Community-Led Regeneration: A Review of Literature
The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last 15 years, there has been a shift in urban regeneration policy to include the ‘community’ as central actors in the process. The Scottish Government at the national and local level have incorporated the community in regeneration through the three social policy frameworks which guide the Scottish Government - Equally Well, Achieving Our Potential and the Early Years framework. In addition, community engagement in regeneration is guided by the ten National Standards for Community Engagement which have as their founding principles a conviction that empowering individuals, communities and families to take ownership of strategies to tackle the issues that affect them has far reaching benefits; from learning new skills, to building capacity and realising personal and shared aspirations. This report follows the Regeneration Discussion paper which identified ‘community-led’ as one of the three key themes which frame current thinking on regeneration.

Involving the Community in Urban Regeneration

The report discusses community participation, engagement and empowerment as important aspects of a ‘community-led’ approach to regeneration. These factors convey confusion with regard to terminology and the intended objectives of the growing shift to participatory democracy. There is ambiguity about the meanings of these different terms and also differences regarding the ultimate objectives of ‘participation’, ‘engagement’ and ‘empowerment’ and where ‘community-led’ sits on the spectrum. The devolution of responsibility for regeneration to the community and the individual has attracted critique from analysts who argue that poorer communities are disproportionately targeted by participatory initiatives and that such a focus raises questions of legitimacy for community-led approaches. Furthermore, criticisms have been levelled at community-led forms of regeneration which question the extent to which area-based initiatives can have any impact on inequalities which have regional, national and even global roots. There can be a tendency to romanticise the community as a homogenous entity with a shared vision, failing to recognise the diversity and power relations at work at the local scale. In addition, structural and socio-economic barriers exist which have the potential to distance individuals and groups from involvement in community-led regeneration. It is noted that these barriers are not uniform and instead are multi-faceted and fluid, with individuals and groups sometimes experiencing several overlapping identity barriers.

The Role of Social Governance

Consistently referenced by the literature is the complexity of governance structures and the speed with which these are relegated and replaced with a fresh, perplexing set of acronyms. In particular, issues around transparency and a lack of knowledge regarding who is responsible for what are mentioned. This has a particular influence in disadvantaged areas whereby people must navigate the complex and often overwhelming system to fulfil needs. This complexity is also seen to be detrimental to smaller community-led groups who lack capacity to navigate, let alone influence, the systems. It is suggested that there has to be a better understanding among professionals that community members are often unpaid, and using their own time, to engage with these structures. Furthermore, the level of formality was found to be off-putting: the language used, the meeting venues and the style of meetings were
all cited as key factors. Personal reasons, such as a lack of confidence, and practical reasons such as English language abilities, are also highlighted. Such issues interact with and compound socio-economic barriers mentioned above. Issues of accountability and representativeness are consistently highlighted. The “catch-22” of participation is an enduring theme surrounding questions about how fully the existing power structures are changed through community-led regeneration, with successive studies claiming that it is the most visible, vocal, wealthiest and most articulate members of communities who become involved, compounding the marginalisation of hard-to-reach groups.

The selection of participants by governance partners emerges as a contributor to this - with self-selection, cherry picking and linked involvement from another community group becoming key factors in deterring wider participation. As once “hard-to-reach” groups become more involved in the structures of governance through acquiring social capital, rather than being celebrated as success stories, they become charged with being the “usual suspects” and not “authentic”.

Issues of overburdening and overreliance on those involved in community-led regeneration is a key theme. The relative accessibility of active community members to their communities means that they are not protected from backlash by the buffer of professional affiliation and office hours. The literature also makes reference to the notion that communities already participate in various ways in their areas informally—through book clubs, fitness classes and so on. Therefore, rather than trying to mould citizens to fit into participation, participation should be moulded to fit everyday practices.

Models of Community-led Regeneration in its Widest Context

Within the literature, there is a widely acknowledged need for ‘holistic’ intervention in regeneration, an approach which connects the social, economic and physical signifiers of deprivation. Historically, there has been a disproportionate focus on physical intervention with detrimental consequences for the ‘soft’ outcomes of social and economic development. The literature, therefore, highlights support for a holistic, coherent approach to regeneration which can produce interrelated benefits.

Underpinning this ‘holistic’ approach to regeneration is the notion of sustainability; an understanding that an exclusive focus on physical intervention which, despite producing visible changes in areas, is unlikely to create lasting change. Drawing from case study examples which look at innovative models of community-led regeneration, such as community asset ownership, participatory budgeting, social enterprises and grassroots projects, the report highlights some key points for consideration. Primarily, the radical roots of successful projects highlights the issues with transferring and attempting to implement such programmes in a top-down way. The case studies highlight the need for holistic approaches to regeneration which do not focus solely on the physical manifestations of deprivation. Furthermore, the importance of understanding that success was developed in a particular context is exemplified. As such, transferring programmes in a one-size fits-all way is therefore unlikely to provide the same results. The necessity of adopting appropriate timescales emerged as a key factor in the success of community-led approaches.
The role of key individuals and groups in stimulating community-led approaches also emerged as an important point for consideration.

**Community-led Regeneration in Practice**

Looking at the case studies of the St Peter’s Partnerships in Tameside; the Blacon Community Trust in Chester; the Cranhill Community Project in Glasgow and the Equally Well Test site in Govanhill, Glasgow, the evidence highlights the diversity in approaches to regeneration involving the community both in a leading role and as equal partners. The example of the Govanhill Equally Well test site was included to present an example in which the levels of deprivation in the area are too severe for the community to tackle without the presence of local service providers as equal partners. This links into the theme that neither the state nor the community should have the sole responsibility for tackling severe deprivation.

Each case-study, however, has specific contextual factors that have contributed heavily to their outcomes (for example, strong leadership, past experience and community dynamics). This reiterates the issues with transferability and ‘scaling-up’. These examples are bespoke to their contexts and therefore there must be some provision for flexibility at the local level to enable community-led programmes to respond to their contexts. Such examples provide stimulating narratives to the community advancing regeneration which have the potential to inspire change in other areas.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Scottish government defines regeneration as ‘the holistic process of reversing the economic, social and physical decline of places where market forces alone will not suffice’ (Scottish Government, 2011). The 2011 Scottish Government Regeneration Discussion Paper identified three key themes which frame current regeneration debates - funding development and infrastructure, community-led regeneration and tackling area-based deprivation. This report reviews existing literature on community-led approaches to urban regeneration. Primarily, the core of the review is on UK literature with an exclusively urban focus unless otherwise stated. The review was conducted for Communities Analytical Services (CAS) as the result of a three month joint Scottish Government and ESRC-funded research internship. Given the broad scope of the themes explored and the relatively short timescale, this report does not claim to be a definitive literature review on the issues surrounding community-led regeneration. However, it aims to provide a succinct overview of the key issues.

Background and Context

1.2 In the last 15 years there has been a discernible shift in urban regeneration policy; a ‘turn to the community’, whereby the role of communities in the regeneration process has become progressively central (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997). It has become generally accepted that traditional ‘top-down’ prescriptive models of urban development are insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of the community and, very often, are unsuccessful. It is now acknowledged that without community engagement and participation through support and initiative, effective regeneration is difficult, if not impossible (Adamson, 2010). As Duncan and Thomas (2000:4) outline:

- Proposals should be developed, wherever possible, by communities themselves;
- They should be encouraged to take the lead, involving local authorities, statutory agencies and other stakeholders in community-led partnerships;
- These will inevitably take longer to develop and carry a higher risk so communities will require the financial and technical resources to support and manage the process;
- Mainstream policies and programmes will have to acquire much more flexibility, ‘bending’ to meet local circumstances;
- Implementation will require a 10-year timescale within which to achieve results;
- National and local political support and financial resources will have to be guaranteed for this 10-year period’.
1.3 Community-focussed policy is now applied to a wide range of policy areas including employment, health, crime reduction, education, local government services and regeneration. This concentration on community input has emerged under the premise that it has the potential to improve service delivery, invigorate local democracy and enhance local government accountability (Foley and Martin, 2000).

1.4 The Scottish Government, at the national and local level, recognise that facilitating community empowerment can result in positive outcomes, dynamic local democracy and improved quality of life (Findlay, 2010). The three Scottish Government social policy frameworks - Equally Well, Achieving Our Potential and the Early Years framework - each have as their founding principles a conviction that empowering individuals, communities and families to take ownership of strategies to tackle the issues that affect them has far reaching benefits; from learning new skills, to building capacity and realising personal and shared aspirations. In May 2005, the Scottish Government demonstrated its commitment to ‘people having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services’ through the ten National Standards for Community Engagement:

- **INVOLVEMENT**: we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
- **SUPPORT**: we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
- **PLANNING**: we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- **METHODS**: we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
- **WORKING TOGETHER**: we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
- **SHARING INFORMATION**: we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
- **WORKING WITH OTHERS**: we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
- **IMPROVEMENT**: we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
- **FEEDBACK**: we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
- **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**: we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement (Scottish Government, 2010).
1.5 The standards establish ‘best practice’ principles for government agencies, councils, health-boards, police and other public bodies in engaging with communities. The standards are ‘not compulsory’ but instead provide ‘good practice and can help deliver the outcomes we wish to achieve’ (Scottish Government, 2010).

1.6 In March 2009, the Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and the third sector, launched the Community Empowerment Action Plan to encourage local people to participate in running their neighbourhoods. The Action Plan describes Community Empowerment as a process whereby ‘people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them’. The plan emphasises that community empowerment cannot be handed to local people. Local people must decide themselves the level of empowerment they want and how they will get there (Scottish Government, 2009).

1.7 With the strain of the economic downturn being felt on public spending, there is a more acute emphasis on the contribution that can be made by community-led regeneration and neighbourhood level initiatives (Arnold, 2009). During the 2010 UK elections, all parties underscored the importance of empowering communities, redistributing power and nurturing ‘bottom-up’ approaches to service delivery. This is particularly evident in the UK coalition’s focus on building the ‘Big Society’. At the time of writing this report, the manifesto stance of the Scottish parties on the issues surrounding ‘community-led’ regeneration remains to be seen. Already, there have been numerous major changes to the policy and funding environment for regeneration in recent years. As stated in the Regeneration Discussion paper (2011: 4), ‘the economic crisis and recession, the Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government, social policy frameworks and the changed role of Scottish Enterprise have all had a considerable impact on previous models of regeneration’. The future of regeneration policy takes place in an environment of limited resources and a tight fiscal climate. That said, this report is well-positioned to discuss the challenges and opportunities of community-led approaches to regeneration in tough economic times.

