

Communities and Regeneration

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ABSTRACT

Many current Scottish Executive regeneration structures are not effective for social regeneration. SIMD 2006 shows continuing problems. A combination of local communities and different structures such as housing associations are more effective for social regeneration delivery. There is a need for a wider variety of regeneration delivery structures, including housing associations and local community development trusts.

2006 SIMD shows domains of Social Exclusion, Poor Health and Inequality hardly changing, especially in regeneration areas – evidence that current regeneration structures are not delivering improvements. Many indicators are the worst in UK and Europe.

The Executive has focused on Urban Regeneration Companies, many of whose Business Plan outputs are not very relevant for social deprivation. Reductions in EU, Big Lottery and other funding mean that levels of Pathfinder URC funding are not sustainable.

URC areas face some of worst deprivation problems in Scotland. URCs are costly and not good at involving communities. Many Executive initiatives, including “People and Place”, do not take adequate account of growing community pressures. A new Communities Alliance - Local People Leading - seeks to extend community ownership of assets, giving communities more control and responsibility. Housing associations and community development trusts form part of a wider range of organisations as alternative delivery platforms for regeneration programmes.

Examples of current capacity of housing associations and of the scale of current URC programmes show that housing associations and similar organisations are as well placed to become URC or regeneration structures which the Executive might support.

Scotland is developing localised structures for greater community involvement. The Land Reform movement is creating Community Interest Companies and Development Trusts.

Housing associations have a better track record in involving local communities, ethnic minorities, funding with better gearing, using their own money and delivery of wider range of more relevant social outputs including the “ladder” to owner occupation.

There is also doubt whether URC structures have a capacity to meet affordable housing needs. Housing associations' have a potential to meet full range of housing needs and aspirations and to provide ladder from social rent through shared equity to ownership.

Councils like Falkirk have a precedent with SIRRS (Special Initiatives for Residential Led Regeneration) for some villages, enabling genuine Community Led Regeneration.

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