



# THE SURF AWARDS: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

## *An outcomes report from a series of SURF workshops in 2017*

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 the summer of 2017, SURF arranged a series of shared learning workshop events with representatives of the [four category winning and shortlisted SURF Award initiatives](#) from the 2016 process. The goal of these events was to explore, in some depth, what transferable lessons these projects can offer to regeneration practitioners working in other sectors and geographies. This report presents a summary of the main outcomes from the three SURF Awards workshop events, and their respective themes:

- Tackling Challenges in Youth Employability;
- Reversing Economic Decline in Scotland's Towns and;
- Promoting Arts in Community Regenerations

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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.

2016 was the 18th year of the SURF Awards, and the 12th that it has been delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Nominations to the 2016 SURF Awards were assessed by an independent panel of 18 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 four category winning projects for the 2016 SURF Awards were:

- **Creative Regeneration:** [The Stove Network](#)
- **Youth Employability:** [Street League](#)
- **Community Led Regeneration:** [Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project](#)
- **Scotland's Most Improved Town:** [Lochgelly](#)

These winning projects were announced at a SURF Awards Presentation Dinner event in Glasgow in December 2016. The following year, SURF invited colleagues in all four 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 2016 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:

- **Tackling Challenges in Youth Employability** with Street League, Rathbone's X-CEED project and ENABLE Scotland's Stepping Up project. Held in the The Teacher Building, Glasgow, on 4 May 2017;
- **Reversing Economic Decline in Scotland's Towns** with Fife Council on behalf of Lochgelly and Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Project. Held in COSLA Centre, Edinburgh, on 18 May 2017;
- **Promoting Creative Arts in Community Regeneration** with The Stove Network, Falkirk Community Trust's Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema and Platform's Made in Easterhouse project. Held in Paisley Town Hall on 1 June 2017.

SURF is grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the SURF Awards process, including these workshop events. The 2016 SURF Awards process also benefited from the support of the following additional partners in the delivery of thematic categories: [Architecture & Design Scotland](#), [Creative Scotland](#), [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#), and [Skills Development Scotland](#).

## Transferable Lessons

### 1) Tackling Challenges in Youth Employability

**With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and shortlisted projects: Street League, Rathbone's X-CEED project and ENABLE's Stepping Up project**

#### About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2016 SURF Award winning projects in the 'Youth Employability: Removing Barriers' category.

Both initiatives were managed by UK-wide charities, and aligned a wide range of wider social and economic benefits for local people.

The half-day workshop took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in The Teacher Building in Glasgow, and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Awards partner Skills Development Scotland as well as the Third Sector Employability Forum. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 42 participants.

#### First Presentation Summary: [Street League](#)

This nationwide project aims to deliver a combined sport and employability programme including 21 locations in Scotland, such as Bathgate, Kilmarnock and Paisley. The programme assists out-of-work young people into sustainable employment, education and training.

Presenting at the SURF Awards Workshop, Street League kicked off with a short video introducing their approach to engaging and working with young people. The crux of their programme is to involve the young people in daily sports sessions, whether football or dance. Particularly as the service users may initially struggle with their confidence, these activities engender team work,

leadership, discipline and a competitive spirit among the group. This sentiment was echoed by 24 year old Chelsea who had completed the football programme and had successfully gone on to find work. As well as bonding with the other young people, Chelsea found the course leaders very helpful by listening to her aspirations, rather than presuming them. Indeed, Street League support “a diverse range of young people into a diverse range of outcomes”, especially those from areas of deprivation and those with no qualifications higher than National 5, Standard Grade or GCSE. Demonstrating their continuing success, 55% of service users have found six months of sustained employment.

A key aspect of Street League’s approach is to allow staff relative autonomy over day-to-day activities. Almost operating like a franchise, local teams are provided with the necessary materials to undertake their work, adapting the national programme for individual young people, as required. Staff on the ground are also supported by a central performance team to track the success of the programme and in turn, help improve Street League’s offer. For example, drawing on data gathered, the decision was taken to provide staff with a laptop and mobile phone so that they could be contacted at any time by the youths. Coaches are also provided with opportunities for professional development, including the opportunity to gain assessor and verifier qualifications. All staff also always attend local employability forums to stay up-to-date and to exchange ideas and resources with other organisations.

Each young person completes three stages through the Street League programme, namely: 1) Engagement; 2) Support and; 3) Aftercare. To complete these stages, it is vital that each young person overcomes the following, potentially daunting, challenges:

- To plan and commit to joining the programme at the specified start dates;
- To independently travel to the programme and;
- To learn to fit in as a team player.

On overcoming these challenges, the young people are given a positive environment to learn and improve their health and wellbeing. Street League offers a person centred approach and works in partnership with employers, to support the young people looking for opportunities following the course. In a case study example, joining a Street League dance course equipped 17 year old Millie with the structure, motivation and communication skills to successfully attain a job in retail.

Street League is continuing to grow and experience success across the UK, with around 30-40% impact growth year on year from 2014 to 2016. In Scotland, after their success at the SURF Awards, [Miles Briggs MSP raised a motion in Parliament](#), signed by 46 MSPs.

*Presenters:*

- *Tracy Davidson, Education and Training Manager, Street League*
- *Chris Caldwell, Operations Manager, Street League*
- *Steven Jardine, Operations Manager, Edinburgh, Street League*

## **Second Presentation Summary: [X-CEED](#)**

X-CEED (Extra Coaching to Exceed and Expand Development) aims to support young people into positive destinations by using a personalised approach to improve their social and employability skills. The programme is based in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

At the SURF Awards Workshop, as the project host, Rathbone UK introduced the X-CEED programme. Rathbone UK is a relatively small charity operating across Scotland and the UK as part of the [Newcastle College Group](#) (NCG), a nationwide not-for-profit education and training group.

X-CEED has supported 1,228 learners, aged between 14 and 25 years old, with the aid of Big Lottery funding over five years. As it has grown since 2012, the programme has been enhanced and adapted to suit local circumstances. The programme focuses on aiding young people who have been involved in the care system, the youth offending system or who are considered vulnerable and hard to reach.

The project primarily provides one-to-one support to youths, so that they establish a relationship of trust and support with the youth engagement worker. This individual support enables them to build their confidence and ultimately reach a positive destination.

As explained by service user Rebekah, after being referred by her school, the one-to-one sessions and support offered by X-CEED meant that she grew in confidence and was able to consider her work opportunities fully. Rebekah has now completed a Rathbone training programme, the [Employability Award](#) and gained a full time administration job. This experience was echoed by other service users who had each gained experience and employment in areas including hospitality, hairdressing, retail and law. These are underpinned by range of companies with which Rathbone has formed partnerships. It is also bolstered by the organisation's ability to provide effective social and emotional support, for those young people experiencing issues with their mental health or home life.

