



## Strathprints Institutional Repository

**Howieson, Stirling (2008) The numbers game - 2 big bangs... one big mess. Scotregen, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (Issue). ,**

This version is available at <http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/14121/>

**Strathprints** is designed to allow users to access the research output of the University of Strathclyde. Unless otherwise explicitly stated on the manuscript, Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Please check the manuscript for details of any other licences that may have been applied. You may not engage in further distribution of the material for any profitmaking activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute both the url (<http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/>) and the content of this paper for research or private study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge.

Any correspondence concerning this service should be sent to Strathprints administrator: [strathprints@strath.ac.uk](mailto:strathprints@strath.ac.uk)



**SURF members and key contacts will receive the SURF Award 2008 publication with this issue of Scotregen**

issue 44 : winter 2008

# scotregen

sharing experience : shaping practice

In a special bumper 20 page issue of Scotregen

- Poverty links – page 3
- Voluntary sector role – page 4
- Growing solutions – page 6
- Community Empowerment plans – page 8

- The view from Australia – page 9
- Regeneration mystery – page 12
- GoWell lessons – page 14
- Our top 20 Regeneration Records – page 18.

*Plus more links, reviews and expert guest columns than ever before.....*

## Regeneration in a cold climate

**As the international credit crunch bites, there is a wintery wind blowing through Scottish Regeneration. Scotregen has asked 9 of SURF's leading contacts in different sectors to give their view of how the current recession is affecting the work and plans of their organisations. It is heartening to see in the comments below, and in those on our centre pages, that there is still some optimism as well as pragmatic realism in what is clearly a very challenging time for everyone.**



**Denis Garrity** – Partner and Head of Property, Brodies.  
denis.garrity(a)brodies.co.uk



Working at the forefront of regeneration projects, we have seen a sea change in the market over the past few months as the credit crunch has bitten. The difficulties in relation to the availability of private finance have been well documented and show no early signs of abating. Fortunately though there are still opportunities to be had. The private residential

market may have stalled and values fallen but housing associations are moving to the forefront of driving through regeneration projects. They are increasingly taking a leading role in the master planning process, site assembly and providing finance to cash strapped developers. Traditional funders are looking to housing associations for help in unravelling mothballed developments for example by increasing affordable housing elements and altering phased development timetables. Local authorities can ease the burden on private developers by contributing land and realising value from the proceeds of completed developments. We are seeing a much changed landscape but one which still often involves a public private partnership approach to regeneration. We are confident that the change in emphasis emerging from current market conditions can lead to successful and coherent sustainable regeneration projects and we are working with clients and have developed structures to achieve this end.



**Liz Gardiner** – Chief Executive, Fablevision.  
info(a)fablevision.org



In common with many creative organisations working in the community sector, the present global financial situation has brought challenges and opportunities for Fablevision. Some sources of funding have dried up, however, we are now firmly committed to the social enterprise route.

With the establishment of our new trading arm, 'Studios' to complement our charitable activities, we anticipate sustainable growth and, at the same time, the provision of vital employment opportunities

for disenfranchised young people. Studios trainees work on real contracts for private, public and voluntary sector clients, local media producers and schools, as well as making films, web resources and 3D animations. We believe this new area of work will become increasingly important as predicted youth unemployment figures rise in the current economic crisis. Our response to that crisis has been to establish a partnership with the Esmee Fairbairn Trust, Project Scotland and others - delivering outreach training in Provanmill, Possilpark and Govan in Glasgow and supporting young people in setting up their own studios and employment opportunities

We're holding to our vision, evolving and playing to strengths. We continue to partner the development of new cultural social enterprises underpinning their community development work with cultural planning methodology and it was wonderful to have Royston Road Project, Linthouse Urban Village and others gain the recognition of e.g. BURA and SURF awards in 2007. We're also developing the Fablevision 'brand' with new cultural planning explorations like our 'Sparr' project linking Govan and the Western Isles ([www.fablevision.org/sparr](http://www.fablevision.org/sparr)) which brought the Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, along to the launch of the project.



**Ian Manson** – Chief Executive, Clyde Gateway.  
gatewayenquiries(a)drs.glasgow.gov.uk



The credit crunch, the decline in consumer demand and the downsizing in the construction, housing and development industries have dominated the business pages in recent months.

However, the current turmoil has not caused the revision of any plans at Clyde Gateway, Scotland's newest and largest URC.

On the ground, the site of Scotland's new National Indoor Sports Arena (NISA) and cycling velodrome is a hive of activity, while the progress on the construction of the 5-mile extension of the M74 is visible to the naked eye. Next year, the initial work will begin on the Athletes Village for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Plans are also advanced for environmental improvements near Rutherglen Station and for substantial work on the public realm in Bridgeton.

The funding for Clyde Gateway is secure, and we currently implementing a 3-year strategic operating plan that will see further physical infrastructure investment, early action on employability and training, a range of activities to support community engagement, as well as sustained efforts with the private sector to deliver business growth.

We remain confident that our ambitious targets in respect of jobs, housing and the re-population across the communities will be achieved over the 20-year lifetime of Clyde Gateway.

Continued on pages 10 and 11

# A view from the chair



*Ian Wall  
SURF Chair*

## **Green for Go**

One of the by products of the recession, that commenced first of all with the property development industry, will be the reduction in claims that major commercial developments are 'regeneration'.

The misappropriation of this term by the property industry reflects the general feeling that regeneration is a good thing and, in so much as that represents the general public's view of our work, it is to our credit.

These schemes will be shown up soon as, reflecting their inability to make profits, they are mothballed and become a part of the urban dereliction that presents a blight across Scotland.

There is a bigger picture to this. In the credit fuelled property boom many thought that a, relatively, quick fix to social issues could be brought about through private sector residential and commercial development and for a

period it undoubtedly brought some improvements. Its flaw was not that such projects are subject to the ups and downs of the market (for instance the URCS are structured and funded so as not to be solely at the beck and call of the market) but that the benefits of profit led regeneration are only delivered as a consequence rather than from a direct investment for direct benefit

With resources coming under greater pressure it becomes all the more important that the social and physical problems we wish to fix should be addressed directly and with measurements of targets and outcomes that put people and their wellbeing at the heart of our practice.

Recent research at the University of Glasgow into health inequalities and green space provides a good illustration. The gap in health between the richest and the poorest, a gap justifiably notorious in Scotland, was only half as big in the areas with the most green spaces than those areas with least green spaces.

Here then lies an evidence led proposal for action to add to, to improve and, most important of all, to maintain to a high standard our green spaces. In doing this not only will we be contributing directly to well being but, because such public investment has the biggest effect, as it is mainly labour, its counter cyclical investment will improve the economy and thus help shorten the length and impact of the recession, which threatens to be the most direct and damaging attack upon our communities.

What is required now are investment and spending policies that are not trickle down but trickle up.

# Editorial



*Andy Milne  
SURF Chief  
Executive*

**Welcome to the Winter 2008 edition of  
scotregen, our 44th edition.**

**The purpose of this quarterly journal is to use SURF's independent position to raise awareness and debate about important developments in regeneration policy and practice.**

**Scotregen is part of SURF's regular output of publications, events and discussions aimed at supporting more successful and sustainable regeneration efforts across Scotland.**

In this bumper, 20 page issue of Scotregen we have further expanded our list of regular columnists to bring our readers specialist inputs on Poverty, and Health in addition to existing columns on regeneration related language, numbers, urban visions and housing. We also have the views of 9 key regeneration figures from across the SURF network on how their organisations will be responding to the challenges of the current recession.

Among a host of other interesting articles, Alistair Grimes of consultants Rocket Science explains why regeneration is a mystery rather than a puzzle, and why that matters.

One anticipated article on the Scottish Government's Hub initiative, which I flagged up in my last 2 editorials, is unfortunately still not available but we hope it will be in our next issue when a range of questions posed by Scotregen will be responded to by the civil servant leading on this interesting development. Meanwhile, you can see the questions and a link to a government press release on the Hub on page 7.

Other planned items for the next issue of Scotregen will include,

- Impressions of Pennsylvania
- Planning applications and the recession
- Supporting vulnerable people through Neighbourhood Networks
- Gender and regeneration
- Manufacturing a green Scotland

**Your views and ideas are always welcome, and if there are other aspects of regeneration you think we should be looking at in future editions of Scotregen, please just e mail me at [andymilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(a)scotregen.co.uk)**



# Where Now for the Fight Against Poverty?

*The challenges of regeneration and poverty have always been closely linked and this is a relationship that SURF will be examining in future SURF Open Forums. Meanwhile, in our continuing efforts to bring Scotregen readers a wide range relevant inputs from leading regeneration related organisations, we are pleased to present the first of a regular series of columns from Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance.*



**Peter Kelly**  
Director, Poverty Alliance  
[peter.kelly\(a\)povertyalliance.org](mailto:peter.kelly(a)povertyalliance.org)

For many people across the UK, particularly those working in the media, it appears to have come as something of a shock to discover that 'boom and bust' economics have not been abolished over the last 10 years. The notion that we have arrived at a period where the economy would continue to grow and prosperity would reach everyone has been decisively rubbished over the last few weeks.

Of course, for many people, particularly those that the Poverty Alliance works with, the experience of the 'boom' years have not been significantly different from any others. These are the people who, despite a great deal of Government effort, have remained living on benefits, who have moved in and out of low paid work, who have struggled to heat their homes, and whose life expectancy is remains lower than the average. In short, these are the people who have not shared in the economic good times that now appear to be coming to an end.

According to the Scottish Government around 840,000 people are living in low income households in Scotland, and 25% of all Scottish children are living in these households. These figures are lower than 10 years ago, but nowhere near the levels of poverty that existed in the 1970s. And whilst the reduction in child poverty from one third to a quarter is very welcome, it still leaves us far behind many of our European neighbours.

## **Making an impact**

But what the last 10 years does tell us is that if resources are put in place, we can start to make an impact on the levels of poverty we have

become so used to in this country. The decline in pensioner poverty and child poverty did not happen by accident, or simply because there was a growing economy. We know that far more needs to be done, but the problems can be overcome if resources are made available and used wisely.



The context for taking forward these arguments is going to be tougher than over the last 10 years. As the recession starts to bite, there is a real danger that Governments north and south decide that now is not the time to put money into addressing poverty. The Poverty Alliance will be working hard to make sure that doesn't happen.

Already we are moving onto a more campaigning footing. Along with several other voluntary organisations we have been organising the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (SCoWR) for the last few years. A coalition of more than 45 organisations has recently written to James Purnell to raise our concerns about the current direction of welfare reform. We are also developing a Scottish Living Wage Campaign, aimed at putting pressure on employers who are exploiting low paid workers.