1.8 Fyfe (2009) has traced a long history of geographically focussed programmes to regenerate deprived areas in Scotland. Yet, in some areas, such as Glasgow’s East End, multiple deprivation persists. The geographical area-based focus of regeneration has been the target of significant critique. With some deprived areas having been the focus of successive regeneration programmes, questions have been raised as to whether such policies have had any real impact on the targeted areas. It is understood that many issues are generational and as a result will not be resolved in the short-term. Furthermore, critiques focus on the notion that structural inequalities become embedded locally (Shaw and Robinson, 2010). There is an understanding that locally-focussed regeneration programmes alone will not fully address the issues faced by individuals and families living in deprived areas in Scotland (Fyfe, 2009). As such, it has been suggested that cosmetically addressing the outcomes of these structural inequalities locally does not address the root
causes which occur at regional, national, and even international scales, and is unlikely to result in sustainable urban regeneration.

**Structure of the Report**

1.9 The report therefore offers a review of current literature on community-led regeneration. It aims to assemble a coherent review of current knowledge and practice as well as offering examples of promising innovations in this field. It is hoped that the report will serve as a catalyst in opening up wider debate on community-led regeneration and pose questions for wider consideration. The report is structured as follows;

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of what is already known regarding some of the main issues which constitute community-led approaches to regeneration, with an explicit focus on community engagement, community empowerment and community participation.

- Chapter 3 investigates the role of social governance in facilitating or restricting community activity in regeneration.

- Chapter 4 provides an overview of existing mechanisms and delivery models to promote community activity within area regeneration in its widest context.

- Chapter 5 provides evidence of existing practice of community-led regeneration with case-studies from around the UK.
2 INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN URBAN REGENERATION

The Rise of the ‘Community’ in Regeneration Policy

2.1 In 1960s and 1970s Britain, regeneration policy involved residents of disadvantaged areas as the subjects of regeneration (Dargan, 2009); a force that was done to communities by urban professionals. Originally conceived as a radical alternative to this top-down, hegemonic developing force, involving the community has moved from the margins to occupy a central position in urban development policy. The rhetoric of ‘participation’ and ‘engagement’ are entwined in most, if not all, policies regarding regeneration and housing and governance more generally, promising to bring a myriad of benefits such as increased efficiency, sustainability and empowerment (Jones, 2003). In the UK, the landscape of service provision has been flooded with new modes, methods and structures to promote participation in the governance of services such as economic regeneration, health and housing (Skidmore et al, 2006). This chapter will provide an overview of some of the main facets of community-led regeneration. Primarily, a summary of existing knowledge of ‘community participation’, ‘community engagement’ and ‘community empowerment’ will be presented. Subsequently, reference will be made to the structural barriers and obstacles that impede community involvement in regeneration.

Issues with a Lack of Definitive Vocabulary

2.2 There is confusion around the terminology used to describe community-led approaches to and the intended objectives of the growing shift to participatory democracy (Bailey, 2010). Participation, engagement and empowerment are often used interchangeably, confusing the original meanings and objectives. While each reference acknowledges that communities should contribute local knowledge to decision-making, each have different objectives with regard to the transfer of power to the community (Bailey, 2010). As well as this ambiguity about the meanings, there are differences regarding the ultimate objective of each. Bailey (2010) identifies five core, but not comprehensive, objectives;

• To provide information and to enable people to express opinions about policies which will affect them;
• To improve the quality of local decision-making by drawing on tacit knowledge;
• To improve the quality and responsiveness of local services by engaging users in management decisions;
• To re-engage local people with local democratic processes and renew civic society; and
• To transfer to residents and recipients direct or indirect powers to manage assets or deliver services for themselves. (Bailey, 2010: 318).
2.3 Models which develop the notion of a continuum of participation provide useful conceptual tools in understanding different levels of community involvement. The ‘ladder of participation’ by Sherry Arnstein (1971) (Figure 1) is a seminal example of this - highlighting the continuum of participation; from the lower rungs of non-participation to the higher rungs which culminate in citizen control. Of these three terms, engagement would sit lowest on the ladder, followed by participation and then community-led; genuine community-led participation would occupy the highest rungs of delegated power and citizen control. This tool, although relatively dated in discussions of participation, provides a starting point in separating the vocabulary and objectives of ‘engagement’ and ‘community-led’.

![Figure 1: Conceptual diagram of the Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1971)](image)

**Community Engagement**

2.4 In recent decades, social scientists, politicians and analysts have cited falling levels of community engagement as an issue for concern (Rogers and Robinson, 2004). Community engagement has become fundamental to the process of regeneration. Regeneration was one of the earliest policy areas in the UK to record a shift in emphasis towards community engagement (Lawson and Kearns, 2010). Rogers and Robinson (2004: 2) understand community engagement as ‘the opportunity, capacity and willingness of individuals to work collectively to shape public life’ (Rogers and Robinson, 2004: 2). Engagement has ‘become the sine qua non of public policy in the UK in recent years, especially under the New Labour Governments since 1997 [chiming] with ‘third way’ ideology’ (Lawson and Kearns, 2010: 19).

2.5 Fyfe (2009) highlights that community engagement has been a central facet of the approach to geographically focused programmes to tackle deprivation in Scotland. For example, community engagement occupied a central position in the New Life for Urban Scotland initiative (1989-1999). Lessons from this initiative highlighted, however, the need for a greater degree of consideration to be given to the nurturing of relationships between organisations and communities to enable the effective transfer of local knowledge held by communities and development skills held by organisations (Dodds, 2011).
Again, there is an inherent understanding that involving communities in the regeneration process would generate policy which is more sensitive and responsive to the needs of the community and consequently, more likely to be successful. As Adamson (2010) reiterates, active neighbourhood engagement and participation is essential for the successful regeneration of deprived areas.

2.6 While many argue that the successes of engagement initiatives are difficult to measure empirically, some studies suggest that reviews of major regeneration activity has demonstrated the value of community engagement. For example, a comprehensive review carried out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (SQW Consulting, 2005) analysed whether community involvement in service provision in deprived neighbourhoods results in better outcomes. The report concludes that the benefits of community involvement outweigh the costs, outlining a number of feedbacks such as:

- Provides better local knowledge;
- Benefits users' access to services;
- Increases awareness of the potential for joined up solutions among service providers;
- Enhances the motivation of front line staff; and
- Encourages innovation in service design and delivery.

2.7 These benefits have the capacity to lead to new and improved service provision for communities targeted by regeneration initiatives (Findlay, 2010). Engagement is central to notions of ‘good governance’, the involvement of residents resulting in ‘better decisions’ or ‘decisions [that] are more likely to be effective and… accorded legitimacy’ (Lawson and Kearns, 2010: 20). Moreover, community engagement has the potential to contribute to processes of civic renewal - fostering trust, teaching skills and empowering those engaged (Rogers and Robinson, 2004). Empowerment through engagement is premised on the idea that allowing individuals and groups more influence in policy will be empowering through fostering the feeling that they have had some influence on the decisions made and the outcomes generated. Furthermore, the Home Office systematic review (Burton et al, 2004) references positive outcomes of community engagement with relation to reducing social exclusion, increasing social capital and social cohesion and contributing to active citizenship. In order to achieve successful outcomes, O'hare (2010:34) suggests that community engagement requires a:

‘triad of qualities, namely: resources to enable empowerment, such as political and legal rights, funding, and the social capacity required to create mobilisation networks; opportunities, such as those provided by institutional arrangements, for example, decentralisation; and finally, the motivations for people to exert their rights’.
2.8 Community engagement has not escaped criticism. Indeed, many of the criticisms levelled at community engagement overlap those advanced with reference to community participation, discussed in the next section. It has been argued that despite common sense cases being made for engagement, the evidence base does not support this uncritical faith in engagement with mixed outcomes having been reported. This suggests that, visible, quantifiable causal benefits are not easily recorded (Lawson and Kearns, 2010). Furthermore, it has been suggested by critical analysts of community engagement that the practice masks the increasing ‘responsibilisation’ of communities, an example of the state pushing responsibilities onto communities who are increasingly expected to take charge of their surroundings (Lawson and Kearns, 2010).

Community Participation

2.9 The literature surrounding ‘community participation’ discusses extensively the notion that the term is difficult to define in any definitive way. The term is understood and invoked differently by numerous statutory bodies as well as individuals within these bodies, some with conflicting ideologies (Morris, 2006). The ability of ‘participation’ to service a multitude of actors (politicians, civil-society organisations, NGOs to name a few) has caused some commentators to suggest that participation has become an ‘inherently malleable term’ (Cornwall, 2006: 63), meaning different things to different groups and consequently flouting any single, concrete definition. As Cornwall and Brock (2005: 1056) suggest, this ability of participation to mean all things to all groups allows the term to ‘shelter multiple meanings makes them politically expedient, shielding those who use them from attack by lending the possibility of common meaning to extremely disparate actors’. Morris (2000) suggests that this makes it difficult for organisations to work with one another and with communities given the variations in understanding. The ability of participation to embody multiple meanings has created a situation whereby participation has become an unquestionable good, ‘morally appealing’ and ‘politically acceptable’ (Green, 2000: 70), an ‘act of faith’ (Cleaver, 1999: 579) that is rarely questioned.

2.10 The benefits associated with community participation are extensive, some would argue comprehensive. Following decades of professional or state-led interventions, it is understood that the community holds an important knowledge resource which, if harnessed, will lead to improved and more responsive services. This shift is based upon the simple premise that the community know best about their own challenges, thus allowing policy-makers to better achieve policy goals (Skidmore et al, 2006; Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Rydin and Pennington, 2000). Furthermore, community participation is seen to address the democratic deficit in the UK, engaging communities in politics and the domestic process as well as building social capital (Skidmore et al, 2006: vii). Further to these direct outcomes of participation, numerous indirect social goods have been documented as having their roots in active community participation. Several authors have noted the health benefits associated with increased participation such as lower reported instances of ill-health and decreased rates of smoking. In the
planning of local development, community participation has reportedly led to more efficient, cost-effective measures (Cleaver, 1999). Finally, involving the community throughout the planning and implementation of urban development programmes results in an increased sense of ownership of the project (Maguire and Truscott, 2006). Without effective participation, many have argued that urban regeneration is made more challenging, if not impossible to achieve (Werlin, 1999).