For schools involved in X-CEED's work, they were very impressed by the youth workers' capacity to work with previously disengaged children, particularly those who felt that teachers were "out to get them". By arranging meetings with young people at their own school, this has eased the transition onto the X-CEED programme. This has also allowed schools to improve their positive and sustained destination rates.

Individuals and other groups can also join one of Rathbone's group projects. These group projects are truly adapted and flexible to meet the needs and interests of the young people, through asking for their opinions and suggestions. For one youth group in Edinburgh, they deemed police officers as intimidating and unapproachable. In response to this, youth workers responded by inviting the charity [Aid and Abet](#) to bring their experiences to a group session. This capacity to work flexibly and creatively with young people is a key ingredient Rathbone's approach.

The X-CEED project also comprises a summer programme where young people are educated by external agencies on matters such as alcohol and drugs awareness, anger management and confidence building techniques. This programme is also an opportunity for the youths to socialise and go on group outings.

*Presenters:*

- *Richard Graham, Business Development Manager, Rathbone (Scotland)*
- *Amy Dunn, Youth Engagement Worker, Rathbone (Scotland)*

### **Third Presentation Summary: Stepping Up, [ENABLE](#)**

Stepping Up aims to help young people with learning disabilities remove any barriers that impede their progress into employment, further education or training. The project is being delivered in more than 70 schools in 11 Local Authority areas across Scotland, including North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire and is funded by Inspiring Scotland.

At the Awards workshop, as Ashley Ryan from ENABLE was unable attend to deliver the presentation, an overview was provided by Andy from SURF.

As the employability arm of ENABLE Scotland, ENABLE Works runs the Stepping Up initiative to support S4 to S6 pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) within schools. The emphasis of the programme is on ensuring that the young people make a positive and supported transition to the world of work by removing key barriers. This is facilitated by a Transitions Coordinator who works with four schools in a participating Local Authority area. The young people will receive long-term support of three or more years to reach and remain in employment. They also have the opportunity to gain an SQA Employability Qualification.

The Stepping Up programme has experienced some notable successes to date. 98% of those engaged go onto a positive destination – this is both higher than the national average for school leavers and significantly higher than that for Additional Support Needs (ASN) Leavers. Moreover, as the project has developed, three Local Authorities now self-fund the project locally.

Nevertheless, ENABLE is having to address wider societal barriers to support the young people into these positive destinations. For example, historically, it has been difficult for young people with ASN to find an exit route from college courses. This results in ‘revolving door’ syndrome where individuals may complete a course twice or more times. Additional support for colleges should be considered to address this. Additionally, parents can act as a barrier by holding the young person back from engaging with support programmes. Therefore, by illustrating consistent support for young people, parental concerns can be alleviated.

By continuing to develop local partnerships, ENABLE will continue to work towards the goal of ensuring that every young person with ASN has access to transitions support.

## 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.

*How do you develop relationships with employers taking in diverse groups of young people?*

- Street League proactively contact organisations listed on the Youth Employment Action Plan for each Local Authority area in which they work. They also ask companies to get involved in practical activities with young people to establish partnerships for experience and employment.
- Similarly, Rathbone work in partnership with companies, schools and youth groups and develop their network through attending local employability events.
- A delegate highlighted the [Disability Confident Employer Scheme](#)
- One of the presenting organisations use live internal figures to improve diversity figures.
- Through their referral scheme, Rathbone explicitly ask individuals if they can state their ethnicity, sexuality etc. so that appropriate support can be provided.

Additional points:

- The opportunity for youths to leave school at Christmas is highly problematic as there are far fewer opportunities than in the summer. A Scotland wide approach must be taken on this. However, it is difficult for the voluntary sector to obtain funding for more flexible programmes to permit this.

- Equally, greater flexibility on leaving dates would allow more out-of-school interventions and access to external support organisations. Indeed, school can seem too authoritative for children.
- The early intervention approach, used by both projects, by engaging children when they are still at school can be powerful as school can act as a comfort blanket, making transition 'scary'.

*How do you deal with failure?*

- Adaptation is key if you realise that an approach is not working as hoped in practice – this is not necessarily an indication of failure.

### **Third Presentation Summary: [Skills Development Scotland \(SDS\)](#)**

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency in Scotland. The organisation leads on programmes including those which promote youth employment, greater diversity in the workforce and the creation of greater apprenticeship opportunities with various employers.

At the SURF workshop, John Lindsay of National Operations at SDS presented an overview of some of the key approaches being adopted at a national level to support those involved in employability efforts at a local level across all sectors.

The Youth Employment Action Plan (YEAP) is a Local Authority level directory of organisations, services and opportunities for 16-19 year olds. They have been created in each Local Authority across Scotland (links are available on the [SDS website](#)) to create a common language among employability organisations. This has proven particularly effective in rural areas in bringing together geographically dispersed services. They also allow any overlaps or gaps in the provision of employability services to be identified, as well as any existing provision which should be reviewed and redesigned. YEAPs form part of the implementation of the [Opportunities For All commitment](#) for 16-19 year olds.

Skills Development Scotland also administers the funding for apprenticeships training. Foundation and graduate apprenticeships associated with this are advertised at: [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot)

SDS also manages [Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive \(SERI\)](#). This scheme operates by offering employers up to £4,000 when their company commits to a new job or Modern Apprenticeship with additional incentives on offer. The initiative is particularly aimed at helping young people with the greatest barriers to employment to obtain and remain in a job.

*Presenter:*

- *John Lindsay, Skills Development Scotland*

### **Fourth Presentation Summary: [Third Sector Employability Forum](#)**

Blyth Deans, Executive Group Member on the Third Sector Employability Forum (TSEF), introduced TSEF's role in developing the capacity of the sector in relation to both employability policy development and delivery of services in Scotland.

Established in 2009, TSEF is a body with a membership of around 180 organisations and provides an arena for these organisations to share views and best practice on employability. It also represents the sector in policy development, taking an evidence based approach. For example, it is currently investigating the contribution of third sector organisations in the provision of employability services and looking at potential improvements to working with the Scottish Government. This is supported by TSEF's Executive group which comprises a number of 'go to'



people on employability including those from Skills Development Scotland and the Department for Work & Pensions.

TSEF forms part of a wider landscape of strategic organisations which link in with the Scottish Employability Forum, as in the diagram below.



It is also part of various working groups at a Scottish and UK level including those evaluating existing programmes, those developing new approaches and those which administer funding schemes.

