



Evaluation of the Community Facilities and Activities Programme – Final Report

SJR 05/07 RR

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Executive Summary

1. The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration launched the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP) in November 2002. The programme takes a specific approach to tackling social disadvantage by focusing on disadvantage at the community level and by recognising that even the most affluent communities in Wales are likely to have small pockets of deprivation. The programme also recognises the contribution that well used community facilities make to the fabric of community life.
2. The review of strategy in Wales undertaken as part of the evaluation clearly identifies that the regeneration of communities is of high strategic priority in Wales. There is reference to the need to develop and maintain “strong communities” in a plethora of Welsh Assembly Government strategy documents including *Wales: A Better Country*. As a community regeneration programme CFAP, potentially, therefore has an important role to play in Wales’ development and in achieving the Assembly Government’s objectives. The high level of demand for CFAP funds also suggests there is a clear need for the type of support that the programme provides.
3. Importantly, changes anticipated in the priorities for the use of Structural Funds in Wales from 2007 are likely to significantly reduce the funds available for community regeneration activities. This may have significant implications for CFAP as, potentially, it will become the fund of last resort for projects and activities that would previously have been submitted as applications to programmes supported by the Structural Funds programmes such as Objective 1 and Objective 2.
4. A review of the development of projects that result in an application being submitted to CFAP found communities which already have a coherent structure are more likely to identify the need for a project. It would also seem clear that the existence of community groups and social structures are important elements in the project development process. It is, therefore, possible to conclude that communities need a certain level of capacity before they are able to access support from CFAP.
5. The majority of applications for CFAP funds are submitted by community groups. The evaluation has, however, identified a growing change in the type of organisations submitting applications. This could, potentially, change the nature of the CFAP programme from one dominated by small-scale community projects to one which is focused on providing funds to professional organisations who subsequently fund community projects.
6. An increase in the number of applications submitted by professional organisations is also likely to have implications on the ability of community groups to access support directly from CFAP as it is likely there will be less funds available to them. Professional organisations are likely to be able to

submit 'better' applications to the Assembly. That is, professional organisations will have more experience of preparing grant application forms and, hence, be more aware of the information required and so on. This could mean, in a competitive scenario, professional organisations are more likely to be able to access funds from the programme than a voluntary group.

7. CFAP is managed with a strong focus on the 'customer': communities and voluntary groups. Every effort is made to ensure the programme reflects the needs of community and voluntary groups and to ensure that a quality service is provided at all times. The result of this is that the programme, its administration materials (application forms and so on) and the service provided by Assembly staff is considered to be excellent by a large majority of applicants and beneficiaries.
8. In a scenario where the number of applications being submitted by 'professional' organisations is increasing, programme administration procedures and application forms may need to be amended to reflect the type of projects being funded. For example, more information may be required to explore the potential commercial nature of activities and so on which will, inevitably, result in a longer, more complex application form. This could impact on the ability of small local groups to submit applications.
9. Demand for funding from the CFAP programme is incredibly high. According to the database provided to the research team by the Client, over 1,256 project applications have been submitted since the programme's inception in 2002. If demand is taken as an indication of need, there is a significant need for the funding provided by CFAP. Over 50% of the projects submitted since the programme's inception have been rejected. The evaluation team understands that this is, principally, due to a lack of finance.
10. The appraisal and approval of applications dominates the activities of the CFAP administration team at the expense of all other activities including the monitoring of approved projects. The sheer volume of applications received in each round requires the investment of a significant proportion of the staff resource that is available to the programme administration team.
11. The appraisal system used is built around the type of projects the programme has been designed to attract. A critical review of the system has identified gaps, but those gaps are less of an issue due to the type of projects CFAP tends to support. The majority of projects will tend to be small scale, have clear justification and do not tend to be controversial. They can, therefore, be considered low-risk. The cost-benefit of introducing a completely robust appraisal and approval process would, therefore, be questionable. The gaps within the system do, however, become apparent when larger or more complex projects are being

considered. Risk can not be taken into account during the appraisal process as it stands.

12. There may also be cause for the programme administration to consider the risk associated with a project when deciding on the monitoring and review procedures used. For example, a large, complex project would be 'flagged' and, accordingly, subject to more stringent monitoring.
13. Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants is clearly important. However, there is a fine line between providing constructive feedback to applicants and providing advice and guidance to community groups on the development of projects and the submission of applications for grant funding which, the evaluation team would argue, is a capacity building activity and, therefore, outside the remit of CFAP.
14. The evaluation has identified a vicious circle within which CFAP is caught. The principle of this cycle is that more project applications will lead to more projects being rejected, which will then generate the need for more feedback which, in turn, will lead to more applications being submitted and so on. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that CFAP is a fund of last resort (which means that applicants are unlikely to seek funds from alternative sources) and by the increase in demand likely to be caused by changes to the priorities for Structural Funds in Wales. Projects accessing the new EU Programmes will need to emphasise their eligibility with the stated aims of the Lisbon agenda, including having a clear focus on investment for economic growth and jobs (sustainable employment). The evaluation team has, therefore, concluded that, unless additional resource is made available or changes are introduced to the system which controls the number of applications submitted, the CFAP management system will become unsustainable in the very near future.
15. The evaluation found the outputs generated by CFAP supported projects are, in accordance with programme objectives, localised. That is, the programme has a significant impact within the local area of each of the projects it supports. The evaluation team has, accordingly, concluded that CFAP is clearly effective and the benefits of projects supported are considerable.

Recommendations

16. Steps should be taken to ensure the programme maintains its focus on supporting community led projects including, potentially, a review of the eligibility of 'professional' organisations to apply for funds from CFAP.
17. The resources allocated to CFAP should be reviewed to ensure the programme continues to effectively support the implementation of communities regeneration projects. Increases in both funding and staffing levels should be considered.

18. If additional funding and/or staff cannot be made available, consideration should be given to introducing mechanisms for controlling the volume of applications being submitted to the programme and for reducing the 'workload' of the administration team.
19. CFAP should maintain its focus on funding the implementation of projects rather than advising communities on the development of projects and submitting an application form.
20. Alternative arrangements for providing in-depth feedback and support to unsuccessful applicants should be considered. For example, advice and guidance could be provided via Assembly funded capacity building programmes and organisations or via a series of workshops.
21. Some targeted capacity building may be appropriate to help those less coherently structured communities to access the CFAP resources including access to 'professional' support. It may, again, be appropriate to deliver this support via Assembly funded capacity building programmes and organisations.
22. Some regions in Wales have been more successful in accessing funds from CFAP than others. The potential to commission further research into the reasons why some regions of Wales have been more successful than others should be considered with a view to exploring whether the success of those regions could be replicated elsewhere.
23. Greater links should be developed with other Assembly departments and with Assembly funded community regeneration programmes and organisations.
24. Projects identified as being 'high-risk' should be subject to more stringent appraisal, monitoring and review by the programme administration team.

1 Introduction & Background

1.1 Introduction

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration launched the Community Facilities and Activities Programme, known as CFAP, in November 2002. The programme forms part of the Government's strategy to tackle social disadvantage – one of the three major themes in the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic plan, 'Wales: A Better Wales'.

CFAP is a grant scheme to help community and voluntary organisations provide facilities or carry out activities that promote community regeneration. The programme takes a specific approach to tackling social disadvantage by focusing on disadvantage at the community level and by recognising that even the most affluent communities in Wales are likely to have small pockets of deprivation.

In June 2006 Mabis (at that time trading as *Menter a Busnes*), working in association with SERS, was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to undertake an evaluation of CFAP. The evaluation was based on the need to answer the following questions:

- i. How effective is the scheme in realising its policy objectives?
- ii. How efficiently are the scheme's resources allocated?
- iii. How effective is the system put in place to monitor the outputs and outcomes of individual projects?

1.2 Research design and methods

The methods adopted included:

- i. a review of policy and strategy documents in Wales;
- ii. a review of programme management literature and data;
- iii. interviews with key programme management stakeholders;
- iv. a review of programmes similar to CFAP from across the UK;
- v. visits to 15 projects supported by the programme (for project selection rationale and criteria see appendix 4); and
- vi. a comprehensive survey of the stakeholders from 250 project applications.

An important aspect of the research design was undertaking the survey of CFAP projects after the other elements of the research had been undertaken. This allowed the questionnaire and the survey to be designed to focus on issues and matters of interest identified during the previous phases of the evaluation exercise.

The response rate to the survey was 21% which is considered to be very favourable. The main report draws upon the findings of the survey in a

number of key areas. A full analysis of the results has, however, also been included in the appendix to the main report.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Section 2: Strategy Review

Section 3: Programme Management & Delivery Review

Section 4: Programme Benefits Review

Section 5: Conclusions & Recommendations

A number of project examples have been included within the report to illustrate the type of projects that programme has supported. They are included in a different type and in shaded boxes to differentiate them from the main body of the report as illustrated below.

Project Example: Oldford Tenants

The aim of this project was to provide a large, sustainable and safe play area to serve the needs of children from the whole Oldford community. It also included the refurbishment of two existing toddler play areas to accommodate the needs of the younger children from the community.

The absence of a play area within the community had resulted in the manifestation of anti-social behaviour and frustration, with young people “feeling unwelcome” within their community. The Oldford Tenants Association, working with its partner organisations, was determined to readdress this situation and, hence, submitted an application for funding to CFAP. In addition to providing the improved facilities for the children, the project had the added benefit of being able to improve the environment and has made older residents feel safer and more secure by taking play out of areas they feel vulnerable in.

Project Example: Neuadd y Ddraig Goch

Neuadd y Ddraig Goch is a hall in the heart of the community in Drefach Felindre. There had been a significant decline in the standards of the toilets and the main entrance to the hall in recent years. In addition, there were no disabled facilities at the hall, which clearly limited its use significantly. CFAP funding was used to make essential improvements to the hall.

The improvements to the hall significantly increased its potential uses and increased its capacity by 100 to 350. As a result, more schools and societies now use the facility for holding performances, concerts, plays, pantomimes, Eisteddfodau and so on. The hall is also home to a number of more physical activities such as karate and line dancing.

2 Strategy Review

The project team undertook a brief review of relevant strategies in Wales as part of the evaluation exercise. The purpose of this review was to show how CFAP fits within these strategies and, importantly, whether CFAP has a role in the delivery of the Assembly Government's strategies. In order to keep the main body of the report as brief as possible, a summary of the full findings (see appendix one) is presented below.

2.1 Strategic Priorities in Wales

The review of strategy in Wales undertaken clearly identifies that the regeneration of communities is a high strategic priority in Wales. There is reference to the development of "strong communities" in a plethora of Welsh Assembly Government and, importantly, European Commission strategic documents such as the Objective 1 programme guidelines and the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006. Interestingly, a number of the interviewees also noted CFAP is a very popular programme across the political parties in Cardiff Bay.

As will be discussed in detail later in this report, the demand for CFAP funds is incredibly high. The programme is also a 'fund of last resort'. This means projects that apply to CFAP for funding are unlikely to be able to access funds from other sources. This increases the strategic value of the programme.

This, we would argue, demonstrates the need for the type of funds provided by CFAP is high. We can, therefore, conclude CFAP has a key role in the delivery of the Assembly's vision for "strong communities".

2.2 Changes in Priority

Preparation work for the 2007-2013 round of European Structural Fund Programmes is well underway. The evaluation team understands that the programmes in Wales during this period will focus on interventions which support sustainable growth and jobs in line with the European Union's Lisbon and Gothenberg strategies.

A significant amount of funds has been allocated to support community projects within the current Structural Funds programme. Priority 3 (Building Sustainable Communities) of the current Objective 1 programme accounts for approximately 20% of the funding available under the current programme. According to the WEFO¹ website, 310 projects had been funded via Priority 3 as of 11th December 2006. The total value of these projects was £115,556,901; an average of £372,764 per project. A significant number of community projects have also been funded under the current Objective 2 programme.

¹ <http://www.wefo.wales.gov.uk/>

The UK's *National Strategic Reference Framework* provides an overarching framework for the new round of Structural Funds Programmes and was launched for consultation by the Welsh Assembly Government on 28 February 2006. This document contains a specific chapter on Wales setting out an analysis of the economic challenges the country faces and how the Structural Funds can help to address them.

The consultation document signals a significant shift in priority for the next round of funding. It notes there will be “*some decline*” in the proportion of spend for Priority 3 (Building Sustainable Communities) type activities as it will not contribute to the Lisbon ‘earmarking’ targets. WEFO also noted during their presentation at consultation events held across Wales during the latter part of 2006, that the new programme will include “*less investment in general urban, rural and community led regeneration and non-employment focused social inclusion measures*”.

This change in priority may have significant implications for CFAP as it is likely to become the fund of last resort for projects and activities that would previously have been submitted as applications to programmes supported by the Structural Funds Programmes. It may also lead to an increase in the number of applications submitted to CFAP by ‘professional’ organisations proposing to provide a service to communities they work with. This, again, could have implications for CFAP (please refer to section 3.3.3 of this report).

Project Example: Llanddulas Angling Club

The aim of this project was to develop the facilities at Nant y Cerrig Lake. The work included improvements to the access to and around the lake, de-silting of the lake, the provision of a car park and construction of 30 fishing pegs. The support provided by CFAP offered the club a stepping-stone to establish a self-funding and self-maintaining facility for local residents and visitors to that part of North Wales.

Having established the lake as a prime fishery, it is the club's intention to maximise its use by working with a variety of organisations and groups including disabled anglers, underprivileged youngsters and with the young offenders “Get Hooked on Fishing” programme. The club now has a number of nominees to undertake coaching courses and intends to make approaches to all local schools and youth groups with a view to promoting fishing.

3 Programme Management and Delivery Review

3.1 Introduction

A thorough review of the procedures and systems in place for the management and delivery of CFAP has been undertaken as part of the evaluation exercise. The purpose of the review was to assess the effectiveness of the systems in place, with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses and so on.

The review has been based upon:

- i. management information provided by the programme administration team;
- ii. interviews with key staff from within the CFAP team and other key stakeholders;
- iii. discussions with project applicants undertaken during project visits; and
- iv. information from the survey of project stakeholders.

An illustration of the programme management procedures is included in appendix 2. In essence, the system includes four phases:

Phase 1 – Developing a project

Phase 2 – Submitting an application

Phase 3 – Project appraisal and approval

Phase 4 – Project monitoring & review

Each of the above phases is considered in detail below.

3.2 Phase 1: Developing a Project

The first phase in the CFAP management and delivery process is the development of a project by, or on behalf of, a community which subsequently leads to the submission of an application to the Welsh Assembly Government for CFAP funding.

CFAP is a 'demand led' programme, managed on a competitive basis. The programme supports projects that have already been developed and for which an application has been submitted to the Assembly by, or on behalf of, the community. Importantly, the programme is not designed to help communities to develop projects. It is not a *capacity building* programme.

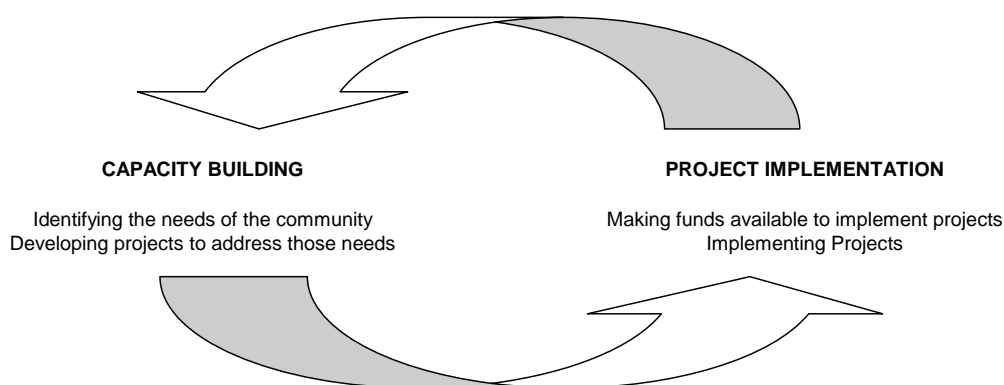
The competitive, demand-led nature of the programme raises a number of issues. It may mean the programme is not targeted at communities where the need is the most. That is, communities (or their representatives) must have the ability to develop a project and submit a good application for funding before they can access CFAP funds.

It is important to recognise CFAP is part of a 'package' of support available to communities in Wales, which has a specific role (or function) within that package.

In simplistic terms, this community regeneration package needs to include two elements working in unison:

- i. **Capacity building:** the process of supporting the development of the capacity of communities to, amongst other things, identify the needs of their communities and to develop projects that address those needs.
- ii. **Project implementation:** to make available and provide funding for the implementation of projects that address those needs.

Figure 1: The relationship between 'capacity building' and 'project implementation'



CFAP fits clearly into the second of these elements, making funding available to implement projects. Other active programmes and schemes have been specifically designed to provide communities with capacity building support. They include Communities First, Rural Community Action and the support available across Wales via the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs).

Having recognised the role of CFAP within community regeneration, the demand-led nature of the programme becomes less of an issue. However, this assumes that the capacity building elements are, where required (some communities have developed the necessary capacity themselves and do not require outside intervention), being delivered by other elements within the package. The review of capacity building programmes and activities was not part of this project but may warrant some further investigation.

Project Example: Cefn Hengoed Youth Centre

The Cefn Hengoed Youth Centre serves the two areas of Hengoed and Cefn Hengoed. It has a simple but modern kitchen and dining area, a garden area and various activity areas. The project is run by a voluntary organisation and provides an out of school hours facility for local children and young people aged 8-18. Their aim is to enhance social well being of all young

persons in the vicinity by providing facilities that develop physical, mental and social capabilities so they can take an informed and responsible role within the community.

The CFAP grant was used to provide attractive, child friendly and quality skateboarding equipment that stimulates the youth of the community providing improved communication and good social behavior.

The Cefn Hengoed Youth Centre is led by a member of the community who, in her own words, “feels ownership” for the project. The concept for the project had two origins. First, complaints from local residents regarding youths skateboarding in the street and, secondly, a consultation exercise with local children.

