



Scottish Urban  
Regeneration Forum

SURF : sharing experience : shaping practice

## *“Regeneration - The Right Stuff?”*

### **A report from the SURF 2006 Annual Conference**



West Park Centre, Dundee  
March 10<sup>th</sup> 2006

The focus of our 2006 conference was to consider whether we have the appropriate set of policies, structures and delivery mechanisms in Scotland to achieve successful and sustainable regeneration.

The context was the publication of the Scottish Executive's regeneration statement and the increasing interest in the role of cities as drivers of wider regeneration

Thanks to support from Communities Scotland and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, SURF was able to ensure that there was a substantial involvement from community representatives in the conference.

## Introduction

The Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF) is the independent regeneration and inclusion network, sharing information and promoting discussion so as to help shape, policy, opinion and the delivery of successful regeneration efforts in Scotland. It aims to stimulate constructive debate about community regeneration; to promote and disseminate examples of current practice; and to achieve a higher status for community regeneration on Scotland's political agenda.

We do this through organising seminars, study visits and lectures; by publishing documents such as a quarterly journal, reports and briefing notes; through organising an annual awards scheme; and by working closely with key policy makers.

We utilise our position as a truly independent forum for our wide membership to explore current practice and experience, and then to positively influence the development of successful regeneration policy.

Through our close links with the Scottish Executive and its agencies we act as a channel for information, consultation and policy proposals based on the knowledge and experience of our membership and the wider networks we connect with.

An important part of SURF's programme of events is our annual conference.

This paper is a brief summary of the main points made by the key note speakers at the conference who were:

- Alistair Grimes (Rocket Science & SURF Chairperson)
- Cllr Jill Shimi (Dundee City Council)
- Prof. Stuart Gulliver (University of Glasgow)
- Dermot Finch & Chris Urwin ('Centre for Cities', Institute for Public Policy Research)
- David Tyler (Community Matters)
- Malcolm Chisholm MSP (Minister for Communities)
- Archie Thomson (Community Activist, Renton)
- Greg Lloyd (University of Dundee)

Copies of the speakers' presentation slides and the outcome of the key pad voting sessions can be found on the SURF web site at the link below:

<http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/events.asp?sid=2>

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## 1 SURF Chair Alistair Grimes' opening presentation

Alistair Grimes works for Rocket Science, an Edinburgh-based private consultancy, and has been SURF chairperson since July 2004. In his consultancy position, he specialises in urban regeneration, financial engineering for projects, community banking & finance and European funding.

Previous posts include: Chief Executive, Community Enterprise in Strathclyde (CEIS); Group Funding Controller, The Wise Group; Assistant Director (Communications), Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). He gained an early grounding in social research, policy and information at Lothian Regional Council, SCVO and Age Concern Scotland.

### **Alistair Grimes' introduction provided an overview of the recent history of thinking on urban regeneration in Scotland.**

He pointed out that "Life", as the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard remarked, "is lived forwards but understood backwards". Alistair then posed the question, "What can we learn from policy and practice since World War Two?" He listed some of the trends as:

#### 1.1 Post war planning

Immediately after 1945 regeneration was seen as a matter of *physical* improvement and of *planning*. After all, planning had worked during the war and we had plans for a National Health Service and the implementation of the Beveridge Report with its attack on the evils of poverty, ignorance, ill health. What we didn't realise was that land use planning had its limitations (and a war economy is very different from a peace time one) and that the communities relocated from the centre of Glasgow to Easterhouse and Drumchapel were not like pieces of furniture that could be picked up and put down somewhere else, but were more like a spider's web, delicate and difficult to carry around.

#### 1.2 Regeneration through Housing

The second trend was the way in which *housing policy* determined regeneration through allocation of council housing at a time when, in west/central Scotland, nearly 66% of housing was in public ownership. This led to the law of unintended consequences, where allocation policies caused all sorts of problems because they were just that, ways of allocating houses, not building sustainable communities.

#### 1.3 New Towns and regions

The other example of the law of unintended consequences was in the move to create new towns which, if it had been continued by the new Strathclyde Regional Council would have stripped out more and more skilled workers from Glasgow and hastened its decline. Thankfully the new regional council did two things – it recognised that a strong metropolitan heart, based on Glasgow, was essential to the region and recognised that social and economic development needed to go hand in hand.