Over the coming months we will keep Scotregen readers informed of development of these campaigns, as well as our work to bring grassroots community organisations and people with experience of poverty into the policy making process in Scotland. Despite the downturn there is still much that can be done to tackle poverty; but unless we keep the pressure on Government in Scotland and in the UK then the progress that has been made will quickly slip away.

**Please send your comments on this article or any other in Scotregen to [andymilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(a)scotregen.co.uk)**

## **The SURF Annual Conference 2009 Health, Wellbeing and Regeneration in a cold climate.**

*Thursday 26th February 2009, at the West Park Centre, Dundee.*

For some time now SURF has been working to promote the links between the regeneration and health agendas in a range of varied presentations, articles and activities; and via its extensive cross-sectoral networks.

The 'Healthy Futures' discussion group at SURF's 2008 annual conference helpfully asserted that 'Health and Wellbeing is the point of



regeneration, not just a factor in it'. With that in mind, and with a view to supporting national and local government's ongoing efforts to promote a flourishing Scotland; Health Wellbeing and Regeneration will be the the focus of SURF's upcoming 2009 Annual Conference.

**'Health and Wellbeing is the point of regeneration, not just a factor in it.'**

The programme of key speakers, includes:

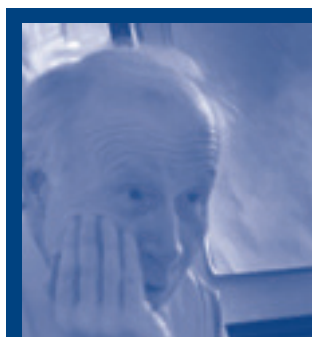
- **Thor Rogan**, Deputy Director General of the Norwegian Government's Ministry of Health and Care Services,
- **Kay Barton**, Depute Director of Health Improvement for the Scottish Government
- **Stewart Harris**, Chief Executive of Sport Scotland
- **Allyson McCollam**, Chief Executive of the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health

As well as a wide range of topical discussion groups, there will be lots of interactive activity and the opportunity to network with friends and colleagues across the wide range of regeneration players in Scotland. SURF will be sending out more detailed publicity and booking information with priority for its members soon and following that on the SURF web site.

**You can register your interest in attending now by contacting [derek\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:derek(a)scotregen.co.uk).**

# VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

*The voluntary sector is widely accepted as being a key partner in any collaborative approach to regeneration, yet many voluntary organisations are concerned about where the resources are going to come from for them to play a meaningful role in future. Others complain about being largely excluded from the important stages of partnership decision making. Stephen Maxwell is the Associate Director of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. Earlier this year he addressed the SURF board on the topic of 'The developing role of the voluntary sector in supporting community regeneration'. Here are some of the observations he made in that presentation.*



**Stephen Maxwell**  
Associate Director,  
Scottish Council for  
Voluntary Organisations.  
[stephen.maxwell\(a\)scvo.org.uk](mailto:stephen.maxwell(a)scvo.org.uk)

## The voluntary sector and policy

- Volunteering is generally agreed to be a good thing but by the nature of that activity government is under no obligation to fund it.
- Nonetheless, the voluntary sector is seen by the Scottish Government as having a useful role in supporting government objectives. For example, there are explicit references to the voluntary sector in the government's recent Health Inequalities report
- The potential for extending the role of the sector is also mentioned in recent Employability policy documentation.

## The voluntary sector - keeping the wheels on.



Photo courtesy of Access to Industry's Passport project

## The impact of the concordat

- Relevant Government policy statements and associated guidance is generally orientated towards 'reducing bureaucracy' with a view to letting Local Authorities and Community Planning Partnerships 'get on with it' with little reference to the role of the voluntary sector.
- The sector's anxieties continue with regard to the implications of the Concordat and the related dropping of ring fencing of funds, although in reality these funds were never guaranteed for voluntary sector organisations.
- It is still too early to assess the net financial impact of the Concordat with any accuracy. That will have to wait on SCVO's own panel survey of the voluntary sector not available until the middle of the next financial year
- The recent round of SOAs strongly reflect the Local Authority perspective
- SCVO is examining them to gauge the likely impact on the sector but not surprisingly they tend to focus on outcomes rather than delivery mechanisms.
- Only 4 or 5 out of the 32 refer to 'the voluntary sector' or some synonym and all rely largely on earlier Community Plans.
- There are no references to the voluntary sector with regard to its role in community regeneration.

## Funding

- There are two sector specific funds
- 1 The £30M Scottish Investment Fund (spread over 3 years) is intended to increase the capacity of 'investment ready' voluntary organisations' capacity to contribute to growth via the government's 'cohesion' and 'solidarity' outcomes
  - 2 The £12M 3rd Sector Social Enterprise Fund which is also for organisations with a proven track record and a suitable business plan.
  - 3 The amalgamated Fairer Scotland Fund is the main source of specific regeneration activity funding. There are again real concerns in the sector about how much of this is available to voluntary organisations.

## Health

The recent health Inequalities report with its shift to a greater prevention focus noted the importance of the role of the third sector in delivery. It also referred to 25 programmes with budgets attached but it is not clear if there are more resources overall. All of this is in a context of a historical failure to match the rhetoric of support for the voluntary sector in this area with adequate resource support.

## Community Empowerment

References in the current administration's manifesto on community empowerment have not yet been translated into reality. The Government appear to have accepted a community engagement approach instead. However a CoSLA working party is set to consider options for community empowerment approaches in addition to community engagement processes.

**If you have any comment on these points or broader issues concerning the role of the voluntary sector in regeneration, Scotregen would be pleased to hear from you. Please send any views or proposals to [andymilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(a)scotregen.co.uk)**



# Urban Imaginings 2



In the second of his regular columns on current and historical visions of urban environments, Alex Law of Abertay University, considers what we mean by 'urban' in the context of our main population centres.



**Alex Law**  
University of Abertay,  
Dundee  
[a.law@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:a.law@abertay.ac.uk)

## Beyond the physical facts

Wandering through our cities and towns we encounter, for good or ill, a practical, usable reality in sensible objects and material things. What is usually meant by 'the city' is often limited to this restricted instrumental sense of the built environment.

Much of what passes for urban renewal also fixes on the sheer physical fact of the built environment. This is premised on the idea that an improved physical reality is both the precondition and the expression of a good society. Conversely, a degraded built environment reflects social decay and moral indifference.

However, the city understood as a physical fact does not quite designate 'the urban' in the sense that I am using it for this column. By 'urban' I mean, first of all, the various ways that gregarious relationships in the city are set loose in and by an active, creative imagination. Second, how this is captured in and by cultural products like novels, films, music, paintings and so on. And, third, the generative role played by social and political activism in the public struggle for what social theorist Henri Lefebvre called 'the right to the city'.

Only when 'the city' passes over to 'the urban' might the life that it supports be understood as something more than mere material existence. Hence the urban cultivates what Aristotle called 'the good life', a common life consisting of companionable social relationships and rational communication.

An artist influenced by Lefebvre, Martha Rosler, whose library is currently being exhibited at the Stills Gallery in Edinburgh (Autumn, 2008), works with precisely this critical sense of the urban. Her photographic practice protests against the bare life of homelessness, property speculation, and degraded housing in American city neighbourhoods. Such critical urban engagement prevents Rosler's work from standing above society as the elevated point of an artistic ideal.

As 'urban' planners, architects, developers and social scientists we often linger on the plane of 'the city'. Social life is conceived as a physical problem to be restored by solely by materials and resources. In so doing, the idea is perpetuated of what philosopher Giorgio Agamben terms a 'bare life' rather than the good life of expansive mutual flourishing. Of course, the opposite – 'urban' ideals limited to the plane of thought with no connection to an active material base – is just as problematic. Perhaps more so: Ideals about exciting urban lifestyles can readily descend under neoliberal conditions into an empty apologetics, a promotional racket lacking a foundation in reality.

Can our cities become more 'urban' in the sense I've outlined? So many developments seem to point in the opposite direction. Rather than a gregarious public life of mutual interest, the city more often consists of dumb, grazing consumers encountering each other in a hostile zone of mutual indifference. Against this only the bare life of alienated solitude in privatised forms of living seems to offer protection. I would be interested to learn from Scotregen readers if they think that the transition from the alienated city to gregarious urbanism is, first, possible or desirable and, second, of any concrete examples of convivial urbanism.

Effective planning fulfills a key role in delivering successful regeneration outcomes. Planning Aid Scotland is a unique and independent, national organisation that helps people to engage in the planning process. It is the leading voice on community engagement in planning matters, and strives to ensure that people are involved in the changes which affect their local area and beyond. In the second of a series of Scotregen columns from Planning Aid Scotland, Lynn Wilson sets out PAS's creative approach to making planning real and interesting for young people.



Lynn Wilson

Head of Development at Planning Aid for Scotland  
[lynn\(a\)planningaidscotland.org.uk](mailto:lynn(a)planningaidscotland.org.uk)

## Planning to Act™

In partnership with North Ayrshire Council, Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) recently held our award-winning Planning to Act™ programme in Ardrossan, where 30 young people aged 14-18, took part in a half-day workshop aimed to raise awareness of the planning system and their potential role within it. PAS volunteer planners and professional community artists worked together in a unique approach, providing an arts-based workshop within which the planning message was conveyed, helping participants to understand the bigger picture of planning, the role of the planner and what tools they might need if they were to become engaged with the planning system in their local community.

Within the workshop session, young people from all areas of North Ayrshire, representing local secondary schools as Youth Council members, worked together in the development of five exercises. The exercises took into account participants' initial lack of awareness of the planning system, and recognition that many young people find such a system difficult or disinteresting to engage with, by focusing on a developmental learning

approach, with each exercise building upon previous knowledge and participant awareness, whilst being fun, active and inclusive.

A successful day was summed up by one participant, 'everyone was really interacting



well together, really participating. It was a good way to get involved with the planner, it got everyone talking and really built up people's communication skills'.

### Community Engagement in the Planning System

The planning system is going through both an exciting and challenging time, with the implementation of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and its emphasis on community engagement, which aims to make the planning system more inclusive and accessible. PAS are committed to developing and delivering training tools which help support all to turn the sentiment of the Act into real benefits for our communities, something which we trust the Planning to Act™ workshop demonstrates and promotes.

As one workshop participant says, 'it's important for young people to be involved in planning because we're the future generation and we're the people who are going to be around for planning to have an effect on'.

### DVD

PAS have produced a promotional DVD of our Planning to Act™ workshop – please contact us for more information on how to be involved with future workshops in your area.