To explore the development of CFAP projects further, as part of the survey of project stakeholders undertaken, users of facilities supported by CFAP were asked how they identified the need their project had addressed. From the objective of supporting communities the results are encouraging. Discussing the need for new/improved facilities are the most common beginnings of projects, followed by information spread by word-of-mouth from friends and family. It is, however, worth noting there may be some suggestion from the results of the survey that communities which already have a coherent structure are more likely to identify the need for a project. The existence of community groups and social structures are clearly important elements in the process of developing a project. This supports the conclusion that communities need a certain level of capacity before they are able to access support from CFAP.

3.3 Phase 2 - Submitting an Application

The second phase of the process is the development and submission of an application for support to the Assembly’s CFAP management and administration team.

3.3.1 A focus on the needs of the customer

Community representatives and programme managers, including interviewees for this evaluation, will often note the complicated nature of an application process as a barrier to a voluntary sector group’s ability to access support from the public sector. In light of those concerns, the CFAP team have made a conscious effort to keep the process of applying for CFAP funds as simple as possible. The team has recognised that those submitting an application (their customers) are generally volunteers. The application form itself is, therefore, short and straightforward compared to other application forms such as the WEFO Objective 1 application form which runs to 16 pages.

Whilst we would accept and support the rationale for this approach, the simplicity of the application process does have implications for the project appraisal process, which is discussed in greater detail in section 3.4 of this report.

The evaluation team identified two distinct groups who are involved in the CFAP application process: unpaid members of the community (committee members and other *non-professionals*); and professionals (individuals who are paid to support the application process). The views held by both groups about the application process was explored during the research and specifically in the survey of project stakeholders.

It would seem clear the design of the application process appears to have been particularly successful in addressing the needs of the non-professionals. 68% of non-professional respondents to the survey disagreed with the statement *“the questions on the application form did not allow us to fully explain the benefits of our project”*. Only the response to *“some difficulty, it took more than one attempt”* shows some sign of less than overwhelming agreement.

Interestingly, almost 30% of projects did, however, need to make more than one application before they were successful. This suggests, whilst the process is straightforward, it may not be something communities can undertake successfully at the first attempt. This, again, supports the conclusion that applicants will need some level of capacity (that is, ability to make an application) before they can access CFAP funds.

3.3.2 The Role of professionals

We have identified that professionals have two roles in CFAP. They provide support to applicants from communities by providing skills and services and, increasingly, as applicants themselves. One such body is discussed in one of the project examples included in this report. These organisations may work on behalf of the community or act as a provider of funds for small projects (see section 3.3.3). They include private companies limited by guarantee and are, in a number of cases, accessing funding from a number of different sources.

Interestingly, less than 15% of professionals who responded to the survey were involved in writing the application. This suggests the community has a strong role in the process. Professional services were largely advice on technical matters (26.5%), supporting evidence (23.5%) and on financial matters (17.6%). Few projects have called on legal advice (2.9%).

There is a clear distinction between professionals who provide services to the fabric of the projects (for example builders who are in effect ‘capital’ costs) and those which provide services to the application and administration of the project. The former appear to give technical advice, the latter to manage the application. There are clearly issues of cost and competition that may need to be considered to maintain the community ethos of the programme.

Project Example: Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

This £300k project is funding the operation of a small grants scheme of up to £20k per applicant to support any eligible community and voluntary organisations in regenerating communities throughout the county of Caerphilly. The scheme is able to fund facilities and activities addressing the three key strands of regeneration – social, environmental and

economic – in order to increase the chances of effecting lasting change. Organisations covering each of these elements are able to benefit from the scheme.

In this type of project, a large organisation (in this case, GAVO) bears the 'cost' of preparing an application for CFAP funding rather than the community groups themselves. The Assembly has no direct contact with the community.

3.3.3 The changing nature of applicants

The majority of CFAP applications are, as previously noted, submitted by voluntary sector (or community) groups and the programme has been designed to deal with that type of project. However, professional organisations, such as voluntary sector associations, are increasingly submitting applications for support on behalf of the communities they represent and support.

These applications can be significant in terms of their value and can include funding to provide additional facilities (such as office accommodation) for the organisation in question. Anticipated reductions in the amount of funding available from alternative sources (please refer to section 2 of this report) is likely to lead to an increase in demand and, hence, competition for CFAP resources. Reductions in alternative sources of funding is also likely to include an increase in the demand for CFAP funds from professional organisations who currently access funds from programmes such as Objective 1².

If CFAP continues to be managed on a competitive basis, this could mean less funds will be available to community groups who (unless restrictions are introduced) are unlikely to be able to compete with professional organisations. Professional organisations will, in the majority of cases, be able to submit 'better' applications for funding to the Assembly. That is, professional organisations will have more experience of preparing grant application forms and, hence, be more aware of the information required, how it should be presented and so on. In a competitive scenario, therefore, professional organisations are more likely to be able to access funds from programmes, such as CFAP, than a voluntary or community group.

Unless restrictions are introduced, this shift towards professional applications could change the nature of the CFAP programme from one dominated by small-scale community projects to one focused on providing funds to professional organisations who, subsequently, fund community projects.

It should be noted, a move towards more applications from professional / intermediary organisations is not, necessarily, a bad thing if there are mechanisms in place to control the type of project submitted and the amount of funds the intermediary is able to 'top-slice' for management purposes. Managing the delivery of CFAP via professional intermediaries could have a

² Details of organisations that have accessed funds from Objective 1 and other Structural Funds can be found on the WEFO website (www.wefo.wales.gov.uk).

number of benefits including lessening the number of applications submitted to WAG, which could reduce the workload of the programme administration team and so on. However, as previously discussed, it could also significantly change the nature of the programme by substantially reducing the ability of community groups to access support directly from CFAP.

3.4 Phase 3 – Project Appraisal and Approval

The third phase of the programme management and delivery process is the appraisal and approval of CFAP applications by the programme administration team.

3.4.1 The procedure

Our understanding of the project appraisal system in place for CFAP is:

- i. Project applications are submitted via two / three rounds a year.
- ii. All applications are independently appraised and scored by at least two officials from within the administrative team and subsequently discussed at a meeting of the appraisal team as a whole with appraisal scores being subsequently 'confirmed'.
- iii. Applications are distributed to colleagues within the Department as appropriate for comment during the above process.
- iv. The funding is available is allocated to projects according to their score until all the funds available have been allocated (that is, funding is allocated to the highest scoring projects until it has all been allocated).
- v. Recommendations are submitted to the Minister responsible for approval.
- vi. Project approval / rejection letters are issued to applicants.
- vii. Feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants, who can subsequently re-submit their applications in future rounds.

The target is to complete the above process within eight weeks or 40 working days.

3.4.2 Demand - the number of applications received

The appraisal and approval of applications dominates the activities of the CFAP administration team. The sheer volume of applications received in each round requires the investment of a significant proportion of the staff resource available to the programme administration team.

Demand for funding from the CFAP programme is incredibly high. According to the database provided to the research team, over 1,256 project applications have been submitted since the programme's inception in 2002. If demand is an indication of need, there is a significant need for the funding provided by CFAP.

Importantly, it would seem clear the level of demand that exists for support cannot be satisfied by CFAP. It would also seem clear that, due

to the anticipated increase in demand for CFAP funds, the current CFAP funding structures will not be able to meet the likely future demand for funding.

Over 50% of the projects submitted since the programme's inception have been rejected. Discussions with Assembly officials have suggested a significant number of those projects are rejected on the basis there is insufficient funding available and not because they fail to meet the programme's eligibility criteria. This needs to be taken into account when considering the future development of the programme especially when we consider demand for funding is likely to increase.

By keeping the application process as simple as possible (for the reasons discussed in section 3.3 of this report) the type of project eligible for funding is, as long as it supports the local community, almost endless. Keeping the programme criteria minimal and hence, simple, means there is very little activity considered ineligible for support. This means it is very difficult to control the number of applications that are submitted and, hence, need to be appraised.

3.4.3 Information on the application form

One of the main issues identified during the evaluation is the quality of the application submitted is fundamental to the appraisal and approval process. This is, obviously, not a characteristic which is unique to CFAP as it is a feature of the majority of competitive grant schemes. It is, however, an issue that warrants further discussion as it has an influence on the way in which the programme is managed and the benefits which it generates.

The appraisal process employed is, to a large extent, dependent on the information contained within the application form. The programme administration team will, on occasion, seek additional information to support their appraisal; research on the internet was an example given during discussions with the administration team. However, the approval or rejection of the application is predominantly dependent on the information provided by the applicant on the application form. This has a number of implications.

It would seem clear the projects are developed and are submitted to CFAP for funding based on a need within the community in question. There is, however, limited scope within the appraisal and approval system to 'check' the information provided by the applicant is accurate. The system can, therefore, be considered to be somewhat exposed to, for example, exaggerations of need. There are a number of organisations in existence with whom applications could be checked and, hence, this exposure reduced. They include local authorities, regional development agencies and voluntary sector associations. There are also other Assembly Government Departments and/or funded organisations whose views could be sought in greater detail than they are currently, such as Communities First and/or Rural Community Action teams. Consideration should be given to how the skills and knowledge

available from these departments and organisations can be utilised as part of the appraisal process.

3.4.4 Gaps in the appraisal system

The evaluation team has identified a number of potential gaps in the CFAP appraisal process including:

- i. Limited, if any, independent and formal consideration of added value; how each project will add value to the facilities or the services already available to that community.
- ii. Limited, if any, formal consideration of the potential for displacement (such as whether the project in question will have a detrimental effect on any other services or facilities within other local communities).
- iii. Limited independent consideration of how the proposed project will fit with local strategies in place to regenerate the region or community in question.
- iv. A lack of quality threshold within the appraisal system. In theory, the same project can be rejected in one round and approved in the next without any changes being made because the minimum approval score fluctuates. This could be perceived as limited quality control within the appraisal system.
- v. It is very difficult to compare projects during the appraisal process. This means it can be difficult to assess whether one project is better than another where they are working with very different communities and/or where they are proposing completely different activities.

The main reason for a number of the gaps outlined above is the application system which has been designed to be as simple and streamlined as possible to reflect the fact that the majority of applications are submitted by voluntary groups. The application form is short and does not, therefore, include a number of questions which would provide the information necessary to consider some of the issues identified above.

Before we accept the above as criticism of the appraisal and approval system, it is important to consider the above within the context of the aims and objectives of CFAP.

The appraisal system used for CFAP applications is clearly built around the type of projects the programme has been designed to attract. That is, a critical review of the appraisal system may identify gaps. However, those gaps are less of an issue due to the type of projects the CFAP tends to support. The majority of projects will tend to be small scale, have clear justification and not tend to be controversial. They can, therefore, be considered ‘low-risk’. The cost-benefit of introducing a completely robust appraisal and approval process would, therefore, be questionable.

It is also important to consider the effect that a more stringent, WEFO like, appraisal system would have on the programme as a whole. A more robust

appraisal would require a more complex, longer, application form. This would probably have a number of effects including making the programme less accessible to communities and voluntary groups who do not have the capacity (that will have been developed from, for example, previous experience of submitting applications for funds) or the time to complete a lengthy application form.

The gaps within the system identified do, however, become apparent when larger or more complex projects are being considered. There are no 'special arrangements' in place to deal with projects outside the standard boundaries of the programme. All projects are treated in the same way. This is understandable since CFAP is a competitive programme. Projects are competing with each other for a limited amount of funds and, therefore, must be appraised in a consistent manner.

However, it does mean that risk cannot be taken into account during the appraisal process. For example, a £300k project (the funding of a delegated grant scheme which would be considered high risk due to, amongst other issues, the level of finance involved) is appraised in the same way as a £6k refurbishment of a village hall, which may be necessary to keep the resource available (that is, need is clear and the risk, therefore, small). A more balanced approach would seem to be required.

Project Example: Span Arts Building

Span Arts is a community arts group based in Narberth. The group was established in 1998 and its objective is to serve a wide range of people in Pembrokeshire with innovative and exciting live music and creative arts activities. They provide a varied selection of community arts activities ranging from music, dance and arts performances to workshops in schools and training sessions and work with all aspects of the community including children and young adults, care homes and disabled people of all kinds.

The aim of the Span Arts Building which has been supported by a CFAP grant is to serve a wide range of people in Pembrokeshire with innovative arts activities. It provides activities ranging from music, dance and arts performances to workshops and training sessions. The building is also used to reach out to groups of people who do not have ready access to the arts.

The CFAP grant gave Span Arts the opportunity to purchase the building which provided them with a solid base for the organisation in the heart of the community and enabled the organisation to continually deliver innovative and exciting projects and events efficiently, because of its unique location to high profile venues, arts organisations and businesses. It also raised the profile of Span Arts by securing the premises to enable the charity to move forward with its partners to deliver arts in Pembrokeshire.

3.4.5 Dependence on the administration team

The programme administration team have a critical role in the management and delivery of the CFAP programme as they do in the delivery of any programme. However, in the case of CFAP the dependence of the appraisal system on those individuals within the team may be of concern. Any system

dependent on members of a team is exposed to members changing. The evaluation team has concluded that CFAP is in such a situation.

The administration team has been able to deal with a number of changes in personnel to date via a very effective 'on-the-job' training system, whereby the departing official takes responsibility for the training of the new recruit. Such a system may well continue to be effective. However, it is exposed and may well struggle to deal with multiple changes. It may, therefore, be prudent to consider building additional safeguards into the system. For example, it may be appropriate to consider the introduction of more detailed written procedures.

3.4.6 Pressure on the administration team

The volume of applications received in relation to the size of the programme administration team is significant. Our understanding is that in the region of 200 applications were received during the most recent round of submissions. The team has 8 weeks (or 40 working days) within which to complete the appraisal process for these projects. That process includes the appraisal of each project by two members of staff, consultation with departmental colleagues, a meeting to review and compare the projects and seeking Ministerial approval for the decisions that have been made.

Discounting the time necessary to consult with colleagues and to seek Ministerial approval, the administration team (which consists of five officials during project appraisals) must complete two project appraisals a day to meet the deadline. Such a workload would clearly put pressure on any programme administration team.

It is also important to note the appraisal of project applications is only an element of the role of the programme administration team. The above is, therefore, likely to underestimate the workload of the team.

3.4.7 Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

A significant proportion of the CFAP administrative team is time spent providing feedback to those individuals and organisations who have submitted unsuccessful applications for support.

During interviews, a number of the programme management stakeholders noted they believed the feedback provided to applicants at the end of the project appraisal process was one of the strengths of the programme. Those comments are supported by the information collected from applicants who rate the service provided by the project team very highly. The number of applications that are resubmitted (and subsequently approved) is also an indication of the quality of the feedback and advice the team provides. It is, however, important to recognise that this 'service' does come at a price.

A number of the programme administration team noted they routinely spend up to an hour providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants (including time on

the phone, preparing notes and so on). This would include time spent discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the application and also providing advice on how the application could be improved in advance of its resubmission as part of the next round of applications.

Assuming this is an accurate estimate – which the evaluation team believe it is given that a number of interviewees gave the same estimate – and using the number of applications that were rejected during the last round of submissions (140), we can estimate the team spends 140 hours or 18.7 days per round providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Assuming there are three rounds of applications per year, this could mean 420 hours, 56 days or 11.2 weeks per annum.

The question that needs to be considered is whether this is an effective use of the resources that are available. The quality of the advice provided and the benefit of that advice would seem to be clear from the feedback received from applicants during this evaluation. However, consideration should be given to whether this a service which the CFAP programme should be delivering. Again, it is important to consider this issue within the context of the strategic role CFAP has within community regeneration in Wales. As previously discussed, the role of CFAP as the programme team understands it, is to provide project funding to community groups. It is not a capacity building programme.

Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants is clearly important. However, there is a fine line between providing constructive feedback to applicants and providing advice and guidance to community groups on the development of projects and the submission of applications for grant funding which, the evaluation team would argue, is a capacity building activity and, therefore, outside the remit of CFAP.

It is also important to recognise that programmes are funded by the Assembly to provide capacity building support to communities. The effectiveness of those programmes has not been considered as part of this evaluation. However, their existence suggests that the efficiency and the appropriateness of the CFAP team going beyond providing 'constructive feedback' to project applicants needs to be questioned.

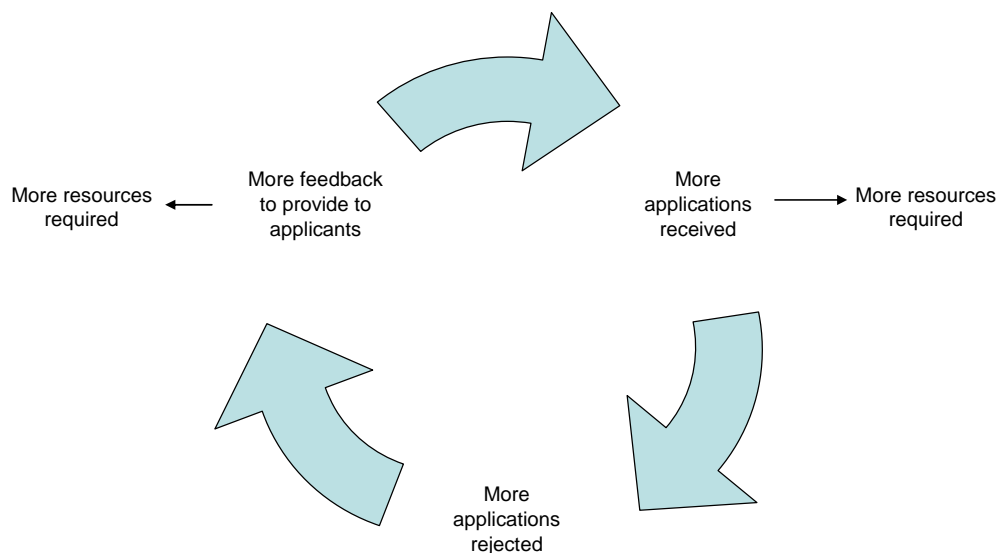
3.4.8 The CFAP vicious circle

The evaluation team has identified what could be described as a 'CFAP vicious circle'. This vicious circle summarises what the evaluation team has concluded is one of the main concerns regarding the CFAP management system.

The principle of the cycle is that, in current circumstances, more project applications will lead to more projects being rejected, which will then generate the need for more feedback which, in turn, will lead to more applications being submitted and so on. This problem is exacerbated since CFAP is a fund of last resort which means applicants are unlikely to seek funds from alternative

sources. This may be further exacerbated by the likely increase in demand for funds in the future.