2.11 Participation can be seen as a means or as an end (Parfitt, 2004). As a means, it has the potential to affect the success of a project. Participation is regarded here as an efficiency tool, an exercise for improving the provision of services. Within this ‘efficiency model’, the community is not involved in the inception of the development project, but are consulted at the latter stages to provide a justification for the project or to help implement it. Participation under the banner of the ‘efficiency model’ is open to charges of tokenism; using the rhetoric of community participation, but continuing with ‘business as usual’. Alternatively, participation can also be understood as an end in itself. This is often referred to as the ‘equity model’. The equity model understands participation as a ‘self-generating activity’: one that has an educational effect and aids in the creation of self-reliant and cooperative communities (Nientied et al, 1986). As an end, it is surmised that ‘people have a right and duty to participate in projects that affect their lives’ (Nientied et al, 1986: 43).

2.12 While the ‘turn to the community’ (Duffy and Huchinson, 1997), and the increased focus on the involvement of communities in finding solutions to the challenges that affect their lives is laudable, it is not without critique. Researchers have offered highly critical accounts of a range of participation initiatives which expose the power imbalances that exist between participants, the co-option and de-politicisation of radical groups, cost-shifting and continuing centralisation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Morris, 2006: 297). Taylor (2000) directs attention to consecutive studies of community participation projects that highlight the pervasive power imbalances between communities and their partners with communities continuing to occupy the position of ‘peripheral insiders’, invited to sit at the table but still unable to enjoy any real influence (Jones, 2000: 582).

Empowerment

2.13 While community engagement and participation refers to the involvement of the community and service users in a collaborative approach to regeneration over a long timescale, empowerment goes further than these terms as it refers to the transfer and decentring of power in decision-making to individuals and groups involved (Bailey, 2010). The transfer of power can theoretically occur at a number of scales from individuals learning new skills or relative power over one another, groups in their increased influence over the structures of decision-making and the relinquishment of power of organisations involved in partnerships (Bailey, 2010). Like that of participation and engagement, empowerment has become increasingly popular in recent years, for the most part becoming a largely unquestioned goal (Sharp et al, 2003). Defining what is meant by empowerment or how it is to be achieved is a rather more complex and contested space. Is empowerment a process or
an end point and what exactly are empowered individuals or groups expected to do once they have been empowered? The Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed the following definition: ‘Community empowerment is a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them.’ (CEAP, 2009:8). However, in a review of UK regeneration, Tallon (2010) makes reference to the challenges implicit in empowering communities, namely, ‘that there is a danger of romanticising community engagement and empowerment, overlooking the tensions and conflicts within communities, the tendency for burn-out because of demands of successive initiatives and the challenges that face the communities involved’ (cited in Dodds, 2011: 16).

Issues with Targeting Participatory Methods in Disadvantaged Areas

2.14 The increasing focus on community participation, engagement and empowerment in regeneration policy, devolving the responsibility for welfare provision to local, community and individual levels is seen by some critics as a problematic concept (Taylor, 2007). It has been documented in the literature that this focus on the community can be regarded as a technique utilised by government to transfer the responsibilities, and the costs, of the state onto the individual or the community, consequently allowing the state exemption in addressing inequalities (Taylor, 2007). Making communities increasingly responsible for challenging their own exclusion, some suggest, can lead to the communities being held responsible for the existence of this exclusion; effectively recasting people living in disadvantage as not victims of, but causes of their own marginal socio-economic position. As one respondent in Taylor’s (2007) study articulated;

‘I think to say that a community that isn’t successful suffers from a lack of social capital is blaming the victim, saying that you’re not talking to each other enough, you’re not getting involved enough - well frankly, you shouldn’t be closing the hospital, pal’ (cited in Taylor, 2007: 305).

2.15 Such a statement links into the aforementioned issues with taking an overwhelmingly local approach to issues with regional, national and international roots. Additionally, the disproportionate concentration of geographically focussed regeneration initiatives imbued with the language of participation, engagement and empowerment on disadvantaged areas has caused critics to question why such communities are selected as targets for such interventions while their more affluent counterparts are not (Blakeley and Evans, 2008). In a study conducted by Maguire and Truscott (2006), this concentration of community-focused intervention of the poorest and most marginalised areas has led some to question whether ‘community’ is code for poor? While it is widely accepted that governments should not be solely responsible for service provision, it has been argued that equally, the most disadvantaged should not be charged with an overwhelming responsibility for providing their own service needs (Halpern et al, 2004; Maguire and Truscott, 2006). An uneven policy focus on disadvantaged groups could prove to be detrimental to the legitimacy of the process of community-led approaches to regeneration (Maguire and Truscott, 2006).
2.16 Related to this, the local area-focus of regeneration has been the target of significant criticism. Some deprived neighbourhoods have been the focus of several, sometimes decades worth, of regeneration intervention yet still continue to suffer from chronic social problems. Instead, the geographical concentration of wealth and poverty actually increased from 1970 to 2000 with little decrease since (Taylor, 2008). Critics argue that the reason for this is that structural inequalities have become embedded locally (Shaw and Robinson, 2010). As such, local, issue-driven responses are regarded as ‘shallow’ and ‘ephemeral’, only partially counteracting inequalities rooted in wider economic and social geographies, if at all (Gardner, 2007).

Issues with an Uncritical Focus on ‘the Community’

2.17 Furthermore, participatory approaches have been heavily criticised for an unproblematic use of the concept of ‘community’. Imagined notions of a homogenous and harmonious community with shared goals has been heavily critiqued (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Kesby, 2005; Mohan and Stokke, 2000). The ‘community’ can be seen as ‘the site of both solidarity and conflict, shifting alliances, power and social structures’ (Cleaver, 1999: 604). Although it is well documented in the context of regeneration that communities are diverse, complex and often include groups with competing interests; for the most part, they are defined spatially, as though living in the same neighbourhood is sufficient to ‘foster a sense of shared-ness – of community-among the people who live there’ (Dargan, 2009: 309). Indeed, one of the principle merits of involving a wide range of communities in decision-making is to take account of a diverse set of needs, challenges and opinions (Foot, 2009). As Foot (2009) suggests,

‘mobility, migration, and changes in housing tenure and employment patterns mean that neighbourhoods often contain varied demographic groups with different origins and interests…Increasingly, individuals have many possible points of identity e.g. they are both a person with a disability and a member of a minority ethnic group’.

2.18 At the same time, therefore, individuals can be included as members of several, fluid and overlapping ‘communities’.

2.19 Stemming from this recognition of the complexity and fluidity of communities, a concurrent theme in the literature surrounding community-led approaches is the question of who can provide a legitimate representation of the community. Critics suggest that often is it the ‘visible and vocal, wealthier, more articulated and educated groups that are allowed to be partners in development’, while more marginal groups remain silenced (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 45). This issue of ‘unrepresentativeness’ and ‘the usual suspects’ have the propensity to undermine the legitimacy of the process. As individuals become more imbued in governance, arguably as an outcome of empowerment and capacity building, they are charged with being ‘the usual suspects’ motivated to fulfill personal interest and unrepresentative of the ‘authentic’ community voice (Foot, 2009). This is often referred to as the ‘catch-22’ of participatory governance.
Moreover, the notion that the ‘community knows best’ has also attracted criticism from social analysts. ‘Local knowledge’ arguably has become uncritically celebrated within the discourse of participation (Hickley and Mohan, 2005). It has been suggested, as a result, that it is essential to recognise the limits of the community. The community ‘can produce a tyranny of the majority against minorities’ (Robinson and Shaw, 2000: 13). Local community interests can be ‘parochial, illiberal and ill-informed, inhibiting rather than facilitating social cohesion and wider regeneration’ (Gardner, 2007: 3). Such attitudes, formed through a range of structural factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and class as well as life experience and the local environment, can therefore run counter to equalities measures taken at city-wide and nationwide levels (Gardner, 2007). Local knowledge is therefore heavily embedded, and ‘local people tend to blame obvious proximal factors for difficulties and lack appreciation of wider issues and interconnections’ (Gardner, 2007: 4). It cannot be assumed therefore, that because community representatives can identify challenges, that they will unquestionably develop the best method to solve them.

**Barriers and Obstacles to Community Involvement**

2.21 As alluded to in the previous section, there are considerable differences in the ability of individuals and groups to access these new participation and engagement opportunities. Blake *et al* (2008) has summarised these barriers and obstacles to being heard as:

- **Practical** barriers such as lack of information and understanding of relevant decision-making processes, lack of transport to meetings and lack of childcare;

- **Personal** barriers such as lack of confidence and/or feelings of discomfort in formal meetings and/or difficulties in the use of English;

- **Socio-economic** barriers including the lack of rights for asylum seekers and the reality of refugees needing to have several jobs to try and support themselves and families back home;

- **Motivational** barriers such as scepticism as to whether improvement is likely to make any difference, cynicism as a result of previous negative experiences, or simply doubts as to whether the desired outcomes could be achieved via local structures of governance at all rather than via some other route (such as through the local MP); and

- **Barriers relating to legitimacy**, recognition and acceptance – recognition that is sometimes gained from established organisations or council officers and in other instances by the fact of moving from informal organisation towards formal constitution (Blake *et al*, 2008: 32).

2.22 These obstacles fall into two categories; 1) relating to structural, socio-economic factors; and 2) political structures and policy environments (Blakeley and Evans, 2008). The next section of the report will firstly concentrate on the structural socio-economic barriers and then in chapter three, focus on the barriers caused by the structure of governance. The
structural barriers discussed are faced by different groups. It must be noted, however, that often the barriers faced by individuals and communities are multi-faceted and fluid, often covering more than one of the following designations at the same time.

