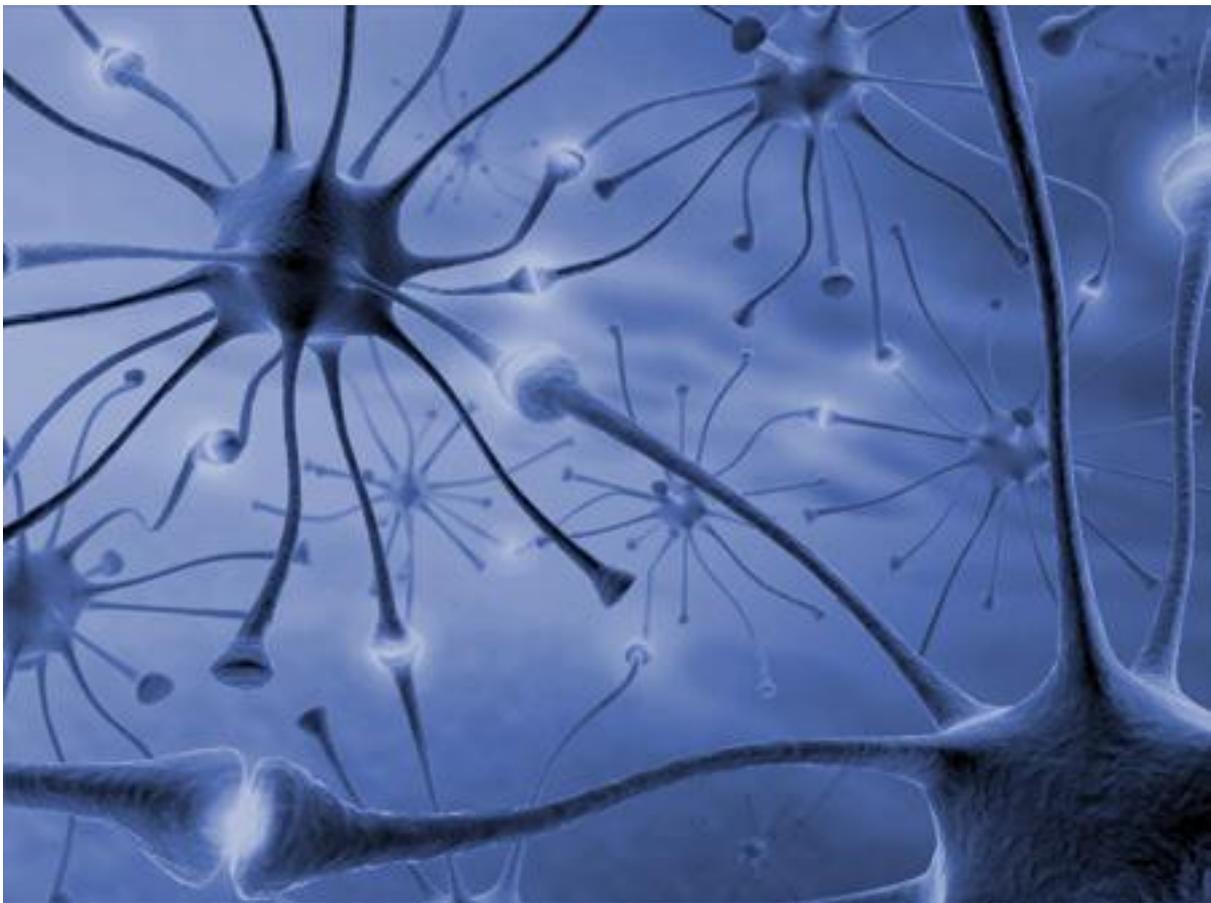




## SURF's Alliance for Action in 2017/18



This paper outlines the purpose, process and activities in the expansion of SURF's Alliance for Action programme over the period from March to April 2017/18.

# 1 Introduction

## The Context

SURF is dedicated to supporting more effective cross-sector collaboration in regenerating disadvantaged communities. Its focus is on shared efforts towards a fairer Scotland by: tackling inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. To that end, SURF's work programme is designed to enhance the interaction of national government policy & resources, local government services & processes, and local community enterprises, assets & challenges.

