SCDC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s call for evidence on ‘what regeneration means for us’. Our overarching message is that the focus of regeneration activity should be on localities experiencing extreme disadvantage and issues of social justice and inequality, as defined by the Scottish Government’s regeneration strategy:

“Regeneration is the holistic process of reversing the economic, physical and social decline of places where market forces alone won’t suffice.”

Community capacity building and community engagement are central to what we understand regeneration to be. Capacity building at a neighbourhood level, assisting communities to develop their skills, confidence, organisation and influence, is needed to equip communities to participate fully in regeneration activity and to enhance participative democracy and civic life. Similarly, meaningful community engagement between agencies and communities is necessary if public sector led regeneration is to be relevant and responsive to local people.

SCDC views a strong, active community sector, enhanced civic society and participatory democracy as the cornerstone of physical, economic and social regeneration. Regeneration activity needs to be holistic and based on a sound understanding of the needs, issues, assets and the different stages of development and organisation within and between communities. The challenge for the Scottish Government is how to enhance civic society and strengthen the community sector without imposing or controlling it.

Strategy and Policy Issues

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

One of the main issues with Scottish Government strategies related to regeneration is that any current intervention is usually attached to a specific policy area. A variety of divisions or departments within Scottish Government fund initiatives which, although not termed as regeneration projects or programmes, share similar ambitions and are designed to achieve related outcomes. Regeneration deals with a range of interweaving and complex factors directly related to local demographics,

history and unique characteristics. This would suggest that one outcome cannot easily be addressed in isolation of another. Moreover, issues of safety, health, unemployment and poor physical infrastructure are particularly pressing in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where such issues tend to compound each other. For regeneration in Scotland to be successful, any combined intervention needs to be planned, coherent and targeted. Most critically, those initiatives need to place the community at their core.

Across the policy landscape there is renewed emphasis on the role of communities and the need to engage with them in the recognition that locally defined and locally delivered solutions often lead to better and more sustainable impact. This is evident in policies and strategies related to health inequalities, public service reform, early years, planning, climate change and environmental justice, reshaping care, community safety, and others.

Following the Christie Commission Report and as set out in the Scottish Government’s response, Renewing Scotland’s Public Services, the need to engage communities in preventative action is key. Good community engagement is at the core of prevention – done properly, it supports communities to engage in collaborative and partnership responses to the issues which most affect them, leading to less need for agency intervention.

In parallel with other reform initiatives, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) have been subject to recent review. The first step in the review of Community Planning is a new Statement of Ambition, which declares that;

‘Effective community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform. They will drive the pace of service integration, increase the focus on prevention and secure continuous improvement in public service delivery, in order to achieve better outcomes for communities. Community Planning and SOAs will provide the foundation for effective partnership working within which wider reform initiatives, such as the integration of health and adult social care and the establishment of single police and fire services, will happen.’

Part of the statutory duty on working together to improve outcomes through increased participation will mean putting communities at the heart of community planning and integrating services and thematic activity around communities.

In 2013 there will be a public consultation on a draft Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill. The ambition of the Bill is to increase community influence and to create opportunities and duties designed to empower communities to act on community need. The initial consultation on the proposed legislation demonstrated that there is a desire for extended community engagement, more duties on the devolution of community budgets and more support for asset and land transfer to community organisations for wider community benefit. Some communities will immediately benefit from the proposed community empowerment legislation but some groups, organisations and communities are less well equipped, especially
those operating in communities which are most marginalised, fractured and impoverished.

A holistic approach must be adopted that prioritises communities experiencing long term deprivation and those at risk of degeneration, recognising and working to tackle, through community capacity building, the barriers to participation, health and wellbeing that these communities face. This should start with a full analysis, conducted with communities, of their social, economic and physical situation to drive the design and delivery of remedial actions. We believe that such a holistic approach has the twin advantage of giving disconnected initiatives a shared focus while also supporting and involving communities in danger of being left behind.

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.