# A place to grow



*The last issue of Scotregen featured an article by Judy Wilkinson of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society on the 'Growing Understanding' of the links between gardening activity and regeneration goals. (see Scotregen 43 page 9 – available via the SURF website) Here, Alister MacLeod recounts the practical experience of Ardlar residents in using gardening and green issues as the basis of the involvement of local people and organisations in the wider regeneration of their community.*



**Alister MacLeod**  
**Manager, Ardlar Village Trust.**  
[alistair\(a\)ardlervillagetrust.org](mailto:alistair(a)ardlervillagetrust.org)

The importance of urban greenspace is clearly seen within a number of the Scottish Governments national outcomes and is an obvious strand in improving our quality of life. Not surprisingly regeneration projects have a fundamental role in achieving positive change in our urban greenspace transforming our public space into places of life and vitality. This can only be achieved through the involvement of those who will use and benefit most from the environment – local residents. In urban



areas facing multiple deprivation environmental projects can act as the first toe hold in turning a place around and empowering local people. The Ardlar Village Trust has been involved in a number of projects that encourage residents to take progressive steps from developing their own private gardens toward local people managing their local Greenspace.

The AVT's program of works reflects the huge change taking place in our community. Ardlar Village in Dundee is coming to the end of an 8 year regeneration program that provides an interesting example of how good planning can combine with a process of community engagement to create a more valued and inspiring place. The most fundamental change however is in the activities and aspirations of local people relating to their environment and in the way that they use and manage it. Throughout this period AVT's role has been to create projects, inspire, lead, manage partnership and seek new ways to manage our shared open space

The link between wellbeing, economy and the environment was made early during Ardlar's regeneration with the establishment of a gardening project by adult education and health workers. Surveys in the late 90's had shown that health and economic issues to be critical for the area. The carrot of a fresh start when moving to a new house with front and back garden proved to be a great incentive for many who were stuck in a rut and 10 flights up. A new garden provided a challenge that was achievable given that initial help. The first step was in providing the tools.

Whilst households were given a home loss payment with which to furnish their new property garden tools were bottom of the list compared to curtains and carpet or household items. To assist, a free tool loan scheme worked alongside the garden project to enable tenants to access tools that would otherwise have been too expensive or not of priority. This complimented the educational role played by the garden project which worked by members taking each others gardens in a rotational manner so that neighbourly links were fostered through altruistic means. Participation rates were incredibly high in that first phase with more than 50% of households involved - and our gardens came to life. Also, from this project came the next stage of development - a group of residents keen to take on the public spaces. By working alongside the partnership structure found in the Ardlar Village Trust the Ardlar Environment group undertook practical projects such as litter picks and bulb planting.

We also developed the idea of a civic pride project Ardlar in Bloom – which would enable us to flag all the environmental work of residents and partners under a single banner. To encourage participation a front garden competition was created and sponsored by the main property owner in the area – Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association. We receive about 100 entries per year from the 1200 households (8%) but many more are aware of the efforts being made by their neighbours and respond accordingly. It's amazing what a little bit of gentle competition can do!

In 2003 we entered the national Scotland in Bloom awards under the regeneration category and won. This was a big surprise for the residents and had a massive impact on their expectations and commitment to further work. There was also great value in the judging process which provided support and recommendations for our future development. Not surprisingly Ardlar scores very well in partnership and community working but scores poorly within horticultural and cleanliness sections reflecting our urban situation. The judging comments sheets were used by the AVT to focus partnership efforts over the next year and most importantly encourage commitment. In terms of managing partnership activity the AVT has found the process of entering Beautiful Scotland very useful as it has helped lever in extra effort and resources to the area in a targeted way.





As a group we were keen to develop a more proactive way that local people could be involved in managing their public open space alongside discovering resident's aspirations for its improvement. We also hoped that future work could influence recent socio / economic figures for Ardler undertaken by the AVT in 2007 that still showed health and wellbeing as areas for concern.

We gained support from Greenspace Scotland through their community-led action research program: 'Demonstrating the Links' and undertook a 2 year program of work. A key part of this project was the development of a basic Greenspace quality audit that could be undertaken quickly by residents every 6 months and used to influence partners work. The data from resident's surveys is entered into a geographical information system (GIS) to produce coloured maps that rank our open space under 5 quality headings from undefined use (red) to excellent.(dark green). Over the last two years this map has led residents to gain commitment from partners to tackle underperforming areas leading to over 90% of Ardler's Greenpeace by area scoring satisfactory or above in the summer of 2008. The project also undertook 200 face to face surveys and created 5 key actions including the development of a women's running group, installation of seating and creating more playful spaces for young children. Ardler's demonstrating the links project is now acting as the foundation for partners and residents next phase of work which will build on an award winning Masterplan to create well used and vibrant open spaces in the heart of our community.

When we compare the footprint of the 1970's Ardler with that of today we see an interesting shift from large areas of high maintenance local authority owned grass land to a combination of private gardens and diverse Greenspace including a SUDS (sustainable urban drainage system). Through a series of steps local residents now manage not only their own private space but also play a major part in controlling their public Greenspace and defining its future development. The success of the physical regeneration will be reflected by the positive change in lifestyles of residents and this is most obvious through their increased activity in the environment around them. Whilst links between environment and health are complex and many, these improvements should contribute to our key local and national outcome that we live longer and healthier lives.



# Miniature Glasgow



**Guests at the SURF Awards Presentation Dinner in December were treated to a special showing of a short film entitled 'Miniature Glasgow', which was introduced by Bruce Whyte of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH). The film statistically portrays the diversity of Glasgow as a village of 100 people, presenting a wealth of highly accessible information without using charts or graphs.**

Reducing the population of the city in this way makes it easier to present this information – on such things as ethnic identity, employment by industry, life expectancy, and transport habits – in an accessible way. Accompanied by various illustrations and images of the city, it emphasises Glasgow as a diverse, modern European city emerging from an industrial past.

The film was produced by GCPH and inspired by the Sustainability Institute's 'Miniature Earth' project, a similar work that imagines the world population reduced to 100 people. It is thought that Glasgow is the first city to produce its own version. At the SURF Awards Dinner, SURF Chair, Ian Wall, encouraged those present to think about producing a version for their own town/city.

For further information, and to view the film online in English or Gaelic, please visit [www.miniatureglasgow.com](http://www.miniatureglasgow.com).

For details on the 'Miniature Earth' project, please visit [www.miniature-earth.com](http://www.miniature-earth.com).

GCPH also support the collaborative partnership behind the GoWell Project, which you can read more about on page 14.



## HUB ANSWERS ON THE WAY

Regular Scotregen reader will be aware of our interest in the development of the Scottish Government's 'Hub' initiative over recent years (See page 3 of Scotregen 34, spring/summer 2006 via the SURF website)

Mike Baxter, the civil servant who has been developing the Hub regeneration procurement initiative for the Scottish Government, had hoped to answer some of Scotregen's questions on the implications of Hub for regeneration in Scotland. Unfortunately, Mike has been temporarily indisposed and will not be able to respond until the next issue in Spring 2009.

The questions which Scotregen has posed include:

- **What is the main driver for the Hub initiative, what problem is it setting out to solve?**
- **Given that it was conceived in very different circumstances, how will Hub planning and delivery help in the context of the extremely severe current credit crunch pressures?**
- **How can local community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises be involved in the regeneration service delivery pattern proposed under the Hub structures?**
- **How does the Hub initiative relate to the Scottish Futures Trust proposals?**
- **How will smaller and more rural local authorities benefit from being part of Hub areas which contain major population centres?**

Meantime, Scotregen readers may be interested in looking at the recent Government press release on Hub at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/11/13154847>



# Community Empowerment in Scotland - an update

*The Scottish Government has committed itself to supporting community empowerment. In this article for Scotregen the head of the government's community engagement team, Alasdair McKinlay, outlines the plans and aspirations for delivering on that commitment.*



**Alasdair MacKinlay**  
**Head of Community Engagement Team, Scottish Government**  
**alasdair.mckinlay(a)scotland.gsi.gov.uk**

In April this year, the Scottish Government and COSLA announced a joint statement of commitment to community empowerment. That statement set out a definition of community empowerment and a high level outline of a community empowerment action plan. The definition that was agreed by Ministers and COSLA says that community empowerment is a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them.

It is fair to say that the definition has been read differently by different people. Some think that the definition suggests a 'top down' approach to empowerment. This was certainly not the intention. Ministers are clear that in essence empowerment is about people doing things for themselves about the things that matter to them. I suspect that the debates will continue – and the trick will be to balance debates on definitions with making progress on practical action.

## **Key roles and messages**

Since the announcement of the joint statement, Ministers have asked us to work closely with a range of colleagues to develop the detail in the action plan. As a key part of our joint working we have been very pleased to work in the spirit of the concordat with COSLA's community empowerment working group. Ministers see local authorities having a key role in enabling and supporting community empowerment and COSLA's decision to set up a group to look specifically at this agenda is to be warmly welcomed. No less importantly, we have also benefited greatly from challenge and ideas from Local People Leading (LPL) who are campaigning for a strong and independent community sector in Scotland. Many LPL supporters are involved in the community led groups who form the backbone of community empowerment on the ground.

It is important to remember that the content of the plan we are developing has been heavily influenced by the wide ranging dialogue that we carried out towards the end of last year. Given that around 380 people gave of their time and energy to get involved in that process, it is important to the Scottish Government that what was

said is reflected in the plan. It might be helpful to reflect on some of the key messages that we heard and how those are feeding in to action for the future.

Perhaps most strikingly, there was a strong plea that we should not invent new schemes or structures, but that we should publicise existing examples and build on what already exists. It was also agreed that there was no "one size fits all" model of community empowerment.

For that reason, we have approached twelve existing examples of community empowerment practice to try to reflect experience from different parts of the country and to give a flavour of the different models in existence. We are delighted that we will be able to tell the stories of places where communities own significant assets like the island of Gigha and Cordale Housing Association, through to examples involving bodies like Registered Tenant Organisations and Community Councils who have clear influence over local decision making.

Describing these examples will not be a dry, academic exercise, but will celebrate what can be achieved through community empowerment by supporting people to tell their own stories in an inspiring way – including both the good and the not so good bits.

It is clear to Government that communities owning assets like land and buildings can be a powerful route to empowerment in the right circumstances, and this was backed up by a number of people involved in the dialogue. Community asset ownership is a complicated area, and we will be working with Development Trust Association Scotland and other stakeholders to put in place a range of work that will help communities and the public sector understand and deliver the potential benefits of community asset ownership.

