

Glasgow and West of Scotland  
Forum of Housing Associations'  
Response to The Scottish  
Government's Regeneration  
Discussion Document:  
*Building a Sustainable Future*

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## About Us

Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) is the leading membership body for community-controlled housing associations and co-operatives (CCHAs) in west central Scotland. CCHAs currently provide affordable housing for around 69,000 households and this will rise to 75,000 later this year as a result of community ownership housing transfers in Glasgow. They also provide factoring services to around 13,000 owners in mixed tenure housing blocks. Founded in 1978, the Forum represents and campaigns on behalf of its 54 CCHA member organisations. Its key objectives are:

- To promote the values and achievements of the community-controlled housing movement
- To make the case for housing and regeneration policies that support its members' work
- To promote information sharing and mutual support among CCHAs
- To facilitate partnership working between CCHAs and external bodies such as local authorities on housing and regeneration

For further details of GWSF's activities, please see the website:

<http://www.gwsf.org.uk/>

### *About this project:*

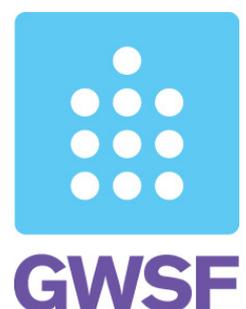
In preparing this response, the report author (Dr Kim McKee) worked with a steering group of GWSF members who play leading roles in community regeneration in their local areas. These were Cassiltoun Housing Association, Govanhill Housing Association, Linstone Housing Association (on behalf of the Federation of Local Housing Associations in Renfrewshire), Maryhill Housing Association, North Glasgow Housing Association, Shettleston Housing Association, Thenew Housing Association and Wellhouse Housing Association. The assistance of all of these organisations is gratefully acknowledged. The views set out in the final report are those of the report author, endorsed by GWSF. Evidence was gathered via a review of relevant policy, academic and grey-literature, as well as round table discussions with steering group members.

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## Executive Summary

Earlier this year, the Scottish Government published a regeneration discussion document, *Building a Sustainable Future*, to encourage debate about how to deliver regeneration in difficult economic times. This paper is **GWSF's contribution to the debate**, on behalf of the 50-plus community-controlled housing associations and co-operatives (CCHAs) it represents.

CCHAs have been at the leading edge of delivering community-led regeneration in the west of Scotland for more than 30 years. They have achieved a great deal, but there is much more to do to tackle the concentrations of poverty and inequality that still blight many of Scotland's most fragile communities.

GWSF's response emphasises **six key areas**:

- **Targeted, place-based strategies** are important but are not of themselves enough to tackle the damaging effects of concentrated poverty. This also needs **individual, person-centred interventions** and **multi-agency solutions**.
- People living in low-income neighbourhoods must have **real ownership** of community regeneration, if it is to be effective and sustainable. With their local focus and relationships, **CCHAs are uniquely placed** to make that happen.
- **CCHAs already make a substantial contribution** to the physical, social and economic renewal of many of Scotland's most deprived communities. The paper illustrates just some of the many ways CCHAs do this.
- **Wider Role funding** has been an important factor in pump-priming regeneration work at neighbourhood level. The continuation of this separate funding stream is a vital way of **investing in community-led regeneration**, alongside the other sources of income and funding that CCHAs lever into their regeneration activities.
- Many CCHAs already play a **'community anchor'** role within their local areas. Their strong connection to, and understanding of, local interests enables them to provide a **focal point for community activities** and to **add value to statutory and voluntary services**. CCHAs are the best and most enduring example of community ownership in the UK today. They are good community anchors not just because of their local roots and accountability – but also because they are **financially stable, regulated social businesses**, with the **capacity to deliver**.
- Many CCHAs are keen to take their **community anchor role to the next level**, to play an even bigger part in tackling the most deeply-entrenched problems such as poor health and worklessness. This will need **vision and commitment** from government and public bodies, as well as CCHAs themselves. The paper explores some of the **key areas where change is needed**. These include opening up different funding options and areas of activity, greater practical support for genuine 'community-led' regeneration, better joint working across the public and not-for-profit sectors, rethinking business models and VAT, and - above all - greater political and institutional support.



