



THE SURF AWARDS: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

An outcomes report from a series of SURF workshops in 2019

SURF and the Scottish Government deliver the annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration to identify and share examples of high impact in addressing social and economic problems in Scottish places.

In May of 2019, SURF arranged a series of shared learning workshop events with representatives of the [five category winning and shortlisted SURF Award initiatives](#) from the 2018 '20th Anniversary' process. The goal of these events was to explore, in some depth, what transferable lessons these projects can offer to regeneration practitioners working in other sectors and geographies.

This report presents a summary of the main outcomes from the three SURF Awards workshop events, and their respective themes:

- Best practice approaches to place-based regeneration;
- Overcoming barriers to employability facing Scotland's young people and;
- The importance of culture and creative arts in community regeneration.

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Introduction

The annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration process is widely recognised as being the most prestigious awards in the broad regeneration scene in Scotland.

The purpose of the SURF Awards process is:

- To recognise and reward best practice;
- To promote and disseminate best practice across Scotland as means of sharing knowledge and experience and enhancing policy and practice;
- To highlight the role that regeneration projects and initiatives have in improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

2018 was the 20th year of the SURF Awards, and the 15th that it has been delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Nominations to the 2018 SURF Awards were assessed by an independent panel of 20 expert judges drawn from national regeneration related organisations and community groups in Scotland. Working in teams, the judging panel members agreed category shortlists, made site visits to these shortlisted projects, and collaboratively selected winning projects.

The five category winning projects for the 2018 SURF Awards were:

- **Creative Regeneration:** [Findhorn Bay Arts](#)
- **Youth Employability:** Pathfinder Programme – [WorkingRite](#) and [DRC Youth Project](#)
- **Community Led Regeneration:** [Papay Community Cooperative](#)
- **Scotland's Most Improved Place:** [Westray](#)
- **Housing:** [Chapelark](#)

These winning projects were announced at a SURF Awards Presentation Dinner event in Glasgow in December 2018. The following year, SURF invited colleagues in all five winning projects to

participate in a series of SURF Awards shared learning workshop events with regeneration practitioners from the SURF network.

The events were designed to explore and highlight the main factors that led to the success of the 2018 SURF Award winning initiatives that could potentially help initiatives in other contexts and places.

The following sections of this report highlight the main areas of discussion and outcomes from the following three themed events in the series:

- **Best practice approaches to place-based regeneration** with Papay Community Cooperative, Chapelpark, Westray, Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Island's Enterprise. Held in the Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh, on 2 May 2019.
- **Overcoming barriers to employability facing Scotland's young people** with the Pathfinder Programme, Kingdom Works, Pathway to Success, Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Government (slides only). Held in the Glasgow Women's Library, Bridgeton, on 15 May 2019.
- **The importance of culture and creative arts in community regeneration** with Findhorn Bay Arts, WHALE Arts, Creative Scotland, Arts and Business Scotland and Renfrewshire Council. Held in Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley, on 30 May 2019.

SURF is grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the SURF Awards process, including these workshop events. The 2018 SURF Awards process also benefited from the support of the following additional partners in the delivery of thematic categories: [Architecture & Design Scotland](#), [Creative Scotland](#), [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#), and [Skills Development Scotland](#).

Transferable Lessons

1) Best practice approaches to place-based regeneration

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

Westray, Chapelpark and Papay Community Cooperative.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partners the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Skills Development Scotland.

About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2018 SURF Award winning projects in the 'Scotland's Most Improved Place', 'Housing' and 'Community Led Regeneration' categories.

All of the initiatives have a focus on place-based regeneration.

The half-day workshop took place on the 2nd May 2019 in The Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Awards partners the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Skills Development Scotland. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 60 participants.

First Presentation Summary: Westray

Westray is a small island off mainland Orkney and has a population of around 600 people, with around 60-70 pupils currently enrolled in the local school, which services both Westray and the neighbouring islands.

The Westray Development Trust have been operating for 20 years, and were initially set up to tackle issues of de-population on the island. They have one full time worker and part-time project staff. They are directed by a volunteer led Board with a diverse range of skills and knowledge. Their charitable objectives include anything that brings benefit to the island

The trust generates a majority of its income from the community owned wind turbine, from which they generate 100% of the profits. This money, combined with other funding, is used to support projects across the island. They offer three grant streams, covered by the wind turbine profits, for Education, Community and Environment.

The most popular grant is for educational activity. This includes things such as training and driving lessons; given the remote location these things are harder to come by and it helps to build skills and increase job prospects.

Their community and environment grants have funded activities such as; bought the land for the golf course, constructed a play park, bonfire nights, formed a dementia group, skiff boat building workshops, provided the local nursery with healthy snacks, funded after school clubs and school equipment and supported community sports events.

The Trust also offer Community Business Loans. Three have been provided to date; two to support island shops and one to a creel fishing boat enterprise. The loans are managed by partners such as Scottish Community Finance. These investments have helped sustain vital industry and much needed amenities on the island.

With support from the Scottish Land Fund, the Trust are producing a plan to increase the affordable housing offer on the island. They aim to build 4 new flats that will be targeted at young people and encourage new workers to the island to work in traditional industries, such as fisheries. The aim is to prevent de-population by creating attractive offers to the younger population to remain on the island.

The Bargain Box has been one of the Trust's biggest successes. It allows local groups to adopt the shop unit on a one-week rotation. Groups who participate get to keep 50% of the income they generate, whilst the rest goes into a shared pot. This helps groups to become self-sufficient by generating their own income, meaning they are less reliant on external funding.

Other successes that have been achieved include the establishment of a Community Growing Project. The island is at the end of a long food supply chain due to its location, this creates an issue with availability of fresh food. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and LEADER funding allowed the Trust to build polytunnels to grow fresh fruit and veg. The Youth Centre provides a space for the



young people, where they have they decide how it is run. The centre is unstaffed meaning the young people can use it for themselves and are given the responsibility of looking after the space.

A Defibrillator Network has been established, as they previously had no device available. They now have one for Westray and are looking to expand on this by developing a network with a greater number of defibrillators and better access. A Home Help Service allows the elderly population the option to stay in their own homes for longer, with additional support.

'Your Island Your Choice' is a Participatory Budgeting initiative between the Scottish Government and VA Orkney. The Westray Development Trust piggybacked on this and doubled the available money. The project empowered the community and the GP Surgery got their own equipment to treat lung conditions, meaning they no longer had to use the shared equipment between islands.

The Trust noted that the community and people as their main strength, as they know what they want and they just get involved. Other strengths include collaboration and being open to change and working with new partners. Their willingness to look at the small projects as well as the bigger projects, things such as flower bulb planting, has led to a sense of civic pride. Pride of place and community involvement are important; don't dismiss the small things.

Amongst their greatest achievements they list their campaign to the Council to provide a care centre on the island, meaning that the elderly no longer need to leave the island when they can no longer live in their own homes. Other achievements include the success of the wind turbine and the Bargain Box. The Trust also re-developed an old bus depot into a Chapel of Rest, as part of a collaborative project with the Community Council, this means people no longer have to be taken off the island.

