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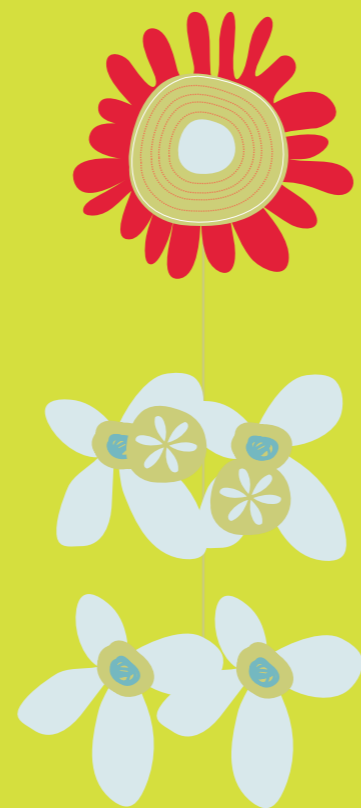
# Unlocking the potential: Supporting the housing sector's contribution to regeneration

Final report of the evh housing and regeneration steering group



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## Introduction

EVH is an organisation which provides support to social employers so why is it setting up a working party and writing a report on Housing? Well we were formed 30 years ago by 9 community-based housing associations in the Glasgow Area and to this day retain a large housing membership.

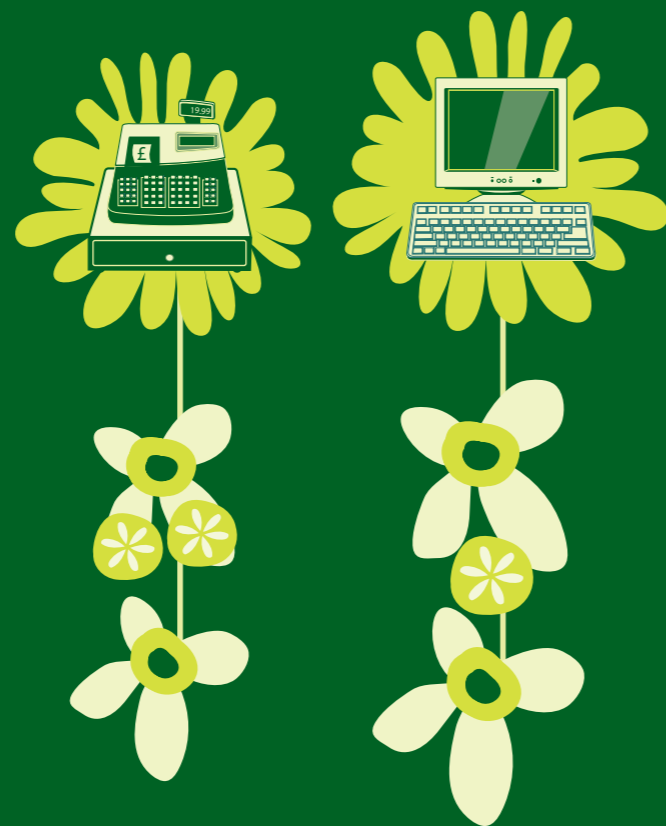
We also organise the conference of Senior Officers in Social Housing in Scotland each year and in 2007 they felt there was a need to do more to unlock the potential of the sector to make our communities sustainable, attractive and successful.

This report is the culmination of considerable work done by our Working Party, chaired by John Rogerson, and supported by Michael Burns. It is also a report which has had input from a very wide group of interviewees, reference group and practitioners on line and in person.

However, it is just a report and it is the support of the Scottish Centre for Regeneration in setting up a Learning Network to address these issues which should hopefully make the difference. Its success will depend on it being worthwhile and delivering real benefits to practitioners and communities. The network could help fill some of the gaps we identified in the report, but more importantly, find practical ways which make a difference to lives throughout Scotland.

We hope you find the report of interest and thanks to everyone who helped. However, it is not this report but unlocking the potential of our communities which must be our priority.

**Foster Evans**  
Director  
EVH



# Executive summary

## Context

The need for this report was agreed at a Scottish Housing Senior Officers event held in October 2007. The event was organised by Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH), and it was attended by many of Scotland's senior housing professionals.

The participants agreed that the housing sector needs to ask some searching questions about its role in regeneration.

These were the main issues the senior officers identified for further examination:

- The relationships between all of the different elements that regeneration can involve. For example, housing, health, employment, welfare, education, environment, enterprise, social diversity and market services.
- The factors that can obstruct the housing sector's contribution to regeneration. For example, organisational, institutional, policy, financial and cultural factors.
- The need to improve understanding of how housing and other agencies work together on regeneration.
- Whether regeneration should be seen as a core function of housing organisations.
- Developing the right framework for unlocking potential for regeneration activity within the housing sector.
- Identifying the essential skills training needed to provide practical support for regeneration.
- Outlining the follow-on actions needed to put recommendations on all of these matters into practice.

## How we have addressed these issues

With financial support from the Scottish Government, EVH has co-ordinated a programme of work to examine all of these issues.

These are the main activities we carried out:

- **A Steering Group was set up to support the review process**  
Led by an independent Chair, this group comprised representatives from the Scottish Government, Forgewood Housing Co-operative, River Clyde Homes, Dundee City Council, Servite Housing Association, and the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland. The Steering Group met four times to review progress.
- **Consultation took place with around 15 key agencies**  
These included the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and CoSLA. Appendix 2 lists the people and agencies who were involved.
- **An external expert Reference Group provided advice and support**  
Its members came from organisations with a range of interests in housing and regeneration, including the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Scottish Builders Federation, Development Trusts Association Scotland and Cruden Estates. Appendix 2 lists the full membership of the group.
- **A short literature review was carried out**  
The purpose of the review was to identify the main issues affecting the housing sector's involvement in regeneration.
- **A presentation and discussion session, attended by over 60 delegates, was held at the Chartered Institute of Housing's Scottish Conference in March 2008.**
- **Key findings were circulated for comment and feedback,** before the production of this final report.