Time and again in our dialogue the point was made that training was needed to help people understand what community engagement and empowerment are and how to deliver them. We will be investing in a range of National work in this area, from supporting a successor to the Community Voices Network aimed at community activists to working with the Improvement Service to develop and deliver training aimed at local authority councillors - which is a first for Scotland.

## **Work in progress**

Finally, while everyone saw potential benefits in communities being more empowered, there was a strong view that many communities simply wanted better opportunities to be heard by public sector bodies when they are planning and delivering services. The plan will therefore reflect the continuing importance of community engagement, as part of a spectrum of working with communities, and we will continue to promote the National Standards for community engagement and the community engagement planning tool, VOICE.

So the plan is a work in progress - and when it is launched early next year it should be seen as a starting point. It will include a re-statement of Ministers' firm commitment to seeing more communities becoming more empowered. I am sure that beyond the publishing of the action plan, debate and discussion about community empowerment, both the principles and the practice, will continue and we look forward to that on-going dialogue.

**If you have any views on this article or any others in Scotregen we would be pleased to hear from you. Please send any comments for publication in Scotregen to [andymilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(a)scotregen.co.uk).**

# To see ourselves...

**SURF is committed to opening up opportunities for sharing learning on approaches to regeneration across international borders. In that process, it is often as valuable to hear the reflections of others on our practice as it is to see what they are doing. Earlier this Autumn, SURF hosted part of the Scottish leg of a visit from two experienced Australian regeneration policy researchers. In the article below for Scotregen they outline the purpose behind their visit to the UK and how they saw the Scottish approach to regeneration.**



**Fiona Murray**  
Director

**N-Carta Group**  
[info\(a\)  
n-carta.com.au](mailto:info(a)n-carta.com.au)



**Barry Dempster**  
Director

## Background to the Study Trip

Over the last 12 months Fiona Dempster and Barry Smith, Directors of N-Carta Group, have analysed literature regarding the implementation of social inclusion and community regeneration agendas, structures and processes in Australia and overseas; and wrote a discussion paper with a focus on Australia (*Leading Nationally - Responding Locally: building social inclusion in localities on the edge*).

In late September and early October 2008 N-Carta Group carried out interviews with key social inclusion and poverty policy and program contacts in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin with a view to gaining more detailed practical responses to social inclusion issues.

In Glasgow and Edinburgh Fiona and Barry were fortunate to be able to hold discussions with representatives from: SURF, Glasgow Community Planning Ltd, Community Planning Scottish Government (SG), Community Regeneration SG, Policy Executive SG, Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR), Regeneration-“Creating Places” SG, SIMD SG, and Housing Investment Division SG.

## Views of Scotland

Before undertaking the interviews the Scottish Social inclusion literature had demonstrated the importance of good data, setting objectives, coordination and integration and providing new social inclusion and regeneration funds.

We were impressed by the news that the Scottish Governments had implemented a policy of devolution in regard to social inclusion and will be interested to see how this works in practice over the longer term. Devolution can remove red tape, micro management and enable those closest to the issues to address them. However to work it also requires an increased level of commitment, cooperation and skills particularly at the local level.

It was interesting to see how the split between policy-program advocacy and technical support has been managed. SURF continues its role to influence policy from the outside capitalising on its member and service networks; and the SCR (now inside the bureaucracy) provides technical support, training and network support capitalising on its links to the various agencies and ministers in government. One possible area for caution we noted was the proliferation of networks – the same people could become professional network attendees.

To hear how data, new funding, community planning, single outcome agreements, technical support and networks are all linked in a practical transparent operational manner was impressive.

## Practical links

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a great example of practical linkages – not only does it help identify need, support objective funding distribution and assist local community planning but can itself be improved by better local data collection and identification of local data needs. One thing that Scotland could explore is the use of community typologies that England is developing as part of its social indicators work. These typologies could allow local interventions to be targeted more effectively.

Complementary people and place policies-programs are both needed if social exclusion is to be addressed and the gains maintained. We discovered in Scotland that place responses are split into place service development and place regeneration. The practical implications appear to be that initiatives such as Community Planning Partnerships focus on the development and better integration of government and community services (health, education etc); whilst approaches such as Urban Regeneration Companies (national and local government and private sector) can focus on the development of infrastructure (housing, shopping centres, redevelopment of waste land etc). Where URCS don't exist other approaches to physical regeneration operate.

Glasgow Community Planning Ltd staff provided a good insight as to how collaborative local community planning works for both the citizens and services providers. For example the use of local data (including an annual survey of 1000 respondents) resulted in practical priority setting (e.g. traffic safety) and the bringing forward of new funds (e.g. safe play areas) that resulted in the community concern moving from top spot to number 5. In another example policing was an issue and the local community partnership decided to use their new social inclusion money on additional police. The police responded in a partnership way by also changing rosters and boundaries to align with the planning divisions.

Access to new money (Fairer Scotland Fund) appears to have made joint decision making easier as organisations are not being forced to contribute or redirect base funds. The use of the new funds does also appear to encourage partners to rethink how they deliver services and what resources might be applied to priority concerns.

Contacts in Ireland emphasised to us that poverty reduction requires a long term commitment – over a couple of decades. Scotland appears to have made a long term commitment, but this commitment could be challenged by emerging economic circumstances.

**Thanks to Fiona and Barry for their objective observations. Any comments from Scotregen readers should go to [andyimline\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andyimline(a)scotregen.co.uk)**



# Regeneration in a cold climate cont. from page 1

**Key SURF contacts give their view of the challenges raised for their organisation by the current recession.**



**Andy Kennedy** –  
Stirling City Centre  
Initiative and Chair  
of ATCM (Scotland)



The role of Town Centre Management within our urban areas is heavily reliant on the financial support provided by the local private sector for projects and initiatives.

In times of financial crisis, the understandable response from the private sector is to pull in the financial horns, and minimise costs. Consequently, I would expect to see in the near future, difficulty in delivering much needed, but non-statutory activity that brings vibrancy and viability to our town centres.

I am of the view that while we are in a situation where private sector finance is difficult to secure, the public sector and particularly local authorities have a significant role to play in the identification of development sites, land assembly and master planning of town centres. Undertaking this role while commercial pressure to develop is at a minimum, creates an opportunity to ensure that when the economic cycle moves out of the current trough, the opportunities for investment are in place. Crucially, this would truncate the timeframe between development identification and regeneration completion maximising public and private sector financial input.

Having seen a number of town and city centre partnerships across the UK in the search for best practice, a common (although not mandatory) feature of their birth and development is the need for the public and private sectors to work together at times of local economic difficulty. I hope that as we surface from the economic downturn, those partnerships are stronger and utilised to deliver partnership projects that add real value to peoples` lives.



**Andrew Field** –  
Deputy Chief  
Executive,  
Scottish  
Federation for  
Housing  
Associations,  
afield(a)sfha.co.uk



As we move into recession, does the affordable rented sector stand to benefit?

For years, soaring house prices and fierce demand for land have fuelled construction costs for housing associations.

In the early 1990s Housing Association Grant (HAG) supported 80% of the building costs. This fell to 63% by the end of the decade. They have subsequently risen again to just under 70%.

However, Scottish land prices grew nine fold between 1988 and 2006.

These outlays meant the amount of HAG required to build a home also increased.

However, the current private sector downturn could bring the affordable sector a welcome respite.

And the timing couldn't be better. The Government aim for housing associations is one of restricted public funding coupled with a wish to increase the supply of housing of all tenures.

However, the current climate is one which is being responded to with a re-birth of pump-prime economics. Both Westminster and Scottish

Governments are talking the language of increasing public expenditure to sustain employment across various industries. Large scale capital projects are historically the result of such an approach. The job of those of us involved in housing is to try and ensure our industries benefit from any additional public monies and that by doing so we can help deliver the homes people need. Of course, these houses have to be built and that also means preserving and creating jobs.

Perversely then, as one part of the housing industry shrinks another may grow and that could have a whole range of social and economic benefits.



**Ian Lindley** –  
Head of Planning  
and Economic  
Development,  
Scottish Borders  
Council. [ilindley\(a\)scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:ilindley(a)scotborders.gov.uk)



The Scottish Borders has seen a continuing decline in the quantity and fees-value of applications for both Development Management and Building Standards. DM

fees have fallen by some 22% during the 2nd quarter of 2008 compared to the same period in 2007. Against the last 5 year average the fees are down by 14% but have been buoyed by a small number of long-awaited higher value applications – the source of which may now have dried up. Interestingly, we are still trading above the average level of development activity a decade ago, which may suggest that any recession may not yet have bottomed out.

As usual there is little direct correlation between the activity level in DM or BS and currently the decline in BS activity appears to be steeper than DM with BS fees falling by 57% during the 2nd quarter of 2008 compared to the same period in 2007. Against the last 5 year average the fees are down by 21 %. Whilst individual house construction applications continue to trickle into the BS system, BS may more accurately reflect the weaker state of the ready-to-go market.

True, we also continue to see a trickle of householder applications for planning permission, but there is a notable down-turn in all other developer activity except that which had substantially completed pre-application work, or had emerged with planning permission before the crunch hit. Even where such sites have commenced on site, some have since stopped or been substantially curtailed as the waiting list of clients with secure funds is met. A number of local builders have reduced staff levels and some builders, previously active in the area, have filed for bankruptcy.

Developer and affordable housing contributions have naturally been hit. Demands by developers to revoke such policy at this time leads to a difficult paradox for local authorities – to fund facilities by rates increases or go without. Our policy is flexible over timing of payment and over treatment of exceptional costs with 'open book' analysis encouraged in cases of alleged hardship. The Council is also actively working with RSLs to enable land purchase and affordable house building in partnership with the private sector in order to keep the construction industry and local economy moving, whilst addressing national priorities and local needs for more affordable homes.

Turning to the larger development sites and pre-application discussions, some of this activity has stopped, but others continue to Master Plan and consult stakeholders with the aim of being ready for the upswing, although are notably more cautious about the timing of future completions. Allied with carbon-free homes and rising fuel cost-awareness, at least one major developer is now looking to future-proof against more discerning clients, post-recovery and anticipates that homes will need to compete not just on price, but on design, layout and energy bills. So there is a silver lining after all.



**Steve Inch** – Executive Director of Development and Regeneration Services, Glasgow City Council.  
steve.inch(a)  
drs.glasgow.gov.uk



When the credit crunch started in mid 2007 it was widely believed by analysts and policy makers that the impact on financial markets – and hence the wider economy - would be disruptive, but relatively short-lived. It is now becoming evident that the underlying problems exposed by the ‘crunch’ are more fundamental than first thought.