SCDC’s position is that physical, social and economic regeneration are interlinked. A liveable, sustainable and equitable community brings social and psychological benefits, ranging from increased neighbourliness and stronger social networks to better longer term health and wellbeing outcomes. Building the capacity of local communities will enable them to contribute to both regeneration and the achievement of the broader outcomes contained within the National Performance Framework. The table below shows how local organisations and networks can contribute to wider outcomes and gives examples of projects doing this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Related National Outcomes</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide learning opportunities for children, young people and families in their own communities.</td>
<td>‘We are better educated, more skilled and more successful’</td>
<td>The Scottish Adult Learning Partnership in Edinburgh, an organisation dedicated to supporting opportunities for community based learning, making connections and between learning and people’s lived environments and putting members at the heart of decision making. <a href="http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/s/genericresource_tcm4652548.asp">http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/s/genericresource_tcm4652548.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the built and natural environment through local environmental action projects.</td>
<td>‘we value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations’ and ‘we live in well-designed,</td>
<td>DightyConnect in Dundee enables volunteers to plan, design and implement human-scale projects linked to environmental and cultural aspects of the Dighty Burn. Building on the local people’s knowledge of their environment and ideas about what could enhance the Dighty Burn, the project supports people to develop initiatives within the local community. <a href="http://www.spanglefish.com/dightyconnect/">http://www.spanglefish.com/dightyconnect/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need'</td>
<td>Ng2 Ltd in North Glasgow is a community-led social enterprise that improves the training and employment prospects for young adults across several city neighbourhoods that are characterised by high levels of socio-economic deprivation. It has achieved a 60% job success rate for young unemployed adults, a turnover of £100,000 per month. <a href="http://nghomes.net/news/423-ng2-win-award-as-young-people-in-north-glasgow-say-yes-to-jobs.html">http://nghomes.net/news/423-ng2-win-award-as-young-people-in-north-glasgow-say-yes-to-jobs.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop community led businesses employing local people.</td>
<td>'We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve health through community led preventive activity, for example food and diet programmes.</td>
<td>'People live longer healthier lives'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide safe play facilities for children.</td>
<td>'Our children have the best start in life’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address experience of discrimination and promote inclusion.</td>
<td>'We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society' and 'we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Better Together in Shotts, a community centred health initiative promoting health &amp; wellbeing of local residents through community health services, including a community café and community garden. <a href="http://www.gbtshottshlc.org.uk/">http://www.gbtshottshlc.org.uk/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Shopmobility is a community-based project that supports the disabled community in West Dunbartonshire to be more mobile. The project aims to involve all sections of the community. <a href="http://www.clydeshopmobility.co.uk/">http://www.clydeshopmobility.co.uk/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The core element of success in all of the examples cited above is that the project is led by the community, the role of the public sector is as ‘enabler’ and the focus is on local people having control over the resources and issues that affect them.

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?

Although investment is needed across physical, economic and social regeneration, in practice there has been a frontloading of physical and economic development at the expense of investing in people and communities.

Funds which have been designated for community groups, such as the People and Communities Fund, Spruce and Resilient Scotland are accessible mainly to larger or more established agencies and organisations involved in regeneration. Where there is no such agency working in a community that can access those funds there will be no resource investment through these sources. The increasing trend towards combining grant and loan finance adds a further barrier to the sustainability of community projects and groups.

A recent report from the GoWell study of the impact of regeneration in Glasgow stated:

“Investment in physical improvements has not yet been matched by similar attention to some of these social factors. Furthermore, there is no evidence that improvements in the ‘social health’ of communities will happen as a by-product of investment in physical regeneration.”

Other Scottish and UK-wide work on regeneration has emphasised this need to redirect resources towards families, peer groups and communities. Moreover, proportionately small increases in community-based partnership work would have greater longer-term impact and cost-efficiency. As GoWell, state, there is little evidence that physical infrastructure projects, on their own, contribute to better health and wellbeing. Rather, it is strong, resilient, communities that can contribute to enhancing the physical environment and economy.

SCDC’s view is that investment should be released which is targeted at community groups and organisations operating in the most deprived areas of Scotland and with the most marginalised groups. Our belief is that a strong local community infrastructure in our poorest communities is essential as the issues currently faced in

those communities will be further compounded by the recent and impending cuts in welfare coupled with an ageing population. A distinct resource for community organisations, supporting them from the ‘bottom up’ to increase their capacity as key and equal stakeholders is key to enable them to address local issues either independently or as co-producers of services.

This community capacity investment should set out a series of key actions designed to provide a support service to local community organisations to assist them to:

- Engage effectively with local decision making processes
- Extend their engagement and widen their own constituencies
- Broker local partnerships
- Plan for action and evaluate impact
- Enhance their delivery
- Learn from each other
- Relate their activities to national and local policies
- Provide evidence of impact

Support should be targeted at new or emerging community organisations, community organisations in a state of transition, community organisations wishing to scale up to more formal partnership delivery and community organisations wishing to meet wider community need.

