Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Regeneration Inquiry  
Submission from South Lanarkshire Council  
The Scottish Government’s regeneration strategy “Achieving a Sustainable Future” was published on 12 December 2011. The Local Government and Regeneration Committee, following its consideration of regeneration aspects of the Scottish Government Draft Budget 2013-14, have agreed to build on this scrutiny and undertake a detailed inquiry on the area of regeneration policy, with a focus upon community empowerment. The remit of this particular inquiry is to -  

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

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

Regeneration is fundamentally about tackling areas of need as a priority and there needs to be consistency across strategies in terms of how we identify these. The new EU structural programme 2014–2020 will allow the Scottish Government to define priorities and areas of need. If programmes such as these are developed increasingly looking at areas of opportunity then there is the potential for regeneration projects and jobs to move to relatively wealthy and successful areas. It is fundamental that links are made to need on economic, health and employment grounds and that the opportunities and funding for growth be connected to these areas.

There is currently a disconnect between national policy programmes under Welfare Reform such as the Work Programme and local delivery mechanisms and programmes which presents a significant risk to the successful delivery local strategies within the context of SOAs.

It can also be challenging to Councils to respond to the number of national strategies and policies, and a more streamlined approach to policy development would be helpful in providing LAs with a more manageable and consistent set of key priorities to respond to locally through SOAs.

At a local level, we can continue to encourage and support effective partnership working through Community Planning and the delivery of the SOA. By focusing on shared outcomes clearer links should follow and the tendency to fall into ‘silos’ reduced.

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.
They can. However they work best when all three strands are interlinked and are more sustainable with a high level of community involvement. This does not require every project or initiative to incorporate all but does require an understanding of how each development impacts on the other.

The onus is on Community Planning partners to consider the whole range of desired outcomes for communities and ensure that there is appropriate engagement with each partner with a contribution to make in any particular area. For example, a physical development project, be it to improve the environment, transport or industrial employment infrastructure, can impact on employability and poverty agendas as well as others such as health.

In South Lanarkshire a range of measures are applied that will bring about these broader impacts. These include the inclusion of community benefits clauses in procurement processes and the development of an effective employability pipeline and business development framework to ensure that local people and businesses have the skills and services to match the contractors’ requirements.

Procurement regulations however continue to be a challenge and our views have been expressed on this matter through the Scottish Government’s recent consultation in advance of the Procurement Bill.

Clyde Gateway is currently the most significant regeneration programme in South Lanarkshire. The objective of this URC, in which SLC is a key partner, is to ‘achieve unparalleled social, economic and physical change right across its communities’. It recognises that there needs to be a focus on all three elements from the outset to ensure that the outcomes are maximised - particularly for the communities within the Clyde Gateway area.

For this reason, even at the early stages of the various developments that will fall within the Clyde Gateway area – resources are deployed into community engagement and capacity building work and to securing employment opportunities and other community benefits via procurement procedures. This is to ensure the outcomes are not limited to physical improvements.

South Lanarkshire’s flagship Primary School Modernisation Programme is well underway to provide first class accommodation for every child in its schools. 70 primary schools have now been completed along with 38 nursery classes, 17 bases for children with additional support needs and 11 community wings. 66 of the primaries are new builds and 4 schools were remodelled to new build standards. 4 stand alone nursery centres have also been extensively refurbished.

Integral to this physical development are the community benefits derived from such large infrastructure developments. The three prime contractors and their supply chain are working to provide key opportunities including apprenticeships, work experience placements and other community engagement opportunities as part of the wider modernisation programme.
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?

Certainly there have been positive outcomes from investment in regeneration. A regular survey of households in our ‘regeneration areas’ in South Lanarkshire highlights that improvements have been achieved in many areas. The most recent SIMD indicates that the number of datazones within Scotland’s 15% most deprived has reduced by 9% since 2009.

We are however operating in very challenging times and resources are scarce and inevitably become more thinly spread - the consequences being that the improvements achieved are at risk and the ongoing impact on our communities could reduce.

There have been examples of successful large scale regeneration projects, in areas like Fernhill, and Whitehill in South Lanarkshire. With the change in the economic context there is far less scope to take forward the master-planning approach utilised in these cases. The focus should now be more on economic growth with the public sector making best use of local contractors and suppliers, encouraging them to provide work experience and employment. There has been insufficient focus on the demand side of the economy and we need to do more to help businesses grow and create demand for labour.

Given reduced resources it will be increasingly necessary to prioritise. The Improvement Service Paper “Making Better Places; Making Places Better” provides useful insight into area based regeneration approaches – suggesting a change in tack and a tighter focus on smaller areas where poor outcomes are highly clustered.

At a local level, we may also want to prioritise certain sectors,(and not necessarily a Scottish Government key sector if there are more locally identifiable ‘sectors’) .

