Summary

Five suggestions for improving delivery of regeneration in Scotland

- Commit to genuine community-led regeneration
- Broad the scope and eligibility criteria for the People and Communities Fund
- Support a new generation of Community Anchor organisations
- Ensure regeneration aligns with other policy and strategy agendas
- Build on the assets already present in communities
Our response

SCVO welcomes the opportunity to respond to this inquiry¹. We are pleased that the committee has opted for an ‘open information gathering’ approach. We would like to make the following five suggestions for improving the delivery of regeneration.

Commit to genuine community-led regeneration

It is now widely recognised that communities are best placed to identify the priorities in their area and lead on delivering the solutions. The third sector views these community-led approaches as the key to successful regeneration. However, it is important that this is not compromised to become simply community involvement in public sector-led activity. The regeneration strategy Achieving a Sustainable Future recognises this when it states: ‘However, the Scottish Government is clear that the involvement of local people in public sector-led activity is not community led regeneration.’² It is important that this commitment is carried forward and incorporated into delivery.

For a list of community-led approaches run by SCVO members: http://www.scvo.org.uk/category/policy/sots-case-studies/

Broaden the scope and eligibility criteria for the People and Communities Fund

The People and Communities Fund (PCF) should provide the funds for community organisations to take forward community-led regeneration. However, the view of many in the third sector is that the fund is not providing the flexibility required for community-led regeneration.

As can be seen by the first round of approved funding³, the majority of awards have been made to housing associations doing employability work. This is valuable and important work but not the breadth of activity required for diverse communities.

In having only two priorities (employability and preventative action) it is missing the fundamental principle of community-led regeneration which allows communities to set their priorities and outcomes. To be effective the fund should have an entirely open remit which allows communities to dictate what the priorities are in their area and what methods they employ to meet those priorities.

Support a new generation of Community Anchor organisations

To encourage a new generation of community anchor organisations funding and support is required to help organisations become established. Successes in places

¹ http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/RegenerationInquiry-call_for_written_evidence.pdf
² http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/12/09110320/11
³ http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/community/pcf/awards
like Twechar and Neilston have been dependent on enormous voluntary commitment, especially in the early stages. To help other communities realise their ambitions, support is needed for them to get started and establish sustainable projects. This will be particularly critical in disadvantaged communities where ideas and commitment are high but time and resources are scarce.

A profile of some of Scotland’s leading community anchors has been compiled by SCVO member; Development Trust Association Scotland: http://www.dtascot.org.uk/content/directory-of-members

**Ensure regeneration aligns with other policy and strategy agendas**

The Christie Commission recommendation that: ‘public services are built around people and communities’ has particular resonance with community-led regeneration and the assets-based approach. In addition to the Christie Commission, the regeneration strategy must also dovetail with other policy agendas. The Community Empowerment Bill, the Procurement Reform Bill, the Integration of Health and Social Care, the Land Reform Review and measures to tackle unemployment, amongst others, will all have a role to play in regenerating communities. Regeneration strategy must also account for the changes to the welfare system and the damaging impact this could have on regeneration efforts and communities resilience.

**Build on the assets already present in communities**

Successful projects build on the local knowledge of the human and physical resources in the community and how they can be unlocked to tackle the problems which have persisted. The assets-based approach is based on working with people, not “doing things to” them. In contrast, the more usual “treatment” approach often fails to recognise what abilities and resources people already have and can result in a culture of dependency. An assets-based approach could therefore help build more resilient and sustainable communities.

**Conclusion**

The third sector views genuine community-led approaches as the key to delivering successful regeneration. Building on the assets in communities and supporting community anchor organisations to play a central role should also be the priority for the regeneration strategy. Ensuring other policy agendas contribute will be crucial for success. The welfare reform agenda could undermine resilience and threaten regeneration efforts in the most disadvantaged communities, so it will be necessary to assess and mitigate the worst impacts of these changes.
About us
The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the third sector. There are over 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 138,000 paid staff and approximately 1.2 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £4.5 billion.

SCVO works in partnership with the third sector in Scotland to advance our shared values and interests. We have over 1400 members who range from individuals and grassroots groups, to Scotland-wide organisations and intermediary bodies.

As the only inclusive representative umbrella organisation for the sector SCVO:

- has the largest Scotland-wide membership from the sector – our 1400 members include charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes
- our governance and membership structures are democratic and accountable - with an elected board and policy committee from the sector, we are managed by the sector, for the sector
- brings together organisations and networks connecting across the whole of Scotland

SCVO works to support people to take voluntary action to help themselves and others, and to bring about social change. Our policy is determined by a policy committee elected by our members.4

Further details about SCVO can be found at www.scvo.org.uk.

References
Scottish Voluntary Sector Statistics 2012, SCVO
http://www.scvo.org.uk/about-the-sector/sector-stats

4 SCVO’s Policy Committee has 24 members elected by SCVO’s member organisations who then co-opt up to eight more members primarily to reflect fields of interest which are not otherwise represented. It also includes two ex officio members, the SCVO Convener and Vice Convener.