Figure 2: The CFAP vicious circle



It would seem clear, unless additional resource is made available or changes are introduced to the system which controls the number of applications submitted, the CFAP management system will become unsustainable in the very near future as a result of the vicious circle in which it is caught.

3.5 Phase 4 – Project Monitoring & Review

Once a project has been approved it moves into the final phase of the management process, monitoring and review. During this phase a project will be monitored during its implementation and, once completed, reviewed to ensure it has been implemented as per the approved application. This phase would also include any assessment of the outcome and impact of a project and of the programme as a whole.

Under the terms and conditions of CFAP funding, the Assembly Government requires beneficiaries to confirm, at the end of the project, that the funding has been used as originally intended. Once a project has been completed, each of the beneficiaries is asked by letter to complete an *Evaluation Declaration Form* and return it to the administration team with copies of any relevant documentary evidence such as builder's invoices, annual accounts, financial statements and so on. In addition, the administrative team conducts a series of visits to a proportion of the projects which have benefited from the programme. The purpose of the visit is, in the first instance, to inspect the project. It is, however, also used as an opportunity to review the benefits of the project via discussions with the project applicants and beneficiaries. After the visit, a *Monitoring Form* is completed and then kept on the relevant file. No further monitoring activities are undertaken.

3.5.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the system

The first thing to observe about this phase of the programme management process is the time the administrative team has available to undertake project monitoring and review activities is limited due to the focus on project appraisal and approval. As previously noted, the administrative team's time is dominated by the previous phase of the management process. This has a significant knock-on effect on the team's monitoring and review activities. A number of interviewees noted monitoring was something they were told should be done "during the quiet periods" in between project application rounds which, somewhat inevitably, never materialise.

The system used has a number of strengths including the fact the administrative procedure is easy to manage (and monitor) and the administrative burden upon beneficiaries is relatively light compared to other programmes. For example, Objective 1 supported projects are subject to significant monitoring and audit rules and regulations. Again, this indicates the desire of the programme administrative team to limit the burden upon community groups who apply for CFAP funding. It does, however, also lead to some potential weaknesses which will be discussed later.

On a positive note, the findings of the survey suggests the CFAP team continues to provide a quality service after the completion of the application process. Payments and help from WAG staff in dealing with unforeseen problems deserve particular mention, only 1.8% of respondents received late payments and only 0.9% did not find WAG staff helpful.

The evaluation team is aware the CFAP monitoring systems have been subject to some criticism from internal Assembly review teams in the past. However, the team was shown systems that are now being put in place to improve the way in which information is recorded and used.

The level of detail received from projects (that is, the progress reports) is limited. This can lead to problems in terms of identifying problems (e.g. delays in implementation) which can then lead to problems in terms of ensuring individual projects, and the programme as a whole, are meeting expenditure targets. The amount of monitoring undertaken once the project has been completed is also limited. 10% of projects in each county are, according to the procedure, subject to a visit. However, there are no additional monitoring activities for the majority of projects once the specified *Evaluation Declaration Form* has been submitted. This means there is little, if any, analysis of the outcomes and impact of any given project. For example, there is no review of the level of use of a facility a year after it has been renovated. Collecting such information could be very useful in terms of understanding the benefits communities derive from CFAP funded projects.

Again, the above may seem to be critical. However, there is a need to evaluate the CFAP monitoring and review procedures within the context

of the aims and objectives of the programme. Any potential changes to the monitoring and review procedures need to be considered from a cost-benefit perspective with ‘cost’ being the resources required for the activity (officer time) and ‘benefit’ being the benefit of the information collected (safeguarding the interests of the Welsh Assembly Government, understanding programme outcomes and so on).

As previously discussed, CFAP is designed to support small-scale, low-risk community-based projects. The project appraisal process also requires the benefit of the project to the community to be clearly demonstrated. It is possible, therefore, to argue there is no justification for implementing an extensive monitoring and review system for projects that represent little risk to the Assembly. However, larger, more complicated and expensive projects may well carry greater risk which may well justify the use of a more stringent (and expensive) monitoring system. The key to this issue may, therefore, again be ‘risk’ and how risk is identified and subsequently treated.

There is currently no differentiation between a low-risk project and a high-risk project in terms of monitoring and review. There may, therefore, be cause for the programme administration to consider the risk associated with a project when it is approved and designate the monitoring and review procedures used according to the risks associated with that project. For example, a large, complex project would be flagged and, accordingly, subject to more stringent monitoring procedures.

Project Example: Elfed Avenue Church, Penarth

The Elfed Avenue Church Hall supports twelve community-based activities and has the support of a cross-section of the local community who recognise the work done for the area of Penarth. The Church was built in 1954 to support a large council estate, now mostly privately owned; the inhabitants of the local area are a cross-section of young and old.

The Elders Council of Elfed Avenue United Church raised funds to make repairs to its 50 year old electrical system and replace the water-damaged suspended ceiling. Without these improvements, the facility would have quickly become unusable. The Council submitted a successful application for CFAP funds having previously submitted numerous applications to other programmes without success. They are hoping to increase the numbers using the improved facility to 20,000 in a year’s time.

Project Example: Lamphey Hall

Lamphey Hall is situated in the small village of Lamphey. The existing hall in the village was constructed mainly of asbestos and, at the time of submitting the application for CFAP support, would have lasted no longer than another year. The hall is the hub of the village and its surrounding areas. It is also the only building in the area which can house the many activities that take place within the community and is used on a daily basis by a large number of organisations.

CFAP funds are being used to build a new village hall to the rear of the existing hall and on completion of the new building, demolish the old using specialist labour to dispose of the asbestos. The development of the new village hall will mean that more groups and societies are going to be able to use the facilities.

4 Programme Benefits Review

The ability to evaluate the benefits of any form of intervention is obviously important. Programme administrators need to be aware of whether or not the investment that has been made is worthwhile and whether it represents value for money.

Measuring the benefit of community regeneration activities is notoriously difficult. Whilst it may be possible to assess the effectiveness of business support activities by, for example, the number of jobs created or safeguarded, this will not be possible for community regeneration activities. A recent report assessing the impact of the work of rural Community Councils in England (Moseley et al, 2006) concluded that measuring economic outcomes *“is a difficult concept to grapple with both in theory and in practice and that it is a delusion to imagine that such outcomes can be easily expressed in simple arithmetic or cost terms”*.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the benefits of the programme were reviewed on the basis of:

- a) **Local Benefits** – such as changes in the levels of use of the facility and the extent to which the predicted effects have actually occurred.
- b) **Geographic Benefits** – for the geographical example, distribution of funding

The evaluation team was also asked to look specifically at a number of projects which supported Welsh speakers and/or individuals with disabilities as part of the geographic benefits review.

4.1 Local Benefits

The survey of project beneficiaries was used to explore the local benefits of projects supported by CFAP. As noted in table 1 below, the survey of project stakeholders found an increase in the use of facilities with 73% of stakeholders believing more people used the facility in question after funding had been received.

More than one quarter of respondents also noted they undertake new activities, over 16% have joined a new group or club and more than one third of people have made new friends as a result of the project in question.

Table 1: Response to Question: “What do you think the project has achieved?”

Effect	% of users reporting effect
I do some new activities	27.1
I have joined a new group or club	16.3
I have made new friends	36.1
I don't have to travel so far for my leisure activities	18.1
Community spirit has improved	53.6
More people use the improved facility	72.9
It has filled a clear need in the community	64.5
Other	18.7

To further explore the effect of CFAP projects, the questionnaire included a series of positive and negative statements regarding supported projects which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with. Responses to those statements are illustrated graphically by figures 3 and 4.

The results have been split into two graphs, the first of which includes responses where ‘agree’ is a positive response and the second which includes responses where ‘disagree’ was the positive response. That is, the statements included in figure 3 are positive statements such as “the project has made a valuable contribution to the community”. Statements in figure 4 are negative such as “the project benefits few people in the community”.

Figure 3: Response to the Question: “What do you think the project has achieved?”
(statement where ‘agree’ is better)

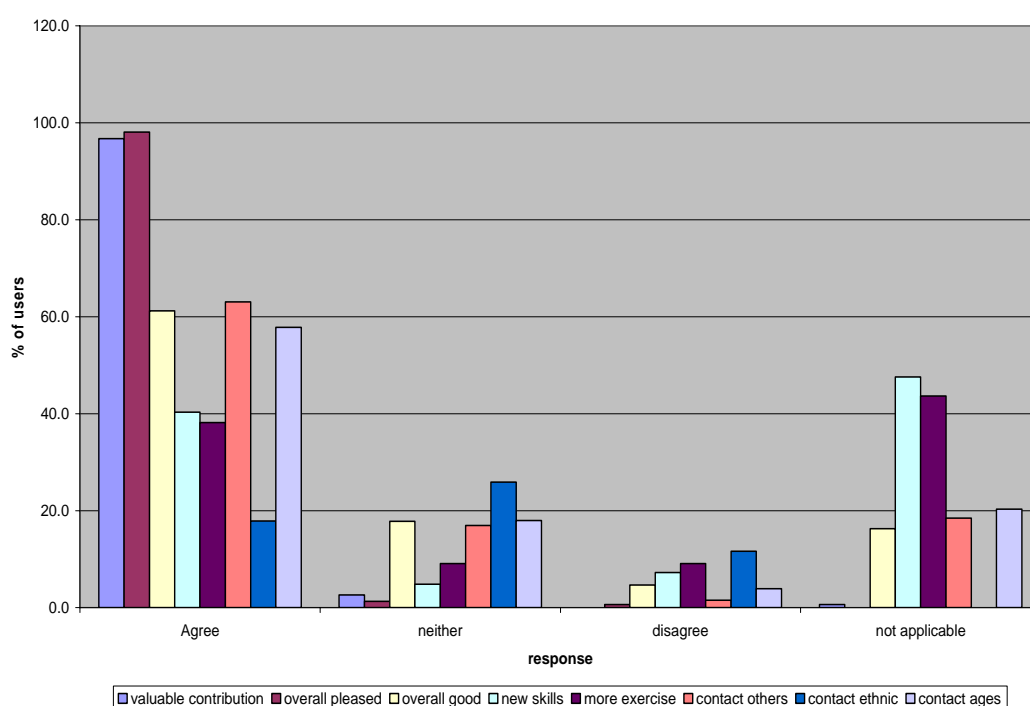


Figure 3 illustrates how many of the respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ with the following statements:

- *The project has made a valuable contribution to our community.*
- *Overall I’m pleased with the project.*
- *There are good and bad points but overall the good outweigh the bad.*
- *I have learnt new skills/taken an evening class because of the project.*
- *I take more exercise because of the project.*
- *The project has helped an existing group to contact other interest groups in the community.*
- *The project has helped an existing group to contact other ethnic groups in the community.*
- *The project has helped an existing group to contact other age groups in the community.*

The number of respondents that disagree with these positive statements are very low. The number that agree their project “made a valuable contribution to our community” and “overall I’m pleased” are notably high. This is a very positive reflection on the projects supported by CFAP.

Figure 4: Response to the Question: “What do you think the project has achieved?”
(statement where ‘disagree’ is better)

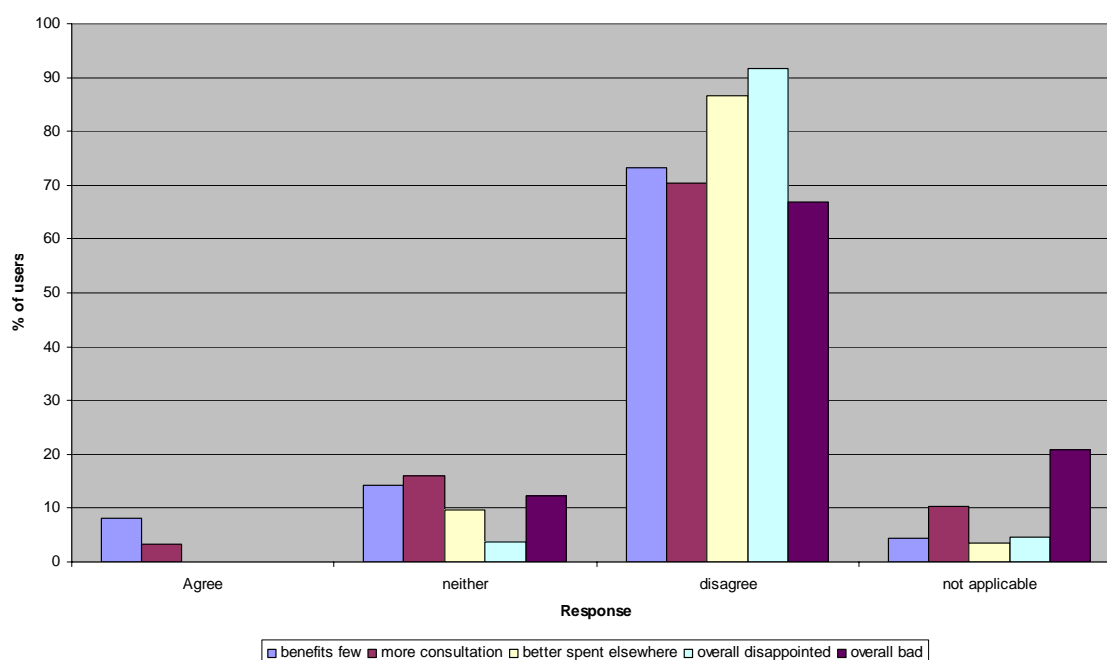


Figure 4 illustrates how many of the respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ with the following negative statements:

- *The project benefits few people in the community.*
- *There should have been more consultation with the community.*
- *The money could have been used on more beneficial projects.*

- *Overall I'm disappointed with the project.*
- *There are good and bad points but overall the bad outweigh the good.*

The majority of interviewees disagreed with these statements. Again, this reflects very positively upon the programme and indicates a high regard for CFAP supported projects amongst interviewees.

4.1.1 Conclusions

The results of the survey demonstrate that project outputs are significant from the perspective of the stakeholder. They also demonstrate that, in accordance with programme objectives, outputs tend to be localised within the community in question. This demonstrates that CFAP is clearly effective and the benefits of projects supported are, on a local level, considerable.

Project Example: Cwmavon Community Hall

The Community Hall in the village of Cwmavon was originally built as a school room for the adjacent Wesleyan Chapel. The stone built chapel was located on the main road from Pontypool to Blaenavon in an area which required extensive excavation to gain sufficient ground space for the two buildings. When the chapel closed in the early 1970's the buildings were purchased by the village community and the hall became a community building. Since that time the hall has played an active part in providing space and facilities for many local activities. Unfortunately, a conditional survey found extensive defects in the building. This, in addition to design problems which made the hall impossible to access for those who have mobility problems, meant it was becoming impossible to continue to use the facility.

The community sought funding for a new community hall structure and were successful in an application for CFAP funding. The grant provided the necessary match funding for Big Lottery funding that had already been secured. The new hall can accommodate the existing activities enjoyed by Cwmavon's community groups such as a lunch club, fitness classes, residents' association, dog training club, gardening club, mother and toddler groups as well as many additional activities.

4.2 Geographic Benefits

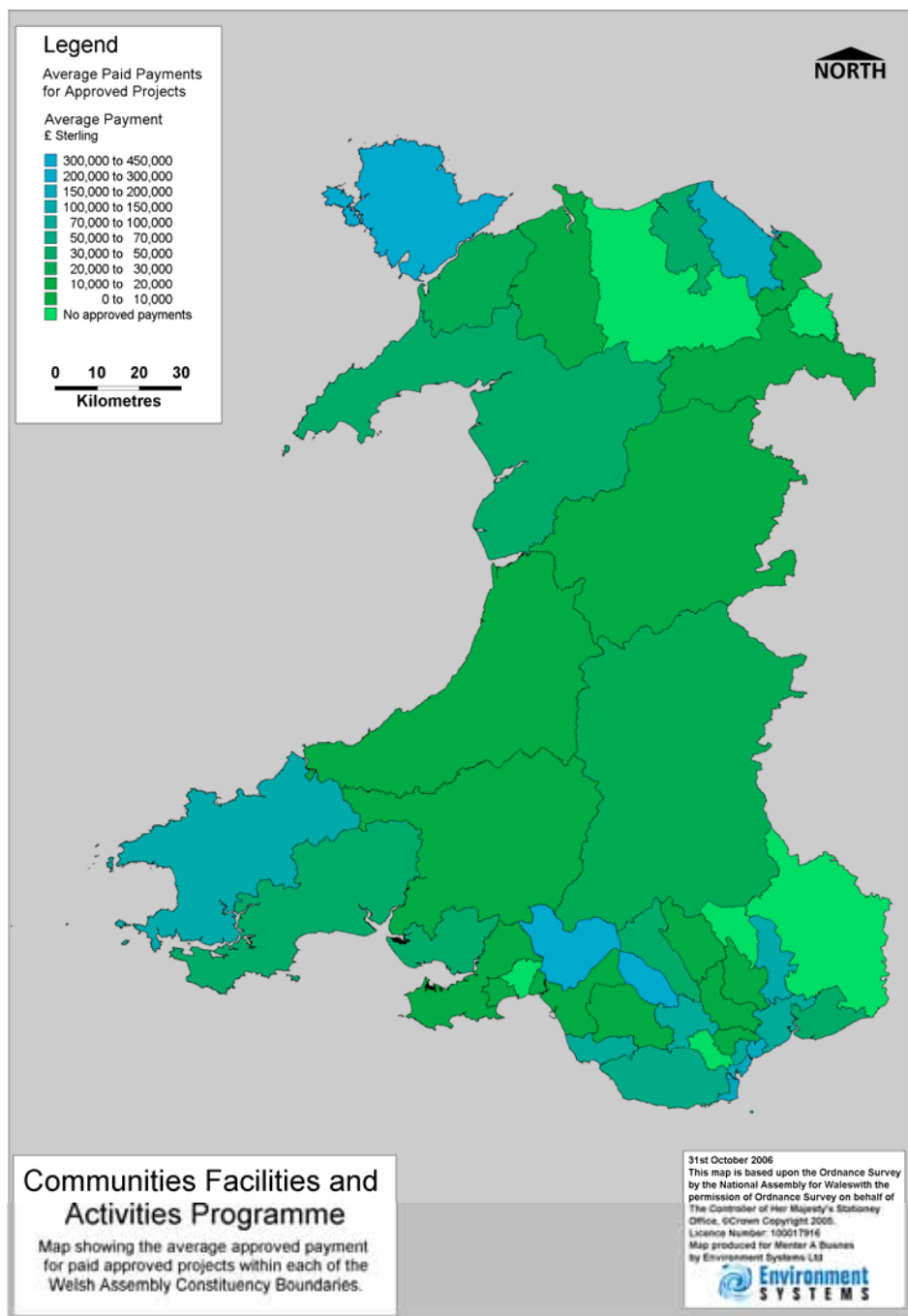
Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis was used as a means of exploring which regions of Wales had benefited from CFAP funds. GIS is a very useful mechanism for analysing issues such as where programme funding has been spent and so on. It can also provide an insight into issues which may not otherwise be apparent.

