



THE SURF AWARDS: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

An outcomes report from a series of SURF workshops in 2022

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 2022, SURF arranged a series of in-person shared learning workshop events with representatives of the [five category winning and shortlisted SURF Award initiatives](#) from the 2021 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 four online SURF Awards workshop events, and their respective themes:

- Best practice examples of housing led regeneration;
- Supporting young people to overcome barriers to employability;
- Learning from place-based regeneration initiatives; and
- Using artistic approaches to help regenerate communities.

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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.

2021 was the 23rd year of the SURF Awards, and the 18th that it has been delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Nominations to the 2021 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 2021 SURF Awards were:

- **Creative Regeneration:** [RIG Arts](#)
- **Supporting Youth Employability:** [Move On: Employability Fund](#)
- **Community Led Regeneration:** [The Furniture Project \(Stranraer\) Ltd](#)
- **Scotland's Most Improved Place:** [Regenerating Fraserburgh](#)
- **Housing and Regeneration:** [Step-Up Step Down at the Telford Centre](#)

These winning projects were announced at a SURF Awards Presentation Dinner event in the Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow on the 9th December. 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 2021 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 examples of housing led regeneration** with Step Up-Step Down at the Telford Centre, The Old Police Station in Langholm, Abergeldie Road in Ballater, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Urban Union. Held on 5 May 2022 in The Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh.
- **Supporting young people to overcome barriers to employability** Move On: Employability Fund, The Larder, Street League, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government. Held on 12 May 2022 in the Pearce Institute, Govan.
- **Learning from place-based regeneration initiatives** with Regenerating Fraserburgh, The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd, Scotland's Towns Partnership, Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Held on 19 May 2022 in Riddles Court, Edinburgh.
- **Using artistic approaches to help regenerate communities** with RIG Arts, Toonspeak Young People's Theatre, Museum of Things, Creative Scotland and Culture Collective. Held on 26 May 2022 in Websters Theatre, Glasgow.

SURF is grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the SURF Awards process, including these workshop events. The 2021 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](#), [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations](#), and [Skills Development Scotland](#).

Transferable Lessons

1) Best practice examples of housing led regeneration

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

Step Up-Step Down at The Telford Centre (who joined virtually), The Old Police Station, Langholm and Abergeldie Road, Ballater.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partner Skills Development Scotland and Urban Union.

About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2021 SURF Award Winner and Highly Commended projects in the 'Housing and Regeneration' category.

The projects featured all used housing-led regeneration approaches to improve the communities in which they work.

The morning workshop took place in The Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh on the 5th May 2022 and featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF Awards partner Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Urban Union. The workshop was attended by 30 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [Step-Up Step Down at the Telford Centre](#)

This presentation was provided remotely.

If you look for Fort Augustus on a map it looks central but in reality this is not the case. Fort Augustus is set in a rural backdrop at the end of a single track road, over an hour away from Inverness and Fort William. The only way to get there is by road as there are no trains and the single carriageway A82 is notorious for accidents and traffic delays caused by camper vans.

There are 430 housing properties in the village but a quarter of those are holiday lets, and many of the former council houses are now buy to let. There is not much land available for development and what is available it is very expensive, meaning young people are moving away, leaving an increasing elderly population.

The school role is stagnating and associated services and budgets are being redirected. This in turn is having an impact on the wider population of the community, with no new families moving into the area. Underused community services are being centralised or redeployed. Rural communities are less well served than the bigger towns.



Recruitment and retention of key workers, particularly in the care sector, is increasingly problematic, meaning homecare options are drastically reduced for older people. A plus is that the community is actively engaged and provide a single voice. A Community Company has been formed and they have used community legislation to their advantage. The community have accessed considerable funding support, such as windfarm money.

Step Up Step Down was established from a premature need for the elderly community to move to a care home due to escalating issues around care at home. The community came up with the idea and brought it to Highland Council and they carried out a massive community consultation.

The site consists of a small cluster of flexible and adaptable houses in the grounds of the Telford Centre Care Home. They were affordable to build, economic to run and incorporate Telecare/Telehealth provision to boost their care package. This frees up general need housing and care home places. Resources were maximised as council staff led on the build using [More Homes](#) funding and the NHS provides the care.

The centre's capacity increases as residents can remain at home for longer, mobile carers travel less and the centre's own staff and Telecare provision offers security between visits. This provides the missing step, allowing residents to live independently with support without leaving their home community. The build also brought fibre to the centre which wasn't there before, allowing them access to new care technology.

There was a policy to use local labour and their housing let policy ensured that tenants were from the local area. The houses neighbour the Telford Centre, rather than an extension to the centre, as that is what the community wanted. The homes share a connection with the Telford Centre that neither forces nor stalls engagement, with a good balance between privacy and "passive surveillance."

The design of the housing needed to be affordable to build and flexible to use. Equally as successful as standalone or supported units, they would be used as homes, not holiday chalets. They were designed not to look like mini care units but be sensitive to physical and cognitive need, and allow for family and friends to visit/stay over. A key element was being affordable to run and having the flexibility built in to make increasing/decreasing level adaptations whilst being cost and time efficient. The model that they opted for was flexi-kitchens. The house design has taken into account who is using them. An example of this is the width of the doors to allow care equipment in.

The dining room can be used as a spare bedroom to give extra space if needed. The flexi-kitchen model sees the space designed twice. This was an alternative to rise and fall kitchens as staff felt that they do not work. To allow for the flexibility, 6ft of wall space was left free to add lower worktops and appliances if needed. This means that they don't need to keep changing things. The tenant survey gave good reports and a community near Strontian are hoping to emulate the model as part of a regeneration package.

Challenges

As the team wanted to ensure they had the right policies in place it led to a time lag. They wanted to ensure that they had a sustainable letting model that could be used again, but admit it is not quite there yet. They had to develop the potential for the NHS/Telford Centre to sublet and to move people in/out directly based on need alone, accommodate short absences from permanent tenancies and reduce premature or delayed move and crisis.

Although the housing development would address the community need of the ageing population, they had to consider the views of the entire community, including the younger population. Considering economic opportunities for younger people was also important.

As this was in essence a community led development project, the team had to resist the urge to take over. Their role was to deliver the housing to the community's specifications. Current representatives are predominantly older people but the next generation have taken over the new houses; will they take over the community too? The outcome of the project was pre-determined

but the route to achieving it was not set in stone and had to be fluid in approach to deliver something that will survive. Most importantly the project had to be community led or it wouldn't work.

Bad news is out with your control. The [Big Switch Off](#) is due to happen in September 2023. The analogue switch off will lead to phone reception issues in the Highlands. There is a need to look at this issue as a sector.

Presenter:

- *Emma Micklethwaite, Housing Development Officer, Highland Council*

Second Presentation Summary: [The Old Police Station, Langholm](#)

South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) is a community led housing support provider and enabler. They were established in 2006 to address a shortfall in rural housing supply in South West Scotland in response to a study by Shelter and based upon a Highlands model.

They support community organisations through the housing process, from planning through to the build. Their work is supported by the [Land Reform Agenda](#) and [Community Empowerment policy](#). They access funding through the [Rural Housing Fund](#), which is the only funding piece of the jigsaw open to community organisations.

There has been a shift in the housing market over the last two years. Second home ownership is now becoming more prevalent in the South of Scotland, making it harder to secure housing. The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) helps to facilitate community asset transfer and the [Land Reform Acts 2003](#) and [2016](#) has provided support via [Community Right to Buy](#) and [the Scottish Land Fund](#). In March 2021, [Housing to 2040](#) announced an extension of the Rural Housing Fund and this platform for community led housing.

Partnership and stakeholder support has always been critical to the delivery of every project. Addressing the pressures on locally affordable housing supply and an undersupply of safe, warm, low-energy/affordable, secure homes for rent/purchase, particularly for families and older residents, whilst also aiming to deliver on the repopulation agenda.

Town centre decline has led to absentee ownership, permanent changes to the retail market and depopulation within towns. There are pressures on services in rural settlements and smaller towns, schools, businesses etc. Developers are being faced with spiralling development costs and supply chain issues. There are evident issues of social inequality, particularly post-pandemic, such as rural homelessness often being disguised, a low wage economy and an ageing demographic.



The Old Police Station in Langholm, a category B listed building, had been empty for 15 years and in the ownership of Dumfries and Galloway Council. The building had been on the market for 2 years with no interest. A local community group, the Eskdale Foundation who are one of the local community development trusts, wanted to do a Community Asset Transfer of the building and bring it into community ownership. They were given 18 months to develop a business plan.

[John Gilbert Architects](#) were brought in to support and oversee the project, they stayed on and provided guidance throughout the whole process. The building consisted of two existing apartments for staff, offices and cells, which were developed into four homes.

In 2018, a project team was established and funding secured to assess the project viability and if there was a local demand. Affordable housing for rent was established as a primary need within the

community of Langholm. The Community Asset Transfer was approved in 2019 and the building was in community ownership by 2020.

John Gilbert Architects led on the low-energy retrofit of the listed building. The biggest challenge was securing a contractor, as the original firm went out of business and the contract had to go back out to tender. This resulted in a price increase on the cost of materials. The build was finally completed in 2021.

SOSCH provided enabling support to the Eskdale Foundation and carried out the community engagement for their Housing Needs and Demand Assessment. This was a multiple partner project. Dumfries and Galloway Council provided a lot of support and John Gilbert had expertise in bringing old buildings back into use.

There were also a number of funders involved in bringing the building back into use. The Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund provided funding for the Project Viability Assessment, with additional support from the Scottish Land Fund and the [Architectural Heritage Fund](#).

The capital delivery costs were also covered by a funding cocktail. This included money from the Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund, [South of Scotland Enterprise](#), Dumfries and Galloway Council [Town Centre Living Fund](#), the Eskdale Foundation's reserves and borrowing.

A big question was what to do with the cells. The cells were integral to the listing and couldn't be changed, including the doors. It was decided that they would be used for storage and as bathrooms.

Key Learning

You have to have patience as projects like this can take a long time to deliver, especially if there are unforeseen delays. Partnership is key to making things work.

Acknowledge the capacity for community led housing to address key issues, such as:

- Affordable housing supply that addresses localised demand profile
- Vacant and derelict Buildings
- Empty homes
- Town centre decline
- Low energy retrofit and carbon saving
- Repurposing/change of use

Projects like The Old Police Station require flexibility in the funding package to cover unexpected time delays or additional costs.

The Old Police Station, Langholm has won or received high commendation in a number of Award schemes for the high quality retrofit of the building and the innovative repurposing of the space. These include; Scottish Empty Homes Awards 2022 – Best “Old Wreck”, SURF Awards 2021 – shortlisted in Housing and Regeneration and Scotland's Towns Partnership, Let's Live Local Awards – Best “Town Centre Living.”

SOSCH is committed to learning and knowledge exchange. They have taken part in the [SHICC Project – 2017-2021](#) and the [NWE Interreg Programme](#) to test and develop urban community led housing models. They have also been involved in the European [CLT Network](#) which is a new network working to mainstream community led housing in response to the affordable housing and the climate crises. The Nationwide Foundation's [Backing Community-led Housing](#) project is engaging throughout the

UK on a funding programme, sharing learning with community led housing hubs in England and Wales.

SOSCH have been working in partnership with 2020 Housing and Regeneration finalist the [Communities Housing Trust](#) to promote the community led housing model across Scotland and have delivered a series of joint blogs.

Presenter:

- *Mike Staples, Chief Executive, SOSCH*
- *Annabel Pidgeon, Partnership and Learning Manager, SOSCH*

Third Presentation Summary: [Abergeldie Road, Ballater](#)

Grampian Housing Association started this project in 2015/16 by initially looking at the site of an old school, which had been vacant for 10 years. Grampian HA have housing stock in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City and are committed to urban and rural regeneration.

The challenges of this rural project were similar to that of the Telford Centre, around connectivity and phone signal. Ballater suffers from holiday lets and a lack of affordable housing for young families.

The design process of this build was arduous as they were not just working with Aberdeenshire Council but also the Cairngorm National Park Authority, in addition to taking into account the needs of the end user.

The initial planning application was rejected so the team had to re-design the project by changing the location of the new build units and removing one unit, to appease the local community. The end result was 24 properties, a mix of flats and family homes.

Due to the delays with planning and design they finally started the project in February 2020 but then Covid hit and the project timescale was hit with further delays.