In taking a lead from the Community Led focus of the Scottish Government's 2011 National Regeneration Strategy, SURF set up its *Alliance for Action* programme in 2013 against the background of the extended recessionary context. With the support of the Scottish Government, it set out to facilitate, and share learning from, collaborative regeneration efforts in the face of rising demands and reduced resources.

## The Model

SURF's *Alliance for Action* model builds on SURF's experience, knowledge and networks to actively link local community assets and aspirations, with relevant national policies and resources.

The twin purpose is to support better outcomes in strategically selected disadvantaged communities, while enhancing shared understanding of the realistic possibilities for successful cross-sector community regeneration in a challenging economic context.

Over the last four years, SURF's *Alliance for Action* programme has supported and linked activities, investments and learning in three place-focused, cross-sector collaborations.

## More in 2017/18

In collaboration with the Scottish Government and other key partners, SURF is now building on that success by extending the range of the programme and further enhancing the active collaboration and investment of the relevant local authorities involved.

The main elements of the enhanced programme period are:

- An extension from the present three, to a maximum of six sites of collaboration;
- A new 'People and Sector Connector' service for the engagement and benefit of all 32 of Scotland's local authorities;
- A pilot 'Scottish Index of Multiple Assets and Aspirations' project.

## 2 Executive Summary

With support from the Scottish Government, SURF will build on the 2013-17 *Alliance for Action* regeneration learning and support programme to deliver further development over 2017/18.

The 2017/18 programme will feature the following developments:

1. A continuation of activities and learning accrual in the **three existing sites** of:
  - **East Kirkcaldy**, Fife
  - **Govan**, Glasgow
  - **Rothesay**, Argyll & Bute
2. Establishment of a further **three programme sites**:
  - **Dundee** (neighbourhood to be confirmed) - with a six month feasibility study planned for 2017/18.
  - **Dunoon**, Argyll & Bute - where SURF has completed a successful feasibility study and is managing a Community Charrette to be delivered in Spring 2017.
  - **Langholm**, Dumfries & Galloway - with a six month feasibility study planned for 2017/18.
3. Delivery of **three cross site projects**:
  - **People and Sector Connector Service** - a series of events and activities to promote learning outcomes to local authority representatives from across Scotland, including senior officers and new elected members.
  - **Scottish Index of Multiple Assets & Aspirations (SIMAA)** - a pilot research project designed to enable *Alliance for Action* site residents to consider present the positive aspects of their lives and places.
  - **A National Gathering** - bringing together *Alliance for Action* community groups, public and third sector agencies, and senior regeneration policy advisers.
4. **Closer engagement** with the five **local authorities** covering the above sites - namely Argyll & Bute Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council and Glasgow City Council.

### 3 Background

#### Reality, Resources, Resilience

SURF's *Alliance for Action* programme was built on a well-received *Reality, Resources, Resilience* study that SURF delivered in 2011-13, with support from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Scottish Government.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of that action based research initiative was to examine the impact of the post-2008 recession on two already disadvantaged communities, and to highlight examples of ameliorative responses. The process generated a remarkable degree of interest and enthusiasm across the wide range of participating local and national partners.

#### Alliance for Action 2013-17

The JRF supported study process encouraged SURF to develop a constructive response in the form of an innovative *Alliance for Action* initiative. The inclusive and flexible Alliance approach was based on the enthusiastic engagement of national and local participants for addressing shared challenges via better engagement of respective roles and resources.

With support from the Scottish Government, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and other key partner organisations, SURF has been delivering a collaborative and coordinated programme of Alliance for Action activities, events, research and reports based on its practical and learning outcomes, since April 2013.

The **overarching purpose** of the Alliance for Action programme is

- to strengthen community resilience and promote practical regeneration outcomes in a diverse set of case study communities;
- to enhance wider policy and resource considerations for supporting community regeneration in the continuing challenging context.