For the development of the maps, information from the Assembly's programme management database was imported into a GIS system and then mapped onto a map of Wales showing the National Assembly for Wales' new electoral boundaries.

The following maps have been produced:

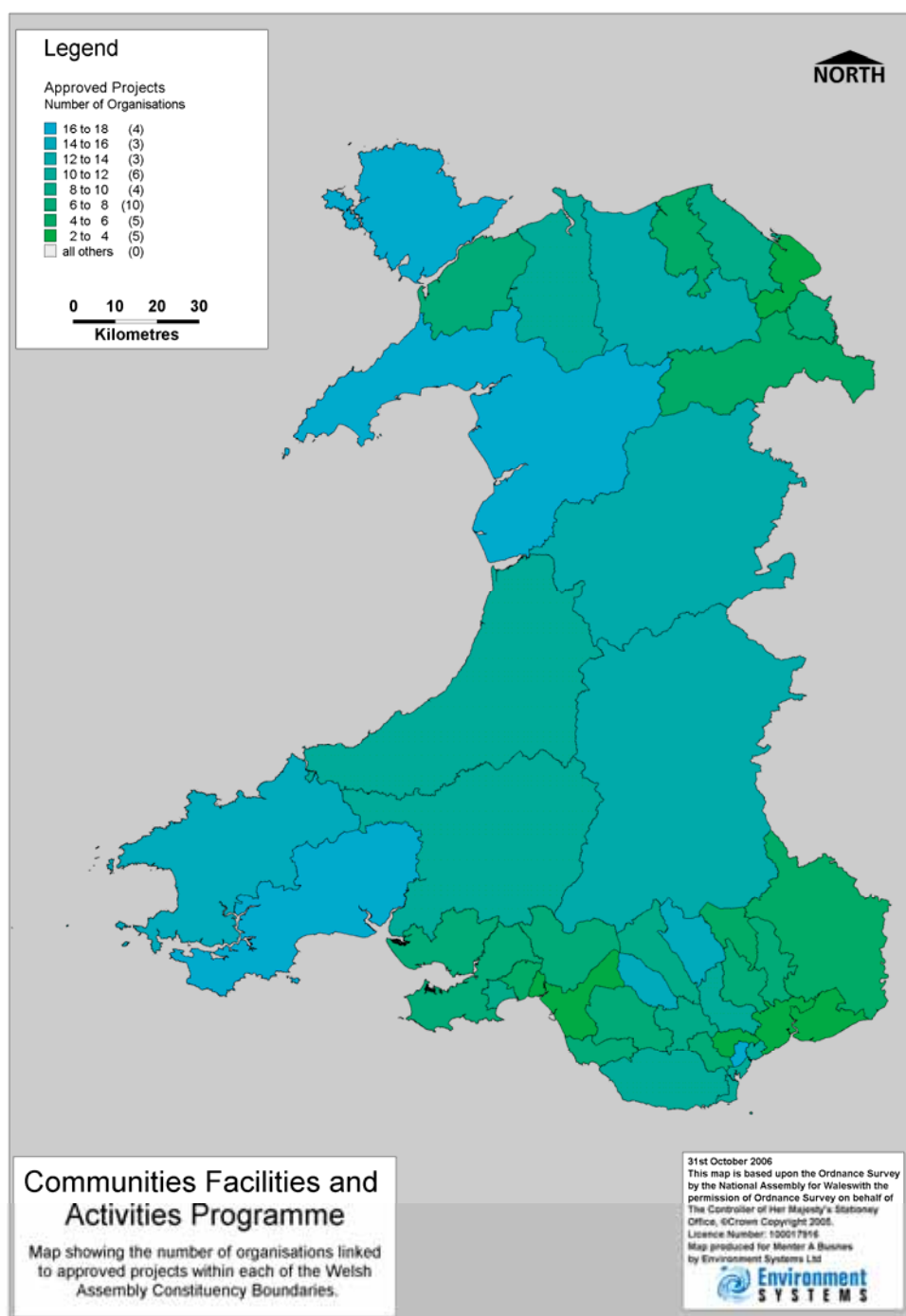
1. the average payment for paid / approved projects
2. the number of organisations linked to approved projects
3. the number of approved projects
4. the number and type of match-funders linked to approved projects
5. the number of 'Welsh speaking' approved projects
6. the number of approved 'disabled' projects

Map 1: The Average Payments for Approved Projects within the National Assembly for Wales' Electoral Boundary



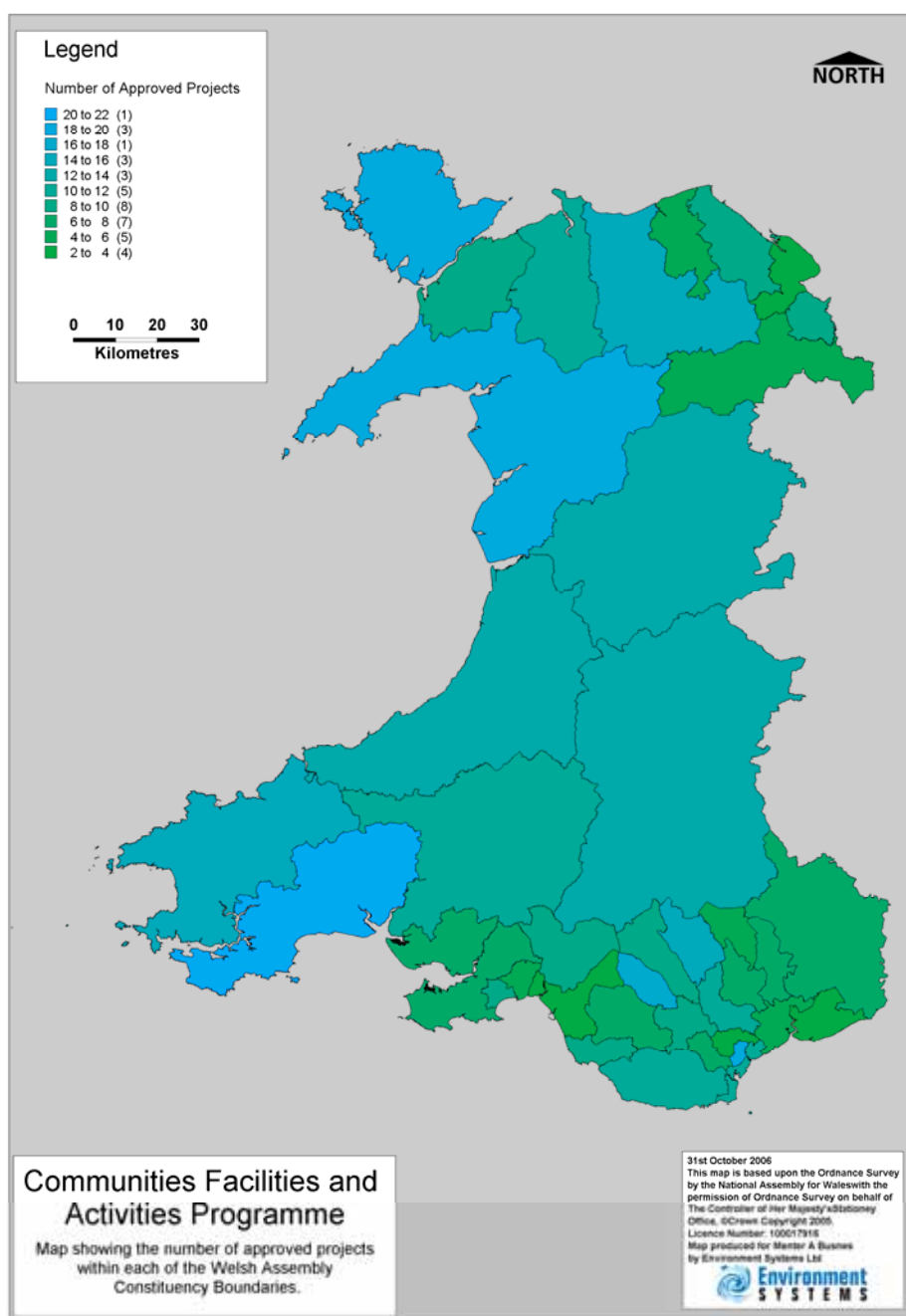
The above map illustrates there are a number of 'hotspots' where the average payment for approved CFAP projects is highest. 'Hotspots' include Anglesey, the Cynon Valley, Preseli Pembrokeshire, Neath and Ogmore.

Map 2: The Number of Organisations Linked to Approved Projects within the National Assembly for Wales Electoral Boundary



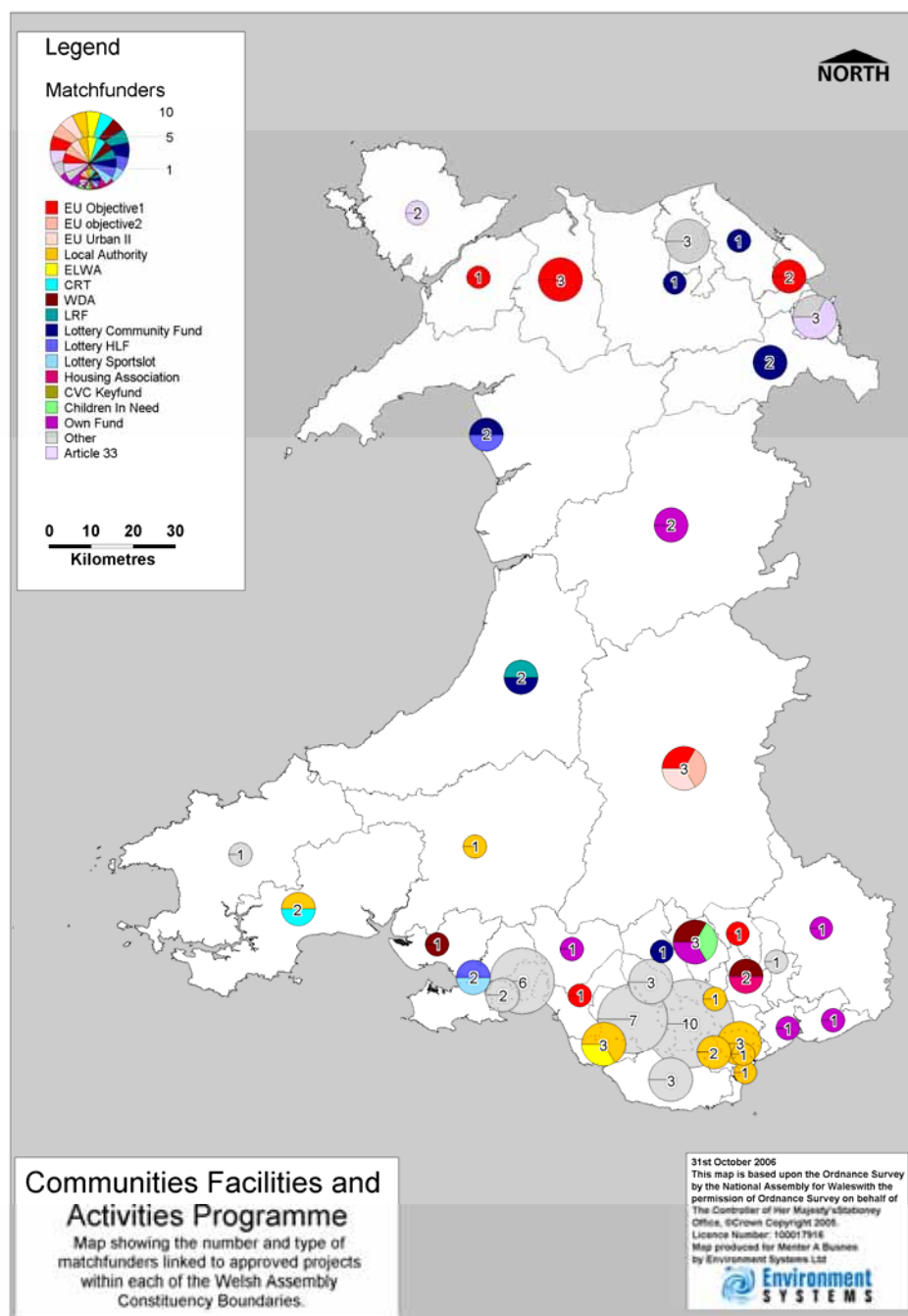
The above map illustrates a number of regions which include organisations which have been particularly successful in accessing funding from CFAP. This may be the result of a number of factors including the existence of a particularly strong community support network within the region (for example, Menter Môn on Anglesey). This may warrant some further investigation.

Map 3: The Number of Approved Projects within each National Assembly for Wales Electoral Boundary



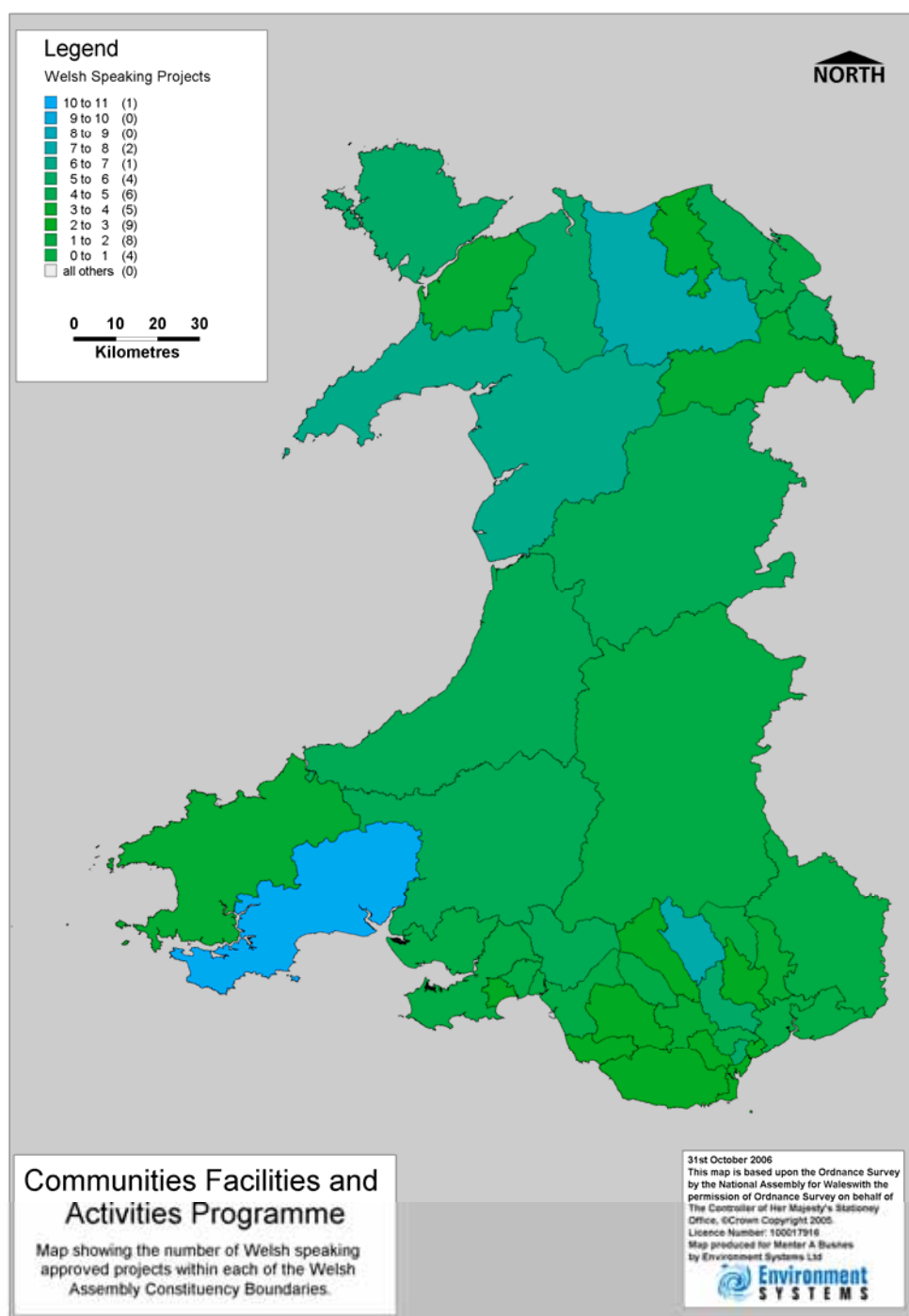
Again, this map clearly illustrates there are regions in Wales which have been particularly successful in getting projects supported by CFAP funds. In particular, Anglesey, Dwyfor Meirionnydd, Cardiff North, Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire would seem to have had a higher than average number of projects approved. Interestingly, this pattern does not match the distribution of average payments or the number of organisations that have been linked to CFAP projects as illustrated by maps 1 and 2.