Westray's geography provides one of their greatest challenges as they are dependent on ferry and air services. It also means that projects incur increased costs for importing building materials. Volunteer recruitment can also be a challenge as they have a limited pool of people available. This can lead to challenges for future proofing, as they won't have the people with their wealth of skills and expertise forever. They also won't have the wind turbine forever. It can be difficult to sustain momentum and keep the energy levels up, especially when geographical challenges can cause project delays. This also leads on to the management of expectations, there is only a limited number of people to do things; can't do everything.

Presenter:

- *Isobel Thompson, Project Officer, Westray Development Trust*

Second Presentation Summary: [Chapelark](#)

Angus accounts for 2% of Scotland's population and provides 70 new units of housing each year towards the Scottish Government target, this accounts for a £20m capital spend. The Council's main aim is focussed on reducing inequalities in Angus whilst delivering the key aspects, of the community charrette.

The Chapelpark development saw the renovation of a Grade B listed school building transformed into a mix tenure housing development. The school closed in 2008 as part of the Forfar Schools Project, leaving the building surplus to requirements. Following a lack of interest from the open market, due to the complexity and cost of conversion, the Council felt a sense of responsibility to the community to save and restore this important asset. They felt the project justified the high expense of conversion.

They wanted to retain the character and history of the building whilst using creative design to produce new modern and functional living spaces. Using existing assets such as the boiler room to provide a district heating system. They wanted to foster a community environment with town centre living.



They held community consultation events from conception to ensure a level of community buy in, using social media as part of the wider consultation. Early allocation of properties allowed tenants to feel involved with the design of their new home, allowing them to pick fixtures and other aspects. The feeling of creating a community was important to the Council so they held tenant information and meet the neighbour events. A Grand Opening event was held on completion to allow the whole community to be part of the feeling of achievement from saving a community asset.

The development came with a lot of challenges and the Council learned from the renovation. There were restrictions in place for the demolition of the annexe building, which were set by Historic Environment Scotland. The existing tall windows provided issues around inserting another floor. They wanted to maintain the aesthetic of the building but it had to also be liveable. Steel support was built in to the floor in order to split the windows.

The quality of the stonework was identified as a hidden challenge once the project was underway. Crumbling walls meant that a wall had to be removed and rebuilt with the roof in place. This all added to the escalating costs. The building was not able to support its own roof. They wanted to show where interventions had been made to the original building where this was possible.

The main lessons that the Council have taken from this development were; you have to account for hidden costs as you cannot plan for every eventuality when renovating old buildings. Expectation management is key, rebuild issues meant that original timelines were delayed. This results in increased costs and the need to manage tenant expectations and needs, particularly given the early allocation of properties. Keeping an existing building, rather than demolition, will result in hidden and unexpected costs. Parking provision has to be researched and well planned, the provision provided was above requirements.

Presenter:

- *Andrea Wilson, Manger Housing Asset, Angus Council*

Third Presentation Summary: [Papay Community Cooperative](#)

Papa Westray, neighbouring island to Westray, is 4.5 miles long and has a population of around 90 people. It is made up of scattered housing with no central village. Similar to Westray, Papa has a previous history of population decline, with it being as low as 54 in the 1980's and 90s. This made the island very fragile.

The island has a very rich history of storytelling and occupancy, and has the oldest standing house in northern Europe, so a wealth of assets. Due to the small community numbers people 'wear various hats', filling many roles. There has been a lot of farming success and the community make the most of their assets, being far away doesn't mean you can't be successful. One of the main assets being community resilience; a lot of people on the island have been around for a long time.

Despite the community resilience Papa faces challenges. A big draw for tourists is to take a flight on the world's shortest flight, from Westray to Papa Westray. Although it draws tourism it does limit availability for locals doing necessary day to day travel. The island is also sensitive to the weather conditions. Everything has to be craned on and off the island, such as building materials etc.



Papay Co-op was set up in the 1970's to respond to the local shop being closed. The community made it work, put differences aside and got on with it. The resilience of the community made things happen. The island has seen a growth of tourism but previously there had been no tourist accommodation. This led to the development of the Beltane space. It hosts 6 hostel spaces, a community shop and a social space, which comprises of a community pub that opens once a week or for events. The Beltane has become the

heart of the community. The island also hosts a successful Karting Race Festival every summer, where the karts are all made from scrap materials and then raced across the island.

The island is now looking to the future and what next. They are currently in discussions with 15 master degree students from Edinburgh looking at community energy, electric planes, low carbon transport etc. The island groups aim to take advantage of every opportunity and if doesn't work then they will just let it go.

Refurbishment and regeneration has always been about more than just building on the island. It is about recycling, reducing carbon footprint etc. Giving the people what they want and need. Due to the location it is important to provide warm homes that are refitted with insulation. It is a challenge to get companies to travel from Kirkwall for small jobs with a low number of houses. The refit will lead to major carbon savings for the occupants.

Their biggest challenge is around transport and getting materials for building, this is particularly difficult when the project takes place mid-winter. They have to ensure that the contractor is prepared for these challenges. There are solutions however, there is a need to be flexible, talk to each other and engage in joint working.

Papay have learned a number of lessons whilst engaging in their various projects and activities. It is essential to engage the community from the outset and use innovative approaches to keep people interested. A focussed Steering Group can make a big difference to the success of a project. Lastly, plan and work collaboratively with others.

Presenter:

- *Jennifer Foley, Community Development Manager, Papay Community Coop and Community Council*

Fourth Presentation Summary: Scottish Government – Place Principle

Iain Murray, from the Scottish Government Regeneration and Social Justice Directorate, introduced the audience to the new Investing in Communities Fund, an amalgamation of current funds such as People and Communities and Aspiring Communities. Rather than the Scottish Government setting criteria for what happens in communities they are taking a more flexible approach and asking communities to tell them what they want to do and what they want and need, giving scope for communities to take the lead. Unlike previous funds, where there is demand they will try to support multi-year funding, rather than the current year to year funding approach.

Iain noted that if you stay still long enough, policy will come back and meet you. There is now a need to share a story that shapes who we are and what we want to become. This has led to the development of the Place Principle, which provides a lens to look through. Making the best use of agendas, establishing a collective focus and creating places that are sustainable.

National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework are not just a Scottish Government thing, they are an every person thing, and everyone has a part to play. The Place Principle is a commitment to change. The Scottish Government recognise that place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose, and is at the heart of addressing needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them. A more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives. The principle requests that all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places. They commit to taking a collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources.

The Place Principle is a multi-department approach across government and it involves everyone not just regeneration. This includes working with local authorities and COSLA, public agencies, partners in the Third Sector etc. Everyone has a role to play. How are you working in a way that supports the ethos of the Place Principle? How are you meeting the needs of your community? It asks questions about what the place is for and how people use it? It is about creating a shared vision.

