicators for measuring and responding to their own performance. In many cases, the data that these generate will be usable for the above purposes, although partners should take care not to rely automatically on existing datasets which may not adequately or fully capture the progress sought.

6.12 Part 1 of the Measure further strengthens these links for local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and National Park authorities in particular. It requires such authorities, to set annual 'improvement objectives' in several categories, including in particular objectives aimed at delivering the community strategy. That process should allow those authorities effectively to monitor and report the progress they have made; further guidance is available on the Wales Programme for Improvement[6]. Other community planning partners may choose to adopt such an approach to the extent that their current systems and accountabilities permit this.

6.13 However, not all community strategy objectives may be amenable to quantifiable measurement in the form of individual partners' performance indicator data. Partnerships will also need to draw upon those data sources developed from the four key partnerships[7] that underpin the community strategy such as

[6] Chapter 4 relates to the setting of improvement objectives
[7] Community strategy, children and young people, health, social care and well being and community safety partnerships

the shared outcome indicators developed for use by the Health, Social Care and Well-being partnership and joint surveys undertaken to find out peoples' views of public services, utilising the forthcoming national framework for local satisfaction research.

6.14 It will be for each partnership, as part of the community planning process to determine the most appropriate indicators of progress from any source, or sector, supported by targets or milestones where appropriate. This includes looking for opportunities to better align sectoral performance management systems, reduce duplication and inefficiencies in reporting processes. Performance management of the community strategy is not about creating a new bureaucracy or performance framework, it is about better management and alignment of existing systems. For example, by utilising **Ffynnon**, partner organisations will be able to avoid duplication and minimise the data collection burden across partners contributing to the delivery of the community strategy.

6.15 The focus should shift from cross organisational data collection and reporting to the constructive use of the information by partners to manage their collaborative performance and deliver results for citizens.

Chapter 7
Engagement and scrutiny

Roles and Responsibilities - Giving the Public and Partners a Voice

7.1 Successful community planning requires all partners to work together to ensure that public engagement and community involvement is as inclusive as possible. Many local authorities have already established a corporate approach to consultation and engagement, either establishing a corporate team or ensuring that policy leads meet regularly to coordinate forward work programmes and structures. The overarching strategic partnership should ensure that engagement processes and structures are coordinated and linked to existing public engagement and community involvement schemes and activities undertaken by the other key partnerships, the third sector and individual organisations. Where appropriate these processes and structures should be rationalised, both to increase their effectiveness for the partnership and to avoid duplication, avoidable costs and "consultation fatigue" on the part of communities and third sector organisations. It is important that engagement on the development, and implementation, of the community strategy, CYPP, HSCWB strategy, local development plan and other key plans is joined up and coordinated at a local level.

7.2 Local partners, collectively and individually, should involve the community throughout the community planning process, and consider:

- ensuring all involvement is continual and meaningful - and always feeding back decisions taken on issues;
- involving a wide range of people through the many networks, partnerships, forums and third sector groups operating at a local level;
- involving senior people - executives, Councillors and Board members - in participative events;
- reaching out to those who tend not to participate and actively facilitating their involvement; and
- being creative in how to engage people - town hall meetings are not for everyone.

7.3 The processes of public engagement, when supported by committed leaders, offer a major opportunity to develop broader community understanding of the challenges, and to establish a positive on-going dialogue with the community and its constituent groups. Some guidance on engagement and consultation is also set out in the guidance supporting the other key strategic plans. (ML/016/08 - Interim Revised NHS Consultation Guidance should be followed and guidance on Local Participation Strategies issued alongside the CYPP.) In addition the Welsh Assembly Government will be issuing a series of advice notes/working papers on community and citizen engagement.

Equality in engagement

7.4 Local partners should ensure that community planning and the engagement techniques they employ do not discriminate against particular groups. It will be important that whatever engagement techniques are used that Welsh language issues are fully considered for and by all sectors. Specific efforts should be made to involve different ethnic communities, gender, faith communities, young people, older people and disabled people. This includes making sure that venues used for consultation are accessible by public transport, accessible for people with physical or visual impairments; that audio loops are provided at meetings and that sign language interpreters or interpreters for minority languages are available when necessary. Written information should be in plain language and that it should be available in large print, audio, Braille or minority languages on request or where the need arises. It should be remembered that hard-to-reach groups can, inadvertently, be under-represented by the methods chosen to engage communities. Third sector groups can provide practical advice on good practice, training for council staff and contacts in this regard.