As Grampian HA were looking to retain features of the original building they had to source second-hand roof slates, with Spain and Wales being the only viable options. The window openings restricted the layout but to keep the aesthetic they had to invest in specialist windows. It wasn't just the site that was listed but also the boundary wall which had to be taken down and rebuilt with the original stone.



The cold winter was a challenge but the contractor being a local firm really helped. On particularly bad days, the builders had to dig a tunnel in the snow to get into the site but they were happy to work around the weather. Grampian HA used a local contractor and a local design team who had offices in the area. The Quantity Surveyor also lives in Ballater.

Utilities were the main issue that Grampian faced with the site due to timescales. The site had still not been handed over in May 2022. It was supposed to be October 2021, then March 2022. Issues with SSE and Scottish Water had caused major delays. Issues with supply from SSE were put on the back burner due to other priorities they were facing, such as storm damage to overhead cables. Scottish Water approved and signed off on the site plans but when they were complete they changed their mind and the contractor had to re-dig and change the pipework. Another challenge was the need for a specialist rig to dig bore holes for ground source heat pumps.

Although the site had not yet officially been handed over Prince Charles came to Ballater and officially opened the site as it neared completion.

The housing allocations policy was delivered in agreement with the local authority and the Cairngorms National Park Authority. It is a local allocations policy with potential tenants already living, working or having family within a 17-mile radius. This again was to appease the local community and address issues raised in the planning objections. Where they could they accommodated the comments and suggestions from the community.

Energy efficiency was an important aspect of the project planning which given the nature of the site would not be entirely straightforward to achieve. Grampian HA utilised relevant grants to install ground source heat pumps. This was touch and go with issues around utilities and funding deadlines to get power into the site.

It costs more to bring a building back into use, with hidden costs such as business rates. There are policy issues around the sustainability agenda, as in reality it would have been cheaper to flatten it.

Presenter:

- *Victoria Anderson, Senior Business Improvement Officer, Grampian HA*

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.

Highland Council did not participate in the discussion session.

- *One delegate noted that community planning objections based on fears around housing allocation should be acknowledged.*

Victoria responded by saying that had the community come to Grampian to discuss fears and worries they would have responded by explaining the local housing allocation policy for the development.

- *A delegate asked about ways of sharing best practice with other associations. There are communities that want to do community led housing.*

Mike said that there are definitely materials that SOSCH could share, such as case studies and a short film. He noted that community led housing projects are all different, so it is not a one size fits all approach.

Annabel offered to share information and get in contact with their organisation.

- *The next question focussed on the importance of patience when working with complex groups. How did you manage and keep motivation levels within partners, yourself and the team?*

Mike noted the importance of partnership as it is the key role of an enabling organisation. The issue of patience and frustration is mostly felt by the community group as they have no choice but to stick with the project, as they have taken on the building. Reports on timeframes of community led housing projects show that they do not take any longer than any other, but there is a perception that they do. There are always issues you cannot foresee, for example the contractor going bust. You need to manage expectation.

Annabel added that SOSCH offer post project support, which is important. A great motivator is the outcome of delivering great homes. You should always keep this as the main focus.

- *A delegate asked a question about policy context and funding. Projects require multiple funders with varied deadlines and demands. Are things changing or is it the same battle every time?*

Mike stated that the projects they work on are different every time. Some can have a complex funding package. The Rural Housing Fund is consistent and has no tight deadlines, making it much more flexible. Dumfries and Galloway Council ring-fenced funding for housing, which really helped. Locally there is a role to be played. The funding environment is not consistent.

Victoria added that the Ballater project had consisted on a mix of funding from the [Affordable Housing Fund](#) and Grampian HA's own borrowing, as this is all they are entitled to. They were lucky with this project as some of the abnormal costs were approved but it is getting more difficult. There needs to be allowances from the local authority for things like business rates and council tax, given that the end project is something they need. Overriding these added costs for 1 year would really make a difference.

- *A delegate asked about the unexpected impacts of market fluctuations. What were the responses from funders?*

Victoria said that their contractor held their obligation regarding prices, so increased costs were not an issue on this project. The contractor absorbed the inflated costs. However, on other projects they had to go to the Scottish Government, who are open to those conversations. You can go back and ask for more money for things that crop up, although they don't always say yes.

Mike added that the impacts of Covid has caused changes to costs. The Rural Housing Fund has a bit more flexibility when it comes to covering unexpected costs. They have benefited from the setup of the South of Scotland Enterprise agency who have been happy to put resource into community projects. Funders know that costs are going up.

- *A delegate asked for tips when balancing the compromise between saving a listed building and the need for local affordable housing?*

Mike said that the Scottish Land Fund is important for those types of projects. You need to overtly justify the need to satisfy community need by using the building. This project was lucky as it had previously had housing in it. You need to have a good design team on board who understand retrofit.

- *A question was asked about heating standards?*

Mike replied that it was difficult but they went as far as they could with the building. Installed good insulation and the building meets EPC C.

Victoria said that Grampian HA usually aim for EPC B but this building is getting a bit of grace. They installed good insulation but didn't want to go too far and have potential issues with damp. You need to find a design team that love the building.

Euan drew a connection to [Community Wealth Building](#) and using local resources, such as the design team.

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations \(SFHA\)](#)

Aaron remarked that quite often we talk in housing about things that don't mention people so it was nice to see people and place discussed.

SFHA are a membership body and the collective voice for housing associations in Scotland. They have 139 members, which covers over 90% of the sector. About half of social housing provision in Scotland comes from housing associations, and over 12,000 people are employed by housing associations.

[Housing to 2040](#) is Scotland's first ever long-term national housing strategy with a vision for what we want housing to look like and how it will be provided to the people of Scotland, no matter where they live and what point in their life they are in. To ensure housing in 2040 will support people to live in homes they want to live in, which are affordable and meet their needs. Housing to 2040 gives clarity around directing the ambition of the government and provides something to work towards collectively.

Tackling poverty and inequality is the core purpose of all housing associations. In Scotland this focus is stronger than in other countries. 46% of people living in social housing in the UK live in poverty and 1 in 5 children in Scotland live in poverty. However, Scotland's poverty rate is lower than England and Wales. The housing association sector's role is to support and prevent negative outcomes relating to poverty. Queens Cross HA is a good example and they are using a model similar to [Housing First](#).

The housing sector has a massive role to play in tackling the climate emergency. We can't solve issues around emissions and heat in homes as we have done previously. The government can't fund it all, particularly when it comes to retrofit. Where does the money come from? Housing associations don't have the option to put rent up due to tackling poverty. With rising costs of materials, £2bn for retrofit could have doubled and would only tackle a 24% reduction in fuel poverty. Some houses won't get to the standard required so do we knock them down? Preserving buildings is a much better alternative to knocking them down but there will have to be trade-offs.

Housing to 2040 has a hugely ambitious housing target. Covid has impacted on the last target so the sector need to ramp things up. The government is making a huge commitment to reaching the target but increased costs will eat into that. Supply chain challenges caused by external factors like Covid and Brexit are causing delays on site.

It has always been a stable and benign policy environment but that is now changing. What does that do to housing associations access to private finance? There is a renewed focus on place and regeneration brought by Housing to 2040. There has also been a move towards a focus on a [Wellbeing Economy](#). The sector's role needs to be better defined.

Scotland faces huge challenges but housing associations are agile and flexible and have responded to big challenges in the past. It is important that they are part of the conversations. They play a key role in delivering sustainable places. Covid has allowed space to reflect on this. Scotland faces huge challenges on poverty, climate and COVID recovery, but housing will be at the heart of that recovery

How are housing associations viewed by other agents as key to economic change? They are good at talking within their own sector but external bodies may not understand their role. Is there a join up

with government? What does new national policy on wellbeing do to local conversations? Economic success and measures should become less important. We need to change how we measure success.

Presenter:

- *Aaron Hill, Director of Policy & Membership, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Urban Union](#)

Successful regeneration is a place where people want and try to live. Urban Union delivers large scale regeneration projects with 600+ units of housing. They are a wholly owned Robertson company established to regenerate, primarily urban, areas across Scotland. Founded in 2011, they create revitalised communities through building new, high quality, affordable homes in mixed tenure developments.

To date Urban Union has delivered nearly 700 new homes for Registered Social Landlords, including social, midmarket rent and shared equity properties, together with a further 500 private for sale properties across 4 sites in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth. 300 units are currently under construction, with 1,300 planned for future phases of existing projects and the newly secured Hamiltonhill and Greendykes developments. A total development value well in excess of £400m.

Urban Union are known for housing, and that is indeed the main focus, but Neil shared a couple of other recent projects that were non-housing development based.

[The Beacon of Hope](#) is a public art installation in the woodland part on Cuningar Loop in Dalmarnock. Its development was linked to the wider art strategy for the area. The principal build partners for the project include lead consultant Ramboll, Urban Union as lead contractor, Aggregate Industries and Keltbray. A further 30 build partners and 28 project collaborators worked to deliver the sculpture pro-bono as a gift to Glasgow, highlighting the industry's goals during and post COP26.

Urban Union provided project and site management support for what they hope will be a lasting legacy for the City of Glasgow. It was constructed with cement free concrete and was made off site and delivered. It is situated at the heart of a regenerated community. It is an example of what can be done in sustainability, and is a best practice example of collaboration and delivery. The project highlighted the role of construction in global climate change. The statue linked the built environment to mental health which was the idea of the artist. Mental Health Scotland were involved in the planning.

The [COP26 House](#) is a zero carbon, timber framed home, made using standard materials and skills already available to us. So not inventing anything new. The COP26 house was developed by a pro-bono collaboration of more than 20 companies collectively known as Beyond Zero Homes. Urban Union again acted as lead contractor, with Robertson Timber Engineering manufacturing the timber frame of the home.

The goal was to go beyond zero carbon and demonstrate that beautiful, affordable, healthy and comfortable homes can be delivered with minimal impact on the environment. It provided a challenge to the industry.

The carbon impact of residential building is enormous at 27% of all emissions. To meet demand, we need 25,000 new homes in Scotland per annum. The average home emits 120 tonnes each year (3M addition tonnes per year). Homes need to last longer, be made from ecologically responsible material and be re-used or recycled. With the technology we have now we should be doing better. Scottish timber is not as strong as its Scandinavian counterpart but you can work around that.

The construction of the house took 2 weeks off-site and 8 weeks on. It took 2 weeks to take it down and a further 2 weeks to re-build it at a local design college. The unit cost is £140k and was designed by Roderick Smith based on a barn house. Energy usage is incredibly low and infra-red heating panels were used.

Given the barn house style the project was particularly relevant to rural regeneration. Urban Union mainly focuses on urban areas but rural challenges need to be addressed. It was built to [Passivhaus standard](#) and incorporated an open and airy space with a rural look. You can take a virtual tour of the house [here](#).

Both projects are different to what Urban Union usually do but are relevant to their business. Both initiatives demonstrated carbon saving and were highly collaborative. Regeneration needs that approach moving forward, rather than working in silos. The projects show what we can do right now by challenging what we do normally.

It was slightly challenging working with artists as they sometimes had ideas that practically were not achievable. Funders need to be on board this new approach to construction. Using home-grown, locally sourced materials, as anything being imported brings challenges, especially just now.

Presenter:

- *Neil McKay, Managing Director, Urban Union*

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 was interested in the speakers' thoughts on new private housing developments, particularly around Edinburgh, that are not good places to live and do not take into account learning? There is a tension between social housing and what is being developed beside that.*

Neil stated that mixed tenure developments are more successful. Development can only be led by the planning process. We need to look at brownfield sites before greenfield. There are issues around building housing on the outskirts of towns and the need for a car, this is not the way to go. We need to develop a community not just for housing.

Aaron said there is a need to look at joining things up. Developing strategies, such as the transport strategy or an economic plan, where housing is at the heart. There is a gap between national policy and practice. It has to be about local authorities holding developers to account in national policy.

Euan mentioned the family owned nature of Robertson as a developer.

Neil added that there is only so much land available for development. How sustainable is that? We need to look at the communities that we already have. There is a need to move away from the stigma of social housing being kept separate from private housing. He gave the Gorbals as an example, noting that people want to live there and there is a waiting list. That development is 60% social housing.

Euan asked why we are not seeing more Gorbals replicated?