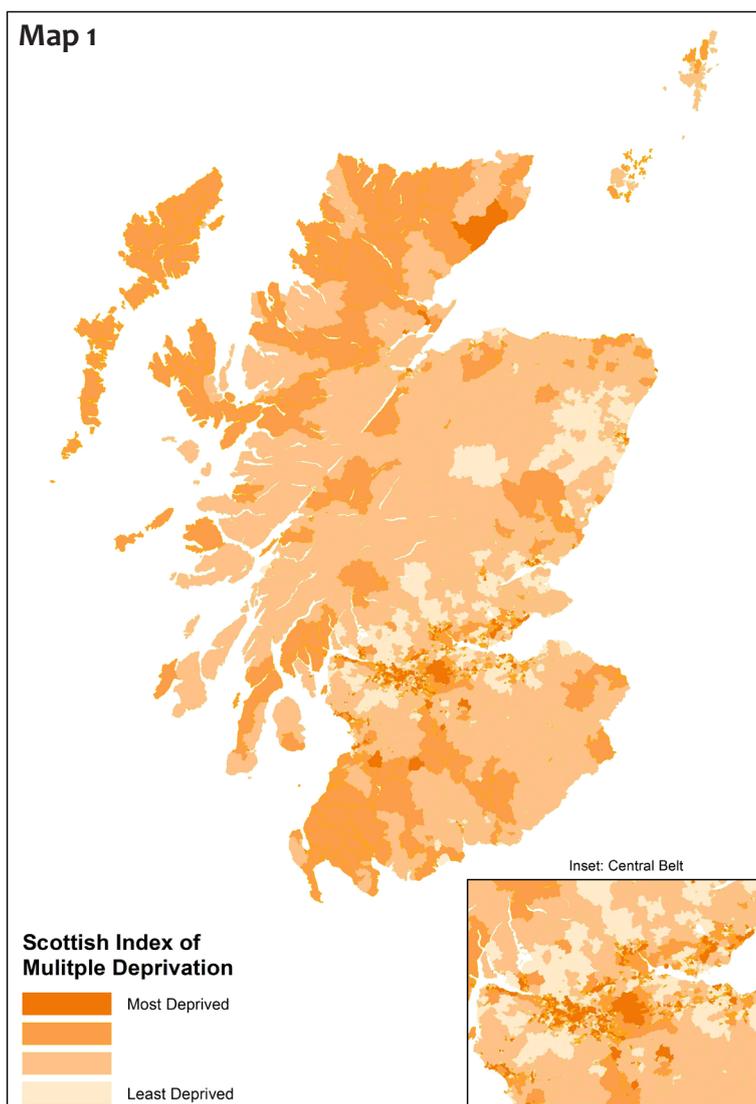
## Rethinking Regeneration in ‘Hard Times’: priorities for the future

As highlighted in the Scottish Government’s (2011) regeneration discussion document *Building a Sustainable Future*, the global economic downturn and its subsequent negative impact on public and private sector resources has undermined traditional development-led models of regeneration. These financial challenges in turn raise significant questions about how the Scottish Government (SG) and its partners can continue to regenerate Scotland’s most deprived neighbourhoods, both for the benefit of those who live and work in these areas, and for the continued growth of local, regional and national economies.

As the discussion document emphasises, the changing economic landscape requires a re-thinking of our approach to regeneration. Nonetheless, it is critical that it remains high on the political agenda of the Scottish Parliament, given its potential to ameliorate the damaging effects of poverty, unemployment, and ill-health: social problems that have been exacerbated across Scotland by the recession (Parkeh et al. 2010; SG 2008a, 2008b).

The geography of poverty in Scotland (see Map 1 on SIMD) is long-standing and persistent in urban areas still experiencing the legacy of de-industrialisation. GWSF therefore welcomes the SG’s suggestion that regeneration should continue to target the most deprived neighbourhoods. We would however question the appropriateness of labelling these areas ‘marginal communities’, given the negative connotations of this language. As a recent report published by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration emphasises, sensitivity is needed when describing low-income neighbourhoods in order to avoid the ‘othering of the poor’ (McKendrick 2011).

