

### Overview

1. This paper updates the group on progress evaluation. Work is on track to the deliver the reports to the timeline agreed by the group at its meeting on 28 February (Annex A). A working group taking forward the work has been established. The working group is focusing on a number of technical challenges which arise from difficulties in isolating change (e.g. that attributable to Community Budgets approach), the variety of approaches proposed by places and the pace of developments.

### Purpose of Discussion

2. The Group is asked to approve a 'national' approach to add value to locally collected information in order to enable the evaluation of the impact of Community Budgets on both families with multiple problems and local decision-making to:

- help ensure convincing and sufficiently robust evidence is provided;
- compare local results to help draw out what the similarities and differences in approaches tells us about the outcomes for the families and financial savings;
- complement and strengthen local evidence through comparison with a wider range of groups and/or areas; and
- more effectively look across and beyond individual local studies to enhance understanding of how the Community Budgets process operated.

3. This is also subject to financial resources. Some additional costs are likely to arise in seeking a 'national' approach to complement the locally collected information. Financial resources will, in the first instance, be sought from the DCLG Research Programme through a business case developed by the Working Group.

### Progress

#### *Working Group*

4. Annex B lists the core-members of the working group. This is comprised of experts from 9 places, 7 civil servants (from across government), LG Group and the Audit Commission. Annex B also lists the larger group which is copied into material for the working group. Places not currently involved in the Working Group have been invited to participate. In addition, a Community of Practice forum on evaluation has been established to provide transparency on the activity and share knowledge more widely.

5. The Working Group has focused on developing a 'straw man' according to the agreed evaluation principles. It sets out an initial structure for the work including suggested approaches to overcome some of the technical challenges involved. Topics covered in the 'straw man' include:

- Re-stating agreed evaluation principles
- Delivering a credible and independent assessment
- An appropriate minimum quality standard
- Balance between quality and cost / effort
- Distinguishing between National versus Local requirements
- Identifying who is affected by the programme
- Baselining using control and comparison groups
- Measuring additionality
- Capturing assumptions

6. Significant further development by the Working Group is required to flesh out these challenges. The working group's next round of discussion will help by moving on from

generic evaluation practice to the key research questions and the common metrics that might support them. Draft research questions for the evaluation include:

- What new mechanisms/processes have been employed under Community Budgets (e.g. pooling, intervention streamlining)?
- Have those mechanisms led to measurable added value (costs / benefits), in terms of, a) cashable savings achieved, b) improved outcomes for families, and avoidance of costs associated with negative outcomes, c) quality of service / experience. If so, what is the level of additionality for each? (compared to robust counterfactual.)
- Are there definable circumstances or different mechanisms which have shown significant difference over others?
- Are there significantly different results for sub-groups (family types, places, service themes) or types of outcome?
- How like for like comparison between areas can be achieved?

7. Several stakeholders including HM Treasury, LG Group and DfE have concluded that that a 'national' approach is needed to complement locally collected information. This would enable the evaluation to more effectively address the points in paragraph 2. The potential need for supplementary analysis was raised as a possibility in the evaluation paper considered by the Group at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February. The design would be undertaken through the Working Group.

#### Support Programme

8. A meeting was held with Kate Blatchford of Institute for Government and DCLG, DfE, Local Government Group, Audit Commission and HM Treasury on how best to support evaluation development. Actions from that meeting were:

- A recommendation that IfG take an active role in the evaluation as an independent providing challenge;
- Local Government Group to lead on development of a support programme emphasising evaluation:
  - DfE Ministers are considering proposals to fund one or more national research organisations to support local evaluations.
  - Audit Commission have offered to contribute free a one-off free event.
  - New Economy has separately offered to provide a seminar on Manchester's Cost Benefit Analysis work (the latest specification of which is in the Community of Practice Evaluation forum).

## **Annex A: Timeline and Key Milestones:**

The timeline and key milestones:

- Evaluation Working group established (25 February 2011);
- Progress update to the CB Group for meeting on 5 April 2011;
- Draft mid-way evaluation report for comments: January 2012
- Mid-way evaluation checkpoint and emerging findings: March 2012
- First draft final Evaluation report for comments: December 2012
- Evaluation report submitted: early February 2013
- Deadline for Spending Review: [TBA]
- DCLG business plan end date for evaluation: March 2013

## **Annex B: Working Group membership**

Working Group core list – those that receive all documents and comments

Andrew Charlesworth-May	Andrew.CHARLESWORTH-MAY@education.gsi.gov.uk
Catherine O'Rourke	corourke@westminster.gov.uk
David Morris	David.Morris@neweconomymanchester.com
Edward Woolley	Edward.Woolley@education.gsi.gov.uk
Eileen McKibbin	eileen.mckibbin@kent.gov.uk
Guy Weir	Guy.Weir@communities.gsi.gov.uk
James Binks	James.Binks@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk
Jason Lowther	jason.lowther@birmingham.gov.uk
Jonathan Rhind	Jonathan.Rhind@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Karin BOSVELD	Karin.BOSVELD@childpovertyunit.gsi.gov.uk
Lesley Wilkinson	Lesley.a.Wilkinson@hullcc.gov.uk
Liz Broadley	liz.broadley@calderdale.gov.uk
Michael Hughes	michael-hughes@audit-commission.gov.uk
Nuala O'Rourke	N.O'Rourke@wigan.gov.uk
Paul Mooney	PAUL.MOONEY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
Rachel Litherland	Rachel.Litherland@local.gov.uk
Sarah Dobson	sarah.dobson@tameside.gov.uk
Stefan Carlyle	stefan.carlyle@environment-agency.gov.uk
Stuart Carlton	stuart.carlton@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Tania.Townsend@islington.gov.uk	Tania.Townsend@islington.gov.uk

Working Group copyee list – those that receive key documents. Documents also posted on CoP

Alan Wilson (Every Child Matters)	alan@everyfamilymatters.org.uk
Ann Christina	ann.christina@kent.gov.uk
Caroline PRICHARD	Caroline.PRICHARD@education.gsi.gov.uk
Cheryl.C.Hopkins	Cheryl.C.Hopkins@birmingham.gov.uk
Chrissie Garrett	Chrissie.Garrett@birmingham.gov.uk
David Clarke	david.clarke51@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Jeremy Vincent	Jeremy.Vincent@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Jo Ivens	jo.ivenes@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
Joanne Fearn	joanne.fearn@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
Justin Vetta	Justin.Vetta@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Kevin Nunn	Kevin.Nunn@essex.gov.uk
Kevin Tinsley	Kevin.TINSLEY@education.gsi.gov.uk
Mags Walsh	mags.walsh@leics.gov.uk
Miriam Light	Miriam.Light@justice.gsi.gov.uk
Nafisa Mathia	Nafisa.MATHIA@education.gsi.gov.uk
Rosemary Main	Rosemary.Main@dh.gsi.gov.uk
Sam Brand	Sam.BRAND@education.gsi.gov.uk
Simon Bullock	Simon.Bullock3@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Simon Lawrence	Simon.Lawrence@leics.gov.uk
Victoria Wood	Victoria.WOOD@education.gsi.gov.uk

Invitations to participate have been sent to places not currently represented on the Working Group.