TSEF also works to engage with individuals and organisations by hosting events to consult on national matters, as well as holding learning workshops on topical issues. These issues currently include the reduction in Employability Fund (EF) money. This means that there has been a contraction in EF providers and consequently, a reduction in the number of young people able to use the services and reach positive destinations.

*Presenters:*

- *Blyth Deans, Board Member, TSEF*

## Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate raised during the SURF Awards workshop on Tackling Challenges in Employability 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 highlighted the difficulties they had experienced in starting as an employability provider due to the complexity of the funding and management required.
- In response to this, the panel stated that support is clearly provided to young people but the needs of employers are not met in the same way.
- Decision-making on employability support does not involve young people in a meaningful way. In addition, smaller employability organisations often do not have the staff capacity to participate in forum discussions.
- In response to this, the panel highlighted that engagement and feedback is sought from service users. However, it is still a challenge which must be addressed to draw on the vast variety of experience to make resource decisions.
- From the perspective of local employability organisations, there is a gap between the aspirations of national bodies for employability and its delivery by Local Authorities.
- There has been marketisation of employability services, due to the competitiveness of the Employability Fund and others.
- There are a various ongoing and upcoming consultations. This includes the Skills and Enterprise Review which will be reporting in September. Additionally, the Scottish Government is currently undertaking a review of the [Learner Journey for 15-24 year olds](#) for which it is actively seeking the views of organisations.
- Although there are efforts being made to raise awareness, it is still difficult to coordinate employability services at a local and national level.

## 2) Reversing Economic Decline in Scotland's Towns

**With introductory presentations from two SURF Award winning projects:**

Lochgelly and Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project

### About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2016 SURF Award winning projects in the 'Most Improved Town' and 'Community Led Regeneration' categories.

The projects featured at the workshop are in contrasting locations and so face vastly different challenges. Nonetheless, both areas began their development process with a regeneration strategy and are dependent on community buy in and input. The community failed to fully comprehend and understand the original strategies produced in each area yet consultation and community engagement allowed them to work alongside partners to produce successful outcomes.

The half-day workshop took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the CoSLA Conference Centre in Edinburgh. The event featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF delivery partners, the Scottish Government, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Scotland's Towns Partnership. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 43 participants.

### First Presentation Summary: Lochgelly

Located in a strong location in central Fife, Lochgelly is a former mining town with just under 7,000 residents which has suffered deep-rooted deprivation. In 2004, with its derelict housing and boarded-up shops, Lochgelly was named as the 'worst place to live in Britain'. In light of this, public and community partners have been working collaboratively to deliver on plans which have brought about notable physical and social regeneration within the town centre.

At the SURF Awards workshop, Hazel Cross of Fife Council the process of regeneration which was instigated in the early 2000s through a series of major and smaller interventions. The initial steps

involved the creation of a masterplan document, developed through a partnership between the Council, Ore Valley Housing Association and the community. The plan identified and addressed key issues for the town centre including improvement to the urban fabric and increased opportunities for town centre living. It also looked to enhance a local sense of pride in the town, together with Lochgelly's image to non-residents. This process fostered capacity building within the partnership which led to the formation of Lochgelly Community Development Forum.

In terms of physical regeneration, Fife Council and Ore Valley Housing Association have worked together to renovate 'forgotten' derelict or vacant sites. For example, with the support of HLF and ERDF funding, the abandoned Miners Institute was transformed into business premises which opened in 2015 and has a current occupancy of 70%. Town centre living opportunities have also been increased by the development of new social housing on Miners Square, together with the addition of new retail units. In addition, the existing Lochgelly Centre underwent a £2.5 million refurbishment and now comprises facilities including a theatre, library and office space. Each of these developments and more have been pivotal to enhancing the look and feel of the place, particularly on approaching the town centre. It has also enhanced the Main Street as a place for enterprise.

This success can be traced back to a Charrette held in Lochgelly in 2010 which was deemed an exemplar initiative and helped to determine the holistic priorities for the town centre, as shown in the diagram below. Subsequently, a working was charged delivering short-term priority projects to set the regeneration in motion.



Although there was initial reluctance from residents, the Charrette also commenced the community engagement and support necessary to drive delivery.

In addition, local events have played an important role in building a stronger sense of belonging within the community. These events include annual gatherings such as the community gala which has grown significantly over recent years and attracts visitors from across Fife and Edinburgh. Informal organisations have also been established to meet the needs of the community including a social support group for women who have experienced isolation. Additionally, the widespread use of the strapline 'I ♥ Lochgelly' in promotional leaflets and shopping bags has been very successful in improving pride of place among residents.

There has also been action taken to enhance local leisure opportunities with the imminent redevelopment of St Andrew's Church as an indoor climbing and bouldering centre. This innovative new use for the Church was determined by the community through 'Have Your Say' events and

design workshops. In terms of developing outdoor leisure opportunities, a 5 year Action Plan has been created to transform 'stalled' vacant and derelict sites to attractive green spaces which can be used by the community.

Overall, several key lessons were drawn by the Council from the project experience so far in Lochgelly. It has proved important to remain resilient, persistent and ambitious to secure investment and deliver on plans over the long-term. It also been critical to take advantage of local assets, including both the people and existing buildings.

*Presenter:*

- *Hazel Cross, Town Centre Development Unit (TCDU), Fife Council*

## **Second Presentation Summary: Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project**

Tomintoul is a remote rural village situated within the Cairngorms National Park and Glenlivet Estate. It was originally planned by the Duke of Gordon as an industrial settlement but, with mechanisation, this purpose became superseded and so the villagers have traditionally depended on land based industries. Today, Tomintoul has needed to take advantage of the tourist market. However, the effects of the economic crash badly affected the village, with the closure of two hotels. This motivated efforts towards regenerating the village, to allow its socio-economic recovery.

A Steering Group was created comprising of community and public body representatives in order to produce a regeneration strategy and plan. Funding was sourced and a baseline assessment of economic and social factors was carried out. This was supported by a significant level of community engagement to identify key issues and ideas. The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 marked Tomintoul and Glenlivet as a Spatial Priority Area and set out improvements to housing. This was supported by the Transform Team, whose membership consisted of local community representation, the Crown Estate and the Local Authority, who drove forward the delivery of projects. Ongoing community engagement continued under a number of key themes including; funding and delivery, community projects, housing and sustainable land management.

The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust was established in 2012. They knew that if anything was going to happen they must have a Community Development Trust. This provided a legal status and structure. A stable governance structure allowed them to attract further investment and funding. The Trust has ongoing account management provided by Highlands and Island Enterprise. The additional investment allowed them to recruit a fully funded Development Officer in 2012. Various other positions are funded on a shorter-term basis, including graduate placements – one graduate is now running the Speyside Whisky Festival.

The Trust have organised and profited from a number of successful events including motorcycling and music. There has been a 150% increase in bookings at the community acquired Smugglers Youth Hostel, which is money that can be reinvested in the community. A challenge can be broadband coverage as it is logistically difficult but they are piloting a scheme to Braes of Glenlivet.

Public money is likely to be depleted as the National Park will focus on other sites and reduce funding for Tomintoul & Glenlivet meaning that the Development Trust will have to find sustainable income. The Crown Estate owns the vast majority of the land in Tomintoul & Glenlivet and its devolution to the Scottish Government and future management structures will have a significant bearing on the community, whether positive or negative.

The main challenge for the Development Trust is being reliant on public funds and as funding decreases they will have to find alternative avenues to remain sustainable. Financial independence

helps drive local interest, however, they are a very small community so this is dependent on strong relationships. The Trust Board need to be more proactive on management to allow project officers to focus on their work. Ongoing engagement with the community is essential and will help to reduce any cynicism. The original regeneration strategy is now very out of date and was deemed by the community to be too much of a corporate document. Moving forward this is now up for review and could provide a good point for the Trust to reflect on what has to be done moving forward.

*Presenter:*

- *Lee Haxton, Community Support Manager, Cairngorms National Park Authority*

## 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.

*Has the BIDs model been considered? And have you considered the scenic routes approach?*

- There are 3 BIDS in Fife already. Fife Council would have to do a lot of capacity building among Lochgelly businesses first in order to get it up and running.
- The key issues for setting up a BID are having a Board, levy payers and boundaries. In Lochgelly they discussed this with businesses and they are not keen on paying levies at the moment. Maybe in next two years.
- In Tomintoul they do operate the Snow Road Scenic Route. This is funded by Scottish Enterprise and there is an opportunity to showcase assets during the closure of the A9.

*A substantial part of town regeneration is public led. What do you do when no Local Authority funding is available? E.g. baseline funding for development officers.*

*The context of economic crash is still with us and Scottish Government has a community led regeneration strategy –but how is this sustainable? It is important for Local Authorities to invest but difficult without HIE.*

- This is a constant challenge. Scottish Government funding, for example the People and Communities Fund may help but needs sustained investment.
- HIE are a driver of Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust. Support is split between Scottish Enterprise/ HIE – different support is available.
- There are a number of paradoxes in the Scottish Government approach. BIDS/ Community Development Trust/ Participatory Budgeting – is there a case for a new model? If a local authority is going to devolve funding to local communities it could be ad hoc.
- For example, the English Model of Parish Council - additional levy to fund this body. It provides benefits but at a cost. Council tax raises money specifically for local projects. Can be revealing about engagement – do people truly want to engage with this?
- In Coupar the Community Council works with Perth and Kinross Council. There are layers of government but no local people, it does not relate to local experiences. Local democracy not working for the town in this instance.
- The size of Councils in relation to the size of the community vs. locality councils is worth considering. Research by the COSLA Commission on Local Authority on scale vs. EU average demonstrated the lack of local representation.

## Third Presentation Summary: Scottish Government

The language used to describe Scotland's towns is generally very negative. Words such as; terminal decline and stalled spaces. What we need to do is start to focus on the assets and the positives. This

was the starting point for the development of the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP). The Town Centre Review was asset focused and acted as a call to action. It was wholly dependent on how Scottish Government structured their approach and recognised a need to improve cross-government working. The key goal of the TCAP was centred round the word 'active' and was about action and opportunities at a local level. It wasn't prescriptive as that is not the role of government they are there to be an enabler of actions.

The Town Centre First Principle was very important for investment. It was not a duty but a method of transparent decision making which prioritised positive outcomes and attracting funding. Derek McKay, then Minister for Local Government and Planning, met with small business owners in Kilmarnock to outline Scottish Government's support to help business in town centres. He stated that retail was not part of the solution and looked at what other uses town centres could have, for example services, housing and leisure. The Crown Hotel in Crieff is an exemplar for town centres. Scottish Government is keen to support small developers in taking over derelict/ historic buildings for housing. Lochgelly have recognised that it is important to address empty buildings and create town centre living. Glasgow city Council's Stalled Spaces initiative showcases the potential for unlocking disused land and allowing communities to make use of these spaces in innovative and creative ways.

Many of the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) now in operation are not only working with their local businesses, but also working with local groups, community councils and other local interest groups to bring about improvement through collective effort, reducing duplication and improving delivery at a local level, bringing about positive change. Scottish Government continue to work with BIDS Scotland in their aim to work closely with individuals, communities, councils, agencies and other public and private bodies whilst working in partnership with the Scottish Government to contribute to more skilful and knowledgeable communities.

Scottish Government has offered various regeneration funding streams to enable improvements in Scotland's town centres. Town centre Scottish Government funded charrettes have enabled effective local community engagement with a focus on community empowerment. Community led approaches have also been funded from a capital programme (Communities Capital Fund). These have been one off grants for capital development and have funded projects such as the Platoons at Fort William, Ayr Gaiety and the Old Railway House, Helensburgh. The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund sees Local Authorities and Scottish Government working together to achieve regeneration objectives whilst connecting economic and social regeneration outcomes.

This is only a start and the Scottish Government remains very focused on town centres especially through Kevin Stewart MSP. They will continue to maintain momentum, skills and knowledge through a partnership approach across the piece in order to tackle inequalities. Town centres have the potential to be economic powerhouses.

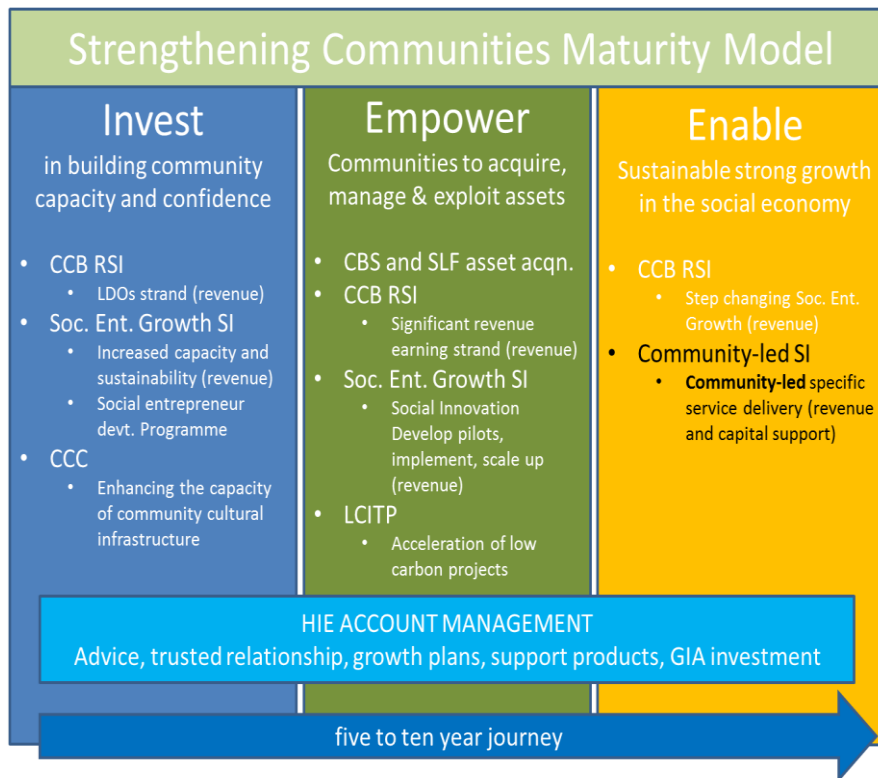
*Presenter:*

- *Kevin McGowan, Regeneration Team Leader, Scottish Government*

#### **Fourth Presentation Summary: Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)**

Ailsa Raeburn represents the Strengthening Community Directorate within HIE. HIE has a strong focus on economic, social and community factors as opposed to the role of Scottish Enterprise. They support social enterprise and invest in community capacity. Confidence is a vital foundation for asset ownership and development. This contributes to income generation for sustainability. Cultural assets and social enterprises are a big part of the Highland economy.

The diagram below shows how HIE supports its communities.



HIE administer the Scottish Land Fund which is concerned with income generating assets and they ensure communities are appropriately supported through the process of taking ownership of such assets. They help communities to become constituted groups, provide start-up grants and have supported over 100 social enterprises.

They adopt a place based approach which brings in assets and resources to be used and distributed, establishing a shared purpose. Within Scottish towns HIE have invested in cultural infrastructure and see the value in this. HIE is helping to improve quality of life and desirability in rural and remote areas by investing in community infrastructure. HIE is a partner in SURF's place based Alliance for Action programme with investment in both Rothesay and Dunoon.

HIE has a spectrum of involvement in communities. For example, they have supported hard infrastructure including the Rothesay Pavilion. In Shetland, they helped with a poverty reduction programme, a soft infrastructure approach bringing businesses and community together. Dunoon is at the start of its Alliance for Action process with hopes of establishing a cultural hub initiative. With SURF, HIE hopes to find solutions to issues such as lack of sustainable jobs, access barriers and stagnating house prices.

The Scottish Land Fund and Community Right to Buy Scheme have invested in Edinburgh Sick Kids Hospital, Marchmont in the Borders and in developments in Crieff. In Campeltown a bid is underway for the Microhanish space port potential. Through the Development Trust partnership they have supported community buy outs of town halls and community cinemas. The Scottish Land Fund and Community Right to Buy offer communities more opportunities to take control and is driving current policy for community led regeneration. Land Reform will open up opportunities for communities to take over abandoned and derelict land. HIE's role is to support and ensure the community feel in a position to take control by building capacity where needed.



*Presenter:*

- *Ailsa Raeburn, Highlands and Islands Enterprise*

## **Fifth Presentation Summary: Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP)**

As an organisation STP operate a website which is a free platform to use for learning and the provision of evidence. They have a varied membership of 180 strategic organisations which includes representatives from sectors such as; digital, transport, libraries, regeneration etc.

STP's role in the Town Centre Action Plan ecosystem was in the recognition of problems expressed through the Town Centre Action Plan and to cut across silos to bring the Action Plan into fruition. They promote learning, tools and engage partners. They have a focus on promoting the Place Standard Tool which helps communities to come to a consensus and to establish their USP. STP is able to promote and showcase good practice from Scotland's towns via a partnership with the Herald Media Platform.

Even with increased urbanisation globally, Scotland is still a nation of towns. It is crucial that we showcase the success of our towns. Most inventions are from Scotland and Dundee and Paisley are leading the way in using historic assets to build economic strengths. Two thirds of businesses are still in towns.

The concept of digital towns is misunderstood. It offers lots of potential for services, marketing and transport. Inverclyde is the first pilot for a digital town and is working to develop a process for digitising. This involves collaboration between transport providers, local authorities, NHS and the Community Development Trust. These are the key stakeholders who rely on Wi-Fi. This work is continuing as they roll out further pilots in partnership with the Scottish Government.

*Presenter:*

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

## **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.

*Hinterlands – will these benefit sufficiently from City Deals? There has been a City centre doughnut effect.*

- There are core resources that you will only find in cities e.g. special hospitals.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership is talking to financial centres.
- You have to be very careful about an approach to adding more retail (e.g. shopping centres). For example, in Dunfermline the focus is on more services and amenities in the centre and more jobs/ offices to draw people back from Edinburgh.
- City Deals need to be more regional.
- Clackmannanshire and Stirling City Deal - much more town centred focussed.
- Scottish Government recognises that city success may not flow to hinterland. Current focus on recognition for towns.
- Looking at the Inverness City Deals. Poverty is often hidden in rural areas – statistics don't show this.

*What happens to towns which are deemed not quite bad enough? Where does investment come from?*



- Nicola Sturgeon's focus on poverty and inclusive growth?
- An important foundation for regeneration is a strong community who can work with statutory bodies and private sector essential. They need to be on tap not on top of the community.
- Threshold size of towns - In small villages broadband can make or break them in terms of retention and drawing people in. For example, in Dumfries & Galloway vs. high function. We need broadband to retain young people.
- Access to town centres can sometimes be prohibitive due to high cost and poor transport links.
- Land ownership
- Transport can also draw people away from the town to the bigger cities.
- Limited scope for development
- Aviemore is a tourist churn of people in certain seasons. It is a case of managing visitor numbers effectively.

### 3) Promoting creative arts in community regeneration

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and shortlisted projects: The Stove Network, Hippfest and Made in Easterhouse.

#### About the event

The last in the series of workshops for 2016's SURF Award winning projects was for the 'Creative Regeneration' category.

All three initiatives were community embedded arts projects working with local artists to regenerate communities through artistic and creative approaches.

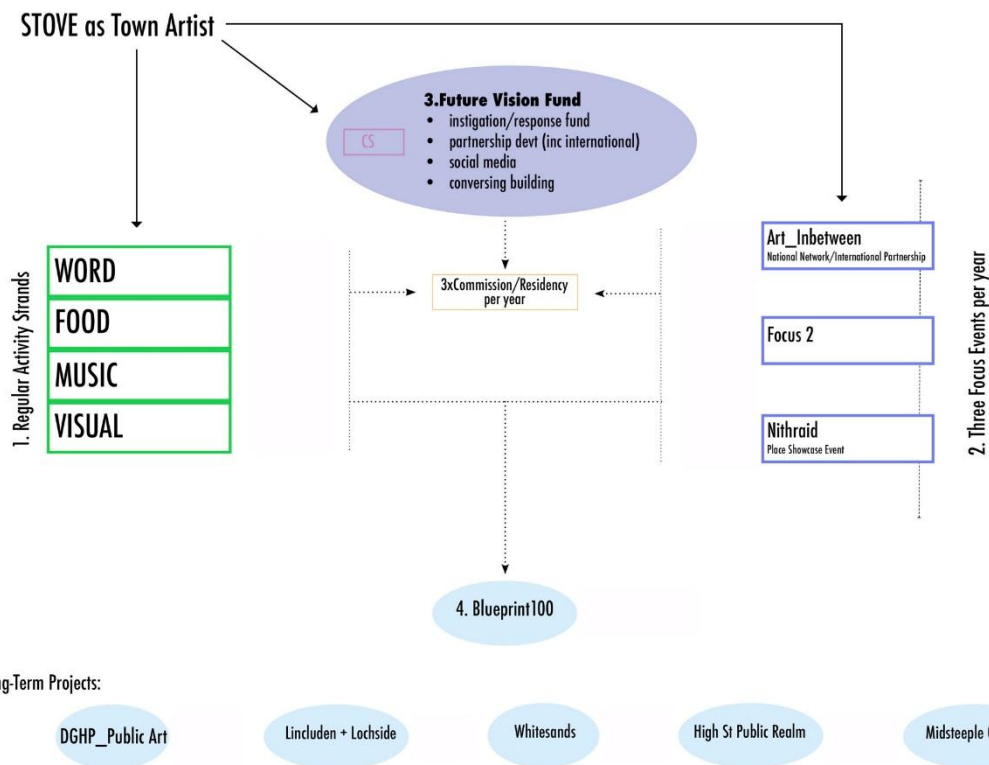
The half-day workshop took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 in The Paisley Town Hall, and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Awards partner Creative Scotland as well as the bid team from Paisley 2021, bid for UK City of Culture. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 55 participants.

#### First Presentation Summary: The Stove Network, Dumfries

Based in Dumfries The Stove Network is a collection of artists who have a vested interest in improving the town centre offer of Dumfries. After some thought Matt realised that some specifics of what they do are transferrable to other areas. There is a need to remove layers of bureaucracy and get money straight to the projects. In Dumfries there has been a significant decline in employment which needs to be addressed.

The Stove Network is a living art project and a hub of creativity. It has a physical presence in the heart of the High Street in a building redevelopment. Within this is a community café which is there to welcome people of all backgrounds and interests. The building also houses a variety of partnership organisations and provides meeting spaces for local groups. The Stove is a membership organisation who consider the civic, rather than retail, offer of the High Street. Part of their core activity involves working in partnerships to establish new work and generate income to remain sustainable. They have 3 main focuses - events such as an annual festival, young creative practitioners through partners Blueprint and resource generation.

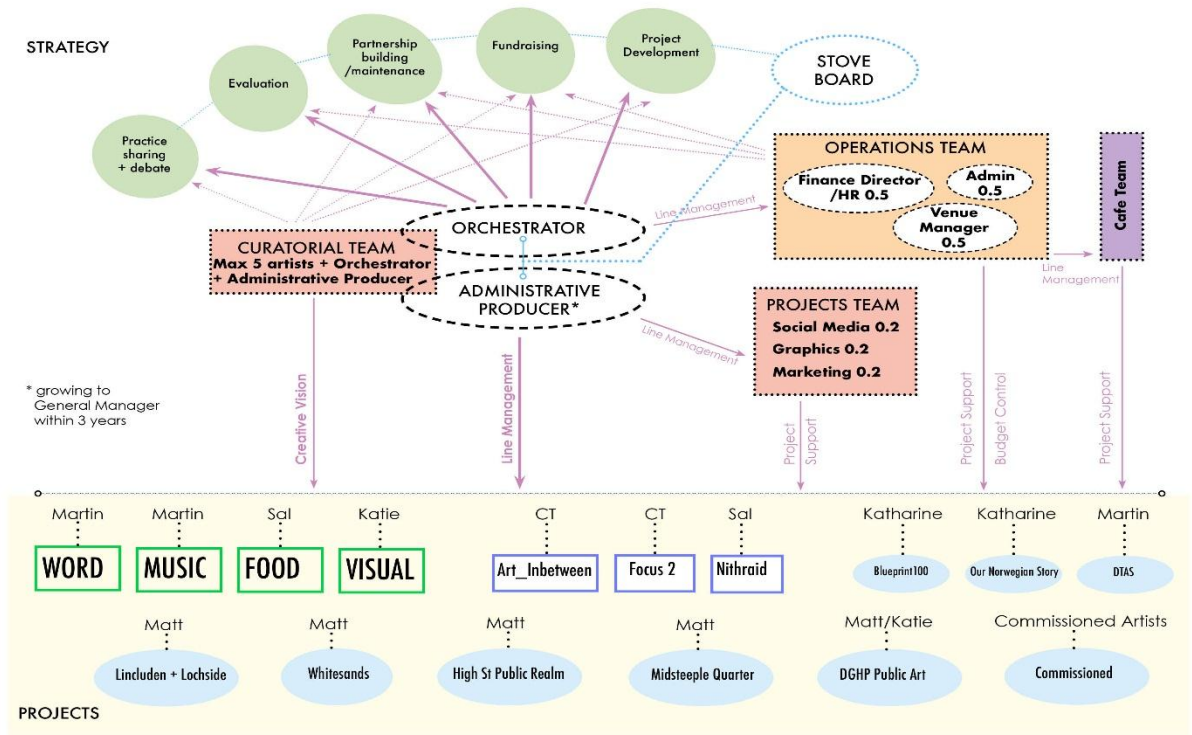
The diagram below illustrates the strategic plan for The Stove.



The model of an artist run community development trust is unique to The Stove and is a model which could be regulated and replicated in other areas. It is a great potential model for other creative regeneration projects as it means the funding base is diversified - 30% cultural and the rest split between Social Impact and Community Development money.

