SURF
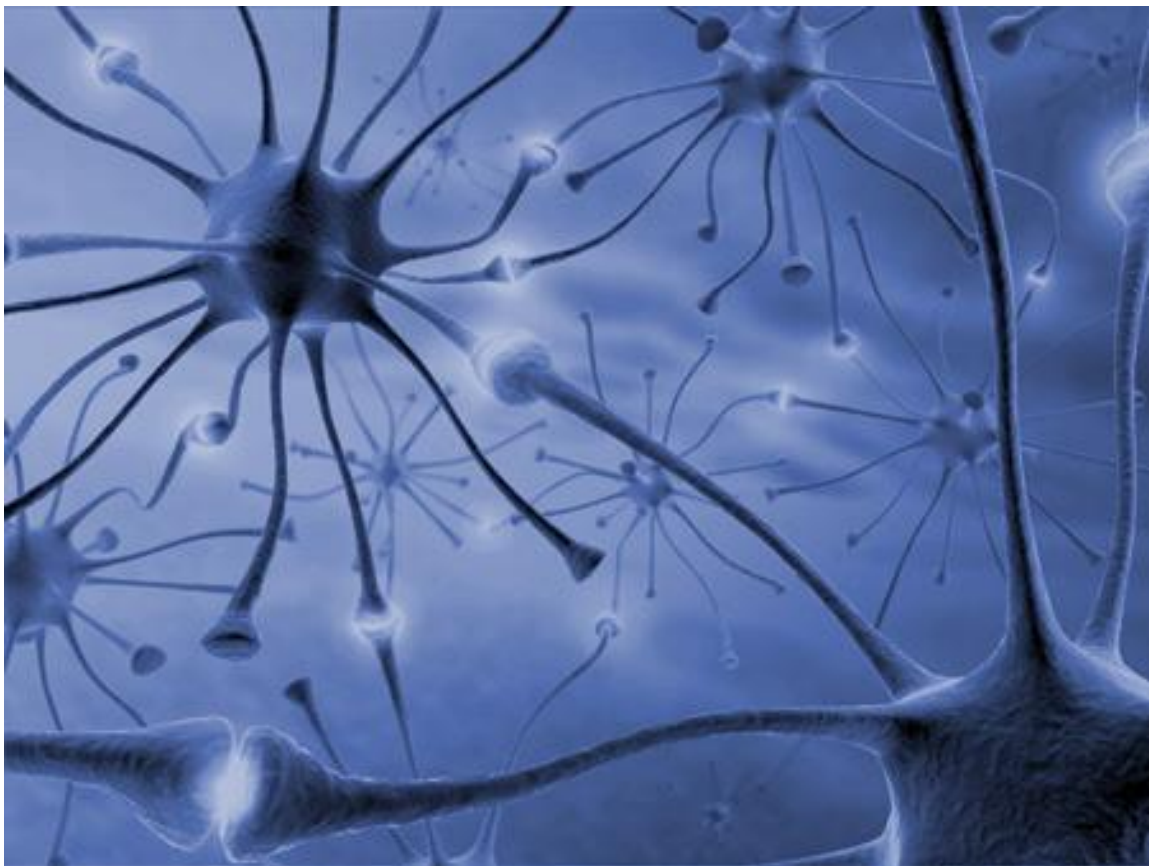Scotland's Independent Regeneration Network

SURF : sharing experience : shaping practice

Delivering and Developing the SURF 'ALLIANCE FOR ACTION' 2013-15

An update on delivery and further plans at November 2014

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1 SECTION ONE: Alliance for Action in Year One (2013/14)

1.1 Introduction and Background

Background

As Scotland's independent regeneration network, SURF shares the Scottish Government's interest in exploring the evolving context and practical options for achieving more participative and sustainable community regeneration.

In March 2013, the Scottish Government committed support for SURF's proposal to use its unique role, experience and cross sector networks to develop a collaborative 'Alliance for Action' initiative. The main specified aims were to:

- **Enhance resilience and practical outcomes** in the two communities of concerted focus i.e. Govan in Glasgow and Gallatown in Kirkcaldy;
- **Identify learning and promote constructive debate on wider policy and resource considerations** for supporting community regeneration in the continuing recessionary context.

The agreed approach was to build on the learning, cooperation, themes and examples identified and presented in the 'Reality, Resources, Resilience' report which was published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as a SURF Programme Paper on 23 January 2013.[1]