## Findings

These are the main findings described in the report:

- There was agreement that **the housing sector has a key role to play in regeneration activity** aimed at creating communities where people want to live, work, visit and invest.
- **Regeneration is a complex process. This can sometimes make it difficult for housing to contribute, and be seen to contribute, to regeneration.** Creating communities that are truly sustainable needs an integrated approach to tackle interconnected issues such as economic inactivity, poverty, ill health and limited social mobility.
- **Housing organisations need to better understand the nature of community regeneration.** They should see interventions to address social and economic problems as an essential complement to physical investment.
- **Others involved in regeneration need to better understand the contribution that housing can make to creating mixed and sustainable communities.**
- We found many good individual examples of housing-led community regeneration activities. **But activity across the housing sector as a whole has been variable and inconsistent.**
- **A stronger enabling and support framework** would help the housing sector to contribute to regeneration. This could also help to demonstrate the significant contribution the housing sector makes to the regeneration of Scotland's communities and to the Scottish Government's Purpose and National Outcomes.
- The **Scottish Centre for Regeneration** (part of the Scottish Government) **is well placed to take forward this agenda.** It should work with the housing sector to develop an enabling and support framework that will help the sector achieve the right regeneration outcomes.
- **The development of an enabling and support framework will bring some challenges for the housing sector.** For example, the sector may need to review existing organisational structures, operational and strategic thinking, and how to make the best use of previous experience.
- **Tackling these challenges will be important and worthwhile.** The benefits could include greater social and economic returns on physical investment; consolidating the role of the housing sector as a strategic partner in community regeneration; and allowing the housing sector to play a greater part in helping to achieve Government priorities across a range of different areas.

## The Way Forward

The extensive consultation we carried out during this piece of work identified capacity-building within the housing sector as a critical issue. We also found a strong consensus in support of creating an enabling framework that will help to unlock the potential of the housing sector.

Going forward, there are three outcomes we think need to be delivered:

- 1. Clarity over the role, contribution and responsibilities of the housing sector in regeneration.**  
Actions that will help achieve this outcome include:
  - A reference guide tailored specifically to housing providers, describing regeneration structures and processes;
  - Research into ways of building the relationship between Scotland's new Urban Regeneration Companies and the wider housing sector; and
  - Advice and good practice for housing organisations on employability measures aimed at people who are unemployed and economically inactive.
- 2. Providing housing organisations with practical tools, to support their contribution to regeneration and the creation of mixed, sustainable communities.**  
Actions that will help achieve this outcome include:
  - A diagnostic tool to help housing organisations assess their readiness and development needs in relation to regeneration activity; and
  - A financial planning tool to allow housing organisations to assess investment decisions.
- 3. Skilled staff with the understanding and capabilities to deliver regeneration and mixed and sustainable communities.**  
Actions that will help achieve this outcome include:
  - A learning network that supports people to assess their skills and learning needs, and that allows them to develop skills through sharing experience with others.

The outcomes we have identified are all linked and interdependent. The creation of a learning network is particularly important.

Some of the tools that will help the housing sector may already be in place, or could be adapted to meet the needs of the housing sector. Therefore, our recommendations do not involve re-inventing the wheel, or starting from scratch. A learning network for the housing sector will be as much about maximising the use of existing resources as it is about creating new measures of support.

## Supporting a national strategy: An overarching purpose

The Scottish Government is moving towards an outcomes-focused approach to performance, directed at key long-term challenges for Scotland founded on effective partnership working. The Scottish public sector will become aligned to a single overarching purpose with performance management systems set to support a single, clear and consistent set of priorities. Scottish Government's Purpose is:

**“To focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.”**

Underpinning this, are high level targets that include specific benchmarks to track progress in boosting Scotland's economic performance and ensure that the benefits of higher growth are sustainable and shared by all of Scotland.

The transition to an outcomes-based approach with delivery partners, including local government, the voluntary sector and the private sector, will leave the detailed management of services to those who can best understand and tailor their resources and activities in line with local priorities. The Scottish Government will provide strategic focus and concentrate on providing the leadership and direction required.

The key targets underpinning the Government's Purpose which are most relevant to regeneration and building mixed and sustainable communities are:

**Participation:** through providing an environment that removes barriers to individuals realising their potential in the workforce and supports competitive businesses. Key targets include maintaining Scotland's position on labour market participation as the top performing country in the UK and closing the overall gap with the top five OECD economies by 2017.

**Solidarity:** Supporting Scotland's sustainable economic growth through providing an environment that helps to give children a strong start in life and maximising economic opportunities for all. Key targets here include improving overall income and the proportion of income earned by the three lowest income deciles as a group by 2017.

**Cohesion:** through supporting local partnerships to improve participation in their most deprived areas by providing services to meet individuals' needs and those of the local labour market. Key targets include narrowing the gap in participation between Scotland's best and worst performing regions by 2017.

**Sustainability:** through creating an environment for competitive businesses, entrepreneurship and innovation and a planning and development regime which is joined up and geared towards achieving sustainable places and sustainable economic growth. Key targets here include reducing carbon emissions over the period to 2011.



Flowing from this are five strategic **objectives** which state that public services must contribute to a society which is:

- **Wealthier and fairer** – Where businesses and people can increase their wealth and more people share fairly in that wealth.
- **Healthier** – Where people sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care.
- **Safer and stronger** – Where local communities are helped to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.
- **Smarter** – Where lifelong opportunities are developed for Scots to succeed through educational and professional experiences.
- **Greener** – Where Scotland's natural and built environment are improved for the use and enjoyment of its people.

Regeneration aims to create communities which meet all of these objectives. And for communities to be sustainable they need to contain or have access to the range of facilities which can help them to be wealthy and fair, healthy, safe and strong, smart and green.