GWSF believe that more preventative work targeting these areas is essential, not only for social but also economic reasons. The health, social and educational problems facing the most deprived twenty per cent of the population constitute the biggest call on public expenditure (Naysmith 2011; Hirsh 2008). Tackling the inter-related outcomes of multiple deprivation effectively however, requires working across traditional professional boundaries, such as housing, health and social work. With their place-based focus and pre-existing relationships with local residents, CCHAs are well-situated to mobilise and advance such local partnerships. Not least, because the correlation between concentrated poverty and social housing in Scotland (compare Map 2 on social housing with Map 1 on SIMD), means they are a prominent agency in our most deprived neighbourhoods, and frequently the only agency with a physical, on-the-ground presence.



This map is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is copyright of the crown. The SIMD was obtained from Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics.

CCHAs therefore have an important contribution to make to regeneration outcomes beyond housing. Research has emphasised that residents in low-income neighbourhoods experience poorer quality essential public (and private sector) services (Parekh et al 2010; Hastings 2009). CCHAs can support statutory agencies in improving their own performance, by raising the quality of service provision, whilst also making the best use of constrained public resources.

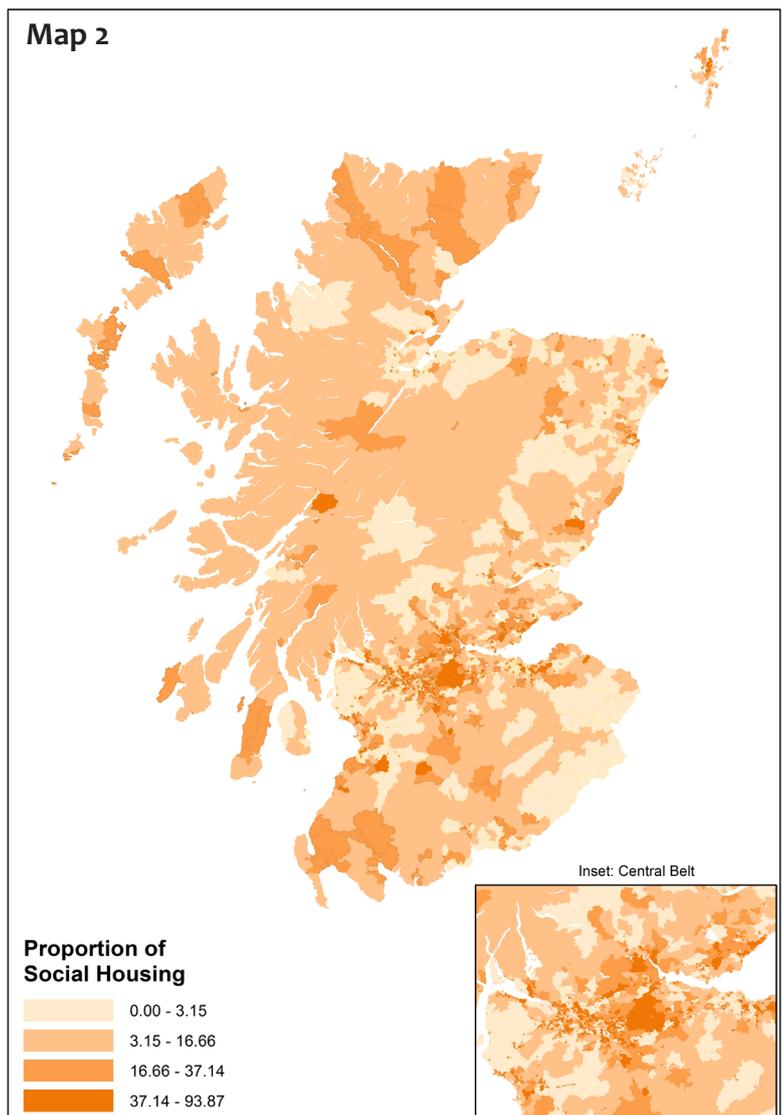
Although the concentrated nature of poverty in Scotland makes a strong case for area-based interventions, a more sophisticated understanding of the interconnection between poverty and place is essential if policies are to be effective. As work commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation emphasised:

“All people live in places, contribute to places, and are affected by places [...] Policies that disassociate people from places and vice versa may perform poorly” (Griggs et al 2008: 1).

