Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum

SURF : sharing experience : shaping practice

SURF ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WEST PARK CENTRE, DUNDEE, 31st JANUARY 2007

SKILLS AND LEARNING:
POLICY PANEL REMIT AND PARTICIPANTS

The four, topical policy panel discussions at this Annual Conference will be interactive debates chaired by SURF directors and supported by the expertise of a panel of invited guests. No formal presentations will be made by the panel guests but they will be encouraged to help inform the debate based on their own expertise and views. Some context for the discussion is set out below in a short briefing paper on current policy trends, and related report links.

Purpose – to offer delegates the chance to discuss current and future challenges and opportunities in a specific policy topic and to propose policy improvements consistent with meeting these.

Context – the main participative focus of the conference will be four policy panel discussions involving interested delegates and a panel of key figures in the relevant regeneration policy fields.

Each discussion group will be chaired by a relevant SURF director who will introduce and encourage open discussion on:

- Where have we been in the last 15 years in policy terms?
- Where are we now?
- What changes will we need to meet the demands of the next 15 years

The intention of the policy panel approach is:

- To maximise the opportunity for participants to contribute to policy discussion in their area of interest and expertise.
- To promote constructive debate with the help of a panel of relevant key figures who will be invited to offer their views and informed comment.
- To produce a list of up to 5 specific policy proposals to feed back to policy makers directly and as part of a conference summary report.

Further details on the 'Skills and Learning' policy discussion group follows:

**Policy Discussion Group
Skills and Learning**

Key Question

What skills and learning policy developments would further enhance regeneration outcomes?

Relevant Context and Challenges

- Building skills and aspiration levels on a lifelong basis is a well-established priority in supporting a vision for a more successful Scotland.

- The Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence website states that:

  The implementation of Curriculum for Excellence will go beyond the provision of guidance on curriculum content. It will have implications for:

    - the teaching profession and other staff,
    - the organisation of the curriculum in our schools and centres,
    - the qualifications system,
    - the recognition of wider achievement and
    - the improvement framework.

  http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk

- The current Scottish Government has produced a strategy for increasing Skills and Learning across the country and across all ages and groups. It states that – "Learning is a powerful good in its own right, a necessary driver of self-development." But it is also a powerful enabler of much of what this Government wants to achieve. Learning allows individuals, families and communities to prosper. It can help to reduce inequalities and improve responsible and active citizenship.

  "Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy", September 2007
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/197204/0052752.pdf

- To support this work, in 2008 the Government intends to establish a new skills body which will combine the roles of Careers Scotland and LearnDirect Scotland.

  "Skills Body Takes Shape", Scottish Govt. News Release 07/11/07:
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/11/07132654

- There have also been important changes in terms of the role of Scottish Enterprise and the Community Learning responsibilities of Communities Scotland, Learning Connections. The latter is now part of the Scottish Government's Lifelong Learning Directorate:
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/LearningConnections

- Futureskills Scotland, which is part of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, published a December 2007 report entitled, "Key Future Labour Market and Skills issues in Scotland."
http://www.futureskillsscotland.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?lID=1680&sID=1455

- There is a challenge around how disaffected young men can be more meaningfully engaged with in both employment and wider society. Sandy Campbell of Working Rite wrote an article on this subject for Issue 39 of SURF's policy journal, *Scotregen*:
http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/publications.asp?sid=1

- There is a debate around possible reform in a number of areas of Scottish education, from University access to the future of Standard Grades. One recent example is Professor Andrew Hamnett of the University of Strathclyde, who, writing in the Herald in January 2008, suggests a major overhaul of the Higher system.
http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/news/display.var.1936148.0.University_call_for_twoyear_Highers_course.php

- Outwith Scotland, a recent UK Government Education and Skills Bill called, "Raising Expectations: Staying in Education and Training post 16+" outlines plans to boost the skills and education of young people and adults in England and Wales by, among other things, raising the school leaving age to 18:
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/educationandskills/docs/Raising%20Expectations.pdf

Panel Guests and Biographies

1) Maggi Allan, former Chair, Curriculum for Excellence

Maggi retired from her post as Executive Director of Education for South Lanarkshire Council in 2005, where she had been employed since 1995.
Prior to going to South Lanarkshire, Maggi had worked for Central Regional Council
for 8 years where she held senior posts in the directorate, including that of Director of Education.

She began her career in education as a teacher of History and Modern Studies in Glasgow before going to work for Strathclyde Regional Council as Curriculum Development Officer in 1984. Throughout her career Maggi has served on a range of national bodies including the General Teaching Council of Scotland, the Beattie Committee and Scottish Arts Council Working Groups. She is currently a member of Court at the University of the West of Scotland.

Since retiring she has worked on a consultancy basis for several Scottish local authorities and as Chair of the Programme Board for A Curriculum for Excellence, the body which was set up to give professional advice to Ministers on the development of the curriculum in Scotland. The Board's term of office ended in December 2007.