#### 1.4 Market led solutions

Alistair pointed out that much of this was abandoned in the 1980s when market led solutions came into vogue and regeneration was sidelined into the four 'New Life' areas with no real national strategic view. Scottish Homes concentrated on widening home ownership and Scottish Enterprise dealt with the economy as if there was no real spatial issue at all.

Whilst Alistair felt that whilst at the setting up of Communities Scotland opportunities were missed, one big positive change was the direct linking of housing with wider regeneration concerns.

He concluded with an anecdote demonstrating that:

- 1) The application of mathematical formulae does not always work in Regeneration
- 2) There is no substitute for common sense

He summed up by noting that we are starting to emerge from this period, with a feeling that although employment is the key to poverty, we also need to look at the non-employment ways in which we can build and sustain communities. This conference will show us how far, and in what ways, we have travelled."

## 2 Councillor Shimi's Welcome on behalf of Dundee City Council

**Councillor Shimi was pleased to welcome SURF to Dundee, 'the sunniest city in Scotland', once again for its annual conference.**

She noted that there is no doubt that since last years SURF conference in Dundee there have been a lot of changes at the local and national level – and that these changes seem to happen faster and faster.

It's therefore important that we as individuals to have time to take a step back and reflect on what we are doing and ask if this is really reflecting on our core values and taking us forward to our personal goals. Councillor Shimi felt that we as individuals need that opportunity for reflection, it's also important that time to reflect on our Regeneration issues. She thanked SURF for providing the opportunity to stand back and really look at how we are operating in terms of Regeneration in our cities.

Councillor Shimi noted that like many other cities Dundee has a complex agenda with issues like housing, health, population and economic and that the physical and the economic cannot be divorced from the social. Regeneration is fundamentally about peoples' relationship to society.

Councillor Shimi spoke of Dundee's strong pride in its partnership approach to Regeneration, including its Community engagement process; she is confident that Community Regeneration is delivering results. Dundee's regeneration has not just been about image, but also about effecting real change in peoples' everyday lives.

### 3 Professor Gulliver, University of Glasgow

#### **Professor Gulliver offered a personal and robust view of the current status of Scottish regeneration.**

His view was that there is no possibility of reducing the differentials between 'North Britain' and the Southeast on present policies. There is a tacit assumption that the U.K. must not do anything that might endanger the world status performance of London/ the Southeast. Indeed he saw the differentials worsening, with 4 new London based urban regeneration areas, airport expansion, Olympics etc. –a £6 Billion investment in St Pancras station alone. He found it ironic that London has its own development agency.

He offered some stark statistics on the contrasting outcome between England and France which had followed of strategy of administrative devolution. In France the major regional capitals all had appreciably higher GDP performance ratios than was the case in England.

In the course of his presentation he made a number of points including:

- We need to make a proper start to radically addressing the massive economic imbalance between London and the Southeast and North Britain. New measures might include tax allowances targeted at 'knowledge businesses' to attract, initiate and develop them in North Britain.
- Scotland needs something 'Big' on the demand side and not just exhortation to try harder.
- Regeneration and urban place-making is about more than 'badly performing urban bits' – it's a key component of the national competitiveness agenda.
- It is unfortunate that Regeneration has become synonymous with urban policy; and therefore about the 'bad bits'. In fact, Regeneration is about national competitiveness.
- We need to articulate a compelling long-term vision for cities and towns in Scotland. This should include asking whether we want them to be 'world class' and being clear about what this means?
- Regeneration in Scotland does not have sufficiently strong political championing in Scotland – and this championing is essential. Consequently, Scotland has lost its lead national profile. Meantime, the Leadership in English Regeneration provided by the ODPM and David Miliband is impressive.
- There is no 'Implementation Leadership' in regeneration and place making in Scotland. In England, the role is taken on by RDAs and consequently much more is being done 'on the ground'.

#### **4 City people - City Centre Living in the UK Dermot Finch, Director & Chris Urwin, Economist Centre for Cities, Institute of Public Policy Research**

**For the first part of their presentation, Dermot Finch and Chris Urwin, drew on the Centre for Cities recently published research on the revival of city centre living in the U.K.**

The set of three cities studied included Dundee. Dermot Finch acknowledged that the research was primarily based on the economic drivers of city Regeneration, but he stressed that this did not mean that they were uninterested in people, deprivation and the linkages with economic drivers. He wanted to draw out two important policy issues:

1. City Regions
2. Devolution

Chris Urwin then began his presentation by stating that there are four main reasons for needing to understand more about city centre living

1. City centre living is a key component of the U.K. Government's urban renaissance agenda
2. We need to understand the growth of city centre living if we are to get to grips with broader patterns of urban regeneration
3. We need to put city centre living in perspective. U.K. cities have been losing population for decades, but this is now turning around – what part do city centres play in this?
4. Policy makers need a rationale. They are not always clear why they are promoting city centre living, what the benefits are or why it's happening.