The impact on local economies is not, as yet, fully understood. It will have a general impact on local economies through the, now inevitable, slowdown in economic growth, and the consequential effects on this on investment, employment, and unemployment. This will be expressed more generally in terms of

Changes in property investment patterns – with the shortage of credit making it harder to finance development

Company responses to tougher trading conditions across all sectors – with reduced investment in new job creating projects

Slacker labour markets, with the long term unemployed becoming less attractive as short term registered unemployment increases.

Implications for Councils could include:

Cost pressures on budgets due to rising fuel price and energy costs, combined with generally increased commodity prices

Deferment of council tax payments where these are seen as lower priority than other forms of cost/debt

a loss of, or delay in securing, potential income from asset sales

decline in development fee income (planning, building control etc) as the commercial development market slows down

potential increase in demand for various social welfare services (eg money advice, homelessness) as personal debt rises

increased demand for additional funding for 3rd sector organizations who are, at times of economic uncertainty, often at the ‘front line’ for individuals either ‘at risk or ‘in need’. This could include CABs, money advice agencies, Local Regeneration Agencies.

The main concern is that the credit crunch is not part of the normal economic cycle but may be involve a longer term readjustment to a set of unanticipated – and unfamiliar - economic circumstances across both the corporate and household sectors. Economic development agencies will therefore have to revisit current economic strategies which, in recent years have been formulated against a background of increasing GDP, growing unemployment, labour shortages, and strong investment across all sectors.



**Robert McDowall** – Director, DTZ.  
robert.mcdowall(a)  
dtz.com.



Robert McDowall and Freya Lees of DTZ on the future funding of regeneration.

In recent years the private sector has played a significant part in the funding of regeneration projects. This has been through providing private finance to public/ private sector developments as well as private developers ‘pump priming’ regeneration through, for example new build for sale and contributions to infrastructure. This autumn brings a situation of less enthusiasm and commitment from the private sector in the wake of the current

economic downturn, which in our view, is unprecedented across a number of generations. Who can we turn to? Who will grasp the nettle and respond to the challenges faced by endangered regeneration plans?

The Scottish Government finances are under pressure and this will impact on, for example, Local Authorities’ budgets and the future role for the likes of the Scottish Futures Trust. Local Authorities are subject to increasing obligations and are in need of additional resources to fund these. Registered Social Landlords are subject to increased borrowing costs while being expected to operate within a tighter grant regime. The voluntary sector has seen a reduction in annual funding allowances. Across the board, organisations are affected by a reduction in asset values, volatility in the stock market and uncertainty in the residential and other property markets.

In these uncertain times there has been the largest bailout of the banking industry – using public sector resources. This bailout will inevitably draw resources from other public sector projects such as the social and physical structures associated with housing, health and wellbeing.

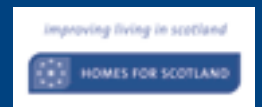
While some commentators may say that a correction in the housing market was needed, the depth of the problems and the scale of the government response required to bring about stability has, in all probability, knocked back a large number of regeneration projects from their current Business Plan position.

The current situation faced is too uncertain for us to be in a position to identify any opportunities for the sector. The challenges faced are far starker than we have seen before and the traditional partners for regeneration of our most deprived communities simply cannot respond.

Public sector intervention coupled with private sector reality will prevail for a couple of years yet. This is the time when the partnership ethos between these sectors will be tested to the full.



**Jonathan Fair** - Chief Executive, Homes for Scotland.



With new build output plummeting, the timescales for achieving the Scottish Government’s targets to deliver essential housing have been shattered. Even more

concerning, the irreversible loss of both skills and capacity caused by the current crisis will make it very difficult for the industry to respond when market conditions recover.

“To prevent this, it is vital that large sums of public investment are now pumped into housing provision, including a massive acceleration of Scottish Government’s ‘Affordable Housing Investment Programme’. This, combined with new approaches and mortgage products being innovated by the private sector, and increased funds being placed into the Government’s LIFT scheme, may help to stave off the critical housing shortage that is currently staring Scotland in the face.

“The industry’s downturn also has wider social and economic implications. With the largest source of private investment in schools, roads, and other community facilities being cut dramatically, there will be major budgetary problems for Scottish Government and local authorities if alternative infrastructure investment mechanisms are not found.

“The biggest single problem facing the sector is now the crisis of confidence sparked by the economic chaos of recent months. It is hoped that the action being taken by the UK Government to stabilise the financial and lending markets will provide the boost that is needed to kick-start a well-functioning housing sector and, in turn, a stronger economy across Scotland.”

Homes for Scotland, the organisation representing companies building 95% of homes built for sale in Scotland.



# Is regeneration a puzzle or a mystery?

*Alistair Grimes of Rocket Science consultants explains why, in his view, regeneration is a mystery rather than a puzzle ..... and why that matters.*



A year ago, Ex-SURF chair Pat Ritchie, from the regional development agency, One NorthEast led a SURF discussion on regeneration policy and practice in Scotland and England. What has changed since then?

We were just about to have an election in Scotland and were preparing for another, possibly different, coalition government. Now we have a different party in power and we have a different way of governing through a minority administration. John Swinney has suggested that the Concordat will be as important in the long run as the initial devolution settlement and for regeneration the switch is important because it implicitly accepts that there will be a postcode lottery for certain services, but one driven by local choice rather than the centre. I think that few of us would have foreseen this at the time.

Even short-term predictions are difficult at the moment especially in regeneration. The moral is that we will always have to make decisions with imperfect information and in less than ideal circumstances.

However, the ability to solve problems and to put things right usually depends on looking in the right place. With regeneration we are often looking at problems in the wrong way, which can explain why we get the answers wrong or at least get the wrong answers.

The American security expert George Treverton makes an interesting distinction between a puzzle and a mystery. The question 'Where is Osama Bin Laden?' is a puzzle. What we lack to solve this puzzle is accurate information and if Bin Laden is ever found it will almost certainly be because someone gives away this information to those pursuing him.

The question 'What will happen in post Saddam Iraq?' is, on the other hand, a mystery. What we lack isn't information but a different range of things which require assessment, judgement, collaboration, skill in negotiation and so on. Information may be part of this, but it is not an information driven problem with an information based solution.

## **Hidden in plain sight**

Malcolm Gladwell expands this point whilst looking at Enron. Most people complained that Enron had not disclosed enough information about its operations (a classic puzzle) but Gladwell argues that all the relevant information was already in the public domain but that investors couldn't (or didn't want to) see it (a classic mystery). The problems of Enron were 'hidden in plain sight'.

So you can see where this is going. I think that we often treat regeneration as if it is a puzzle, which leads us to focus on collecting more and more information, whereas it is actually a mystery which requires a different way of thinking about things, especially the willingness to exercise judgement, take decisions and turn 'information into intelligence'. Crucially, the institutions we previously set up to tackle regeneration, for example Communities Scotland, were wedded to seeing it as a puzzle and their failure was not especially surprising.

A small example of this is the way in which CS got very excited over the fact that data could map the worst areas in groups as small as 750 households. But this misses the point in two important ways. First of

all even at this level of detail you are still left with the uncomfortable fact that most deprived people don't live in deprived areas and most people in deprived areas are not deprived, allied to the fact that the solutions to deprivation (especially employment) will largely lie outside of those areas. Second, if we consider some of the things that we want regeneration policy to achieve – greater empowerment, increased confidence and well being, stronger communities, more self-esteem or whatever, then we can see that these require judgement and choice rather than more information.

## **Wicked elves cleared**

It might be argued that this is unfair and that CS did see regeneration as a mystery and not a puzzle in my sense of the term. All I can say is that for four years on the Board it didn't seem like that. Mystery yes, but not in a good way. And as a Board member I would want to take my share of the blame for this. Wicked elves were not responsible for failure here, the Board and managers were jointly responsible. I think that many of the organisational failures within CS were due to the fact that it remained a housing agency looking at regeneration, rather than a regeneration agency with a role in housing and certainly it never consistently engaged with those experts, communities and agencies who could have helped it make a better fist of regeneration. The new English Homes and Communities Agency has much to learn from this.

**The challenge for the future in regeneration lies then, in seeing if the new set up in Scotland with local authorities having a bigger role and central government setting a framework will enable us to tap more effectively into the judgement intelligence of those who are practitioners rather than relying on information, and the resulting policies, generated at the centre.**



# Releasing Scotland's potential

## GENERATING A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

**SURF Chief Executive Andy Milne, suggests shorcuting the support mechanisms for energetic community activity.**



**Andy Milne**  
**SURF Chief**  
**Executive**

At one stage in school it looked like I had the potential to be quite a good student of physics, but then my interests got diverted (as they do at that age). Still, I remember that potential is defined by the different levels of energy between two fields. When the potential is realised it becomes momentum with kinetic energy and the power of achieving change.

The SURF Community Regeneration Awards, which were presented at a celebratory dinner on the 4th of December in Glasgow's Radisson hotel, once again demonstrated the potential that exists in a field that is all too often isolated from the mainstream. The highlighted projects are not only excellent examples of success from which we can learn, they are deliverers of real change which are making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and their communities every day.

Each year, it is fascinating to marvel at the level of potential in the projects. What strikes us is not just the effectiveness of the existing activity but the latent possibility of what could be achieved if this level of creative energy was connected to the mainstream circuit of resources and structures.

Of course, larger circuits tend to have a lot of resistors, capacitors, switches, inductors and meters; and while these all have a necessary function, they also tend to hold back and absorb the current. Over time and distance a lot of the energy is dissipated in the form of wasted heat and noise.

At a recent dinner SURF 'Food For Thought' dinner, Professor Phil Hanlon introduced some of the emerging lessons from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health supported GoWell project. It is examining the health impact of the substantial physical transformation of Glasgow's social housing on the city's residents. In the process, Phil has also been studying the history of recent approaches to regeneration in Scotland. One of his main messages is that while we look back on failed earlier attempts with the slightly smug satisfaction of knowing where they went wrong, we still have difficulty in creating the same objective distance to our own current efforts.

Phil suggested that an orthodoxy has emerged around the concept of 'holistic' regeneration, i.e. that 'it all matters' and that sustainable regeneration will only be achieved by tackling all the physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges in partnership. While there are many examples of localised successes, the problem appears to be that no one is able to point to examples of where these have been scaled up to a level that makes a real impact on national, or even city wide, regeneration and wellbeing.