The 2013-17 programme featured three places:

- East Kirkcaldy, Fife
- Govan, Glasgow
- Rothesay, Argyll & Bute

A series of progressive reports, summarising project delivery and learning outcomes, and video interviews with local participants are available on the SURF website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Milne, A., & Rankine, D., 2013, *Reality, Resources, Resilience: Regeneration in a Recession*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available online at: [www.jrf.org.uk/report/reality-resources-resilience-regeneration-recession](http://www.jrf.org.uk/report/reality-resources-resilience-regeneration-recession)

<sup>2</sup> SURF Alliance for Action webpage: [www.surf.scot/alliance-for-action/](http://www.surf.scot/alliance-for-action/)

## 4 Alliance for More Action in 2017-18

Based on the programme's success and its relevance to SURF's core aims, as well as those of the Scottish Government, SURF and its partners agreed to further develop the *Alliance for Action* programme.

Local stakeholders and a number of programme partners and contacts, including senior Scottish Government policy advisers, have noted the programme's value in respect of several inter-linked key policy concerns. These include work towards a Fairer Scotland via more inclusive growth, improved public services, greater community empowerment and enterprise, place specific regeneration, locality planning, and the overall priority of tackling poverty and inequality.

Alliance partners at all levels, and across all sectors, have indicated enthusiasm for its further potential in meeting shared aims.

## 5 Programme Purpose and Outcomes

The **central purpose** in the further development of SURF's *Alliance for Action* programme is to enhance practical, cross-sector cooperation in place-based community regeneration, while enhancing shared understanding, policy and practice on a Scotland-wide basis.

The **anticipated outcomes** for the different sets of partners involved in this next phase of the Alliance for Action shared enterprise are:

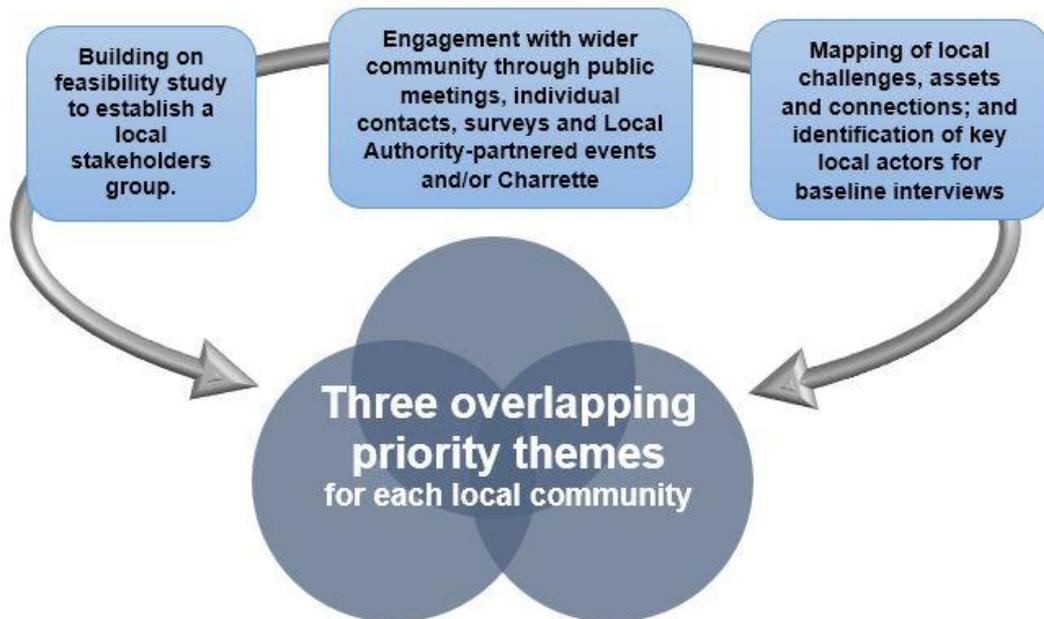
- **Local residents** - improved quality of life and opportunities via better engagement with local services and assets.
- **Local enterprises** - improved business and engagement opportunities in a clarified system of collaborative priorities.
- **Local community and voluntary organisations** - improved cooperation and enhanced mutually beneficial collaboration with the relevant local authority Community Planning processes and priorities.
- **Local authorities** - increased access to, and engagement with, community-based knowledge, assets and initiatives.
- **Cross-sector local stakeholders** - better shared understanding and active coordination of respective roles, capacities, priorities, skills and resources.
- **Regional and national regeneration agencies** - more effective and efficient targeting and coordination of policy and resources in tackling poverty and inequality.
- **Local and national regeneration policy officers** - increased knowledge of the practical interaction of different policy and resource impacts in different settings with similar challenges.