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[1] *Reality, Resources, Resilience: Regeneration in a Recession*, SURF (2013)*.* Available on the JRF website: www.jrf.org.uk/publications/reality-resources-resilience
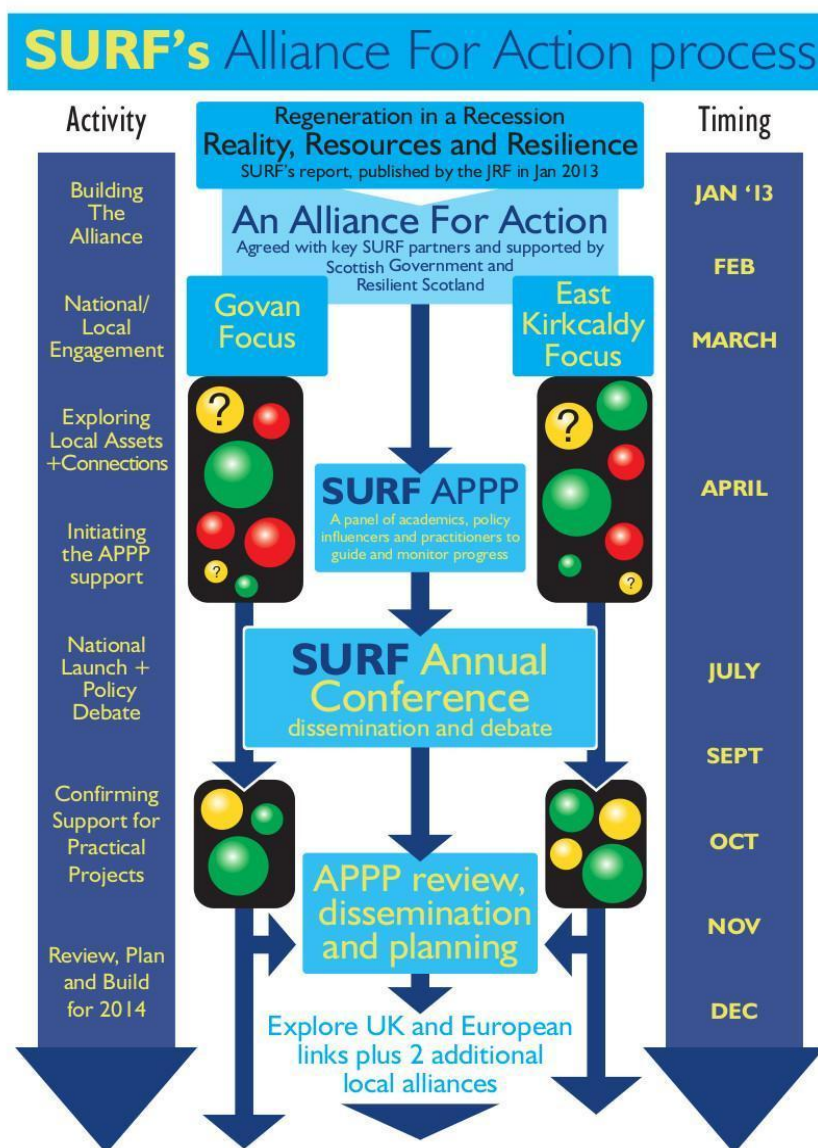
Content

Section One of this paper reports on the progress achieved in the first year of SURF's Alliance for Action initiative over the period 2013/14.

Section Two sets out activities already delivered in 2014/15 by building on the first year's practical experience and learning. It also outlines the plans for further action and development in the remaining 2014/15 period of the current Scottish Government support agreement (which ends on 31 March 2015).

The intended development process for the first year of SURF's Alliance for Action, as described in the 2013 SURF Alliance for Action diagram (see Diagram 1 overleaf), has been successfully completed.

What follows in section 1.2 is a summary of the activity targets for 2013/14 and the practical progress achieved in that period.

Diagram 1: SURF's Alliance for Action in 2013/14

1.2	A Summary of targets and outputs for Year One (2013/14)

Having consulted locally and nationally towards a programme of 'Alliance for Action' activity, SURF took responsibility for planning and delivering a number of complementary outputs between April 2013 and March 2015.

These outputs are highlighted below in **navy text**. The italicised text underneath each output provides a record of what was delivered in 2013/14.

● **AGREED OUTPUT:** Establishing, supporting and developing an interactive 'Alliance for Action' network by linking partner organisations that have policies and resources dedicated to supporting community led regeneration.

> *Delivered in Year One (2013/14):*
>
> *Following explanatory discussions with local and national partners to confirm shared interests, the local Alliance for Action initiatives were successfully launched at special events in Govan, Glasgow, and in East Kirkcaldy, Fife, in April 2013. Over 80 representatives of relevant cross-sector local and national regeneration organisations participated.*

● **AGREED OUTPUT:** Enhanced understanding and cooperation, with a view to increasing the quality, value and shared benefits of investments via more coordinated engagement with locally appropriate knowledge, initiatives and experience.

> *Delivered in Year One (2013/14):*
>
> *Relevant local assets, challenges and priorities were explored in an extended series of bilateral discussions prior to the two local Alliance for Action launch events. Potentially constructive connections between national policies and resources, and local initiatives and assets, were identified. Details are listed in the subsequently circulated reports of the two Alliance for Action launch events that are available on the SURF website.[2]*

● **AGREED OUTPUT:** Showcasing successful approaches and the availability of support for community led regeneration via SURF network communication systems.

> *Delivered in Year One (2013/14):*
>
> *Twenty four face to face interviews with key practitioners in relevant local regeneration projects were carried out, recorded and subsequently checked for accuracy with the interviewees. The resultant baseline information reports covered project, aims, resources, partners, aspirations and perceived challenges to further progress.*

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[2] *A SURF-led Alliance for Action: Report from Launch Events in Govan and East Kirkcaldy*, SURF *(2013).* Available on the SURF website: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SURF-Alliance-for-Action-launch-events-report1.pdf

Further desk based research followed by face to face interviews with 12 of the above contacts focused on awareness, access to and use of existing Scottish Government resources for supporting community regeneration efforts.

A summary report drawing out consistent themes from the baseline discussions and additional research is available on the SURF website.[3]

Additionally, presentations based on the Alliance for Action process and early learning have been made by the SURF Chief Executive to:

- *The Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee*
- *The Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Architecture and the Built Environment*
- *The Scottish Community Development Network Annual Conference*
- *The Community Development Alliance Scotland Annual Conference*
- *The Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government*
- *The Chief Executive of CoSLA*
- *Relevant senior Scottish Government civil servants, and others*

- **AGREED OUTPUT:** Convening a series of participative events to raise awareness and debate learning from the work of the Alliance with colleagues across all sectors and geographies.