##### **4.1 Key city centre living research – Key findings**

There has been a dramatic increase in city centre living since the start of the 1990 (Dundee's city centre population for example rose from 1,500 in 1991 to 2,900 in 2001). This has helped the cities grow overall.

City centre populations are mostly young, single and don't stay long. There are few families or people over 40. In Dundee and Liverpool the proportion of family households in the city centre is approximately half the city average. In Dundee city centre 4.4% of the population is over 65 compared to 15.9% of the Scottish population. For most city centre residents, city centre living is a short-term phase, not a long term commitment

City centres also show more religious and ethnic diversity than their surrounding areas. In Liverpool, Manchester and Dundee it is the Chinese ethnic group that make up the largest non-white element. The 2001 Census

also counted an unusually high proportion of residents not born in the U.K. – 14% in Dundee

City centres are home to a highly skilled population. In Dundee 29% of those centre residents aged 16-74 are graduates. Single people dominate the centre populations because students form such a large part of the population, especially in Dundee where students make up 56% of the population and 62% of the working population

The 'buzz and proximity' are the largest attractions of city centres. The buzz is the sense of energy and of being in the heart of things. Proximity is the reality of being within walking distance of shops, work, friends, entertainment etc. City life has become aspirational and urban living is trendy again (URBED et al 1999). British cities have had a very public makeover and images of city living have changed

There are direct impacts from the centre revival. The increased population helps the local economy. It also improves the physical infrastructure – the centres are now nicer places to be for residents and non-residents

There are indirect effects, however these are limited. They are especially limited for smaller cities. These benefits include improving the perceptions of potential investors, tourists etc. and attracting highly skilled workers. The local council tax take is increased and car usage is reduced.

#### **4.2 Key city centre living research – Key messages**

The economic impact is positive but not huge and reflects economic performance rather than drives it. There are local catalyst effects for a vibrant city centre and local services boost. There are wider catalyst effects with improvements to labour and housing markets and investor and visitor perceptions

Most city centres are not for families. Most residents move when they have children and the priority should be to encourage families into inner ring neighbourhoods next to the city centre.

Inner ring neighbourhoods are the next big challenge

Centres have got better but many nearby areas have not. They have the potential to be better suburban communities but funding rule make it hard to put in key infrastructure

Smaller cities should not copy bigger ones because city centre living is less attractive in smaller places. In these places regeneration has to start with improvement to the economic base and the development of transport links with bigger urban communities.

Cities performance has improved to produce 58% of the population growth and 63% of job growth. But this growth is very uneven Southeast cities above average and North & West cities below

#### **4.3 Lessons from the 'State of the English Cities' report (similar to the 'Review of Scottish Cities')**

Whilst London dominates in England it ranks only 23<sup>rd</sup> in Europe (GDP per capita, 2001)

Recent high national growth and public expenditure rates have boosted city growth – but what does the immediate future now hold?

Cities matter, but they need stronger local partnership, greater financial powers and fewer, more strategic, interventions – 'less is more'

City regions should be supported within a regional agenda, starting with the 'Big 9' cities

#### **4.4 City Leadership- Messages**

Cities should have greater financial powers and need stronger local leadership.

Leadership and power are key to economic growth

England is too centralised with too many fragmented funding streams and unelected quangos. All areas need more freedom and flexibility

City regions are the right level for economic development because regions are too big and LADs too small. But the biggest city regions need more financial powers.

#### **4.5 City Leadership Recommendations**

Dermot Finch referred to what David Miliband had described as 'Double Devolution' and noted that Miliband's description was "a great phrase but hard to achieve in practice".

He went on to note that very recent research supported a view that devolution had made little or no difference to economic performance in Scotland and Wales.

Dermot Finch described what would amount to the other half of Double Devolution:

- The creation of city region contracts on regeneration; housing, skills funding etc
- Greater tax raising powers; Supplementary Business Rate
- City-region mayors
- Economic Development contracts for cities and towns outside the city regions and improved capacity and skills at local level.