Map 4: The Number and Type of Matchfunders linked to Approved Projects within each National Assembly for Wales Electoral Boundary



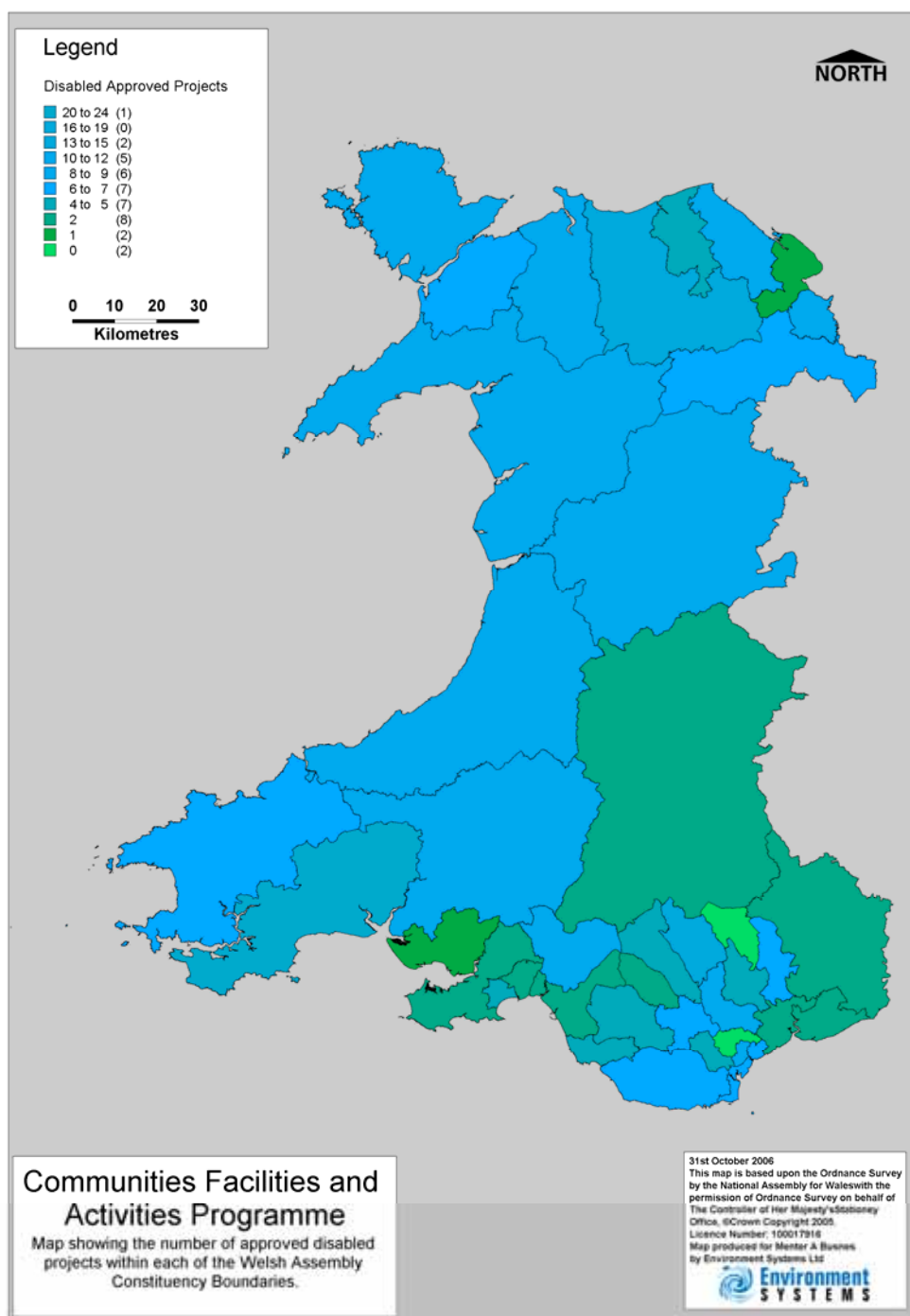
The above map is interesting as it does not match the previous maps since it illustrates far higher levels of match funding being accessed in South Wales & the Valleys than in the other regions. There may be a number of reasons for this including the possibility there are more 'alternative' or 'additional' sources of funding for community regeneration projects in those regions. This may, again, be an issue that warrants further investigation.

Map 5: The Number of 'Welsh Speaking' Approved Projects within each National Assembly
for Wales Electoral Boundary



As illustrated by the above map there have been few 'Welsh speaking' projects in those areas of Wales where you would not expect that type of project to be a priority for communities. There are, however, particular hotspots which may warrant further investigation.

Map 6: The Number of Approved 'Disability' Projects within each National Assembly for Wales Electoral Boundary



Again, there is a clear hotspot and, again, that hotspot is Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire. The fact this area is the same as was identified in the previous map suggests that there may be an organisation or an individual within that region which is driving the development of certain types of projects.

Project Example: St James' Church

St James' Church is a Christian body whose primary aim is to advance the Christian faith and have an active role in meeting the needs of the community.

The needs of the town are now far more complex than when St James was first built and CFAP funds were used for a project which would provide a well-placed centre for worship and amenities that would not otherwise be available within Holywell, such as a 'drop in' centre for tea/coffee, luncheon club and rooms for formal and informal gatherings. The community had already managed to raise £425,000 for this project but required a further £200,000 funding which was the grant provided by CFAP.

Project Example: Vineyard Vale Community Group

The aim of the *Vineyard Vale Community Group* is to benefit all residents by working with communities to develop and enhance the area in which they live.

An application was submitted to CFAP for funding to landscape an existing run down park area to create two separate areas. Area 1 will be a park for all children living in the area from ages 1-14. The area is to consist of park equipment for all the younger children consisting of swings, roundabouts, slides, climbing apparatus and also learning equipment. Area 2 will be the community/recreation area, this area will be hard paved with a 4 metre fence around all perimeters. This area will be used for a variety of purposes and by persons of all ages and abilities.

4.2.1 Conclusions

The GIS analysis has identified a number of interesting 'hotspots' within Wales. Some regions have clearly been more successful in submitting applications and accessing CFAP funds than others. Other areas have been more successful in other respects, such as being able to access match funding.

The reasons for this may be varied. However, the evaluation team suspects it may be because there is a particularly effective community regeneration support organisation in that region. It has not been possible to draw any specific conclusions as to why this is the case during this evaluation. It may, therefore, be appropriate to undertake further research in one or a number of the hotspots identified to ascertain why certain regions have been more successful than others in accessing CFAP funds.

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

This final section of the report will present the conclusions of the evaluation process. It also includes a series of recommendations that have been made by the evaluation team for the Assembly's consideration.

5.1 The Evaluation Questions

The following will address the evaluation questions as set out in the brief for this project.

5.1.1 How effective is the scheme in realising its policy objectives?

The conclusions of the evaluation team's review of the effectiveness of CFAP in terms of realising its policy objectives are noted below.

- a) The outputs generated by projects supported by CFAP are, in accordance with programme objectives, localised. The programme has a significant impact within the local area of each of the projects it supports. The evaluation team has accordingly concluded that CFAP is clearly effective and the benefits to projects supported are considerable.
- b) CFAP is managed with a strong focus on the 'customer' which, in this instance are, in the main, community and voluntary sector organisations. Every effort is made to ensure the programme reflects the needs of the customers and to ensure a quality service is provided at all times. The result of this is that the programme, its administration materials (application forms and so on) and the service provided by Assembly staff is considered to be excellent by a large majority of CFAP applicants and beneficiaries.
- c) The evaluation has identified a growing trend towards the submission of applications for support by 'professional organisations'. Unchecked, this trend will be accelerated by changes in priorities for Structural Funds between 2007-2013 which are likely to reduce the number of alternative funding sources. If it continues, this trend will have significant implications for the CFAP programme including:
 - changes to the type of projects that CFAP supports: projects are likely to become focused on providing a service to the community (such as a small grant scheme) rather than one-off projects; and
 - the quality of the application needed to secure funding from CFAP is likely to be higher, making it more difficult for non-professional organisations to access CFAP funds.

- d) The above will have implications on the way in which the programme needs to be managed. They may also have implications on the ability of the programme to realise its policy objectives.

5.1.2 How efficiently are the scheme's resources allocated?

CFAP has two key resources: financial resources and the human resource available to administer the programme. Both have been considered as part of this evaluation.

- a) CFAP is caught within a 'vicious circle'. Increasing numbers of applications leads to an increase in the number of applications being rejected, which leads to an increase in the number of community groups receiving advice and guidance on improving their applications which then leads to an increase in the number of applications and so on. This vicious circle needs to be broken if the programme is to continue to be effectively managed.
- b) The workload of the programme administration team is, in the opinion of the evaluation team, high and the pressure that it places upon individuals within the team may inevitably lead to problems in terms of the management of the programme.
- c) The appraisal of applications is, to a large extent, dependent on the knowledge and experience that has developed within the programme administration team. The programme management system is, therefore, exposed to inevitable changes in personnel.
- d) Due to the volume of applications submitted and the limited resources available, the time of the programme administration team is dominated by the appraisal of project applications at the expense of other activities including project monitoring and review. This can lead to difficulties and can mean that monitoring and review activities are not being carried out at appropriate levels.
- e) A critique of the project appraisal system has identified a number of gaps in the procedure. However, the evaluation team has concluded that, from a cost-benefit perspective, the type of project supported (in the majority of cases) does not justify the expenditure of the limited resources available on a more comprehensive appraisal system. Consideration should, however, be given to undertaking a more robust appraisal of 'high-risk' projects.
- f) Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants is clearly important and the service that is provided by the CFAP team to applicants is highly rated. However, given that CFAP is not a capacity building programme, there is a fine line between providing constructive feedback to applicants and providing advice and guidance to community groups on the development of projects and the submission of applications for grant funding which, the evaluation team would argue, is a capacity building activity. The amount of resource that is currently allocated to providing feedback and advice to

project applicants suggests that the CFAP team are providing ‘capacity building activities’ which is outside the remit of the programme. The appropriateness of this is questionable given that other programmes are funded to provide those services.

- g) CFAP funds clearly have a significant local impact on the communities supported. However, the fact the programme is managed on a competitive basis and is demand led means the administration team has limited control on the targeting of the funds. The fact that CFAP is not targeted at the most deprived communities in Wales is, however, not considered to be a weakness of the programme. It is important to consider CFAP within the appropriate context. It is not a capacity building programme and has not been designed to support communities to develop projects to regenerate their communities. The programme is designed to fund the implementation of projects. Other programmes have been designed and are funded for capacity building purposes. The effectiveness of those capacity building programmes is critical to the ability of the most deprived communities to access support via CFAP and may require further review.

5.1.3 How effective is the system put in place to monitor the outputs and outcomes of individual projects?

- a) As previously noted, there is a strong focus on project appraisal and approval within the programme management procedure. This limits the time that the team has available to monitor the outputs and outcomes of individual projects.
- b) The amount of information received from projects (progress reports and so on) as part of the project monitoring process is limited. From a beneficiaries perspective, this is good as it limits the administrative burden associated with the project. However, from an administrator’s perspective, this can lead to problems in terms of identifying problems. For example, delays in implementation may not be identified which can then lead to issues relating to meeting expenditure targets and so on.
- c) There is no review of the medium to long term outcomes of CFAP funded projects. This can limit the Assembly’s understanding of the benefits of the programme. The evaluation team has, however, concluded there is little justification from a cost-benefit perspective for implementing an extensive monitoring and review system for what are (in the main) very simple, straightforward projects where the benefits are very clear and which represent little risk to the Assembly. However, larger, more expensive projects may well carry greater risk which may well justify more stringent monitoring and evaluation.

5.2 Recommendations

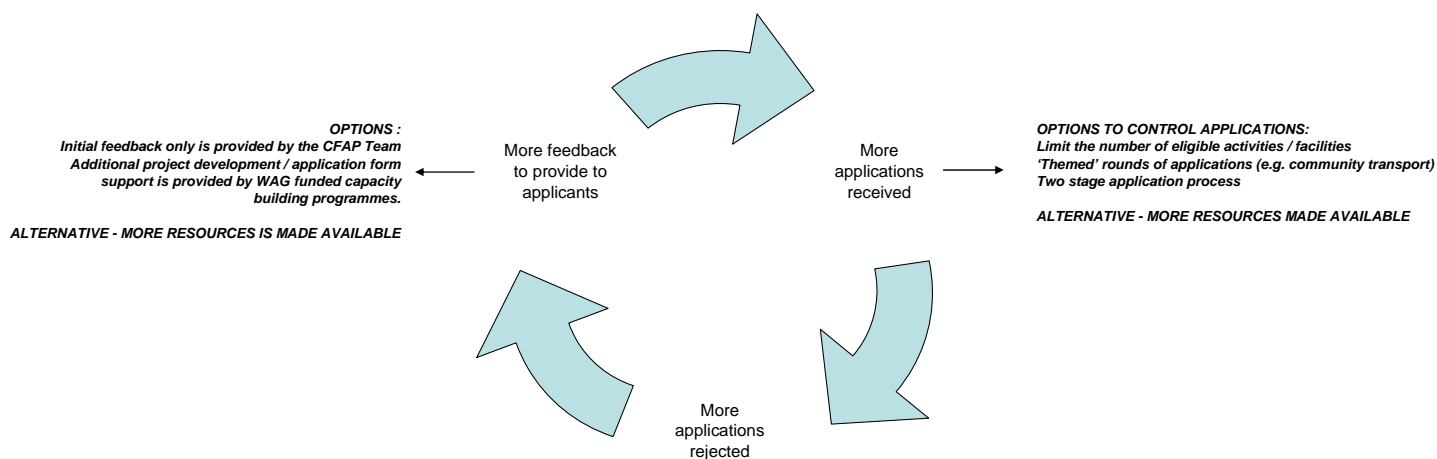
- a) Steps should be taken to ensure that the programme maintains its focus on supporting ‘community led’ projects. Potential options include:

- i. Limiting the amount of funds available to third parties and professional organisations who provide services to the community.
 - ii. Ring-fencing a proportion of funding for applications from community and voluntary sector groups.
 - iii. Providing funding to community and voluntary sector groups to allow them to access professional support during the development of projects.
- b) The resources allocated to the CFAP programme should be reviewed to ensure the programme continues to effectively support the implementation of communities regeneration projects. Increases in both funding and staffing levels should be considered.
- c) If additional funding and/or staff cannot be made available, consideration should be given to introducing mechanisms for controlling the volume of applications being submitted and for reducing the workload on the programme administration team. Options considered could include:
 - i. Limit the number of eligible activities and facilities (e.g. revenue funds only if associated with the development of a facility).
 - ii. 'Themed' rounds of applications (e.g. community transport projects).
 - iii. A two stage application process - approval in principle of projects or provision of funding to community groups to employ consultants to provide development support.
- d) CFAP should maintain its focus on funding the implementation of projects rather than advising communities on the development of projects and submitting an application form.
- e) Alternative arrangements for providing in-depth feedback and support to unsuccessful applicants should be considered (for example, the provision of advice and guidance via Assembly funded capacity building programmes and organisations and/or a series of feedback workshops across Wales).
- f) Some targeted capacity building may be appropriate to help those less coherently structured communities to access the CFAP resources (including access to professional support). It may be appropriate to deliver this support via Assembly funded capacity building programmes and organizations.
- g) The potential to commission further research into the reasons why some regions of Wales have been more successful than others in accessing CFAP resources should be considered. This research should focus on identifying those factors that have been critical to the success of that region with a view to, potentially, replicating those factors in other regions in Wales.

- h) Greater links should be developed with other Assembly departments and with Assembly funded community regeneration programmes and organisations with a view to:
 - i. increasing their role on the development of projects and applications submitted to CFAP (therefore limiting the number of 'poor' applications submitted).
 - ii. drawing in appropriate expertise during the appraisal of applications.
- i) The level of risk associated with projects needs to be considered as part of the appraisal process with 'high-risk' projects being subject to a more stringent appraisal process.
- j) Projects identified as being 'high-risk' should be subject to more stringent monitoring and review by the programme administration team.

Implementation of some of the above suggestions could, in the opinion of the evaluation team, be used to break the vicious circle which CFAP is caught in as illustrated below. This is critical to the sustainability of the programme in the medium to long term.

Figure 5: Breaking the CFAP vicious circle



Appendix 1: Strategy Review

Introduction

The following is a brief review of the key strategies in Wales documents which explores how CFAP fits within these strategies and, importantly, whether CFAP has a role in the delivery of the Assembly Government's priorities.

Wales: A Better Country

The Welsh Assembly Government sets out its strategic agenda in '*Wales: A Better Country*'. The strategy outlines a vision for "a sustainable future for Wales where action for social, economic and environmental improvement work together to create positive change".

It identifies ten commitments as flagship programmes to drive forward its distinctive approach to delivering health, jobs and social justice, based on the needs of citizens and communities and reflecting the values of equality and sustainability.

Amongst the actions for achieving this vision are:

- Promoting a diverse, competitive, high-added value economy, with high quality skills and education, that minimizes demands on the environment.
- Action on social justice that tackles poverty and poor health, and provides people and their communities with the means to help themselves and to break out of the poverty trap.
- Action in the built and natural environment that enhances pride in the community, supports bio-diversity, promotes local employment and helps to minimize waste generation, energy and transport demands.
- Promoting openness, partnership and participation.

Wales Spatial Plan

The *Wales Spatial Plan* forms one of the high-level strategic guidance 'building blocks' of the Welsh Assembly Government. It will aim to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and programmes come together effectively with the workings of local government, business and other partners across Wales, to enable a truly sustainable future.

It sets a strategic, integrating agenda for the next 20 years and will therefore have a key influence on community regeneration issues and opportunities across different geographical areas and sectors.

In particular, the Plan will:

- Provide a clear framework for future collaborative action involving the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies, local authorities, the private and voluntary sectors to achieve the priorities it sets out nationally and regionally.
- Influence the location of expenditure by the Assembly Government and its agencies.
- Influence the mix and balance of public sector delivery agencies' programmes in different areas.
- Set the context for local and community planning.
- Provide a clear evidence base for the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop policy and action.

The Plan will also provide a framework for the implementation of any future EU Structural Funds, following on from the current (2000-06) programmes.

Within the overall framework for Wales, six distinctive areas of Wales have been recognised. The fundamental proposition of the Wales Spatial Plan is that each area will need a different response to deliver its future. The Spatial Plan provides a framework for collaboration, linking national and local policies, and has been shaped by a huge range of organisations and individuals. It provides the basis for the Assembly Government to work with its partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to turn the visions for the different areas of Wales into reality.

Making the Connections

Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services in Wales, published in October 2004, and the subsequent action plan called *Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action*, outline the Government's vision of a Welsh Public Service that shares common goals and works across functional and organisational boundaries.