**Structural and Socio-economic Barriers**

**Age**

2.23 While the literature underscores the benefit of community involvement for both youths and elders, it was noted that typical community activists tend to be older individuals who have been residents in the area for some time (Fitzpatrick et al, 2000). In a study by Blake *et al* (2008), however, elderly people emerged as a group that were relatively isolated from engaging in community activity. Furthermore, it has been extensively noted that there is a deficit with regard to youth involvement in community forums (Lightfoot, 1990; Fitzpatrick *et al*, 2000). The primary barriers to the involvement of young people in community activity are identified as being largely structural (Blakeley and Evans, 2008). A high level of attention has been afforded to the lack of representation of young people in community forums, directly informed by concerns relating to the political position of youths and a need to stimulate ‘democratic renewal’ (Fitzpatrick *et al*, 2000).

**Homeownership, Income and Unemployment**

2.24 It has been widely recognised that access to financial resources have a significant influence on participation and engagement in community-led programmes. Financial resources provide individuals with the means to participate - for example having the ability to pay for childcare, accessing transport or being able to take time off of work (Torgerson, 2007). Furthermore, homeownership is widely acknowledged as influencing participation as it is suggested that individuals are motivated by the stake held in the area through owning a home. Studies show that homeowners have higher rates of participation (Verba *et al*, 1995), however, the impact of income is variable depending on contextual factors.

**Education, Attributes and Skills**

2.25 It has been suggested that confidence is a key barrier in individuals accessing governance. This attribute is necessary for public speaking and working with a diverse group of individuals (Rai, 2008). Furthermore, written and oral communication skills are essential in enabling individuals to participate successfully. Finally, Rai (2008) has suggested that engagement is not possible without any knowledge of local issues and some understanding of the structure of governance in their locality.

**Ethnicity, Immigration and Asylum**

2.26 The influence of ethnicity is well documented as a structural impediment to effective community involvement. In a recent study, Blake *et al* (2008: 32) found that recent migrants and immigrants struggled due to a:
'lack [of] information and understanding about structures and decision-making processes in a new local context, just as some may be settling into an alien environment with the added barrier of having to operate effectively in English'.

2.27 Moreover, the study found that often black and minority ethnic (BME) groups are crudely categorised, placing together groups that are less homogenous than imagined by policymakers and service providers. Finally, experience of racism and discrimination was recorded with more than three quarters of the BME women interviewed having experienced discrimination in some form. Such attitudes, including negative perceptions about their abilities, being undermined because of race, gender and faith stereotypes, and the persistent 'glass-ceiling', were seen to limit the opportunities of BME women in governance structures (Foot, 2009). Moreover, there is also an added hindrance if individuals are dealing with issues that are beyond the remit of local governance, such as immigration and asylum (Blake et al., 2008). For example, asylum seekers were identified as one of the most marginalised groups; not legally having the right to work or receive state services.

Gender

2.28 It has been well documented in feminist literature that time poverty is a key issue for women (Bryson, 2007; Blakely and Evans, 2008). Yet, it is also acknowledged that women undertake a greater burden of community activity (Blakely and Evans, 2008). This issue of ‘time poverty’ due to the increasing demands placed on individuals is consistently cited as a major impediment to participation. Family commitments and work were seen to take priority over participation (Rai, 2008). Disproportionately, women remained the primary caregivers for children, elderly and disabled family members and often played a central role in domestic life. As such, women have less time to engage in civic participation than males as they often had to organise replacement care before considering involvement. These challenges were not felt uniformly by all women and age, culture and ethnicity played a major role in the erection of such barriers (Rai, 2008).

Disability

2.29 In general, it has been suggested that people living with disability have less capacity to attract resources than other groups and although marginalised in multiple ways, are rarely identified in regeneration policies which aim to involve communities (Edwards, 2001). Living with disability often involves multiple, overlapping barriers. For example, Edwards (2001: 124) argues that

‘it is well documented that disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications, and nearly seven times as likely to be out of work and claiming benefits; the barriers they face in accessing and moving around the built environment are also manifestly apparent’.

2.30 It has been suggested that this marked absence of disabled groups may be traced to a common societal stereotype that disabled individuals lives revolve
around specific issues such as healthcare and social services and therefore unlikely to be involved personally in regeneration (Edwards, 2001).

**Cultural, Ideological and Faith Barriers**

2.31 Cultural factors have also been seen to impact on the involvement of women in regeneration. Cultural stereotyping was found by Rai (2008) to be a significant factor in blocking participation. For example, female participation among Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities was sometimes seen to be at odds with cultural norms, and resulting in women of such backgrounds being cast as passive and compliant (Rai, 2008). As one participant remarked;

‘Yes, there is racism! I may wear a headscarf, people think I’m thick, or incompetent, or oppressed, or all of these things. It’s people’s stereotypes! When you enter a room, the first thing they see is a headscarf and automatically make assumptions, and you have to work hard to break these down’ (cited in Rai, 2008: 29).

2.32 Similarly, some black women reported that stereotypical opinions of black women as being ‘demanding and overpowering’ were still prevalent (Rai, 2008: 29). Furthermore, cultural factors and community politics have also impacted on the ability of Asian women and certain faith groups to participate in governance. For example, patriarchal cultures have traditionally designated the political realm as the domain of males and the domestic realm as being women’s space, although it must be noted that this is being challenged internally, particularly by young Asian women (Rai, 2008). Related to this, mixed gender settings may provide a further barrier for women from certain cultural and faith groups (for example Muslim women).

**The Barriers Associated with a Focus on ‘Hard to Reach’ Groups**

2.33 A study conducted by Mathers et al (2008) highlighted the ‘survival strategies’ that are employed by residents living in deprived areas as a barrier to becoming involved in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) partnership. This study demonstrated the mistrust and avoidance of the state through public services which were seen to be interfering and/or threatening. This study put forward the notion that rather than lacking the capacity for civic engagement, some residents made a conscious decision to avoid engagement and participation as part of their survival strategies whereby it was essential to avoid interaction with the state. Mathers et al (2008) conducted research with young mothers, people on benefits and individuals engaged in criminal activity to support this study. The study found that such individuals did not become engaged in civic life as they feared the consequences of some state interventions such as having children put on the ‘at risk’ register, being arrested for criminal activity or losing benefits. The young mothers interviewed in the study commented that involvement with the state had involved contact with social services, health visitors, schools and social security and ‘consisted of these services telling them what to do, telling them that they were doing something wrong or trying to make them do something differently’ (Mathers et al, 2008: 598). Underpinning this contact was the underlying threat that being
seen to be unfit by any of these state contacts could ultimately result in having a child placed on the ‘at risk’ register or being taken into care.

2.34 Consequently, the women attempted to avoid contact with state services and as a result, avoided participation with the local NDC partnership. In addition, several studies have opened up the benefits issue as a barrier. The Mathers et al (2008) study highlighted that for many in so-called deprived areas, the benefits agency was a main, if not the only, source of contact with the state. It was felt that involvement in regeneration activity would expose benefit fraud activities and risk benefits as well as support and friendship from social networks. Furthermore, this observation is supported by Blakely and Evans (2008) who note that individuals were 'reluctant to get involved as even payment low enough not to affect benefits would still draw them into the bureaucratic, benefits quagmire' (Blakeley and Evans, 2008: 108).

Conclusion

2.35 This chapter has provided a brief summary of some of the key debates in the literature surrounding issues which constitute community-led approaches to regeneration, namely community participation, community engagement and community empowerment. The chapter has highlighted the lack of a definitive vocabulary, the issues with disproportionately focussing on disadvantaged communities for involvement in regeneration and the problem of treating the community as a homogenous entity and an uncritical appraisal of ‘community’ knowledge. The chapter made reference to the structural barriers which have the potential to present an obstacle for hard to reach groups to become involved in community-led regeneration. These barriers are referenced in the literature with regard to studies of specific contexts and programmes. As a result, they do not occur in every instance, nor do they occur in isolation from one another. Blake et al (2008) referred to a process of ‘super diversity’ in discussing the experiences of black and minority ethnic women’s experience with participation. Not only were women prevented from participation due to factors relating to their gender, for some, these merged with factors relating to ethnicity and culture. However, it must be reiterated that these barriers are specific to the context and, to the individual.
3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL GOVERNANCE IN FACILITATING OR OBSTRUCTING COMMUNITY-LED ACTIVITY

From ‘Government’ to ‘Governance’

3.1 The shift from a language of ‘government’ to a language of ‘governance’ heralds the introduction of new spaces and civil society groups into the traditional mechanisms of government. The ever-increasing focus on community participation and engagement in the decision-making and implementation of policies which affect their lives has been referred to as the ‘new localism’ in the UK (Gaventa, 2004). Proponents of the involvement of citizens in governance argue that citizen participation offers the prospect of an enriched and more vibrant local democracy, improving the lives of citizens and offering more pragmatic, responsive solutions to sustainable neighbourhood renewal (Barnes et al, 2008; Gaventa, 2004; Foot, 2009).

3.2 Alternatively, critics suggest that a move toward citizen-centred governance heralds the erosion of the constitutional system of representative democracy, diminishing the role of elected local government representatives and creating a messy patchwork of responsibility in which who is responsible for what is increasingly unclear. Citizen-centred governance is of particular relevance to individuals and groups living in disadvantaged areas. This is apparent in the rise of a multitude of policy prescriptions targeting ‘disadvantage’ specifically in the last ten years, placing additional strain on disadvantaged individuals and communities, while aiming to engage citizens in the shaping of regeneration at the urban governance level. As Rai (2008: viii) describes,

‘succesive government policies for neighbourhood and civil renewal, race equality and devolution have placed onus on local government (and indeed other public agencies) to adopt a participatory approach to service delivery and community development. A range of structures are in place, designed to engage citizens and communities in determining how and what services are delivered, and to promote citizen participation and equality in local democratic decision-making processes’.

3.3 This chapter will build upon the foundation created in chapter two, regarding the structural barriers and obstacles to citizen involvement, and focus on the role of social governance in facilitating and/or obstructing community-led activity.

