The Committee has issued a number of questions for local authorities to answer. South Lanarkshire Council’s response to each of these is as follows:

1. As key delivery agents of a wide variety of policies and activities identified in the Scottish Government’s regeneration strategy, how do local authorities and CPPs identify and implement their regeneration activity?

As outlined in the Council’s submission made in advance of the evidence session on the 27th November, there are strong partnerships in place in South Lanarkshire engaging both local and national organisations and groups. These include a range of thematic partnerships that sit below and report into the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Board. Each of these is very much part of the strategic CPP / SOA planning processes.

Although all of these partnerships will identify some priorities, activities and outcomes that will contribute towards regeneration efforts locally, the key thematic group established to lead and coordinate activity in this field is the South Lanarkshire Community Regeneration Partnership (CRP). Its role is to:

- Agree partnership priorities
- Monitor and evaluate progress
- Oversee the development and implementation of programmes
- Manage and agree funding allocations and monitor programme performance.
- Co-ordinate funding bids
- Ensure links are made with other partnership structures under the CPP
- Ensure effective arrangements exist to support the engagement of local communities

The priorities identified by the CRP form the basis of two Improvement Plans – one covering Sustainable Economic Development and the other Tackling Poverty. These include a set of key outcomes, measures and interventions which are monitored, reported upon and reviewed annually.

2. How do local authorities and CPPs coordinate their other activities to ensure they are aligned with, and support their, regeneration strategy?

South Lanarkshire’s Community Planning structure has a number of thematic partnerships, each contributing to the CPP / SOA planning processes. The CPP Board has the responsibility of taking an overview of what each partnership is doing in the context of a set of agreed strategic priorities, one of which is economic growth / regeneration.

In so doing the CPP ensures that all of the partnerships are working towards common aims and objectives, that their actions complement each other and that the
potential for duplication of activity is minimised. Lead officers from a range of partners for each of the SOA Improvement Plans meet regularly to discuss performance and to ensure the plans are connected and mutually supportive.

This structure was developed a number of years ago and is currently being reviewed to ensure that it reflects the ambition of the CPP Board to be as effective and efficient as possible in meeting the needs and aspirations of local communities and businesses. In this context, a recent CPP event engaged representatives from each of the thematic partnerships to consider key challenges, including tackling inequalities and effective involvement of communities which are key regeneration priorities for South Lanarkshire. All thematic partnerships were able to recognise their current and potential contributions to these priorities and a number of opportunities were identified for partners and themed groups to work more closely together.

Similar recent CPP events focussing on Tackling Poverty and Employability and other regeneration issues help to ensure a joined up approach and best use of precious human and financial resources.

3. Do local authorities have comprehensive strategies in place for specific community areas to “reduce poverty and inequality”? How long have these strategies been in place and how effective are they proving?

In South Lanarkshire we have used the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to target resources and activity towards the 15% most deprived communities since it was first introduced. In our evidence presented previously, we referred to the Council’s Tackling Poverty programme which supports a £5m programme of preventative interventions much of which is targeted at the above communities.

The number of South Lanarkshire datazones that fall within the 15% most deprived in Scotland had reduced from 66 to 53 which suggests we are moving in the right direction albeit that this is a relative index.

Regular neighbourhood level residents surveys in the same communities over the same period reflect improved perceptions of community facilities, community spirit, quality of life etc, in some cases more than for the less deprived areas surveyed again suggesting our work over the last decade or so has been effective.

Unemployment however continues to be a key challenge with the recession having had a major impact on the local economy.

Looking more closely at the SIMD, although the overall position is better, we have more datazones that sit within the most deprived 5% in Scotland (8-11) than we had when the SIMD was introduced which suggests we need to focus more on these areas and try out new approaches.

Our recently developed SOA and associated Improvement Plans have a number of closing the gap type targets that will allow us to measure progress in relation to income and unemployment related gaps between the most deprived communities and South Lanarkshire as a whole and there is ongoing work with CPP partners including health to consider other targets and actions required.