## 5 Open Question & Answer Section

Guest facilitator Willie Roe, Chairperson of Highland and Islands Enterprise, thanked the speakers for their informative presentations.

### **In response to questions from the floor the following points were made:**

- In terms of ensuring that incoming businesses employ local people from the deprived areas, we have learned that we should at least get into a position where the supply of jobs is there and support local training and business start-ups.
- We have challenges with shops and small businesses in our main streets. Tax breaks for small shops, such as for expenditure on shop frontages, would greatly improve high streets. Shops and local small businesses are good for local employment.
- There is still a need to engage with real people, activists are routinely disempowered on the big decisions.
- Community activists are very frustrated over inappropriate funding schemes and over timescales for funding that are too short to make an impact.
- Local Authorities may not have funds, but quangos often do.
- Run-down areas are often adjacent to nearby vibrant areas so the transport linkages become the important thing here.
- In England the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) is a great device for bypassing the rest of the Government machinery. Until we get a Scottish Executive that clearly accepts their responsibility for leadership in Regeneration we won't get very far in Scotland.
- In terms of local employment more needs to be done about encouraging and developing local talent so that disadvantaged areas are more competitive and attractive to employers.
- The more the universities can do to reach out, the more they will attract people and jobs.
- Regarding what used to be referred to as the brain drain, Manchester and Liverpool are now currently running programmes that deliberately target the more mature students as a way of contending with the London magnate.

## **6 David Tyler, Director, Community Matters**

**David Tyler began by drawing a distinction between ‘community’ and ‘voluntary’ sectors. For him, one major distinction is the voluntary and mutual elements of the community sector ‘banding together to help themselves and their neighbours’.**

He then provided an overview of the community sector’s role in Public Service delivery and described this topic as a “pre-occupation of the government in England at the moment”. He pointed out that Community Organisations can, and do, get involved and add value through:

- Good local knowledge and relationships
- Taking a holistic, multi-purpose approach
- Ensuring services are well networked, employing local labour and supporting the local economy
- Helping spread risk through multiple small-scale delivery
- Making services cost-effective and delivering on a more intimate scale
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Freedom from institutional pressures
- A strong track record of self-help and user involvement

However, David suggested that Community Organisations could do more if they worked in collaboration with larger charities.

### **6.1 The real strengths of Community Organisations**

- Building strong social capital
- Enhancing community cohesion through inter-community activity
- Facilitating active citizenship
- Providing a community anchor role
- Incubating new community groups and enterprises
- Providing a community voice and democratic engagement
- Their interest and expertise lies in the very local

- Limited capacity
- Lack of universal access to electronic communication
- They need recognition and support for their potential wider role

He saw Community Organisations that provided valuable informal services to the elderly, youth and people with disabilities; but that were vulnerable to displacement. The Community sector provided a voice for communities but David Tyler cautioned that it is not reasonable to expect a wholly representative voice as there are lots of 'communities' and lots of Community Organisations.

In the context of Regeneration policy David Tyler noted:

In England there is a moving on from Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) which had focused on programme and project 'winners and losers' and flagship projects

ABI had been poor at involving communities

The English Community Sector Funding Taskforce proposals included some that are directly relevant to Community Organisations such as:

- Capital funds for community buildings and enterprise development,
- Seed-funding for new initiatives and for equipping community organisations to manage CSAs The Learning for Leadership fund for Community Organisations to broaden and deepen their involvement

There needs to be more thinking, evaluation and recognition of the impact of the community sector and the Treasury and Audit Commission are currently working on this area.

Community Organisations need to also think about engagement in Local Area Agreements and Strategic Partnerships as they are the best short-term hope for effective and larger scale engagement of community organisations.

**6.2 In the course of the subsequent question & answer session the following points were made**

- At the risk of moving away from the importance of the difficulties around what cannot (easily) be measured it may be that much of what we do is about 'an act of faith'
- In terms of measuring the accumulation of social capital one answer is to encourage community organisations to agree and meet standards as described in the Community Matters manual).
- Accountability of public money is important and community organisations are not exempt from this accountability.