It asks that you look at more than just infrastructure but how that investment has helped the community to thrive; created employment, training opportunities, up-skilling the community. It is about looking at the whole picture and not just singular parts. It requires a need to move away from working in silos.

A 'Place' website is currently in development which will include case study examples of what is working well. Replicable information that other communities can learn from and build into their approaches.

There remains a challenge in the quality of collaboration to deliver a shared vision and the aspirations of the community.

Presenter:

- *Iain Murray, Regeneration Unit, Scottish Government*

Fifth Presentation Summary: Scotland's Towns Partnership

Scotland's Towns Partnership focus on structural challenges to towns as well as national and local factors. They have a focus on supporting the re-imagining of towns for a new age where retail is not a strong component in High Streets anymore. Phil gave examples of the resilience of Borough Market following a terrorist attack and Dundee's ability to re-invent the city, moving away from a post-industrial city to focus on culture as a tool for regeneration.

Towns face a psychological blow when shops or schools close in a community. They find ways of making things work though, finding alternative ways of providing services and resources. With the current 'death of the High Street' there is a need to ask ourselves what are we going to do next? What are the alternative uses for the High Street? Where do we start? Each town has its own complexities.

STP was formed following the Fraser Review to deliver a Town Centre Development Plan and the Town Centre First Principle, which looks to deliver enterprising communities with vibrant local economies. It encourages proactive planning with accessible public services. Creating digital towns with an attractive town centre living offer.

STP provides a central portal with resources, tools and best practice examples via an interactive website. They act as a broker for town centre issues, such as the closure of shopping centres and amenities.

Towns have to look at and future proof for issues such as; an aging demographic, carbon related issues and changing consumer trends. The STP website provides the Understanding Scotland's Places tool to compare towns with similar characteristics, demographics etc. so as to not compare apples and pears.

Scotland's Improvement Districts, the new version of Business Improvement Districts, focuses on three additional strands, Community, Corporate and Public, not just about business. Engaging with partners across all sectors and allowing for the development of a variety of Improvement Districts to be established. Examples include; an Island Improvement District in Bute and Aberdeen Inspired, which is focussed on creativity and the arts.

Presenter:

- *Phil Prentice, Chief Officer, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Scotland's Improvement Districts*

Sixth Presentation Summary: Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) have been supporting communities for 50 years. There is a lot of place-based working already taking place across the HIE region, they just don't call it that. It is just how they work and are not too hung up on the terminology. HIE's role is to support and nurture this work and to promote multi-partnership working.

There are typical characteristics in successful community led placed-based approaches. Communities have to be at the heart, you can't regenerate from an external place. This is not just the community organisations but also local services, businesses etc. National agencies have to be around about it,

listening to what these places want. Even at a local authority level it is important to consult with the community.

Really successful places are built on respected partnership work, with players from all sectors. There is a lack of formality, in that they are not chained to a strategy or vision but involved in creating it, having flexibility to overcome unforeseen hurdles. In places such as Orkney, where resources can be limited, people have to collaborate. Place-based working is just collaboration. It is about responding to priorities rather than getting caught up in an agency agenda.

There is a difficulty in deciding 'what is the community' in towns, this is different in cities. It is about how urban communities define themselves.

There are a number of critical behaviours that can determine the success of a project. The ability of partners to respect the culture and rhythm of a place and the priorities that the community self-identify. There is a need for equal respect between all partners. How do you get coordinated investment and what the decision making processes are.

Presenter:

- *Neil Ross, Head of Community Growth, Highland and Islands Enterprise*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *One delegate asked the project representatives to discuss anything that didn't work and how that was overcome. They also asked about what could be replicated elsewhere.*

Isobel noted the need to get the community involved, as they are able to tell you what they want and need to provide direction. She also noted projects like the Bargain Box, which allow projects to be self-sustainable and less reliant on funding.

Jennifer noted that a Development Plan can act as a mandate for the community, with clearly agreed action points. A stumbling block had been the recruitment of a staff post to deliver the community outcomes. This was due to a lack of housing on the island.

Andrea demonstrated the Council's willingness to demonstrate failure by highlighting the issues with the stonework etc. affecting timescales. Because of this they had to focus on expectation management; managed failure. There will always be something that goes wrong; hidden costs etc.

- Another delegate highlighted the need to discuss failure to help build trust within communities and between project partners.
- *Chapelark were asked about justifying additional costs to funding bodies. How do you explain that the project is now more expensive?*

Andrea explained that there had been an element of pressure on the Council to take on the building because if they didn't do it no one else would save this much loved community asset.

She highlighted that the Council have taken on board the need to act early and to take the lead. They are now looking at another building on the register and needing to act before further deterioration. With Chapelpark the right people were in the right place at the right time.

- *The projects were asked about their community growing initiatives.*

Papay had a market garden listed as a community need in the Development Plan. A plot of land was developed for polytunnels to grow fresh fruit and vegetables. However, the site is far from being sustainable due to staffing and maintenance costs. They are currently using excess funds from other projects to keep it going as it is a community priority.

- Challenges around connection and distribution of resources. There has been a tendency towards resource centralisation.
- Discussion was had around the new Planning Bill and the inclusion of local place plans which gives control to the community if the planning authority register agrees and it meets their aims, local place plans help communities to comply. It was noted that the word compliance creates tension.
- How do you balance local and national government with local issues?
- There is always going to be competing interests and views; what we want and aspire to for our communities. The Scottish Government acknowledge place-based approaches are not always going to be seamless; not all places are the same and not everyone's aspirations are the same.
- How do you deal with the power dynamic of who holds the resource?
- HIE encourages communities to make a development plan which looks at assets. There is a need to get this level of local plan into the bigger community planning system. It is difficult at present to get the community voice heard.
- There is a need to acknowledge where buildings have gone into the wrong hands/not been developed.
- Local government is coming from a point of austerity.
- Community asset transfer. The community is put in a position that it is unsustainable to take on assets.
- We need to take a leap of faith. Areas such as East Ayrshire, Kilmarnock, are a good example of this. We need to show the community and the commercial sector that the area has a future.
- What is the role of the private sector? It is really difficult to think of places without thinking about the private sector and how they are involved, whether big players or small businesses. Some organisations are helping employees create homes and thinking beyond the day to day business.
- We operate in a developer led economy, especially when it comes to housing. Policy needs to think more sustainably. There is a mistrust of the private sector as we are a public sector led nation. There is an inherent need to build trust into the conversation.
- There is a need to connect procurement with national investment.
- Local authorities have a focus on statutory requirements which has led to a loss of capacity building teams. Communities are expected to take a lead, responsibility, risk, while capacity building support is gone. This is a hole that needs to be considered.
- Questions were asked about the Scottish Government's new Investing in Communities Fund and how it will be delivered, with what level of informality. Iain noted that the fund is never

going to be big enough, it is the nature of the situation. Regardless what size the funding pot is decisions always have to be made.