Neil noted that Urban Union have been there for 10 years and will probably be there for another 10. Longevity is key.

- *A delegate asked if plans are available for the COP26 House and a list of materials used?*

Neil offered to put them in touch with Beyond Zero Homes. They are looking at using the template in a rural setting, potentially in Arran.

- *A delegate noted that housing associations have a role as a conduit between issues beyond housing, such as credit unions etc. Is there an enthusiasm to fulfil that role or are they more focussed on the delivery of housing?*

Aaron said that this is more of a common focus in Scotland, especially in Glasgow, with the community focussed associations. Difficult decisions are being made around high standards for existing housing stock. It is a challenging landscape but there is still lots going on.

- *A delegate said that we are focussed on the principles around Community Wealth Building. Delivering very strong support to tenants, a role perhaps akin to that of a local authority. Is there a danger that they could become overloaded with additional things being passed on from local authorities?*

Aaron said that this is a risk for all housing associations. They have strong links within communities but partnership is key to this. Local authorities need to have resources to fulfil the roles they previously did.

- *Euan raised a point about the [Private Members Bill](#) and new builds meeting Passivhaus standards.*

Neil said that private volume builders will not be happy and thinks that the [Net Zero agenda](#) should be industry led. This is not as daunting a task for Urban Union. The sector needs to actively look at the Net Zero target now. Passivhaus takes a different approach as to how you live in your home which can be a challenge.

Aaron says that we have spoken about existing homes but there are challenges in new developments. Whether Passivhaus is the right way to go is something to be debated. The social housing sector is always going to get there first as it is held to a higher standard.

- *A question asked if new builds are being built to a higher standard then what is differential in running an existing home?*

Aaron mentioned [Community Energy Schemes](#). Associations have been supporting tenants with bills. The role of the [National Energy Agency](#) in Scotland is not clear yet but they will be key to conversations.

- *A delegate reflected that there is a focus on existing stock being brought up to standard. With support to tenants and homeowners. What happens to those that are not asset rich or do not have the money to do this? It will create disparity if funding is not put in.*

Aaron mentioned failures of schemes like [Green Deal](#). The pot of power sits at Westminster and we can't control it all up here.

Euan mentioned gas boilers which were the thing of the time. Green Hydrogen tests are taking place but we don't have time for tests as we need it now. With retrofitting of tenements no one wants to go to the extent of stripping the building back.

2) Supporting young people to overcome barriers to employability

With introductory presentations from two SURF Award projects shortlisted in 2021 and the 2020 winner in the Supporting Youth Employability category:

Move On: Employability Fund, The Larder and Street League.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partner Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government DYW Team.

About the event

The second workshop in the series highlighted the 2020 and 2021 SURF Award Winners and one of the 2021 Highly Commended projects in the 'Supporting Youth Employability' category.

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

The morning workshop took place in the Pearce Institute in Govan on the 12th May 2022 and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Awards partner the Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government DYW Team. The workshop was attended by 35 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [Move On: Employability Fund](#)

Move On have been delivering an employability service since their inception 25 years ago. In 2015 they were awarded their first [Employability Fund](#) award and employed a dedicated staff member to deliver the programme. Year on year they have looked to develop the project and build on their successes. Move On are always looking to be adaptive and innovative when delivering training and support to their young people. Since 2015, they have supported 250 young people through the Employability Fund project, tapping in to their other initiatives to support this work. All of their work streams feed into each other.

Move On are the parent charity for [Fareshare in Glasgow and the West](#). Fareshare is a national organisation that works with some of the largest food suppliers in the UK, to redistribute fit for purpose surplus food to community organisations who help some of the most vulnerable people in their local communities. Participants not only gain work skills but feel that they are making a difference in a lot of the communities that they themselves come from. Move On have found this to be a great motivator.

By having their own work placement opportunity at the FareShare warehouse they are able to develop workplace skills and have a more in-depth knowledge of how participants react and conduct themselves in different workplace scenarios. This is a real benefit not only to the young people but allows staff to make adjustments to training plans and goal setting.

They tell referrers and partners that the main aims of the programme are:

- The aim of the Stage 2 provision is to break down individual barriers to accessing employment, by building confidence and introducing participants to workplace expectations.
- This provision is particularly suitable for young people who would like to improve their employment skills and gain real life work experience.
- The aim of the Stage 3 provision is to better prepare participants for the world of work, this is done through ensuring that all participants are confident in applying for employment.

- Participants gain an underpinning knowledge of the warehouse sector through completing work experience at the Fareshare Glasgow and West of Scotland Depot. This better prepares them for moving into employment in this sector but the experience and knowledge gained is transferable to a multitude of employment sectors.

To Move On this is not the important stuff but if you are just starting out the detail is needed. What they are telling the young people is what really matters to them. This includes:

- You will meet new friends
- You will learn new skills
- You will gain qualifications
- You will be supported to learn real working skills
- You get out what you put in
- We will work as hard as you to help you achieve your goals
- You have the skills that employers want let us help you showcase them
- You can decide what you learn

The first few are the most important. Move On find that positive reinforcement is very effective. Telling the young person that they have the attributes that employers want. Young people decide what they learn so as do not feel like they are back at school.

Stage 2 of the employability project is an 8-week classroom based employability programme. Classroom tutors are with them at all times, even on work placements. They are work shadowing, there to learn so there is no pressure of added responsibilities. Stage 3 is a 12-week programme with 10 weeks of work experience. Move On are mainly volunteer led. At Stage 3 the young people are given added responsibilities. They reduce volunteer numbers in the warehouse when the young people are onsite, so if they don't show up for work the work doesn't get done. This makes the young people feel important.



At Stage 1, Move On receive referrals and they work to move the young person on to Stage 2 then to Stage 3. After that they can go on to further training or programmes like [Kickstart](#). Last year, 28 young people went through the Kickstart programme. Move On are a national minimum wage employer. They pay the young people £9.50 an hour which sometimes causes issues when they move on and other employers pay less. Volunteering is an option for next steps and they have also employed young people who have come through the programme. One girl now manages the food that comes through the warehouse. They can move young people backwards through the pipeline if they are not ready to progress or if they have gone on to further education or work which has not worked out, they can come back to Stage 3 to develop further skills.

One of the main reasons that the programme works is the quality of the work experience they offer. A big part of the process is listening and learning. If something doesn't work then don't force it, adapt instead. It is important to make learning fun to keep the young people engaged. Move On have found that negative experiences have detrimental effects. It is important that you treat the young person as an individual and provide them with the right qualifications. Again, positive reinforcement is key, praise them for everything they do even if it is small or seen to be easy.

Stages 2 and 3 have elements of mandatory training such as various SCQF qualifications, food safety awareness and manual handling awareness. Additional needs assessed training is also provided

depending on the young person. This includes things such as IT literacy, forklift training, health and safety, literacy and numeracy, peer mentoring and other training identified through the individual's training plan. Extra support is provided where required. There is a dedicated literacy and numeracy team. If needed the young person can do extra classes. There is also a dedicated money advice team. Giving young people money, often for the first time, can cause problems.

Move On also run a mentoring programme which provides the young person with a friend or someone to talk to. External work coaches come in and do training. They don't expect a massive amount from the young people, which makes it less daunting. Trauma informed training changed the way that Move On speak and work with young people.

It is not about statistics it is about the young people. Jobs are great for those that are ready but we always have to remember what is best for the young person. Get them enthused in something. Getting young people enthused about something/anything can be an achievement. Do not just tick boxes. If someone need to complete a CV for an SQA award, make sure it is a CV that is of good quality and not just a paper exercise. Work Experience is important, work with the provider closely to devise a proper learning plan. Young people are not there for free labour; they are there to develop.

Move On have noticed the decline in the mental health of their young people since Covid. They set up wellbeing groups to help support their young people through the lockdown periods. We need to break down stereotypes and barriers. Move with the times and change the employability landscape.

In addition to their existing programmes, Move On are now running a driver training scheme and have become a forklift training site. They have increased their SQA portfolio and want to be the go to place for warehouse logistics training. The driver training they provide is not just cars but also vans. They give the young person time to actually use the vehicles in order to help get them a job.

Presenters:

- *John Connell, Volunteering Manger, Move On*

Second Presentation Summary: [The Larder](#)

The Larder is a social enterprise based in West Lothian. Founded by their CEO, Angela Moohan, in 2010 as a result of the rising unemployment in West Lothian, alongside the notable decrease in people's, particularly young people's, interest in cooking. They became a charity in 2011.

Over the past 11 years, The Larder has grown to be West Lothian's largest training provider and whilst they initially started as a cook school, have now pivoted into a thriving social enterprise, supporting the community through provision of needs-led, bespoke learning and high-quality food for all.

They provide training and employment opportunities to young people with multiple complex barriers. They opened three cafes for community and workplace opportunities. Their pop-up dining experiences, once held at local foodbanks, provide opportunities to young people. Their aim is to have a Scotland without hunger and for young people to fulfil their potential.

The Larder's Training Academy changed after the pandemic. They were once pigeonholed into hospitality but participants can now do any form of training and will be supported, but with cooking integrated where relevant. Due to Covid, the dining experience was redesigned and became a

service providing prepared food that was delivered to doors and pantries. This became known as Catalyst Kitchen. This project has grown enormously and they have now served over 120,000 meals to those experiencing food insecurity in Scotland. As restrictions lifted and face to face interactions re-open the dining experiences are returning to help address loneliness, providing work experience and opportunities to socialise. They have plans to deliver cook and dine classes and are in discussions with West Lothian Council regarding opening a food pantry.

The Training Academy provides training on employability, life skills and health and wellbeing, all alongside learning to cook. The Larder believe that cooking is an essential life skill and even if someone isn't looking to become a chef it is important to offer this opportunity for all.

They have three cafes which have mainly been unable to re-open as a result of Covid. These cafes served as training spaces for young people on cookery courses but also functioned as an area for community and social cohesion. To recover from the devastating impact which the pandemic had on their trading income, just before Christmas The Larder launched an online bakery and over the next few months they will be renovating their old office to become a bakery shopfront.



Catalyst Kitchen started as an opportunity for work experience but has grown rapidly. This is helping to address growing food insecurity, even as we come out of the pandemic. Pre-pandemic The Larder was a trading enterprise but due to the pandemic had to rely on funding. They are trying to get this back up and running. They have now re-opened one of the cafés and the online bakery to integrate young people.

They are one of the only organisations in West Lothian to offer the full strategic skills pipeline. They work with schools in the classroom and bring young people out. [Power to Grow](#), funded by [YoungScot](#), offers support to young people over a 15-week period. They offer a Stage 2 employability transitions programme. This is focussed on employment in whatever field the young person wants to work in. Moving away from restrictive prescriptive training and becoming more tailored and bespoke in Stage 3. Stage 4 is an individual training programme which was brought in last year for those leaving Stage 3 who have not moved into employment. It provides extra training on areas such as interviews. The final Stage 5 consists of Modern Apprenticeships.

In 2021, 199 young people and adults were supported through the training academy. 90,301 meals were delivered through Catalyst Kitchen and 168 bakery orders were received in the first two weeks of opening. They also became the Edinburgh Airport chosen charity of the year.

Emma gave an example of a young person called George who came to them as an 18-year old leaving school who wanted to be a chef. He has a general learning disability. The Larder trained him for 24 weeks and he then moved into a 4-week placement working at the dining experience. He then went on to the Stage 4 progression programme and applied to Brucefield Farm and got the job. His confidence and self-belief have really grown.

In terms of what is next for The Larder, they are developing the Training Academy following the removal of the [Employability Fund](#), working with the new Youth Board. West Lothian doesn't have anything else like this in this capacity.

Catalyst Kitchen will be re-developed to provide innovative solutions to food insecurity, an alternative to relying on foodbanks and meal prep. They hope to bring an element of enterprise into this with a [pay it forward](#) scheme. They are opening a bakery shopfront after their online success and opening a pantry as part of Catalyst Kitchen.

Euan reflected on how Covid has transformed places of work and had positive long-term benefits, not just negative effects.

Presenter:

- *Emma Husband, Fundraising & Communications Manager, The Larder*

Third Presentation Summary: Street League

Street League use the power of sport to tackle poverty. They work with people aged 14-30 who are based in the most deprived areas of Scotland, and help young people overcome barriers and move into employment.