- **Academics** - more effective engagement of research with improved practice based learning opportunities and productive initiatives.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between programme phases, partners and outcomes.

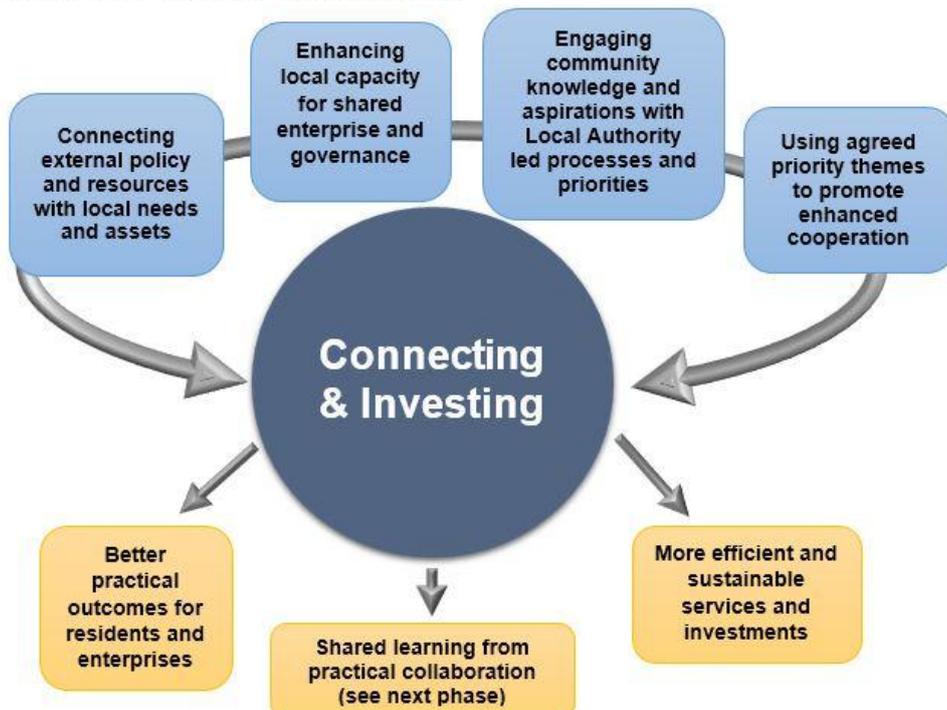
## PHASE 1

### FEASIBILITY & PRIORITIES



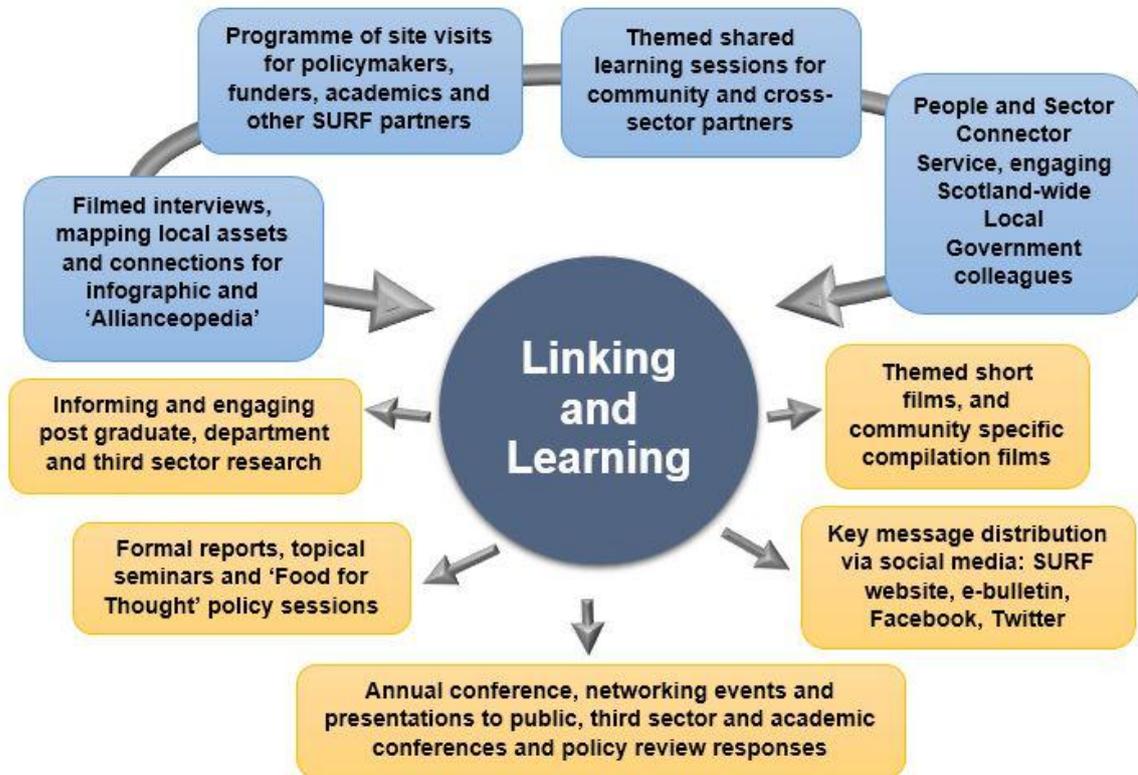
## PHASE 2

### DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY



## PHASE 3

### SHARING PERSPECTIVES & INFORMING POLICY



## OUTCOMES

Enhanced local cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Improved connection of national policy and resources with local assets and initiatives.

Greater shared intelligence on linking opportunity and need.

### PRODUCING:

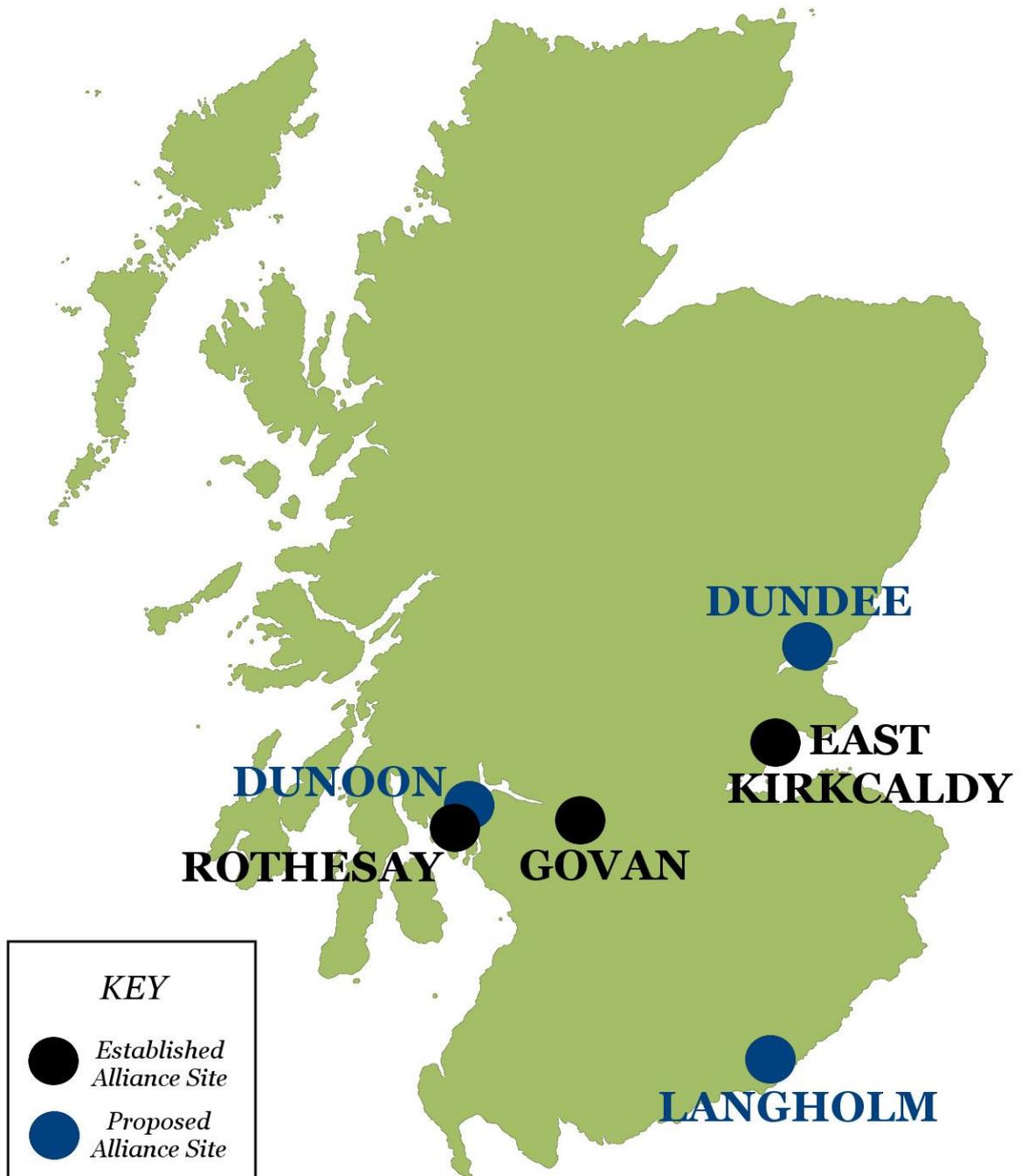
- Strengthened community resilience with more inclusive growth and practical regeneration outcomes.
- Better informed local and national policy and cross-sector coordination.
- Increased wellbeing and opportunities for local residents and enterprises.

## 6 Strategic Objectives for 2017-18

The eight key delivery objectives for the 2017-18 programme are:

1. **An expanded range of study** in collaborative regeneration policy and practices at the community level, through the establishment of three appropriate new case study places (increasing the current total from three to a maximum of six);
2. **An enhanced flow of valuable and transferable learning outcomes** from locally-rooted regeneration collaborations in a suite of varied contexts, from rural and island geographies to high-density urban areas;
3. **Greater and more efficient investment from larger partner organisations** in addressing poverty and inequalities in the disadvantaged case study areas;
4. **A people and sector connector service** providing direct engagement for officers and representatives from Scotland's 32 local authorities with relevant practical contexts and learning in SURF's *Alliance for Action* cross sector collaborations;
5. **Expanding on the baseline information established** in the 2013-17 stage of the programme, to **provide further evidence** of the impact of the initiative and the transferable learning emerging in the evolving operational and policy context;
6. Exploring the process and benefits of developing a **Scottish Index of Multiple Assets and Aspirations (SIMAA)**;
7. **Promoting the collaborative Scottish Government supported Alliance for Action model and sharing learning** through Scottish, UK and European policy forums, journals, publications and conferences;
8. **Building on the practical engagement and shared interests of the Scottish Government, local authorities and other key regeneration partners** in the evidencing the cross-budget benefits of more holistic, preventative, cross-sector, collaborative place-based regeneration and inclusive growth.

## 7 Programme of Work 2017-18



The Alliance for Action for 2017-18 will feature up to six community sites

## 7.1 Site-Specific Plans

### 7.1a Active Sites

In the existing **Alliance for Action** site of **Govan** in 2017/18, SURF will: strengthen its links with young people by establishing a summer schools initiative with Children in Scotland; deliver a shared learning session on young people and health; promote partnership opportunities for a proposed 'Govan Orchestra' project; work with Glasgow City Council's Thriving Places, Govan Community Project and Central Govan Action Plan on community engagement and physical planning processes; and work alongside local residents to promote the social benefits arising from the planned River Clyde Govan-Partick bridge.

SURF will reinforce and expand its community engagement programme in **East Kirkcaldy** with strong support from Fife Council, which has committed to sharing local resources and providing active support. SURF is pursuing a number of projects in the locality, including: a potential follow-up to our successful 2014-15 Participatory Budgeting process; a social enterprise support element; an investigation into local social care and health inequalities responses; and a public seminar on young people and health.