    Delivered in Year One (2013/14):

    The Alliance for Action initiative and the emergent lessons from its work were the main focus of SURF's Annual Conference of July 2013. It was attended by over 120 delegates from all sectors across Scotland and was addressed by both the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government and the President of CoSLA. Highlights of the main presentations and summaries of the thematic workshop discussions are available on the SURF website.[4]

- **AGREED OUTPUT:** Organising 'study visits' to successful projects and participating organisations.

    Delivered in Year One (2013/14):

    SURF facilitated free access to information, contact details and interactive study visits of the winners of the 2012 SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration in collaboration with the Scottish Government, Architecture + Design Scotland, Highland and Islands Enterprise, the City of Edinburgh Council, and others.[5]

- **AGREED OUTPUT:** Facilitating a series of focused and frank 'Chatham House Rule' discussions of the policy implications via SURF's 'Food For Thought' model, involving relevant invited key policy makers, practitioners and academics.

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[3] *SURF 'Alliance for Action' One Year On – Progress and Priorities*, SURF (2014). Available on the SURF website: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Report-for-SURF-APPP-April-2014.pdf

[4] *2013 SURF Annual Conference: Creative Community Regeneration*, SURF (2013). A SURF web-page with various event materials: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge-centre/annual-conferences/

[5] For more on this, see: *2012 SURF Awards: Sharing Experience, Shaping Practice, Celebrating Success* (2012). Available on the SURF website: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2012_SURF_Awards_Publication.pdf

Delivered in Year One (2013/14):

A 'Food For Thought' dinner discussion event held immediately prior to the 2013 Annual Conference involved 14 relevant and influential guests, including community activists from the Alliance for Action sites and senior policy-makers and academics.

SURF also convened two SURF APPP 'Food For Thought' policy discussions involving academic, policy and practice Alliance partners with relevant expertise, responsibilities and experience. See following output for links to summary reports of those discussions.

● **AGREED OUTPUT:** Linking policy development debate with the practical experience of local initiatives and academic research capacitates via a bespoke SURF academic, policy & practitioner panel ("The SURF APPP").

Delivered in Year One (2013/14):

SURF established a bespoke network of over 20 academic, policy and practitioner colleagues to form the SURF APPP (see list of members at end of this section on p8). Two APPP sessions were convened in 2013/14 to raise awareness of the process and agree the most appropriate process for monitoring progress and maximising the value of learning outcomes, including links to emergent research, policy and practice trends. The SURF APPP membership follows overleaf. Reports from SURF APPP meetings [are available on the SURF website](.)[6]

Following discussion of the Alliance process and options for relevant monitoring and evaluation arrangements at the second APPP meeting of 12.09.13, SURF conferred with Erica Wimbush, Head of Evaluation at NHS Health Scotland, and other. These discussions resulted in the APPP confirming a 'Theory of Change' for the Alliance for Action process. A diagram indicating the specified challenges, actions, scope, and intended results was produced and circulated (see diagram two at the end of this section on p9).

● **AGREED OUTPUT:** Broadening the accumulated learning and interactive debate onto an international scale via UK cross border policy/practice exchanges.

Delivered in Year One (2013/14):

SURF has had constructive discussion on opportunities and options for cross border collaboration with colleagues in the Scottish Universities Insights Institute, the Scottish Cities Alliance, Newcastle City Council, Dundee City Council (which maintains a connection with 2013 UK City of Culture Derry/Londonderry), as well as with JRF and the Carnegie UK Trust.
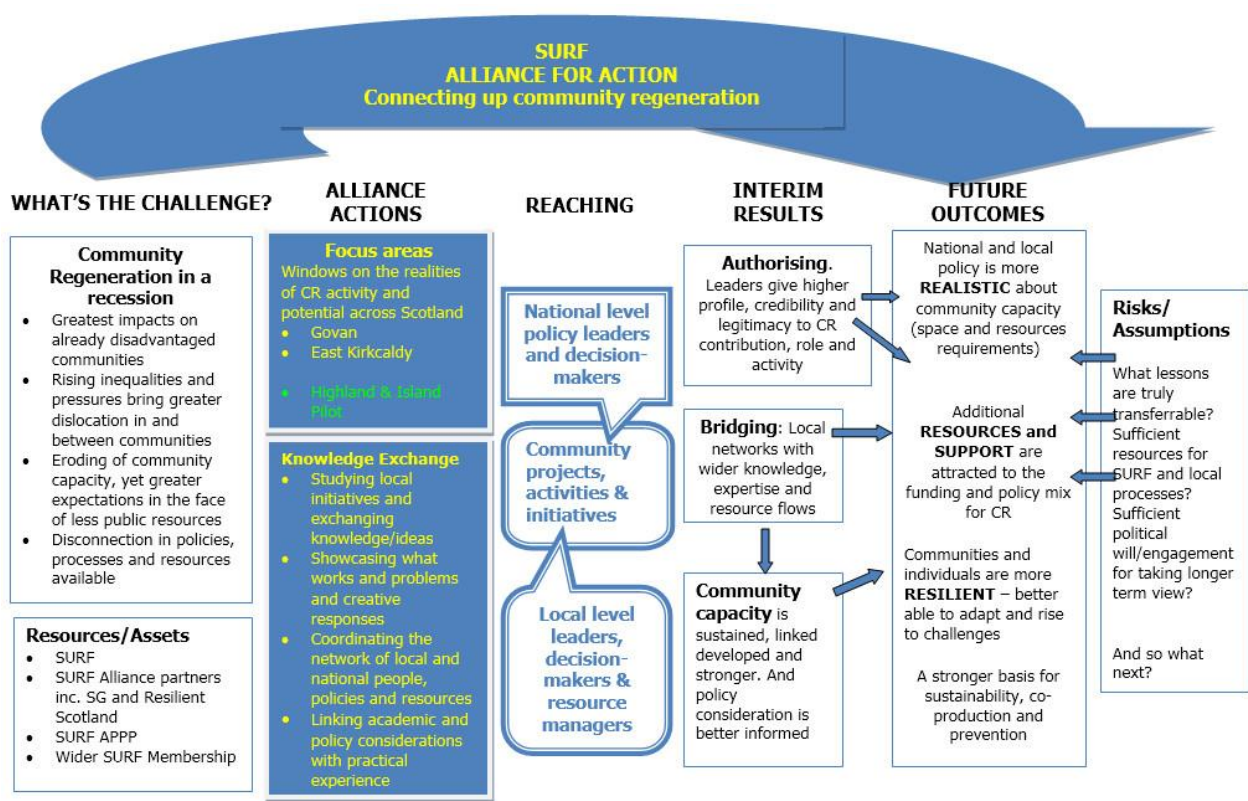
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[6] *SURF Alliance for Action* web-page (2014): http://www.scotregen.co.uk/projects/alliance-for-action/