Underneath these strategic objectives are 15 key **outcomes**. Regeneration activity aimed at creating mixed and sustainable communities has the potential to support a large number of these, namely:

- Strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- A valued built and natural environment; protected and enhanced for future generations.
- Lives led safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- Improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Tackling significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- High quality public services, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
- Realising full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- Encouraging young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Living longer, healthier lives.
- Reducing local and global environmental impact of consumption and production.

Finally, of the 45 national **performance indicators** identified to provide evidence of progress, mixed and sustainable communities would relate especially well to around one-quarter of these; providing scope to contribute to the measurable progress of the overall national strategy. Key indicators for the housing sector are:

- Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live.
- Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered.
- Unintentionally homeless households entitled to settled accommodation by 2012.
- Increased rates of new house building.
- Increased rates of social economy turnover.
- Increased business start-up rates.
- Increased positive public perception of the general crime rate in local area.
- Reduced ecological footprint.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing.
- Improved healthy life expectancy at birth in the most deprived areas.
- Improved public sector efficiency through the generation of 2% cash releasing efficiency savings per annum.

These objectives are reinforced through the economic development, social enterprise, anti-poverty and social justice intentions set out in the Government's Economic Strategy. Similarly, the opportunities presented through the fund flexibility and performance management structures set out in the local authority Concordat with the Scottish Government should help support new ways of achieving complementary outcomes between housing and regeneration.

The housing sector can be a key contributor to many of the outcome targets set by the Scottish Government. Its actions relate especially well to the national performance framework objectives for well designed sustainable places, strong communities, good quality built environments, health and wellbeing, neighbourhood satisfaction and, most visibly, to the number of new houses built. Within a changing institutional and policy environment, the Scottish housing sector can position itself as a significant agent of regeneration.

# How can housing contribute?

Evidence of sustainable social and economic benefits can be difficult to measure and identify, despite significant direct housing investment in recent years. However, the research and dialogue undertaken as part of this work has told us there is a strong desire to ensure that the housing sector is linked to, and supports regeneration activity aimed at, building mixed and sustainable communities. We also know many of the limitations and shortcomings of previous regeneration interventions, although we often struggle to learn from these. Our discussions with key stakeholders have told us that what we need to do is move beyond merely identifying and analysing factors which limit success. We now need to develop tangible, practical assisting measures for the sector.

Indeed, given the right circumstances, it is considered that there is great potential for Scottish Government and the sector to ensure that housing contributes to the National Purpose and outcomes through, for example:

- Exploiting the social impacts of housing policy far more efficiently.
- Harnessing housing as an economic driver.
- Capturing scale economies of social and economic effect.
- Supporting the housing sector to take account of the economic context and the failure of aspects of past reform strategies.

## Mixed and sustainable communities

Communities of mixed income and tenure are more likely to be successful, attractive, sustainable and non problematic (JRF 2006c). Attaining this might prove most difficult where the community profile for a housing provider tends towards concentrations of a tenure type and social group, reflecting low opportunity, low income and social marginalism. The needs of these communities arise in not just housing but in health, employment and a range of associated social and economic disadvantages. (Hills 2007).

Regeneration programmes generally need to tackle several interdependent factors at once if improvements in one are not to be lost by deteriorations in another. Whilst this is accepted as a cornerstone of effective regeneration practice, many housing professionals continue to underestimate the importance of social and economic issues and tend to focus on physical regeneration – despite the fact that it is primarily non physical factors which affect quality of life (JRF 2006b).

The Smith Institute review of housing reports that social landlords tend to approach local problems from a housing perspective without taking a broader view of the surrounding/associated contextual factors (Adebowale *et al* 2006). Even where there is a willingness to appreciate these factors, action can be frustrated by the lack of obvious support pathways, distance from decision making and difficulties with funding mechanisms too tightly focused on physical assets.

## Practice: How does it connect?

The housing sector engages with non housing issues through a fairly small set of organisations. Central to the purpose of developing the sector's engagement with these potential partners is a better understanding of the 'fit' for housing within the structures which determine local community regeneration priorities and actions.

In Scotland, the relationship between the housing sector and regeneration agencies concentrating on social and economic outcomes can often be opportunistic, ad-hoc and variable (Communities Scotland 2006). Although there are many solid successful examples of how housing organisations have engaged with a non-housing regeneration agenda, experiences have been variable and inconsistent (*ibid.*). There has been a strong reliance on project level individual initiatives which fit easily as a reactive response to broad regeneration priorities, but offer little by way of proactive influence on policy development. Here housing organisations tend to be operational rather than strategic partners (*ibid.*).

## Institutional structures

The institutional landscape features several key players. The influence of housing on the decision making of the main strategic community regeneration structures (Community Planning Partnerships – CPP) appears underdeveloped where, for example, social landlords are viewed as unsuitable for full partner status and more appropriately engaged at the local or neighbourhood level.

**“...registered housing landlords may find engagement in local or neighbourhood partnership processes more relevant.”**

Scottish Executive (2003a)

Some Community Health (and Care) Partnerships (CHP/CHCP) are developing a stronger engagement with the housing sector through the appointment of Housing Liaison Officers who work to connect the issues of health, wellbeing and housing. This development recognises the link between poor housing and poor health and the importance of housing and care for especially vulnerable individuals but, given the scale of the issue, is still viewed by these partners as a relatively modest, underdeveloped relationship.

At national policy level housing is clearly recognised as a central part of the regeneration process. Several key policy statements touch on the issues of housing and regeneration; most notably Firm Foundations (2007). Alongside the issues of housing supply, managerial efficiency, physical regeneration and environmental sustainability, Firm Foundations outlines the importance of better neighbourhoods based on mixed and sustainable communities.

In planning terms, some encouragement is offered through guidance within Scottish Planning Policy for Housing (Scottish Executive 2003b, revised 2008). This calls for the planning system to create quality residential environments and promote mixed communities by house type, resident type, income bracket and service availability e.g. transport, retail, commercial, leisure. This reflects similar priorities within the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy, which talks of building “attractive places to live” Scottish Government (2007a). The Scottish Executive policy statement ‘Measures to improve Scotland's Housing’ (Scottish Executive 2005) outlines the need to provide quality homes for rent or ownership; building strong, safe and attractive communities convenient for employment and other community needs – ‘the right type of housing in the right place’.