Area-based initiatives, although important, cannot tackle poverty and inequality on their own. Poverty is a societal-level problem; a product of entrenched structural inequalities. Tackling it (as opposed to tinkering around the edges) requires a multi-scalar approach that involves *both* targeted area-based initiatives and individual person-centred interventions (normally through the social security and tax system at the UK level). This twin approach is central to achieving a more equal and fair society, not least because many low-income households live outwith areas of concentrated poverty (and so may receive no help if policy focuses on deprived communities alone).

The current devolution settlement limits the ability of the SG to effectively tackle poverty and inequality, as changes to the welfare and tax systems are the preserve of the UK government. Localised interventions are however an important arena where the SG can effect real change to transform communities for the better – and GWSF would encourage the SG to target its resources in this way.

The success of localised interventions is nonetheless dependent on engaging the community in regeneration, so initiatives can be sustainable and genuinely reflect the vision of residents. GWSF therefore welcomes the SG’s commitment to community-led regeneration, which has been a real Scottish success story, complementing other SG (2009) policy priorities, such as the *Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan*. Community empowerment in regeneration is central to the objectives of GWSF, and will be returned to in more depth later in this report.



This map is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is copyright of the crown. The Social Housing data was obtained from Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics.

## Contributing to Local Regeneration Strategies through ‘Wider Role’

*Building a Sustainable Future* asks how housing associations can “do more to deliver social and economic outcomes, particularly in relation to tackling poverty and creating training and employment opportunities” (SG 2011: 21). GWSF would argue this statement underplays the significant contribution CCHAs *have already made* to the physical, social and economic renewal of Scotland’s most deprived communities (McKee 2010; Ekos Consulting Limited 2008; Hastings 2002; Tarling et al 1999; Clapham et al 1991). Whilst their origins in the 1970s were in the physical regeneration of their communities, over the last 30 years CCHAs’ activities have diversified beyond their initial housing purpose. Community development and regeneration are now at their core, although the scale of activity varies across organisations. Supported by public, private and voluntary sector resources CCHAs deliver a range of additional services for their tenants, and the wider community, beyond their traditional landlord role.

Working with local people, CCHAs have sought to address a number of important social issues including addictions, debt, literacy, mental health, racism, social isolation and worklessness. Through social enterprise they have developed a variety of community facilities, such as cafes, galleries and workspaces. Physical renewal also remains important, although the focus has extended beyond housing to include the revitalisation of back-courts, civic spaces and community gardens. CCHAs therefore have the potential to contribute to a number of SG cross-cutting initiatives, for example *Good Places, Better Health*.

As Table 1 emphasises, the availability of Wider Role funding launched in 2000 by Scottish Homes, has been crucial here. In 2010/11, it supported 103 lead RSLs to take forward 261 projects (new and continuing) across all 32 local authority areas. Wider Role priorities centre on improving ‘quality of place’ through tackling poverty and worklessness. Around half of the 2010/11 budget was awarded to associations in the west of Scotland. This spatial concentration reflects the geography of poverty in Scotland, as well as the location of CCHAs who are key players in community regeneration (of which the majority are in Glasgow and the west).

Given the importance of Wider Role funding in supporting locally generated community projects and activities, the SG’s decision to reduce the 2011/12 budget to £6million is a major concern for GWSF members: not least because this funding has traditionally been matched by a range of other public and private sources (the leverage rate for 2010/11 was 1: 2.62). Consequently, the actual reduction to regeneration budgets as a result of this decision is likely to be much greater than the SG cut alone.

**Table 1: Wider Role Funding 2003-2011**

Financial Year	Actual Grant Paid
2003/2004	£9,462,898.59
2004/2005	£10,141,321.24
2005/2006	£9,517,237.04
2006/2007	£9,261,815.86
2007/2008	£10,332,385.73
2008/2009	£9,279,813.33
2009/2010	£7,784,454.91
2010/2011	£10,075,112.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>£75,855,038.76</b>

Source: SG (Wider Role Team) FOI Request

Drawing on data from the FLAIR federation of local housing associations in Renfrewshire (which is an excellent example of CCHAs sharing-services), Table 2 evidences the ‘multiplier effect’ that CCHAs have in deprived communities. Their strong local partnerships enable them to stretch public resources by leveraging in other funding for the benefit of the wider community. Channelling public money through CCHAs therefore adds economic as well as social value.