Issues with the Structure and Prohibitive Culture of Governance

3.4 In a study of barriers to effective community engagement, Rai (2008) identified that rather than there being a dearth of opportunity to engage in governance, the most significant impediment was the prohibitive and burdensome culture of governance that deterred involvement. Recurring themes were seen to be complex, labyrinthine structures; excessive levels of bureaucracy; ineffective leadership; obtrusive red tape and overwhelming jargon. These hindrances to effective community-led approaches to regeneration will be explored further in this section.
3.5 The structure of governance is consistently identified as a key challenge in the success of community activity infiltrating governance. Blake et al (2008) found that ‘where structures had clear, coherent and consistent frameworks, community engagement tended to be experienced more positively’ (Blake et al, 2008: ix).

3.6 Governance structures under the continually evolving community involvement agenda has resulted in a myriad of initiatives and bodies to service this renewed focus. This is exemplified in a study undertaken by Barnes et al (2008) which identified in Birmingham, over 30 different governance structures, 650 individual bodies and 18 partnerships. It is essential to note, however, that English local government structures are different to those in Scotland. Although the opening up of government to new groups offers the opportunity for a more animated local democracy, it also leads to a higher degree of fragmentation whereby urban spaces are governed by a ‘patchwork quilt’ or ‘alphabet soup of acronyms’ alongside local authorities, NHS bodies, police authorities and so on (Foot, 2009; Barnes et al, 2008; Coaffee and Deas, 2008: 169). The fragmented nature of service provision and engagement programmes have led to confusion among communities regarding who exactly is responsible for what (Foot, 2009). As one participant in the Blake et al (2008) study claimed,

‘we have issues we don’t know who to report them to...there is a chronic and severe lack of information on how to engage. The problem is that we don’t have a map of decision-makers’ (Blake et al, 2008: 37).

3.7 Citizens have been noted to struggle when trying to contact and navigate, let alone influence, this complex patchwork of local governance (Foot, 2009). In disadvantaged areas, Foot (2009) suggests that people are ‘doubly disadvantaged’ as they must navigate the complex system of public services to fulfil pressing needs as well as to respond to the multitude of engagement initiatives that are directed specifically at them. Furthermore, this complexity and fragmentation is increasingly detrimental to smaller community-led groups. This is particularly pertinent when attempting to encourage community approaches to regeneration. As Taylor (2007) maintains in her study of an English New Deal for Communities area,

‘...complex application forms and the demands of monitoring in this and in the New Deal for Communities Initiative which followed it excluded smaller and less experienced groups from participating altogether - a perverse consequence for programmes which seek to put communities at the heart of proposals to turn around decades of neglect’ (Taylor, 2007: 204).

Patchwork Quilt of Governance: speed of change

3.8 In a similar vein, many commentators have pointed to the momentum of change in governance arrangements as a major stumbling block in engaging citizens in governance. This was referred to as a sweeping away of previous processes and entirely replacing them with a fresh, perplexing system or
process, once community representatives (and often officials) had just begun to comprehend the system in place (Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Foot, 2009; Ray et al, 2008; Blake et al, 2008). An important distinction was made, however, between the implications of a fast pace of change for communities and for officials: communities were using their free time to comprehend these ever-changing, intricate structures of governance. Maguire and Truscott (2006) support this in stating:

‘when people are using their valuable free time to grapple with complex procedures and understand the responsibilities implied by roles they take on in their communities, they need their knowledge to continue to be useful for some time without the language and rules changing drastically’ (Maguire and Truscott, 2006: 9).

3.9 This links into an important theme in the literature of an overburdening and overreliance on unpaid community members which is discussed later in this chapter.

3.10 Related to this increased level of fluidity and flux in governance structures is the notion that this complexity has a correspondingly detrimental impact on the level of transparency. This decreased transparency is believed to occur as the traditional roles performed by government officials and the community are now unclear. There is uncertainty with regard to where the ultimate authority for changes to services lie. Foot (2009) suggests,

‘there are no clear structures for mediating difference, there is disconnection from the council and other decision-makers, there is uncertainty regarding the role of local councillors and there is no overarching strategic approach’ (Foot, 2009).

Issues of Formality

3.11 Similarly, a theme which emerged regularly in the literature was the issue of a discouraging level of formality which some community members found foreboding. The styles of meeting and the venues used were reported as being factors in deterring people from engaging:

‘some said they did not feel able to attend meetings and groups because they did not know what to expect and felt intimidated by what they might find’ (Dinham, 2005:306).

3.12 The issue of language was often cited as an issue holding people back from engagement. The language used in meetings is usually English. This presents a practical barrier for recent immigrants and individuals who have not yet grasped the English language. More than this, however, reports of the use of perplexing jargon was often cited as a key factor in deterring people from becoming involved in the governance of their communities. Although the language may be English, it may be used in a way that is confusing to those coming into a bureaucratic environment from the outside. As one participant in the study by Blake et al (2008) commented, ‘the language used in meetings may be English. But if the business is conducted in a ‘lawyer’s language’ that
a layman would not understand, this is also alienating' (Blake et al, 2008: 32). This is relevant both in the context of immigration and migration. But it is also very important for ‘hard-to-reach’ groups and the issues surrounding skills and attributes discussed in chapter one. Put simply by Rai (2008):

‘few people willingly want to appear ‘stupid’ and be embarrassed unless they have a burning issue or are confident enough to participate despite potential information and knowledge gaps’ (Rai, 2008: 18).

3.13 The issue of confidence can, therefore, provide a major barrier to broader participation as individuals may find the environment and language used intimidating. This intimidation has the capacity to become transposed onto the officials working in these environments themselves, perpetuating a ‘them’ and ‘us’ relationship (Ellison and Ellison, 2006: 341; Rai, 2008:18).

Who Speaks for Whom? Issues of Accountability and ‘Representativeness’

3.14 In light of the issues discussed hitherto, several commentators in the literature have made reference to the need to properly address existing power relations. It has been suggested that it is not enough to simply open spaces for the community to participate, as these spaces may not change power alone. Rather, critical commentators on community participation have claimed that even when new groups enter participation spaces, it might be the case that their presence only serves to reinforce and reproduce existing power relations (Gaventa, 2004). Building upon themes explored in chapter two around the ‘catch-22’ of participation, there are consistent issues of representativeness and accountability; specifically, who provides an acceptable community representative to participate in governance (Foot, 2009)? Given the heterogeneity of communities, the question of representation immediately surfaces. There is recognition, as previously discussed, that certain individuals and groups face significant barriers in getting involved. Such studies have called into question participatory governance, charging it with ‘[reinforcing] the interests of the already powerful elites rather than advocating the needs to the less powerful’ (Korf, 2010: 712), casting doubt over the potential for any dramatic transformation of the governance landscape (Cleaver, 2005). Taylor (2003) refers to formal participation in governance structures as a ‘minority sport’, citing the following reasons as critical to stunting wider participation in governance;

- Newcomers lack the confidence to step into the roles of experienced community leaders;
- Sometimes participation spaces are dominated by cliques;
- The issue of apathy - people are generally willing to let a few individuals do the work;
- Community groups have a cyclical lifespan with initial enthusiasm difficult to sustain;
- Generally, people lack time and resources;
• Community leadership involves risks of exposure which are off-putting for many;
• There are often unrealistic expectations of community leaders;
• The overreliance on a few key members can lead to burnout;
• The usual suspects are often created by the system - timescales and structures.

The Role of Local Elites

3.15 Issues surrounding the domination of participation by a handful of powerful local elites is well documented in the literature. The selection of participants is often critiqued as a hindrance to wider involvement in the governance of places. New spaces of governance are sometimes referred to in the literature as ‘invited spaces’ (Cornwall, 2004), whereby citizens are invited to participate by the state into spaces that are ultimately created and defined by the state (Taylor, 2007). Building upon this idea of ‘invited’ spaces, Kothari (2001) suggests that until now, participation has been mediated through the existing power relations both within the community and more widely through the existing state/citizen relationship. As a result, there has arguably been a failure to fully address the issue that participation can be seen as another exercise of power in which participation maintains the interests of powerful elites, but repackages the process and outcomes as ‘community-led’.

3.16 The selection of citizens to participate in governance structures is often as the result of involvement with a community-based organisation (Gaventa, 2004). Community leaders may also enter governance spaces by self-selection (Taylor, 2003). And finally, leaders may take position as the result of co-option by councillors and other partners who effectively ‘cherry-pick’ citizens who are seen to be easy to work with (Gaventa, 2004). It has been suggested that people are chosen on the basis that they have been involved already and have established strong working relationships with the local council and the wider network of governance (Gaventa, 2004). As a result of such practice, representatives reinforce community governance structures and perpetuate the domination of the ‘usual suspects’ with individuals consequently excluded if seen as being difficult. As Coaffee and Healey exemplify,

‘it remains difficult [for community activists] to decide whether to get involved in these new discourses and practices and risk co-option, or whether to maintain a critical distance and capacity for alternative resistance strategies’ (cited in Taylor, 2007: 311).

3.17 Furthermore, practical issues to wider participation in governance emerges as a prominent feature in the literature. Logistical arrangements such as meeting times, the location of meetings and issues of childcare were all cited as barriers (Rai, 2008). Such factors can interact and compound structural barriers which influence the involvement of some groups. For example, day time meetings present particular issues for those in employment, whereas issues of travel and the location of venues was cited as an impediment for those using public transport (Rai, 2008). It is understood, however, that such
issues are often personal and as such cannot be alleviated in all cases. The fitting of citizen involvement in government into existing governance practices (for example making decisions based on the needs of paid professionals) was considered to be detrimental and intermingled with the practical issues referenced above.