This will then allow for a more comprehensive strategy to be developed – clearly identifying which areas we should focus our combined resources on. How we engage and involve residents of these communities in the development and delivery of the strategy will be key.
What is also helpful in relation to taking a more targeted approach is the fact that many of the external funding organisations such as the Big Lottery are encouraging and in some cases requiring a focus on the most deprived communities.

A recent example of this is the Big Lottery “Our Place 2” programme, which will allow for long term support and investment into 2 of our communities that have stubbornly sat within the 5% most deprived in Scotland since the SIMD was established.

4. How do local authorities and CPPs monitor the regeneration strategy that is being delivered, and whether or not it is successful?

As stated previously the Community Regeneration Partnership is the lead themed partnership for Regeneration in South Lanarkshire and its role includes monitoring and evaluating performance.

The SOA and Improvement Plans include a number of outcomes and measures and both the CP Board and the CRP receive monthly progress reports which allow members to consider performance and respond the emerging issues.

5. It has been suggested in previous evidence sessions that the establishment of common standards of measurement should be applied in evaluating regeneration outcomes. What measures to implement this would be most appropriate?

To an extent the development of the Menu of Local Indicators and the SOLACE benchmarking activity reflect the desire for a common approach to identifying indicators and measuring change. However, there continue to be the same issues around common definitions and understandings of inputs, outputs and outcomes and in the defining and capturing of data around ‘soft’ outcomes, around processes and around implementation issues.

Whilst there may be agreement of common standards of measurement, there will always be issues around the availability of data – even across all council areas in Scotland let alone local regeneration areas. The danger is that a common approach may end up measuring what is available rather than what is appropriate.

The issue may not be around the establishment of common standards of measurement as seeking agreement on evaluation approaches and tools.

It is also important that consideration is given to local context and local priorities. The danger behind a set of common standards is that it presumes a ‘once size fits all’ approach is appropriate and ignores the differing challenges and approaches that may need to be adopted to reflect local situations.

In South Lanarkshire investment has been made in providing a tool to enable people and organisations to understand the characteristics of local areas based around the domains of the SIMD. The aim of this is to create a common understanding and awareness of the situation of an area which can then inform the development of priorities and policies.
6. It was discussed, during the meeting on 4 December 2013, that utility companies were not keeping pace with council regeneration plans. Could you provide greater detail on this lack of pace, what impact this is having on council regeneration plans, and what is being done by the council to rectify this? (column 2895 and 2919 Official Report)

The Council has, both itself and in conjunction with partners, been involved in the promotion and delivery of a number of infrastructure and economic development projects across both urban and rural areas of South Lanarkshire.

It would be fair to say that engagement with utility providers can be difficult and protracted with information on existing utility capacity and future provision difficult to access. Utility providers appear reluctant to invest in schemes without ‘payment up front’ or will refuse to undertake a review of existing infrastructure assets without being paid to do so. This appears to suggest that providers, such as Scottish Water, either do not have the necessary capacity information relating to their own network and / or are unwilling to invest in the necessary research to furnish them with the necessary data that allows future network capacity planning.

On occasions where utility companies advise the existing infrastructure is at full capacity, it would appear that they fail to recognise the need to invest in their infrastructure to help promote development and thereby assist in growing the economy which, at the same time, will increase income streams to them. Capital expenditure required to improve drainage, water and utility networks is placed on the promoter of the development scheme without the long term benefits this bestows on the infrastructure provider being recognised. Where infrastructure providers do have investment plans and delivery timescales these do not appear to be flexible enough to address market demand / regeneration priorities in specific areas eg. Clyde Gateway.

At a practical level, on site delays encountered by an unwillingness of infrastructure providers to work with contractors to deliver service installations within reasonable timescales is a problem with a lack of consistency in quoting accurate lead-in times for service connections and disconnections.

7. What business planning processes do councils conduct when determining to speculatively construct building units? (column 2911 Official Report)

The Council does not see itself as a developer or wish to compete with private sector operators in the property market. The Council’s regeneration priorities seek to ensure that it can, in appropriate circumstances, address market failure in a specific location or in a specific market sector to provide the right conditions for economic growth and enterprise.