CCHAs have proven to be a successful regeneration model, and have the capacity to achieve a lot with relatively little public investment. They are also trusted and valued by their communities and partner agencies. GWSF would therefore argue that they should continue to be a funding priority as they represent the ideal vehicle for the SG to achieve its cross-cutting objectives. As grass-roots voluntary-sector organisations, CCHAs put the vision of the community at the forefront of their activities. This community empowerment not only has positive health spin offs for local residents, but is also important in building social capital (GoWell 2010).

Although GWSF welcomes a discussion about how housing associations can contribute more to local regeneration structures and processes, the question about how they can fit better with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) overlooks the tensions that exist between a ‘community’ and ‘strategic’ focus. The ‘geography of decision-making’ is important here; many CPP areas are too large to be relevant to local people (EHRA 2011). To work towards the SG goal of community ownership of decision-making a more local focus is needed. Given their strong, pre-existing connection with the community, CCHAs are best placed to co-ordinate a grass-roots vision for community regeneration. However, to enable them to do this, the SG needs to do more to open up alternative funding streams, such as the funding pots of CPPs, so that CCHAs can engage in regeneration activities beyond the boundaries of Wider Role funding. More effective dialogue and partnership working within CPP structures is also vital. The experience of GWSF members within CPP structures has been less than positive, especially in terms of their perceived ability to influence and effect change for the benefit of their communities.

**Table 2: FLAIR Wider Role Funding**

<b>Projects 2010/11</b>	<b>Wider Role Grant</b>	<b>Match Funding</b>
Paisley South Backcourt Improvement Project	£37,067	£29,378
FLAIR Minor Landscaping Employability and Training Project Phase Two	£98,346	£82,821
Money Matters (Fuel Poverty) Project	£43,077	£23,981
Twilight Basketball	£ 8,728	£8,728
FLAIR Outreach Project	£46,361	£6,920
Johnston Castle Community Learning Centre	£8,389	£18,000
Creative Inclusion Phase 2	£35,445	£32,559
Dunterlie Family Support Project	£11,025	£19,115
Credit Munch	£4,580	£3,192
Working out Haven Project	£41,763	£33,409
Barrhead Community Learning Co-ordinator	£46,362	£66,705
FLAIR Financial Advice Project	£60,846	£29,359
FLAIR Tenancy Intervention Project	£50,900	£20,498
Banking on Neilston	£74,152	£260,068
<b>Total</b>	<b>£567,041</b>	<b>£634,734</b>

Source: FLAIR federation of local housing associations in Renfrewshire

## CCHAs as Community Anchors

GWSF welcomes the emphasis on community-led regeneration in *Building a Sustainable Future*. Scotland's communities are indeed "a rich source of creativity and talent" (SG 2011: 30) and the local knowledge and energy of the community is essential to delivering bottom-up, sustainable regeneration outcomes.

Nonetheless, GWSF would like to see more precision in the language used when talking about community regeneration: consultation, participation, empowerment and asset ownership are not synonymous. They deliver different outcomes and mobilise local people in different ways. In addition, research has continually highlighted that not all residents want to get involved in local decision-making, nor want to be involved in the same way (see for example, EHRA 2011; McKee 2009). A diversity of engagement methods and structures is therefore needed if the views of the community are to be fed into the regeneration process; not least because 'the community' is not a homogenous entity speaking with one voice, operating at one scale. By their very nature, communities contain a wide spectrum of different views and perspectives. There is therefore not one 'community regeneration' model that would fit every circumstance.