These policies set out a top level statement on the desire to create mixed and sustainable communities. However, their success depends on those responsible for their implementation having the skills and understanding to deliver; bringing together policy intent and programme level action. If housing providers were better equipped to support personal wellbeing, encourage local prosperity and employment, as well as providing housing, considerable progress could be made towards mixed and sustainable communities (JRF 2007a).

## What's worked?

Despite the difficulties experienced at the structural level in connecting housing and the wider regeneration agenda, there are numerous examples of project specific good practice stemming from successful partnership actions in these sectors. Most housing organisations now have had some involvement in this process, at the very least through the Wider Role programme. Many others have extensive experience through collaborative work undertaken with a range of related agencies. From this, a wide portfolio of best practice is available to the sector (Appendix 3). Examples of this have included:

- Social care and childcare.
- Employment and employability development.
- Community leisure and lifelong learning.
- Community health and wellbeing.
- Debt, money advice, and welfare rights.
- Community safety initiatives.
- Community transport.
- Community facilities, workspaces, accommodation.
- Environmental improvement projects.
- ICT projects.
- Community arts projects.
- The establishment of community development trusts.
- Diversionary activities for young people.

These successful examples of complementary service provision from the housing sector clearly identified need, focused effort and coordinated actions with related agencies.

Whilst successful and effective, projects of this type may only offer short-term relief from the fundamental symptoms of disadvantage (Communities Scotland 2007). Given this we consider that there is a need to convert activities of this nature into sustainable, core business functions evidenced consistently at the sectoral level. Many previous regeneration efforts in the housing context have been frustrated by a funding and policy environment encouraging opportunistic, ad-hoc and operational project work (Communities Scotland 2006), this proposed network offers an opportunity to move beyond this to consider these issues as a structural response.

Many housing providers already possess some capacity to develop complementary community regeneration projects. Embedding these projects within an organisational structure and developing long-term sustainable effect may be limited by the strategic relationship many housing providers currently have with the wider regeneration network. If the housing sector is to act as a key influence on community regeneration, its latent contribution requires stronger explanation, articulation, presentation and integration. There may therefore be a need to support the housing sector to develop activity and practice around the main themes introduced below:

#### Human Capital – Employment and Enterprise and Health

Low levels of educational attainment, dated vocational skills and long-term benefits dependency combine to frustrate labour market access and enterprise development. The poverty, ill health and low aspiration associated with this acts as a strong drag anchor on regeneration effort. Improving the economic and social prospects of a community improves income and opportunity, attracts services, builds social capital and helps break self-reinforcing cycles of deprivation which otherwise make effective and sustainable regeneration difficult.

#### Social Capital – Community Credibility and Legitimacy. Mixed Communities

Communities which cannot attract and/or retain residents of mixed social and economic assets are prone to imbalance and concentration of need. This will then compromise progress in the development of an area's physical and environmental appeal (JRF 2007b)

Community 'buy-in' to area regeneration will only be achieved through early dialogue. This will help illustrate how decisions are made, where community influence can be exerted and how the actions of regeneration agencies can be made accountable. Over the longer term engagement with the community makes local service providers more accountable on issues of progress and lends credibility and legitimacy to the actions of the regeneration agents.

#### Fixed Capital – Amenities and Leisure

Availability and access to local leisure amenities not only provides a community focal point for individuals but may suit as a delivery point for local services such as health and wellbeing, financial advice, employment and education. Although primarily physical in approach, where a good balance of provision is provided such facilities can become regeneration reference points.

#### Environmental Capital – Schools and Services

School quality is critical to the attraction and retention of young families within a community. Where local schools are perceived as weak, the most able are likely to exercise their mobility by selecting to live in a community where the schools are regarded as more attractive. This can lead to a vicious circle effect, with high concentrations of pupil need leading to stresses in school management, resource shortages and negative perceptions of the school as a local institution. Stronger support as to how public services, such as schools, and private services can contribute within a broader regeneration effort may help raise the importance of this in the context of local regeneration.

#### What's not worked?

Whilst recognising the critical success factors introduced in the previous section, a learning network should also appreciate the main limitations which have compromised the effect of previous regeneration activity:

#### Concentration on Physical Assets

Management structures which primarily concentrate on the physical development of housing can inhibit the development of non-housing complementary actions. Whilst improving poor quality housing is often an immediate priority, successful sustainable regeneration relies on more than this.

#### Weak Partnerships

Sustainability is enhanced through a broad stakeholder base. Agreeing common aims, resource sharing and practical collaboration with related organisations is the most effective means of achieving common regeneration aims.

#### Project-based Funding

Many of the examples introduced (above) were encouraged through the availability of external grant funding such as Wider Role, Community Regeneration Fund, European Social Fund, Big Lottery and other grant funding. The temporary nature of this funding can give rise to difficulty in sustained effect.

#### Distance from Decision Making

From the consultations undertaken, it appears that knowledge of, and access to the structures and processes governing regeneration, is variable across the housing sector. Where knowledge and communications with these structures is limited, providers can become effectively distanced from the decision making processes which affect their business. Understanding how decisions are made, where the housing sector can fit with this, advocating on behalf of the sector and positioning housing organisations closer to the centre of the regeneration process will strengthen influence and assist coherent effort.

The following section suggests some ways in which these points can be developed further.

## Moving forward: Unlocking the potential of the housing sector

The Scottish Government invests a significant amount of resources in housing – around £450M directly per annum (Scottish Government 2007c). Alongside this, considerable funds are invested in infrastructure, health, employment and economic development.