Its mission is to reform the public services in Wales to make them:

- More citizen focused.
- Responsive to the needs of communities.
- Driven by a commitment to equality and social justice.
- Deliver efficiency.

Making the Connections outlines four main principles:

- Citizens at the Centre: services more responsive to users with people and communities involved in designing the way services are delivered.
- Equality and Social Justice: every person to have the opportunity to contribute and reaching out to those hardest to reach.
- Working together as the Welsh Public Service: more co-ordination between providers to deliver sustainable, quality and responsive services.
- Value for Money: making the most of the resources available.

Amongst its goals is a desire to see services which are more responsive to the needs of citizens and communities, and which are planned and run with their active involvement.

Wales: A Vibrant Economy

Wales: A Vibrant Economy (WAVE) is the strategic framework for economic development in Wales. The approach it sets out focuses on encouraging strong and sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for all. The approach described reflects the aims set out in *Wales: A Better Country* to create more, and better, jobs.

The strategy notes that the Government's priorities in pursuit of its vision will be:

- Increasing employment still further so that over time the Welsh employment rate matches UK averages, even as the UK employment rate itself raises.
- Raising the quality of jobs so that average earnings increase and close the gap with the UK average.

The key actions for achieving those priorities include:

- Supporting job creation and helping individuals to tackle barriers to participation in the world of work.
- Investing to regenerate communities and stimulate economic growth across Wales.
- Helping businesses grow and to increase value-added per job and earnings.
- Ensuring that all economic programmes and policies support sustainable development, in particular by encouraging clean energy generation and resource efficiency.

Wales Transport Strategy

The Wales Transport Strategy, which sets out the Assembly Government's vision for an integrated and effective transport system, is based around social, economic and environmental outcomes which the Assembly Government wants to achieve. Many of these are based around access to services, for example, relevant social and economic outcomes are:

- Improving access to healthcare
- Improving access to education and lifelong learning
- Improving access to shopping and leisure facilities, and
- Improving access to employment opportunities

The same outcomes will be repeated in the Regional Transport Plan guidance with Local Authorities expected to contribute to achieving the outcomes.

Social Enterprise Strategy for Wales

The *Social Enterprise Strategy for Wales* (2005) outlines the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for dynamic and sustainable social enterprises strengthening an inclusive and growing Welsh economy. It also aims to achieve greater recognition for social enterprise in the economic, social and environmental regeneration of Welsh communities.

The Strategy aims to create an environment that encourages new social enterprises and capitalises on opportunities for growth. It also hopes to establish integrated support for the sector involving mainstream and specialist agencies leading to the creation of a thriving social enterprise sector in Wales.

This recognition by the Welsh Assembly Government of the potential contribution of social enterprise to the economy and communities of Wales offers a policy context that is conducive to developing and growing a sector which offers a triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental impacts, which are all key elements in regeneration.

Structural Funds 2000 - 2006

Wales has received substantial funds via a number of European Programmes including Objective 1 for West Wales and the Valleys, Objective 2 and Objective 3 in East Wales, the Rural Development Plan and a range of other European Community Initiatives such as LEADER+, URBAN II, INTERREG III A, B and C, and EQUAL.

Objective 1

The 2000-2006 Structural Funds programming round is the first in which West Wales and the Valleys have benefited from Objective 1 Status. This funding is aimed at the most deprived regions of the European Union. Total funding for this area (£1.28 billion) accounts for 84% of the total funds available. The Programme is structured round six Priorities, each of which focuses on an area of economic activity with potential for development and growth. These are:

- Priority 1: Expanding and developing the SME base.
- Priority 2: Developing innovation and the knowledge-based economy.
- Priority 3: Community economic regeneration.
- Priority 4: Developing people.
- Priority 5: Rural development and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Priority 6: Strategic infrastructure development.

The most applicable of these measures to CFAP is Priority 3. The aim of this Priority is to combat social exclusion, by targeting local, community based

action on the most deprived communities to increase skills and employability and to improve conditions for businesses.

The priority focuses on 3 main themes:

- to build the capacity of people of all backgrounds and communities to participate in community activities to contribute to and benefit from economic regeneration.
- to support community led initiatives which contribute to social and economic development and tackle the underlying issues which prevent sustainable economic development
- to enhance opportunities and services in peripheral areas, specifically promoting the role of social enterprises in providing those services.

The Priority comprises 4 measures:

- Community action for social inclusion (ESF).
- Partnership and Community Capacity-building (ERDF): 2000-2003.
- Partnership and Community Capacity Building and Regeneration of deprived areas through community-led action (ERDF).
- Support for the Creation and Development of Businesses in the Social Economy (ERDF).

According to the WEFO³ website, 310 projects had been funded via Priority 3 as of 11th December 2006. The total value of these projects was £115,556,901; an average of £372,764 per project.

Priority 3 accounts for approximately 20% of the funding available under the current Objective 1 programme.

Objective 2

The East Wales Objective 2 and Transitional Programme's overall objective is to secure increased levels of economic growth in East Wales. Its key objectives are to increase employment growth across the region, promote economic diversification in the region and develop sustainable communities. The Programme receives support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The areas covered by the Objective 2 Programme are parts of Cardiff, Newport and Powys. The areas covered by the Transitional Programme are parts of Powys, Cardiff, Newport, Wrexham, Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Programme is structured around 3 Priorities, each of which focuses on an area of economic activity with potential for development and growth. These are:

³ <http://www.wefo.wales.gov.uk/>

- Priority 1: Developing Competitive and Sustainable SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises).
- Priority 2: Sustainable Rural Development.
- Priority 3: Urban Community Regeneration.

Elements of both Priority 2 and Priority 3 of the programme are targeted at supporting ‘community regeneration’ at some level.

Priority 2 comprises of two measures ‘rural economic development’ and ‘building rural networks’ which has as its objectives:

- To support and promote initiatives which increase access to key services and which enhance their provision.
- To develop these services within and between communities to underpin sustainable economic growth.
- To increase wealth circulation and reduce economic leakage.

Priority 3 focuses on four main themes:

- Building the capacity of residents and groups, developing their ability to play an active role in their community.
- Developing the social economy to create local employment opportunities not otherwise available and contributing to economic growth.
- Support for the development of active networks and new ways of working in partnership.
- The need for specific action to tackle social exclusion through engaging minority groups in the regeneration process. Community regeneration activities must demonstrate that all sections, age groups and cultures within the community are actively engaged in the planning and decision making processes.

According to the WEFO website, as of 11th December 2006, the programme had supported:

	No of projects	Total Grant	Average grant per project
Objective 2, Priority 2	42	£11,882,352	£282,913.14
Objective 2, Priority 3	41	£11,846,935	£288,949.63
Objective 2 (transitional), Priority 2	35	£4,699,845	£134,281.29
Objective 2 (transitional), Priority 3	31	£7,931,671	£255,860.35

Objective 3

Objective 3 aims to combat long-term unemployment and assists young people and those at risk of social exclusion; promotes equal opportunities, adaptability and entrepreneurship in the workforce; and improves training, education and counselling for lifelong learning. This programme operates in all areas outside the Objective 1 region.

The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000 - 2006

The Rural Development Plan (RDP) provides a mechanism for supporting sustainable development in rural Wales. The Plan is based around ten possible measures, including agri-environment, support for less favoured areas, the wider adaptation and development of rural communities, and the processing and marketing of agricultural products.

Article 33 is the most applicable part of the RDP providing a menu of possible measures to promote the adaptation and development of rural areas. On November 26th 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced a development programme utilising three measures of Article 33, which will operate in rural areas of east Wales outside of Objective 2.

Local authorities and community groups in Powys, Flintshire, Monmouth, the Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham have come together to form development partnerships for their areas. These partnerships are responsible for drawing up Action Plans for their areas which enable them to access funding under the Article 33 provisions in the Welsh Assembly's Rural Development Plan for Wales targeted at promoting the adaptations and development of rural Wales.

The measures concerned are:

- Provision of basic services for the rural economy and population.
- Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage.
- Encouragement of tourist and craft activities.

According to the Assembly's website, to date over 100 projects have been approved with a total value of just over £7.6m. This represents a total grant of nearly £5.2m. It should be noted that the evaluation team suspects that this information is not up to date as the programme is now closed, ending in December 2006.

LEADER+

LEADER+ is one of the European Union's community programmes and seeks to promote the development of rural areas. Its aim is to encourage and help rural actors to think about the longer-term potential of their area. It seeks to encourage the implementation of integrated, high-quality, original strategies for sustainable development based upon innovative approaches towards rural development.

Following a competitive bidding process, LEADER+ Local Action Group status was awarded to seven organisations in Wales:

- PLANED (rural Pembrokeshire)
- Glasu (rural Powys)
- Menter Môn (rural Anglesey)
- Cadwyn Clwyd (rural Denbighshire and Flintshire)

- Adventa (rural Monmouthshire)
- Rural Conwy
- Northern Marches – Cymru (rural Wrexham)

The programme's target groups are:

- Micro and small businesses (which includes farms)
- Farming families
- The under-employed
- Welsh speaking communities
- Young people
- Women

Structural Funds 2007 – 2013

Preparation work for the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes is well underway. For the period 2007-2013 Wales will benefit from a new round of European Structural Fund Programmes.

Under the European Council budget agreement, West Wales and the Valleys is likely to receive around £1.3 billion over seven years to support a new *Convergence Programme*. East Wales will qualify for a new *Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme*. Wales will also continue to participate in a successor to the *INTERREG* cross-border programme with Ireland, as well as the *Atlantic Area and North-West Europe trans-national programmes*. It is anticipated that the allocations for these programmes will take some months to determine.

The new programmes will focus on interventions that support sustainable growth and jobs, in line with the Lisbon and Gothenberg strategies. The UK's *National Strategic Reference Framework* (NSRF) provides an overarching framework for the new round of Structural Funds Programmes and was launched for consultation on 28 February 2006. This document contains a specific chapter on Wales setting out an analysis of the economic challenges the country faces and how the Structural Funds can help to address them.

The Welsh NSRF Chapter provides a broad framework to help guide the more detailed Operational Programmes that will operate in Wales. It is proposed to have separate ERDF programmes for West Wales & the Valleys and East Wales and an all-Wales ESF programme (with ring-fenced allocations for West Wales and the Valleys). There will also be a separate cross-border programme between parts of North and South-West Wales and South-East Ireland. Consideration is being given to having a more limited number of priorities in each programme which will provide additional flexibility in implementation and should assist in the absorption of resources.

The priorities proposed for West Wales and the Valleys are:

1. Improving knowledge and innovation for growth - including R&D, entrepreneurship, business finance and sectoral development. (ERDF).
2. Creating a favourable business environment - including transport, ICT, clean & renewable energy, environmental goods and services, environmental protection and improvement, waste, maritime & inland waterways (ERDF).
3. Building sustainable communities - including business sites, urban and rural regeneration and community development (ERDF).
4. Increasing employment and tackling inactivity - including tackling barriers to employment, childcare, promoting healthier lifestyles and promoting equal opportunities (ESF).
5. Improving skill levels - including the transition from school to work, improving basic skills and addressing skills gaps. (ESF).
6. Building the administrative capacity of our public services – including the development of human resources and capacity building initiatives in the context of the Making the Connections Strategy (ESF).

As previously noted, Priority 3 (Building Sustainable Communities) accounts for approximately 20% of the funding available under the current Objective 1 programme. The consultation document on the proposed new programme notes that “some decline” in the proportion of spend for this propriety as it will not contribute to the Lisbon ‘earmarking’ targets. WEFO also noted during their presentation at consultation events that have been held across Wales that the new programme will include *“less investment in general urban, rural and community led regeneration and non-employment focused social inclusion measures”*.

The priorities proposed for East Wales are more limited in their focus and are linked to:

- Building the knowledge based economy - focus primarily on R&D and innovation (ERDF).
- Enhancing the environment - includes community regeneration, clean & renewable energy, environmental goods and services, environmental protection and improvement and waste management (ERDF).
- Promoting accessibility - includes integrated transport initiatives and ICT (ERDF).
- Increasing employment and tackling inactivity (same as for WW&V) (ESF).
- Improving skill levels (similar to WW&V but more focus on demand-led training and training systems) (ESF).

The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013

Commission Regulation 1698/2005 provides Member States with a framework on support for rural development through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for the next programming period 2007-2013. Within the regulation, the European Commission has set out four main objectives (axes)

for rural development policy for the period 2007-13 to ensure the sustainable development for rural areas:

- AXIS 1: Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural sector through support for restructuring.
- AXIS 2: Enhancing the environment and countryside through support for land management.
- AXIS 3: Enhancing the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of economic activities through measures targeting the farm sector and other rural actors.
- AXIS 4: Enhancing the use of the Leader approach which provides a bottom up, community driven approach using local partnerships to inform the implementation of the other three axes.

Contained within the axes, are 34 ‘measures’ which form a broad menu of the types of activity it is possible to fund through the next Rural Development Plan for Wales. The measures can contribute to more than one axis within the regulation and the National Strategy and successor Rural Development Plan for Wales must be constructed around them although it is not necessary to use them all.

Conclusions

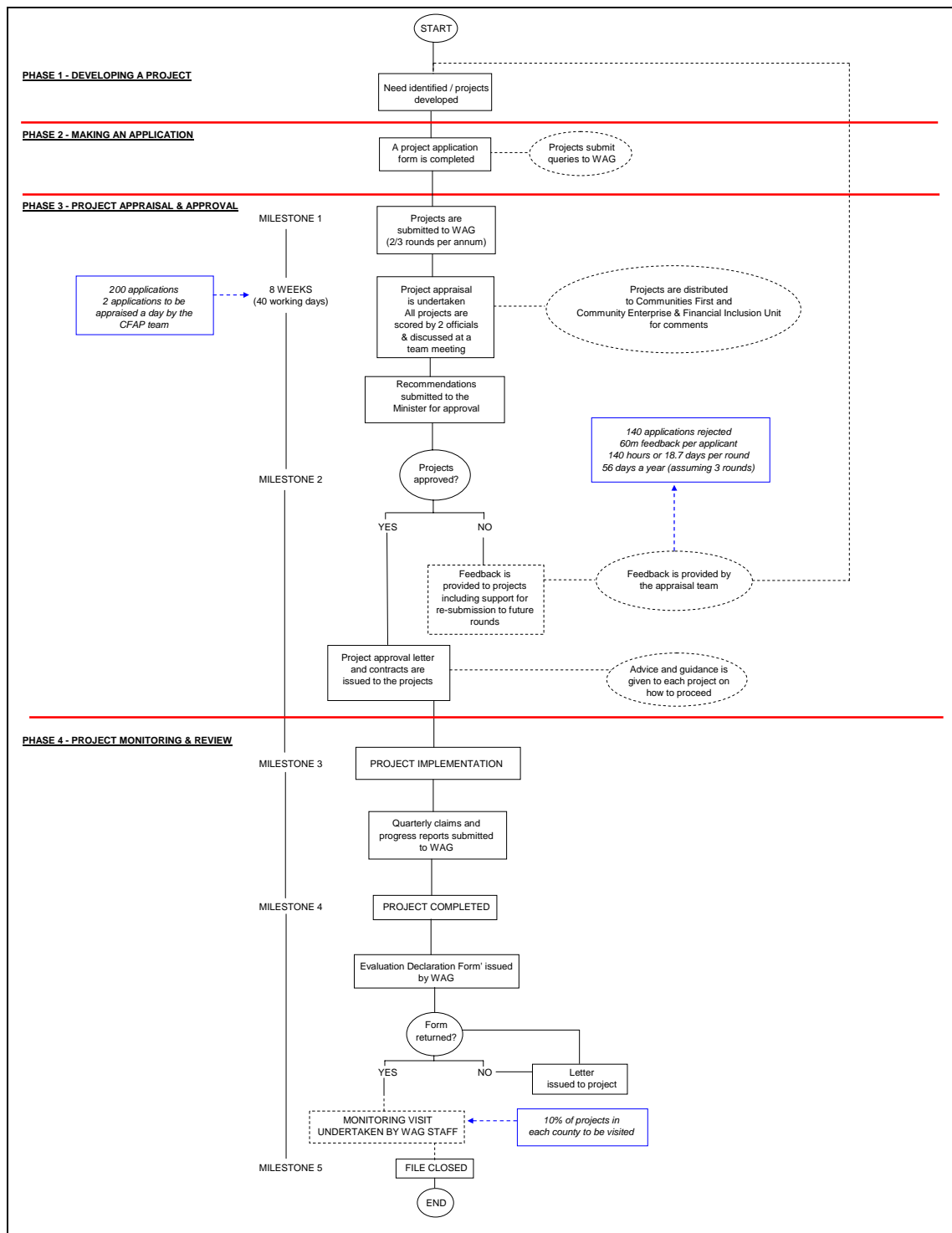
The review undertaken clearly identifies that the regeneration of communities is of high strategic priority in Wales. There is reference to the development of “strong communities” in a plethora of Welsh Assembly Government and, importantly, European Commission strategic documents. Interestingly, a number of the interviewees also noted that CFAP is a very popular programme across the political parties in Cardiff Bay.

The demand for CFAP funds is incredibly high. The programme is also a ‘fund of last resort’. This means that projects that apply to CFAP for funding are unlikely to be able to access funds from other sources.

This, we would argue, demonstrates that the need for the type of funds provided by CFAP is high. We can, therefore, conclude that CFAP has a key role in the delivery of the Assembly’s vision for “strong communities”.

Changes in priorities for the use of Structural Funds from 2007 may have significant implications for CFAP as, potentially, it will become the fund of last resort for projects and activities that would previously have been submitted as applications to programmes supported by the Structural Funds programmes. It may also lead to an increase in the number of applications that are submitted to CFAP by ‘professional’ organisations who are seeking to provide a service to communities that they work with. This, again, could have implications for CFAP.

Appendix 2: Illustration of CFAP Management Process



Appendix 3: Detailed Analysis of Survey of Project Stakeholders

The questionnaire was set out in discrete sections directed towards individuals according to their relationship to the project. This section does not follow that approach but presents the data in a form analogous to the CFAP process; it begins with identifying the need for the project followed by a review of the application process and, finally, some estimation of the impacts and effects. Where appropriate, the views of the various stakeholders involved at each stage are shown.