Although the focus on community-led regeneration in *Building a Sustainable Future* is to be welcomed, the discussion document offers a somewhat downbeat view about the prospects of making it a reality on a significant scale. GWSF is disappointed that no recognition is given to the important contribution many CCHAs **already** make in this area, or of the capacity they have to do more in future. Scotland's CCHAs are perhaps the best and most enduring UK example of assets and public services being transferred to community ownership and local control. They are more than social landlords. They have been engaged in Scotland's renaissance for over thirty years, through their proactive role in community projects and facilities. Highly effective approaches to community empowerment and involvement underpin these achievements. As the case studies which follow illustrate, these include, but are not restricted to: new civic spaces and community hubs; workspaces to foster economic activity; and local leisure, educational and cultural resources.

Community ownership is what makes CCHAs distinctive from other types of social landlords. They own the housing, as well as manage it, with any income generated reinvested to make the community a better place to live. Moreover, they are governed by a democratically-elected management committee, comprising local residents who volunteer for the good of the community. Their place-based focus and local scale mean that the needs and visions of the community are central to their activities.



## Community Anchor Case Study 1: Cassiltoun Housing Association

In Castlemilk, one of Glasgow's large peripheral housing schemes, the community anchor role is fulfilled by Cassiltoun Housing Association, and its subsidiary Cassiltoun Trust.

The association is a community-controlled housing organisation managing a stock of over 1000 homes. It started life as Castlemilk East Housing Co-operative in 1984, when 90 Glasgow City Council homes were transferred through a 'community ownership' stock transfer in order to promote neighbourhood renewal. The co-op changed its name in 2004, when it became a registered charity, although the co-operative ethos has remained. It has a long history of community development and wider role activity.

Cassiltoun Trust was established in 2000 to undertake the conversion and modernisation of 'The Stables block' (the only surviving part of an historic 18th century country estate) as a community asset. It provides offices for social businesses; space for a nursery; education, recreation and IT facilities; a community garden; and training and jobs for local people (22 in total). To develop this vital community hub the Trust worked closely with Glasgow City Council and the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, securing over £4million pounds of investment through 22 funders. Rental income from office spaces provides a long term sustainable future, whilst the multi award-winning design ensures running costs are low due to the installation of ground source heat pumps and sun spaces.

The vision to reclaim and restore this important piece of local history came from the community itself, and local links have been maintained through the creation of The Stables engagement group. It comprises residents and organisations working together to further transform the area.

The Stables provides a venue for regular community events and away days, but also houses a number of community projects. It is open and accessible to the public, local groups and schools.



## Community Anchor Case Study 2: Linthouse Housing Association

In the Linthouse area in the south-west of Glasgow, the community anchor role is delivered by Linthouse Housing Association. Formed in 1974, it is one of the oldest community-based housing associations in Glasgow. Operating in the west end of Govan it manages over 1000 properties.



In 2003, the association set up the Linthouse Urban Village (LUV) project to improve the community, which has been badly affected by the legacy of industrial decline. LUV aims to restore the area back to its former glory, through physical renewal, rebuilding community spirit and raising aspirations. Working with a range of funders and partners, not least local residents themselves, a number of innovative community projects have been developed and sustained over the last 8 years:

- The bistro-style LUV Cafe has run a successful social enterprise since 2004, employing five local people and providing a much needed social amenity in Govan. It is used by those who live, work and visit the area.
- The LUV Gallery is a stylish and modern exhibition space for local and new artists. It is also home to a Learning Zone, which runs a variety of classes including basic computer skills, money management, internet access, and basic literacy and numeracy. More recently, it has housed a Cancer Support Service.
- Through working with the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Communities, a multicultural LUV cook book has been developed to bring together people of different cultures (on sale in the LUV Gallery).
- LUV's Building Wraps have given a new, fresh look to the gable ends of the tenements facing the Clyde Tunnel. Chosen through a local competition, the designs have helped put Linthouse on the map.
- Annual community events are held to bring residents together, ranging from Christmas Markets to Summer Fairs.



## Community Anchor Case Study 3: Wellhouse Housing Association

In the Easterhouse area, one of Glasgow's large peripheral schemes, the community anchor role is delivered by Wellhouse Housing Association. It was formed in 1994 and manages over 800 homes.