It is clear that Scottish Government sees a key role for housing in helping to regenerate communities as part of its desire to create mixed and sustainable communities. However, if this is to happen, the housing sector has to be able to work effectively with others involved in regeneration, and vice versa. Those involved will have many common interests and specific responsibilities, roles and contributions to make. Taking a joined up approach; building on one another's strengths, will allow for more coherent and sustainable action.

#### Priority outcomes and associated actions

The priorities identified by the main agencies and individuals consulted for this review may be grouped as a number of outcomes relevant to the housing sector in its work towards creating mixed and sustainable communities. These are:

- Clarity over the role, contribution and responsibility of the housing sector in creating mixed sustainable communities.
- Organisational excellence among housing bodies which allows them to be fit for purpose in delivering mixed and sustainable communities.
- Skilled staff who have the understanding and capabilities to deliver mixed and sustainable communities.

This cannot be achieved overnight. Nor is it fair to suggest that one organisation take full responsibility for it. If the Scottish Government wishes to encourage a new type of community regeneration organisation, the housing sector will need help. A simple enabling and support framework could be the way to take this forward. This should be developed within the terms of the Scottish Government's strategic focus, outlined earlier in this report.

This will require all involved in regeneration and building mixed and sustainable communities to gain a better understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and a common understanding of regeneration as it supports the Government's Purpose and outcomes, and the mechanisms in place to support this.

#### An enabling and support framework

Each of these outcomes and some key actions identified as having the potential to help achieve them are outlined in more detail below:

#### Outcome: Clarity over the role, contribution and responsibility of the housing sector in creating mixed sustainable communities.

The sheer breadth of the regeneration field and diversity of project action possible within this will make any attempt at offering comprehensive guidance for the housing sector very difficult. Rather, a clear set of guiding principles derived from national policy and informed by practical experience should offer enough for most organisations to:

- Understand where they can most effectively contribute.
- Incorporate this within their operational ethos and organisational structure.
- Identify the resources and partnership structures necessary.
- Draw support through a learning network.
- Successfully manage and develop a single project or portfolio approach to complement their core housing responsibilities.

Research undertaken for this paper has shown us that there is need for the housing sector to be supported to make the change to develop and deliver mixed and sustainable communities more effectively. Towards this, several priority actions are identified including a **practical guide on mixed and sustainable communities** for the housing sector. Exemplar regeneration projects may help move this from the conceptual to the practical. A high profile, best practice exemplar project with strong political support could serve as an advertisement for housing's contribution to regeneration focused on mixed and sustainable communities.

The production of a concise **briefing note** for the sector to update and inform current knowledge of the structures and processes governing regeneration. Within this, a series of exemplar 'context' maps could be produced to improve awareness of how regeneration effort can be undertaken and what results it may produce for the sector. This might extend to improve community understanding of the regeneration process.

It is also considered that it would be worthwhile exploring the potential of the housing sector to help **achieve broader objectives**. Given this, there is scope to look at research into ways of building the relationship between Urban Regeneration Companies and housing and developing advice and good practice for housing organisations on employability measures aimed at the unemployed and economically inactive.

**Outcome: Organisational excellence among housing bodies which allows them to be fit for purpose in delivering mixed and sustainable communities.**

Our work has highlighted the need to ensure that housing organisations are fit for purpose so that they can contribute to the broader regeneration and mixed and sustainable communities agenda.

Key issues raised are the need for housing organisations to be supported, perhaps through a diagnostic tool, to develop their approaches to **investment and return**. Such a tool may prove useful for organisational development and in the delivery of strategically targeted projects. It may also support the financial justification for non-housing investment and help generate additional investment leverage.

Similarly, the need to support **change management** was seen as important. External support for the business planning and change management anticipated could come from a Knowledge Exchange mechanism (below). In this way, housing providers might plan, develop and deliver regeneration services, through a structured, supportive business review and change management process.

**Outcome: Skilled staff who have the understanding and capabilities to deliver mixed and sustainable communities.**

This would be achieved through the development of a **network** which supports people to assess their skills strengths and needs, and which allows them to develop these through sharing experience with others. This could include the development of a project exchange and development forum, or **'marketplace'**, where ideas, expertise and practical assistance may be obtained from experienced staff on short-term secondment, project placements and/or external consultants. In this way projects can be planned, developed and delivered through an informed, experienced and supportive structure. This knowledge exchange could be attempted through the formation of 'Special Project Teams' supporting exemplar projects.

An up-to-date **skills review** of the housing sector would help indicate priority areas for training support. Similarly, a review of the resource materials available to support community engagement might help identify the most effective models. These may then be presented within a resource book for the sector – perhaps going so far as to introduce a modular learning programme for all involved.

Some of these tools may already be in place or may need to be contextualised for the housing sector. This network is as much about maximising the use and effectiveness of existing resources as it is about creating new measures of support.

By way of illustration, several of these actions, or component projects, are developed in some further detail in Appendix 1. These will require further development, in time, but nonetheless exemplify, at this stage, the type of task which may form the core of the early work programme.

## Making the connection: Sectoral needs and national resources

### Findings

This report has outlined the potential that housing has in helping to achieve Scottish Government's National Purpose and Outcomes through regeneration activity aimed at developing mixed and sustainable communities. It has found agreement that the housing sector has a key role to play in regeneration activity aimed at creating mixed and sustainable communities where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

However, our research and stakeholder engagement has confirmed that the process of regeneration required to establish mixed and sustainable communities is complex. Tackling interconnected issues such as economic inactivity, poverty, ill health and limited social mobility, combined with a complex and often disjointed public, voluntary and private service provision, can sometimes make it difficult for housing to contribute, and be seen to contribute, to such regeneration. Given this, there is a need for housing organisations to recognise and understand the interdependent nature of community regeneration as a deliberate complement to physical investment with social and economic interventions. Similarly there is a need for other sectors involved in regeneration to recognise and understand the contribution that housing can make to this, and ultimately achieving its goal of creating mixed and sustainable communities.