7.5 The overarching strategic partnership will need to take the requirements of existing equality legislation in respect of gender, race, and disability into account in developing such measures, but we believe that the measures for engagement utilised by the partners should go beyond the statutory minimum and should also encompass the other equality strands of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. The duties on race, disability and gender which are applicable to all public sector bodies, means that local partners should ensure that the techniques they employ do not discriminate against these specific groups. Using a variety of different methods of engagement is more likely to avoid this problem, and much good practice already exists. Partnerships will need to be imaginative and flexible in their approach and take advantage of the range of available methods that have been successfully used for achieving the widest participation.

Councillors

7.6 The success of any community strategy will depend on the sense of ownership it generates within the community, and elected representatives have a key role in that. All councillors should be involved as:

- representatives of their wards, leading and listening to formal and informal discussions and consultations, and representing these community views;
- members of overview and scrutiny committees. (See paragraphs 7.30 - 7.31 below);
- members of area and neighbourhood forums and committees. Many councils have or are considering establishing area committees; one of their roles could usefully be to contribute to the community planning process;
- council representatives on outside bodies, ensuring that their views receive full expression in drawing up the community strategy.

7.7 Councillors and officers engaged in community planning will need to be able to commit the local authority to take action to deliver the priorities agreed as part of the community strategy action plan. Since the full council should ultimately adopt the community strategy, the executive (in councils operating executive arrangements) or the relevant policy committee (in councils operating alternative arrangements) will need to ensure that all councillors are informed of emerging developments and outcomes and have continuing opportunities to contribute to the process. Non-executive members of scrutiny committees should examine the performance of the local service board to monitor the achievements of the local authority, and other accountable partners such as health bodies, in the activities that they have promised to deliver as part of the action plan, as well as monitoring progress against long-term outcomes.

Community and Town Councils

7.8 There are over 700 community and town councils in Wales, covering 96% of the land surface and 70% of its population. As the tier of local government closest to individual communities, community and town councils have the potential to facilitate citizen engagement in community strategies at the most local level. One of the most important ways in which a community council might discharge its duties under the Measure could be to facilitate citizen engagement at the community level. Such engagement might be co-ordinated through area committees or forums that provide an opportunity for community and town councils across the community planning area to engage meaningfully. One Voice Wales is able to facilitate such involvement through its Area Committees.

7.9 Community and town councils, either singly or jointly with neighbouring town and community councils, might also wish to prepare strategies for their own individual communities. These very local strategies would outline how the immediate area could be developed sustainably and also identify the contribution that the community council and others could make to implementing them. The strategies should be informed through a process of community engagement, e.g. via a town or village appraisal or Planning for Real® exercise. The Community Development Foundation/Community Development Cymru are able to provide more information on specific community engagement techniques. The strategies should be realistic, based on solid research and full engagement with the public and other bodies, including the local authority. Such locally developed strategies should be recognised in the overall community strategies in the same way that Communities First strategies are recognised. This process will be facilitated through the adoption of charter working between the local authority and the community and town councils in its area.

7.10 The Welsh Assembly Government, together with the Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales, has developed a resource pack to encourage closer working relationships between community and town councils and their respective unitary authorities. The model charter forms the basis of a possible formal agreement, including in particular on community planning. It is anticipated that this resource pack will enable an increasing number of community and town councils to engage with unitary authorities and make a positive contribution to this process.

Community involvement

7.11 The involvement of local people is central to the effective development and implementation of community strategies, and to wider change and improvements in the longer term. There is an often untapped pool of ideas, knowledge, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm among individuals, groups and communities as a whole which, if realised, can be a real driver for change. Community strategies should provide an opportunity to put local people at the heart of partnership working and should be grounded in the views and expectations of those people.