2) Overcoming barriers to employability facing Scotland's young people

With introductory presentations from all three SURF Award projects shortlisted in the Youth Employability: Overcoming Barriers category:

The Pathfinder Programme, Kingdom Works and Pathway to Success

About the event

The second workshop in the series highlighted the 2018 SURF Award Winner and Highly Commended projects in the Youth Employability: Overcoming Barriers category.

The projects featured are all using techniques to support dis-engaged young people into employment, training and further education.

The half-day workshop took place on the 15th May 2019 in the Glasgow Women's Library. The event featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF partners, namely Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 56 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [The Pathfinder Programme](#)

The Pathfinder Programme is jointly delivered by the DRC Youth Project, based in Yoker, and national employability support agency WorkingRite. The programme aims to remove labour market disconnects for young people by taking a collaborative approach, rooted in the strengths of each individual, to support them into sustained employment. The main aim is to give young people access to real jobs and opportunities in the community.

The key to the programme's success is the strength of the partnership between the two organisations. Partnership is often used as a buzzword but what they have realised is that a couple of strong partnerships is better than forging a lot of weak ones. None of the traditional benefits of partnership; such as the ability to scale up, reducing competition or the ability to bid for larger contracts, came to mind when Pathfinder was set up. This partnership was based on trust and shared values, and open communication.

The partners wanted to create a programme with the young people rather than to them or for them. Establishing a young people's agency with the opportunity to shape a service that will work for them. Understanding needs, pitfalls and potential.



There is always a danger in parachuting into a community. Having the DRC based in, and already working with, the community allowed a strong starting point for engagement. The DRC already had an engagement strategy in place that linked across the city. Having the WorkingRite staff in the same building as the DRC team provides a consistent face for building relationships with the young people. They don't differentiate staff from different teams.

Partnerships can fail when each of the partners have their own agenda. Programme outcomes should always be at the heart and should be the main focus. There should always be a commitment to improving and strengthening the core relationship.

What differentiates Pathfinder from other programmes is the built in aftercare. The philosophy that no one is left behind. Sometimes young people fall off the wagon but Pathfinder just puts them back into the system. 85% of participants get into real jobs first time but with the rest going back into system it eventually means that 100% go into jobs. The hook of a real job at the end of the process is what engages the young person, and keeps them engaged.

DRC have found that there are 11 key factors to making the project work. These include;

1. A proper engagement strategy – this includes carrying out street work and talking to other organisations about what they are delivering.
2. Linking with local businesses – do they employ young people? Build up your own portfolio of local opportunities as well as linking in with employability support agencies, such as WorkingRite.
3. Offer a wide selection of accreditation in different fields such as construction etc. Young people recognise these and they want to achieve qualifications without sitting in a classroom.
4. Being Flexible – this includes being open to go to where the young person is at a time that suits them.
5. Being selective with your partners – surround yourself with partners that are easy to work with/make decisions. You don't have to work with everyone, work with relevant partners that are a good fit.
6. Always listen to the young people and take into account their opinions.
7. Provide proper after care – most will not be successful straight away, it is not possible.
8. Feed people back into the system – don't be afraid to do this. Keep them on a positive path.
9. Be patient
10. Never give up on young people.
11. Be surrounded by a good staff team who care about the project.

The SURF Awards is much more than a 12-month thing. It provides continual support, learning and exposure. The DRC credits the Award for receiving additional year funding. The recognition added extra weight to their application.

The representatives were asked about how they get employers involved and if they are restricted by postcode when engaging young people. They responded that they cover the whole of North West Glasgow. Young people who change address can still seek support as long as they still have a North West postcode.

They engage with small/medium sized employers exclusively, who are working in the community. As they are smaller organisations it means that they have more direct access to the decision maker. Often they find that the employers have had someone take a chance on them when they were entering the world of work. The match is key as they provide more than just quality work experience, there is investment from the employer. Mentors support the young people in placement, providing real life work experience without too much pressure. A matched and mentored approach. There is a greater potential for failure with larger employers.

This was followed by a question about the relationship with schools. Arthur clarified that schools have recognised the potential of engaging with the programme. Schools are now referring pupils to

the DRC to do a course with the youth project, using PEF funding. The young people then move on to Pathfinder when they are old enough. The DRC look to engage with the young people who are falling through the cracks.

It is important for them to remain a certain size. Big enough to have weight but not too big that you lose the person centred approach.

Presenters:

- *Arthur McNeaney, Project Manager, DRC Youth Project*
- *Scott Christie, National Operations Manager, WorkigRite*

Second Presentation Summary: Kingdom Works

Kingdom Works launched in 2008 with three staff and is linked to the larger parent company Kingdom Housing Association. They offer a range of packages to help young people deal with the barriers they face, such as money advice, drug abuse etc.

Their core operation links publicly funded contracts with unemployed disadvantaged young people. Like Pathfinder they noted the importance of partnership work, and they work with a wide range of partners, making mutual referrals. They work across Fife and are part of the third sector employability consortium in Fife.

The SDS Employability Fund contract has allowed the project to expand and they now have a team of 10 staff. They receive additional funding from organisations such as the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Scottish Government and Fairer Scotland.

Fife Council has an ambitious affordable housing target. Kingdom HA are building 500 new units every year for the next 5 years with community benefit clauses built in to every contract. They expect contractors to create apprenticeships/jobs and offer work experience to allow young people opportunities to prove their skills and reliability for future employment.



Kingdom Works offer sector based work accreditations in areas including; construction, rural skills and hospitality. They have sector based work academies which consist of two weeks classroom based activities, such as employment skills, CV training etc. Four weeks working towards entry level certification in construction skills, for example. It is dependent on what the employer requires. For many participants it's the first certification they've received so Kingdom Works like to make a big event out of it, with a presentation ceremony.

They engage with a wide range of employers across Fife to increase opportunities. Job match is key to a successful outcome. Getting it right at the beginning means there is a higher chance of securing and staying in a job. They support employers to deliver community benefits by placing the right person with them. Kingdom promote the use of apprenticeships and provide in-work support as well as enabling the employees.

The Sector Skills Framework keeps them up to date with what grants are available. A big part of the success of the programme is the Discretionary Fund that is available on all projects. This covers vocational training costs, travel, clothing for interviews, work clothing, childcare etc. This helps many of the young people to overcome barriers that may be preventing them from getting into employment.

The main challenges faced are short-term funding models, which have implications on their delivery plan and ability to find match funding. There can be challenges around getting buy-in and raising awareness on community benefits, many employers are not aware of what this means or involves; or the benefits. There is also an increasing number of young people needing support, and with limited resources it is difficult to meet demand.

Presenter:

- *Lynne Dunn, Kingdom Works Manager, Kingdom Housing Association*

Third Presentation Summary: [Pathway to Success](#)

Young Enterprise Scotland have been in operation for over 25 years and work with over 15000 young people each year, becoming the leading youth enterprise education organisation. They have over 600 volunteers working with the programme.