General

A total of 320 completed responses were received by the cut off date (3rd November 2006). The sample consisted of 37 responses (11.6% of total) from professionals engaged on a project, 148 (46.3%) from non-professionals involved in the management of the project, 166 (51.9%) of users of the facilities provided, 18 (5.6%) from professionals using the facilities to provide services to the community and 20 (6.3%) from people whose business was located within the facility. Clearly, as the total exceeds 100%, there are individuals who have several roles. For example around 16% of respondents were users of the facility and members of a committee or management team; almost 17% are users and committee members. The average respondent has 2 roles though significant proportions have more (see Table 1).

Table 1: number of roles of individuals

No of roles	% of respondents
1	7.8
2	19.4
3	12.8
4	4.1
5	1.6
6	0.3
7	0.3

This is a result of the sample which includes both users and informed individuals involved in the projects; it includes those with several roles, the management, professionals and so on. Where necessary the sub samples (e.g. users only) are employed in the following sections.

Identifying Need

Some form of incentive or awareness of need is the initial stage of any project. Users of the facility were asked how they identified the need (Table 2).

From the objective of supporting communities the results are encouraging: discussing the need for a new/improved facilities are the most common beginnings of projects, which is followed by information spread by word of mouth from friends and family. The 'other' includes committee members of existing groups and

volunteers/professionals working in the community in an indirect role (e.g. treasurer of a community centre)

Table 2: Response to Q12 "How did you first hear about the project?"

Statement	% of users
I discussed the problem of an existing facility with others	36.7
I discussed the need for a facility with others	37.3
I saw a report in the media about it	4.8
Friends/family told me about it	18.1
I took part in a survey	7.2
I heard about it as part of my official role in the community	13.9
Some other people started a petition/campaign to get a new facility	9.0
Other	21.7

The majority of users were made aware of the need from 2 sources (Table 3) suggesting at least some form of interaction in the community.

Table 3: Number of incentives

No.	% of users
1	2.4
2	67.5
3	18.1
4	6.0
5	3.6
6	1.8
7	0.6

Few people took part in a survey (7.2%). This would suggest that little formal identification of need is made but it is not clear from this whether it is due to good informal communication or that consultation was limited. Most users suggest that more consultation was not necessary (Question 16); only 2.4% of users thought there should have been more consultation (Table 4).

Table 4: Response to Q16c "There should have been more consultation with the community"

Response	% of users
agree	2.4
neither agree nor disagree	12.0
disagree	53.0
not applicable	7.8
not answered	24.7

There may be some suggestion from these results that communities which already have a coherent structure are more likely to identify the need; existing groups and social structures are important elements in the process. Though not within the remit of CFAP, some targeted capacity building may help those less coherently structured communities to access the CFAP resources

The issues of identifying need were examined from non professional persons involved in the management of the projects. Again these suggest some existing level of community activity; almost 43% were members of an existing group and almost two thirds thought existing facilities were not adequate (Table 5).

Table 5: Response to Q19 “How did you identify the need for the project?”

Response	% of unpaid officials
...because I am a member of an existing group or club that needs some facilities	42.6
Existing facilities were not adequate	62.8
People complained about the lack of a facility	43.2
We were aware of the benefits others had obtained from CFAP	22.3
Other	12.2

Clearly the need addressed is local (Table 6): over 66% identified local people and existing regular users as the beneficiaries. Audits were less in evidence but still significant, around one fifth identified potential users in this way.

Table 6: Response to Q20 “How did you identify potential users of the facility?”

Response	% of unpaid officials
We had an existing membership/regular users	68.9
It would benefit local people	66.2
An audit had been done	20.3
There were some issues we wanted to address in our community	28.4

Consultation appears to take one of two forms, community meeting and vote (33.8%) or a survey of the community (40.5%). More than half of the projects formed a management committee.

Table 7: Response to Q21 “How did you consult with users of the community?”

Response	% of unpaid officials
We held community meetings and took a vote	33.8
We formed a management committee	54.1
We conducted a survey of our community	40.5
There was a pre-existing audit	8.1
We did not need to consult with the community	9.5

It is perhaps surprising that a large proportion of communities were able to organise meetings and voting (33.8%). There appears, also, to be something of an anomaly; over 40% of projects claim to have conducted a survey (Table 7) yet only 7% of users claim to have taken part in one (Table 2). Likewise 20.3% claim an audit had been done (Table 6) but only 8.1% knew of a pr-existing audit (Table 7). The reasons for these are unclear.

While the local targeting is clear and effective there may be some need to ensure that evidence of consultation with the community is of appropriate quality.

Application process

Two distinct groups were involved in the application process; unpaid members and professionals. The application process has been designed with communities (i.e. non-professionals) in mind.

Non-professionals

The design of the application process appears to have been particularly successful in addressing the needs of the non-professional applicant (Statement A). The design aimed towards simplicity, clarity, minimal demands on the applicant's resources where possible and, although this has proven problematic to the allocation of WAG resources, quality of feedback and support. The results suggest these objectives have been achieved (Table 8).

Table 8: Response by non-professional members to Q22 “What was your experience of the application process for CFAP”

	Statement	Response (as % of those non-professional members responding to statement)				Not answered (as % of all non- profession- al members)
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Not applicable	
A	Simple and straightforward	62.6	17.8	15.0	4.7	27.7
B	Some difficulty, it took more than one attempt	29.3	8.7	42.4	19.6	37.8
C	Because we found it so difficult we used professionals	13.1	15.2	44.4	27.3	33.1
D	WAG staff were helpful	73.7	11.1	2.0	13.1	33.1
E	It would be helpful to have a case officer appointed to each project	46.5	33.3	7.1	13.1	33.1
F	Feedback from WAG staff was useful	56.6	27.3	3.0	13.1	33.1
G	Application forms were confusing	10.5	28.4	52.6	8.4	35.8
H	Too much information was demanded from a small organisation like ourselves	18.4	24.5	49.0	8.2	33.8

I	The application process was too complicated	8.1	25.3	58.6	8.1	33.1
J	We would have preferred to represent ourselves at interview rather than complete the forms	18.4	22.4	49.0	10.2	33.8
K	We feel that as a small organisation we could not compete with the more professional groups	15.3	16.3	56.1	12.2	33.8
L	We didn't realise it was a competition for funds	10.4	14.6	65.6	9.4	35.1
M	There wasn't enough guidance at the beginning	11.5	19.8	61.5	7.3	35.1
N	We were sometimes given contradictory information	8.3	12.5	69.8	9.4	35.1
O	The questions on the application form did not allow us to fully explain the benefits of our project	13.4	11.3	68.0	7.2	34.5

The views of the non-professional members are illustrated in the figures below. Quite clearly, where an 'agree' response indicates the process is looked on favourably it has been achieved (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Response to Q22 a, d & f (agree is better)

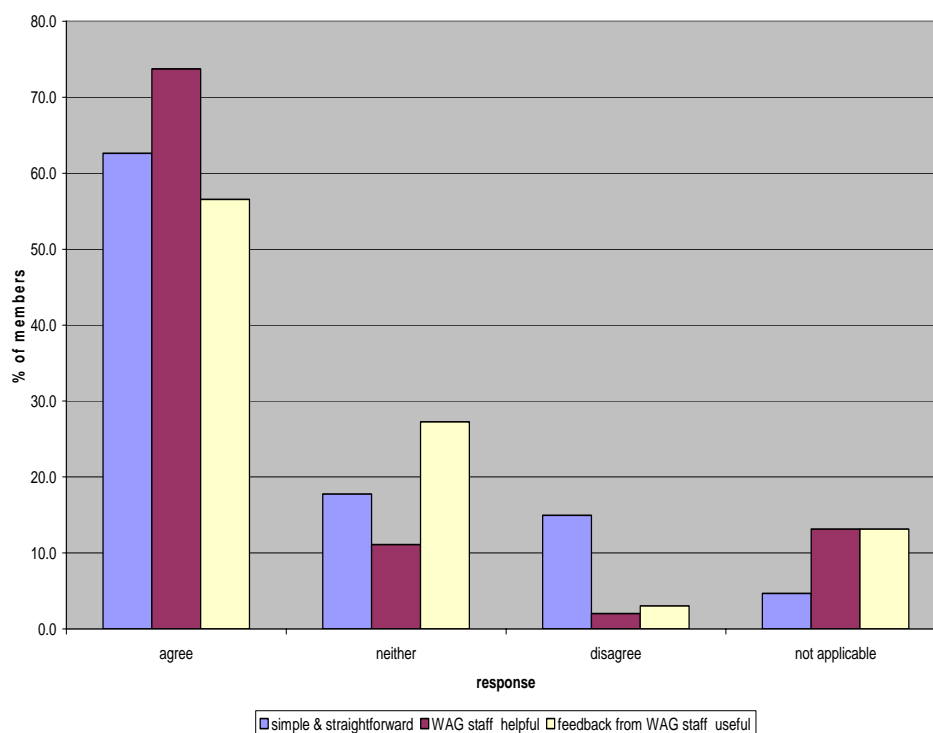
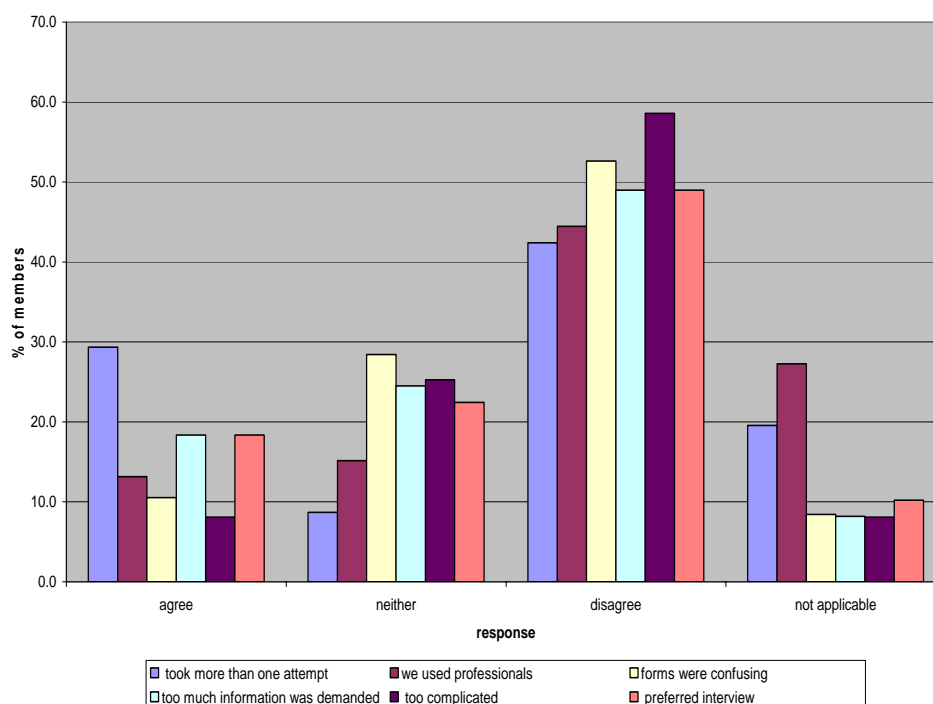
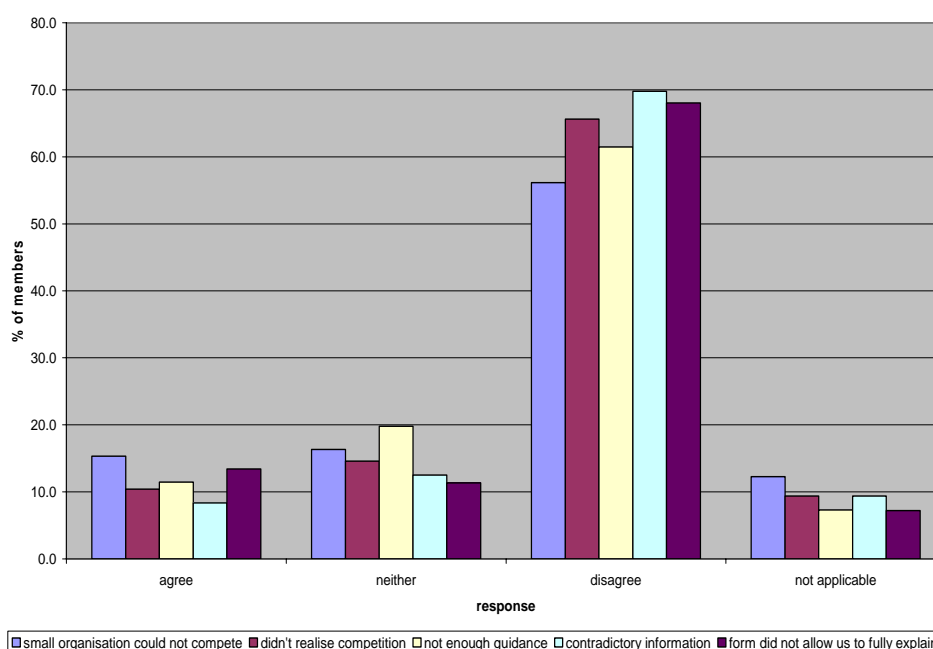


Figure 2: Response to Q22 b, c, g, h, i, j (disagree is better)



Likewise where ‘disagree’ indicates the barriers or restrictions to the process have been managed this also has been achieved. For example 68% of respondents disagree with the statement “the questions on the application form did not allow us to fully explain the benefits of our project”. Only the response to “some difficulty, it took more than one attempt” shows some sign of less than overwhelming agreement; almost 30% of projects needed to make more than one application before they were successful.

Figure 3: Response to Q22 k, l, m, n & o (disagree is better)



Quality of service continues after the completion of the application process; the pattern of agreement with positive statements and disagreement with negative outcomes is repeated (Table 9).

Table 9: Response to Q23 “What was your experience after your application was approved?”

Statement	Response (as % of those non-professional members responding to statement)				Not answered (as % of all non- profess- ional members)
	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Not applicable	
WAG staff were helpful when we had unforeseen problems	54.1	17.4	0.9	27.5	26.4
We expected more help and support from WAG	3.2	20.2	55.3	21.3	36.5
Payments were always on time	79.8	5.5	1.8	12.8	26.4
We encountered problems we think the WAG administrators should have expected	2.2	20.7	50.0	27.2	37.8
No problems	73.5	8.8	2.9	14.7	31.1

Payments and help from WAG staff in dealing with unforeseen problems deserve particular mention, only 1.8% of respondents have payments that are not on time and 0.9% did not find WAG staff helpful.

The quality of service both during and after the application process is greatly appreciated by the non-professional applicant. However, as a consequence administrators suffer from the excessive demands this incurs. This is exacerbated by the nature of the fund; it is the last available option. Once refused, applicants have little choice but to re-apply to CFAP. Therefore it is essential that potential applicants are directed towards appropriate services (professional help, capacity building, suitable partners and so on) prior to making an application. While this is unlikely to change the success rate (given that funds are fixed) it will reduce demand on CFAP administrators by ensuring those services are provided by the appropriate bodies.

Professionals

Professionals have two roles in CFAP; supporting applicants from communities by providing skills and services and, increasingly, as applicants themselves. At least one such body is discussed in the case studies; these organisations may work on behalf of the community or act as a provider of funds for small projects.

Regarding the former role of the professionals, supporting community applications some verification of the simplicity and ease of completion of the application form is given (Table 10). Less than 15% of professionals were involved in writing the

application. Professional services were largely advice on technical matters (26.5%), supporting evidence (23.5%) and on financial matters (17.6%). Few projects have called on legal advice (2.9%). Professional services such as those provided by builders and electricians are included in the ‘other’ category.

Where management of an application from early stage to completion occurs the projects are largely partnerships between local authorities and community groups; the professional services are provided by the local authority.

Table 10: Response to Q27 “What was your role?”

Response	% of professionals
I wrote application forms only	14.7
I managed application from early stage to completion	35.3
I gave advice/input on technical matters	26.5
I gave advice/input on legal matters	2.9
I gave advice/input on financial matters	17.6
I gave advice/input on supporting evidence	23.5
Other	26.5

The majority of the professionals fulfil more than 1 role; almost 90% fulfil two or three roles.

Table 11: Number of roles of professionals

No.	% of professionals
1	8.1
2	59.5
3	24.3
4	5.4
5	2.7

Response to question 28 (Table 12) verify the quality of support offered by the CFAP staff; few of the professionals were employed to address problems with previous applications. Further the non-professionals have rated the application process as simple and straightforward. This would suggest that professional services are required for issues other than the application process. Thus it appears that professionals are required for support on technical elements outside of CFAP; as such these services include the services of such professionals as architects, electricians and others in the building industry. Clearly the need for these would be apparent from the outset. A second form of professional are those seconded to the project by partner organisations, mainly local authorities and larger community support organisations.

Table 12: Response to Q28 “Why were your services needed?”

Statement	% of professionals
It was apparent before making the application to CFAP that professional services were needed	57.1
It became apparent after the application to CFAP was started that professional services were needed	0.0
A prior application had been refused, my role was to address the problems in the first application	3.6
The community approached my employers as a potential partner in the project	14.3
Other	28.6

Over one quarter of professionals state other reasons for their involvement. In the main these are ‘technical/advisory’ services other than those listed in Question 28; examples include a childcare specialist and a business advisor.

The professional involved in the application process confirm the ‘simple and straightforward’ verdict of the non-professionals. Furthermore in these terms it compares favourably with other funding sources (Statements A, B, C & E). There is some support for the appointment of case officers (statement L), wider publicity for CFAP (K), a signposting service (I) and direct access to CFAP (H).

They are more equivocal on competition between community projects and professional organisations (G) and themed rounds (J).