**Perhaps then, the greatest potential for achieving change is at a community level by connecting up to the knowledge, commitment and energy of local people. If so, what we should be doing on a national and local authority scale is ensuring that adequate resources and services are available to create the climate for releasing that potential where it matters most.**

## SURF stuff - some selected upcoming SURF events for booking into your diary now.

- **29th January 2009, Stirling Tolbooth:**  
**SURF Open Forum – This Forum will look at poverty and inequalities, and their impact on regeneration efforts in Scotland.**
- **26th February 2009, Dundee's West Park Centre:**  
**SURF 2009 Annual Conference - top speakers and discussion on the theme of health and wellbeing in regeneration.**

**For more information on any of the above events you can visit the SURF website at [www.scotregen.co.uk](http://www.scotregen.co.uk) or contact SURF Events and Communications Officer, Derek Rankine on 0141 585 6879 or at [derek\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:derek(a)scotregen.co.uk).**

## Join SURF

**SURF's membership is the backbone of its work.**

**Become a SURF member and get:**

- A guaranteed 33% discount on SURF seminars conferences, and study visits.
- Advance notice of all of our events.
- A complimentary invitation to SURF's Annual Lecture and a free copy of the speech.
- Priority access to our programme of Open Forums
- Information on SURF's annual Regeneration Awards for best practice and reduced rates for the Awards presentation dinner.
- Copies of our quarterly Scotregen journal sent directly to you and your key colleagues.
- Access to our members' library of SURF publications and reports on our Website.

**Get connected to a truly independent and informed network of regeneration organisations and individuals.**

Your support will help SURF to continue to be an effective catalyst for improving all our efforts to create successful and sustainable communities across Scotland.

To find out more and for a form to join SURF visit our web site at [www.scotregen.co.uk](http://www.scotregen.co.uk) or contact Andy Milne directly by calling 0141 585 6848 or email him at [andyMilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andyMilne(a)scotregen.co.uk).



# Regeneration and Health: Some early Findings from the GoWell project

*The Glasgow based physical regeneration and health impacts research project, GoWell, has considerable potential for those interested in regeneration efforts across Scotland and beyond. The article below is the first of a series of special updates for Scotregen readers on the lessons emerging from GoWell.*



GoWell is a longitudinal research and learning programme investigating the impacts of Glasgow's investment in housing and neighbourhood renewal on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It aims to establish the nature and extent of these impacts, to learn about the relative effectiveness of different approaches and to inform policy and practice in Scotland and beyond. Currently just over two years into its planned ten year programme, some lessons are already emerging. Here we reflect on a number of our health and wellbeing findings and what they might mean for future regeneration efforts.

One component of GoWell is a community survey, to be repeated four times at two-yearly intervals. The first survey was conducted in 2006 and just over 6,000 residents from 14 different Glasgow communities took part. It included a whole host of questions on issues ranging from home and neighbourhood satisfaction, to education and employment status, household makeup and health and wellbeing.

## Cultural Norms

Compared with findings from national surveys of deprived areas, many of our respondents had a relatively positive view of their health with few people considering their health to be 'poor' or 'not good'. This is partly a reflection of the population composition of the areas. Many of our study areas have large asylum seeker and refugee populations who report better self-rated health than the white Scottish respondents. In addition, many of our areas have low numbers of older people (who tend to report worse health). In addition, cultural norms are likely to play a part in this relatively positive view of health: people's perception of their own health and behaviours is influenced by what they see around them.

Despite the relatively positive picture presented by self-reported health, levels of smoking are high (and four in ten smokers state they have no intention of quitting); levels of physical activity are low; there is high use of take-away or fast food outlets; and in a number of areas more than one in five people had spoken to their GP about a mental or emotional health problem in the past year. Routine health statistics also tell a consistent tale of poor health in these communities.



Our findings suggest that health may not be perceived as a particular priority – or a problem – by the residents in GoWell areas, and that therefore health issues are unlikely to be addressed unless an environment is created which seeks to take health seriously in these communities.

## Opportunities for change

Given that major change is being introduced into people's lives over the next few years as a result of regeneration programmes, there may be opportunities to use this as a catalyst for improved health and behaviour change. Health improvement may need a higher profile within the overall objective of community change and transformation, with closer working between regeneration and health agencies to



design appropriate inputs at relevant stages within and across the regeneration process. Health improvement will not happen as a by-product of regeneration: it will need to be 'designed-in'.

Physical and social regeneration could enhance residential psychosocial benefits (i.e. feelings of privacy, safety, personal progress, control and belonging can all be raised through regeneration) and in turn potentially contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing. If this potential is to be realised this should be an important and declared objective for regeneration efforts – not just a by-product of them. Aiming for a situation where people derive psychosocial benefits from where they live, and do not suffer area-based psychological stigma, may in fact constitute more challenging and relevant goals for housing and community regeneration than residential satisfaction rates (the traditional target for housing providers).



The pathways between regeneration activity, as inputs, and better health and wellbeing, as outcomes, are generally understood today at policy, practice and community level. Indeed a more holistic approach to regeneration encompassing physical, environmental, economic and social aspects now exists. However, our findings demonstrate how complex health is and the sheer scale of the task being asked of regeneration. At the last SURF annual conference, there was consensus that improved health and wellbeing is the actual point of regeneration and not just a factor in it. We would agree that this may be a more useful mindset for planning, implementing and delivering regeneration.

**For further information on GoWell contact Jennie Coyle on 0141 221 9439 or at [jennie.coyle@drs.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:jennie.coyle@drs.glasgow.gov.uk) or visit the GoWell website at [www.gowellonline.com](http://www.gowellonline.com)**

# The Credit Crunch and Regeneration – A Role for Mid-Market Rent?

*Housing is a key element of regeneration, both as a fundamental necessity and as a driver for wider related activity, particularly via RSLs. In the second of a series of regular columns for Scotregen, SFHA Good Practice Adviser, David Stuart proposes some solutions to the problems the current slump is presenting for regeneration and the creation of mixed communities.*



**The impacts of the credit crunch on the economy, and in particular on the housing market, have been well rehearsed in the media. The impacts have been so wide ranging, however, that no-one is likely to be untouched by the economic shockwaves.**

Housing Associations have been affected in a number of ways – some positive and some negative. When it comes to developing housing for affordable rent, Associations have been hit by the banks' reluctance to lend money. Associations are traditionally viewed as a very safe investment and usually achieve excellent rates of lending. The impact of the credit crunch has been such, however, that associations now find that there is a scarcity of banks willing to lend, and those that will lend are offering much higher rates of interest than a few months ago. Conversely, the credit crunch may present opportunities for Associations – having previously struggled to secure land in the right locations, Associations may now be able to secure sites at more reasonable prices. The fall in demand in the private market may also mean that contractors' prices come down as competition increases.

Another problem created by the economic downturn is its impact on housing for sale in regeneration areas. In recent years, it has been increasingly accepted that for regeneration to be sustainable and successful, then mixed tenure is essential. Urban regeneration strategies such as those developed by the Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs), and by Glasgow City Council for Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs) are based upon mixed tenure developments that are market led. With Jonathan Fair of Homes for Scotland recently suggesting that it may be 5-6 years before the for sale market bounces back, waiting for the market to recover is clearly not a palatable option for those involved in regeneration.

There have been some attempts to address the issue – the SNP recently announced £60 million to fund shared equity schemes for first time buyers, and Glasgow City Council are in discussions with lenders to ensure loans are available to support first time buyers in regeneration areas. While the motivation behind these initiatives is admirable, there has to be a question over whether they can succeed in the prevailing economic climate. With the Council for Mortgage Lenders suggesting that it would be unwise to encourage first time buyers into home ownership at this time and questioning whether loans would be available, in my view these are not sustainable solutions at a time when house prices are expected to fall further.

The private housing slump, however, creates two major problems for regeneration- how can mixed communities be developed when the for sale market has contracted, and how can they be funded? Regeneration projects such as PARC Craigmillar rely on the proceeds from housing for sale to subsidise "community benefits" such as schools and parks.

## Right solutions - right times

One solution that the SFHA is keen to explore is the use of mid-market rent. Mid-market rent does essentially what the name suggests, providing rented housing at a level between affordable rent (provided by RSLs) and market rent. Mid-market rent was developed by some Associations in East Scotland in the 1990's, and meets a market that Shared Equity and Shared Ownership also seeks to provide for. Mid-rent was previously developed for people unlikely to be housed in affordable housing who struggle to buy a house or pay market rent. Mid rent has a number of advantages over shared equity – it is more flexible, since a tenant can move at the end of their lease if their circumstances change, and residents will not be affected by falling house prices. It also has the advantage of providing subsidised housing in perpetuity.

The introduction of mid rent in regeneration could bring a number of advantages. It would allow a reasonable rate of development to continue as mid rent housing is developed alongside affordable housing and it would help the development of mixed and sustainable communities. Investment in mid rent would also help to sustain capacity in the construction industry and minimise blight while areas wait for the market to recover. Finally, it would reduce the level of grant needed for some developments.

Community Benefits – a better outlook for schools in Craigmillar



Mid-market rent is not a panacea for all the ills associated with the slump in the housing market, but I believe it can help to provide a solution, filling a gap in the market at a time when Shared Equity is not the right product and helping to provide a mix and balance in communities. The Scottish Government indicated in Firm Foundations that it favoured the pursuit of mid market rent schemes, and has recently written to Housing Associations announcing plans for a mid rent initiative. The SFHA awaits the details of the scheme with interest. In our view Mid Rent has a role to play.

There needs to be clarity, however, on how the scheme is funded and on who would be housed. Funding should come from the £60 million set aside from the governments' shared equity initiative and not from the cash for developing quality affordable rented units – there is already an acute shortage of this type of housing in Scotland. It is also my view that there needs to be clear criteria for eligibility of households, such as minimum earnings, as mid rent should meet the market shared equity was intended for rather than seeing people best housed in affordable housing paying higher rents. If these issues can be addressed, however, then I believe mid rent is the right initiative at the right time, and Housing Associations, with their track record in development and management of rented housing, are well placed to deliver it.





# The Numbers Game

*Dr Stirling Howieson of Strathclyde University is interested in numbers. From understanding the 'big bang' to managing your credit card repayments, numbers hold the key to everything. Here, in his regular Scotregen column, he offers some more interesting figures.....*



**Dr Stirling Howieson**  
**Strathclyde University**

s.howieson(a)  
strath.ac.uk

## 2 big bangs..... 1 big mess!

We have a problem with a lack of mass (or liquidity?) in the universe from the first big bang that occurred circa 15 billion years ago. The Hadron collider has been designed to provide us with some new insights into the origins of the universe by unlocking the mysteries of the strange world that is sub-atomic particle physics. But for now let's set this fabulous experiment to one side and concentrate on the fall-out from the second big bang that occurred circa 1986.