- However, there may be some double standards in the way community and the voluntary sectors are regarded with respect to the private sector where if something goes bust we just say “Oh, that’s tough”, the community and voluntary sector has to have everything guaranteed with no risks and little support.
- Why are we always concerned about money? The biggest problem communities have is getting listened to. How much of the so-called apathy and community engagement failures down to failure on the part of Councillors and professionals to trust communities?
- How can we do anything new if all the funding goes to just keep going what we are already doing?
- Co-option of the community sector is a big issue. Many community and voluntary organisations are independent charities. Partnership should be a 2-way street between Councillors/councils and communities; not just the community organisations being co-opted to deliver pre-determined outcomes.

## **7 Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Minister for Communities**

**The Minister began by acknowledging that SURF has done a great deal over the past year to stimulate the debate on Regeneration, community involvement, Regeneration Outcome Agreements etc.** He even welcomed the occasional criticism of the Executive that this debate generates. He congratulated SURF on pulling together such an interesting programme for this event and welcomed this first opportunity to talk in any detail about the Executive’s policy statement.

### **7.1 The Regeneration Agenda**

In terms of the timing of the ‘People and Place’ policy statement, the Minister said:

“... all in all, we felt it was time to take stock of how our funding and our policies work together; to examine some key regeneration issues; and to look at what more we could do to turnaround our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In essence, to ask ourselves whether looking forward we need to do more, and do better. ‘People and Place’ is the result.”

He referred back to the Executive’s 2002 Community Regeneration Statement and restated the Executive’s continuing commitment to the consequent agenda:

- To targeting the most deprived areas – an issue which the Parliament’s Finance Committee will report on shortly;
- To making a difference to people’s lives - focusing on outcomes not just projects;

- To getting the big budgets- Council, health, police and other budgets - working together to regenerate communities;
- To linking regeneration with wider strategic issues and opportunities

## **7.2 Commitment**

In addition, the Minister emphasised that the Executive remains committed to active community engagement, supported by programmes like Community Voices, but also through the funding the Executive provides to local authorities for community learning and development.

The Minister acknowledged that getting the Regeneration Outcome Agreements up and running has been hard work at times; this is not surprising given that it was the first concrete task for Partnerships. But he assured all concerned that the Executive and Communities Scotland are learning from the experience and he was confident that benefits would emerge over the next couple of years. This would provide a strong foundation for partnership working and for ensuring that the likes of the Community Regeneration Fund and other activities deliver real change on the ground.

## **7.3 Principles**

The Minister described the principles underlying the Executive's principles as:

- First, as the title suggests, regeneration is about people and place. By doing this, the Executive's aim is to grow the economy in order to tackle the poverty and disadvantage that still hold back too many of our communities. Regeneration has a clear economic rationale: but also a compelling moral purpose. Our aim must be to turn areas of need into areas of choice
- Second, regeneration is not about a prescribed list of actions: it is about outcomes.
- At local level, where regeneration really takes place, local authorities are the key strategic player. But at national level, the Executive is determined to play a wider and more ambitious leadership role.

The Minister described the Policy Statement as a 'to do' list for the Executive and its agencies – a list to tackle the connected issues which affect regeneration wherever it is taking place.

## **7.4 Investing in Communities**

The Executive has provided £20 million in the 3 years to 2008 to Local Authorities to deal with contaminated land, and £20million to the 3 Authorities with the highest concentrations of vacant and derelict land – and the Minister has just announced a further £24 million for the overall programme over the next 2 years

But, the Minister pointed out, a primary objective is to benefit individuals and communities. He said this is why the Executive has insulated over 223,000

houses installed 63,000 central heating systems through the Fuel Poverty Programme. Furthermore, all Scottish RSLs must now meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015, helping to ensure that all our houses are fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The recent Housing Act will tackle the deep-rooted problem of disrepair to private sector housing. There are also key measures to enable Local Authorities to address the decline of an area in particular or as part of a wider approach to Regeneration. These important powers give Local Authorities real clout to tackle decline.

But the Minister was also sure that delegates would all agree that whilst housing improvements can make a huge difference to peoples' lives it will not deliver the wide-ranging transformation to which we aspire. The Regeneration Policy Statement is clear that the Executive wants to create communities with a mix of housing and a mix of incomes. But also communities that are great to live and invest in – strong, safe communities with a sense of place and identity and where there are opportunities for sport, leisure and cultural activities for all ages.

Sometimes when people move up in terms of income or employment prospects they move out of an area. The Executive does not want to hold them back, but it does want to create communities where people want to stay. The Minister understood that delegates would be aware that mixed communities was not a new concept. For 20 years housing policy and programmes have sought to create mixed tenure communities, especially in areas dominated by Council housing. Executive programmes like Gro-Grant have had considerable success encouraging private investment in areas that had previously been no-go areas for private sector housing.