Through market intelligence, for example the Lanarkshire Property Advice Service (LPAS), the Council gathers data from both enquiries and subsequent outcomes to maintain an understanding of both the supply and demand for business accommodation which, in turn, will assist in identifying areas of market failure which will ultimately inform our investment decisions. This may be in the form of physical development – for example the provision of small scale business space - or remediation of brownfield sites for lease or onward sale to SME’s.
The Council will frequently seek match funding from other sources e.g. ERDF, and this process requires cash flow, projected income and end value to be prepared. This demonstrates the need for public sector intervention in a specific sector that will not provide an economic return to the private sector. Whilst economic development project can produce an income over a project lifetime it can be demonstrated that this income does not reflect the whole life costs of a project. A project deficit can be viewed by the Council as its investment in regeneration activity.

In addition we may instruct consultants to provide an additional overview on both the demand and supply side for business accommodation. Indeed, the Council has recently instructed consultants to undertake a special assessment of the current stock of business accommodation comprising industrial estates, serviced industrial land, business centres and other business accommodation, in order to achieve a better understanding of the needs of businesses now and in the foreseeable future. We will seek to report on the existing stock of business property and the future needs of businesses in order to inform our Property Management and Capital Investment decisions. The study will initially focus on East Kilbride with subsequent coverage of the remainder of South Lanarkshire.

8. Can the local authorities explain what effect their regeneration investment has had in their SIMD areas and provide information to the Committee? (column 2912 Official Report)

In answering this question there are issues about what the term ‘regeneration investment’ means and also the focus on SIMD. The Council has had a focus on the worst 15% datazones it has also been conscious of the need to balance a geographical focus of regeneration investment activity with the needs of individuals. In policy areas like employability, the Council has sought to balance the need for action in the most deprived areas with the need to improve employability for particular groups – such as young people or those in rural areas.

In 2007 and 2010 the Council and its partners commissioned a series of face to face interviews with around 4,000 residents chosen to represent the various communities across South Lanarkshire, giving information on the situation and perceptions of their local communities. In comparing the most deprived 15% of areas with South Lanarkshire as a whole, there was generally an improving situation between 2007 and 2010. In the case of views about their local neighbourhoods, the perceptions improved in these areas whereas it fell slightly in South Lanarkshire as a whole and community spirit had improved there but fell slightly in South Lanarkshire as a whole.

Over this period the Council carried out a major investment in upgrading its housing stock and it and its partners also increased their activity in areas like community safety, health and employability.

As stated previously, South Lanarkshire has seen a reduction by 20% of the number of datazones that sit within the 15% most deprived in Scotland since the SIMD was first published. We do however recognise the limitations of the SIMD in relation to measuring improvement given that the SIMD is a relative measure.

In the main the regeneration activities undertaken by the Council and its partners relate to specific projects or programmes in specific areas or for specific groups. The following case study of Whitehill provides an example of this activity and its impact.
Whitehill is a neighbourhood in Hamilton and because of the significant challenges in the area, Council housing property was hard to let and there were many void residencies. Over the last 15 years or so, the area has benefitted from major investment by the Council and other partners. This has included new schools, a new integrated community facility and improvements to housing in the area – including providing a better mix of housing type and tenure. The demand for housing in the area has changed dramatically and it no longer has hard to let properties.

This capital investment has been matched with improved access to a range of supports and services for the community to tackle unemployment, poor health, poor educational achievement and anti social behaviour concerns. The most recent residents survey in the area reflects improvements in the SIMD position.

School level qualifications increased from 29% (of those surveyed) to 52% over 5 years. Those reporting no qualifications had decreased from 65% to 44%. 75% of residents surveyed felt their health was good or very good compared to 66% in 2005 and 11% more of those surveyed reported an improved environment.

The table below considers local issues and what proportion of residents felt these were a significant issue in the area. Again, the results show improvements across all areas bar one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Problems</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rowdy Behaviour</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Fouling</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug misuse/dealing</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs/Territorialism</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy Neighbours</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism/Graffiti</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/Litter</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults &amp; muggings</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly tipping/illegal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish/derelict houses</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant/derelict houses</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derelict land</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire raising</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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