Our work has also told us that although there are many individual solid examples of housing-led community regeneration activities, activity across the sector has been variable and inconsistent. This has led to a call for a stronger enabling and support framework would help the housing sector to contribute to these activities. This could help to demonstrate the significant and visible contribution of the housing sector to the regeneration of Scotland's communities and to the Scottish Government's Purpose and National Outcomes.

We recognise that this enabling and support framework may challenge the housing sector's existing organisational structures, its operational and strategic thinking and how it makes the best use of previous experience. However, we are firmly of the view that such a framework can result in greater social and economic returns on physical investment, consolidating the housing sector as strategic partner in community regeneration and positioning it as a key contributor in the realisation of Government aspirations across a range of national priorities.

Our work has also summarised what the sector needs in terms of support so as to enable it to work more effectively with others involved in regeneration to help it to achieve these outcomes.

### The Way Forward

Taking this forward will require effort from all interests, an overview that brings coherence to the 'support package' and resources to make it a reality.

A national learning network aimed at supporting people and organisations in the creation, development and management of mixed and sustainable communities has the potential to do this. We believe that, if properly taken forward, this learning network has the potential to support the housing sector achieve the outcomes it requires to contribute more effectively to regeneration activity.

Given this, we urge the Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR) in Scottish Government to facilitate this in its role as the national body for developing expertise in regeneration. We feel that, given its role, the SCR is well placed to ensure that this network provides the coherent enabling and support framework necessary for a more effective exchange of learning and expertise across the many agencies working towards regeneration aims. The work undertaken through this review and consultation would appear to lend itself especially as a primer for this proposed network and an early opportunity for SCR to develop a collaborative working culture with the housing sector.

In developing and managing this learning network the SCR should ensure that the housing sector is able to:

- Advise on the sectoral needs in relation to the activities of the learning network.
- Promote the proposed learning network as a source of resources and learning helpful to the building of mixed and sustainable communities.
- Link its work, people, organisations and initiatives within the sector to the activity of the learning network.
- Communicate experiences of best practice, difficulties encountered and solutions applied.
- Work and develop relations with other key partners and interests from outside of the housing sector critical to the successful development of mixed and sustainable communities.

We feel that this approach will

- Build on an existing body of expertise in regeneration, housing and learning;
- Provide the strategic overview and coherence of effort required;
- Support the housing sector to articulate its strategic and operational significance in the creation of mixed and sustainable communities; and
- Allow the housing sector to develop more effective partnerships across related sectors with a shared interest in effective, sustainable regeneration.

Finally, we believe that this will help the housing sector to support, and be seen to support regeneration activity, helping to achieve Scottish Government's Purpose, Targets and National Outcomes.

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## Appendices



# Appendix 1 – Learning network. Expanded briefs

## Project Outcome 1 – Regeneration skills review and expertise exchange

### Project Aim

A common observation across the housing sector is the demand that non housing regeneration actions place on staff groups whose professional background is primarily housing. This is likely to feature as an issue where housing organisations seek to develop a fuller role in the regeneration of the communities they serve.

Developing a strong, broad regeneration focused skills set across the Scottish housing sector will directly support this aim, however, many of the skills essential to effective regeneration cross many organisational boundaries, have no single accredited qualification and may have been developed in very specific circumstances i.e. through direct project action.

The concept of a 'taught' generic skills set in regeneration is difficult and the limitations of a traditional training model limited. Skills development here may mean closer partnership working, on secondment or project placement; based around a non traditional action based approach – exploiting latent expertise, helping to replicate and enhance this across the broader sector. The first step towards this will be in identifying current skills issues, demands and training provision. An up-to-date skills review of the sector would help indicate priority areas for training support.

This concept may develop to become a central driver of the proposed learning network.

### Method

A general survey of the Scottish housing sector is likely to produce a broad 'wish list' of skills requirements, mainly unrealistic because:

- Most organisations will have no developed regeneration focus, where regeneration is a wishful concept rather than a fundamental principle.

- Staff are unlikely to find the time for formal professional development of this type.

For these reasons we would anticipate narrowing this skills review to a smaller pre-selected sub-group of housing organisations intent on developing their regeneration efforts. This will enhance understanding of skills needs; inform how best to develop these and accomplish this in 'real time' action based context.

A series of working models will be suggested from this which organisations may then interpret according to their organisational needs. Once fully developed, these may then be presented within a resource guide for the sector – perhaps going so far as to introduce a modular learning programme for all involved. Within this, consideration should be given to the role of the community sector and how their involvement can be supported as a complement to the efforts of professional staff.

### Key Outcome

This process will identify the key skills development areas essential to the sector and will recommend how best to develop these. It will identify skills gap areas but also, more importantly, assess how best to develop these within the working practices of the sector.

The concept of a Knowledge Exchange or a Project Development Forum, or 'marketplace', where ideas, expertise and practical assistance may be brokered could be a principal output of this project. Some resources may be required for specific support measures whether these are delivered by experienced staff on short-term secondment, project placements and/or external consultants. In this way projects can be planned, developed and delivered through an informed, experienced and supportive structure.

## Project Outcome 2 – Developing Organisational Capacity

### Project Aim

Housing organisations planning a stronger portfolio of regeneration-related action must be confident that they possess the organisational, management and technical resources required to do so. This project will seek to develop a diagnostic tool for housing providers intending to develop their regeneration effort.

Successful regeneration activities from the housing sector must have clarity of purpose, strong partnership footing, informed leaders and sustainability as a key concern. Understanding how all of this fits together will be an essential part of a successful programme or project. Towards this, the concept of a diagnostic tool for use by housing organisations may help assess what needs to be done, who is best to do this, where they can assist and how this will contribute to a continuing regeneration effort.

The main fields for such a tool could be drawn from the following qualities; resembling, perhaps a 'health check' model assessing organisational preparedness through key linear stages.