In summary, we advocate more investment in neighbourhood community work to encourage more organisations to be established and to encourage increased community participation, activity, networking and cohesion.

**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?**

Community organisations and groups currently have to compete for project based ‘funding pots’. This acts as a barrier to sustainability and partnership working. An alternative is to support community-led activity systemically through collaborative decision making with communities. There is potential in innovative approaches such as participatory budgeting or community budgets\(^5\). Genuine engagement along these lines, following the National Standards for Community Engagement, can help establish community priorities and also enhance local democracy.

The proportion of funding designated to community organisations needs to increase relative to that for infrastructure projects but both funding areas need to cohere and complement one another.

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SCDC recommends that an analysis of funding supports should be undertaken to identify:

- The proportion of funding to community organisations relative to infrastructure projects.
- The level of take up - our experience is that the majority of (grant) funding for which community organisations are eligible is almost always over-subscribed, meaning that supply does not meet demand, or need.
- Where in Scotland the concentrations of successful applications are to be found and if those areas are defined regeneration areas.
- Whether or not funding involving loan finance debar some smaller community organisations working to address local need, especially in the current climate.
- What types of organisations are drawing down the funds and the pattern of expenditure against outcomes associated with physical regeneration, enterprising activity, employability, housing and other regeneration initiatives.
- Where the gaps are.
- Which funding programmes are short term, time bound or single issue focused and what the static sources of funding are (if any).
- Whether or not the tendency towards the provision of ‘funding pots’ for community organisations perpetuates top down approaches.
- Ways in which community-led activity can be supported systemically rather than project based and subject to current models of competitive application.

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 should be focused where there is an identified need. If communities are to be empowered, and regeneration is to be meaningful for local people, investment needs to prioritise community capacity building at an early stage so that local people and groups can take part effectively. Local capital projects will only succeed when supported by revenue costs and managed by strong local organisations.

As previously highlighted, some communities, especially in more affluent areas can and do respond independently to emerging issues within their communities therefore it makes logical sense to invest any resource in those areas determined to be in most need.

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

The focus should be on participation, volunteering and local democracy, leading to more cohesive, resilient and healthier communities, alleviating pressure on services. Reinvigorating local democracy has the added benefit that community-led organisations are more likely to be representative of their communities and accountable to them.
Sustainability plans, such as those of Urban Regeneration Companies must prioritise building the capacity of the local community to sustain the impacts associated with some of the physical and economic infrastructure which has been put in place, such as improvements to town centres, development of a business infrastructure and environmental improvements.

Investment should be directed to community-led organisations to enable them to connect better with agency partners, e.g. local authorities, Urban Regeneration Companies, Community Health Partnerships and Registered Social Landlords. This will underpin the productive economy with what the New Economics Foundation describes as the ‘core economy’ of family, neighbourhood and community.\(^6\)

**Practical Issues**

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

SCDC recommends that the Scottish Government takes the following actions:

- Build on pre-existing models in Scotland which can demonstrate success in terms of community-led regeneration. Community Housing Associations, local Development Trusts and other local support organisations are ideally placed to deliver and support many aspects of community-led regeneration. Those organisations already operating successfully at a local level should be recognised as exemplars and used to influence and support more of this type of activity in their own operating areas and beyond.

- Develop models around several well-evaluated programmes run in Scotland which have achieved significant levels of success but which have ceased due to withdrawal of funding. Two examples of these are: Meeting the Shared Challenge,\(^7\) which worked with partners across the public, voluntary and community sectors to embed a common and consistent understanding of community-led health; and the Scottish Community Action Research Fund (SCARF)\(^8\), where local community groups and organisations were supported to conduct their own inquiries into local issues and to identify local solutions. These programmes, and other similar programmes run by other organisations, are low cost relative to previous investment streams in physical regeneration and should be reassessed to measure relative impact through which to consider future similar work.

- More specifically, a national community capacity building programme should prioritise development work with groups around: direction and structure; accessing resources and assets; building links and networks; involvement and

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\(^7\) http://www.scdc.org.uk/who/experience/examples/meeting-shared-challenge/

\(^8\) http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/community-led-action-research/scaf/
inclusion; accountability and legitimacy; achieving recognition; and effecting change within communities.

