Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Regeneration Inquiry

Submission from RTPI Scotland

Thank you for the invitation to provide written evidence to the Committee’s Inquiry into the Delivery of Regeneration in Scotland.

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the voice of the planning profession. We are a charity registered with 2,200 members in Scotland and 23,000 worldwide. We work to advance the art and science of planning for the public benefit. Good planning is crucial to creating great places for people – planners work to manage our space, resources and environment to help shape the future. Our work involves:

- promoting good planning
- developing and shaping policy affecting the built environment
- consistently raising the standards of the planning profession
- supporting our members through continued professional development
- education and training for future planners


**GENERAL POINTS**

The 2011 Regeneration Strategy defined delivering success in terms of regeneration activity:

- puts communities first, effectively involving local residents in the regeneration process and empowering communities
- is holistic, making connections between the physical, social and economic dimensions
- adopts a long-term vision for a places and focuses the on the safety and quality of places
- takes account of the specific function of neighbourhoods and integrates regeneration initiatives into wider economic strategies
- makes tailored interventions to link economic opportunity and need to address worklessness and deliver sustainable quality employment
- is supported by simple and aligned funding streams and maximises the impact from mainstream resource by better integration with place-based interventions
- Has strong leadership with clear accountability and makes effective use of partnership working, involving the private sector, both in investment and in shaping ideas and development.
RTPI Scotland agrees that these are sound principles. In order to achieve this we feel that a number of foundations need to be put in place, namely:

- It is essential that regeneration enjoys the support and promotion of Scottish Government into the future. We recognise the tight fiscal circumstances that Government has to work within but feel that regeneration should be seen as a priority in the allocation of resources. Regeneration is an essential contributor to economic growth, social cohesion and environmental quality.

- RTPI Scotland also feels that there must be an increased commitment to dedicated funding for regeneration. In doing this the funding landscape has to simple and clear. Scottish Government, and others, must support new and creative ways of making best use of resources, including those aimed at developing land for regeneration. This could explore the idea of providing the planning system with statutory powers (by designation powers for areas of regeneration along with matching resources) to lead on desired change.

- There should be a better link between Community Plans, Single Outcome Agreements and Development Plans. The approach to partnership working in Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) have much to commend them. However, they are based on establishing priorities for resources and programmes and do not always currently assess or set out the implications these have spatially. The spatial dimension is important as it is communities and neighbourhoods that these programmes will impact upon. Given this, we feel that there is a role for development plans to be used more effectively to show how investments and programmes will impact on people’s neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

- Regeneration programmes should recognise the important role played by planning, planners and the planning system in supporting regeneration efforts. Core to planning is working with the different interests such as communities, public agencies, developers and community organisations to develop a deliverable vision for a place. It has a key role in supporting sustainable change to help regenerate communities and so a properly-planned approach to regeneration will help to create regeneration which is sustainable over the longer term. A properly-resourced planning system, working within the correct framework, is key to realising ambitions for regeneration. It will highlight pressures for change, identify opportunities and build appropriate safeguards. It can provide a long-term, pro-active vision for neighbourhoods through integrating and future-proofing development. And it will allow, and indeed encourage, people to have a say in the future of the places they live or work.

**STRATEGY AND POLICY ISSUES**
1. How can the linkage between the various strategies and policies related to regeneration be improved?

At a local level there must be better coordination of Community Planning, Single Outcome Agreements and Development Plans. Development Plans should be seen as key delivery mechanisms for regeneration, providing opportunities for community and stakeholder engagement and partnership, as well as the coordination of funding and programmes across agencies, and the private sector. Change at the local level requires an effective planning framework in the form of the Local Development Plan. There is a need for Community Planning Partnerships to engage in the Development Plan process, and vice versa.

At a neighbourhood level, a number of successful regeneration projects have used Master Plans to engage with communities to develop ideas on how to regeneration their neighbourhoods, and to deliver these. Examples include the Crown Street Regeneration Project in the Gorbals, Glasgow; the current regeneration of Govan; the regeneration of Raploch in Stirling; Craigmillar in Edinburgh; and Ardler in Dundee. Master Plans can help to set out the vision and provide predictability and certainty on development.

Townscape Heritage Initiatives can also be a useful way of bringing together programmes and funding and for engaging communities, often in challenging contexts. For example, Glasgow City Council is using these in Parkhead and the East End.