The Company Programme is an S5 and S6 competition, where the pupils compete to win the title of best company. The main benefits of enterprise education come from it being non-restrictive. It is not just for the best performing young people, anyone should have the opportunity. They offer a highly supportive enterprise programme aimed at disengaged young people.

One of the major draws of engaging with the Pathway to Success programme is that every student is guaranteed an interview at Clyde College when they complete the course. Students also earn an SQA qualification, and the package includes all travel costs and lunches.

YES offer taster employment courses in areas such as; construction, music, retail, dog grooming, horticulture etc. The courses incorporate a mixture of practical experience with classroom learning and work experience. The courses are aimed at 13-21 year olds and comprise of three days of training over a ten week period. To help meet student needs there is an element of flexibility in attendance and some young people attend one day per week for a longer period, it is tailored to meet the needs of the group. The learning includes interview practice for jobs and college.

The main delivery location is the YES base in the Rouken Glen Park centre. Location is one of the key elements of their success. Four other social enterprises are based on-site to provide additional support and experience. It offers a different experience to school, which many of the young people have become disengaged from.

The young people come through referrals from partners such as schools, job centres etc. Their key partnership is with Glasgow Clyde College, who enrol all of the students whilst they are on the



course. This allows them to access the College facilities and offers a taster of college life

YES have monitored the impact the programme has had on the young people who enrol on the courses. They have noted increased confidence, knowledge and skills. The young people are more aware of what opportunities are available and other routes into employment outside university. 92% recognise an increase in personal and transferrable skills and 85% move into positive destinations. Looking at the programme as a whole 50% gain a college place, with some groups 100% of students get a place. The young people who engage with the programme were not previously expected to go on to college.

YES face a number of challenges. Namely the level of demand from schools looking for something for younger age groups. They are looking at the possibility of changing and adapting the programme to meet the needs of the schools.

In response to a question about the rate of young people who re-engage with school, Emily noted that the programme has good rates of attendance. The project is a hook to get the young people, often school drop-outs, to re-engage with learning. There is more to education than just school. This offers a different experience that young people engage with.

Presenter:

- *Emily Watts, National Programme Manager (People in Place), Young Enterprise Scotland*

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Skills Development Scotland](#)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are the national skills agency for Scotland and employ around 1400 people. The Scottish Government dictate the direction of travel for what support SDS can provide.

They engage with people in schools and school leavers, businesses and the economy. Their main role is to get the right people into the right jobs. Part of their role involves speaking with employers to ascertain skills gaps. This feeds into Sectoral Skills Plans which are then overlapped with Regional Plans to forecast what will happen within sectors. This information can then be fed to Employability Advisors.

SDS have recognised that the employment market is changing and young people are entering a world where it is essential to keep updating skills. Young people will need to build resilience to handling job change, regardless of where they sit on the skills pipeline, as long-term careers are no longer guaranteed.

2019/20 will mark a time of change within SDS. The Modern Apprenticeship Scheme is a flagship programme and now offers a Foundation Apprenticeship programme which starts in school. It offers an alternative route to University. They plan to expand the MA programme with foundation and graduate apprentices. They are enhancing their support to teachers, working with children at a younger age. Taking a much more intensive approach with young people outside of education. SDS recognise that there is still a stigma attached to MAs and that they are seen, by some, as a lesser route, and this has to change.

There are still barriers towards getting more women involved in STEM and engaging harder to reach and disadvantaged groups in the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. This is something that SDS will prioritise with a more holistic view. They want to embed equality and fair work, making services accessible to people from all backgrounds, with a particular focus on the BME community. They

need to listen to employers and better understand their needs, and what the barriers are to getting young people into employment. Where is information getting lost?

It is important to be conscious of environmental changes. They have to continue to adapt to the changing environment, such as Artificial Intelligence, technology and Brexit.

A number of new websites have been set up to help simplify the employability process. These include;

- **Apprenticeships Scotland** – setup following feedback to help employers and apprentices. The site includes information on funding available and how to market apprenticeship schemes.
- **My World of Work** – easy access to find out about jobs. Offers training to organisations on how to use the site.
- **My Kids Career** – help for parents and carers.
- **Digital World** website is new – creates a digital human and shows tailored options and information on jobs.
- **Skills for Business** – info on grants etc.

In the future work will change forever. Two out of three primary school children will have jobs that don't exist today. We need to keep learning. Our uniquely human qualities will keep us in jobs that AI can't do. Qualities such as creativity, feeling, integrity, learning, curiosity and collaboration.

We need to adapt how we deliver services, due to young people's needs and expectations, information in a digital age. Young people want information there and now. How we deliver information will vary. The human element will still be needed with some but others will be reliant on technological services.

Presenter:

- *Michelle Gibson, Standards and Frameworks: Operations Manager, Skills Development Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Scottish Government - DYW](#)

The representative from the Scottish Government Employability Division was not available on the day. Michelle Gibson provided a brief commentary on the slides on Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). The Slides are available on the SURF website.

There is a common cry around frustration from employers of a lack of 'work-ready' young people. This is changing with projects like Pathfinder and Pathway to Success providing trained young people ready to enter into employment.

The Wood Commission was established in 2014 by the then Education Secretary. It provided 39 recommendations across 5 Change Themes. The remit was to focus on how we develop a modern, responsive and valued system.

The Umbrella Brand has four key outputs;

- To help young people leave school prepared for the world of work;
- To help employers shape the workforce of the future;
- To help teachers and schools understand the world of work; and
- To support parents to understand the offers.

Supporting DYW influences a young person's life chances. It provides them with the skills and experience to flourish in work. It helps to ensure they have a positive destination to move on to. The more engagement a young person has the greater chance they have of moving on to a well-paid job. Young people are one of the solutions to economic growth, addressing future skills gaps and to succeeding an ageing workforce

The 5 Change Themes include;

- Schools (Change Themes 1&2)
- Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Regional Groups

There are still challenges around societal perceptions of things such as apprenticeships. A continued need to engage with and understand what young people need and want. Understanding and embracing the pace of change that can be responded to. Recognising the context of how, when and why employers engage, and meeting the needs of the ever-changing labour market, economic context and geographies.

We are seeing signs of success with;

- More young people in employment;
- More employers recruiting young people;
- A broader range of opportunities for young people to better prepare them for work;
- Permanent behavioural change among the employer and education communities; and
- A sustainable industry-led network that improves collaboration between employers and education.

Presenter:

- *Slides provided by Steven Turnbull, Senior Engagement Manager, Scottish Government DYW Employer Engagement Team*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and topics of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- Employers need to be realistic about what young people are like when they come out of school. A balance between exams and social skills are necessary for the workplace. There are worries from employers that young people aren't ready for work. We need certification that they are ready for employment. There is a need for longer term work experience.
- Young people who are not used to success need additional support to transition into a job.
- Technology has undermined communication skills with less phone calls and face to face interactions.
- Need to match the expectations of young people and employers.
- Links between places, enterprise and employment. New place focus from Scottish Enterprise and the creation of SOSEP are positive steps.
- Wide acceptance of the unlikelihood of a big foreign investment arriving. New emphasis on inclusive growth, place/asset based growth and the diversity of places.
- 35 – 40% of the population are economically inactive and the government ignores this in figures.

