



## SIP PUBLICATION SCHEME

Board Meeting – 10 March 2005

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Board of the requirements placed on Social Inclusion Partnerships by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002, including the development of an approved Publication Scheme.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002 (the Act) introduces a public right of access to information held by public authorities, including Social Inclusion Partnerships, and is designed to promote greater transparency and accountability throughout the public sector in Scotland.
- 2.2 Members will be aware that from 1 January 2005, anyone who makes a request to a public authority for information is entitled to receive it, provided no exemptions apply.

### 3. PUBLICATION SCHEME

- 3.1 The Act requires that each public authority must produce and maintain a Publication Scheme which specifies:
- the classes of information that the public authority publishes or intends to publish;
  - the format in which information of each class is, or is intended to be, published; and
  - whether the published information is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.

Information which is accessible via the Publication Scheme is exempt from requiring a specific response under the Freedom of Information legislation.

- 3.2 The Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) indicated to Communities Scotland that a consistent approach to compliance with the Act should be applied to all existing SIPs in Scotland.
- 3.3 Although not directly responsible for ensuring that SIPs comply with the Act, Communities Scotland agreed to develop a 'Model' Publication Scheme applicable to SIPs, which was approved by the SIC on 29 September 2004. Individual SIPs and their respective 'accountable bodies' require to confirm compliance with the Publication Scheme.

3.4 A draft Publication Scheme for the Coalfield Area SIP has been prepared, which requires to be approved by the SIP Board, and will be available for inspection at the Board meeting.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i) notes that the Coalfield Area SIP is classified as a public authority under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002;
- ii) notes the requirement of the SIP to comply with the Act, and develop and maintain a Publication Scheme;
- iii) endorses the SIP Publication Scheme and remits the Chair of the SIP Board to confirm that the 'Model' developed by Communities Scotland has been adopted by the Coalfield Area SIP Board; and
- iv) otherwise notes the content of the report.

**Gwen Barker**  
**Community Planning and Partnership Manager**  
**28 February 2005**