Organisational Ethos • Organisational Capacity • Nature of Demand • Analysis of Need • Legitimacy • Leadership • Partnership • Information and Access • Sustainability • Agreement of Action

Organisations may use such a tool to baseline their readiness for engagement in regeneration-related action.

Such organisational awareness should be balanced by an accurate and current community profile, based on common indicators, highlighting the area of greatest need in regeneration terms.

### Method

The principal method for this project will be through a desk review of existing resources. This will inform a pilot project to be undertaken with a small group of housing providers; collaborating to develop a general model which can be used across the sector by different types of organisations

### Key Outcome

The development of a simple assessment tool which would assist housing providers determine where their contribution to a wider regeneration effort might be most productively targeted, what partnership can support this and how their resources can be used to best effect.

A general diagnostic tool assisting housing providers in understanding:

- Their organisational capacity and legitimacy as agents within a regeneration process.
- The most effective positioning for the housing organisation in the local service provider network.
- Resource allocation and focusing strategies.
- The most appropriate way in which to service the needs of the communities in which they work.

## Project Outcome 3 – Financial Planning Tool

### Project Aim

The early question raised when different models of regeneration and development are proposed inevitably focuses on the potential for additional costs incurred through complementary non-housing activity. Housing providers who more fully understand the relationship between non-housing investment and overall return, perceive less risk and are more likely to invest in such approaches. Here the issue of cost obstacles is neutralised through a developed argument of 'investment and return'.

### Method

The principal method for this project will be through a desk review of existing resources supplemented by a best practice review of organisations actively working to this

model. This may be tested with a small group of housing providers; collaborating to develop a general model which can be used across the sector by different types of organisations.

### Key Outcome

A financial planning tool for the sector which supports the concepts of asset management, value creation, public/private capital investment and revenue flows can help make a strong business case for investing in non-housing regeneration work. Such a tool will help the sector understand, plan and manage the investment and return implications of broad based regeneration. It will also simplify the complex concept of investment and return as a financial, social and physical model.

## Project Outcome 4 – Structures and Processes in Regeneration

### Project Aim

Improving awareness and understanding of the processes governing regeneration will assist housing providers identify opportunities to develop their contribution to this. By providing information and explanation of the decision making structures and funding sources, this will inform, empower, facilitate access, develop influence and connect organisations keen to develop this aspect of their work.

The provision of a reference guide, tailored to housing providers, outlining the structures and processes governing regeneration at the national, regional and local level will enable this. This should be complemented by a companion resource able to identify the most appropriate sources of resources and funding for these actions.

### Method

The principal method for this project will be based on a literature review of institutional and practice landscape across Scottish housing and regeneration illustrated by case study examples.

### Key Outcome

The production of a concise short briefing note for the sector might help outline:

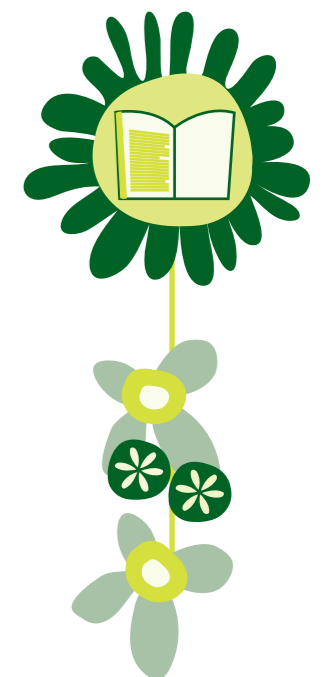
- What's happening in the policy environment with regard to housing and regeneration.
- What structures are established to support this.
- How can housing providers position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities which will arise from this.

- What resources can be accessed to support this.
- What partnership structures will be required to support this.
- What implications are there for organisational structure.

This guide could be modelled around the following structure:

1. Introduction, Housing and Regeneration.
2. The Institutional Landscape: Engaging with Regeneration Structures –
  - Community Planning Partnerships;
  - Community Health (+ Care) Partnerships;
  - Local Authorities; and
  - Scottish Government.
3. Influencing Decisions.
4. Accessing Resources.
5. Partnership Protocols.
6. Long-Term Outcomes.

The production of a concise resource guide which can help housing organisations identify suitable options, partnership structures and funding sources in the pursuit of non-housing regeneration effort. Such a guide would offer information not only on funding sources but on how to influence the local structures administering regeneration funding. The guide could easily be developed as a web-based resource, however, where this is attempted, care should be taken not to understate the value of personal contacts and professional relationships which underpin successful regeneration.



### Project Outcome 5 – Urban Regeneration Companies, Housing and Regeneration

#### Project Aim

Scotland's six Urban Regeneration Companies (URC) are established to provide focus, integration, coordination and increased investment to areas of Scotland that have significant and complex regeneration needs. These areas are Raploch (Stirling), Craigmillar (Edinburgh), Clydebank (West Dunbartonshire), Inverclyde, Irvine Bay (Ayrshire) and Clyde Gateway (Glasgow/Lanarkshire). Each of these areas has adopted strategic measures designed specifically to address the social, economic and environmental factors inhibiting regeneration. The central importance of housing within this is acknowledged, however, given the varying priorities evident across these independent organisations; practices, partnerships and outcomes will vary.

Understanding the relationship between housing and regeneration in the URC context should provide insight into the most effective partnership models undertaken and stress the potential that housing organisations can bring to regeneration projects in non URC areas.

This presents an opportunity to investigate the relationship between housing and regeneration within a national level policy initiative. From this the successful features identified may then be translated as best practice measures for use in non URC areas.

#### Method

The principal method for this review will be based around:

- A literature review of the strategic and operational plans for each URC.
- Individual interviews with each URC Chief Executive.
- Interviews with local housing providers for each URC area.
- A short literature review of housing and regeneration undertaken in the English URC model.
- A summary report outlining the main features and best practices across Scotland's URCs.
- Interim conclusions and recommendation showing how these might be introduced to mainstream regeneration practice.