At a regional level there should be role for Strategic Development Plans. The Cities Review appeared to conclude that economic growth could be better encouraged by consideration at the City-Region scale, and Strategic Development Plans should reflect this.

The forthcoming 3rd National Planning Framework should be help to identify those areas where there should be investment and where infrastructure should be developed to help support this.

2. Can physical, social and economic regeneration really be separate entities? The Committee would find it useful to hear about projects distinctly focussed on one or more aspects, and the direct and indirect outcomes of such activity.

The most successful regeneration projects and initiatives have managed to tackle physical, social and economic issues in a holistic way. Unsuccessful projects have tended to take a narrower approach, which often has unintended consequences.
3. Are we achieving the best value from investment in this area? If not, how could funding achieve the maximum impact? Could the funding available be used in different ways to support regeneration

There is a need for a more holistic approach to be taken towards funding. This could be done through taking a more place based approach to programming, resourcing and budgeting. At present most programmes are based around a specific issue and focus on individuals, groups or organisations, rather than the neighbourhood they are in. This can mean that the impact upon the community as a whole is not fully realised. If budgets were organised and delivered around neighbourhoods there may be economies of scale and better complementarity between approaches. It would be worthwhile examining the Total Place approach taken in England which attempted to look at what money is coming into an area, explore what obstacles there are to making funding go further, examine the complexities within the system and look at how best to strip out the inefficiencies and wastage they discovered. See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_total_place.htm

There is also potential to more effectively link infrastructure and development and make best use of the rise in land values that come about from infrastructure investment so that local communities benefit.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

4. What delivery mechanisms, co-ordination of, and information on the funding that supports regeneration are required, to facilitate access by all sections of the community?

Communities should be at the heart of regeneration and should therefore be supported to ensure that they have the information, knowledge, skills and abilities to engage in the process. Regeneration, as in planning, should become an open dialogue between different players, rather than one-off and closed communications.

However, at the moment there is very little investment at all in regeneration. The loss of the ringfence for the Fairer Scotland Fund means Community Planning Partnerships are able to use this money as best as they see fit, within the context of their Single Outcome Agreements and Community Plan. This means that now there is effectively no national regeneration programme funding in place at present, but rather many localised projects. The solutions to problems in specific neighbourhoods do not always lie within those neighbourhoods, so there is a need to ensure we take a more strategic overview of regeneration which links opportunities with the needs of people living in these places, and vice versa.

Other regeneration funding has been reduced markedly in recent years. We should not underestimate the role that funds such as the Town Centre
Regeneration Fund, the People and Communities Fund and the Vacant and Derelict land Fund have had in acting as catalyst funds and/ or as gap funding for otherwise unviable projects.

Finance from the private sector is hard to come by for regeneration projects. Such projects inevitably bring more risk and, given current economic circumstances, investors are focussing on prime development opportunities which are safer for them.

There is a need for Scottish Government to prioritise regeneration funding. In doing this there is an opportunity to simplify the range of funding streams that are in place and ensure that they focus on areas of disadvantage. Two important issues in delivering regeneration development are land ownership and risk. Given this, we feel that Scottish Government should examine ways in which it can support ways of consolidating land ownership and facilitating the public and private sectors to develop joint venture regeneration schemes. Key to this are approaches to Compulsory Purchase, Prudential Borrowing and Local Asset Backed Vehicles where public authorities work with the private sector to develop areas. We also feel that it could be worthwhile exploring mini-development corporations for smaller scale regeneration projects. There is also much to learn from the models adopted in other parts of Europe where public authorities own land, develop infrastructure to make it attractive and risk free for developers, and then work with developers to regenerate the area. The Delivering Better Places document published by Scottish Government has a number of examples of how this has worked. See http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/31110906/0.

Other new mechanisms of delivering development should include the third sector, and community development trusts will have an important role, particularly where they are firmly rooted in the community.

Funding should still be focused on specific areas of deprivation. This will entail creative approaches to funding as well as grants. Grants will still be required given that we are dealing with market failure. However, efforts should be made to ensure that communities undergoing regeneration are able to gain from the benefits of development being undertaken in nearby areas. This concept of linking opportunity and need can be important in future regeneration and there is a key role for planning in providing a context for this. This approach maps out the different stages of a regeneration initiative and looks at the needs of the community and its residents in terms of training and support with a view to ensuring individuals can be 'job ready' when required and organisations are ready to take advantage of contractual opportunities during the construction, open for business or aftercare stages of the development. See http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/24090451/0.
Community Planning should be create the partnership working context that facilitates the approaches outlined above.