The Potential Burden on Community Activists

3.18 Issues regarding the relative accessibility of community activists in their communities are reported. It was suggested that this meant that activists were held accountable for unpopular decisions or outcomes and, in some cases, were targeted with harassment when taking on a more prominent and visible role in the local area. It was noted that, unlike their professional counterparts, community members involved in governance do not enjoy the personal protection offered by an organisational affiliation with strict procedures for contact (i.e. secure offices and office hours). As a result, Maguire and Truscott (2006) make reference to participants in studies receiving phone calls on New Year’s Day, being victimised by defamation on the internet, being threatened in their homes, and being seen to have ‘changed sides’ (Robinson et al, 2005). As Taylor (2003: 193) highlights, participants are:

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‘caught in a no-man’s land where they are expected to represent the views of their constituencies… on the one hand, but at the same time to embody the partnership back in the community on the other… where money is at stake, representatives also run the risk of being suspected of feathering their own nests by the community’.
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3.19 Such examples highlight the burden that community activists are sometimes placed under when becoming involved. A consequent concern that arose in the literature surrounding such issues was the failure of professional partners to fully appreciate the commitment of, and sometimes strain put on, voluntary participants. This issue of overburdening was also mentioned continuously in the literature,

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‘overburdening activists can undermine confidence, leading other community members to see engagement as too costly. It was often felt professionals, used to their work being supported by organisational structures, fail to appreciate the costs incurred by community representatives in terms of time, money and opportunities foregone’
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(Maguire and Truscott, 2006: 30).

3.20 The factors behind (non) participation or engagement often reference, among others, apathy and laziness. This can lead to a misunderstanding of the factors leading to community (non) participation in governance. An unwillingness to become involved, however, can be the result of a myriad of factors including past experience with regeneration whereby communities have witnessed decades of intervention corresponding with decades of little change as well as the structural impediments discussed in chapter two (Botes and van Rensburg, 2001: 42).
The Importance of Local Elites

3.21 Although the issue of a lack of representativeness of the community in citizen involvement in governance is an important one, several commentators have pointed to the necessity of such local elites in driving regeneration. While self-interested participants are often cited as a concern, Barnes et al (2008), Skidmore et al, (2006) and Rai (2008) have suggested that self-interest is a vital motivator in getting people involved in developing their area. As participants become involved in governance, they may acquire linking social capital which provides them with political influence. This is, however, concentrated in the hands of a few powerful community members (Skidmore et al, 2006). The ‘catch-22’ has caused several commentators to question: what is the purpose of policies that devolve power to the community? Is it to widen participation to the majority? Ray et al (2008) have argued for an appraisal of the relative worth of both grassroots community activist and informed ‘usual suspects’. They suggest that if the aim is to gather ‘authentic’ information then the participation of grassroots activists is important; whereas, if the aim is to achieve results then working with informed usual suspects has clear benefits. Such a position explicitly recognises the importance of local elites. Skidmore et al (2006: 48) have constructed three premises upon which communities policy should be based:

- More direct participation by citizens in decision making is the only credible basis on which democratic renewal will take place. But all citizens do not need to be equally involved for this participation to be legitimate;
- Elites of various kinds have always been vitally important in creating social change; and
- Elites are only undemocratic if they are disconnected from processes by which they can be influenced and held to account by the communities they purport to serve.

3.22 Several commentators have made reference to the importance of tapping into informal spaces where people participate in their daily lives, whether it be in children’s groups, fitness classes, book clubs, faith groups and so on. In a study by Dinham (2005), residents made reference to an existing informal network of support which often involved ‘chats over the garden fence’ as vital in engendering ideas from the grassroots. Dinham (2005) suggests that this informal activity leads to ideas being taken up by members as well as some people crossing from an informal to a formal involvement. Skidmore et al (2006) suggest that what is necessary is not the absence of elites, but their situation in:

‘a general pluralism, which holds them in check, calls them to account, limits the influence of a single elite across different centres of power and, most crucially, prevents the transient power of one elite from crystallising into something more permanent’ (Skidmore et al, 2006: 49).

3.23 This is done, Skidmore et al (2006) suggest, through making connections between elites in the institutions of governance and in these informal spaces
of participation. Therefore, the aim here is not to involve every single individual in governance, but to acknowledge and reflect different types of participation. This proposed model rests on the premise that, rather than trying to mould people’s participation to reproduce existing structures, changes should be made to fit in with people’s existing structures of participation (Skidmore et al, 2006).

**Timescales and Good Practice**

3.24 Ultimately, however, participatory involvement in governance at the local level in the UK defies decades, if not centuries, of an alternative political culture based on representative democracy (Gaventa, 2004). It is unrealistic, then, to assume that such changes are likely to occur in the short term as it requires:

‘new attitudes, new forms of trust and collaboration, new skills and capacities, new models of leadership and power sharing - all take time to develop and to grow’ (Gaventa, 2004: 30).

3.25 There is a need to understand that building community capacity and partnerships of trust and respect take time (Robinson et al, 2005). There is also a need to mediate the timescale for community-led regeneration allowing for development, innovation and experimentation and the timescales of professionals with political and budgetary concerns (Robinson et al, 2005). As a result, critics warn against haste in scaling up participatory governance in a top-down way.

3.26 In light of the issues explored in this chapter, Blake et al (2008) and Robinson et al (2005) have referred to good practice which is emerging in opening up governance space to a more diverse range of participants. The following considerations provide examples of areas where citizen involvement in governance can be better facilitated:

- Importance of clear and accessible routes to involvement;
- The importance of joining up practices in a more ‘holistic’ way;
- A need for alterations in the practicalities of involving citizens in governance;
- A commitment to reducing the bureaucracy and formality;
- Adoption of appropriate timescales;
- There is a need to tap into existing informal;
- Acknowledgement of the ‘catch-22’ of participation which blights the process;
- Recognition made of the commitment of volunteers from the community and an attempt not to overburden them;
- Support from local agencies available for those involved in community activity. (Blake et al, 2008; Robinson et al, 2005).
Conclusion

3.27 This chapter has considered the barriers to community-led approaches which emerge from political structures and policy environments. Rather than being distinct, the structure and culture of governance can interact with and compound the structural and socio-economic barriers discussed in chapter one. Issues pertaining to the structure and culture of governance, complexity and the speed of change, overwhelming bureaucracy and formality, and issues of transparency which deter community activists from becoming involved in regeneration activity have been highlighted. Furthermore, issues of accountability and representativeness have been shown to be a major theme in the critical literature around participatory governance. The selection of participants and the role of local elites as well as the burden placed on community representatives emerges as a key concern when considering community-led approaches. There are also issues relating to the transferral of power from professional governance partners to local elites, which makes little impact on 'hard to reach' groups who remain marginalised. That said, the literature also attempts to recognise the relative importance of local elites as well as ‘authentic’ community members and consequently dismantle the issues of the ‘catch-22’ which afflict discussions of participatory governance.
4 MODELS OF COMMUNITY-LED REGENERATION

Holistic Regeneration

4.1 It is widely acknowledged that the issues and challenges faced by deprived areas are multi-faceted and deep rooted, calling for interventions which adequately address the different, intertwined aspects of deprivation. Policy responses to such challenges and interventions in such areas have arguably been constricted, focussing narrowly on property development, business development and so on (Tallon, 2010). The logic of area-based regeneration initiatives, at its very simplest, targets urban areas that:

‘show clear signs of decline in their economic fortunes, the quality of their physical environment and the social structures that might otherwise improve residents’ quality of life. Incomes are low and there is a heavy reliance on support; the health of the population is poor compared with other parts of the same town or city; people are often fearful of crime and are victims of much anti-social behaviour. Children leave school with few qualifications and hence are likely to experience the same extremely limited life chances as their parents. The area continues to be one where few would choose to live and from which many choose to leave given the opportunity’ (Burton et al, 2006: 299).

4.2 The above statement highlights the multi-dimensional urban issue, reinforcing the need for boundary crossing regeneration policy which tackles socio-economic issues such as health, education, crime and employment, as well as the physical upgrading of the area. Underpinning this ‘holistic’ approach to regeneration is the notion of sustainability; an understanding that an exclusive focus on physical intervention which, despite producing visible changes in areas, is unlikely to create lasting change (Furbey, 1999; Shaw and Robinson, 2010).

4.3 In Fyfe’s (2009) review of Scottish regeneration, he points to a discrepancy between the physical, social and economic dimensions, with the physical renewal of deprived areas occupying a more central position. This disproportionate attention to upgrading the physical manifestations of deprivation has meant successive programmes targeting the built environment have taken place, as the social and economic problems remain. This has been referred to as a disproportionate concentration on highly visible ‘hard’ outcomes which can be easily captured through a statistic, with a neglect of ‘soft’ social outcomes which are ultimately more difficult to measure. Rather, what is necessary is not a short-term approach to fix deprivation at a surface level, but a long-term organic process with a broad focus to make connections between economic, social and physical factors of deprivation as well as issues of society, community and institutional development which extend beyond the narrow ‘local’ focus (Furbey, 1999: 428).

4.4 It is understood that holistic, coherent approaches have the capability to produce inter-related outcomes, whereby intervention in one area can have
knock-on positive outcomes in another area (Taylor, 2008; Dodds, 2011). This is exemplified through strong relationships being recorded between:

- Improved housing, the built environment and crime;
- Increased community cohesion and educational outcomes; and
- Reduced unemployment and improved health (Taylor, 2008 referenced in Dodds, 2011).

4.5 Responding to such shifts in thinking, the Scottish Government has introduced three thematic social policy frameworks for tackling inequality in Scotland:

- Achieving our potential - a framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland
- Early Years Framework - to give children the best possible start in life
- Equally Well - an approach to tackling health inequalities in Scotland.

4.6 The thematic nature of these frameworks highlights a discernible shift from spatially focussed interventions with a physical bias, to a more holistic and coherent approach to regeneration in Scottish policy. This chapter will review different methods and mechanisms of community-led regeneration in its widest context, beyond simple ‘physical’ regeneration approaches to holistic approaches that potentially can create the knock-on effects on other areas, as evidenced by Taylor (2008). The Scottish Government Regeneration Discussion paper (2011) outlined several models of community-led regeneration of interest. This chapter will focus primarily on exploring these models, however, it must be noted this is not a comprehensive overview of all available methods of community-led regeneration. This chapter will review community asset ownership, community budgeting, social enterprises and grassroots approaches to regeneration.

**Community Asset Ownership**

4.7 The Regeneration Discussion paper suggests that community asset ownership ‘is seen as a key way of ensuring a community organisation’s sustainability by providing a secure base in the community and possible opportunities for developing revenue streams’ (Scottish Government, 2011). The legal framework in Scotland has been altered in order to support and enable communities to own assets. The 2003 Land Reform Act allowed communities the right to buy land and buildings in certain circumstances and in 2008, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) announced a joint agreement which includes support for community groups in owning assets.