Members of the SURF APPP as of November 2014

(a-z by organisation)

- *Jim Metcalfe, Practice and Development Manager, Carnegie UK Trust*
- *Dr Elaine Cooper, Consultant, C.A.R.E.S*
- *David Cleghorn, Chair, Dedridge Environment Ecology Project*
- *Prof Darinka Asenova, School of Risk Management, Glasgow Caledonian University*
- *Helen Scott, Programme Coordinator – Regeneration, Glasgow Housing Association*
- *Ade Kearns, Principal Investigator/Professor of Urban Studies, GoWell Research Programme/University of Glasgow*
- *John Cassidy, Director, Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing*
- *Colin Mair, Chief Executive, Improvement Service*
- *Andrew Lyon, Director, International Futures Forum*
- *Jim McCormick, Scotland Advisor, Joseph Rowntree Foundation*
- *Robert Livingston, Cultural Facilitator, Kirkhill Associates*
- *George Dodds, Director of Delivery, NHS Health Scotland*
- *Dr Gerry McCartney, Head of the Public Health Observatory Division, NHS Health Scotland*
- *Francis Stuart, Poverty Programme and Policy Research Advisor, Oxfam Scotland*
- *Chris Holloway, Head, Resilient Scotland Ltd*
- *Paul Spicker, Director of the Centre for Public Policy and Management, Robert Gordon University*
- *Angus Hardie, Director, Scottish Community Alliance*
- *David Allan, Head of Programmes, Scottish Community Development Centre*
- *David Stewart, Policy Manager, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations*
- *David Cowan, Director of Regeneration Unit, Scottish Government*
- *Dr Andy Park, Senior Economist and Head of Housing and Regeneration Analysis, Scottish Government*
- *Brian MacDonald, Chair, SURF*
- *Pippa Coutts, Vice Chair, SURF*
- *Deborah Peel, Chair and Professor of Architecture and Planning, University of Dundee*
- *Annette Hastings, Professor of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow*
- *Tam Munro, Chair, West and Central Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network*

Diagram 2: A 'Theory of Change' for SURF's Alliance for Action

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1.3	Practical Learning Outcomes in Year One (2013/14)

SURF's Alliance for Action activity has already produced significant benefits in enhanced practical cooperation and coordinated investments in the two case study communities that are facing multiple social and economic challenges.

The process of investigating local/national and practical/policy interactions based on that coordinated engagement has also produced valuable insights. These have been have been debated and informed via bi-annual sessions of the SURF Academic, Policy and Practitioner Panel (the SURF APPP).

SURF's summary of the main learning outcomes so far is as follows:

Productive partnerships

- **Partnership agreement** – There has been enthusiastic participation in the Alliance for Action approach, which seems to substantiate a generally increased level of consensus on the wisdom of collaboration for achieving added value on shared aims. This appears to be built on a now widely ingrained orthodoxy of partnership processes which has been actively promoted in advice, legislation and practice by the Scottish Government over recent decades.

- **Powerful lessons** – The practical experience of engagement in formal Community Planning processes appears to have helped all partners develop a more realistic appreciation of the extent and effects of differences in the statutory and informal power held by some players, particularly in decision-making authority and access to resources. It is evident that influential relationships and networks are important but they are not always obvious or openly shared.

- **Adding value** – Significant added value in partnership activity is achievable via the role of a generally respected 'no axe to grind' network like SURF which can take responsibility for supporting a coordinated and focused approach to collaborative place-based regeneration. Investors and policy-makers appear to appreciate the opportunity to engage with the reality of a local regeneration context in a 'safe' coordinated collaboration. Funders appear to take reassurance from the shared commitment and responsibility of other investors. Policy-makers welcome a broader understating of the local dynamics that affect the viability and interaction of their approach. Many local players are encouraged by the level and broad spectrum of interested parties engaged via the Alliance process. That breadth more accurately reflects their view of the extent and interactivity of local regeneration challenges. For most activists, it stands in favourable contrast to the conventional linear connections between individual funders, policy-makers, places and specific projects.

- **Making connections** – A range of more incidental benefits have arisen from SURF's facilitating of organisational and individual introductions. These include the uncovering of shared interests between previously unfamiliar individuals and organisations, with some instances of resultant practical collaboration.