In 2003, the association established Wellhouse Community Trust to lead the development of its new office space, which would also benefit the needs of the wider community. This led to the creation of The Hub, a community asset and resource centre bringing together housing, childcare, employment, training and youth services under one roof. Over 30 organisations now deliver services through the facilities, enabling real partnership working at the local level, through the co-location of voluntary and public services.

The Hub is also an important social space for the community, with its cafe, IT suite and allotments. It also has a dedicated youth facility 'Innerzone' (with a music suite and mini cinema) and sports facility 'hubSports', in addition to acting as a meeting space for local groups such as the walking club and parenting group, and providing opportunities for volunteering.

To further build local capacity and confidence, in a community that has experienced long-term high unemployment and poor health, The Trust became involved in a ground breaking psychology project, with Glasgow Caledonian University, aimed at improving happiness and well-being. Initially the project measured how people felt, noting high levels of depression and low levels of life satisfaction. Participants were then asked to undertake a simple exercise, noting in a diary experiences that they were grateful for and which made them feel good about themselves. By encouraging people to focus on a positive way of thinking, reported feelings of depression decreased, whilst sense of well-being increased.

Following on from this success, The Trust have evolved the original project into 'Wellhouse Futures' in order to help every member of the community fulfil their potential.



## Community Anchor Case Study 4: Govanhill Housing Association

In the Govanhill area in the south-east of Glasgow, the community anchor role is delivered by Govanhill Housing Association. Formed in 1974, it is one of the oldest community-based housing associations in Glasgow and now manages a stock of nearly 2500 homes. The association has long been involved in physical renewal and community development. One of its current community projects is the Govanhill Social Inclusion Project (GOSIP). Its outreach service aims to prevent social exclusion by engaging more effectively with ethnic minority communities, who form around 40 per cent of the local population. Its Welfare Rights Service has also secured over £2m in unclaimed benefits over four years; vital in an area that experiences high levels of poverty and worklessness.



The association works closely with its two subsidiaries: Govanhill Community Development Trust (formed 1992) and GREAT Gardens (formed 2008):

- The award winning GREAT Gardens excels in providing young people with skills and training in horticulture, gardening and grounds maintenance.
- The Trust, with the support of its partners, funds a diverse range of social, educational, and employability initiatives for the benefit of the wider community. One of many positive examples is the Govanhill Family Support Group, which provides help and advice to families affected by alcohol and drug addiction.

As well as directly providing services, the Trust also offers rent-free accommodation and administrative support to a range of local groups and agencies, including the recently formed Service HUB. Launched earlier this year by Nicola Sturgeon, the HUB houses a range of statutory services, including the Housing Association, to enable localised, multi-disciplinary solutions to the community's most complex problems. These include council-run Community Safety Services and Cleansing, as well as Police, Fire Brigade and Health

Services. This initiative seeks to improve the quality and efficiency of core services through co-location and joint-working at the local level.





As the case studies illustrate, Scotland's CCHAs *already* are important 'anchors' in their local communities. They have independent community assets and a strong connection to, and understanding of, local interests. This enables them to provide a "focal point" for community activities, and add value to existing statutory and voluntary services (CLG 2007; Home Office 2004). Whilst in some instances this involves CCHAs directly providing services themselves, they also act as intermediaries between the community and other public sector agencies, and provide space and support to help smaller voluntary groups thrive.

GWSF would urge the SG to further support CCHAs in their role as anchor organisations in order to advance local community development and regeneration. They are ideally placed to take on this role for the benefit of Scotland's most deprived communities, given their financial independence and stability, established governance and regulatory structures, local knowledge and professional expertise, strong connection with the local community, and history of effective partnership working.

CCHAs are much more than just landlords: they are an integral part of the communities they serve, delivering a multitude of services with the support of their partners and subsidiaries. The sheer scale and diversity of their activities (as the case studies highlight) provides the 'social glue' that holds communities together.



## Supporting CCHAs to Deliver more for their Communities

As this report has illustrated, CCHAs are key agencies in Scotland's deprived communities. They have a proven track record of delivering regeneration for the social and economic benefit of local residents in a way that is sensitive and responsive to their needs and aspirations.