At the start of the pandemic Street League furloughed a lot of their on the ground staff. They had one team delivering remotely. The team were sceptical of how their work would translate onto Zoom as they deliver football. A lot of young people had no IT or internet so Street League gave out tablets and dongles. Booklets are used to deliver the coursework so they had to find ways to deliver them to participants safely.



How can you find young people when everyone is at home was a question that was raised. They used social media as a means of engaging but motivation was at an all-time low. Many of the young people that engage with Street League come from chaotic home lives and they usually go to Street League to escape. For staff it lifted morale to engage with young people and feel like they were helping. The move to online delivery allowed staff to develop improved approaches to workshop delivery, as what you get away with in real life you can't on Zoom. You need to be more organised. The team found that it was important to have cameras on to see engagement.

A main issue was how they would deliver sport online. They used apps like Strava and encouraged young people to go for a walk or do a bike ride. They ran photography competitions with prizes, online fitness classes and football challenges in the garden. This helped to get people out of their bedrooms and houses. Making it fun was key.

Street League have improved the way they use IT within the academies. Young people now all have tablets or devices. They now provide better quality workshops and SQA sessions. The SQA portfolio no longer uses paper booklets but instead a more efficient online app. This has helped tackle challenges with spelling and bad handwriting.

Street League will carry on doing online delivery for the hard to reach in remote areas and are looking to establish a dedicated delivery team. The team has a new appreciation for face to face delivery and realise how lucky they are to get to spend time with young people.

Presenter:

- *Adam Wilkinson, Dundee and Angus Operations Manager, Street League*

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 about the recruitment process and self-referral?*

John said that if it is referrals to the Employability Fund it depends what stage they are coming in at. Stage 2 is referral only but for Stages 3 and 4 Move On can refer young people themselves. For their other services self-referral is an option.

Adam said that word of mouth brings a lot of young people along to Street League. As the Employability Fund changes referrals will change. We need to start looking at ways of referring.

Emma noted that The Larder has the same restrictions with the Employability Fund but in other areas of their work they take self-referrals and the schools refer people.

- *A delegate asked Move On about their work experience and if they offer anything out with their own Warehouse?*

John said that they used to do that and with the employability offer changing they are relooking at it. They are aware that they are not in the community as much as they would like. The [Community Pantry Network](#) is looking to advertise opportunities to volunteers on a notice board so there is definitely possibilities.

- *The next question was to The Larder about working with schools.*

Adam said that Street League also work with schools and offer taster sessions during the summer to assess appetite.

Emma added that a lot has to do with word of mouth and the relationship their CEO has with the community.

- *Move On were asked about breaking down stereotypes around warehouse work?*

John said that it is about getting people in first. Speaking to partners and doing presentations to specific groups, such as women's groups, to increase female interest. Changing attitudes within the workforce is important. Four years ago the warehouse was mainly made up of older white males but now the average age is 24 and 35% of the workers are female. You need to do the leg work and speak to people to make a change. Training staff and volunteers about language and appropriate behaviour has been key. They have carried out a lot of diversity and mental health training with the team. Trauma informed training has been useful around the use of language as a trigger. It has been difficult and took 3 years to change the culture.

- *The next question was also to Move On, who were asked about transporting young people from across Glasgow to the warehouse?*

John answered that Move On will support as much as they possibly can but they need to get the young people to be self-sufficient. The warehouse is 8 minutes on a bus from Glasgow City Centre. There are issues around territorial behaviour. Scotstoun is deprived but there is not a big gang culture. In other areas of Glasgow young people won't leave their local area. For the first couple of days they will show the young person how to get there and then it is up to them.

- *A delegate asked about the impacts of the changes to the Employability Fund as it moves from Skills Development Scotland to local authorities?*

Adam said that Street League are lucky as they are a big charity. The challenge will be that each local authority will have a different way of doing things and it could be slow for awards to come through. This could potentially leave the young people in limbo. Street League can cope but changes for the young people will be difficult.

Emma added that limbo is a good word. As The Larder had a good year with fundraising they are ok for now but they are starting to look at other funding as they don't think the council will support them.

John said that it won't have a detrimental effect on Move On as they have income but for their young people they don't know what will happen if the programme is not up and running by the end of the summer. What do Development Workers do? This will be a transition year.

Adam pointed out that the positive is that it isn't a one size fits all model.

Euan noted that change involves risk.

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

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are Scotland's skills body. Their role is to deliver the best possible outcomes for people, businesses and the economy. They provide services for individuals and employers to achieve their ambitions. SDS work to build strong partnerships to deliver strong programmes which make the most difference.

SDS understand skills demand through direct employer engagement, engagement with employer groups and insights through partner agencies and data research. This feeds into the [Regional and Sectorial Skills Investment Plans](#) which leads to investment in responsive education and training provision. This then leads to matching learning provision with demand to develop the right skills that employers are looking for. Regional and Sectorial Skills Investment Plans also influence choice through careers intelligence which means that people can access a careers service that helps them pursue opportunities important to the economy and employers.

SDS have been working to tackle gender pay gaps and inequalities in the workforce and fair work practice. They have been working with employers to do that. They are looking to ensure services are inclusive for all regardless of situation or background.

The new SDS organisational strategy focussing on 5 themes;

- Invested employers - it is important to employers to have a more invested workforce, this includes upskilling.
- Inclusive talent - employee expectation and what skills are needed to get people back into work.
- Industry skills – what skills are needed to get people into employment.
- Evidence Led – equality needs to be built in.
- Impactful organisation – not silo working.

Apprenticeships show value to people and employers. Foundation apprenticeships with SQA accredited qualifications in a variety of sectors including engineering, accountancy, creative industries, social services, business skills and food and drink technologies.

Climate change is a focus for Scotland and for SDS. Tackling climate challenges needs a coordinated approach and collaboration across Scotland. SDS is a leading contributor to a low carbon, inclusive and sustainable economy in Scotland, and on track to becoming a net-zero organisation by 2030.

Supporting a green economy by influencing the skills system to be responsive to the climate emergency and helping to embed sustainability into learning provision. Enabling colleagues to understand and have the confidence to deliver digitally, whilst enhancing their service offer and making best use of digital technology.

They will embed sustainability into SDS business process and drive environmental performance reporting and improve efficient use of resources. Changing the organisational culture by driving sustainable colleague behaviours and use of resources, whilst also adopting exemplar green practices and leading change in others. SDS are carrying out a consultation to see how they can maximise input to meeting the 2030 target. Meeting the needs of a low carbon economy and what they want others to do across the skills landscape.

They will continue to develop the careers service as part of the [Young Person's Guarantee](#) and have carried out a comprehensive review. Challenges brought by the pandemic are exasperating poverty. The pandemic plus climate emergency has led to changing skills and how people work. There is an opportunity to look at how they serve the needs of those that use their service.

There have been 10 key recommendations coming out of the consultation. A key focus is digital technology as that has advanced at a rapid rate. Are SDS fit for purpose in that space? They are developing a Digital Economy Skills Action Plan with consultancy Ekosgen.

The 3 key areas are:

- Digital skills employers need to do jobs.
- Increase in technical roles - how to access and use.
- Specialist technical roles – data analysis etc.

SDS are working with organisations to make practical changes by developing 500 BSL device to help bridge the gap for neuro-diverse people and the digital world. Covid has accelerated IT engagement by 10 years.

People are the greatest asset. Scotland needs to ensure they can achieve goals by connecting the dots. Working with public sector organisations to encourage them to get young people more engaged in apprenticeships.

Ian showed a video of Chloe in the workplace at North Lanarkshire Council. Chloe has visual impairment and registered blind. The clip is available in Ian's presentation on the SURF website [here](#).

Presenter:

- *Ian Bruce, National Training Programmes Equality Manager, Skills Development Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Scottish Government](#)

Kenneth opened by asking who had heard of the [Young Person's Guarantee \(YPG\)](#). Attendees mainly responded positively but there were some nos.

YPG was setup in 2020 on the back of an ACER report that stated that young people would be disproportionately affected by the impacts of the pandemic.

The Young Person's Guarantee is a commitment to bring together employers, partners and young people. It aims to connect every 16 to 24 year old in Scotland to an opportunity. This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering.

Additional investment across 3 financial years of 2020/21 £60m, 2021/22 £70m and 2022/23 £45m. The £45m is misleading as there is additional money in local authorities and money being carried over from the previous year.

Meeting the young person where they are and giving them the opportunity to progress into a meaningful destination. It is those furthest to reach in the labour market that we need to think about. Scotland has not yet reached the level of youth unemployment post-pandemic as predicted but could possibly be there by the end of the year.

[Developing Young Workforce \(DYW\)](#) was setup in 2014 as the Scottish Government's youth employment strategy. It has been very successful and spans across schools, colleges etc. Employers are looking for different things, especially during the pandemic. The system needs to react to the new world of work. The strategy brings employers to the heart of DYW and links them directly with young people. It takes into account the macro economy, local labour market and skills requirements, and employer leadership is at the heart of activity. Regional Groups, led by employers, are the conduit to activity and DYW School Coordinators are working with young people in an education setting. The key to success is rooted in partnership work.

Start with schools and ensure young people understand what the world of work looks like and the skills required. A national strategy being delivered locally and guided and led by employers. The role of the DYW group is to seek employers and engage/link them in. Although this is being done at a local level it links to national vision. For example, a young person in Argyll can link with an employer in Glasgow.

There is a focus on young people most at risk of a negative destination. Around 10% of young people leave school and enter into a negative outcome. If you turn these people around it can have a positive impact on the economy. If you turn 100k people from being inactive the economy can grow by tremendous amounts.

The approach is rooted within partnerships. Policy needs to translate on the ground into real actions, [No One Left Behind](#) policy. There is a need to bring more employers round the table as not all are engaged. The figure hovers between 14%-20%.

We need to break the cycle of poverty and then the economy can have the skills it needs and in terms of a wellbeing economy people can have the life they want. DYW is a national top down approach but it is national policy at a local level.

Presenter:

- *Kenneth MacDermid, Team Leader – DYW Employer Engagement & Young Person's Guarantee, Scottish Government*

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.

- *A question was asked about actively targeting refugees and asylum seekers?*

Ian said that SDS are involved in a regular conversation around Ukrainian refugees. There are 1000 based in Edinburgh, predominantly young people. They are working with organisations to help with the translation of materials. Young people don't want a gap in their education but also don't want to be in Scotland forever. They need support them during the time they

are here. SDS have been working with refugee and asylum seeker support organisations. We need to understand the parameters. 10-12 of the main languages spoken in Scotland have been translated for SDS materials.

Kenneth noted that this conversation pre-dates the pandemic. Ministers recognise the challenges around the population. Scotland has a declining population so we need, want and desire to attract people to live and work in Scotland. We have skills gaps but are constrained regarding UK policy. The [Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#) is making sure that the cohort of people with additional challenges are addressed. YPG has people involved who tackle race and minority issues. There are pockets of activity happening and we are making sure provision is there. Can do anything but can't do everything.

- *A delegate said that people get settled status but are keen to work and not take benefits.*

Kenneth said that Scottish Government are keen that programmes should be supporting that. It is easy to take the low hanging fruit but need to turn the system around. It is about the kids not at school or engaged.

- *A further question asked where SDS sits now with YPG if the Employability Fund is no longer delivered by them?*

Ian said that things have changed considerably. SDS don't deliver the fund now but they still have residual groups. The Careers Service are really making sure that young people are engaging with that. The [National Training Transition Fund](#) was put in place due to Covid so that we didn't lose skills and to address those displaced from work.

- *A delegate reflected that we still have careers advisers in schools but have lost the links to delivery organisations.*

Ian said that SDS delivery advisers are at the tables to have those discussions and they still have careers advisers close on the ground.

- *A delegate raised the example of Chloe in the workplace but noted that the impacts of those leaving education and working from home means that they are not experiencing the workplace. The office workplace is not returning to normality. There is a new flexible way of working.*

Ian made an observation around how people have adapted to being at home. Where offices could open they have tried to get young people in as soon as possible. SDS worked with Penumbra around the impact on mental health. Making employers understand what the challenges were. He showed the example of Chloe to show what resources are available.