- Support for community organisations around the following topic areas should be provided: establishing a community vision; widening local engagement; effective influencing; demonstrating impact; and building equalities. ‘Learning Exchanges’ should also be developed, as implemented by the Community Health Exchange (CHEX) and partners Voluntary Health Scotland and Community Food & and Health Scotland⁹, which involved learning exchanges between community-led health organisations and Scottish civil servants.

- A clear point of contact should be established for all of those concerned with building community capacity at both local and national levels for information, guidance and sharing of good practice. This should include those working in all aspects of regeneration, community capacity building being central to each.

- As an intervention, community capacity building must be taken forward in full partnership with communities and community organisations themselves if it is to succeed. The activity of capacity building must be firmly rooted in working with local people to recognise the assets they already have at their disposal and to identify what skills, processes and systems they need to develop in order for them to achieve their vision independently. Building Stronger Communities is a useful new resource in this regard¹⁰.

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

CPPs are tasked with taking the lead in developing strategic plans for community engagement and community capacity building, although performance in this area is mixed. Too often CPPs are seen, and act, as inter-agency planning vehicles instead of facilitators and enablers of neighbourhood work. All CPPs should therefore ensure that they prioritise supporting engagement and capacity building.

Investment at a national level has traditionally taken the form of working through, and with, established local partnerships with little investment targeted directly at community organisations. Experience of these programmes, along with subsequent experience of programmes such as Better Community Engagement (BCE)¹¹ and Achieving Community Empowerment (ACE)¹², leads us to believe that community development and the direct targeting of community organisations as drivers of local

⁹ CHEX (2012) From Local to National and Back Again

¹⁰ Building Stronger Communities: A practical assessment and planning tool for community capacity building in Scotland is a new practical resource developed by SCDC which sets out a common framework to help partners at strategic, practitioner and community level work together to assess the strengths and opportunities that lie within our communities.

¹¹ http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/better

¹² http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/achieving-community-empowerment/
change would be a more effective and sustainable use of resources. This approach would not ignore the importance of local partnerships but would focus on the role of communities and community organisations as local leaders, and would emphasise the importance of community-led approaches to a variety of issues and themes related to the regeneration agenda.

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.

Community Planning Partnerships should use models which support increased involvement of communities in shared action and not be overly reliant on community participation or engagement being in the form of traditional representation on partnership groups or boards. The devolution of outcome budget decision making to a neighbourhood level can lead to positive impacts, supporting the move to the involvement of communities as equal stakeholders. In this respect, more control and autonomy should be given to local area forums or other such community based structures.

Models to consider as part of this, if communities are ready, include participatory budgeting (the anti-social behaviour pilots in Scotland having recently been positively evaluated\(^\text{13}\)), and assets based approaches, which are beginning to become established in mainstream thinking, especially in health. Growing evidence shows that community development approaches that build on the strengths of people and communities have positive social, health and wellbeing outcomes – leading to greater sustainability\(^\text{14}\).

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?

Over the past year, SCDC has received positive feedback from statutory agencies and voluntary/community organisations which have used the online LEAP (Learn, Evaluate and Plan) tool\(^\text{15}\) to measure progress towards outcomes as well as plan more effectively, develop partnership work and learn lessons. The strength of LEAP is that it gives attention to the participatory element of outcome focused planning and evaluation.

Validity and attribution are often seen as barriers to capturing long-term and diverse outcomes. The use of monitoring systems cannot guarantee that the collection and analysis of data will be methodologically sound. However, these issues affect the measurement of all interventions, and therefore should not be a reason to dissuade

\(^{13}\) PB Unit (2011) Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative: Programme Level Evaluation Report

\(^{14}\) GCPH (2012) Assets in Action: Illustrating asset based approaches for health improvement
\[\text{http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/assets-scotland/newsandresources/}\]

\(^{15}\) \text{http://www.planandevaluate.com/}\]
policy makers from investing in, and evaluating, community-led regeneration and community development approaches. In addition, the collection of richer, qualitative, data can complement longitudinal evaluation, adding in-depth evidence of positive change that other forms of monitoring cannot capture.

Whatever tool is used, outcomes should be measured holistically and meaningfully, using indices such as the Oxfam Humankind Index\textsuperscript{16}, measuring prosperity based on the quality of environment, strength of friendships, safety, health and housing. Visions and outcomes should also be determined collaboratively, and this would, in effect, become the definition of regeneration in any given community.

\textsuperscript{16} \url{http://www.oxfam.org.uk/scotland/blog/2012/04/what-makes-scotland-happy}