- **Reconnecting and uncovering** – Under the shared Alliance for Action focus, there have been instances of improved investment efficiency and cooperative operating climate through the diplomatic re-engagement of some historically disconnected local projects and personalities. Similarly, there have been useful examples where debilitating misunderstandings and shortcomings around effective representation and accountability have been addressed.

- **More creative approaches –** While resistance to anything more adventurous than the most conventional bureaucratic processes remains high amongst some organisations and colleagues, there does appear to be a greater level of appreciation of the productive potential of artistically creative approaches. That potential was highlighted in SURF's *Reality, Resources, Resilience: Regeneration in a Recession* report, which informed the instigation of the Alliance for Action initiative. Support for more creativity as a medium for community engagement and within organisational culture has been evidenced in Alliance activities in both sites and via national policy developments.

- **Investing in success** – The noted advantages for all parties of a diplomatic and catalytic role (such as that of SURF's in the Alliance for Action) raises the question of how such a function might be replicated to achieve greater levels of constructive collaboration and mutually beneficial investments on a Scottish wide basis.

Some cautionary lessons

- **Preventative investment** – Many of the third sector organisations involved in the Alliance have been developed locally in an effort to address some elements of disadvantage. There is strong, and broadly accepted, evidence that they provide practical outcomes in enhanced enterprise and local capacity with substantial preventative spend benefits for wider society. Despite the high level of rhetoric on the strategic importance of this type of local response, it is concerning that even the most respected and capable organisations, some frequently cited as national exemplars, still struggle to secure sufficient resources to survive, let alone thrive and replicate.

- **Competing interests** – Present funding processes and criteria still tend to set up organisations to compete with each other, rather than cooperate - and to focus on short-term outputs rather than sustainable outcomes. Substantial examples of resulting local inefficiencies have been

identified in this process so far. SURF hopes to build on regeneration resources research that it has undertaken as baseline material in the development phase of the Alliance action/learning programme.

- **Turf and trust** – There have been some instances of 'professional status anxiety' hampering the ability of Alliance for Action partners to act quickly and collectively on agreed collaborative efforts. These include the reactive protection of organisational 'turf' and 'professional' resource allocation. They arise from a lack of trust between organisations under financial and political pressure, and/or a lack of empathy for the lived reality and potential capacity of community residents and organisations.

- **Effective leadership** – In some cases, these barriers have been successfully negotiated through the creative intervention of effective individuals. Such individual leadership provides a more common and timely solution than the much vaunted but, as yet, largely unrealised 'cultural shifts' within whole organisations. The effectiveness of larger organisations can be stimulated or stymied by increased financial pressures. Again, the style of leadership applied is highly influential in the direction which the pressures tend to drive organisational performance.

- **Encouraging deviance** – In a similar vein, notable examples of enterprising activity and creative collaboration are seen to be frequently based on individual relationships, attitudes and personal dedication. The question is how to adequately recognise, reward and replicate such 'positive deviance'. Should we be investing more in that opportunistic, and hopefully catalytic, route rather than in broad based (and usually top down) efforts at shifting the whole organisational culture? If so, how can we do so with a sufficient degree of timely intelligence and adequate accountability?

Community context and challenges

- **Boom to bust** – Over the extended pre-2008 property 'boom', regeneration policy became increasingly based on the now discredited orthodoxy of 'trickle down' from rising land and property values.[7] Despite what had become a longstanding reduction in investment in 'community development' the Scottish Government's National Regeneration Strategy (2011) placed considerable weight on 'community led' regeneration. While this radical, pragmatic change of strategic course was welcomed by most community development advocates, substantial concerns about resources, capacity and deliverability were also expressed, especially in a recession of unprecedented scale and duration.[8]

- **Challenging 'Community' realities** – Community contacts in both Alliance for Action sites remarked on a tendency for some (and especially more recent) professional advocates of community led regeneration to overlook the frequently challenging reality experienced by community groups. Concerns include the natural volatility and variable capacity of community groups. That reality presents closely associated difficulties in:

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[7] As stated in the Scottish Government's 2011 'Building a Sustainable Future' regeneration discussion paper (p6): "The assumption that wealth generated by economic development would 'trickle down' to the poor through job creation is now widely discredited." Available online at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/340876/0113159.pdf

[8] SURF previously raised some of these concerns in its response to the 2011 'Building a Sustainable Future' discussion paper, which was published in advance of the launch of the National Regeneration Strategy. The response is available on the SURF website at: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/SURF-Response-Regeneration-Discussion-Paper-June-2011.pdf

1. Ensuring adequately inclusive long-term access to any transferred assets;

2. Sustaining reasonable accountability in decision-making processes.

While the desire for more community engagement remains high, at least in rhetorical terms, the challenge of identifying who represents 'the community' except in the most specific instances, remains problematic. This is an unsurprising outcome of decades of underinvestment in community development and the increasing degenerative recessionary pressures on residents and organisations in more disadvantaged areas in particular.

The SURF Alliance for Action process in both sites engages a range of community organisations with considerable expertise, knowledge and, in some cases, significant resources. It has also involved impressively active individuals who freely contribute substantial amounts of time and energy, backed by their uniquely valuable experience of the interaction of various remote policies with conditions, service configurations and delivery mechanisms 'on the ground'.

However, the perspectives of individual organisations and groups of residents do not always cohere into a 'community' view. The pressures on statutory partners to promptly secure an acceptably constructive community input (in their terms) can lead to unhelpful shortcuts that further exacerbate local tensions and divisions. In both sites, difficulties in establishing reasonably representative and effective community interest 'umbrella' organisations have been experienced. If it is not deemed possible to dedicate sufficient and sustainable skills and resources to that end, it will be necessary to accept the reduced outcome expectations of a more piecemeal, opportunistic approach to community engagement/participation/empowerment. In that case the policy rhetoric should be adjusted accordingly to help reduce potential misunderstanding and frustration amongst local community participants.