- *The issue of development being stalled over the past couple of years and leaving a financial risk to employers taking someone on was raised. Should we be working with young people to develop skills to lessen the risk?*
- Kenneth said that the Scottish Government led by example around Covid policy. What does this new world of work look like? It is a challenging question. There have been pilots of 4 day working week. What does that mean for the working world? People have different priorities around work. Flexible working doesn't always mean working from home. It is about flexibility

that works for you. Creating a better work/life balance. You need to think about the person in this and find the sweet spot. There is a fear of returning to 5-day office working week.

Ian added that from a disability perspective there is an unintended consequence that these people end up separated behind a screen.

- *A participant said that we are talking a lot about office work but a lot of young people won't be working in an office. We need to make use of funding and get the employers on board.*

Kenneth said that we need to make sure people are still attracted to those industries. We need to add value to get people engaged. Fair work with well-paid good jobs, that is what YPG should do.

- *A final question related to young people getting out and doing something that is for their community. How does this link to [20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#)? How will it link to the local economy?*

Kenneth said you need to put money into the local authority. There are artificial barriers. Stages 2 and 3 of the employability pipeline should start to tackle those. Putting people into volunteering to tick a box can't happen. It is about making it happen on the ground.

Euan noted the challenges of applying 20 Minute Neighbourhoods to a whole nation.

3) Learning from place-based regeneration initiatives

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

Regenerating Fraserburgh and The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partners the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

About the event

The third workshop in the series highlighted the 2021 SURF Award Winner in the 'Scotland's Most Improved Place' and 'Community Led Regeneration' categories.

The projects featured at the workshop varied in location, from Fraserburgh in Aberdeenshire to Stranraer in Dumfries and Galloway, but are all using place-based approaches to regenerate their communities.

The morning workshop took place in Riddles Court in Edinburgh on the 19th May 2022 and featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF Awards partners the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The workshop was attended by 55 participants.

First Presentation Summary: Regenerating Fraserburgh

Fraserburgh is one of the earliest planned towns, dating from the 16th century. It has a population of 14,000 that, despite new housing, has remained static. It is a coastal town that is always re-inventing and re-evaluating itself. The town is beginning to diversify with moves towards offshore wind.

Fraserburgh has socio-economic challenges and areas of deprivation. It is a settlement of mixed SIMD rankings. There are particular challenges around income inequality and health and education outcomes.



The town is poorly connected and isolated which limits the scope for growth and development and has suffered from a neglected built environment. Despite these challenges Fraserburgh has always had a strong community spirit and distinct pride of place.

It was Aberdeenshire's first regeneration town but in 2015 a key employer, Youngs, shed 100s of jobs which shook the town. The 2016 SIMD presented challenges. One data zone in Fraserburgh was in the most deprived.

Fraserburgh has pockets of wealth but also areas of significant social and economic disadvantage.

Aberdeenshire Council needed a plan that the community would buy into but plans don't just happen. You have to stand back and take time to work out what you are trying to fix. Don't just assume you know all of the issues. You should engage with the community early.

They had a 5-year vision and action plan. Designed to be a strategic plan of activity with a role for all sectors. The sum of the plan is greater than the individual parts. It was crafted to address issues faced by the town and have a focus on people and place. The approach was developed before the [Place Standard](#) was utilised but in looking at the tool they have done one thing across all of the elements. The plan focussed on the economy, the environment and people and communities.

They delivered a programme of tailored business support as they recognised that businesses were not accessing mainstream support. Through this Aberdeenshire Council supported 150 businesses and 75 start-ups. A [CARS programme](#) supported a Japanese themed community garden amongst other projects, and they worked with an offshore windfarm developer to locate an office in the area.

The plan delivered and supported sport and leisure activities including an all ability running track and a skateboarding and wheeling park. Other projects included sustainable housing, a deep clean of the streets, public realm maintenance and a [Participatory Budgeting](#) programme.

Challenges

Projects never go entirely as planned and you shouldn't fight it. Things always take more time and more money than you think they will, especially now with cost increases. Managing multiple funding programmes and different expectations and requirements can be exhausting.

You must not take communities for granted. Often there is a feeling of volunteer and consultation fatigue within the community. Be aware that there will be people trying to de-rail progress with negativity and cynicism and you have to rise above this. You can't please everyone all of the time.

The Covid pandemic created an immediate re-focus which led to knock on delays. You can't plan for the unexpected but you have to adapt. Above all, true regeneration takes time to see physical improvements and even longer to see socio-economic impact and positive outcomes, and people are rarely patient.

Lessons

When taking on a project like the regeneration of a town centre you need to look to develop strategic programmes that projects fit within, rather than individual projects. Get a good partnership around you as collaboration can be key to overcoming hurdles. In Fraserburgh, the Business Association is now back up and running.

Quick wins always help to build momentum and retain motivation. So you have to think of ways to build these in and give something to the community. Try to build capacity and skills within the community as you go. This will prove useful for future projects and helps the community feel involved. Continually engage, review and evaluate, follow the evidence, and don't be afraid to deviate and change course if things don't go to plan.

Celebrate achievements and share good news, as you never know when it will happen again. It is important to keep everyone informed as it helps to keep people on board. Nominate yourselves for awards. They help build profile and get people to sit back and take notice.

Fraserburgh has changed hugely with a £15m investment in the town.

Presenter:

- *Alastair Rhind, Strategic Regeneration Executive, Aberdeenshire Council*

Second Presentation Summary: [The Furniture Project \(Stranraer\) Ltd](#)

The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd was set up in 1997 by a group of local people, supported by Dumfries & Galloway Council. It opened in Stranraer in 1998 to collect, repair, restore and sell furniture to people throughout Wigtownshire to assist in reducing poverty in the area. For 20 years it resided in poor accommodation in Dicks Hill. More recently moving to new premises in the winter of 2017 after receiving a contract with Dumfries and Galloway Council to have a reuse centre in the Zero Waste Park in Stranraer. The organisation has gone from being solely a furniture project to a

community reuse project selling all sorts of homeware and white goods, which people donate or they collect.

The project also provides a facility for people to undertake training schemes or to learn and share skills. It is also providing a space for people to come together and volunteer which helps to address social isolation, poor mental health and addictions. People who have been long-term unemployed can learn new skills.

They offer volunteering opportunities to people from many different backgrounds. They are currently offering positions in; customer service, van assistance, administration, workshop repairs, warehousing, online retail, bike engineering and retail.



The organisation is entrenched in community life with the services they deliver. They once made a 20ft Galloway cow out of rubbish at the request of the community. In addition to their own services they help deliver projects for other organisations. For example, three years ago they provided hampers for people at Christmas, food for 50 people identified by Social Services. For Christmas 2021, they spent £10k on gifts for children and hampers for families. In 2017 they held a big Christmas dinner for those who would otherwise be alone.

They setup the Fed Up Café which is now running as a standalone organisation. An Aspiring Communities funded project delivered a series of upcycling workshops and they have been involved in the local poppy appeal. They have created an accessible coastal pathway and their Winter Warmth programme provides clothes to people in need. A similar service was provided after lockdown.

The project provided school clothes to the council Anti-Poverty Team and this has now been setup as a service from the clothes shop on the High Street. Last year the Anti-Poverty Team programme extended beyond just clothes and also helped to get children ready for school, including haircuts in partnerships the local hairdressers.

The 3 main projects out with the reuse shop are:

- Reloved Local – The clothes shop on the High Street which provides free school clothes and the Winter Warmth programme.
- Rhins Active - Reuse bicycles diverted from landfill. They prepare the bikes to Revolve accredited standards and provide them at low cost in the shop.
- Fed Up Café – A Café that addresses social isolation by providing free meals to people across the community.

They get involved in all sorts of micro-projects. People come and ask 'can you' and they establish whether there is a real need for it and can they deliver it.

Paul showed a short film clip about the project which was produced for South of Scotland Enterprise. You can view the film [here](#).

They collate all sorts of statistics to measure impact for the team, Trustees, funders and Dumfries and Galloway Council. They have made 1420 collections of reusable goods, 940 deliveries of goods, sold 103609 items to customer, diverted 231 tonnes of waste from landfill for reuse, diverted 19 tonnes of waste from landfill for recycling and made carbon savings of 175839 kg CO2e (equivalent in volume to 31 London Buses). They work with 40 volunteers who provided 8950 hours of volunteering time in 2020 (Equivalent to 5 full time staff) and have 26 employees across all projects.

Social Labs recently completed a Social Return on Investment report and determined that for every £1.00 invested in the organisation they provide £4.00 to their local community.

The organisation is about building self-confidence and self-esteem. It provides opportunities to go out to work with other employers, not just vocational qualifications. Covid caused issues but over the last year they have become financially stable.

They have a contract with the council for 8 employees but they have 26 and are a designated community anchor organisation. The project had a feasibility study drawn up and will be expanding the building to increase the showroom and lease out space to 10 private enterprises. They have seen an expanded volume of goods and they are using more recycling centres. They have setup an online team to help maximise returns on higher volume items regionally, nationally and internationally.

Presenter:

- *Paul Smith, CEO, The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd*

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 referred to public sector buy-in through contracting but asked what community led or locally led decisions allowed for that?*

Paul said that they started talking to Dumfries and Galloway Council in 2004 regarding the recycling centre. The council have done everything they can to take steps forward but it took until 2010 to get through the committee and tender process and then 2011 before they were awarded the contract. It took years to get through the different stages as it was a unique concept. As it is a 20-year contract they had to work out who was funding it and how the money would be paid back if it failed. It took a year with solicitors and a lot of support from the Scottish Government. Dumfries and Galloway Council could see the value but also potential weaknesses, particularly around financing. Time was a real challenge. Inverclyde Council are interested in the setup and going to visit. Perth and Kinross and the Scottish Borders have also expressed interest.

Alastair mentioned that their relationship with local community continues to evolve. There had previously been a disconnect between the local authority and the community as Fraserburgh had not been of interest. The community knew what they wanted and have an active development trust. The council had to start in listening mode. Still on a journey as it takes time to build that trust and relationship.

- *A delegate asked about the similarities between what is happening in Stranraer and a project in Midlothian, then also about whether the Furniture Project handles carpets? They also asked about the Participatory Budgeting programme in Fraserburgh?*

Paul said that they are unique in that they are located in a Zero Waste Park with D&G Council. Get something onto a site that is financially sustainable and has an economic and social impact. They don't get a great deal of carpets and definitely not enough to accommodate need. They do have a machine to clean them though.

Alistair answered that they intentionally ran a PB programme early on to build a connection and trust within the community, with a £100k budget. They invited projects to pitch and the wider community voted online and at an official in-person voting day. There were over 10000 votes cast and 25 projects received funding. Recently in Stonehaven there was a big PB process to allocate £3m of leisure funding. An opportunity to decide how the council budget would be spent.

- *A participant referred to the strong brand created by both projects and how they had managed to get local businesses to work with them. They asked a question around scalability and replicating that, as it is not possible for everyone. How had they managed the relationships and kept everyone on side?*

Paul said there is a complacency around maintaining their profile. They have drip fed information. You should not underestimate the value of Facebook. Keep sharing information, keep a continuous routine. Through the [Revolve programme](#) the representative asked five people in the community where to find the centre and all of them said they did not know. There is a need to keep telling people. In terms of recruitment they have a lot of roles but it is about what they can do for the team and the community. They have a key member of staff who is always looking for ways to engage with the community.

Alastair added that they have upset a lot of people along the way. One person's priority is another's waste of money. There has been criticism of the built environment improvements.

- *Alastair was asked about his reference to a strategic approach. What was the timeline? What is the role of PB going forward?*

Alastair clarified that the initial plan was for 5 years which was not anywhere near enough time to change the fortunes of the town, and they had not envisaged a 2-year break caused by Covid. They are continuing to deliver the plan and what will become Local Place Plans for that area. There will be another longish term horizon for that. He said that he is not directly involved in PB but Stonehaven was a test of that model and it was successful. They are now looking at what funding is available.

Euan mentioned that replicating relationships is not always easy.

Third Presentation Summary: [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#)

There was a change to the programme and Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) delivered their presentation before the Scottish Government. This presentation was delivered remotely.

STP are a large organisation that speaks on behalf of Scotland's towns and villages. They are a membership body with an extensive and varied membership. They also deliver programmes on behalf of the Scottish Government.

They host the [Understanding Scotland's Places](#) platform which allows you to compare and contrast different types of places, and they also host the [Town Centre Toolkit](#).