The Executive now wants to go further than mixed tenure and house types. It wants to create a mixture of residents and incomes to support and sustain not just good public services, but also the private sector in the form of shops and other services. The Executive wants to see mixed communities as the catalyst for further Regeneration that changes the local housing market and peoples' perceptions and links opportunities and need. The Minister stated that there were opportunities across Scotland for providing mixed communities from the outset. The Minister said that the Executive's Planning Guidance on affordable housing supports this, and with the actions described in the Policy Statement will help ensure that communities are sustainable.

The Minister acknowledged that there was more thinking to do on all these issues, but he asserted that the Statement provides a clear path forward.

The Statement also sets out actions to ensure that places are about local environment and the people who live there, about green space and design and sport and culture. The Minister 'to take just one example', pointed out that good architecture and design, underpinned by sustainable principles is essential for successful Regeneration. Architecture and design that involves communities, which is about the local built and natural environment and which

inspires residents and visitors alike, can and should be fundamental to effective Regeneration. The Minister committed himself 'for one' to be ensuring that the Executive's housing investment encourages such architecture and design.

## **7.5 Changing the approach**

He accepted that the Executive delivering on regeneration is not just about individual policies and funding streams. It is about changing the way the Executive works –

- about ensuring a joined-up approach across Executive departments and agencies, at the centre and on the ground, in support of local action;
- about opening doors for others;
- about being proactive and outward-looking;
- about engaging more effectively with public and private sector players

For the Minister this is about being more strategic, and smarter, in what we do, and how we do it. It is about partnership; but it is also, fundamentally, about leadership. He stressed that there is no question of the Executive lessening our existing commitment to support for Local Authorities and its partners.

The Executive would continue to provide targeted action to help the most deprived areas across the country with Community Regeneration partners across the country. Effective action will be taken to link economic development to community need. The Executive's support for skills and employability training under the forthcoming Employability Framework will be crucial in this. He saw that Communities Scotland and the enterprise networks have particularly vital – and complementary - roles to play in all of this work, and the Executive will look to them to work closely and collaboratively together across the country in support of local players, whether from the public or the private sector, as we follow through on our new approach.”

The Minister said that the Executive's Regeneration policies “were ambitious, but they are achievable”. He pointed out that experience like places here in Dundee has shown that they can be transformed for the better and for the benefit of local people. “Here in Dundee, Ardler used to be just another post-war problem estate where moving up in life often meant moving out of the area. Not any more; Dundee City Council, together with the people who really matter, the people who actually live in the area, have transformed Ardler. And the private sector has been a part of this.”

## **7.6 Summary**

“Our ambition is to create places and communities where people are proud to live, work and invest. Dynamic places that can hold their own with towns and cities across Europe. We want to take a more ambitious, more strategic approach to regeneration in Scotland. We want to work more effectively with public sector and private sector players, with the voluntary sector and with

communities to promote successful, sustainable regeneration. And we want to do this to realise our economic potential and to transform our most deprived communities.”

## **8 Open Question and Answer Session**

**In the course of the subsequent question & answer session the following points were made:**

Funding to local government is over prescribed and much is diverted via Housing Associations

**The incoming Labour government** inherited a situation in 1997 where Councils were very constrained and went about freeing this up. The Executive has firstly funded a hugely ambitious housing programme, secondly tackled homelessness and thirdly supported owner-occupation. For the Executive, housing associations are also a way of increasing tenant involvement.

**Question-** The ‘Regeneration Statement’ may be seen as an economic policy statement and reflects the shifting economic policy positions between the two editions of ‘Smart Successful Scotland’. That shift is away from business start ups and small-scale entrepreneurialism and toward growing globally competitive companies, substantially through privation. This may be a recognition by the Executive of the horror of poverty and its geography and the fact that the Executive really wants to do something about it, and something radical needs to be done, but where is the evidence that extensive privatisation and the continuing pursuit of a neo liberal policy agenda actually closes the inequality gap and benefit poor people?

It is recognised across the world that this approach is not to be good for communities suffering from poverty.