5. Should funding be focussed on start up or running costs? What is the correct balance between revenue and capital funding? Please indicate reasons for your views

Funding will depend upon the specific needs of an area and the project identified to tackle the issue it faces. It should be borne in mind that the best regeneration approaches have embraced social, economic and physical issues and established solutions that tackle all of these.

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

We need to recognise that the issues we face in our disadvantaged communities are often long term and structural. They will not all be overcome in short term. This means that approaches must be both long term in their outlook and in their delivery. This will involve a commitment to areas, and to investing in areas, which stretches beyond 3 year funding cycles. The planning process can help to provide the context for this long term approach.

Key to the success of any regeneration initiative is the engagement of the community. There is a need for dedicated resources for regeneration areas and the projects within them. The Charrette programme taken forward by Scottish Government and a number of planning authorities may offer some potential here. These have been used in Grandhome in Aberdeen; Ladyfield in Dumfries; Lochgelly in Fife; Callander; Johnstone; and Girvan. You can see more on this at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/AandP/Projects/SSCI

PRACTICAL ISSUES

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

We await details of the community capacity building programme. Any programme developed must have a number of elements to it. Firstly, and most importantly, it must be designed in partnership with those who will be involved to make sure that it meets their needs and fits in with their demands. Community members and organisations need to be engaged. Secondly, the programme must look at how best to develop a learning loop which involves identifying, sharing and supporting people to apply good practice and innovation. And thirdly, the programme should not only focus on community members, but should also include officers and organisations who work with communities to deliver
regeneration. This is essential to develop a culture of partnership working between these different interests.

Thought should also be given to the role of Planning Aid for Scotland given its role as an independent and impartial organisation, working across Scotland to help people shape their communities and engage more effectively with planning.

A useful example of community led regeneration where local people identified issues and opportunities in their areas, decided what to do about them and then took responsibility for delivering action is the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. This was founded on the strategic planning of the area. See http://www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk/

8. What role should CPPs play in supporting the community in regenerating their communities?

CPPs have two important roles. Firstly, to align public spending and activity so as to ensure best value, and, secondly, to engage with communities on their needs and priorities.

There is a need to better align Community Planning and Spatial/ Land Use Planning. If Community Planning Partnerships worked more closely with the development plan process it would enable them to connect decisions on investment to particular places, which in turn could help communities to gain a better understanding of the implications of Community Planning for their area. This could also embrace concepts such as ‘Total Place’ which provide a better articulation of the impacts of investment and policy on specific places. Community-led solutions have always been key outputs of the planning system, and that is where much of the activity in community regeneration should be focused. For this to be effective requires a robust and representative community network and capacity to tackle issues.

9. How can CPPs best empower local communities to deliver regeneration? Please provide any examples of best practice or limitations experienced that you think the Committee would find useful in its scrutiny.

In practical terms, Community Planning has focussed more on partnership working rather than planning with the community for the community whilst the land use planning system has generally not engaged in Community Planning activity. There is potential for these to be better connected to help engage and empower communities. The spatial/ land use planning system could help to ‘make it more real’ for communities by using its engagement processes to show how communities, neighbourhoods and towns would be affected by proposals in
Community Plans. At present Community Plans do not generally set out their spatial implications.

In particular, the Development Plan provides an opportunity for the community to discuss and openly agree its views about the future. Planning has a tradition of community engagement, especially in the context of Development Planning and given this planners use a range of techniques to engage communities in developing an understanding of and an implementable ‘vision’ for their area. However, there is still a need for decision making on planning issues to be guided by professional expertise rooted locally.

The Institute is of the view that there is a need to ensure that a culture of subsidiarity of decision making to the right level ‘governance’ is adopted in taking forward community empowerment. This requires assessing what level will be most effective in making decisions and giving the people at these levels the power and resources to do this.

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

The key measure of the success of regeneration are the outcomes delivered for people outcomes for people, including quality of place. A successfully regenerated community is a community that doesn’t need additional support to allow it and its resident to function ‘normally’ and where people want to continue to live.

I trust that the Committee will find this helpful. RTPI Scotland would be pleased to give oral evidence expanding upon these comments if the Committee would find this helpful.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the evidence or require clarification on any points raised, please contact me on 0131 229 9628 or 07850 926881.

Yours sincerely

Craig McLaren
National Director