2) Sandy Campbell, Director, Working Rite Ltd

Sandy is Director and co-founder of Working Rite Ltd, a company that sets up work-based mentoring projects and promotes rites of passage experiences for teenage boys. Working Rite has established projects in three Scottish and three English cities and is now pursuing a roll out of the Working Rite method with the new Scottish Government.

Sandy has a background as a consultant in community regeneration since the late 1980s. His expertise is in community engagement and untangling systemic problems in organisations.

3) Phil Denning, District Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)

Phil has been with HMIE for five years. He has led and participated in a range of inspections including schools, education authorities, child protection, prisons community learning and development and further education. He is HM District Inspector for two local authority areas and is an advisory inspector to another five.

Prior to joining HMIE, he was CEO of the UK national training organization for community learning and development. He has extensive experience in both the strategic development and practical delivery of education/regeneration programmes that link the formal and informal education sectors at local, regional and national levels. He is qualified at masters levels in both education and cultural planning. In his spare time, he is a Director of a number of community organizations in Scotland and England and six social enterprises. He is a Trustee of an Edinburgh art gallery.

4) Dr Jonathan Sher, Director of Policy, Research & Practice Development, Children in Scotland

Dr Sher was the President of the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute (NCCAI) between 1995 and 2004. He stayed on as a Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Leandro Advocacy Project (with Prof. Jack Boger of the UNC Law School's Center for Civil Rights. Sher also served for several years as a Vice-Chair of the Covenant with North Carolina's Children -- a public policy coalition of 150 organizations representing approximately one-half million members across NC.

Before coming to NCCAI, Sher played the lead role in planning the $50 million Annenberg Rural Challenge - a national school reform initiative. He has been a faculty member at both the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University (including Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at NCSU's College of Education and Psychology). Sher has served on numerous public and private sector boards and councils -- including the Ethics Committee at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill. Earlier in his career, Dr. Sher was the founder of REAL Enterprises, an organization working with high schools and community colleges across North Carolina (and more than a dozen other states) since 1986 to help students create their own jobs by creating their own businesses. Sher also was the Education Director at the Centre for Community Change and the National Rural Centre (both in Washington, DC).

Panel Chair

Paul Ballantyne, Knowledge & Practice Manager, Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR), Communities Scotland. Paul is a long-standing SURF Director. Prior to joining SCR, he was a Community Engagement Officer with Argyll and Bute Health Board. He also worked for Community Education in Strathclyde Regional Council. Paul

Further Reading

For your interest, the key questions and relevant context and challenges from the other three discussion groups follow:

Gainful Employment

Key Question

What can be done to help ensure that employment really is an effective route out of poverty and is of sufficient quality and potential to genuinely improve the quality of life of the employee and his/her family?

Relevant Context and Challenges

- Previous and current policy prioritises employment as the best route out of poverty. The Scottish Government's June 2006 paper, "Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland", is one example:
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/12094904/0

- Substantial investment is made nationally and locally in attempting to break concentrated cycles of poverty and exclusion through co-ordinated support into employment.

- Further levels of support, encouragement and sanction are currently under discussion at national political party levels. For example, there is a debate at the UK level on the benefits and drawbacks of including elements of a US-style workfare programme. "Long-term jobless must do community work, say Tories", Guardian, 08/01/2008
  http://politics.guardian.co.uk/conservatives/story/0,,2236961,00.html

- Yet, as unemployed people are increasingly strongly encouraged to enter the job market, concerns are being raised about the quality of the jobs on offer. These concerns relate both to financial and wider family and community 'wellbeing' impacts.

- There are also questions about the lack of potential for progression within low skilled, and low paid service sectors. Issue 39 of SURF's policy journal *Scotregen* carried a short series of articles on this topic on pages 6-8:
  http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/publications.asp?sid=1

- These concerns link to wider issues of social division and social immobility. The House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee has recently produced a wide-ranging report on poverty in Scotland which noted that, '"employment is not an automatic route out of poverty":
  http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmscotaf/128/128.pdf.

- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) have also produced recent reports on the same topic. The JRF paper, "Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2007" includes research on poverty in working families:
  http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2164.asp

  The IPPR's January 2008 publication on the subject is, "Working Out of Poverty: A Study of the Low-Paid and the 'Working Poor":
  http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=581

Empowered Communities

Key Question

What opportunities are there for policy improvements that would have a significant impact in supporting the development of genuinely and appropriately 'empowered communities'?

Relevant Context and Challenges

- It is widely accepted that the development of genuinely empowered and successful, sustainable communities is a key element of real regeneration.

- An original aim of Community Planning was to empower communities by putting them "at the heart of the decision making process" in terms of public service planning and delivery.

- Recent announcements confirming the larger scale service co-ordination focus of Community Planning have reflected the broad experience of community representatives that Community Planning has not ultimately prioritised community empowerment.