The paper is about linking opportunities and need. What makes social improvement and the tackling of poverty possible? The whole purpose of this Statement is to make sure that economic opportunity is there for communities that have lost out. It is accepted that economic growth benefits poorer communities. Not everyone in the past has benefited from this approach, but that’s one of the challenges about it we have to face.

In terms of CRF funding beyond 2008 the Minister didn’t anticipate any fundamental change and while he could not anticipate arrangements beyond 2008 he assumed a level of continuity.

## **9 "Keeping the Community in Community Regeneration" – Archie Thomson, community activist, Renton**

**Archie Thomson explained that he based his presentation on the contrast between rhetoric and reality.**

He pointed out that the only way his community stopped the Local Authority closing 2 local libraries was by threatening to go to court. He contended that the reality for somewhere like Renton is being continually marginalised and

played around with in terms of constantly changing regeneration funding programmes.

His response to the statement in the Strategy Paper that Regeneration does not happen overnight was - "You're telling me! What came across clearly this morning is the need to take this issue forward in the Scottish political agenda and put it at the top of the political list where it needs to be".

Archie Thomson acknowledged that it was 'good to see that Communities Scotland is now speaking our language'. The Renton community was not about improving houses in the middle of poverty. They were also about attacking the problems of poor education, poor attainment, poor employment opportunities and being poorly judged in terms of being a community.

### **9.1 Priority**

He described how the Renton community started to do what's now termed 'Wider Action'. By taking processes and resources into community ownership, the community can use these resources to tackle other challenges. For him, the thing for the community was about much more than housing, it's about the built environment, opportunities, reducing vandalism. In 1993 Renton community took on the risk and took on the job. This means that, for example, houses for sale are now in demand whereas previously the Council struggled to even let some of the houses.

Archie Thomson said that Minister Malcolm Chisholm is absolutely right about architectural quality as part of the solution. But his challenge to the Minister is that you need to also look at the budget, at the resources, provided because the budget needs to be the right scale to do what needs to be done in social housing.

Archie Thomson believed that Renton was the first community build its own health centre and he described the process behind that. The community worked in partnership with the health board, Communities Scotland and the Council who owned the land. The housing association built the centre and it's owned by the community. It's a community capital asset, providing healthcare to the community.

The community also owns a shop. The estate was typically 1970s with poor facilities etc. The community wanted to build a shop. The Economic Development Office of the Council said they wouldn't do it, so the community went ahead and did it itself. They got funding from the bank, bought the car park from the Council, and had identified a trader who now wants to buy it off the community for half a million pounds.

Another facet described by Archie Thomson was how the community has become a social economy employer through Local Services Agreements with Supporting People. A conscious decision to be self-sufficient, self-sustaining, through using the community's own money... if that means going to the bank, fine the community will go to the bank. The community will use that money to

build up the assets. They don't want to have to keep going back and asking 'please can we have more public investment'.

Archie Thomson emphasised that this is not to say you don't need public investment. Indeed, for him, the tragedy ... looking at Renton ... is the local authority is pulling out and pulling services out. They are not investing in the area. The community organisation is becoming the local provider of services rather than the local authority.

## 9.2 Conclusion

"Have we got what it takes in Scotland? Yes, but it's hard to recognise it with all the rationalisations and reorganisations. We have quite a strong social economy sector in Scotland and a Third Sector second to none. We have the organisations... the Minister mentioned Housing Associations and some people have problems about them, and I have some problems with some types of housing associations and the Local Authority. The imperative now is for a transfer of power from Scottish Executive and the local authorities over to communities where it's needed.

"My appeal to the Minister on the Regeneration Statement is hopefully we have learned the lessons of the past and will work in a non-party political way with anyone who will work for safe, vibrant communities."

## 10 Reviewing and developing the Scottish Regeneration scene Innovation or Institutional Clutter? Professor Greg Lloyd, The Geddes Institute, University of Dundee

**Greg Lloyd began by stating that, "Yet again a policy statement comes out that triggers fundamental questions about society"**

He then gave an overview of what his presentation would cover:

- The emerging development of urban Regeneration in Scotland
- To identify what represents innovation or institutional clutter
- To consider a way forward
- The urban challenge – degeneration, regeneration and connectivity:

### 10.1 Context

Greg Lloyd's first image served to show that Scotland is a very, very, small place sitting on the western edge of a very much larger economic market that is moving ever more eastwards and southwards. He emphasised the importance of scale, and the resources we can command to address the issues associated with urban regeneration issues.

