Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Regeneration Inquiry

Submission from City Design Section of Glasgow City Council's Development and Regeneration Services Department

"To identify and examine best practice and limitations in relation to the delivery of regeneration in Scotland"

I respond as a local authority officer within the City Design Section of Glasgow City Council's Development and Regeneration Services Department, with a particular area of interest/experience in historic area regeneration - a distinction with applies to just about most urban and many rural burghs in the Nation and where some of the best examples of streamlined and multi functional regeneration programmes have been pioneered – mainly via Historic Scotland Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) allied to Heritage Lottery Funded Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI) and often involving charitable building preservation trusts. From our own experience of this in the Merchant City of Glasgow the key factors in the success of the multi agency, multi faceted, regeneration programme were:

- Appointment of dedicated, single purpose staff within the area with access to high level decision making within local authority and other agencies such as Scottish Enterprise
- Buy into to an ambitious Vision for the area which in itself is set out pragmatically and realistically at the outset
- Community buy in and involvement
- Freedom from unnecessary red tape, procurement constraints etc.
- Ability to recognise and harness local creativity and not be averse to calculated risks
- Demonstrable integrity and accountability at local level.

To answer some of the specific questions asked in your paper (using your numbering):

1. Linkage between strategies can be improved if there is civic leadership (in the case of a city such as Glasgow) which aligns strategies to an overarching vision. This requires of course a constructive relationship with Scottish Government, ALEOS and Health Trusts etc.

2. Through our work in the THI and soon to be CARS there is a constant focus on the inter relationship between physical, social, cultural, economic and environmental performance of an area. It may be that targeted grant schemes may sometimes focus on one aspect - e.g. Historic Scotland Repair/Maintenance grants will focus on physical improvements but there is a growing realisation that the questions as to end use and e.g. community buy in are equally important in a schemes viability and long terms success. In our work with the building preservation trust sector these issues are best explored and increasingly schemes where bpt's attract finance from the lottery distributors insist on and exemplify these cross discipline and multi beneficiary approach.
3. Glasgow recently had a partnership scheme with a local bpt where a compulsorily purchased local landmark in a regeneration area was the subject of a comprehensive restoration and capacity building programme of activities over 18 months. This was effectively halted by the relative inflexibility of the Big Lottery Fund who could not directly work co-operatively with anyone except the local community, despite the social objectives, partnerships and experience of the organisations involved. This ignored the alignment of other funders, HLF, Historic Scotland, ERDF, GCC already at the table towards the "greater good". Big were only interested in an application written and delivered by the local community itself, believing that their existing involvement in partnership with a not for profit charity meant that they were being sidelined - as opposed to "capacity built" as the Council would in fact have described.

4. HLF in its new Enterprise Regeneration programme and Catalyst grants are about (April 2013) to explore more creative ways in which to effect regeneration, job creation and public/private partnership/job creation and Scotland should be ready to capitalise on this with strong applications and projects.

5. Each project is different but it will be important to demonstrate robustly at the outset that there is a viable business plan that is not dependant on long term subsidy, has undertaken the right tests at the outset, has the right skills base to carry it forward and has an exit plan.

6. Holistic approaches to town planning, local neighbourhood strategies, etc. but as set out in 5. Above, to ensure - as far as possible - that a project has long term viability, it will be essential to lay a solid foundation and rigorous testing at the outset.

7. Teach them how to engage with the right professionals, support them to engage and employ the best professionals in the requisite field and. Reinforce their confidence. Issue case studies in plain English of successful exemplars. Capacity build.

8. No comment

9. Be aspirational, genuinely address local need rather than sectoral agendas. Exemplars may include Castlemilk Stables, Govanhill Baths, Dunoon Burgh Hall. St. Margaret's Former Church in Polmadie may be a useful case study in failure and the reasons behind this.

10. Social Return in Investment tools are being refined and made more sophisticated so as to capture the wider benefits of regeneration including hard statistical factors such as investment, job creation, and floor space reused/buildings saved etc. but also soft gains such as feel good factors, health benefits, psychological uplifts, crime statistics, creative enterprises and locational desirability.

I hope these comments are of use.

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