The capacity building support programme being developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre, based on Scottish Government support, is helpfully accessible and appropriate. Nevertheless, that and similar resource inputs may not be sufficient to create the sort of structures and capacities required in the short term or to sustain them in the longer term. Additionally, the tendency for statutory partners to conflate voluntary organisations, some of which are understandably keen to assert and maintain their own role and resources, with the residential community, can be a source of local disharmony. Despite the best intentions of both statutory partners and activists, this remains a challenge in both Alliance areas. What are referred to as community priorities and plans may only be understood as such by a relatively small group of individuals. This need not be a complete barrier to progress, but if the reality gap is ignored or misrepresented, it is likely to become counterproductive for all partners.

- **Challenging 'Political' realities** – Notwithstanding the positive messages on increased partnership enthusiasms referred to at the start of this section, Alliance for Action activity in both areas has evidenced the considerable challenges of political and organisational divisions within and between statutory partners. This is understandably a greater challenge for the local authority partners, where it is mostly a reflection of their scale and their party political composition and representative roles. There is little realistic expectation of substantially removing these challenges, but a more frank explanation of the political realities would be helpful. Moderate 'Glasnost' would help community activists, and perhaps other partners, by providing the sort of information and contextual understanding that is essential for realistic engagement and empowerment. As it is, the most sincere and potentially useful commentary is usually conveyed via sporadic 'off the record' observations and privileged 'inside information'. The value of this informal narrative of parallel reality is one of the reasons that SURF's invited 'Food For Thought' discussions, which are held under the 'Chatham House Rule', have remained

an important and effective feature of its broader work in promoting shared understanding and linking different perspectives and priorities.

- **Challenging inequality** – The Scottish Government is developing an impressive range of initiatives and policy aimed at supporting more community participation, enterprise and ownership. These include the implementation of 2011 Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services recommendations, the 2014 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, commitment to follow through on the proposals presented in the Land Reform Review Group in 2014 and various innovative social enterprise support measures. The ongoing national review of Community Planning, and the 2014 CoSLA Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy final report fit well within the same incrementally progressive policy framework.

There remains, however, a fundamental requirement to adequately address underlying inequalities in resources and capacity. Evidence from the Alliance for Action interactions confirms that the present disparities have crucial implications for the success of both 'asset transfer' and the practical prospects for more community led regeneration in disadvantaged areas. Studies by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the University of Glasgow and others have highlighted the danger of community asset transfer policy in the present context unintentionally *increasing* inequalities. The absence of macro-economic policy aimed at meaningfully addressing extreme imbalances in resources and networks between affluent and disadvantaged communities threatens to derail and potentially discredit further aspirations for 'asset based' and community led regeneration. Lastly, in the same vein, there is the significant risk of lasting damage to potentially valuable elements of local regeneration strategies in over-selling and under-resourcing isolated examples of excellence in community based regeneration.

Regeneration in a degenerative context

- **Mitigation –** SURF's Alliance for Action initiative has been successful in encompassing an extensive range of scales of intervention in both sites. Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that even the most substantial local regeneration efforts captured and nurtured within the Alliance for Action framework are focused on the mitigation of more powerful degenerative forces and the more efficient use of limited (and threatened) regeneration resources.

- **Harder to reach** - The study so far has confirmed that high-level 'hard to reach' political and private sector investment decisions have a much more profound effect on the lives and opportunities of local people and businesses than even the most substantial attempts at local collaborations on regeneration strategies and investments.

- **False narrative** – The personal and professional remoteness of decision-makers and processes from the community level tends to obscure their role and responsibility from those most affected by their decisions. Within that gap in understanding, relatively small local initiatives are burdened with undeliverable levels of challenge and expectation. The result is the acceptance of a generally false narrative of 'failure' in local regeneration efforts.

- **Degenerative dynamics** - There is considerable scope for further productive work in exploring the prospects for better engagement, or at least greater appreciation of the implications these overarching and potentially degenerative dynamics for regeneration policy and practice. Failure to do so will mean a continuing unfair, debilitating and widespread perception of general failure of existing regeneration policy, investment and practice.

- **Converging on outcomes** - A general lack of focus on, and adequate measurement of, outcomes, even from relatively substantial national regeneration investments, tends to sustain this false narrative. The development of clear and measurable 'convergence targets', focused on employment, education and health/wellbeing outcomes from more substantial regeneration investments, could provide a constructive context for assessing both investment impacts and external influences.

[End of Section One]

2   SECTION TWO: Alliance for Action in Year Two (2014/15)

2.1   Overview of Priorities for Year Two (2014/15)

One year on 'Progress and Priorities' sessions were held in Govan on 13.03.14 and Kirkcaldy on 20.03.14. These sessions built on the agreements of the initial launch events one year earlier and reflected on the practical and diplomatic progress made over that period.

Again, over 80 community project and agency representatives participated across both events. Following presentations and debate, the following priority themes of Alliance for Action activity were agreed for each area:

Govan

- Linking Planning & Infrastructure Investments / Govan Town Centre Development;
- Enhancing Creativity and Community Participation;
- Building on Heritage and Assets.

East Kirkcaldy

- Infrastructure Investment (including spaces for independent community development);
- Creative Community Participation via Community Budgeting;
- Health and Wellbeing (addressing inequality and preventative spending).