The recent gymnastics in the banking system have generated a veritable cornucopia of hypothesis as to what went wrong and who should now be consigned to the stocks. Fred and Fanny, spivs and speculators, buccaneering be-knighted bankers, those damn productive Chinese with their \$2 trillion export surplus and of course, G. Dubya Bush. Financial commentators with a reputation for sober analysis, have been forced to stretch hyperbole beyond its natural elasticity. These economists appear to be truly astounded by what has happened, for they all come from the same tradition that has imbued them - like Voltaire's *Candide* - with an intrinsic belief that the so-called, 'free market' is "the best of all possible worlds".

Our own dear prudent leader has had to intervene and effectively nationalise Britain's largest banks with a £500 billion package of loans and guarantees, to stop the entire system suffering a 'China syndrome' meltdown. Brown and Darling's intervention was pinched from Scandinavia who had battle tested such an unreconstructed Keynesian intervention when they faced a similar crisis in the early 1990s. What is remarkable in all of this is that the arch neo-con George Bush has followed suit.

One or two prominent analysts have actually blamed the crisis entirely on Bush who, after 9/11 was keen to re-assure his trembling but angry population that the USA was still top gun. What better way to demonstrate this than slash interest rates, encourage cheap credit and offer home loans to a greater proportion of the working class, whose ability to make the repayments (in a remarkably low wage economy) is just possible during the good times, but becomes increasingly dodgy when the curve starts to fall. Enter Fred and Fanny and 1.5 trillion dollars of toxic shock syndrome, most of which ended up in financial 'mystery bags' known as collateralised debt obligations (CDOs); a product eagerly snapped up by most western banks. The banks now protest that they were innocent, as these 'sweetie pokes' were given a AAA delicious rating by the candy regulator; a group of confectioners who are actually paid by the bag fillers to rate their products sugar quotient. Talk about a conflict of interest! Nobody bothered to lift the vermicelli sprinklings and discover the bags were actually filled with stones, until that is the bankers put them in their pockets and went skating on thin ice. Up until this point the banks, like bookies, were used to off-loading their bets to each other, but as a few of the heavier individuals started to slip below the surface, knives were pulled and the ropes were cut. Cue Bosun Brown in a lifeboat.

Making capitalism popular was first tried in the 80's by our own monetarist Boadicea when the best council houses were sold off at bargain basement prices. The disastrous results are evident if one ever ventures into the peripheral housing schemes. There you will encounter rows of refurbished terraces punctuated every three or four doors by a dwelling with spalling roughcast, rotting windows, no external insulation, leaking gutters and roof tiles that are green with moss - the new 'middle class' owner occupiers being unable to fund their share of the upgrade costs being undertaken by the social landlord. The waste and inefficiencies of this absurd piecemeal approach to regeneration are demonstrable in the disturbing aesthetic *melange* that is the post-Thatcherite streetscape.

The economics are equally bizarre. I recently had occasion to survey a leaking dwelling in the Scottish borders. Built using non-traditional construction techniques, this concrete tank was purchased by its sitting tenant a few years ago for £8000. The share of the refurbishment costs demanded by the social landlord when attempting to upgrade the block was £25,000. The resultant market value was less than these combined figures and this was before house prices started to fall. There is clearly no incentive to invest, but such is the absurd fall-out from ideologically motivated policies, promising individuals personal 'freedom'.

The origins of the recent crisis can trace their genesis to the second 'big bang'; the de-regulation of the City of London in 1986. With Friedmanite Chicago school shibboleths to the fore, they liberated the banks and stock markets from 'red tape' - aka regulation. Many have recently postulated that it is precisely this type of 'red tape' that is now required to protect the consumer and stop men (bankers, spivs and speculators) from 'behaving badly' and indulging themselves in hedge funds, arbitrage techniques, derivatives, over leveraging, short selling, excess gearing, securitisation and so forth. Prof Friedman had assured them that 'greed is good', so the party and the bonuses continued, even after it became obvious that this was a massive bubble surrounded by an increasing number of sharp pricks.

60 eminent economists, who remain true to the Chicago school orthodoxy, recently had the bare faced audacity to write to Brown telling him not to intervene and let the free market resolve the crisis through its own magical self repairing mechanisms. If however *laissez faire* capitalism is actually self-regulating, why do we need regulations? Apparently it is to inhibit 'unnatural' monopolies! The entire history of the modern banking system where usury was allowed from the Rialto banks of the Venetians to the more recent HBOS/LoydsTSB shotgun wedding, has been one of takeover, amalgamation and conglomeration into cartels. Monopoly is the natural end point of 'free markets'!

The upside to all of this is the undermining of 'Monetarism' as we know it. For the Chicago boys who have provided the ideological pretext and absolution for war, torture, murder, starvation and destitution (see Chile, Argentina, Africa, Poland, South Africa, Russia, Iraq and countless others) there is only one word that will suffice .....GOTCHA!

The downside is that these financial shenanigans are now impacting on the real economy and hundreds of thousands will join the dole queue over the next few years. Those who stand in a different tradition and believe in the now, not so naïve, 'labour theory of value' knew that 'big bulls' are invariably followed by equally 'big bears'; that if you produce paper profits without creating wealth through human labour, you have the components for the rapid inflation of a bubble. The £500 billion stake money chipped into the game by Her Majesty's Government will have to be found from somewhere. History tells us that it will be the working class who will be made to pay for this crisis in terms of lost jobs, lost homes and lost hope. In the words of a true warrior poet, Hugo Dewar,

*"In this Arsy-Versy world, there's experts by the score*

*Who plead with those producing goods to turn out more and more*

*But the way the turn-out turns out is somehow always such*

*That though there never is enough, there's always far too much"*



# SURF Open Forum Programme Update

Edward Harkins,  
Networking Initiatives Manager



*Edward Harkins*  
*SURF Networking*  
*Initiatives Manager*

edward(a)  
scotregen.co.uk

This is an unusual report on the SURF networking programme. It is about the continued forward development and enhancement of the Open Forum programme - rather than the more usual format of reporting on recent events.

Readers will be well aware of the dynamic and challenging context for regeneration at the Scottish, UK and international levels. Meantime, participants' discussions, networking and feedback from Open Forums continue to uncover the most relevant themes for networking and learning in regeneration.

SURF and its Open Forum programme partner-funders, the Scottish Centre for Regeneration in the Scottish Government, continuously seek to assess and respond to these various contexts, developments and feedback. A shared objective for SURF, our partners and Open Forum participants, is to enhance and deepen the dialogue, exchange and learning outcomes of the whole programme.

With the aim of enhancing and deepening the dissemination and learning outcomes, SURF will now implement:

- more variation in the style and structure of the individual events to address different purposes, stages and levels of learning.
- a sustained focus on a limited range of themes, with fewer but better resourced events, to better facilitate development and learning within those themes.
- more resources to be deployed in prior sourcing of the most relevant and useful, and evidence-based, material for dissemination, discussion and learning at each event.

One of the broad themes for the programme over 2008 will be poverty and inequalities and the impact of regeneration. The Open

“ as a cross-sector, holistic and sustainable approach, regeneration offers the best prospect of securing maximum return and community benefit, especially from large scale public investment projects or programmes ”

Forum on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009 will be on this theme. The other theme will be sustainable development and regeneration, with particular reference to sustainable mixed communities.

The continuing need is to demonstrate, through success and learning, the importance of regeneration across the full range of practice policy-making. To quote from the May 2008 Open Forum on lessons from the overall programme:

- as a cross-sector, holistic and sustainable approach, regeneration offers the best prospect of securing maximum return and community benefit, especially from large scale public investment projects or programmes.
- an un-integrated focus on single components of Scottish social, cultural and economic life will almost certainly fail to secure such value.

SURF continues to welcome any enquiries, suggestions or potential contributions from any stakeholders to the Open Forum programme. If you wish to know anything further about these programme developments, please contact Edward Harkins, Networking Initiatives Manager at SURF, on 0141-568 6850 (Wednesdays to Fridays) or email [edward\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:edward(a)scotregen.co.uk)

The SURF Open Forum programme is funded by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration, part of the Scottish Government, with the aim of facilitating independent feedback and opinion to policy makers in Scottish Regeneration and Community Planning. This funding ensures that Open Forum participation is open to all without charge. SURF always welcomes suggestions for topics or offers of contributions for future forum events.

# “Young Children in Charge”

Keir Bloomer, Bronwen Cohen

A review by Ian Wall

Young Children in Charge £13.99  
Published by Children in Scotland.

This book reviews the experience of early years education, from 1 to 3, in San Miniato, Tuscany, over the last 25 years.

The most important element of the Council's programme is to treat the child as a person in their own right who can, and will, manage their own programme of learning with support.

That support comes from two sources. The 'educatori', nursery staff, who encourage and aid the children in their learning and do this in an active partnership with the children's parents.

The documenting carried out here is not a management tool to check on staff or children's performance but a running log and reflective guide shared and contributed to by all staff and parents to help analyse and understand the child's development.

This approach contrasts with the more centralized, top down, tick

box, one size fits all approach that has been developed in Scottish education over the last two decades or so.

In San Miniato children, nursery staff and parents are granted the trust to work together to bring out the best for the child and in a physical environment that is carefully designed “to support and nourish learning”

This is a short but rich book and will stimulate and assist anyone who, directly or indirectly, is responsible or is concerned for the future of our children and communities. People centred investment in our communities is the basis for a good life. It is impossible to start too early and this book provides powerful direction.

ISBN - 978 1 901589 83 2



# “Skye Bridge Story”

Andy Anderson A review by James McLellan

Multi-national interests and people power

Compiled by Andy Anderson Argyll Publishing – £14.99

This is a great story It tells the tale of how a community took on the might of the government and its supporters, a series of big capitalist firms for which this project was explicitly designed to benefit, and comprehensively defeated them.

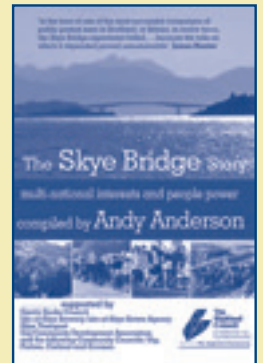
That triumph did not come about easily and the great strength of this book is how it describes in a practical but exciting way the activities of the individuals, groups and communities in the programme of mass disobedience they undertook to build the campaign and defeat the Government.

With such a powerful enemy, who had even rewritten the law to make non-payment protests much more difficult, the campaign took a long time and had considerable ups and downs on the way. Inevitably there was a split between those who wanted to rely upon the law and those who understood that the law favours the government and owners, not communities, and that the way to win is through campaigns that rely upon mass involvement not on a small number of individuals and lawyers.