4.8 Community Asset ownership is not a new phenomenon. The Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) has been funded by the Scottish Government to pilot a two year programme of work around the transfer of
assets between local authorities and communities. The Promoting Assets Transfer (PTA) programme forms part of the implementation strategy for the Community Empowerment Action Plan which was published jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA in March 2009 (DTAS). In affordable housing, there is a long legacy of ownership and management by community-led housing associations and co-operatives (OPSI, 2007) and there is a wealth of material available on the community ownership and management of housing assets. As such, this section will focus primarily on the transfer and ownership of non-housing assets. The term ‘assets’, in this context, refers to physical assets such as land and buildings; human, social, financial and intellectual assets are not captured (Aiken et al, 2008). The community ownership of assets in this context is concerned with the attainment of freehold or leasehold titles to an asset in order to benefit the wider community, or for a community-based organisation’s own use (Aiken et al, 2008). Community asset ownership can take place at a number of scales, from small-scale community programmes to multi-million pound community-led, asset-based initiatives like the Coin Street builders in South London (OPSI, 2007).

4.9 Literature on the transfer of assets to the community has alluded to several benefits for both the community and stakeholders including;

- The provision of better, more responsive public services;
- Increased local employment opportunities and other wealth creation activities as well as improvements in health;
- The renovation of abandoned and disused buildings and the control of an asset at an often discounted rate;
- Sustainability for community-based organisation activities as well as a lessened dependence on grant funding;
- The reinvestment of profits into the community for innovative community-led initiatives;
- Increased personal skills and experience from owning and managing assets; and
- Promoting community cohesion by overcoming cultural divides present in the community (OPSI, 2007; Aiken et al, 2008).

4.10 It must be noted, however, that despite reference being made to this plethora of potential benefits of asset ownership, as of yet, there is limited independent analysis and evaluation. Similarly, there is a discernible lack of published material on the risks and barriers associated with the community ownership and management of assets. What information is available makes reference to:

- The associated liabilities of managing and owning assets;
- The dangers of devolving poor quality or run-down assets to community groups;
• The confusion about the process of attaining assets; and

• The lack of available funding for acquiring assets.

4.11 The work to date on community asset management and ownership has tended to focus on the benefits accrued by the organisations involved, with less focus on the multiplier effects felt on the community at large. As Aiken et al (2008: 6) surmise, ‘a lack of multi-variant research means it is hard to understand which combinations of factors might lead to good results- either in the technical aspects of asset management or in the improved outcomes for local people’.

Neilston Renaissance, Neilston, East Renfrewshire
http://www.neilstontrust.co.uk/

The Neilston Development Trust has its roots in a community project, ‘Neilston: Space to Live’ which was established in 2004 to regenerate the town. In November 2005, the closure of the only bank in Neilston was announced. After an unsuccessful community campaign against the closure, Space to Live was involved in the decision to invoke the Community Right to Buy provision of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the establishment of the Neilston Development Trust. The Neilston Development Trust is described by the Scottish Government as providing ‘a mechanism for small town regeneration through the quality of its physical transformation, a commitment to sustainable development and approach to community involvement and community asset development’ (Scottish Government, 2010). The Neilston approach uses what is described by the Scottish Government (2010) as ‘a renaissance town approach’ which is said to involve community-led activity that empowers local people to lead the regeneration of their town via a Town Team. Although led by the community, this project had support by key partners including East Renfrewshire Council; Barrhead Housing Association; Glasgow Urban Lab of the Mackintosh Glasgow’s School of Architecture; Architecture and Design Scotland; Urban Design Skills; and the Development Trust Association Scotland. The development utilised a ‘charrettes’ format to bring different groups together to collaborate on design solutions for the village. The result of this was the Neilston Town charter (2009) which presented a 20-year vision for the regeneration of the town, signed by a wide range of local stakeholders, including residents and community representatives (Scottish Government, 2010). The success of the Neilston Development Trust was identified in the 2009 SURF awards for ‘The involvement of the local community of Neilston, and in particular that of the local Development Trust and community councils in driving this initiative.’ SURF also acknowledged that there was a desire by a range of communities of interest to work together collegiately to improve Neilston (SURF, 2009). It must be noted, however, that despite the celebration of the initiative by both the Scottish Government and SURF, this project is still in its infancy. It provides a useful example of the community using a variety of mechanisms to lead regeneration while underscoring the necessity of professional support in driving the project.

The Coin Street Community Builders, South Bank, London
http://www.coinstreet.org/

The Coin Street Builders provides a somewhat infamous example of the potential of community asset transfer. The Coin Street Builders began as an oppositional movement to a proposed commercial development identified in the 1969 London Strategic Plan which had marked the South Bank for commercial redevelopment. This development had the potential to displace the local community. After an extensive disagreement, the commercial developer backed out and in 1983, the sites on Coin Street were sold to the Coin Street
Community Builders (CSCB) who developed the sites to incorporate social housing as well as both commercial and public space in the heart of London (Rogers and Robinson, 2004). The CSCB vision was to create a sustainable community through providing housing co-ops, commercial facilities and well-designed public space. The CSCB developed a neighbourhood centre to provide a space for families, youths, carers and the elderly and also provided the location for the CSCB offices as well as providing activities, courses, workshops, drop-ins and programmes for the community.

As stated above, a focus on housing assets has had a longer period of experimentation, thus providing more robust case study material at this stage. The longevity of the CSCB provides an example of asset transfer that can be adequately evaluated retrospectively, taking into consideration the risks involved as well as the benefits accrued. Taking the experiences of the Redwood mixed-use housing co-operative as an example, CABE (2011) describes the lessons for success learnt through the CSCB programme as: 1) moving commercial and residential tenants simultaneously. In this scheme, residents moved into flats one year before commercial space was inhabited. Residents were later disrupted when commercial tenants moved in; 2) to set up the co-op 18 months prior to the residents moving in so residents can be involved early on and are given the support they need. A training programme offers housing help and advice while also allowing people to socialise and get to know their future neighbours; and 3) the need to develop more methods to engage residents once the buildings are complete.

The success of the CSCB is supported through recognition by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) who, in 2008, awarded the Coin Street Community Builders the Client of the Year Award for their transformation of the South Bank by building a genuine community in London's cultural quarter through their innovative use of commercial revenue to subsidise social housing.

### Participatory Budgeting

4.12 Participatory budgeting is another example of an innovative community-led approach identified in the Regeneration Discussion Paper. In short, participatory budgeting (PB) refers to the process whereby budget-making processes in an institution are made transparent and communities are involved directly in budgetary decision-making (Rocke, 2008). PB is underpinned by four principles (Blakely et al, 2008: 62); 1) the direct participation of citizens in setting the agenda for spending; 2) deliberation (through informed decision-making); 3) social contract (as citizens become co-responsible for the implementation of the project); and 4) accountability (as there is a transparent management of resources). The increasing focus on participatory budgeting as a community-led method has stemmed from the successful and innovative inception of PB in the late-1980s in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre. Since this first instance over 20 years ago, PB schemes have been established throughout Europe, with over 100 examples now existing (Rocke, 2008).

4.13 PB is beginning to be recognised in the UK as ‘producing good outcomes for democracy, service redesign and the empowerment of citizens’ (Hall, 2010: 136). The benefits of PB arise from its commitment to direct, deliberative democracy that is genuinely community-led rather than a tokenistic consultation experience (PBU, 2008). In terms of concrete benefits experienced in the UK, however, there is little by way of definitive evidence. Anecdotal evidence suggests that PB is successful in creating better
engagement with communities; creating social capital; increasing local investment; nurturing stronger, more resilient and cost effective communities; and making spending decisions more responsive to local needs (Hall, 2010). Furthermore, PB tends to shift from a focus on physical regeneration towards smaller-scale, people-based projects which focus on health care, education, employment as well as increased support for hard-to-reach groups (Hall, 2010).

4.14 The amplified attraction directed at PB at a government level in the UK has caused commentators to point to a friction between what was initially a bottom-up strategy to something imposed by a top-down implementation approach. This can be seen to be at odds with the highly radical and politicised, grassroots example of Porto Alegre and houses a danger that PB becomes simply another ‘tool’ which can be used on communities by local governments (Rocke, 2008).

**Participatory Budgeting in Scotland: The Community Safety Pilots, Glenrothes, Fife**

The Glenrothes project had a partnership steering group who targeted small community groups, with an available fund of £30,000, including partnership funding. Community outreach was promoted in a range of ways, including letters to community groups, local radio and press campaigns and outreach sessions, resulting in 12 community group bids which sought over £40,000. Of the groups who participated, some previously would not have come forward. A community voting event was held and had over 100 local people participating. Each of the community groups made a three minute pitch for their share followed by a ‘speed date session’ where every group had one minute at tables of voters to get their message across and answer any queries. Eight of the groups were successful in getting funding for their projects. At present, the steering group are evaluating the process and so no evidence on the outcomes of the project are available; they have intimated that they feel there is real potential in the model and are keen to increase community involvement in PB (PBU, 2010).

**The Village Spend, Coedpoeth, North Wales**

This project collectively involved Together Creating Communities, a community organisation, Help the Aged and the Coedpoeth Community Council in designating precept funds for community projects. It must be noted that this project has taken place in a ‘rural’ setting and consequently is subject to different initiatives and funding than projects in an ‘urban’ setting. A public meeting was held to allow participants to suggest ideas for projects to correspond with predetermined headings. These projects were then ranked according to popularity and the top six were costed and presented at a subsequent meeting for approval. Alongside this, primary school children were also asked to prioritise their favourite projects and this information was fed into the scheme. The projects put forward included the refurbishment of a war memorial, a pedestrian crossing, outdoor seating, tree planting, lunch club transport and sport facilities. The outcomes of this project are presented as follows;

- Although the Village spend pilot was a small initiative it established a strong case for further PB initiatives in Wales and in rural areas.
- Residents and school pupils engaged about what was good about their village and what needed improvement.
- The process affirmed the work and leadership of the Community Council.
- The process increased budget literacy.
There was a sense of ownership of the resulting projects.

