Response to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee Delivery of Regeneration in Scotland Inquiry

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee Delivery of Regeneration in Scotland inquiry. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

We have chosen only to respond to the questions where we have experience and relevant evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

STRATEGY AND POLICY ISSUES

1. How can linkages between the various strategies and policies related to regeneration be improved?

The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes the desire of the Committee to focus on how the linkages between different regeneration strategies and policies can be improved. Regeneration is a cross-cutting issue, which overlaps with many different aspects of public policy, including economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, environment and community empowerment. Our discussions as part of our Enabling State project have reinforced our view that there are significant challenges associated with achieving a holistic approach to government of the kind needed to achieve an effective approach to regeneration.

We would suggest that regeneration strategies are more explicitly linked to improving the wellbeing of citizens in Scotland, and are clearly linked to the National Performance Framework. The Carnegie UK Trust supports the Scottish Government’s commitment to an outcomes based system of performance management through the National Performance Framework (see More than GDP: Measuring What Matters, Carnegie UK Trust, 2011). We see this as part of a wider movement towards understanding, measuring and improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Taking a system-wide approach to the overall impact of government activity can encourage joined up working and help services consider their unintended impacts, as well as those that they proactively seek, including
regeneration.

While it is important that sectors, such as regeneration, have specific strategies, it is also important that they understand how they contribute to the overall purpose of the Scottish Government. Without this link, there is a risk that sectors, professions and departments will fall back to only being concerned with ‘their’ indicators, reducing the value of the systems-wide thinking contained within the NPF.

2. Can physical, social and economic regeneration really be separate entities?

Our international research into measuring what matters shows that wellbeing is a useful concept in linking physical, social and economic outcomes. Separating out different strands of activity can limit a systems-wide, joined-up approach of government.

The Trust believes that linkages between the priority areas identified by the Scottish Government can be improved in order to support regeneration and improve wellbeing. Below we have outlined some examples of the connections we believe should be made between strategies, particularly between connectivity and support for rural areas, infrastructure development and place strategy and education policy, and community empowerment and tackling environmental incivilities. These examples show the potential of a joined-up approach to improving outcomes for individuals and communities.

1. Connectivity and support for rural communities

We welcome the Scottish Government’s strategies of connectivity and support for rural communities in order to achieve regeneration, and believe that there is a need to continue to develop the linkages between the two. Our *Rural Broadband – Reframing the Debate* report (Carnegie UK Trust and the Plunkett Foundation, 2012) suggests that governments and markets alone are unlikely to be able meet the high aspirations of rural communities when it comes to the provision of superfast broadband. Rural communities themselves, particularly in remote rural areas where distances are greater and the population more dispersed, are likely to be required to play a central role in achieving the services that they require. However, this does not mean that governments should ‘leave communities to get on with it’, but should support, encourage and empower communities to achieve the infrastructure that they need. We therefore welcome the fact that the Scottish Government is seeking to provide leadership on this issue through the Community Broadband Scotland initiative. It is important that this initiative offers the full range of support that community broadband enterprises are likely to need – including financial support, business advice, technical expertise and development support – and that the Government develops a clear vision for building and developing this initiative over a number of years,
2. Infrastructure, development and place strategy and education policy
The Trust welcomes the recognition of the importance of towns and cities in the Scottish Government’s infrastructure, development and place strategy, and believes that regenerating Scotland’s towns and cities should be connected to the Government’s education policy.

The Trust’s understanding of the economic environment suggests that there is a deficit in retail innovation on the high street but a surplus of innovation, energy and retail experience amongst younger people, many of whom are looking for real opportunities to experiment with small business ideas (Enterprising Minds, Carnegie UK Trust, 2012). In response to our analysis of youth enterprise and towns regeneration, the Trust has developed TestTown (Carnegie UK Trust, 2013). Through TestTown, we want to find the next generation of ideas that will help to rebuild town centres as places to visit, shop in and live in. Teams of young people aged 16-25 from across the UK, from all kinds of education and employment backgrounds, are being invited to submit cutting edge new business and social enterprise ideas, and will have the chance to put their ideas into practice in Dunfermline town centre in summer 2013.

Through our work in this area, the Trust has found that previous reviews of Scotland’s towns and cities and their policy recommendations have often been dislocated from the wishes of young consumers and their appetite for experimenting with enterprise in their local area. We believe that regeneration relies on engaging with local problem solving, and that local opportunities for experimentation with entrepreneurship should be incorporated into enterprise education in Scotland.

3. Community participation and tackling incivilities
The Trust believes that community participation is key to the Scottish Government’s goal of regeneration.

Our Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities research (Carnegie UK Trust, 2012) includes 8 case studies of community-led projects from across the UK where local residents have sought to tackle issues such as vandalism, graffiti and litter. We believe that a community-led approach – with the right support from public bodies, charities and funders – to tackling these problems can lead to significant improvements in the local environment. This is a critical aspect of neighbourhood regeneration as data shows that communities which are blighted by environmental problems are unlikely to have the motivation to address the wide range of other social and economic challenges facing them.

However, where citizens are supported and empowered to address these local environmental problems then this can also bring about improvements in community cohesion and focus – with citizens inspired to undertake further action to help
achieve a range of other economic, social and environmental improvements.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

6. How can it be ensured that regeneration projects are sustainable in the long term?

The Scottish Government can ensure that regeneration projects are sustainable in the long term by making regeneration part of a process, rather than a one off top-down intervention. One way in which this can be achieved is through community management and ownership of assets. Over the past 100 years the Carnegie UK Trust has been actively involved in community assets, originally through grants for public libraries, playing fields and village halls, and more recently through support to the community land trust movement in Scotland and across the UK as a whole.

Community control and ownership of assets
Unused and underused public assets can have a significant negative impact on communities, particularly where they are allowed to fall into disrepair. Conversely, we have seen how community ownership of land and assets has transformed many communities, as demonstrated in *From the Low Tide of the Sea to the Highest Mountain Top* (Island Book Trust/Carnegie UK Trust 2012). We strongly support opportunities for communities to take greater control and ownership of the assets in their locality, where they are interested in doing so.

The benefits of community ownership or stewardship can be:

- financial: levering in finance from other sectors and other fund raising activities.
- economic: contributing to the regeneration of the local economy which will improve the value of local land and buildings.
- social: opportunities for participation, pride in the local environment and individual and community wellbeing.

Options for community ownership of assets include asset transfer from local authorities, long-term leasing, joint or co-operative ownership and gradual equity purchase. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to identifying the correct solution for community assets but all should be considered by the public authority and community groups.

In order to understand the assets in their area, local people need to first be provided with the opportunity to explore these issues together. There are many techniques for facilitating discussions about local assets, including asset mapping, appreciative enquiry and community-led planning. To be effective, they must start with assessing the views of people in the community as to what they think the assets are. This can
help communities to build greater confidence and a stronger political voice with which to engage with the political system.

However, taking over community assets must come from a desire from the community to do things differently, not pressure from public authorities to take responsibility for assets that they can no longer maintain effectively.

PRACTICAL ISSUES

7. What actions could the Scottish Government’s forthcoming community capacity building programme include to best support communities to ‘do regeneration’ themselves?

The Scottish Government can take a number of actions to support communities to become involved in regeneration. The Trust believes we are at the beginning of a fundamental shift toward more empowered citizens and communities and a more enabling state. With the help of Carnegie Fellow Sir John Elvidge we are engaging with key stakeholders across the UK and Republic of Ireland to better understand this movement and, what this would mean for public service delivery (The Enabling State: A Discussion Paper, Carnegie UK Trust, 2012). Below we have outlined the importance of community engagement and what the Scottish Government might do to further enable communities.

Community engagement
In order for regeneration strategies to improve wellbeing, communities and citizens must be actively engaged in the process and empowered to take part in the decision making process. Without this underpinning principle there is a risk that regeneration strategies will not be effective.

The Trust has a long history of supporting effective community engagement. Our experience in a number of areas, including public libraries, improving local environments, broadband deployment, children and youth participation and rural development, suggests that there are a number of key components to effective engagement:

- the community as a whole must be aware of the opportunity to participate and actively encouraged to do so. Our experience across a range of policy areas is that sustainable solutions to community problems are often community-led solutions.
- the community must be involved in defining what the problems and priorities for action are, as well are providing their views on options for delivering services.
• the organisation carrying out the engagement process must have the skills to engage effectively, and have a culture of valuing contributions from a range of stakeholders.
• the organisation carrying out the engagement must provide clear and publicly available information on their role and vision for the community.

Through our Tackling Incivilities project we identified a series of ‘lessons learned’ from the 8 best practice case studies we researched. These lessons relate to how communities can be supported and empowered to tackle key challenges related to the regeneration of a local area.

The key lessons from our research are as follows:

• Change is difficult to initiate, a ‘spark’ or tipping point is therefore required. This can come from within the community – or it can be stimulated from the outside by a public agency or the voluntary sector. Examples of how this might be done include: asking the community what action they would like to be taken; or organising a competition to give local people the opportunity to come up with ideas about how the area could be improved.

• Successful community-led initiatives tend to have a broad spectrum of support from across the local community – this can lead to greater impact and make the achievements of the project more sustainable in the longer-term. Public bodies have an important partnership role to play in helping to stimulate interest and engagement from a large number of community members, for example by securing publicity for activities via websites, newsletters and the local media.

• Inspirational community leaders play a critical role in the success of regeneration-focused projects which are delivered by or in partnership with the local community. Policymakers must ensure that these leaders are given the encouragement and support that they need to be able to carry out this role.

• Projects should not be pushed to achieve too much too soon, but should be encouraged to be flexible, creative and aware of opportunities that emerge. Small, one-off projects can lead to wider benefits than the limited activities that they carry out – for example by developing new connections in a community which may lead to more significant activities being undertaken in the future.

• Developing a community project to support regeneration often requires a wide range of different skills – including; financial skills; project planning;
leadership; and community engagement. In some cases local community members will already possess many of these skills – but in others, public agencies have a significant partnership role to play in building capacity amongst local groups.

10. How can the outcomes of regeneration be captured and measured? What are the barriers to capturing outcomes and how should success of regeneration investment be determined?

As explained above, we are supportive of an outcomes based approach through the National Performance Framework.

Agreeing joint outcomes, shared between departments can help overcome some of the difficulties but one of the key barriers to joined-up working is operating to different targets and indicators. Even where the outcome is agreed, departments may have different target priorities. Virginia Performs, the inspiration for Scotland Performs, pioneered the model of having shared, cross-departmental indicators (see Shifting the Dial: From wellbeing measures to policy and practice, Carnegie UK Trust and IPPR, 2012) but fell back quickly to departments only reporting their own specific outcomes, not considering their impact on other outcome areas (i.e. health only concerned with health, education with education and so on). Scotland will have to work hard to avoid this situation and CPPs are an asset in providing a focus for strategic governance across all areas of activity.

While we have the structures and frameworks in place, we are not convinced that systems-wide thinking is embedded in all our Community Planning Partnerships, via shared responsibility for Single Outcome Agreements. We appreciated that this is a major change in how we govern Scotland and that it will take time to embed the approach but we are concerned that our discussions around our Enabling State and Measuring What Matters work suggests that there is still confusion about what outcomes are and why they matter. Community Planning Partnerships will require guidance, information and training to help them understand the outcomes of regeneration work and how these support the National Performance Framework.

In terms of local indicators, there is a need to engage communities in setting the outcomes that Community Planning Partnerships are trying to achieve and for measuring their success. The importance of community engagement was a key finding of our international work on measuring wellbeing and similarly our Tackling Incivilities research demonstrates that local projects benefit from being able to capture and report on what they have achieved. Gathering and presenting this information can provide them with evidence to help secure future funding, and can inspire and encourage current and potential project volunteers. When working in partnership with communities, policymakers should ensure that sufficient time and resources are set aside to allow citizens to take part in this type of reflection process.