- “Positive Outcome” – is this a job guaranteed for two years? Need to clarify and talk about what this means.
- It’s not a level playing field. Look at how much money is given to those going to university in the form of loans.
 - Michelle clarified that the modern/graduate apprenticeships are trying to change this.
- Young people in Inverclyde aspire to do apprenticeships, but it still feels out of reach to them. How do we keep them engaged? They are in placements but can’t get to that next step. Been in work experience for years but can’t get skills for SVQ.
 - Michelle said that SDS are now looking at apprenticeships at a lower level and that the scheme is currently being piloted.
- *The Pathfinder Programme were asked about how they engage with young people to achieve positive outcomes. They were also asked about funding for the aftercare programme.*

The positive outcome for the young people they work with is progressing into a job or work placement. If they don’t succeed it is not a negative outcome. They go back into the system and are offered further support to overcome barriers and understand what went wrong. The programme continually keeps track of the young person, even after they leave the programme. The door is always open for them to re-engage if things don’t work out.

The aftercare support was set up due to failings they found in other employability provider services. They added the support element to the package and won the funding. They provide a programme to fill the gap in aftercare support. The programme provides proper training and proper accreditation that is recognised by employers and young people

- A delegate asked what we mean by behavioural change. It is becoming recognised that going to college/university is not the only option. Preparing young people for the world of work can be preparing them to put off work, as they go off to college/university for 3 years.
 - It was noted that colleges provide a second opportunity to those who don’t get on well at school.
- Soft skills are important and necessary but employers still require hard skills like English and maths.

Kingdom Works gave an example of a construction company, that they partner with, who links with schools to go in and provide classes in basic maths that is related to work. Relatable teaching is needed to show the young people the relevance of learning. There is a need for different models for different needs.

YES also demonstrated how jobs in industries such as hair and beauty still require basic math skills when making appointments and working out time allocations.

- Education has become a major business, Universities and Colleges are there to make money. Loans to young people for other approaches, similar to student loans, are not available. Why is there nothing available to get young people into work and business?
- Third sector and Local Authorities are chasing pockets of money. They are delivering any services that they can make fit into their remit. They should be concentrating on good quality delivery of statutory services. A second delegate noted that Local Authorities are good at

getting money through partnerships but are not good at engaging on the delivery of services. It was also put forward that there are certain things local government do well but they need to link with the third sector who have reach to certain places and groups.

- There was discussion around the quality of jobs out there and a potential power shift to employers from employees around the security of jobs. One delegate claimed that there are lots of jobs but not the right people to fit into them, as we face an ageing workforce and decreased population with relevant skillsets. There is a need to up-skill people to fill the gap set against a timeframe when opportunities are available.
- There is a need for greater funding to provide in-work mentors.
- Sectoral and Regional Skills Plans evaluation found that there is a trend away from young people coming out of university or college and looking for a 'job for life'. There is a move towards trialling different things and getting wider experience. This means that employers are less inclined to invest money in training young people.
- There has been a move away from Trade Unions, which is less prevalent in the Third Sector. This has led to a lack of understanding of Trade Union membership and a rise in voluntary, part-time and minimum wage contracts.
- Glasgow has been built on student debt.

3) The importance of culture and creative arts in community regeneration

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and highly commended projects:

Findhorn Bay Arts and WHALE Arts

About the event

The final workshop in the series highlighted the 2018 SURF Award Winner and Highly Commended projects in the Creative Regeneration category.

The projects featured at the workshop varied in location, from rural Forres to Wester Hailes in Edinburgh, but are both using culture and the arts as tools to engage with their local communities.

The half-day workshop took place on the 30th May 2019 in Paisley Arts Centre. The event featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF Award partners, namely Creative Scotland, Arts and Business Scotland and Renfrewshire Council. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 80 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [Findhorn Bay Arts](#)

Findhorn Bay Arts is based in the village of Findhorn in Forres, Moray. It has a population of around 962 people. The main industries have historically been oil, farming, tourism and whisky.

Findhorn Bay Arts provide creative events and experiences across Moray. They were set up during a time of economic uncertainty for the area as the main services began to close or centralise and young people were leaving the area due to a lack of opportunities. The economic uncertainty provided an opportunity for the community to reflect on what assets they have, and acted as an engagement tool. Their core activities include Findhorn Bay Arts Festival, opportunities in professional development, creative activities, their current CashBack for Communities project In the Mix, and the Culture Café

A Culture Café network, with Dance North and individual artists, was created which centred round good local food. They created a manifesto where a grassroots approach lay at the heart. The group took time to build partnerships and make cross-sector collaborations. The first big event they held was a Culture Day, based on the Culture Nights European model. The event attracted around 2000 people and provided an opportunity for artists to showcase their work, engage with the community and make new connections.



In 2013 the group saw 100% withdrawal of their arts budget, which came as a major blow to the group who were starting to build momentum in the local community. They were able to continue the Culture Café as it provided a space to talk and discuss ideas. They opened it out to the business community and politicians etc. It provided a leadership role in a time of uncertainty.

This led to the development of the Findhorn Bay Festival. It provides opportunities for local artists to link with touring/visiting artists. It offers space for emerging artists to showcase their work and also space to learn and develop skills. It has acted as a tool to engage with the local community and businesses, who can see the immediate benefits. It acts as a positive spotlight on the arts. The festival is not held every year as it is more than just a festival, but what spills out of that, the ripple effect. The outcomes have led to better equipped communities due to the meaningful connections made.

A Cultural Strategy was developed by Highlands and Island Enterprise. It offered an ambitious vision for a strong creative sector that links to education, health etc. The Creative Scotland Creative Place Award in 2015 was a big milestone for the organisation and provided a much needed funding boost. This funding supported the 2013-16 Culture Days, 17 arts projects and development of the 2016 festival.

Findhorn Bay Arts aligned with the Year of Young People in 2017 to develop the Ignite programme with Moray Youth Hub. They engaged with over 300 young people, 30 of which went on to work in their chosen arts stream. It provided creative possibilities for young people. Findhorn Bay Arts believe their greatest strength lies in partnership work. They can overcome challenges by working in collaboration.

They are currently assessing their structure and have applied for charitable status, are expanding their Board, developing projects and looking for money to develop the youth hub.

They exist on a project to project basis, which is their biggest challenge. It is essential that we develop a route to core funding as it is important to fund core costs to allow for sustainability and future planning. They are also looking at potentially changing their name to reflect their wider work across Moray.

Presenter:

- *Kresanna Aigner, Creative Director, Findhorn Bay Arts*

Second Presentation Summary: WHALE Arts

WHALE Arts is a cultural anchor organisation based in Wester Hailes in Edinburgh. Wester Hailes is amongst the top 5% most deprived in the SIMD statistics and has a population of around 11,000 people. The area of Wester Hailes was poorly designed for pedestrians to easily move around.