  John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, recently circulated open letter to attendees of a special November 2007 conference in Fife called "Community Planning – Delivering the Benefits." Mr Swinney summarises his view of the main points of the day and in turn offers a link to all the presentations made at the conference and other relevant useful papers:
  http://www.scotregen.co.uk/doc.pl?file=surf/news/Cabinet%20Secretary%20for%20Finance%20and%20Sustainable%20Growth.doc

- The current administration has stated its aspiration to support more empowered communities and consultative work is ongoing to determine how this can best be done. Alastair McKinlay of Communities Scotland gave a detailed overview of the Scottish Government's commitments in this area in a Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS) November 2007 seminar on "New Powers for Communities?":
  http://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org/documents/seminars/EventReport1-11-07.doc

- Other models such as Development Trusts and community run Social Enterprises are increasingly seen as a more substantial route for genuinely empowering communities.

  Development Trusts Association Scotland: http://www.dtascot.org.uk/
  Social Entrepreneur Network Scotland: http://www.senscot.net
  Local People Leading: http://www.localpeopleleading.co.uk/

- The community ownership developments in the Highland and Islands are referred to positively by senior politicians as 'a silent revolution'. Debates continue as to how and if this revolution might be spread to more urban communities.

- SURF has been liasing with other partners to promote discussion on the potential of the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland's Growing Community Assets grant to support community capacity and empowerment in disadvantaged urban communities. SURF held a 2006 seminar in Perth on Community Asset-Based Regeneration with input from the Big Lottery Fund, Communities Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, One NorthEast and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

- The role, capacity and attitude of Local Authorities and community run Housing Associations to community empowerment are crucial elements in how this agenda develops.

- Many commentators note the different level of discussion and support in the English context. David Tyler of English community organisations umbrella body Community Matters gave a presentation detailing their work at the previous SURF Annual Conference: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/ppt.pl?file=surf/file/David%20Tyler.ppt

- The UK Communities and Local Government Department's "Firm Foundations: A Framework for Community Capacity Building" report identified the crucial role of Community owned 'Anchor' organisations. http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/152480

- SURF has recently published a summary paper on "Leadership in the Community". This paper includes some issues and proposals identified in SURF's own research on the subject: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/publications.asp?sid=7

Healthy Futures

Key Question

What regeneration activities have proved effective in reducing health inequalities? What more could be done through the regeneration agenda to significantly reduce inequalities in health: by Government and by organisations on the ground?

Relevant Context and Challenges

- Despite recent dramatic improvements in cancer, heart and stroke related illness, health remains a major challenge for Scottish policy makers and practitioners.

- The extent of inequalities in relation to health is a key concern and despite overall improvements in the whole population's health the gaps remain and in some areas are widening. This is a major focus of concern for the for the Government.

- SURF has been working in the last two years to support the increased awareness of the mutually important links between the health and regeneration agendas. The following event reports are available:

  1) Event Report from a special Forum event in Glasgow on "An Outcomes Approach to Health Inequalities", delivered in partnership with Health Scotland, 31/05/07 http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/health-improvement/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,0/task,doc_download/gid,1227/

2) Outcomes Paper from the SURF Open Forum in Glasgow on "Health, Wellbeing and Regeneration – Developing the Linkages", 25/01/07
http://www.scotregen.co.uk/pdf.pl?file=surf/file/Outcomes Paper 25.01.pdf

3) Outcomes Paper from the SURF Open Forum in Stirling on "Health Impacts on Regeneration in a Community Planning Context", 25/05/06
http://www.scotregen.co.uk/pdf.pl?file=surf/file/Outcome Paper Short 25.05.06.pdf

- Recent moves towards a more outcomes-based focus on 'wellbeing' rather than illness has strengthened the understanding of shared goals and potential routes to longer-term improvements. For example at the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health's 10th anniversary Conference in October 2007 there was a strong focus on future policy direction in this area. Interim event report:
http://www.sdcmh.org.uk/events/10thanni%20interim%20rpt.html

- The Scottish Government are currently consulting on how to consolidate and build on this more positive approach to policy and delivery. "Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland", a consultation paper on mental health policy direction 2008-2011, was published in November 2007: http://www.wellscotland.info/news/item.php?id=220

- The Scottish Government have set up a Ministerial Taskforce on Health Inequalities and the content and outcomes of today's discussion will be fed into one of their future meetings:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/inequalitiestaskforce

- The Government are also taking forward a Health Improvement Performance Management Review in Partnership with Health Scotland:
http://www.healthscotland.com/scotlands-health/evaluation/planning/hi-performancemanagement-nhs.aspx

- There is an argument that we have little or no evidence of what impact regeneration efforts of the last 15 years have had on health. Hilary Thomson of the University of Glasgow's Medical Research Council provided an in-depth feature on this subject in Issue 36 of SURF's Scotregen Journal (pp.7-10):
http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/publications.asp?sid=1

- Some very substantial large scale Glasgow based collaborative research in this area is beginning to build a better picture of the inter-relationship of housing, employment health and wider regeneration efforts. GoWell is one such research and learning programme – they published two reports in November 2007, "Will Glasgow Flourish?" and ""The Regeneration Challenge in Transformation Areas".
http://www.gowellonline.com/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=20&Itemid=67