In both cases, it was collectively agreed that in 2014/15 the SURF Alliance for Action would focus on:

- Developing investment and learning collaboration within and across these complementary priorities (see diagrams 3 and 4 overleaf);
- Sharing experience and learning between Govan and East Kirkcaldy;
- Identifying and disseminating transferable regeneration policy and practice lessons for application on a Scotland-wide basis.
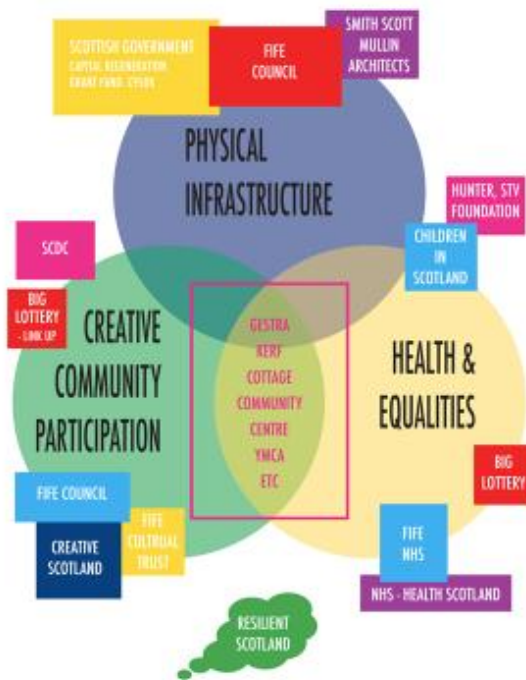
Diagram 3: SURF's Alliance for Action focus in Govan, Glasgow

SURF -

Govan Alliance for Action focus

Diagram 4: SURF's Alliance for Action focus in East Kirkcaldy, Fife

SURF -

East Kirkcaldy Alliance for Action focus

April – June 2014

Research on Scottish Government Resources for Community Regeneration

The final draft of the report was shared with Scottish Government colleagues who liaised internally to firstly ensure accuracy and secondly, provide constructive comment on the main findings. Those observations were then noted in the final report to the SURF APPP, which was made public in September 2014 (see reference 3 on p6 for a link).

SURF is now keen to build on this collaborative research by securing additional resources for a supplementary phase two. It would encompass other sources of community regeneration support, such as those from local authorities, the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Creative Scotland and Resilient Scotland.

July 2014

Community Projects Perspectives - Baseline Films

Written records of baseline information on project roles, resources, partnerships and perspectives, drawn from face to face interviews were supplemented by professionally filmed interviews with 20 of the relevant local contacts. A compilation of short extracts were then shown at the 'One year on – Progress and Priorities' sessions in Govan and East Kirkcaldy. They are available on SURF's YouTube channel.[9]

SURF is now editing the full set of original filmed interviews into a single film with an additional explanatory introduction and concluding summary points. This will be widely publicised and made available via the same YouTube channel.

August 2014

Govan Town Centre and Water Row Gathering 19.08.14

In SURF's Govan centred Alliance for Action discussions with local partners and national organisations over the last 18 months, the Govan town centre and waterfront area emerged as the main focus of shared interest. SURF's discussions with existing partners and new stakeholders revealed an encouraging level of consensus on the importance of building on Govan's physical and cultural assets. Their potential in the successful development of the Water Row site as a vibrant social, economic and cultural hub of connectivity was highlighted.

The scope for realising the benefits of that inter-related connectivity, and the hurdles on the way to achieving it, was the focus of a productive discussion involving 35 cross sector colleagues on 19.08.14.

A summary report of the perceived links/opportunities and hurdles to be overcome has been produced and circulated. SURF is continuing its diplomatic and connective Alliance for Action activity on this key priority in support of the successful work of the Central Govan Action Plan steering group.

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[9] SURF's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/scotregen

September 2014

Fourth SURF APPP Meeting

The progress report prepared for the fourth meeting of the SURF APPP on 4th September 2014 in the Corinthians, Glasgow, enabled the 16 members present to build on earlier explanatory and advisory processes and to consider the early emergent lessons from the Alliance for Action activity so far.[10] The APPP members discussed potentially useful links to relevant and current academic, policy and practice streams of work. It concluded by providing advice on how the work of the Alliance for Action could therefore be best oriented and further developed in order to enhance understanding, policy development and more successful regeneration practice on a Scotland wide basis.

October – December 2014

East Kirkcaldy – Participative Community Budgeting

Following extended discussions on planning, process and content, October will see the instigation of a participative community budgeting process in East Kirkcaldy.

By, and for, residents involved in community groups of East Kirkcaldy, this process will involve residents who are already participating in creative projects presenting their case for investment and then collectively prioritising and allocating grants totalling £18k. These will be provided to the selected creative community groups via the SURF Alliance for Action process. The £18k has already been committed by Creative Scotland, Fife Cultural Trust and Fife Council. SURF has discussed and agreed with all parties the process and how it will help meet shared aims.

In addition to the actual investments and the resultant increased creative community activity, the main intended outcomes are:

- Increased shared understanding and practical cooperation between local projects and activists;
- Enhanced awareness and capacity in terms of the challenges of deciding priorities and allocating limited resources.

December 2014

Rothesay - Feasibility Study for New Alliance for Action Area

By the end of December 2014, SURF will have completed a Highlands and Islands Enterprise funded feasibility study on the prospects and rationale for successfully developing a SURF led Alliance for Action initiative focused on the island town of Rothesay.

SURF has used the accumulated experience of the Govan and Kirkcaldy Alliance process to support its role in instigating a programme of research and a related a series of extended discussions in cooperation with Argyll and Bute Council and relevant local and national partners. This has involved several site visits and successful presentations to the Council's senior management team as well as elected representatives on the Local Area Committee for Bute.