STP are working with the Scottish Government on the [New Futures for Towns](#) policy and the [revised Town Centre Action Plan](#).

Promoting towns through [Scotland Loves Local](#) which is being used by councils and other organisations to increase local spend. There is an opportunity to expand this card in the future.

The SURF Awards provide a practical insight into on the ground activity across Scotland. Wide ranging applications with wide ranging budgets. It is not always the 'big guys' that win. The Awards are looking for places that have been transformed along physical, economic and social grounds. Fraserburgh impressed the judges with the enthusiasm that had been sustained over years and which had resulted in other projects. The change to category title is to reflect that judges are looking for projects that have made big changes but are not at the end of their journey.

Mhairi concluded with a call to get involved in STP's work. Using things such as [Funding Finder](#) or coming along to events. Look at the resources on the [website](#).

Help to maintain the profile towns have at supporting people, places and the environment.

Presenter:

- *Mhairi Donaghy, Vice Chair, Scotland's Towns Partnership*

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Scottish Government](#)

Joanne opened by saying that it was good to see practical examples.

The Scottish Government Regeneration Team work to the high level strategic [National Performance Framework](#). The new Permanent Secretary has a focus on 4 C's; Climate Change, Child Poverty, Covid Recovery and the Constitution. Another 'C' that could be added is the cost of living crisis. It is a challenge to deliver around all of this. There are negatives in terms of challenges but the positive things we have are the P's; People, Participation, Partnership/Collaboration and Positivity. Positives for some people can also be perceived as negatives. Use positivity to get through this.

A focus on community led is at the heart of government. A place-based approach is underpinned by the [Place Principle](#). This work is being led by Sam Cassels.

They are now in the second year of the £350m capital place-based programme. Some of the money goes to local authorities and others to be delivered through the [Regeneration Capital Grant Fund](#), which has been going since 2014 with over 200 projects delivered. Bringing investment together to deliver in a systems based way to deliver all outcomes in one place. The partnership with COSLA is important as they can work to help communities together.

The team have a focus on town centre regeneration and Scotland Loves Local, and also Business Improvement Districts (BIDS). The 2013 Town Centre Action Plan is currently being revised, as Mhairi mentioned. It has been reviewed by independent stakeholders and a [report produced](#) by Leigh Sparks. An action plan is being jointly delivered by COSLA. They are currently promoting the plan and getting it moving.

The Regeneration Unit now sits within Planning and Architecture. A positive is that Planning are leading on [NPF4](#) which is important for regeneration.

The [Our Place](#) website highlights best practice examples and promotes place-based working. This includes the Place-Based Framework as a how to guide. Joanne asked for suggestions and comments as they need feedback to make it work.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods are being led by colleagues in Architecture. The concept is about making better places. SURF have a [practice network](#) to discuss how this is working across the country.

[Community Wealth Building](#) is under Tom Arthur's portfolio. This is part of regeneration and they are using this approach for Scotland Loves Local to show practical examples. It provides support to local businesses. SURF also are setting up a network to discuss what this means in practice. The Community Wealth Building Bill is being prepared.

The [Empowering Communities](#) programme supports place-based capital projects. Other funding includes Investing in Communities and the Communities Recovery Fund. These are used to support community led activity. The focus on place and communities is what they want to embed across government.

Presenter:

- *Joanne Boyle, Regeneration Unit, Scottish Government*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Highlands and Islands Enterprise \(HIE\)](#)

HIE are one of the three economic development agencies for Scotland. HIE and the South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) agency have a remit for economic development and community, which differs from Scottish Enterprise. Part of that is because of the place discussion. They focus on specific places so no one is left isolated, which is important.

HIE work in a diverse region which extends from Shetland to Argyll, and from the Outer Hebrides to Moray, covering more than half of Scotland's land mass. They have teams across the region helping communities and businesses to develop and grow. They help people across those areas of Scotland to build a stronger economy and a better future. They want the Highlands and Islands to be a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable region, attracting more people to live, work, study, invest and visit.

They provide support to build successful, productive and resilient businesses; to enable strong, capable and resourceful communities; and to create the conditions for growth and a green recovery. HIE work with all of the actors and provide direct support to businesses. Within communities they work to ensure entities are strong and work to help with project development. Mags encouraged people to go visit The Furniture Project, even though it is not in the HIE region, as they have a similar approach to supporting social enterprise.

HIE manage the [Scottish Land Fund](#), support the use of Gaelic and the development of cultural heritage, woodland crofts and the components of Community Wealth Building, and what we need to do to support that. Things such as looking at local food production, shared ownership models and green jobs. The list of support they provide is too long to list.

Human capital is key to success. If you haven't got interest and drive from the place that growth needs to come from the project won't get anywhere. HIE are there to support growth in places by creating infrastructure and strengthening existing assets. You can only do this where communities are ready or you can work with them to get ready.

Their website hosts a series of videos and case study resources. Mags encouraged attendees to sign up to the [#GoPlaces newsletter](#).

Presenter:

- *Margaret McSparran, Head of Social Enterprise Development, Highlands and Islands Enterprise*

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.

Scotland's Towns Partnership did not participate in this open discussion session.

- *One delegate asked when the Investing in Communities Fund would be open as the website says May?*

Joanne said that she doesn't lead on that fund but there are budget discussions going on and then it will be ready to launch.

- *A participant said that there is a difficulty with a place-based approach if the local council representatives own the land. The community is never involved in the decisions. With these barriers how do you build places and hold accountability with councils making decisions? A 20 Minute Neighbourhood is not an option as there is no viable transport options other than taxis, which can be costly.*

Mags said that it is a long game. The [Scottish Land Commission](#) have some good practice resources. Within the Act for community purchase of land there are [lands rights and responsibilities](#). Advised to look at the SLC guide to help communities to start conversations.

Joanne added that there is no easy answer but offers to discuss challenges. You need to work with the community to figure out what you want and then make a plan, but difficult if people in the community are not willing to engage.

Euan raised the issue of land ownership and long held challenges and barriers.

Joanne mentioned that there is a similar context in urban areas with derelict land.

Euan added that there has been a non-urban Scotland push back on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. Transport is key to that.

- *A delegate asked how you begin to interrogate the grants landscape? Explore feasibility studies or how to set up a project. Is there a central place to review what is available?*

Mags highlighted the Scottish Government website called Find Government Support. She added that talking to other organisations can help. The eco-system is varied. Navigating the funding landscape can be time consuming. Talking to people is key.

An attendee from the STP Board mentioned the STP Funding Finder. Would love for it to be expanded so that there is more narrative to explain it. Need to know what you are looking for. There is also a similar tool available from [SCVO](#). Suggested signing up to STP for monthly emails.

Joanne added that it is complex in government but they are trying to combine funds. They are a long way off having something less time consuming.

Euan asked for any comments from other funders in the room.

- *This was put forward as more of a plea. Works in the regeneration of historic buildings. Levelling Up is fantastic but the tight timelines don't work with cocktail funding. Difficult to fit in with the view of giving money that has to be spent now. Over ready projects get favoured which aren't ideal. Levelling Up will only work if it takes a longer-term view. Same with other key funds. Some projects just don't fit the timescales.*

Euan also asked about relationships with UK funding and conversations around that. Can reporting mechanisms be harmonised?

Mags asked about bridging finance?

The [Architectural Heritage Fund](#) (AHF) said that they give cash flow loans on all projects. A lot of funding only appears at the construction phase. AHF is the only money that you can get upfront for feasibility and project development. This is key for a lot of small and voluntary organisations.

Jo from AHF added that they often make loan offers. There is security of having that in place. Not uncommon for them to make an offer and then it actually isn't used, but it helps.

Mags said that [Levelling Up](#) is an evolving story and in her experience there has been a gradual awareness of a need to discuss criteria that enables the funds to be distributed in a way that is helping places. An evolving story that has a way to go. Recognises that it is not perfect. Trying to keep the door open to keep conversation moving forward is the primary goal at HIE. Had a degree of success with this.

Joanne added that the Scottish Government has no influence over the Levelling Up Fund timescales but they are trying to engage so that it aligns with Scottish priorities and is place-based. Engaging when they are invited and can navigate the complexity. The place-based investment fund is for 5 years but RCGF works on a year on year basis. Happy to listen to suggestions on how to tie in better but there are restrictions around reporting.

Euan mentioned the [SURF Heritage & Creativity Alliance](#) meeting with Lauren Bruce on the delivery of LUF in Scotland. There is a local presence in Scotland. Lauren came from COSLA so has knowledge and she is trying to state that there are different priorities in different nations.

- *A participant commented that the 4 C's mentioned are quite difficult to engage with and community is not one of them. 20 Minute Neighbourhoods is now half tech led and pushes place-based leadership out of a community role. Fits with the P's not the C's.*

Joanne answered by pointing out that regeneration itself isn't in there. With the [Covid Recovery Strategy](#) and the [Social Renewal Strategy](#) there is lots out there now. They will re-look at the [Regeneration Strategy](#) and show how it fits. Community doesn't need to be a C as it is embedded in these areas. For example, climate change work and strategies. Continuing to embed in priorities.

Sam Cassels from the Scottish Government said you notice when you are on the ground talking to communities that language is simple. Normal conversations and work. The Minister is very similar, not about the C's and P's. Those in the middle are trying to manage the process but there is an added level of detail. This is difficult to sustain around the question 'are we better off?' When getting the attention of the decision makers matters you need to cut through the layers of detail. Not being a 20 Minute Neighbourhood doesn't mean you are a failure. Wind the rhetoric down and don't be tricked by badging. The fundamental conversation is 'are places better for people?' Cut to the chase and have the confidence to know the most important thing is the places we live.

- *The final question asked about scoring systems?*

Sam Cassels answered that it is about stating the main issues that everyone knows. The business case will be a huge document that states the main issues at the start and end. Going through this process make sure we don't lose sight of the main issues. Return to the fundamentals of how we can influence policy.

Euan added that what is most powerful are the individual stories of where lives have been changed by projects, the tangible difference.

4) Using artistic approaches to help regenerate communities

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

RIG Arts, Toonspeak Young People's Theatre and Museum of Things.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partner Creative Scotland and Culture Collective.

About the event

The final workshop in the series highlighted the 2021 SURF Award winning and highly commended projects in the 'Creative Regeneration' category.

The projects featured are all using creativity and artistic approaches to engage with and support members of their local community.

The morning workshop took place in The Playhouse at Webster's Theatre in Glasgow on the 26th May 2022 and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Award partner Creative Scotland and Culture Collective. The workshop was attended by 60 participants.

First Presentation Summary: RIG Arts

RIG Arts are a socially engaged arts charity whose work responds to need within Inverclyde. They bring professional artists into the community, which benefits the community and supports artists in the creative industry sector. Their main aim is to improve the lives of people living in Inverclyde and the communities they live in. RIG operate with a diverse funding package as they have no core funding.

Their work uses creativity as a tool for creative regeneration, in areas such as Seedhill in Paisley and Broomhill in Greenock. These are areas of high deprivation housing disadvantaged individuals. The team connect with kids and show them that they can choose the arts as a profession, regardless of where they come from. Supporting young people to enter into careers in the creative industries.

They start by identifying the needs of the community. Using arts to tackle health and wellbeing challenges. Heritage is important to the people living in Inverclyde so the team do a heritage project each year. Tackling the climate emergency has become a key focus for the team at RIG. They deliver projects focusing on both mitigation and adaptation.

The projects they deliver build pride and social cohesion within the communities they work in, by empowering people and sharing skills. They use creativity as a tool for people to see things differently. All of the work they deliver is led by artists. It is important to remember that the team have never stopped being artists. By working next to other people they can see what they are doing, share skills and be inspired. Doesn't separate out the creative process, rather embed it in everything you do. We are all in it together. Partnership and support is important and it informs everything.

RIG Arts are small but they have a big passion and make a big impact. Due to Covid restrictions and limitations they moved into a bigger space within the Tobacco Warehouse. This allowed them to deliver workshops online and in-person classes when they could.

Identifying genuine community need is key to success. The main focus should be to strengthen communities and build vibrant places. After a number of years, The Broomhill Project is still running from the art flat because they are responding to need. The work needs to be authentic, not just ticking a box.

RIG are active members of the Inverclyde Local Partnership which allows them to work closely with other local organisations and tap into local intel, which helps them to identify need. Due to the impacts of Covid they setup Creativity in Mind, a programme to tackle mental health issues locally. This has been so popular, and needed, that there is a waiting list. The programme provides space to be creative and meet others. They get referrals from other organisations which helps them target those in greatest need.

Co-creation is at the heart of everything RIG deliver. Creative regeneration isn't always about physical changes but the people who live in communities. RIG have recently been involved in the South West Library Dandelion Project, which transformed an area of scrubland into a community garden. Similarly, the Unexpected Garden project featured on the Beechgrove Garden and RIG were involved in identifying and designing the space. The Broomy's Bees garden was created to provide an outdoor space for the tenants in the Broomhill flats. The garden was well used over lockdown and provided an outdoor space for people to reflect and take time away from their flat.

RIG worked with [Sustrans](#) on a co-creation project. They developed three water based art works along the waterfront. The project was about being present. As there was little seating in the area, which raised issues during the pandemic, part of the artwork consisted of a sensory seating area. The three pieces represent the past, present and future and linked to climate change.



The team constantly feel like they are walking a tightrope. They need to deliver high creative standards without alienating people, and this takes trust. It is important to listen and respond to opinions. If you can't deliver what the community wants you need to go back and tell them why. Don't dumb down the language you use, be ambitious and bring people up.

RIG run a programme for Community Champions. They try to employ a person from within the community, which are quite often the activists that challenge. It is important to always create a cross-partner steering group, and constant communication is key. It can be a messy process but when you get it right it is amazing. It is not about using people to get an in to the community but building relationships yourself.

Barriers

You should go out into communities. However, some areas do not have halls or community centres as a space to meet. Getting a flat from the housing association was part of the success of the project in Broomhill. They are using the same approach in Seedhill in Paisley, where again the housing association has provided a small community flat.

RIG used a truck during the pandemic to do community engagement but it was vandalised. They now have a community art bus to continue their outreach work. They are also planning to take a shopfront in Seedhill to raise their profile and engage with more people.

Art is not a barrier but it can be. Start with a conversation or a kids project to meet the wider family. Partnerships are really important, working together makes you stronger and reduces duplication. It also allows for a wider range of knowledge. [Inverclyde Climate Beacons](#) and the [Inverclyde Culture Collective](#) are examples of partnership projects that RIG are involved in. They work in partnership with local housing associations and also Inverclyde Council. Sometimes bigger organisations can unlock opportunities, such as permission to use land or access to a flat.

[Inverclyde Place Partnership](#) took a trip to the Fatima Mansions in Dublin. RIG took away the need to celebrate local identity. Working class people have culture. Get art out into the streets and not

confined to a studio. Recruit new people and carry out consultations so that people know there is something going on in the area. It is about being adaptable.

RIG are constantly evaluating what they are doing, open culture, conversations with freelance artists. Create films of the project as it is a good evaluation tool as it captures feelings not just numbers. Films can be rough and filmed on phones or tablets.

Challenges

Working in communities is not always straightforward. You need to tackle things in a creative way and be aware that things will skew. Justify what you are doing.

The Fixing Fashion project had to move online due to Covid but this has been a positive as they now have over 50 online tutorials on upcycling. A good example of its success is a woman from Sri Lanka who joined knowing no one and now has her own business. On a personal level it was the difference that the work was making to someone's life. The positive impact on participants and their wider family. The ripple effect.

RIG Arts are very active at a local level. People in Inverclyde really look forward to Halloween and the annual Galoshans Festival. It is an arts festival celebrating Inverclyde's unique Halloween tradition, with a strong focus on outreach and engagement deeply rooted in local culture. RIG has embedded the festival at a grassroots level, positively raising Inverclyde's profile

Presenter:

- *Karen Orr, Chief Executive, RIG Arts*

Second Presentation Summary: Toonspeak Young People's Theatre

The presentation from Toonspeak focussed on the work that they have been doing over the past year, which has been a diversion from their normal activity.

Toonspeak is a company limited by guarantee and a registered Scottish charity. In their day to day, and most importantly to all of their participants, they are a proudly youth-led organisation. Founded in 1987, they have been based in the North of Glasgow since conception. Up to six spaces on their Board are filled by young people aged below 25, as they believe in the power and importance of young people's voices and always want to ensure they are involved in the 'Big Decisions' for Toonspeak and its future.

Their work involves developing relationships with people from a range of backgrounds and cultures. Working effectively with diversity and promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion is an essential part of their work.

Following the lockdown in 2020 they developed the Response Programme. The idea was that it would only exist in the time of the pandemic. The Recovery Programme followed on from this but timelines became a shifting picture. They were responding to the needs of staff, participants, venues and restrictions. They had to develop new ways of working.

Classes follow the academic year, there are 3 terms of 10 weeks. In addition, there are performance activities out with this period, including trips to the theatre, masterclasses etc. All activities are offered at no charge to participants and they also provide free transport for any young person without support to attend workshops in any of their venues. They work with a variety of age groups from P1-P2 up to those aged 25.

Through their Recovery Programme, and additional Culture Collective Programme, they have employed 40 freelance artists and connected with 95 unique participants. They have worked across 5 venues through their core programme of work. Groups participated in [Positive Stories for Negative Times](#) with two zoom performances created, a complete new direction for Toonspeak. In the future the photos of people in masks will be important as it captures that moment in time.

In 2021 there was a return to face to face activities and they saw an uptake in progressive opportunities. Toonspeak established a programme for young people to consider career opportunities and delivered an Arts Award. They created 'Connector' opportunities and employed two Toonspeak participants through this programme, as well as offering Young Leader Development sessions. The opportunity to train as a young leader is mainly aimed at young people who want a career in theatre and the arts, but it is not essential.

In addition to their core work they also offered support to Overdrive Dance Company as part of a [Youth Theatre Arts Scotland Allies](#) project, as well as other industry associated events and initiatives.

As they were unable to deliver their standard theatre performance, young people had the opportunity to take part in a film project called Protest Lab which addressed issues surrounding the climate crisis. The project involved 13 cast members, 6 Toonspeak team members, 14 production team members, 1 catering company, 5 support staff members, 6 participants contributing to pre-show material, 2 Connectors, 3 transport companies, 5 venues, 1 trip to Mugdock Country Park and provided 4 professional development opportunities for young people. The film was delivered as part of COP26. The participant's work was curated by Living Museums, and was part of Film Access Scotland's Climate Change Project. You can watch the short film in the Toonspeak presentation [here](#).



Challenges and Changes

There were industry restrictions in addition to the government Covid restrictions which provided added challenges. Toonspeak had to find ways to engage and inspire whilst adhering to 2m distance restrictions with no interactions. The industry had different restrictions for different age groups which proved both confusing and difficult to navigate. On top of that venues had their own individual guidelines as well.

Transport proved to be a big challenge as they would normally use taxis to bring young people to their sessions and then home again, but under the restrictions it became 1 person per cab. This brought both logistical and financial challenges. Despite the issues with the taxi firms it was critical to remove that barrier of transport.

Self-isolation rules proved difficult whilst staff followed strict guidelines. Staff morale was low and there was a real awareness of individuals own struggles, and transitioning back to face to face took its toll.

They addressed communication challenges by revisiting texts and calls, which they had done throughout the Response Programme. Private social media pages were setup and spreadsheets contained key information. An additional shared drive was established which allowed them to become paper free.

The team Introduced new reporting procedures and freelance staff were able to ask for Toonspeak core support. Consistent check-in was required for both staff and participants. The Zoom way of life

has allowed freelance staff to have a more robust way of working. They are more productive as they have no travel time incurred.

Toonspeak staff spent a lot of time restructuring classes and the progression pipeline. They had to be robust but flexible to respond. The team and participants finished the year downhearted as they had planned to celebrate the year but due to restrictions coming back into force they had to cancel their plans, which felt like they had removed Christmas. There was a glimmer of joy when the Tron Theatre hosted something locally in Barmulloch.

What's Next

By the end of 2021 Toonspeak launched a performance collective. This aims to help young people to launch an arts industry career. The Scribevers group have been given the opportunity to work with some of the best Scottish Writers.

There will be a return to live events, with a Theatre Makers Plus performance as part of Culture Collective event on Saturday 6th August. They will be connecting more with the local area with a week of informal sharing sessions for the classes, and they can finally meet with families since 2019. This will be the start of new relationships and ways of connecting with the community.

They have developed a new mission statement for going forward which states that Toonspeak are on a mission to transform lives through creativity, developing their work into a model of excellence to positively influence peers in the third sector and creative industries.

Presenter:

- *Hazel Wotherspoon, Chief Executive, Toonspeak Young People's Theatre*

Third Presentation Summary: [Museum of Things](#)

Maryhill Integration Network (MIN) are a charitable organisation set up in 2001. They were one of the first organisations to welcome asylum seekers and refugees to the community. They operate a unique and creative environment and a safe and inclusive space for people to come together. MIN focus on art and other groups like English and Opera.

During the pandemic they got people online which became a lifeline for many. Many of their members became volunteers. Museum of Things started in February 2021. The word fun was a big aspect of the project and what refugees and asylum seekers needed. The project used art to keep people engaged, have fun and keep them entertained during the lockdown periods.

Two artists sat down and planned a series of online classes. Part of the programme asked participants to hold their artwork up to the camera to show everyone. MIN provided computers and other necessary tech to those who needed them and they met every week. There were 14 different nationalities involved in the sessions. Participants could take what they wanted from the workshops and there were no restrictions to participating. The project was so popular that they had a waiting list for people who wanted to take part.

The main thing was to give as much information in the lightest possible way. They were lots of different arts methods to get involved in, something for everyone regardless of experience. You could take part in what you seen relevant to your talents. Most people were not artists and the project involved a lot of mothers and children.



The sessions consisted of different techniques each week to help improve skills and compliment activities, using creativity as a problem solver. This included activities such a painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, printmaking, creative writing, animation and much more. Some of the participants were involved in the graphic design for the 2022 [Refugee Festival](#). Their designs could be seen on the street.

Outcomes

- Creative Engagement - creating opportunities to develop participant networks and space to bond through participation in collective creative activities.
- Community Connections - tackling isolation and developing knowledge, skills, confidence, and creativity. Making positive life choices and enhancing health and wellbeing.
- Empowerment - MIN believe that individuality and creativity are advantageous in building a positive group environment. Having the participants at the centre of activities has developed a sense of ownership and agency within the project.

They wanted participants to engage with each other and share experiences. This would help them to feel more confident within their new community. They had a chance to run sessions themselves which helped to build skills and self-esteem. There was a nice relationship within the group and participants and staff started to consider each other as friends. A lot of this was due to the removal of a power dynamic, the delivery team were not there to act as teachers.

There was a chance to enhance or develop a community connection. Refugees are part of the community. The project provided opportunities to participate and create other potential prospects. It provided a platform for participants to share experiences and empowerment was built in at every stage.

Partnership was a key factor to the success of the project. Since 2021, Museum of Things has collaborated with various partners including Edinburgh Printmakers, Glasgow Open Museum Project, The Hunterian Museum, Multaka Project (Berlin), Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Refugee Festival Scotland and Glasgow Connected Arts Network.

Partners have helped MIN to become part of the creative fabric of the city, interweaving with one another to create new experiences and interactions. This engenders valuable motivation and encouragement within the group, celebrating diversity and collective achievement. Each one helped with the purpose of each class.

Sustainability

MIN hope to give participants a role. Push them to apply for a school or to be an instructor, as they know they are capable. It provides a platform to engage with the wider community. The project has opened up wider opportunities for the participants. One of the attendees involved in the printmaking sessions has a print made at the Edinburgh Printmakers and sold in the shop.

MIN held an exhibition, which was meant to be held over one weekend but was extended by 1 week, to display participants work to the community. A bigger piece was made which incorporated everyone's work into an installation for the exhibition.

The project provided roles and responsibilities for the participants to help them gain experience and confidence to lead and present themselves in the future. It enhanced partnerships and provided a platform to engage with the wider community and other arts and cultural institutions.

The exhibition provided exposure for participants, improving awareness about refugees and what they bring to society and provided an opportunity for interaction with more remote communities to help educate and support them.

MIN held a feedback session to evaluate what is working and what is not, in order for them to adapt and improve. The project is not just about art skills but about overcoming difficulties such as mental health, language barriers and difficulties around responsibility to adapt to a new country.

Presenter:

- *Anastasia Tariq, Development Officer, Maryhill Integration Network*
- *Mousa AlNana, Project Lead Artist, Maryhill Integration Network*

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.

- *A question was raised about where funding had come from?*

Karen said that they deliver six categories of work and they have projects going in all six areas at any one time. Creative Scotland have been flexible and supportive, as have the [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#). Everything they do needs to be rooted in the community. It is best to establish the need and then find funding that will be appropriate. Not the other way about where you are making projects fit funding criteria. RIG have had funding previously from [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) and then Climate Beacon funding from [Creative Carbon Scotland](#). They have employed a Funding Officer which makes a huge difference. It was hard with artists trying to write bids or bringing in someone externally who doesn't always fit with the ethos of the organisation. Funding lists are available via the local Third Sector Interface and the [GCVS newsletter](#) is good. It is tricky getting core funding so they don't have that luxury of 3-year security. RIG have a wide spectrum of funding and projects, which can be exciting.

- *A delegate asked Hazel about the Connector role?*

Hazel replied that during the pandemic they thought more about how they connect with participants. Two young people under 16 were employed to connect staff, participants and freelance artists. They also provided an increased social media presence. The use of language is important, having a consistent voice. They are currently piloting the Connector model and looking to see if they can have more Connector roles but would have to find funding. They wanted to test it out before presenting the idea to funders. Tell them about mistakes, don't hide what hasn't worked.

- *A participant referred to the use of paid freelance artists when many groups rely on volunteer artists.*

Mousa said that there are things a volunteer can do and things that they can't. There are restrictions around the legal number of hours a volunteer can spend with a project. Volunteers tend to have a certain type of experience or be a certain age. Professional artists will bring bigger experience.

Karen added that recognising that people have trained in the arts and rewarding that is important. Making sure you are not abusing volunteers and paying what they are worth.

Hazel said there is an opportunity to give people the best of the performing arts. So find the best people to do that. Bring these experts in. You find that in the community context these experts will work for a lot less. There is a beautiful generosity.

- *A delegate asked if any of the projects work with primary or secondary care providers? Social prescribing?*

Anastasia said that a lot of their participants come through social care and referrals. They are regularly contacted.

Karen mentioned that there are Community Links Workers in Inverclyde so they get regular referrals. [Inverclyde Cultural Partnership](#) are doing work to better connect with the cultural network. Organisations informally share what they are working on and the Links Workers will email if they have a client that could benefit. Third Sector Interfaces will also refer people.

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Creative Scotland](#)

Creative Scotland are the national body that supports arts, screen and creative industries. They are a non-departmental government body funded by Scottish Government and the Lottery. The funding proportion has changed since Covid.

People and organisations working in arts and creativity are supported to make work of quality and ambition that enriches life in Scotland for all. They work to ensure that more people from all parts of society are accessing and participating in a range of artistic and creative activities. Art and creativity is being recognised by people at home and abroad as a central part of our nation. Creative Scotland's Annual Plan supports people to take part in any of the three areas, with opportunities to engage wherever you are. Their main goal is to support culture and creativity in Scotland, which is seen as vital to society.

Creative Scotland work across 4 key areas;

- Equalities, diversity and inclusion - Supporting a diverse range of creative people, communities and activity. Promoting an equality of opportunity to create, participate and engage.
- Sustainable Development - Helping tackle the climate emergency and supporting the growth of sustainable creative businesses across Scotland.
- Fair Work - Promoting fair pay, conditions and employment opportunities across the creative sector. Not just about pay and industry standards but conditions and treatment.
- International - Developing innovative and sustainable ways of strengthening international collaboration and promoting creative and cultural exchange.

Most people that engage with Creative Scotland are interested in funding. They have 4 strands of funding; Regular, Open, Targeted and Delegated. In the past two years they have added emergency funding to survive Covid. Their funding supports individuals and organisations, from individual professional development and creating new work to festivals, creative programmes and residencies.

In March 2020 Creative Scotland did not have online applications. In the first part of the pandemic £75m delivered in addition to their £90m budget. In Jan-March 2022 £54m was given out to support the industry. They are currently reviewing their standard funding routes.

Their RFO regular funding currently supports 121 organisations who receive multi-year funding. This is usually for 3 years but due to the pandemic it was extended to 5 years. This funding stream will be replaced by a new multi-year funding programme delivered in a more responsive way.

The Open Project funding programme supports things to make them happen. This includes personal development or projects such as festivals and creative regeneration. The process has been tweaked to accept online applications. This funding can be up to 2 years.

Targeted funds come in the form of support such as the Youth Music Fund, Create Inclusion and the Touring Fund. Place Partnership funding is another example and supports local plans to address changes and local opportunities in the area. They can provide support where intervention is necessary. This can come at Scottish Government request or if they recognise a barrier or opportunity.

Delegated funding is where they ask other organisations to deliver pots of money on their behalf. For example, the [VACMA Awards](#) which are small grants given out locally to make change. This is for those who are maybe not ready for Creative Scotland funding.

When it comes to funding it is always best to talk to Creative Scotland and discuss potential applications, as they may not always be the right funder but are always open to having those discussions.

The [National Culture Strategy](#) was produced just before the pandemic to help communities, places and people. Culture is not just about being on a stage or behind a screen. It aims to address challenges in places and get voices heard. Culture and heritage projects are often local and place-based, presenting a unique opportunity to engage directly with communities. Giving people a greater say in shaping the cultural life of their communities, and community ownership can help protect Scotland's rich cultural heritage and provide inspiration for the cultural expression of the future. Artists and practitioners can help communities to visualise and understand the impacts of climate change, can provide leadership through debate and practice and can encourage people to imagine the possibilities and potential of a greener future.

Creative Scotland deliver strategic grassroots programmes such as Place Partnerships and Culture Collective. Place Partnership is a programme of work to pilot ideas, festivals and support businesses. They are developed with local authorities and work with community organisations and businesses.

[Culture Collective](#) started in 2020 and was designed as a Covid Relief Fund to support artists and freelancers to ensure that they got paid. It has become a network of creative practitioners, organisations and communities. The projects are providing employment opportunities for creative practitioners and are actively engaging people in shaping the future cultural life of their community. Working collectively to create a positive difference locally and nationally, in response to COVID-19.

Testing new models, learning, sharing and adapting. It has become a framework to support artists and communities. A pre-requisite of the programme is that the projects have to employ artists for a certain amount of time, which helps address issues around fair work. Organisations support the artist and there are no barriers for community engagement. The programme is fairly flexible and different to other programmes that Creative Scotland have delivered. £1.5m of funding was originally available but a further £6m from Scottish Government was invested, and in March a further £4m was made available. A further round of funding will open for applications later this year to target areas where no Culture Collective exists at present.

Presenter:

- *Karen Dick, Head of Place, Partnerships and Communities, Creative Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: Culture Collective

Culture Collective funding has been invested in places where creativity meets community, and looks at what that means for people and place. Kathryn gave an insight into her background growing up in a mining community which she thought really had a sense of identity. The town held an annual festival that people looked forward to and came together for, creating a sense of identity and pride of place.

If projects are very local and being done on a small-scale they can feel isolated and it is hard to bring these projects together to talk about the messy bits and the struggles. It is more important to grow together as one than survive individually.

Culture Collective is made up of a widespread of projects, where there is no 'one size fits all' approach. By sharing ideas and learning you can think about things that might work in places but also challenges and how they are overcome. It is important to share very local work.

The programme is somewhat about physical stuff and space but mainly about people. Space is important. If you don't have places to meet it can be difficult to bring people together. Although space can be a complicated ideology. It can determine who allows you to meet and under what terms, and also determine who is in charge in communities. It can entrench divisions between different communities in a place or power dynamic.

Each of the 26 Culture Collective sites have a project coordinator. People are at the heart and centre of each of the projects. As Karen mentioned, a pre-requisite of the programme is the employment of paid artists. There are 300 artists currently employed across all 26 Culture Collective projects. There is a perception that you have to move to a big city to be an artist. This programme creates a network of artistic jobs, which is vital for regeneration.

An example of Culture Collective is a project for young women and non-binary being run by Stellar Quines. One of the challenges they have faced has been around how to communicate with their audience when there's been such a lack of opportunities for such a long time in this area. There is an issue in Fife with actually connecting with the young people in the first place because there's such a sense of "the arts isn't really for people here." Stellar Quines are trying to batter that wall down but it's been built so high and with the toughest cement. They are just two people trying to break down a lifetime of stigma. They are trying to change the landscape.

Another example is a Recovery programme in North Lanarkshire. Lots of people feel like they don't contribute to their community but through time and investment they start to feel useful. A project in Glenboig in North Lanarkshire are working with people in a brand new community centre to create a painting that depicts them; past, present and future; to be installed in the café. The community are spotting things and seeing themselves represented in a piece of artwork. These are not the kind of lives that are normally seen represented in expensive visual art. Kathryn commented on an image from RIG Arts and agreed that communities deserve art here and free and for us all.

Another programme was mentioned called Free Talk Online. What is different and what could Scotland learn from around the world. What can we share? What works in different places.?

Presenter:

- *Kathryn Welch, Programme Lead, Culture Collective*

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 where funding is now with the state of the nation and challenges post-Covid?*

Karen Dick noted that the [Scottish Government Spending Review](#) was only announced the previous week. The Creative Scotland review process is discussing 3-year funding so it is really important to get that right. There are a lot of demands on funding. They will be looking at the Spending Review to see what opportunities there are for culture, even if it is not the obvious fit but where communities have an option to decide how money is spent. There needs to be new and better outcomes for communities. It is about how people are recovering and what audiences want to do.

She also commented on [20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#) and the challenges in certain areas but noting that the overall ambition is about living better locally. How can we make what happened in the pandemic continue? It will be a challenging year ahead with the impacts of the cost of living crisis, climate emergency and impacts on travel. We need to hold national and local policies to account.

- *Another question asked about the Remembering Together programme? And raised a consideration for 10% of development spend to be spent on public art. Mentioned Participatory Budgeting as scope for creativity.*

Karen Dick answered that [Remembering Together](#), previously known as the Covid Memorial Fund, came from the Scottish Government and is managed by [Greenspace Scotland](#). All projects have to have a local authority link. There is information on who received funding online. Many of the Culture Collective projects are involved. The programme is specifically about remembering and appreciating what happened over the last 2 years. It was built on an initial pilot in Glasgow. It is not a Creative Scotland programme but they were involved in initial discussions.

Kathryn added that there were loads of callouts and interested communities. There is more to come on the programme.

Karen Dick said that there is something in [NPF4](#) about funding from development going to public art. Art is not just shiny things on a hill but about engagement.

Karen Orr added that RIG have put this suggestion to Inverclyde Council but they said no as it would need to be done on a national level. Money could be used as seed funding rather than just painting a wall.

Karen Dick mentioned a previous SURF Award winner who has argued that the community are not wanting a shiny object but a space to meet.

Euan said that we should be considering this across Scotland and that NPF4 remains in draft form.

Karen Dick noted that Creative Scotland have used [Participatory Budgeting](#) and in local funding they do use this approach. For Creative Scotland it isn't always the right approach as

it depends on the explanation and the engagement process. It solely depends on the value of the arts within the local activity.

Kathryn added that PB is brilliant if it is done well but it shouldn't be a popularity contest. You need to genuinely listen to what people want and realise that not everyone shouts with the same volume. It is hard to put programmes up against each other, arts vs services. She mentioned a project called [SOUP](#) being a beautiful example because it is tiny and uses small amounts of money but it brings the community together.

- *The final question referenced creative and cultural activities happening along the Clyde on different sides. Glasgow City Council are working on the physical infrastructure to connect these projects and make a case. Can Creative Scotland help with social infrastructure?*

Karen Dick mentioned support networks. Anything can be creative if it has a creative leader with an open project that can react to need. Anything about a community coming together regardless of the end output which has a creative vision. You can have creative outputs that are not necessarily a play, artwork etc. Organisations in the room and many across Scotland are doing that.

Kathryn said that it is about spaces and the planning of spaces. There is a nuance and complexity in what spaces mean to people, and this is hard to understand. The community are the only ones with the knowledge. You need to know your picture, not other peoples. They say build a community centre and they will come but quite often they don't. There is a thought process that thinks about the sexiness of places rather than the journey people take.

Euan noted the changes in Govan.

End of paper

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