In relation to funding available for regeneration, we are not achieving best value and major sources – for example the Lottery is unevenly distributed and does not aid regeneration priorities to the level they could. Areas of deprivation or need, particularly those within formerly industrial communities are far less likely to secure significant funding for projects than other wealthier and very rural areas. There is however scope to improve here, working closely with Councils and Community Planning Partnerships.

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?

Closer links are required between awarding bodies and local Community Planning structures, where there is a strong understanding of local need, opportunities and priorities, to ensure best use of resources and outcomes.

CPPs are in a good position to provide funding information to communities and to coordinate responses ensuring best fit with local strategies and action plans. There are examples of highly regarded and valued regeneration projects which have been
carefully developed with considerable local support which have failed to attract funding when others, with little tie in to local needs or strategies have been successful.

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

There is no standard fit which will suit all circumstances. The allocations should depend on the merits of the project, the potential of the organisation and crucially the need which is being addressed.

Many effective 3rd sector organisations which play a key regeneration role have the capacity to generate income but that takes time, investment and expertise. The challenges are compounded by the economic climate. Very few South Lanarkshire based social enterprises can currently compete on a commercial basis. Very few can generate all their own income through enterprising activities however there are significant long term benefits of supporting organisations to become less dependant on grant funding.

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

Sustainability is an outcome that all stakeholders should strive for however it cannot be ensured.

We can at the same point apply some key principles that will help in achieving sustainable solutions –

- strengthening existing, and developing new community anchor organisations, building community and voluntary sector capacity and developing a strong understanding of the need and certainty about the demand.
- promoting an assets based approach.
- Involving the private sector
- Where possible/appropriate, deliver evidence based practice/solutions.
- provide access to specialist resources/expertise/guidance on a long term basis.

Sometimes projects /interventions need to be tested, with no clear understanding of sustainability at the outset. If we want to tackle some of the 'wicked' problems and create change in our most disadvantaged communities, we need to understand when it is worth taking risks and equally, when we stop if what we are doing isn't working.

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

Where there is good practice this should be promoted.
The work that the Scottish Government has been doing in relation to the Early Years Collaborative has included a very strong focus on the need to work with communities rather than ‘do to’ and the Improvement Science methodology – using tests of change will, in itself, help partners to do this effectively.

In time, the learning should be shared beyond those currently involved.

Additional resources are required to enable proportionate, responsive and ongoing community capacity building support to be provided. The Scottish Government should work closely with Community Planning Partnerships to identify appropriate community anchor organisations that are often in the best position to engage communities, CPPS can work with them to build their capacity and ensure the appropriate partners are linked in as and when required with the support and expertise they can bring. There should not be an expectation that short term funding solutions will be sufficient as is sometimes the case.

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

CPPs should take a leadership role in relation to community led regeneration/community engagement recognising the critical role it will play in achieving SOA outcomes. This will include embracing the principles of co-production and committing resources to maximise the opportunities for community influence and involvement where this is needed most including supporting capacity building work targeted at areas of greatest need.

The work emerging from the Early Years Collaborative, which will be delivered through CPPs is already showing a very strong commitment to working with communities to achieve change. As the benefits of this approach are seen, this will help to promote community engagement beyond the early years agenda.

There should also be a coordination role for CPPs ensuring that communities are not overwhelmed by approaches from partners to engage.

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.

Targeted neighbourhood focused community capacity building work is currently ongoing in some neighbourhoods in South Lanarkshire that sit within top 5% most deprived areas in Scotland. This is currently funded through South Lanarkshire Council’s Tackling Poverty programme.

The aim is to increase volunteering levels, establish new community run activities; increase take up of services; increase community influence in relation to local decision making and service design and improve community spirit. The long term aim is to improve local outcomes for children and adults in these communities.

The process of community capacity building is at various stages of development across the areas and was first initiated in July 2010 in the Burnhill area of
Rutherglen. The success of the approach relies on extensive partnership working and relationship building, recognising the community as key stakeholders and drivers of change. Voluntary sector partners – with strong community links are providing the capacity building support and significant developments have included the development of a local Action Group, new out of school hours groups for children and young people with local volunteers; a Parent café and the development of a Community Hub, offering advice and support on a range of issues including employment training and jobs. The physical environment has also improved following various events and projects initiated by the local action group. As the communities build their capacity through the work outlined above, they become more able and confident to work with partners in relation to helping to shape/improve mainstream services.

The new EU funding programme provides opportunities for Community Led Local Action Plans which provide opportunities in Urban areas similar to existing LEADER funding in rural areas. As a council we have extensive experience of LEADER funding and the partnerships required to deliver efficient community led local economic development. The funding has allowed the capacity of the rural area to grow with the scale and complexity of projects now increasing. Larger training employment and social enterprises are now developing as are town centre projects. However this has taken several years of support and partnership work.

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 outcome of effective regeneration should be that the gaps between our most deprived communities and the more affluent communities they sit alongside are reduced. We need to be able to measure performance at a very local level and the lack of data at this level e.g. health data can be a barrier.

As important, we also need to consider how communities themselves would measure success and build this into any framework.