In the course of his presentation he made a number of points including the following:

Firstly, context is important and there is a set of questions we have to ask and appreciate when it comes to thinking about Regenerating communities.

We live in an economic system a where inequality and divisions are endemic. This produces a society divided between the haves and have-nots. A society where he or she who shouts loudest actually gets what they set out to do.

Politicians of all persuasions never challenge the win-win mentality fostered in these circumstances. They do not defend the idea that there must be losers – somehow the idea is fostered that we are all winners.

History shows that reality is very different - that cities grow, thrive and change their shape in any number of ways. Some of it can actually be accidental, for example the sudden changes for Aberdeen and the surrounding area following oil and gas discoveries around 1969.

Cities like Dundee have a different history as a city of longer-term and gentle economic decline, but a city that is trying to find its way to grow back. So history and cultural identity is very different right across the Scottish landscape.

## **10.2 Devolution**

Secondly, devolution has come along and it has actually changed things. Because devolution has thrown the gauntlet for all of us down and asked us what are we actually doing? It's not now 'them' doing it to 'us', it's us doing it for ourselves.

The Cities Review in 2001 demonstrated very clearly that the six Scottish cities are very different in size, locations, facilities etc. And much more importantly, in how they have responded to change; and their capacity to respond differs, and we need to look at that. Recent research has claimed that devolution in Wales has not made very much difference to economic development.

We need to address:

- Scalar relative economic performances within and between urban areas and the impacts on relative economic performance of policy
- Devolution and new spatial economic agendas – if policies are all London-centric this is bad for Scotland. The recent ESRC report and its findings on devolution and the Scottish and Welsh economies is very worrying
- Differential institutional arrangements and infrastructure deficits - we still don't invest in people or infrastructure in any great measured or strategic way.

- On 'pariah' urban change, it is no bad thing that neighbourhoods vary in performance. The important thing is how you manage the relationships between them. Moreover, you cannot just dismiss the 'trickle down' approach to Regeneration.

### **10.3 Policy Developments**

Professor Lloyd then took delegates through a sequence of slides depicting the development of thinking and policy on urban development in the U.K. from the Social Democratic phase of 1945-79, then the Neo Liberal influences of 1979-97 and to the current 'Third Way' from 1997 onwards

Decay and decline, can be triggered by a number of big factors. We now have to be brave enough to recognise that a community may not be able to respond to collapse of a major employer, *but* could have dealt with some other challenge or crisis.

### **10.4 The Third Way**

On the Third Way theme, Greg Lloyd listed a number of significant benchmark documents that help constitute the Third Way modernisation:

- Egon 2003
- Lyons Review 2004
- Gershon Review 2004
- Barker Report 2005 (and here he advised that all the thrust on public sector reform is coming out of the Treasury)
- Hampton Review 2005 (with the rule of 1 regulation in must be balanced by 1 regulation out)

### **10.5 The Congested State**

Much of this is happening in parallel and we have a condition of the 'congested State':

- On the Evidence track we have the Cities Review 2001
- On the Political track we have Partnership Agreement 2003
- On the Policy track we have the Framework of Economic Development in Scotland 2004 and Smart Successful Scotland

### **10.6 The Organic State**

We may be moving onto the 'Organic State' as evidenced by:

- Scalar tensions – space versus place - tensions between the need or wish for large scale economies and impact and the need for human scale in place-making.
- Strategic versus local - the need for wider scale strategic strategy and action and the wish for locality and connectivity
- Territory versus theme - there will also be a need to balance or trade off one against the other

- Efficiency versus inclusion - there is a need for honesty and transparency in recognising that real inclusion with its complexities and time-scales will not always fit well with efficient strategic management and programme or project delivery. There is a lack of honesty on this issue in most policy papers
- Integration versus fragmentation
- Voluntarism versus contractualisation

## 11 Conference Outcomes

The conference ended with a final round of comments and voting with participants reflecting on the key questions of leadership and progress in Scottish regeneration.

The voting outcome data is available online at:

<http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/events.asp?sid=2>

Following this successful event, SURF will continue to develop discussion on policy and practice in relation to:

- Leadership and empowerment
- Political and practical support for building capacity and social capital in disadvantaged communities
- Appropriate and effective regeneration delivery vehicles
- The potential and the reality of community planning processes
- The role of cities and city regions
- The potential of cultural planning as a basis for regeneration strategies and delivery

### *End of Conference Report*

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