Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Regeneration Inquiry

Submission from Glasgow Housing Association

GHA Area Funds

1. I refer to your call for written evidence regarding GHA Area Funds which are managed by our Area Committees. I would like firstly to give some background to the Area Committee structure.

Background

2. GHA Board has 3 Area Committees, as part of its community governance, which identify, plan and monitor community priorities within their local area. They do this through our 28 local housing committees (LHO) in relation to how the Area Funds should be spent. Initially the Board set up 4 Committees in 2010. Each of the committees consisted of 1 nomination from each individual Local Housing Organisation (LHO) within that area, 2 tenant members of GHA Board, 1 homeowner, 2 local councillors and 2 independent representatives. Tenants are always in the majority within the committee.

3. Each of the 4 Area Committees had authority over a fund of £1 million per annum which could be spent on projects that were priorities of the local communities and were backed by the Local Housing Organisation. Before an Area Committee would approve a project they had to be assured of the consultation with the local community and also whether the project could access any other funding available. The Committees also have other functions such as monitoring local service performance, but for the purposes of this evidence this paper is focused on the spending powers and local budgets.

Current Situation

4. In April 2013 we moved to 3 Area Committees and these are North East, North West and South. The make up of the Committees remains the same. The changes came about to reflect GHA’s new operational model and importantly they also reflect the 3 strategic planning areas of Health, Social Work and of Community Planning in the City. This ability to engage at the 3 sector level for Community Planning makes strategic alignment much easier for the future. When this change took place the Area Committees fund increased to £1.5 million each.

Use of the Area Committee Funds

5. Some of the particular projects funded by the Area Committee are detailed below.

6. There have been a total of 192 projects competed so far and some photographs are attached to give your Committee an idea of the nature, and impact at local level.
Environmental Projects

7. A vast majority of Area Committee bids originate from complaints or concerns from tenants over environmental issues in their neighbourhood. Many, but not all, of these are relatively small scale and would not be picked up in any other programmed activity. Our aim in establishing the fund is to enable local solutions to local problems and therefore the LHO get engaged to see where the fund can be useful. The LHO is supported through the initial costing process by Housing staff. Once approved by the LHO the Housing Officer consults with residents in the specific area for their views. The projects are then prepared based on that consultation and put forward to the Area Committee.

8. The environmental projects range from changes to front gardens, upgrading empty spaces, tree management, relaying slabs, removing and rebuilding walls, upgrading car parking, making new car parking spaces to larger projects such as renewing boundary fencing.

9. We have also been able to complete 6 community garden projects with total funding of £352,051

10. We always try to maximise the funds that can be brought to projects and we have completed projects in partnership with Glasgow City Council, through the Community Planning Partnership, Stalled Spaces, Jobs and Business Glasgow and/or Glasgow Heritage Trust.

Play Areas

11. We have completed in total 4 Play Areas using Area Committee funding. There is always community consultation carried out by the partners involved as the essential requirements for local engagement. The consultation methods used include on-site events, consultation surveys, presentations at local meetings and school projects. This helps inform site location, target age group and types of equipment. This ensures that local people are at the heart of local regeneration, and have real ownership of both developing and maintaining the projects.

12. Play Area bids are usually approved on a 50:50 cost basis with Glasgow City Council and the Council carries out ongoing maintenance of the site. This results in getting good value for money for tenants and residents.

13. In addition to these 4 play areas we have also carried out improvements to fencing and surface work in existing play areas.

14. In total the Area Committees have approved £264,645 on play area projects.

Transformational Regeneration Areas

15. Many of our bids complemented recent investment works within Glasgow’s Transformational Regeneration Areas. To date there have been 6 successful applications in targeted areas of Ibrox, Toryglen and Shawbridge.
16. The details of the sum approved and the work are:

- £50,000 on security doors and CCTV at Ibroxholm Oval
- £51,000 for a Play Area within the Whitefield estate in Ibrox
- £35,470 to enlarge front gardens and other environmental work at Toryglen
- £25,000 contribution to relocate a kindergarten that was been demolished as part of Toryglen TRA, to retain service within the community
- £60,000 for a joint project with GCC to upgrade the fence and gates at The Vennel a cemetery of historic importance within the Shawbridge area.
- £94,747 for a community garden in Riverford within the Shawbridge area.

Other Projects

17. In addition to the categories listed above the Area committee fund has also help to facilitate larger projects and these have included:

- Extension to Sheltered Housing complex
- Funding toward Village Hall in Townhead
- Conservatory on Sheltered Housing complex

New Additional Fund – Communities Fund

18. Following the initial success of the Area Committee fund the Board more recently approved a new additional Communities Fund as part of our Stronger Communities Strategy, of £150,000 for each Area. Some examples of Community Fund projects are;

- Art workshops for people with a disability.
- Rent/utility costs for a volunteer led alcohol support project.
- A photography booklet compiled by past/present residents and school children that captures the history of a local neighbourhood

19. In summary

As GHA came into the final years of its major ten year £1.3bn investment programme in homes which began in 2003, the Board wished to have a much greater strategic emphasis on improving neighbourhoods. This emphasis came about through listening to feedback from tenants and residents. It is also intended to sustain the asset value in the main housing investment programme. And the Board wanted to see local people feel proud of their neighbourhoods as green, clean and safe places to live.

The Area Fund complements other aspects of GHA’s Business Plan such as the Neighbourhood Environmental Teams and the upgrading programme for tenement closes.

The Area fund has been seen as hugely successful, with;

- increased local satisfaction
- areas which had been neglected being brought back to life
- safer and cleaner, greener neighbourhoods.
The aim of the funds is to ensure that the Area Committees can directly address relatively small scale local projects making a direct and real difference in a short space of time. They demonstrate to the community that local engagement results in an improved neighbourhood, and increase the capacity of local people to look after their own area.

Fanchea Kelly
Executive Director of Housing and Customer Services
# Area Committee Fund Post Evaluation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Linthaugh Community Garden</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>Improve the communal ground surrounding the houses of Linthaugh Terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Aim</strong></td>
<td>To provide raised planters that encourage small gardening tasks, install benches, transform the front entrance way and improve the overall look of the area to match tenants aspirations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Completion</strong></td>
<td>July 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Before**

![Before Image 1](image1)

![Before Image 2](image2)

**After**

![After Image 1](image3)

![After Image 2](image4)