With the support of local and national government they have the potential to *do even more*. Small changes to the operating environment of CCHAs would enable these anchor organisations to further strengthen their regeneration activities:

- Community regeneration is not a cheap option; it needs to be adequately resourced. GWSF would like to see the SG continue to support the Wider Role fund given its importance in pump-priming local initiatives and its ability to support the delivery of national cross-cutting priorities. Nonetheless, we recognise the narrow definition of what constitutes 'Wider Role' can constrain associations' activities and we would urge the SG to review this. In addition, GWSF would ask the SG to consider opening up alternative sources of funds to CCHAs. Resources held by CPPs would be an obvious example here, but given the connection between housing and health, monies held by Health Boards are another potential avenue to explore. Some CCHAs would also like the opportunity to tender for the delivery of statutory services, such as cleansing, which might be more effectively delivered at the community level.
- As the case studies highlight, there are already a number of examples of co-location of services between different providers in the voluntary and public sector. GWSF would encourage the SG to support further pilot 'hubs'. We believe more effective partnership working at the local level is essential to tackling the complex support needs that persist in Scotland's most deprived communities. Working together better, can also help to make more efficient use of limited resources, allowing them to go further, as the housing association movement has learned itself through shared service arrangements. GWSF is keen that CCHAs should be invited to participate more fully in discussions about the Scottish Housing Futures Trust's "Hub Initiative", which is developing options to improve the planning, procurement and delivery of infrastructure that supports community services.
- GWSF would question whether the CPP framework is the most effective scale at which to deliver community regeneration, if community empowerment is to be a core driver. As this report has underlined, CCHAs with their strong connections to the local community are well-placed to co-ordinate the design and delivery of community regeneration plans. We would therefore urge the SG to encourage statutory agencies (such as CPPs, HBs and Scottish Enterprise) to enter into a more effective dialogue with CCHAs so the voluntary and public sector can mutually support each other to deliver their common goals.
- Some CCHAs would like to work in a policy and financial environment that involves greater sharing of risks by public bodies, in allowing the community anchor role to be developed further. They want to have more explicit regulatory recognition that community regeneration activities may need to be subsidised from core landlord income if this helps to meet



tenants' wider aspirations for their community, and that community regeneration activities frequently generate efficiencies or savings in landlord services, even if these are not always immediately quantifiable. CCHAs want to develop their business models for social enterprise in a way that allows surpluses to be reinvested for the benefit of the wider community.

- GWSF members would also like the SG to lobby HMRC to incorporate the EU directive into UK law, so that not-for-profit companies (including housing associations) can share services without paying VAT. This would make shared service arrangements more attractive to CCHAs, and as the example of the FLAIR associations highlighted, where collaborative working can be achieved, it can deliver real social and economic benefits (FLAIR 2010).
- GWSF also believes that more political and institutional support is needed from both local and central government, to fill the gap left by Communities Scotland and its predecessor Scottish Homes. This void has created a number of issues that have hindered CCHAs in their regeneration efforts. Firstly, more constructive relationships are needed at the local level, because politics continues to constrain the ability of CCHAs to effectively deliver regeneration. Secondly, more continuity in the personnel working in housing and regeneration in the civil service is vital, in order to build relationships, mutual understanding and knowledge. Finally, GWSF would welcome more clarity from the SG about what they see the future role of RSLs as being. Members are frustrated with frequent changes to funding, strategy and priorities, which they see as continually 'changing the goalposts'.



The 'community' continues to be central to government policy priorities at the Scottish and UK levels. GWSF would argue however, that the current rhetoric on 'localism', 'the big society' and 'community asset ownership' offers nothing new for Scotland. CCHAs have been working with their communities for over 30 years, in order to deliver physical, social and economic change. They are the best and most enduring example of community ownership in the UK, and exemplify the social value that community-based, not-for-profit organisations add to their communities.



Community regeneration is not however the responsibility of the voluntary sector alone. Delivering the SG's cross-cutting priorities also demands more creative and flexible solutions by public bodies. Taking the potential of CCHAs as community anchors to the next level will need vision and commitment from government and public bodies, as well as CCHAs themselves.

The policy and political changes brought about the economic downturn offers an opportunity for both the voluntary and public sectors to improve their practice by rethinking how they might deliver services more effectively together.

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