Fortunately the great majority understood that and continued the campaign even when a member was jailed and after ten years they succeeded.

Their success was not only for Skye and Lochalsh, in defeating the first ever PFI to be established in Britain their victory was one for all those trying to stop the privatisation of our public services. One of the outcomes of the campaign, well brought out in the book, is how Government twisted and turned to meet the needs of the firms not that of the people. The SFT is the last attempt by those who believe that their profits are the only criteria of good. Campaigns such as this give heart and confidence to continue to organise to defeat attacks upon, and to improve, our communities all over Scotland.

ISBN - 978 1 906134 19 8



# Here's Scotregen's top 20 Regeneration Records

If you have a better list send it to [andymilne\(a\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(a)scotregen.co.uk) and we'll print it in the next issue of Scotregen. We might even send you a prize - some record tokens perhaps?



- 1 Dirty Old Town - Ewan McColl
- 2 In the Ghetto - Elvis Presley
- 3 Ghost Town - The Specials
- 4 Living for the City - Stevie Wonder
- 5 Move on up - Curtis Mayfield
- 6 Inner City Blues - Marvin Gaye
- 7 Shipbuilding - Elvis Costello
- 8 White Riot - The Clash
- 9 Down in the Tube Station at Midnight - The Jam
- 10 Heart Attack & Vine - Tom Waites
- 11 Big Yellow Taxi - Joni Mitchell
- 12 Common People - Pulp
- 13 How can you live in the Northeast? - Paul Simon
- 14 City Song - Lindisfarne
- 15 The Message - Grand Master Flash and furious five
- 16 Killermont Street - Roddy Frame
- 17 This land is your Land - Woody Guthrie
- 18 Mary Baker's city mix - Alex Glasgow
- 19 The times they are a changin' - Bob Dylan
- 20 What's so Funny About Peace Love and Understanding - Nick Lowe

# LANGUAGE GAMES

Chik Collins of the University of the West of Scotland continues his personal look at the role language plays in social change.

## (This is not) A Rant

When the Church of England starts wringing the necks of the 'golden geese' of finance, the market and the City of London, then the thinking that sustains this column is thrown into sharp relief. A world in flux reveals the temporary, fluid nature of so much that had seemed permanent and solid. Meanings, connotations and evaluations carried by familiar words had yesterday seemed self-evident, shared by all 'right-thinking' people. Today they are seen as temporary effects of power, sustained by a complacent 'group-think'.



Symptomatically, the Archbishop of York denounces "a market system" which seems to take its rules "from Alice in Wonderland." The Archbishop of Canterbury is accusing "unbridled capitalism" of turning us into "idolators". You'd think these dignitaries had converted to the 'ranter' tradition.

This brings us to a term bound up with what has been worst in the 'group think'. Its participants' first recourse, when confronted with any sustained challenge, has been to reach for a label – frequently the 'r' word.

A 'rant' is an argument which is, allegedly, neither well-researched nor calm; the connotation is of imbalance; the evaluation very negative. The original Ranters were a religious sect in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England. Regarded as a threat to social order, they were accused of terrible immorality and labeled as heretics. Indeed, one leading historian regards the idea of 'the ranter' largely as a horror-myth created to reinforce traditional values. In other words, the propagation of the term was largely bound up with *power delegitimizing its critics*.

There was some indication of this even in the last *Scotregen*. Andy Milne's review of Klein's *The Shock Doctrine* mentioned its widespread denunciation as a 'rant'. Andy went on to note that Klein's book was meticulously researched and referenced – so not a 'rant'. But who now is arguing with Klein's claim that recent decades saw an increasingly reckless global capitalism making itself fantastically rich at the expense of ordinary folks – while looking to the taxpayer to line its pockets (or bail it out) whenever possible (or necessary)?

But it's not just 'radicals' who have had the treatment. Radicals don't get invited to the IMF, but it was there, in 2006, that Nouriel Roubini was labeled 'a Cassandra'. The 'crime' of this NYU

economist was to forewarn of the disaster for which the world financial and economic systems were headed. He was supposed to crawl into a hole and wait for permission to re-emerge. But he continued to challenge the 'orthodoxy', and so found himself on the receiving end of the 'ranter' treatment – labeled 'Dr Doom'.

But 'Dr Doom' is now, according to *The Sunday Times*, "the world's most in-demand economist". His secret? The "ability to work outside traditional economic disciplines", together, one imagines, with the personal courage not just to *think* for himself, but to *speak* against the 'group think'.

In Scotland we have had our own 'group think' in 'regeneration' for over 20 years. It has, inevitably, evolved somewhat. Most recently its evolution produced what one leading professor calls a "new conventional wisdom" (NCW) – though with "surprisingly little public debate" to *scrutinise* its wisdom.

It was based on the 'faith' that boom and bust had been banished. A burgeoning world economy and 'buoyant' property markets were here to stay. The future lay in making our cities, and indeed our nation, "open for business". The 'regeneration challenge' was to link the resulting growth to the welfare of our poorest communities.

This NCW was always more conventional than wise. It simply ignored the evidence that even if such growth were secured it would tend to *exacerbate* the problems of our poorest communities. And it was a wee bit intolerant of those inclined to refer to such evidence, and to question the 'wisdom' of ignoring it. But now even the NCW's staunchest advocates could hardly *begin* to defend it.

Some who have fallen prey to the 'group think' have at least shown self-awareness – which can be redeeming. The 'confession' of leading economist Professor Lord Robert Skidelsky stands out for me. The good Lord admits that he was himself seduced by the 'group think'. He "resented the stultifying hand of the state on everything" and was in favour of extensive deregulation. And not just in theory: Since 2005 Skidelsky has been a non-executive chairman of the Greater Europe hedge fund.

But now Skidelsky acknowledges that: "Anglo-American capitalism has *had its run*, and has been *tested* to the point of destruction". There is, he now remembers, "social *harm* that the market can do against which governments do need to protect people, and we're going to start re-learning that lesson. I think some people have always been aware of it, but we were actually deluded by *something else*".

Roubini, on the other hand, has "never traded, bought or sold a single security", seeing such as a serious barrier to objectivity. And Skidelsky now recognizes as much too. What was that "something else" that "we" were "actually deluded by"? Why, of course, "the dollar signs".

In urban policy, as in our economic and political life more generally, it's time now to confront the delusions of recent decades and to start over. Let's try to avoid further 'conventional wisdoms', especially those based on "surprisingly little public debate". And let's problematize that worrying psychological trait that has seen too many in 'regeneration', including the odd academic, wanting to be 'inside the tent (where the dollars are to be found) pissing out'. Because outside that tent are to be found, not just the critics and the 'ranters', but the 'socially excluded' themselves.

**Further nominations for the 'language games' dissecting table to: [chik.collins@uws.ac.uk](mailto:chik.collins@uws.ac.uk).**



# Review:

## Sense of Place, Health and Quality of Life

by John Eyles and

Allison Williams et al –

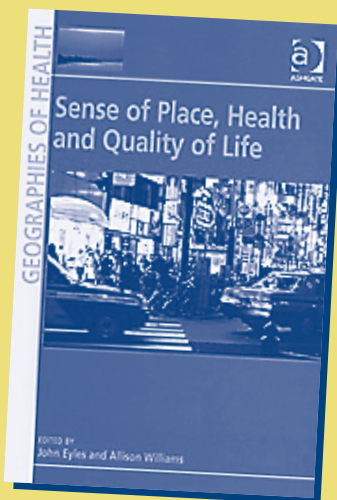
reviewed by Edward Harkins,

Networking Initiatives Manager, SURF.

**For those of us in the regeneration field it is heartening to come across a book that demonstrates the convergence of thinking across many disciplines onto the common ground of a regeneration framework.**

For example, in their introduction to this book, editors John Eyles and Allison Williams note that more recently in the public health and health promotion fields: "... emphasis has been placed on developing and promoting evidence-based decision-making, integrating policies that tackle several determinants and perhaps most importantly for our argument, promoting new approaches to policy, including the development of healthy public policy, partnerships and collaborations and community involvement and local action (PHAC 2002)".

This book is an international perspective on sense of place and its impact on health, wellbeing and quality of life. Concepts of 'place making' and 'sense of place' have increasingly interested urban regeneration practitioners in a world where the unique identities of places and a sense of place at all levels seem to have been declining. Some persuasive commentators assert that this has negative impacts of the individual's sense of wellbeing and belonging.



It is always difficult for a reviewer to be selective when faced with such a compact, concise and incisive book. Edward Relph of University of Toronto Scarborough, considers sense of place and wellbeing against contemporary environmental challenges, and argues for cooperative ways of understanding and action. In something of a contrast, John Eyles of McMaster University offers a methodological perspective with various qualitative approaches to the study of sense of place and health.

Michael Buzzelli of University of Ontario, in a chapter based mostly on the USA, emphasises issues of inequity in examining environmental (in)justice in disadvantaged communities. He states; "In essence the struggle for environmental justice is that of quality of life against standard of living and of the local against the global". A quality chapter, but oh dear, on a minor point, did he have to skewer the dignified term 'environmental justice' on the barbed shorthand of 'EJ'?

Yet another direction is taken where Gregory Ashworth of University of Groningen ponders place, and the attempts to create place identity through heritage. He is one of the writers in this book who see problems with the suggested relationships between a sense of place and wellbeing.

The editors state that they hope to make the case for examining not just place, but sense of place as an important factor in shaping health outcomes. This book is a well argued, well evidenced case. For anyone interested in notions of place and sense of place and impacts on wellbeing, it's a recommended read.

*Sense of Place, Health and Quality of Life. John Eyles and Allison Williams et al as part of the Geographies of Health series from McMaster University, Canada.*

Published by Ashgate October 2008

Online ordering £49.00 (Hardback)

ISBN 978-0-7546-7332-3

<http://www.ashgate.com/Default.aspx?page=583>

## Scotregen

Scotregen is the journal of the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum and is distributed free to its members throughout Scotland.

Editor: Andy Milne

Typesetting and production: Blueprint Productions (Glasgow) Ltd

Relevant articles are welcome but may be subject to editing.

Any contributions should be sent to Andy Milne,

SURF, Fairfield House, Ibrox Business Park, Govan, Glasgow G51 2JR.

Tel 0141 585 6848 Fax 0141 445 2024

Email [andy@scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andy@scotregen.co.uk)

The views expressed in Scotregen are not necessarily shared by the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum, and therefore SURF is not responsible for the statements made or views expressed.

The Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum is an independent company Limited by guarantee. Registered in Scotland No. SC154 598. VAT Reg. No. 735 2880 21

SURF is grateful for the support of its key sponsors, who are:

