



REGENERATION IN A RECESSION: REALITY, RESOURCES AND RESILIENCE

A SURF seminar: *Exploring the Impact of Recession-Based Policy on Disadvantaged Communities in Scotland*

Wednesday 16 November 2011, 9.30 – 12.30
Glasgow Concert Hall (Buchanan Suite)

A briefing paper for seminar participants on:

- 1. SURF, the JRF and the purpose of this programme of work**
- 2. The process so far**
- 3. The purpose and format of the seminar**
- 4. The main messages from the two case studies**

Appendices:

- A. Additional information on case study interviews**
- B. Background notes on the two case study communities**

1 SURF, the JRF and the purpose of this work programme

SURF is Scotland's independent regeneration network. Its overall objective is to help improve the wellbeing of residents in Scotland's disadvantaged communities. SURF uses the information and views gathered through interaction with its extensive, cross sector membership of over 250 organisations to inform and influence more successful and sustainable regeneration policy and practice.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is an independent charity that seeks to understand the root causes of social problems, identify ways of overcoming them, and show how social needs can be met in practice. Its purpose is to influence policy and practice by searching for evidence and demonstrating solutions to improve:

- the circumstances of people experiencing poverty and disadvantage;
- the quality of their homes and communities;
- the nature of the services and support that foster their well-being and citizenship.

SURF is undertaking a programme of collaborative work with the JRF to examine the 'Reality, Resources and Resilience' in Scottish communities under the impact of recent recession-related policy decisions at local and national level.

2 The process so far

The initial phase of work comprises two case studies that focus on experiences in two different communities – **east Govan** in Glasgow and the **Gallatown** neighbourhood of Kirkcaldy. The aim has been to learn more about specific circumstances and to deepen understanding of the effects of public spending reductions.

The main focus has been on the lived experience and perspectives of residents, businesses, voluntary sector support bodies and public sector service organisations. This is being supplemented with the gathering of some relevant background statistical information.

3 The purpose and format of the seminar

3.1 Purpose

Beyond networking and sharing of information; the main purpose of the seminar is to discuss and agree which of the main messages emerging from the two case studies have most resonance across the wider Scottish context.

3.2 Format

Following a short introduction and explanation of the wider programme of collaborative work, this participative event will begin with presentation of some of the key messages emerging from discussions in the two case study areas. Four of the participants in those discussions will briefly elaborate on one or two of the key points from their particular perspective

The cross-sector participants attending will then be invited to discuss similarities and differences in their own experiences across Scotland. This will be done in informal, discussion around small, table-based mixed groups. A SURF facilitator will help to ensure an inclusive and sufficiently focused discussion.

Feedback on the agreed key issues from each table will form the basis of a concluding open discussion panel session aimed at narrowing the focus further down on one or two points. SURF will go on to explore these points further in the later stages of its programme with relevant policy-makers and key players.

The event will end with an opportunity for further informal discussion and networking over a snack lunch. A summary of the outcome of the seminar will be sent to all participants.

3.3 Agenda

Wednesday 16 November

- 9:30 Registration and coffee
- 10:00 Welcome, and outline of the process so far
Andy Milne, Chief Executive, SURF
- 10:10 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's interest in this process
Jim McCormick, Scotland Adviser, JRF
- 10:15 A summary of the main emerging case study messages
Andy Milne, Chief Executive, SURF
- 10:30 Comment on some elements of the key messages by participants in the Gallatown & east Govan case studies:
 - *Karen McGregor, Chair, Gallatown and East Sinclair Tenants & Residents Association*
 - *Alice Connelly, Member, South West Glasgow Community Reference Group*
 - *Cheryl McFadyen, Headteacher, Ibrox Primary School*
 - *Heather Young, Senior Health Promotion Officer, NHS Fife*
- 10:50 Facilitated discussion groups comparing and contrasting the main case study messages with views and experiences in other communities
- 11:30 Feedback session, exploring main issues and identifying consistent themes with a panel including the above four case study participants
- 12:15 Summary and what next
Andy Milne, Chief Executive, SURF
- 12:30 Close of event followed by networking lunch

4 Main shared messages from the two case studies

4.1 False economies – the reverse of preventative spend

There is a disproportionately negative impact on disadvantaged communities from the effect of relatively minor centralised ‘savings’ in basic physical maintenance regimes. Examples given included reductions in arrangements for grass cutting, litter and refuse collection, fence and road mending, lighting and landscaping. There was a perception of negative impacts on performance from the ‘contracting out’ of such services.

The resultant decline in physical appearance was seen to have damaged internal and external perceptions of place and people. It was noted that such decline repels the prospect of new external investments and undermines existing ones. It also erodes community resilience and residents personal investment at a time of increased local social and economic pressures.

4.2 Blocked systems – stymied aspirations

Despite initial media speculation on a ‘white collar recession’, the reality is that residents of disadvantaged areas have been particularly affected by stagnation in the employment market. This has had the effect of blocking off opportunities for young people and others seeking employment, training and further education. In addition to the thwarting of individual hopes and ambitions, the stagnation has also built up pressure on local employment support organisations; threatening their business plans, future sustainability and therefore their ability to deliver an increasingly important local service. Within this blocked system there was evidence of the continuing additional difficulties faced by minority groups and people with particular needs who continue to suffer from negative discrimination in accessing what limited opportunities still exist.

The same blockage phenomenon is evident with regard to local housing where those who have bought find they can’t sell. The lack of lending and capital means that there is little new house building for rent or sale. The resultant stagnation has halted plans for supporting the greater local economic diversification intended to support wider regeneration agendas. It also locks young people out and confines growing children and families into inadequate accommodation with obvious wider negative effects.

There was evidence that some householders who cannot sell go on to rent out their properties to individuals with no long-term commitment to the area or understanding of their community responsibilities. This was said to be a significant factor in local decline of the community. It was noted that this tended to be an especially rapid process in blocks of flats and one which can instigate a highly damaging ‘domino’ effect over the surrounding streets and then the wider community.

4.3 Fractured plans – lost investments

Regeneration partners have long been urged to work together for a 'joined up approach' to plans and investments. The prolonged stalling of private sector physical development investment is seen to be resulting in the fracturing and failure of previously agreed regeneration strategies and master-plans. This is especially the case in disadvantaged areas which are most vulnerable in the current recession to the 'flight to prime' of both private and public investments.

The effect is to leave existing regeneration related investments isolated and therefore economically unsustainable. Long term derelict land and empty or underused buildings produce further erosion of local image and investment confidence as referred to in point 4.1 above. There is also evidence of postponed or abandon private sector investment resulting in the loss of anticipated community benefits in terms of facilities and resources previously negotiated via formal and informal planning consultation processes.

4.4 Small cuts - reverse empowerment

Disadvantaged communities often have responsive internal support networks based on social connections, projects and services developed over time in response to local needs and conditions. The Scottish Government is increasingly interested in the possibility of building on this network of activity to deliver greater community empowerment. This is currently being promoted as a potentially vital alternative source of community regeneration in the face of reduced external investment.

Evidence from the case studies indicates that cuts in relatively small scale grants and contracts provided to local services and social enterprises are undermining the basis for community empowerment as a way out of the currently accelerated cycle of decline in disadvantaged areas. The loss of capacity in local support organisations cuts off two-way partnership activity pipelines at the local level. It also damages prospects for services, opportunities, vitality, and social cohesion at a time of higher stresses within disadvantaged communities, homes and individuals. This is seen as the opposite of the 'preventative spend' approach, which was recently vaunted by the Scottish Government in its September 2011 Spending Review.

4.5 Sense of abandonment – or all boats falling?

Beyond the issue of adequately resourcing and delivering basic public services, there is perceived to have been a general shift away from investment in broad-based support for long-standing economically disadvantaged communities. There was some evidence of communities feeling somewhat abandoned as the focus, and dedicated support resources, for disadvantaged areas is seen to diminish in the recession while national economic pressures on jobs and services increase local difficulties and demands.

It was noted that, for reasons of cost efficiency, locally developed and valued services are being spread increasingly thinly across wider geographies, resulting in loss of local service impact and ownership. In this context, there was some concern that what is seen as continuing and necessary limited and targeted investment in specific thematic groups – who still suffer discrimination and disadvantage on a wider and more dispersed geography – could appear divisive to some in contrast to the draining away of broader support for the more general local population.

End of main paper; appendices follow

Appendix A Additional information on case study interviews

The following interviews were conducted by SURF as part of this initial stage of the case study process focusing on the impact of recession-based policy decisions on two disadvantaged communities:

East Govan, Glasgow

- 1 First east Govan case study scoping meeting with Tommy Docherty (Chief Executive), Susan Boath (Contracts Manager) and Mary-Theresa Smith (Head of Employability) of Glasgow's Regeneration Agency on 13.10.11
- 2 Second east Govan case study meeting with Hazel Young of Glasgow Housing Association and Tommy Docherty & Susan Boath from Glasgow's Regeneration Agency on 20.10.11
- 3 Meeting with nine local unemployed youths (aged 16-18) who are participating in a 'Get Ready for Work' employability programme at Hills Trust Learning Academy in Govan and support worker Christina MacKay (Youth Placement Officer) from Glasgow's Regeneration Agency
- 4 Meeting with community representatives Esmee Clark, Alice Connelly, Elizabeth Neilson and Ellen Turner from the South West Glasgow Community Reference Group, and support workers Julie MacLoed and Clare Robertson (Community Action Officers) from Glasgow Life
- 5 Meeting with Mark McAllister (Community Engagement Manager) from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board on 08.11.11
- 6 Telephone interview with Prince Emeka Ikemere (Treasurer) from the Glasgow Ethnic Minority Association on 08.11.11

- 7 Telephone interview with Hariette Campbell (Chair) from the African Caribbean Women's Association on 07.11.11
- 8 Meeting with Cheryl McFadyen (Headteacher) from Ibrox Primary School on 09.11.11

Additional statistical research for use in this case study is being provided by representatives of the GoWell project in Glasgow's Centre for Population Health and the University of Glasgow.

Gallatown (pronounced Galton), Kirkcaldy

- 1 First Gallatown case study scoping meeting with Robert McGregor (Sustainable Communities Programme Manager) and Danny Cepok (Community Planning Officer) of Fife Council on 05.10.11
- 2 Meeting with Fife Council officers Julie Dickson (Community Learning and Development Team Leader) and Kevin Robertson (Kirkcaldy Area Locality Support Team) on 10.10.11
- 3 Meeting with Julie Anderson (Headteacher) from Pathhead Primary School in Gallatown on 10.10.11
- 4 Gallatown-focused group discussion on 14.10.11 with the following participants
 - o Jackie Barbour, NHS Fife
 - o Shanana Beattie, Kirkcaldy Free Church
 - o Alistair Buack, Fife Council (community development)
 - o Danny Cepok, Fife Council (community planning)
 - o Liz Easton, Kirkcaldy YMCA
 - o Gillian Grieg, Gallatown East & Sinclairtown Tenants & Residents Association
 - o Ken Halley, Fife Council (community planning)
 - o Gareth Henderson, Fife Police
 - o George McGregor, local resident
 - o Karen McGregor, Gallatown East & Sinclairtown Tenants & Residents Association
 - o Morag Paterson, Fife Council (community planning)
 - o Carlyn Thomas, Fife Council (housing)
 - o Andrew Walker, Fife Council
 - o Callum, local schoolboy
- 5 Tour of Gallatown community with Karen McGregor (Chair) and Gillian Greig (Member) from Gallatown East and Sinclairtown Tenants and Resident Association on 02.11.11

Additional statistical research for use in this case study is being provided by the KnowFife research team within Fife Council.

East Govan

The history of Govan dates back to an early monastery founded by Constantine around 565 AD. In the middle ages, Govan was primarily an agricultural village, but in the 16th century Govan's flourishing industries grew rapidly. By the 18th century, Govan was known for its handloom weaving industry along with the associated skills of bleaching, dying and spinning.

In 1759, the Clyde Navigation Act was passed due to the increase in trade with the Americas. Exploiting the natural resources of the river, Govan grew steadily from then on. The population grew from 2,500 in the early 19th century to over 90,000 a century later. The main contributors were the rise of the shipbuilding industry and increased immigration from Ireland and the Scottish highlands.

Changing economic conditions after 1945 led to a dramatic decline in shipbuilding. Many of the yards were forced to close and today only one remains operative. Sharp industrial decline and changing economic conditions have put great strain on the social fabric of Govan, but there have been efforts to restore the area to its former significance.

Govan has a current population of just over 30,000. The smaller area of east Govan includes part of central Govan, Drumoyne and Ibrox.

Deprivation: The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland. It combines 38 indicators across 7 domains; income, employment, health, education, skills and training, housing, geographic access and crime. Most areas of east Govan are in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland, with Ibrox and parts of central Govan falling into the 5% most deprived areas.

Housing: In 2009, 41% of Govan dwellings were owner-occupied while 43% were rented from social landlords. 79% of the total population reside in flats. Housing design is varied, and includes post-war tenements and three storey concrete structures of non-traditional design.

Employment: In 2009, the unemployment rate in Govan was at 6.2%, which was above the then Scottish average of 5.4%.

Health: According to an NHS constituency and wellbeing profile for Govan, male life expectancy (69.8 years), the proportion of the population unable to work through disability/illness (15.4%), and smoking prevalence (41.2%) all compare significantly worse than the Scottish average.

Gallatown

The largest town in Fife is Kirkcaldy, which has a population of approximately 48K. It has a rich heritage, first appearing in recorded history in 1075. Its historic growth was mainly due to its sheltered port in the Firth of Forth, which supported a sizeable fishing fleet. In the 18th century, coal mining, salt, linen and floor cloth production were the main industries.

In 1846, Gallatown was a village in the Parish of Dysart, a district of Kirkcaldy. The inhabitants were formerly engaged in the manufacture of nails and following the decline of that trade, the population found employment in weaving, agriculture, and mining.

Throughout the 20th century, Kirkcaldy continued to grow, reaching a population of nearly 50K by 1951. The subsequent decline of linoleum production in the mid-1960s and mining in the 1980s saw the population dip from a peak of 54K in 1961 to its present total of around 48K.

Deprivation: According to SIMD statistics, Gallatown is in the top 5% of most deprived communities in Scotland.

Housing: The community of Gallatown currently consists of approximately 650 residents in 350 housing units. The majority of housing are flats and maisonettes (4 in a block); 50% of households are owner-occupied. The housing construction is generally sound, however a high number of the population live within 500m of derelict sites.

Employment: Gallatown is in an area with high unemployment. Kirkcaldy East has, however, been recognised as one of Fife's strategic development areas and is a target for dedicated employability improvements.

Health: The 2010 Health and Wellbeing Profile puts Gallatown in the top 5% statistically worst performing communities in Scotland. Gallatown residents typically face illnesses relating to diet, exercise and negative health behaviours. Life expectancy for males in the community is 70.9 years old; statistically, significantly worse than the Scottish average of 74.5. Early deaths from coronary heart disease also compare unfavourably with the Scottish average.

End of briefing paper

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