Working in this new era of Community Empowerment the arts seem to be one of the best equipped sectors for working in collaboration. This is allowing creatives to form meaningful working relationships across all departments in Local Authority, the NHS, Higher Education, the Environmental sector and to support community groups to form their own partnerships with these sectors. This is a very valuable and important role for the arts.

Homing in on how all that works in practice



The entry to the Future Towns competition has a focus on one core area, the traditional centre is too big. This involves working in partnership with Social Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the NHS. The Community Benefit Society is looking to buy back buildings on the High St from current Land Owners. Other means of community buy out of town centre buildings includes through council building asset transfer and through the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. This will be done under the Dumfries High St Ltd company. This all fits as part of the official council Strategy which provides £1 million from the Town Centre Living Fund.

The Glasgow Institute of Architects have drawn up a vision for the proposed Midsteepie Quarter.



*Presenter:*

- *Matt Baker, Orchestrator, The Stove Network*

## **Second Presentation Summary: Hippfest**

Located in Bo'ness Hippfest is the annual Hippodrome Festival of Silent Film. Bo'ness is in the highest 15% in the recent SIMD statistics. The Hippodrome Cinema is one of the key buildings in the town. It lay run down for 30 years and a renovation effort was stalled by the financial crash. In order to restore the cinema to its former glory and reverse the economic decline in the town centre funding was sought from the Heritage and Big Lottery Funds.

The cinema lay closed from 1912-1975 until it reopened as a Bingo Hall. In April 2009 an annual festival was to spearhead a new generation for the restored cinema. Seven silent movie festivals have since taken place. In 2011 more than 2000 people were tapped into in schools and community groups to encourage engagement with the festival and get more people involved. The group wanted to install a sense of pride in the town.

The Bo'ness Heritage Railway gets 7,000 visitors but the challenge lies in encouraging these visitors to shop, eat and stay over in the town. Simple interventions such as engaging local businesses in window dressing competitions, putting up bunting, listing all businesses in leaflets, visitor signposting, reciprocal social media usage and community meetings have been trialled in order to encourage more businesses to engage with the festival and to retain footfall in the town.

One of the main challenges faced is a limited capacity within the town to host events so there is a difficulty in adding new venues to increase activities during the festival. 22% of visitors visited more than one attraction across the festival. Local venues hosting their own events have been successful but the cinema needs to stay relevant. They have looked at innovative new ideas such as dementia friendly screenings.

Another challenge is a lack of accommodation in Bo'ness for visitors. 12% of festival visitors stayed over last year but there is only one hotel so a very limited capacity to increase this. Is there a potential for an Airbnb? There is also a perception issue, especially locally, of Bo'ness comparing it to nearby Linlithgow and Falkirk. There is an ongoing PR job going on to try and address this in the central belt but especially locally. The Festival itself aims to celebrate the positive aspects of Bo'ness with screenings including films of: Bo'ness Fair; industrial and cultural heritage and old black and white movies.

Despite negative comments from outside pride within the town is fierce.





The group have found that engaging directly with the local schools has been more effective and they are able to make it relevant to the school programme. They had struggled to connect with 12-25 year olds who prefer an active and hands-on approach.

Challenges are ongoing for the Festival as there is still some existing resistance within the town, especially when businesses close at traditional times rather than extending their hours to offer more to visitors during the Festival period. This adds to the difficulty in retaining visitors and increasing footfall. Transport is also a major challenge as there is no direct mainline train. To overcome this they are piloting a shared taxi service.

*Presenter:*

- *Alison Strauss, Arts Development Officer, Hippfest*

### **Third Presentation Summary: Made in Easterhouse, Glasgow East Arts Company**

Glasgow East Arts Company operate the successful Platform project from The Bridge arts hub in Easterhouse, Glasgow. The Bridge as a venue is an education, arts and leisure facility and a unique way of bringing together partners to deliver successful outcomes for Easterhouse and the surrounding community.

They work on an asset based approach and the regeneration of the community is central to their work. They offer a mixed arts programme which brings the community and artists together. This includes the running of an experimental Arts Festival. They engage with the local community and offer local residents discounted prices to events running in the centre as an incentive to get involved.

In 2016 Platform celebrated 10 years in operation. They decided to mark the achievement by offering a programme of projects that worked towards a final celebratory event. They focussed on engagement with a high number of local residents to develop the quantity and quality of provision

needed. In order to run the programme they secured funding from Glasgow City Council on top of their regular funding from Creative Scotland.

They engaged with partners across Easterhouse to help with the facilitation of events and generated a hub of cultural activity achieving both social and community development outcomes for the area. There is a lot partners can learn from working with arts organisations, particularly the ability to shortcut to creative solutions to challenges. Local and Scottish Government are increasingly recognising the potential of the arts and creative regeneration solutions.

The 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary festival was led by artist Deirdre Nelson and developed over a 2 year period. Over the piece she developed 12 projects which engaged with residents and reached out to older non-traditional audiences. One such project was the running of a Tea Dance. Deirdre worked with the community to design table cloths and crockery to be used at the event that reflected Easterhouse and what staying there meant to the residents.

Platform is currently acting as the host organisation for the Glasgow City Council's Thriving Places initiative in Easterhouse, which was selected due to the high level of degeneration in the area. They have also applied for Scottish Government Charrette funding which will be used to develop a Town Centre regeneration plan for Easterhouse in partnership with Glasgow City Council. This will offer the community an opportunity to pause for reflection and evaluate how far they have come and what the future direction for Easterhouse should be.

*Presenter:*

- *Jenny Crowe, Arts Manager, Platform*

## 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.

*The Platform entranceways are based on desire lines and show the contrast between new Easterhouse and old.*

*What is it in our own places? It is important to look for similarities in processes. Complexity and simplicity – partnership too.*

- Very difficult to form these partnerships – creativity eases and facilitates this process.
- The Stove says it should be genuinely driven by artists.
- There are still difficulties in finding the balance between collaboration and partnership.
- An arts mind set gives you all the tools required to manage an organisation such as responsiveness and creativity. However, to outsiders, artists are perceived as fluffy and spurious in their approach.
- Platform says it helps to have a track record to draw upon.
- The Stove notes that partnership means different things. It comes down to people, creative tools and self-organisation.
- It is the opposite of risk averse and siloed – innovative. It brings emotion into the room.

*A strong approach is to have a strategy and a plan together with the freedom to think within this framework*

- Regardless of the approach you still have to produce results.

- Post economic crash local and Scottish Government couldn't make infrastructure and draw in investment. There is a weight and expectation on small organisations and communities.
- In light of this, you need to be realistic about staff capacity – will and determination is not enough.

