1. Scottish Community Alliance
The Scottish Community Alliance is comprised of Scotland’s leading community sector networks and intermediaries with an active interest in local economic development, health, culture and the arts, housing, transport, energy, land ownership and management, allotments, food production, financial services and the environment. Membership currently consists of 18 national networks. The overarching theme to which all these networks subscribe is that of community empowerment, and the principle that local people are best placed to lead the process of regeneration and community renewal.

2.1 General comments
The most significant feature of the Scottish Government’s regeneration strategy "Achieving a Sustainable Future” is the acknowledgment that the overall approach to regeneration requires a radically new direction. Regeneration can no longer be defined by large programmes of public sector expenditure aimed at priming opportunities for private sector investment in the expectation that communities will somehow benefit from ‘trickle down’ regeneration. The strategy refers to this former model of regeneration as being fractured (plummeting land values combined with long term cuts in public finance) and indeed questions the extent to which previous regeneration initiatives ever produced the sort of outcomes that had been hoped for. Community led regeneration is the strategy’s defining idea. But there is little detail within the strategy as to what community led regeneration means or how it should be delivered.

The Strategy needs to be clear how this new approach will be delivered in a way that will differentiate it from previous regeneration strategies. This process of formally acknowledging that a fundamental shift in emphasis has taken place would be assisted if the new strategy were to be underpinned by a set of first principles. The Alliance proposes the following principles for the committee’s consideration.

2.2 First principles of regeneration

- **Subsidiarity.** Subsidiarity is an organising principle that should inform all aspects of public policy in Scotland and specifically should be at the heart of the regeneration strategy. The principle of subsidiarity requires any matter to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralised authority capable of addressing that matter effectively.

- **Self-determination.** Local people should be allowed to determine for themselves how their community is defined and which local organisational
structure is best suited to take forward their plans for community led regeneration.

- **Local people leading.** Community led regeneration only occurs when local people are in a position of genuinely leading the process of regeneration. This requires other stakeholders to explicitly recognise a shift in their role to being one which is ancillary and supportive and in stark contrast to their more familiar leadership role in previous regeneration strategies which was delivered top-down.

- **Land and self-generated income.** Ownership of land and control over land use, and the capacity to generate income streams which are independent of the state, are critical in determining the degree to which a community becomes empowered and is able to lead a process of regeneration.

The Strategy also needs to identify the mechanism or catalyst that will deliver community led regeneration. Such a mechanism should be rooted within a community, with governance and accountability structured in such a way that is consistent with the principles of community led regeneration.

### 2.3 The strategy therefore needs to make an explicit acknowledgement that community anchor organisations are the key delivery mechanism of community led regeneration.

While there may be some debate about what precise characteristics a CAO should display, there is a consensus that the CAO is a broadly defined concept which can include many different types of community organisations. eg development trusts, community associations, faith groups, community based housing groups etc.

### 3.1 Response to specific questions set as part of the enquiry

#### Strategy and Policy Issues

**3.1.1. How can the linkage between the various strategies and policies related to regeneration be improved?**

The shift in emphasis from top-down, agency-led regeneration to a community led approach will in fact facilitate better integration of effort over all. In the past, a single public agency or government department held lead responsibility for the regeneration effort with all other ‘strategic partners’ and public stakeholders assuming a ‘junior’ role. Consequently, the extent to which key partners such as education, health and social care or police played as a full part as they might was always questionable.

By placing a community anchor organisation at the centre of the regeneration process and by having all the public stakeholders assume an equal but ancillary role with a clear focus on supporting the CAO, a much more integrated effort can be
expected as the focus of regeneration activity is being directed through the lens of an organisation rooted in the community with pre-existing relationships with stakeholders and the wider community.

3.1.2. 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 evidence from the Highlands and Islands is compelling. HIE have built into their modus operandi an implicit understanding that it is not possible to address any one of the three ‘legs’ of sustainable regeneration without given due consideration to the other two. One of the principle reasons for the many failed regeneration attempts in the past (chiefly across the central belt) has been the belief that top-down investment in physical regeneration is, of itself, enough to stimulate regeneration. It’s not and the rest of Scotland should learn from the Strengthening Communities approach which has been integral to HIE’s work for many years.

3.1.3. 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?

Need to be careful about application of best value principles. Other metrics have been developed such as WARM (Wellbeing and Resilience Measurement), Oxfam’s Humankind Index etc

3.1.4. 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?

Taken together there are significant amounts of financial support available for regeneration activity. The challenge for communities is that most of this funding is held and dispensed through unconnected government silos and independent funders which requires the community body leading local regeneration to make multiple and similar applications to many different funders. From the perspective of community led regeneration, the funding system would have to be considered no longer fit for purpose. Previously it served a model of top down regeneration and was relatively efficient (in terms of getting money spent) but ultimately ineffective. If community led regeneration is to be a success, the funding system needs to change to reflect the specific requirements of the new approach.

3.1.5. 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

One of the notable aspects of successive Scottish Govt strategies to support the growth of social enterprise has been the ‘pipeline’ approach that it has adopted –
from tailored funding and support to stimulate start-ups through to substantial packages of social investment to support growth and development of successful social enterprises. Recognising that communities develop at different rates, there should be a flexible funding regime similar to social enterprise to reflect the particular and specific needs of communities at different stages of their development.

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

The focus in the past has been short term project driven funding. Here today, gone tomorrow. The focus has to be on developing and supporting community based enterprises and developing a locally owned asset base. (see 4th underpinning first principle)

3.1.7. What actions could the Scottish Governments forthcoming community capacity building programme include to best support communities to “do” regeneration themselves?

A series of direct investments into communities with appropriate levels of support from partner stakeholders but with local people, through their local anchor organisation, in control of the process and trusted by external stakeholders to deliver effective regeneration outcomes.

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

CPPs have delivered much better strategic integration of large scale public services. They have failed to successfully engage with communities in any way that would encourage community led regeneration. Where CPPs have developed local structures to engage with communities they invariably encroach on the ‘space’ where locally led regeneration might flourish. Whether there could be a role for the new Third Sector Interfaces to protect this space and literally be the interface with CPPs remains to be tested.

3.1.9. 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.

Let communities determine for themselves what the outcomes should be. Local people have to live with the consequences of regeneration and if there is to be any sense of ownership of the process, the outcomes should be self-defined.

As an example of how difficult it will be to effect the culture change at all levels in order to encourage community led regeneration to occur, the Scottish Govt’s Peoples and Community Fund is a case in point. This is a fund that was promoted as
supporting community led regeneration. However, the first thing the Scottish Government did in the process of setting up systems to distribute the funds was to prescribe what activities it would support – employability and preventative action. This was precisely the approach that used to characterise the previous top down approaches to regeneration and reflected the reality that while the language of regeneration has been updated, the required changes to practice continue to lag some way behind.

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