WHALE are both building based and place-based, and have been operating for 27 years. They work collaboratively with local organisations. They are currently redeveloping their strategic plan to have a greater focus on the people they work with and co-production. They want to support the people they work with to move from someone who engages with a programme to someone who runs a programme. Their work has three main areas of focus; Health and Happiness, Enterprise, Learning and Skills and Places and Spaces.

Health and Happiness is;

- Helping people with additional support needs and no formal training to embrace their inner artist.
- Encouraging local residents to see themselves as artists.
- Bringing artists in to work with the community.
- Running the Stitch in Time textile project, which works across the community.
- Running the Street Arts Project. Running in five play parks using different art forms to engage with young people. One young person involved is now leading her own dance session.

Enterprise, Learning and Skills has encouraged local residents to;

- Make a film for the film festival. Developed by local young people and shown in the local Odeon.
- Take part in a Mural Project.
- Set up the Mums into Business project. WHALE supported a group of women to set up a business. They brought in advisors and provided childcare. The group is now continuing with their own funding.

Places and Spaces is;

- Developing a Creative Placemaking Project.
- Encouraging collaborative work, rooted in public participation.
- Running a Community Garden where the food is used at a community meal. There is no paid community gardener so the local people garden.
- Hosting a Digi Mapping Project with Napier University. Young people have gone out and spoken to residents and created a digital map of their community.
- Establishing a two year food project based on issues of food insecurity. There is a value and importance in people cooking and eating alongside creative activities.
- Running Play Days which create small changes to the physical environment. It is an engagement and participation project.
- Hosting a Film Festival. Recently used the underpasses, deemed to be a scary place, and the poor layout of the area and set up projections on buildings and underpasses.

They have found challenges with developing an updated strategy. How can they do things differently? Finding different ways to utilise the building and generate income.

There are challenges around funding and sustainability but also about the loss of the 'trusted worker' when projects end due to funding cuts. The impact this has on project users, who may have existing barriers. If they are not innovating then they are not going to progress in the future. Like Findhorn they recognise the necessity for core funding and likened it to a doughnut with a hole in the centre, a piece missing.

Now looking at developing creative enterprises in the building, which will contribute towards their sustainability. Building in more childcare options and possibly a café in the building. They are also currently looking at a long-term vision for Wester Hales with Edinburgh City Council.

Presenter:

- *Leah Black, Chief Executive, WHALE Arts*

Third Presentation Summary: [Creative Scotland](#)

Creative Scotland is the main arts funding body for Scotland. Their priorities emerge from a national policy perspective. The funding distributed by Creative Scotland comes from the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

At a national level the Culture Strategy is still in development. The strategy encourages us to think about what arts and culture means to us. We are operating in uncertain times where there has been an erosion of social infrastructure, making it challenging for arts organisations to operate.

Creative Scotland have realised that they need to be sensitive to the local context. It shouldn't be a top down approach. The Place Partnership programme devolves decision making on priorities to a local level. They must provide support, where relevant and needed, to local projects to help them determine local priorities. Where local groups come together, collaborate and take the lead. This includes supporting established groups and activities, but also small seeds which are in development. They are not able to support everyone but they have to cover a breadth of different projects across Scotland. They have adapted their approach to be more flexible when spanners in the works occur. It is about setting and working to realistic expectations.

The Awards projects presenting reinforce the importance of arts and culture in community development, different contexts and approaches, shared challenges and principles. Bringing artists and communities together to help create tangible and intangible connections with place. The intangibles stretch imaginations. The arts is a good way to do that. It helps us ask questions and see what is possible.

Regeneration is about more than culture. Cultural activities help people develop skills, develop the economy and create jobs and use spaces. The cultural, social and economic benefits are key in talking to funders but culture is only part of the jigsaw. It can't be viewed in isolation. How do we connect this work to the wider process of regeneration?

We can do more as a country and they can do more as Creative Scotland. They are currently in the middle of a three stage review process looking at how they fund, why, who and the structure of their funding. Less than 3% of the Scottish Government budget is spent on the arts. In recent years there has been a loss of community arts officers and services such as libraries are running on reduced hours. There is a need for increased investment in culture. We need to be bold, come together and be collaborative. Make the case for increased investment.

Presenter:

- *Gary Cameron, Director of Strategy, Creative Scotland*

Fourth Presentation Summary: Arts and Business Scotland

Arts and Business Scotland is a charity who have been operating for over 40 years. They provide programmes that help the culture and business sectors to connect and thrive.

The World Economic Forum in 2015 listed creativity at the bottom of the skills list, but by 2020 it will shoot up to number three. There is a need for creativity in business to nurture innovation and allow businesses to thrive.

The Culture and Business Fund was set up in 2017 and is funded by Creative Scotland. It provides match funding for projects who are able to secure sponsorship from a business. It encourages cultural organisations to develop relationships and partnerships with the business sector.

The fund offers support to arts and heritage projects, and funds a diverse range of activities. It not only matches pound for pound cash investment it also funds in-kind support matched with cash support. In 2 years they have funded 68 applications and provided £486,788 in investment. It is a flexible online application process and materials and case studies can be found on the A&BS website.

They recently toured the country showcasing the values and benefits of the fund, talking to creative projects and businesses. Businesses need reasons to get involved as they are looking for return on their investment, such as being able to sell their services to a wider market who engage with the cultural activity.

Examples of projects that A&BS have invested in include;

- Grampian Transport and Norco Group – Robert Davidson Electric Motor Project.
 - There was a direct relationship between Norco’s work and the heritage project.
 - It allowed for community benefits and publicity for the business.
 - There was an increase in civic pride and educational benefits for the local young people who didn’t know of the history.
- D-Lux Arts Festival of Light and Jardine Funeral Directors
 - The project helped to regenerate the area.
 - Offered paid opportunities for young people to gain technical and artistic skills.
 - Created a skilled workforce in the town.
 - 25 paid internships to people not in employment – steward roles.
 - The business was longstanding and was committed to the area.
- Dundee Heritage Trust and Stewart Milne Group
 - The organisations were connected by the theme of built environment.
 - Stuart Milne are building a large housing development and looking to form connections with the community.
 - Worked with the local primary school as the housing development is close to the school.
 - Lego exhibition of local landmarks.
- Creative Coathanger and Brand Satellite
 - The aim was to regenerate the Scottish Borders by raising awareness of its heritage with a series of events showcasing local makers.

- Brand Sat saw the relevance of creative activity to rebuild the brand of the Scottish Borders. They provided in-kind support, helping the festival to create a digital media strategy, which was crucial to the festival's success.
- The project was intergenerational and community focussed.
- Digital technology is key to reaching people. The project was challenging for a small organisation like Brand Satellite, but it raised their profile and they gained new contacts and clients.