#### Key Outcome

A comparative assessment of these key features will inform, influence and enhance the role of housing as reinforcement to regeneration in non URC areas. The discussions raised by this can be developed within a fuller dissemination process – helping to raise the profile of housing within the URC approach and stimulating new thinking in the relationship between housing and regeneration.

The key outputs from this study will be a final summary report outlining effective working practices which combine housing and regeneration.

### Project Outcome 6 – Housing, Regeneration and Employability

#### Project Aim

At the centre of all regeneration policy and practice is the enduring issue of employment and employability. In one way or another, this will impact on the work of housing organisations and the tenants that they provide for. Two key aspects of welfare reform and employment policy appear key to this:

- The drive to increase workforce rates and reduce economic inactivity.
- The emphasis on Incapacity Benefit and economic inactivity in the current welfare reform process.

Accepting that sustainable regeneration is dependent on the provision of functional local economies, employment then becomes a critical success factor. However, for many social housing providers where tenants present high levels of unemployment and incapacity to work, employability measures will be difficult to introduce successfully. Enabling housing providers to understand the employability agenda, in the context of regeneration, can help ensure that they are able to respond effectively to the changes this will bring.

Housing organisations as trusted local intermediaries have a legitimate role in this volatile area of policy and practice, where they have a responsibility to:

- Promote balanced and successful community as a vibrant market function supported by earned income.
- Manage the indirect outcomes of long-term benefits claimants returning to employment, where income interruption may cause cashflow difficulties for landlords.

- Partner with a range of associated organisations who can complement housing provision through related social, economic and environmental actions.
- Act in the best interests of their tenants.

#### Key Outcome

The main outcome of this review would be to inform and advise housing organisations how they might best benefit from the range of employability measures aimed at the unemployed and economically inactive. Given that for many social landlords this can represent a majority of their tenants, a familiarity with this policy and practice environment is helpful in determining how to identify and respond to the opportunities and issues this presents. A range of outcome from this may result in:

- Improved employment opportunities from capital development.
- The development of the local social economy sector e.g. organisations able to compete for longer term maintenance work.
- Partnership working with local specialist employability organisations.
- A greater awareness of how welfare reform will impact on their tenants.
- An improved capacity to anticipate and respond to the issues that will arise from this.

#### Method

The method for this review would be based around an overview of current policy and practice in employability, and the examination of case study best practice where housing organisations have acknowledged and responded to these issues.



## Appendix 2 – Consultees

### Project Steering Group

**John Rogerson**  
(Chair)

**Julie Cosgrove**  
Chief Executive, Servite Housing Association

**John Duncan**  
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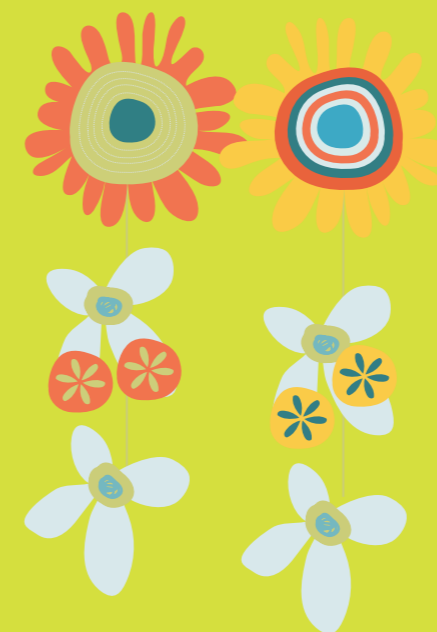
## Appendix 3 – Best practice examples

The following examples illustrate how this has been achieved across several key sectors and suggests the critical success factors which have underpinned this.

Employment			
Organisation	Project	Sustainability	Critical Success Factors
Drumchapel Opportunities Pineview Housing Association and Drumchapel Housing Co-operative	Supported access to employment in the construction sector for disadvantaged young people	Pathfinder project of 4 young people received well by employers. Model developed from this has enabled a further 32 construction apprenticeships to be negotiated.	Appointment of support worker for young people. Full partnership effort with local economic development agency
Port of Leith Housing Association	Pre-apprenticeship training for vulnerable young people. Helping to prepare young people for work and avoid potential loss of training place	Three year project supported by dedicated development officer. 24 young people per year supported	Employment focused project but dependent on external funding
Cunninghame Housing Association Impact Arts	Tenancy sustainment and Employability support for young people based around home maintenance project	Project seeks to continue though reliant on external grant	Identified gap in service provision and creative partnership

Enterprise			
Organisation	Project	Sustainability	Critical Success Factors
Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association Whiteinch Community Association	New build community facilities, small workspace and social rented flats	Appointment of a community regeneration co-ordinator to promote the use of the facility as commercial space	Clearly identified local need supported through strong community consultation and involvement
Grampian Housing Association:	Development of a social firm model (horticulture) to provide employment to local individuals with mental health and employability difficulties.	Full financial sustainability anticipated	Clear business plan
Fyne Homes	Extension of Bute Recycling Centre Activities	Business base extended from original grant period	Strong partnership base and identified need
Linthouse Housing Association Fablevision	Linthouse Urban Village. Cultural planning project. Partnership with local arts project and local economic development agency. Environmental improvements and arts projects	Developing focal point of local regeneration effort supported by strong partnership culture	Clear vision of project as central point of long-term regeneration effort.

Community			
Organisation	Project	Sustainability	Critical Success Factors
Calvay Housing Association	Landlord supporting a social action group to develop the facilities available through the local community centre	Direct provision of management expertise; strengthening the business base of the centre	Clear focus and identified need. Continuing reliance on grant funding requiring review of business base
Pentland Housing Association	Family centre to provide a venue for social activities, training and 'capacity building' initiatives, childcare provision and community services.	Financial sustainability anticipated	Strong local leadership and business case
Hillhead Housing Association Antonine Housing Co-operative	Provision of welfare rights support through full time dedicated officer	Dependent of external grant funding	Successful project reliant on external funds





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