Table 13: Response by professional workers to Q29

	Statement	Response (as % of those professional members responding to statement)				Not answered (as % of all profession- al members)
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Not applicable	
A	I think the application to CFAP would not have been successful without professional help	53.1	21.9	9.4	15.6	13.5
B	I have some experience of funding applications and CFAP is easier than most	53.3	23.3	3.3	20.0	18.9
C	I have some experience of funding applications and CFAP is more difficult than most	9.7	29.0	41.9	19.4	16.2
D	Applicants should be advised at the beginning of the application process that professional help may be	53.3	20.0	13.3	13.3	18.9

	needed					
E	Because CFAP provides funding for such a wide range of projects it is difficult to understand what the people assessing your application are looking for	23.3	33.3	26.7	16.7	18.9
F	A prior application for CFAP funding failed and, although the project was unchanged, a second and better written application was successful	28.6	10.7	0.0	60.7	24.3
G	It is unfair that community projects have to compete with professional organisations for the available funds	38.7	22.6	29.0	9.7	16.2
H	I understand that CFAP is the 'last port of call' for funding and is therefore able to support projects that can not be funded by other programmes, it is unrealistic to expect some projects to be able to go through several applications to other programmes before coming to CFAP	46.7	23.3	20.0	10.0	18.9
I	A 'sign posting' service to direct applicants to the most appropriate funding programme is needed	60.0	6.7	20.0	13.3	18.9
J	The broad range of projects supported by CFAP should be continued but if each round had a theme it would allow fairer like-for-like comparisons of potential projects	41.4	17.2	34.5	6.9	21.6
K	CFAP should be more widely publicised	40.0	33.3	20.0	6.7	18.9
L	It would be helpful to have a case officer appointed to each project	43.3	40.0	13.3	3.3	18.9

There is a clear distinction between professionals who provide services to the fabric of the projects (for example builders who are in effect 'capital' costs) and those that provide services to the application and administration of the project. The former appear to give technical advice, the latter to manage the application. There are clearly issues of cost and competition which may need to be considered to maintain the community ethos of the programme.

Impacts

Two measures are used to assess impact: change in the volume of use of the facility and examination of the extent putative effects have occurred. Volume of use is indicated in Table 14 for general users and Table 15 for providers of professional services. However, these increases are considerable and some new use seems to have occurred. Almost 8% of respondents who never used the facility do so now. This figure may actually underestimate the change, the sum of reductions in ‘never’, ‘rarely’ and ‘occasionally’ are less than the change in ‘regular’ use suggesting that other categories of user are now using the facility.

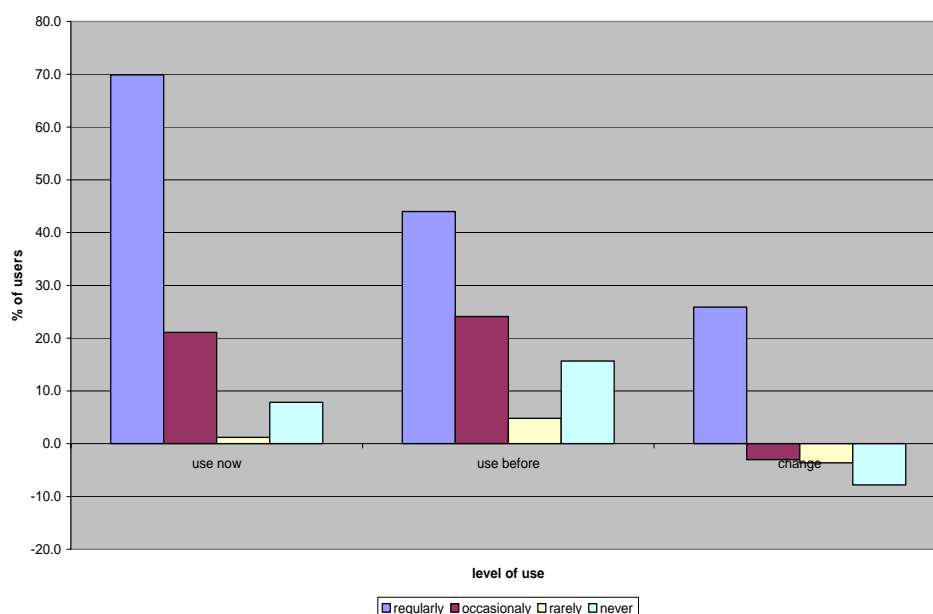
A similar effect, and perhaps some explanation for the increased use, is seen in the response from those using the facility to teach classes. The changes are, predictably due to the ratio of instructors to instructed, less than for the general users. The pattern of change, however, is similar: some increased use by previous users and a reduction in those who have never used the facility prior to the project.

Table 14: Response to Q13/14 change in use of the facility by general users

Frequency	% of users		
	use now	use before	change
Regularly	69.9	44.0	25.9
Occasionally	21.1	24.1	-3.0
Rarely	1.2	4.8	-3.6
Never	7.8	15.7	-7.8

There is considerable increase in regular use, from 44% of users prior to the CFAP project to 69.9% after. This is accompanied by a consequential decrease in less frequent use. This shift in use pattern is to be expected in localised community projects; the potential group of users is finite making ‘new’ use less likely.

Figure 4: Usage rates at facility (general users)



However, these increases are considerable and some new use seems to have occurred. Almost 8% of respondents who never used the facility do so now. This figure may actually underestimate the change, the sum of reductions in ‘never’, ‘rarely’ and ‘occasionally’ are less than the change in ‘regular’ use suggesting that other categories of user are now using the facility.

A similar effect, and perhaps some explanation for the increased use, is seen in the response from those using the facility to teach classes. The changes are, predictably due to the ratio of instructors to instructed, less than for the general users. The pattern of change, however, is similar: some increased use by previous users and a reduction in those who have never used the facility prior to the project.

Table 15: Response to Q13/14 change in use of the facility by instructors

Frequency	% of professional service providers		
	teach now	teach before	change
Regularly	55.6	50	5.6
Occasionally	0.0	5.6	-5.6
Rarely	5.6	0.0	5.6
Never	38.9	44.4	-5.6

The effects of these changes in patterns of use are seen in Table 16 below. The increased use is confirmed as around 73% think more people use the facility. More than one quarter of respondents do new activities, over 16% have joined a new group or club and more than one third of people have made new friends. In turn these have had their effect on the community with noticeable effects on community spirit.

Table 16: Response to Q15 “What do you think the project has achieved”

Effect	% of users reporting effect
I do some new activities	27.1
I have joined a new group or club	16.3
I have made new friends	36.1
I don't have to travel so far for my leisure activities	18.1
Community spirit has improved	53.6
More people use the improved facility	72.9
It has filled a clear need in the community	64.5
Other	18.7

These effects are considered in greater detail below (Table 17). Few people think that the project has not made a valuable contribution to their community (Statement A). Further the benefits are well distributed (B, C), and in terms of satisfaction the funds have been well spent (D). These have promoted greater cohesion in the community (M, N & O) and have encouraged more exercise (L) and uptake of learning/skills development (K). There appears to be a mild effect on stimulating new business (J), 2.8% of respondents claim to have done so.

Table 17: Response by users to Q16

	Statement	Response (as % of those users responding to statement)				Not answered (as % of all users)
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Not applicable	
A	The project has made a valuable contribution to our community	96.7	2.6	0.0	0.7	7.8
B	The project benefits few people in the community	8.0	14.3	73.2	4.5	32.5
C	There should have been more consultation with the community	3.2	16.0	70.4	10.4	24.7
D	The money could have been used on more beneficial projects	0.0	9.7	86.7	3.5	31.9
E	Overall I'm pleased with the project	98.1	1.3	0.6	0.0	6.6
F	Overall I'm disappointed with the project	0.0	3.7	91.7	4.6	34.9
G	There are good and bad points but overall the good outweigh the bad	61.2	17.8	4.7	16.3	22.3
H	There are good and bad points but overall the bad outweigh the good	0.0	12.3	67.0	20.8	36.1
I	I have an existing business which benefits from the project	2.5	3.4	9.2	84.9	28.3
J	I have started a new business because of the project	2.8	0.9	12.8	83.5	34.3
K	I have learnt new skills/taken an evening class because of the project	40.3	4.8	7.3	47.6	25.3
L	I take more exercise because of the project	38.2	9.1	9.1	43.6	33.7
M	The project has helped an existing group to contact other interest groups in the community	63.1	16.9	1.5	18.5	21.7
N	The project has helped an existing group to contact other ethnic groups in the community	17.9	25.9	11.6	44.6	32.5
O	The project has helped an existing group to contact other age groups in the community	57.8	18.0	3.9	20.3	22.9

A similar proportion of existing businesses seem to have obtained some benefits from the project (I). A small but significant proportion disagree with the statement “I have an existing business which benefits from the project”; it is not clear whether this indicated no effect or a negative effect but is a point which may require some investigation.

These results are shown graphically below. Where ‘agree’ indicates a positive outcome (Figure 5) and ‘disagree’ indicates management of potential dis-benefits (Figure 6) the results speak highly for the programme.

Outputs are, in accordance with programme objectives, localised. While this demand led method of implementation causes some administrative difficulties it is clearly effective, the benefits are considerable. It is recommended that this demand led approach is supported and the administrative difficulties are minimised by signposting potential beneficiaries to capacity building programmes.

Figure 5: Response to Q16 a, e, g, k, m, n & o (agree is better)

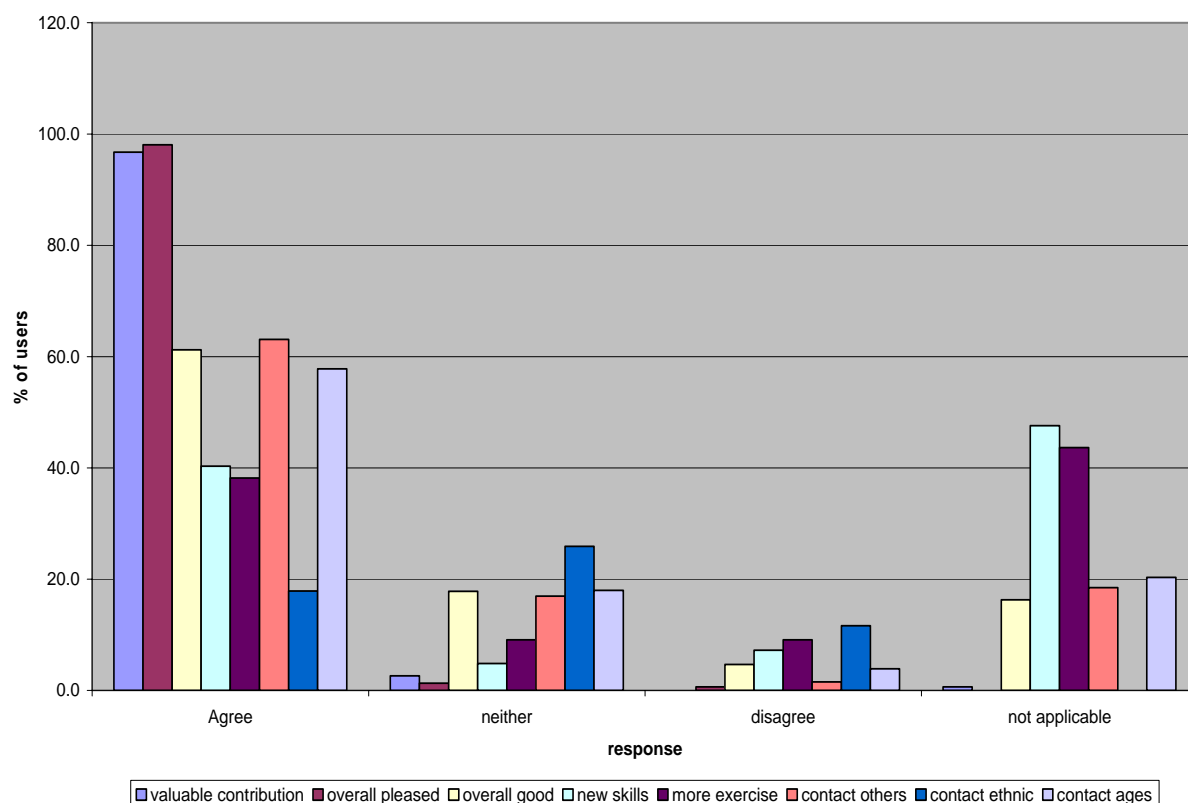
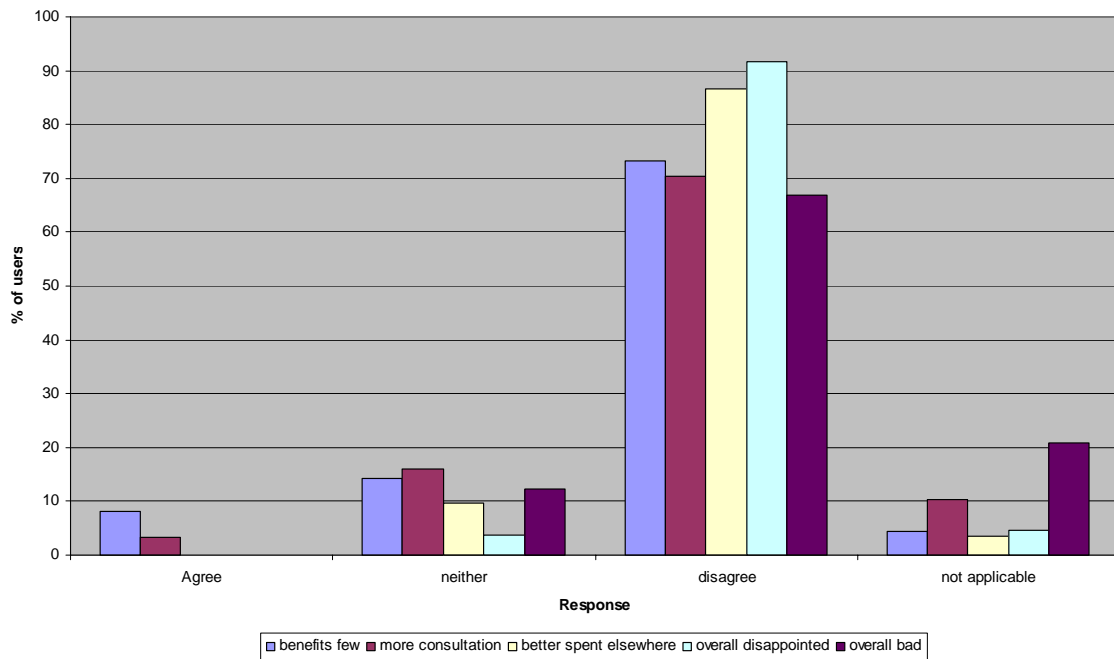


Figure 6: Response to Q16 b, c, d & f (disagree is better)



Appendix 4: Project Selection Rationale and Procedure

A cursory examination of the range of projects supported by CFAP is enough to suggest that selection of 'representative' projects is not without problems. This is illustrated through value of awards; if the average value is calculated it is almost meaningless because the range is so great. Likewise selecting projects on other attributes (e.g. functional conditions or objectives) raises the same problem of identifying what is representative of the broad range.

Within the field of sample selection there is a solution to such complexity called orthogonal design; while this is the most rigorous (in that it tests every possible combination of variables) it is also unwieldy and, used in its entirety, unsuitable to this evaluation; it would select a very large (possibly all projects) sample size.

A second option, and the one that was used in this evaluation is to use two or three pertinent variables in a 'main effects' only design. Pertinent variables in this study were defined through some issues thought to be of interest, these were:

- Location; we wished to see whether the support was focused in any areas as this may give some indication of best practice, need and other geographic issues. The four economic regions were used and, where possible projects in the LA areas in each region were subject to similar proportional representation.
- Size of projects; while this is related to the amount of support awarded the problems with a calculated mean was overcome by categorising projects as micro, small, medium, large and very large within each region. Thus role of scale in the effectiveness of funds allocated could be investigated (i.e. for a given sum is a greater impact achieved through many small projects or by a few large projects)
- Finally the researchers were aware that some changes to the processing of application had been made. To capture the relevance of this to applicants and to obtain during- and post-project opinions completed and approved projects were selected.

Selection was made using the following steps:

- a) Proportional representation of the four economic regions. That is the proportion of total CFAP projects in each of the economic regions was calculated and an equal proportion of the sample allocated to that region
- b) the projects within each region were separated into 5 groups according to size of project (1/5 each in micro, small, medium, large and very large)

- c) the mean of each size group was calculated (given the smaller range in each the means are now usable)
- d) projects were selected to replicate the mean of the size group
- e) as far as possible pairs of projects (one complete and one yet to complete) were selected
- f) where several possible projects were indicated by the foregoing procedure the projects were selected to represent the diversity of CFAP and/or the LA areas within the region
- g) the selections were confirmed/refined in association with stakeholders and CFAP officers

For example, the appropriate proportion of CFAP in North Wales indicated 65 projects. That is 13 projects in each of the five size classes. Thus a project near or at the average size in that class and six larger and six smaller projects within that size class were selected consisting of three pairs of complete/yet to complete projects.

This method overcame the problem of averages mentioned above by using the average of smaller sub-samples. The selected projects from these size groups were compared to the group they were drawn from to ensure they were statistically similar⁴. This ensures the sample is representative in terms of project size⁵ without the problems mentioned earlier. The location element of selection allowed identification of regional variation. Further, by giving access to projects at different stages of completion it gives an insight into the process of CFAP.

The final stage of the selection procedure was superfluous in some regions/size groups; in areas where there were few projects all the projects were needed to fill the quota. Where this did not occur, the choices were often between two similar sized projects in the area. For example, if two projects in the North Wales large project group were near the mean value then the project which could illustrate or raise some point of interest not already made would be selected. If the choice was between refurbishing a community centre (a common enough project, of which other examples would have been selected) and an imaginative community action initiative then, providing sufficient examples of the more common type of project had been selected, the unusual project would be chosen. This procedure ensured that the diversity of CFAP was represented; the common and the innovative.

As this final stage of selection was judgement based it was subject to two forms of confirmation and refinement; first in the relevant stakeholder interviews any projects highlighted by interviewees were checked against the selections and, second, the selections were discussed and confirmed with CFAP officers.

⁴ Using Students t test

⁵ By the simple expedient that the mean of the sub-sample means = the sample mean

The case study projects were selected in a similar manner, though each was intended to be illustrative of a particular issue; in effect each was intended to be the archetype of its combination of location/size/issue addressed. To this end, for example, a large (CFAP maximum) value, small grant scheme and a children's play area were selected as the case studies in Caerphilly.

In sum, the selection process achieved representation of diversity through selection of projects according to location, size, stage of completion and type of issue addressed.