#### Fourth Presentation: Creative Scotland

The role of Creative Scotland is to administer funding, advocacy and development. They work alongside Big Lottery Fund, Scottish Government, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sports Scotland, among other partners. Creative Scotland offers three forms of funding. These include; Regularly Funded organisations who receive 3 year funding. The Stove Network and Platform are amongst recipients of these grants. Open Project Funding is for organisations wishing to run specific projects or programmes. RIG Arts have used such funding to aid in engaging with communities across Greenock. The final funding stream is Targeted Funding which is delivered in multiple ways. Examples of this type of funding include, funding for creative industries, place partnership programme and others.

**Excellence and experimentation** across the arts, screen and creative industries is recognised and valued

Everyone can **access** and enjoy artistic and creative experiences

**Places** and quality of life are transformed through imagination, ambition and an understanding of the potential of creativity

Ideas are brought to life by a diverse, skilled and connected **leadership and workforce**

Creative Scotland funding criteria focuses on 7 keys outcomes. These include; excellence and experimentation, accessibility in line with the Scottish Government mandate for every day creative experiences, leadership, projects which connect people, intrinsic value, social value which builds social connections; and economic value. Economic value is not at top of list but is an important point in the economic context as creative industries contribute to inclusive economic growth. This comes in the form of festivals and events which generate significant income. This is now recognised by government officials.

Creativity should be intrinsic and should not sit separately.



A society's values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the ways they are expressed are a society's culture. The way a society governs itself cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly affect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work.

Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability.

John Hawkes, 2001.

We need to unlock access to decision-makers and further funding opportunities. Get the right people round the table at the right time. It is important to look at long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes. This is the case in Dumfries and the work of The Stove. Only 0.004% of the Scottish Government budget is spent on the arts. This is a very small sum but it generates huge return on social and economic outcomes.

*Presenters:*

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

## **Fifth Presentation: Paisley 2021**

The Paisley 2021 bid for the UK City of Culture is a cultural and heritage led initiative. Events so far have included the Sma' Shot Festival which concluded with a burning effigy.

**“Cultural programmes are the rocket fuel of regeneration”**

David Henshaw, Liverpool 08



Paisley as a place has well-expressed and visible issues but it has an untold story. The spark was ignited when the team seen a Department of Culture Media and Sport quote with a call to action to build local pride and step change for communities. Renfrewshire Council chose Paisley as it offered a chance to explore a potential of story with remarkable assets. The pitch was based on economic and social impacts. 4,000 jobs have been lost in past 10 years. Paisley has become a poster child of deprivation and there is very visible decline in the High Street. This affects the stories that the community tell others about the town.

It's a people's bid and a huge variety of people have engaged with and contributed to the project. It seeks to deliver a series of changes throughout the town. 40% of people in Paisley live within 20% of the most deprived areas in Scotland.

The town has a strong identity but it is a challenge to remain individual when in the shadow of nearby Glasgow. They have done this by work around the Paisley pattern, #WhyIlovePaisley brand and a washing line of ideas as part of the principle of co-design project. Paisley has a friendly culture where cultural activists are welcomed.

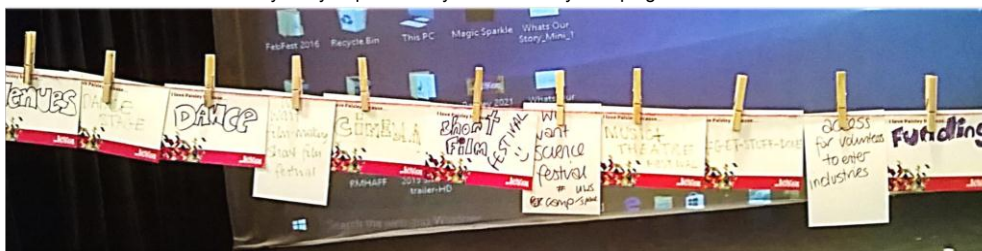
Renfrewshire leisure and other public partners have engaged with 30,000 people (40% of overall population) so far. It is recognised as a world class creative industries incubator. The Paisley 2021 brand is openly accessible for people and organisations to use. The team have engaged with businesses, schools and creative organisations. A Culture Bus for and designed by children has been created. The bid is backed by 12 ambassadors. To engage with young people a Twitter Takeover event took place and another local 17 year old created a Lego film about Paisley and the bid. Businesses have engaged via Pride of Paisley which is led by Paisley First BID. The elderly community have participated in a digital cultural project.

## ☆☆☆ OVERALL Reach >30,000 individuals ☆☆☆

Youth | Music | Visual Arts | History & Heritage | Film | Literature & Spoken Word |  
Theatre & Dance | Fashion & Applied Arts &

Community Planning & Creative Renfrewshire partnership events

- ✓ Conference events
- ✓ Localised community events
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ Tenants meetings
- ✓ Culture bus tours
- ✓ Participatory activities
- **1,000** responses to the 'What's Our Story' campaign
- **100s** more to Paisley Daily Express 'Why I Love Paisley' campaign



The Paisley 2021 team are learning from Dundee, who were shortlisted for the 2017 competition. The most important message is that even if the bid is not successful, they feel it's a win-win situation as they know what their 'landing pad' is.

*Presenters:*

- *Stuart McMillan, Head of Regeneration, Paisley 2021*
- *Jean Cameron, BID Director, Paisley 2021*

## 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.

*What is the transferability of a cultural bid approach?*

- There is a semantical issue – cultural vs. arts. Advocacy still necessary.
- A bid clearly galvanises aspiration.
- Have to be careful of not raising aspirations unrealistically.

*Not connecting relatively new legal powers (e.g. Community Empowerment Act/ physical development and arts). There needs to be an awareness of possible approaches*

- The Stove says there's a danger of not raising aspirations.
- There needs to be education and social impact budgets for arts and culture.
- To establish the Paisley 2021 bid they had to make a case for cultural regeneration to the Council executives. They did this by demonstrating that a property led approach has repeatedly been unsuccessful because market forces simply outstrip the Council's abilities. Therefore, there was a greater risk of not attempting a cultural approach.
- Paisley and Dumfries are similar in that many of the buildings are privately owned.
- Community empowerment is very much about physical regeneration.

To view full presentations from each of the workshops please visit [www.surf.scot/surf-awards/surf-award-shared-learning-events/](http://www.surf.scot/surf-awards/surf-award-shared-learning-events/)

For more information on the SURF Awards visit [www.surf.scot/surf-awards/](http://www.surf.scot/surf-awards/)

End of report

Emma Scott, Information, Communications and Events Officer

July 2017

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