In **Rothesay**, the current central focus is on stabilising and building the local population. The overlapping priority themes of linked activity and investment are in support of that central aim are; economic development, tourism and heritage and creative community participation. In 2017/18, SURF will provide further linking and learning support to the Bute Island Alliance, a new local regeneration alliance that emerged from SURF's initial work. While helping to link additional investment, knowledge and policy coordination in support of the agreed local priorities, SURF will also provide varied formats for local partners to share learning and practical experience across its full range of *Alliance for Action* settings and thematic activities.

### 7.1b Sites In Development

SURF successfully delivered a feasibility study in the medium-sized peninsula town of **Dunoon** (population 13k) in Argyll & Bute. We are working with Argyll & Bute Council and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to develop its potential as a new programme area. SURF also managed the 'Think Dunoon!' Community Charrette, which was delivered between March and May 2017. Facilitated by Austin-Smith:Lord and funded by the Scottish Government and Argyll & Bute Council, the Charrette outcomes will be used to further inform themes and activities for a Dunoon *Alliance for Action* site.

SURF is using its *Alliance for Action* approach to engage with the regeneration challenges and opportunities in Dumfries and Galloway, a region often highlighted as being at some distance from major regeneration support programmes. A series of local stakeholder discussions in late 2016 and early 2017 indicated a strong rationale for the small town of **Langholm** (population: 2300) in the east of the region to be added to the *Alliance for Action*. The town and surrounding region has some long-standing issues, including rural disconnection and low incomes.

SURF is working with Dundee City Council and other local partners in investigating the possibility of bringing an appropriate **Dundee** neighbourhood into the *Alliance for Action* programme. This choice is based on the productive potential of focusing on a disadvantaged area within another Scottish city to usefully compare and contrast with

Govan in Glasgow. Given the current town-to-city migration population trends, a second city site will provide a useful means of informing long-term policy considerations.

## 7.2 Cross-site Initiatives

### 7.2a People and Sector Connector Service

In making the best use of *Alliance for Action* learning outcomes, SURF welcomes opportunities to engage with colleagues in the Scottish Government, CoSLA, and the Enterprise agencies, as well as policy research partners such as NESTA, the Carnegie UK Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and IPPR Scotland.

An element of the growing debate on public sector reform in Scotland concerns the cost and disruption of large scale organisational restructuring. The scale of that challenge, and the day-to-day pressures on politicians and practitioners, tends to undermine the prospects for substantial change. SURF believes that effective change is more likely to evolve incrementally from the combination of the practical engagement of progressive people, initiatives and processes.

In support of that evolutionary shift, SURF is well-placed to provide a **people and sector connector service** to regeneration-related practitioners and decision-makers. It will be based on SURF's accumulated *Alliance for Action* experience and contacts, in addition to those in its wider networks. In contrast to normally compartmentalised Continuing Professional Development one-off training sessions, SURF's approach will enable participants to share knowledge of 'what works' and will crucially, provide, face-to-face or distance-managed networking with colleagues in practical community regeneration stings and activities, as part of an accessible, bespoke developmental process.

The People and Sector Connector process will include:

- Regular stakeholder gatherings with guest presenters from SURF's local Alliance for Action projects and senior national regeneration experts;
- Facilitated study visits to SURF *Alliance for Action* sites;
- Knowledgeable SURF staff being 'on call' to provide informal advice, signposting and enquiry responses to those keen to learn more about the regeneration policy and practice landscape;
- Opportunities to observe and or participate in, relevant selected projects and events.

### 7.2b Assets and Aspirations (SIMAA)

Regeneration practitioners in Scotland are familiar with SIMD - the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.<sup>3</sup> SIMD gathers data on 38 social and economic indicators in broad areas such as income, housing, health and crime for just under 7000 small area 'datazones' across the country. Most recently updated in August 2016, this data is used to

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<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Webpage, maintained by the Scottish Government: [www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD)

produce an overall index that ranks these datazones, each with around 750 residents, from least to most deprived.

SIMD is designed as a tool to provide context for place-specific challenges and to direct regeneration investments to areas with the highest deprivation levels. There are, however, concerns about the negative impact of the way in which its findings are sometimes presented.