7.12 If community strategies are to respond to public concerns, there needs to be genuine public engagement and involvement throughout the process. It is important that community planning enables communities to be fully involved in establishing both the long-term vision and the shorter-term priorities for action. It would not be sufficient simply to consult communities on a range of options determined by the authority and its partner organisations. Attention should be given at an early stage to ensuring that all sections of the community have the opportunity to participate.

7.13 Local partners will need to continue to consider the various methods by which they can involve communities in the preparation of community strategies. These will need to recognise that individuals belong simultaneously to a number of communities, of both place and interest, and will identify with different communities according to their circumstances and the issues under discussion. Community strategies should reflect this complexity, and the partnership should accommodate it by putting in place a variety of routes into participation, employing different mechanisms. In this way the full range of perspectives and contributions can be accessed and included. Each overarching strategic partnership will need to consider how best to involve the different communities that make up their area, and devise techniques that are most appropriate to local circumstances.

7.14 In working with citizens it is important that the widest range of people are given opportunities to have their say, and to have their views taken into account on all issues which affect their lives. As a starting point, overarching strategic partnerships should, wherever possible, use existing mechanisms that have already been proved to be effective, rather than setting up duplicate processes. This should then form the basis for considering how to equip local groups with the knowledge and support to make a meaningful and continuing contribution to the community planning process. Consideration should be given to the role that councillors, public sector staff and the third sector, particularly local community groups (among them Communities First Partnerships and the structures established to consult with older people), can play in helping to ensure that all communities have access to independent sources of information and advice to support their involvement.

7.15 The local infrastructure and expertise to support the involvement of children and young people aged 0 to 25 are in place, or currently being developed, to comply with guidance on Local Participation Strategies issued alongside guidance on the Children and Young People's Plan and should be utilised. Standards for effective practice in involving children and young people have also been developed by Participation Consortium and adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government.

7.16 The nature and degree of community involvement will inevitably vary at different stages of the process and according to the issue. Moreover, community engagement is likely to reveal differences of view - particularly about priorities for action - not all of which will be reconcilable. The local service board at the local level, and the other key partnerships, will need to consider:

- how community views are going to influence and inform the decision-making process;
- how differences of view are to be aired and resolved within the local strategic partnership; and
- how decisions are to be explained to communities. (See Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.1 - 5.4).

7.17 It is important that in seeking the views of communities, councils and their community planning partners do not inadvertently raise expectations that they cannot meet. Clear parameters need to be established and communities should be given full information about the context and constraints within which public service providers operate (e.g. national expectations and targets, resource levels and statutory limitations). The process is about dialogue, including communication about limitations as well as possibilities. Where there are genuine constraints, these need to be explained so that the partners - including local communities - can understand them and work within them.

7.18 Local partners will also need to consider the part that residents and community groups can play in implementing community strategies. In some areas, such as the management of social housing and community policing, there are well-established ways of involving communities in both the planning and delivery of services. Partnerships should be responsive to the wishes of local communities in this regard, and help to create the conditions for a greater degree of community involvement where this is being sought.

7.19 Where they exist, Communities First Partnerships bring together representatives from the local community, local authorities, public agencies, the third and private sectors. They have a specific remit to involve local residents in devising and implementing strategies that address the issues arising from deprivation. Communities First Partnerships provide established structures for communicating and engaging with key sectors of the population. It is therefore important that if seamless working at a local level is to be delivered that the community strategy partnership and/or local service boards develop mechanisms to enable effective communication with these partnerships.

Involving other organisations

7.20 As noted in chapter 2, local partners may wish to invite other bodies to become more involved in community planning to any extent that seems useful. In some cases, those bodies might have similar roles to other partners. However, where they are less engaged, the following considerations might arise.

The Third Sector

7.21 The third sector has a crucial role to play in improving the quality of life for local communities through its expertise in effectively engaging citizens, services users and potential users; through service design, commissioning, procurement and evaluation; through joint delivery partnerships; through contributing to a mixed economy of service provision and through engagement in scrutiny and review of services.