Presenter:

- *David Watt, CEO, Arts and Business Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire Council have taken a jigsaw approach to regeneration, with a number of strategies fitting together, creating a 'Regeneration Shopping List'. They had previously had a lot of sporadic, disjointed projects taking place. They chose to focus on the remarkable built heritage that Renfrewshire has to offer. This proved key to their success and has opened the door to funding and development.

In 2012/13 they started developing their My Heritage Regeneration Strategy, the first local authority to take this approach. With a focus on Paisley the Untold Story. They engaged with a lot of organisations and what came from this was the Paisley 2021 bid for City of Culture. Their motto was 'think big, aim high'. Although they didn't secure the winning bid they feel that what came from that work was worth much more than winning. The journey they had undertaken had provided them with a structure and connections to go further. They are now using a cultural regeneration approach to take things forward, keeping the engagement going and continuing to build on the legacy of Paisley 2021.

The vision of the bid had always been about people. Local people contributing to the economy. Paisley is nothing without its people. The local authority can't make all of the decisions, they have no budget or resource. They need to reconnect with the community and what they want. Bringing everything together to get the full picture, all of the pieces of the jigsaw.

Place is the important part of the strategy. They have received funding from the Heritage Lottery Great Place Scheme with a refurbished heritage plan. The projects include;

- Investment in the town centre, which is the hub of cultural infrastructure activity and investment;
- £42m in Re-imagining Paisley Museum;
- They purchased a building for a Learning and Cultural Development Hub;
- Town Hall interior refurbishment;
- Investment in the Arts Centre. It has had external investment now internal refurbishment needed; and
- Public realm improvements. This is a challenge without the physical infrastructure in place to do the rest.

The Paisley Town Centre Action Plan has a ten year focus. It has five main areas earmarked for investment. These include; Paisley Gilmour Street Station, Paisley Abbey and Town Hall greenspace, the High Street and the West End. They hope to increase engagement with underused spaces.

The Russell Institute has had a £4m restoration and reopened as a skills and employability hub. It had previously been a vacant health clinic. The Council chose not to put a food or drink offer in the building. This has led to the opening of five new cafes.

The council is not just focussing on physical regeneration but also social regeneration. The Fountain Project was jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery and Historic Environment Scotland. The Lottery application focussed on the community re-engaging with a space that previously they had turned their back on. The HES application was more about the physical regeneration of the fountain.

In terms of business support and economic regeneration, the Council offers a Retail Improvement Grant Fund and also the Cultural Investment Fund and Festivals Fund.

Paisley High Street acts as the town centre. Some of the Victorian buildings are in poor condition so have not been developed. The Council have made a number of key investments to regenerate the High Street. These include;

- Investment in InCube, which supports development of creative businesses;
- £400m to develop a building into a training and cultural development hub;
- Development by a private owner to refurbish six flats. A CARS grant from the Council was provided to do the shopfronts below;
- Paisley Museum Re-imagined – how they use the building going forward. Wasn't previously configured for the public to feel it was theirs to use;
- Town Hall – exterior had investment, now interior; and
- Increase in town centre living – private and student living has popped up;

A Community Development Plan has been incorporated into the THI and CARS programmes. This is getting people involved who wouldn't normally be. 10% of the funding received through the second round of THI and CARS has been set aside for community activity and developing skills. A new vision document for the town centre is being set out by a consultant. This will include a diversification away from retail.

There remains a challenge around the wide definition of culture and regeneration. Creating partnerships is the way to go forward and make things happen

Presenter:

- *Susan Jones, Assistant Regeneration Manager, Renfrewshire Council*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and topics of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- Both of the Award projects demonstrated long-term challenges and the links between culture and overcoming deprivation.
- The Scottish Government Place Principle highlights common themes in different contexts, such as food insecurity and connectivity.
- *The projects were asked how local groups can influence local authorities and national agencies, who sit above the local level and make decisions.*

Findhorn said that prior to budget cuts there was one worker in Moray who tied arts and culture to other departments, once this was gone the groups had to pick up the slack by networking and attending meetings. Boards and participants need to be involved too, can't rely on a few individuals to represent.

WHALE said there had been change within Edinburgh Council. There was long-term core funding for Health and Social Care but no core culture funding. Previously ring fenced funds are now being opened up. They are part of the wider voluntary sector groups in Edinburgh which allows them access to meetings and networks, part of more conversations.

- The struggle with project to project funding is tiring and stressful and makes it difficult for organisations to grow. Creative Scotland funding is only over two years. There is a need to fund beyond pilot funding. How can funders evaluate work and make longer term funding decisions?

- *Each of the speakers were asked what they would do differently if they could.*

Susan said there was a need to encourage council officials and those involved to be more honest, not just tow the party line.

David stated a need to have more connectivity and cross-sector cultural collaborations between the funders.

Gary reiterated the need to be more open and informed, and to make an unashamed ask for investment in culture.

Leah said there was a need for more face to face early stage conversations, with food.

Kresanna highlighted a gap to embed connected income generation from the start. To allow for stacking up of income for when they are between projects.

- *The speakers were asked about the resource challenge around sustainable funding, and the inability for some groups to access funds. They were also asked to suggest an alternative form for income generation and funding.*

WHALE have the ability to generate income from their building via room rental, event rental and tenants. Looking to the future they are considering different ways to generate money from the building, such as childcare provision. They have to do this without excluding the community. Creative thinking is needed. It can be a challenge starting conversations with businesses for the Arts and Business Fund.

David responded saying that A&BS offer skills development workshops for the sector. This gives organisations the tools to write applications of support. Puts cultural organisations in the shoes of the people they are trying to talk to. Businesses want to get clients from the cultural sector, which is ok as long as they give back. Get them to deliver workshops. Think about what assets they have and how they can be used as services.

- A delegate said that it was great to hear that Creative Scotland are looking at greater flexibility in their funding as this is key. However, capacity within some organisations can prove to be a challenge when trying to deliver core activities and get funding applications in. Core funding should be delivered to projects they know work.
- Creative Scotland commented that taking risks is ok. Core funding challenges have been recognised by Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government. Funding across Scotland tends

to be year to year. If it were to be longer term would it affect the ability to fund new things? How do you provide some sort of sustainability to fund for longer than one year? We do need to get better and find new models. Find ways to fund things for 2 years, which is not done often at present. Leverage is key. How can Creative Scotland support be used as leverage?

- A participant suggested that a % of money should be given to the arts from capital investment projects.
- Sustainability funding is an issue but so is income generation. Businesses are good at that. Can they help creative organisations make money and creative organisations can help businesses with engagement.
- Renfrewshire have a Cultural Regeneration Officer as part of the regeneration team, which allows them to be more joined up. This is not the case in all local authority areas, where there can be a lack of joined up thinking.
- Do a bit of skillset swapping. Accentuated benefits from building relationships.
- There is a gap in the market for someone to provide assistance with governance development. The Cultural Enterprise Office provides limited support.
- What is the role for the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and Highlands and Islands Enterprise around the culture agenda?
- Scottish Enterprise never seen culture as an economic driver but Steve Dunlop is set to change that which is a positive move.

End of paper

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