People living and working in our current *Alliance for Action* programme areas of Govan, Rothesay and East Kirkcaldy - all of which have datazones in the 10% nationally most deprived - told SURF they felt media coverage around the publication of the 2016 SIMD was stigmatising and unbalanced. They were concerned that SIMD data was being used to negatively label communities as continuously multi-deprived - while ignoring positive changes.

SURF has responded with a Scottish Index of Multiple Assets and Aspirations (SIMAA) proposal which will enable communities to present the positive aspects of their lives and counteract the SIMD labels of multi-deprivation. SURF will initially focus on the *Alliance for Action* communities to identify a baseline of local assets and aspirations, and produce a list of broad categories to which assets and aspirations could be attached.

Some specific themes have already been suggested as appropriate complements to the seven sets of statistics used to produce the SIMD data. For example, where SIMD looks at employment, SIMAA could highlight the numbers of volunteers; where SIMD identifies academic results, SIMAA could recognise practical knowledge, skills and experience.

## 7.2c National Gathering

As part of the 2017-18 *Alliance for Action* programme, SURF will deliver a national event in Edinburgh to bring together representatives of:

- Community groups in *Alliance for Action* areas;
- Public and third sector agencies active in *Alliance for Action* areas;
- Senior regeneration officials in the Scottish Government and other national bodies.

The purpose is to formally promote 2017-18 *Alliance for Action* themes and outcomes, and provide a useful learning and networking opportunity for all participants.

## 8 Enhanced Local Authority Engagement

### Consolidating Cooperation

In the successful development of its *Alliance for Action* programme so far, SURF has been careful to manage the most appropriate engagement of local authority roles and processes in support of authentic community participation, assets and aspirations. Having established sufficient mutual trust and understanding on shared priorities and respective responsibilities, SURF will now negotiate more formal agreements on further investment of resources and political/policy commitments.

SURF will formalise the engagement of up to five local authorities across the maximum six Alliance for Action sites referred to in this proposal. Those sites, and relevant local authorities, have been selected to provide a coherent framework of varied scale and context. That framework of shared, place based practice and learning will be the basis on which SURF will offer a 'people and sector connector service' to relevant officers and elected members in all 32 local authorities across Scotland.

## 9 Information and Communications

SURF's Information and Communications Officer, Emma Scott, will compile and maintain a database of all Alliance partners, national and local, across all six sites. Emma will liaise with site facilitators to ensure lists are kept current, noting any changes and reasons for this.

This will allow for greater shared communications across sites as Emma will share and disseminate information to appropriate contacts whilst also pinpointing opportunities for learning and partnership work. This will include information on events, funding opportunities, partnership opportunities and general information that may be of interest. Emma will use this database to assist in the setup of Shared Learning events, shaping programmes and circulating information to relevant partners. It will also allow Emma to feed information into the People and Sector Connector Service to aid SURF's Derek Rankine in the arrangement of study visits.

Emma will maintain the SURF website Alliance for Action section and establish a designated page for each of the Alliance sites containing learning papers, films, feasibility studies and information on the Alliance model and outputs. This will allow information to be shared with the wider SURF network who may benefit from the opportunity to learn from the Alliance outcomes. Emma will also interact with the Alliance partners on social media to share information to the wider network.

## 10 Linking and Learning

While enhancing the delivery of practical regeneration benefits to communities, SURF considers a key activity of the Alliance programme to be identifying, connecting and disseminating relevant learning from that process.

That reality and place based, cross sector, learning is shared and debated between the sites and across SURF's national regeneration networks and wider contacts. In that process, it produces substantial additional benefits in the form of increased knowledge, understanding and cooperation.

The capturing and dissemination of practical learning, empowers individuals and communities and actively engages SURF partners. In doing so, it helps to inform local and national policy decisions and associated resource allocations.

The *Alliance* delivers tangible results by creatively and intelligently connecting investors and other supportive resources directly into active communities, and to each other.

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## End of report

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*Derek Rankine, Policy and Participation Manager, SURF*

*Emma Scott, Information and Communications Officer, SURF*

*21 March 2017*

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