7.22 The third sector is often best placed to reach and involve those sections of the community that the mainstream public sector may find hard to reach, and to access funding that is not available to public bodies. As with other partners, third sector bodies remain responsible for decisions on how best to deploy their resources. Specific efforts should be made to involve representatives from under-represented groups in the wider community planning structures, such as ethnic minorities, women, faith communities, older people, young people and children, and disabled people.

7.23 Local partners should ensure that the diversity of the third sector is reflected in all partnerships that support the development and implementation of community strategy objectives, and that any organisation speaking on behalf of others has a fully representative and accountable structure that mandates them to do so. The Voluntary Sector Compact should provide a framework within which the relationship between the third sector and the local authority can be defined and developed. Many of these compacts have already been expanded to include other public sector partners such as Health Bodies, the Police forces and Police Authorities. This is a continuing trend, which is encouraged, as is the monitoring of Compacts and their associated action plans, by county level Joint Liaison Committees.

The Private Sector

7.24 The private sector should be fully involved in the community planning process, as it is a significant user and supplier of local services, as well as a key provider of local employment. Business activity contributes both directly and indirectly to community prosperity and quality of life.

7.25 Local partners should consider how best to engage the business community in the community planning process and reflect on how the skills that the business community can 'bring to the table' can be most effectively utilised. Whilst relationships will vary from area to area, it may be that the skills of the business sector are best utilised in specific projects or scrutiny role rather than in more general strategic management.

7.26 Councils and their partners should build on approaches to business involvement that have already been shown to work - there are many examples of good practice - and should ensure that local businesses, economic development agencies, local chambers of commerce, trade union councils and other representative organisations are properly engaged in preparing community strategies.

Welsh Assembly Government

7.27 The Welsh Assembly Government is a significant player at the local level, both because of the resources and services that it provides and because local government and other public bodies are often involved in delivering national priorities. The aim of community strategies is to allow local communities to articulate their needs and priorities, and the Welsh Assembly Government has no power or right to dictate detailed terms to local partners or to approve or veto community strategies. However, action at the local level should take place against a backdrop of regionally and nationally agreed priorities.

7.28 Section 46 of the Measure requires the Welsh Ministers to promote and encourage community planning. We propose to discharge this duty by:

- creating and sustaining a policy framework (as set out in this guidance) in which community planning can best thrive;
- continuing to allow local authorities and their partners the freedom to respond to local concerns, within a national strategic policy framework;
- maintaining senior Assembly Government representation on local service boards;
- responding positively to any suggestions and proposals for changes in policy and law which would better facilitate community planning, so far as these are consistent with national policy, and deliverable within current resources and the powers of the Welsh Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales.

Regional bodies

7.29 The Spatial Plan Area Groups, WLGA Regional Boards, regional transport consortia, regional economic fora , regional housing fora and other partnerships which operate at a regional level all have specific responsibilities that may be relevant to the preparation of a particular community strategy. Local partners will need to consider how best to involve these and other regional bodies in community planning; the regional boards, groups and partnerships in turn will also need to take account of relevant community strategies.

The role of overview and scrutiny

7.30 Overview and scrutiny committees are an essential and integral part of a local authority's executive arrangements. A community strategy's place at the centre of the strategic policy framework, and in delivering citizen focused services, means that it should have a central position in overview and scrutiny committees work programmes. The cross cutting nature of community strategies means that a coordinated forward work programme should be developed, and agreed, by the

various scrutiny committees to ensure that all relevant policy areas incorporated within the strategy are all given appropriate attention. A Scrutiny Advice Note has been issued to support this guidance but overview and scrutiny committees should look at the:

- community planning process, including the membership composition of the local service board, the extent and appropriateness of consultation/ engagement utilised during the development of the strategy.
- Policy implications of the community strategy;
- Delivery of community strategy priorities.

7.31 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill expected to complete its parliamentary process in the autumn, proposes to confer on the National Assembly for Wales measure-making powers in relation to overview and scrutiny. The Welsh Assembly Government will bring forward proposals for consultation on the reform of scrutiny so as to enable it to operate more effectively in the new era of cross border partnerships and local service boards.