The success of the investigative and diplomatic engagement process so far means that it is now likely that the resultant feasibility study report can recommend establishing a Rothesay Alliance for Action proposal and will have the support of all key partners. If so, this third Alliance 'leg'

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[10] A briefing paper prepared for the fourth SURF APPP meeting is available on the SURF website: http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Report-for-SURF-APPP-Sept-2014.pdf

would then add significant value to the whole Alliance for Action process by expanding the scope of settings, partners, activity and shared learning.

January 2015

Delivery of a Govan/East Kirkcaldy Learning Exchange Event

This event will focus on the added value of engaging artists in local asset based regeneration. It will be delivered in cooperation with Creative Scotland, Voluntary Arts Scotland, Fife Council, Fife Cultural Trust and Glasgow Life. The plan is for 30 colleagues from relevant cross sector projects and agencies to contribute to a sharing of views, experiences and knowledge. A summary report with appropriate recommendations and links will be produced and widely circulated across SURF and partner agency networks as part of the Alliance for Action shared learning process.

February 2015

Collaborative Alliance for Action Event on Food and Nutrition

Focusing on participative local food/nutrition awareness, production and distribution, this seminar will be delivered in cooperation with Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, Children in Scotland, Govan Housing Association, and Glasgow Housing Association. The expectation is that 30 colleagues from relevant cross sector projects and agencies will participate in the event. A summary report with appropriate recommendations and links will be produced and widely circulated across SURF and partner agency networks.

Fifth SURF APPP Meeting

This session with no fewer than 16 academic, policy, and practitioner colleagues will review reports of the process and progress over the first two years. In doing so, it will then debate and confirm plans for further development of the Alliance for Action; particularly the most effective means of identifying, disseminating and further promoting transferable learning in policy and practice.

March 2015

Food Initiative

Confirmation of arrangements and resources for a practical food initiative in Govan in cooperation with Children in Scotland, Govan Housing Association, local primary schools, Glasgow City Council's Education Department, Scottish Television and the Hunter Foundation.

A similar event supported by Children in Scotland will be developed and delivered in cooperation with community organisations in East Kirkcaldy and with the active support of NHS Fife, local schools and Fife Council.

In both cases, we expect at least 20 colleagues from relevant cross sector projects and agencies to participate in the event. Summary reports with appropriate recommendations and links will be produced and widely circulated across SURF and partner agency networks as part of the Alliance shared learning process.

Research and Reflection

SURF will re-engage with its original 20 Alliance for Action project contacts in Govan and East Kirkcaldy to measure change with reference to the earlier baseline films/reports. This activity will be followed by the publication of a first phase final report. It will be then be formally presented to relevant Scottish Government policy colleagues along with a presentation of the films; prior to discussion of the material and its wider dissemination.

2.3	Some additional SURF Alliance for Action partner collaborations

- **Children In Scotland** – has been drawing on SURF's Alliance for Action networks to explore and promote options for enhancing mutually supportive links between primary schools in the Alliance sites and the resources and capacities represented by local community groups and agencies.

- **CoSLA and the SG** –engaged with SURF and its Alliance for Action experience in the instigation of a study on practical options for enhancing third sector involvement in Community Planning processes and outcomes.

- **Dundee City Council** – linked with SURF in convening a November 2014 conference on 'Bridging Culture and Regeneration' consistent with the creative participation and infrastructure investment elements of the Alliance for Action.

- **Glasgow Caledonian University** – by drawing on its Alliance for Action networks, SURF supported the delivery of the University's study of 'social risk' identification and management processes in local authority service planning in the context of budget reductions.

- **NHS Health Scotland** – is tapping into Alliance for Action networks in exploring and promoting opportunities to focus on reducing health inequalities as a means of identifying and enhancing the wider financial and social benefits of preventative spend. On the back of contact via the Fife SURF Alliance for Action activity, it is developing a particular programme of cooperation with Fife Council.

- **Resilient Scotland** – is using the Alliance for Action connections to identify opportunities for making the best use of investments from the £15m JESSICA (Scotland) Trust fund, which is enhancing community enterprise activity in disadvantaged areas across Scotland.

- **Scottish Community Development Centre** – is engaging with the Alliance to target support for community capacity building in community groups via the Scottish Government's Community Capacity Building Fund.

- **University of Dundee** – is working with SURF to explore the options for linking Alliance for Action learning into UK and European cross-border networks.

- **University of Glasgow** – urban regeneration postgraduate students use SURF's Alliance for Action work in Govan as a focus of practical engagement in their studies.

- **What Works Scotland Centre** –SURF is providing information and advice from its Alliance for Action activities to help inform the approach of the new Scottish wide £3.5m research centre, funded by the Scottish Government and the Economic & Social Research Council.

2.4   Conclusion

SURF appreciates the active support of all its partners in this initial development phase of its Alliance for Action initiative.

The above interim report indicates significant progress in achieving practical outcomes and in identifying learning applicable to wider improvements in policy and practice.

The content and timing of the programme is proving increasingly propitious as other important developments in participative governance, enterprise, and co-production evolve across Scotland.

In the coming months, SURF will liaise further with Scottish Government colleagues and with the Academic, Policy and Practitioner Panel (APPP) members in the production of a formal proposal for building on the success and scope of the Alliance for Action approach.

For more information on this stream of activity and the rest of SURF's work as Scotland's independent regeneration network, please visit: www.scotregen.co.uk

[End of paper]

Andy Milne, Chief Executive
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