The issue of putting in a pedestrian crossing led to local people building a relationship with the local Co-op Supermarket and persuading them to put money into the crossing scheme.

PB addresses citizenship in terms of rights, roles and responsibilities and worked well as a vehicle within which to engage the school council (Participatory Budgeting, 2008).

4.15 The International Centre for Participation Studies (ICPS) at Bradford University analysed a participatory budget pilot scheme in the north of England in 2006/2007 in order to investigate the translation of PB from Porto Alegre, Brazil to a UK context (Blakey, 2008). The study highlighted that PB was successful in involving more people in decision-making than any other local programme with around 300 people attending (Blakey, 2008). Yet, it was noted that the involvement of the Local Strategic Partnership, the voluntary sector and the council but no local residents meant that decisions were made without the community, completely missing the most vital element of participatory budgeting: the transferral of power.

4.16 The key lesson learned from the brief PB pilot period in the UK is the necessity for programmes to be bespoke in nature. Transferring a somewhat radical grassroots initiative from Brazil and attempting to install it in the UK is inevitably going to require some flexibility to navigate particular contexts. Hall (2010: 139) suggests that, ‘no one definition of PB fits every scenario, and empowerment is a subjective term, but experience has been of huge growth, of innovation and of diversity’ (Hall, 2010: 139). It is necessary, therefore, to allow PB to develop and be led locally, by the community (Blakey, 2008). Blakey (2008) suggests that it is necessary to question:

‘how participatory budgeting fits with the wider political system. In other words, participants need to have the opportunity to consider how the PB process fits with the bigger local authority decision-making processes. How can participants get involved in actually setting priorities for spending-in budgeting, not just in ‘grant-making’ from a fixed pot?’ (Blakey, 2008: 64).

4.17 Blakey (2008) suggests that in order to achieve the levels of success experienced in Porto Alegre, Brazil, there is a need to make real attempts to transfer power to communities.

Social Enterprises

4.18 Social Enterprise was also identified in the Regeneration Discussion paper as having ‘the potential to deliver a range of crucial services in our towns and villages... and [improving] land values and [attracting] new investments... and [providing] new services and job opportunities’ (Scottish Government, 2011: 35). Non-profit social ventures which advance economic, social and/or environmental manifestos generate part of their income from trading. This allows them to mediate the void between private and public service provision (Haugh, 2007). Although some social enterprises are established with profit-making objectives (such as the Grameen Bank), most are established as non-profit organisations. This charitable status constrains surpluses from being
channelled to those with a controlling interest in the enterprise (Haugh, 2007). This constraint therefore ensures that any profits generated are rerouted to contribute to the achievement of the aims of the organisation. As such, if social enterprises are successful, they may inject profits into the community, thus attracting new ventures and contributing to the regeneration of the area.

**All Saints Action Network, Wolverhampton**


The All Saints Action Network (ASAN) contributes to community development and the regeneration of inner-city Wolverhampton through an enterprise portfolio which includes ventures such as a car park, a recycling venture and a sports centre. The objective of the enterprise is to become self-sufficient and consequently sustainable. As chief executive Mike Swain notes, ‘*We have a long term approach to asset development. If you get a grant for something for three years, the problem is always what you do after those three years. If you look long term then the benefits can be longer lasting and have much greater impact.*’ ASAN has an annual turnover of £930,000, employs 29 staff and claims to have contributed to motivating over 25% of the local population to participate in regenerating the local area: however, no evaluation of the programme is available.

**Sunderland Home Care Associates, Sunderland**

http://www.sunderlandhomecare.co.uk/

The Sunderland Home Care Associates (SHCA) was established in 1994. It has since developed into a large-scale operation, providing employment for around 200 disadvantaged local residents and supplying care for over 500 elderly and disabled people. In 2006, the SHCA was commended with the Social Enterprise of the Year Award in the Enterprising Solutions Awards (Social Enterprise).

Annually, the company has a turnover of £1.75 million and is entirely employee-owned. As a result, staff receive benefits such as above market pay, good working conditions and a voice in all major decisions made by the SHCA. The enterprise has enabled more than 150 employees, who lacked any formal education, to attain an NVQ in care and business qualifications while all other employees are undergoing education or training. The ownership of the enterprise by the employees has contributed to a low staff turnover which is often characteristic in care homes, the formation of lasting relationships with clients which leads to a higher quality of care. This is evident through the SHCA achieving constantly high scores in Commission for Social Care inspections.

This case study places emphasis particularly on the importance of strong leadership. The work of one individual who has experience of establishing social enterprises, was fundamental to the success of this programme.

**Grassroots Approaches**

4.19 Community-led regeneration can take place at a variety of scales, from the activities of large-scale social enterprises and development trusts to very local, grass-roots activities that bring people together through shared interests or shared needs. Such activities sometimes emerge through encouragement and support through local authorities and local partners and sometimes entirely independently of the state. Such initiatives are, therefore, entirely community-led, operating through informal networks and the associations of participants in their everyday lives, whether it be fulfilling needs or through
general shared interest, including faith groups. Such groups can have small-scale thematic approaches which then translate into knock on, holistic benefits which contribute to the wider regeneration of places.

Community Mothers South, South Lanarkshire

An example of ‘grassroots’ community-led regeneration can be seen through Community Mothers South who run a breastfeeding peer support group with local mothers. Local mothers act as volunteers, encouraging others to breastfeed their children. Taking place in some of South Lanarkshire’s most deprived communities, the project has supported 23 women to become volunteer peer support workers who have, in turn, supported over 300 new mothers in their communities (SURF, 2008). This programme has benefited from its strong community roots. The benefits of this scheme include ‘the strengthening of the bond between mother and child, health improvements from breastfeeding, the growth in confidence of the new mum and the skills developed by the peer support worker. The longer term benefits will contribute to a reduction of the poor health profile that exists in Lanarkshire’ (SURF, 2008: 4).

Guerrilla Gardening, Glasgow

http://www.glasgowguerillagardening.org.uk/

Guerrilla gardening provides another innovative example of grassroots community-led regeneration through the transformation of neglected, derelict land into urban gardens (Fraser, 2010). Guerrilla gardening can be described as a movement, with local groups operating across the country. In Glasgow, guerrilla gardeners currently work on parts of Townhead. The actions of guerrilla gardeners are, however, illegal; altering land that they do not own. Yet the Glasgow group has gained the endorsement of local council as they are regenerating derelict spaces that the council cannot afford to. Such an example highlights how informal networks of interest can contribute to the regeneration of run-down spaces.

Conclusion

4.20 Taking only a small sample of the available models and mechanisms for community-led regeneration, this chapter has highlighted the promising advances being made in achieving community-led regeneration. From the above discussion and examples, the following implications can be deduced for supporting and enabling community-led approaches.

4.21 Several of these approaches began as radical opposition movements (i.e. Coin Street and Porto Alegre); there is a danger in co-opting such approaches and attempting to implement them through traditional top-down mechanisms. This could potentially transform a genuine ‘community-led’ model into tokenistic engagement. Furthermore, there is a need for holistic approaches to regeneration which do not focus solely on physical regeneration, but attempt to focus on physical, economic and social aspects of disadvantage. The mechanisms and projects discussed in this chapter each celebrated successes in specific contexts. This highlights the need for the support and facilitation of bespoke, context-specific approaches to community-led regeneration. Replicating successful projects in a ‘one-size-fits-all’ way is unlikely to duplicate the benefits.
4.22 Successful projects evidenced in this section have made the move from grant-based funding streams to **self-sustaining funding** from enterprising activity. This is particularly relevant in the current climate of austerity and public spending cuts. Many of the successful case-studies (particularly in social enterprise) emerged through the leadership and initiative of a few key individuals. From the work of pioneering individuals and small groups, wider participation and benefits to the wider community are accrued. As such, it is important to recognise the importance of such groups in spurring community-led regeneration and not to relegate them to the position of ‘the usual suspects’.

4.23 It is necessary to understand the **timescales involved** in creating successful, sustainable community-led approaches to regeneration; it is unrealistic to implement revolutionary participatory governance programmes in short timescales and to expect quick wins. Many of the case studies focussed on in this section have occurred over timescales exceeding decades. This was deliberate, and essential, as such timescales provide robust examples of community-led initiatives that are not yet available in more youthful programmes. Related to this, many programmes are at a very early stage (for example, pilot studies of PB), and as of yet, have a **dearth of robust critical analysis**. This has created a situation whereby a number of current case studies are unable to provide anything other than anecdotal evidence of benefits and risks at this stage.

4.24 Support is necessary for **informal, grass roots approaches** which may evolve independently of the state as these tap into informal networks of community participation and have the potential to contribute to holistic regeneration.

4.25 Finally, further mechanisms which provide interesting examples of community-led approaches to regeneration but are beyond the scope of this report are wider examples of **co-production, LETS schemes and Time Banks, electronic participation and community shares**. Again, this report is not intended to provide a comprehensive list; simply a starting point for further research and discussion.
5 COMMUNITY-LED REGENERATION IN PRACTICE

5.1 This chapter will provide some lengthier case studies of community-led regeneration in an attempt to share lessons learned by individuals and organisations involved in a regeneration programme. These examples are not intended to provide beacons of ‘best practice’ which can be transplanted to other contexts. Rather, they provide examples of what has worked, or has not worked, on the ground and provide inspiration for tackling problems.

5.2 Identifying positive outcomes in projects emerged as a methodological challenge with this research. The ‘desk-based’ nature of the research meant that the claims made in relation to the case-studies included in this section were not evaluated independently for the purposes of this report. As a result, the claims made are entirely based on source material. Similar to chapter four, this chapter will provide examples of community-led regeneration in its widest social, economic and physical sense. Where this chapter will differ, however, is in the depth of detail afforded to each case-study. Examples were chosen especially when intervention in one area reverberated and impacted other areas, as such examples highlight how a holistic approach to regeneration is achievable as well as offering sustainable solutions for regeneration practice. These examples aim to provide thought-stimulating practices which have the ability to shape and inform community-led approaches to regeneration in Scotland.

St Peter’s Partnerships and St Peter’s Trading Partnership, Ashton Under Lyne, