

Old Police Station, Langholm
SURF Shared Learning Workshop – Housing-led Regeneration
5 May 2022

sosch.

**South of Scotland
Community Housing**

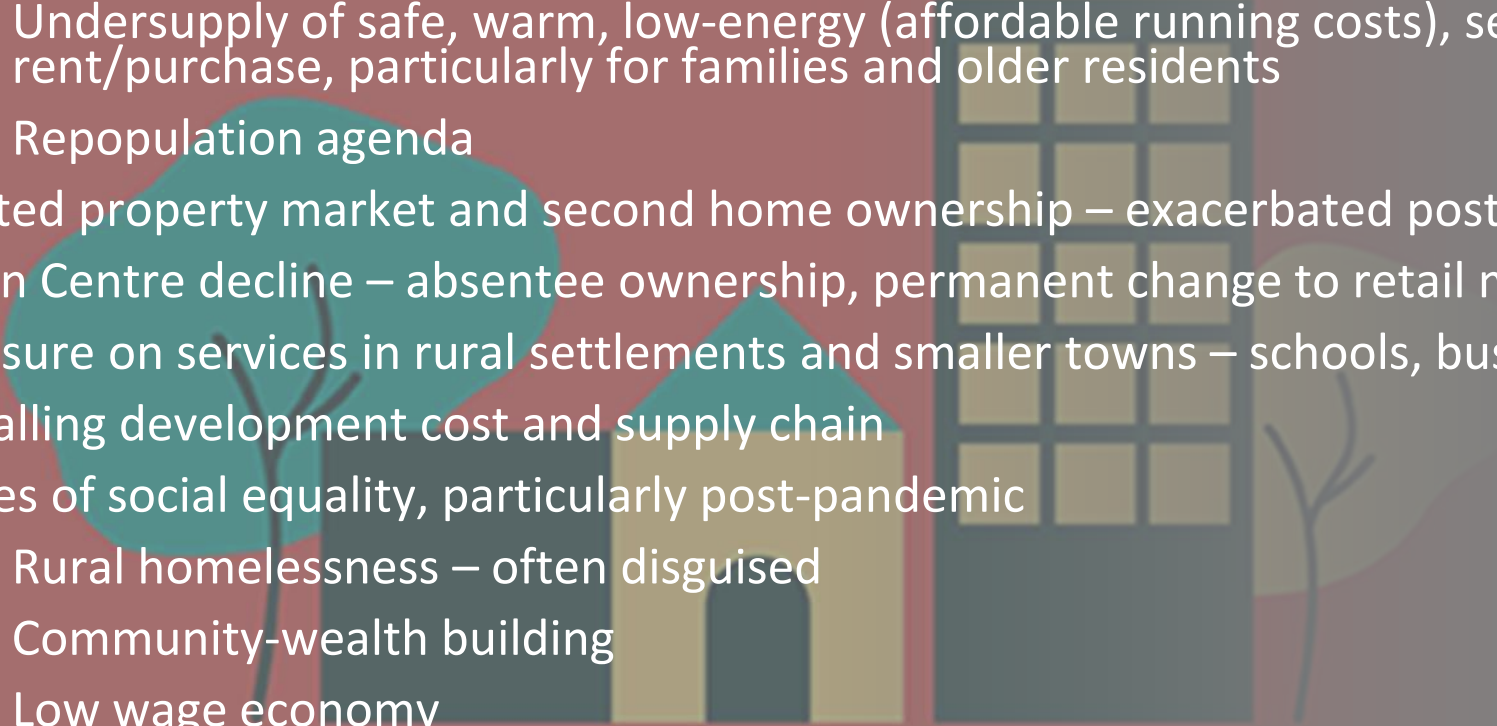


History & Context

- Established in 2006 to address shortfall in rural housing supply in rural SW Scotland – response to study by Shelter and based upon Highlands model.
- Support, facilitate and enable affordable community-led housing delivery within the context of community-ownership of land and assets, community-led regeneration, and Land Reform
- Community-led housing – wider context of community ownership and land reform:
 - Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 facilitates Community Asset Transfer
 - Land Reform Acts 2003 and 2016 – Community Right to Buy and Scottish Land Fund
 - Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund – community-led housing capital grant
- Housing to 2040 – March 2021 – extension of Rural Housing Fund and platform for Community-led Housing
- Partnership and stakeholder support critical to delivery

SOSCH – Challenges to SoS Communities

- Pressures on “locally affordable” housing supply
 - Undersupply of safe, warm, low-energy (affordable running costs), secure homes for rent/purchase, particularly for families and older residents
 - Repopulation agenda
- Heated property market and second home ownership – exacerbated post-Covid
- Town Centre decline – absentee ownership, permanent change to retail markets, depopulation
- Pressure on services in rural settlements and smaller towns – schools, businesses
- Spiralling development cost and supply chain
- Issues of social equality, particularly post-pandemic
 - Rural homelessness – often disguised
 - Community-wealth building
 - Low wage economy
 - Ageing demographic



Langholm Police Station – 2018



Old Police Station, Langholm

- Community org given 18 months to develop business plan for CAT – property previously on market
- Property vacant/disused for 15 years – category “B” listed
- Two apartments (staff accommodation), offices and cells
- Project team established and funding secured to assess project viability and local demand – 2018
- Affordable housing for rent established as primary demand within community of Langholm
- Community Asset Transfer approved 2019 / community ownership 2020
- JGA led on low-energy retrofit of listed building
- What to do with the cells?
- Challenges of securing main contractor and price increases
- Project complete – 2021 – four local tenants with demonstrable housing need



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PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

- Eskdale Foundation engaged South of Scotland Community Housing to support as “enabler” - 2018
- Community of Langholm – consultation and Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
- Dumfries and Galloway Council – Communities and Strategic Housing
- John Gilbert Architects and Team and Community Enterprise
- Cubby Construction

FUNDING PARTNERS

- Project Viability Assessment – Scottish Government - Rural Housing Fund, Scottish Land Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund
- Capital Delivery – Scottish Government - Rural Housing Fund, South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council - Town Centre Living Fund (income from CT on second homes), Eskdale Foundation (reserves), borrowing





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KEY LEARNING

- Importance of Partnership and Patience!
- Capacity for community-led housing to address key issues of:
 - 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
- Flexibility of funding package
- Scottish Empty Homes Awards 2022 – Best “Old Wreck”
- SURF Awards 2021 – shortlisted in Housing and Regeneration
- Scotland’s Towns Partnership, Let’s Live Local Awards – Best “Town Centre Living”





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SOSCH – PARTICIPATION IN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- SHICC Project – 2017-2021 NWE Interreg Programme to test and develop urban CLH
- European CLT Network- new network to mainstream CLH in response to affordable housing crisis & climate crisis
- Nationwide Foundation – “Backing Community-led Housing” - engagement across UK-wide funding programme, sharing learning with CLH Hubs in England and Wales
- Communities Housing Trust - partnership working to promote Community-led housing model across Scotland and series of joint blogs.



<http://www.sosch.org> / @SOSCommHousing

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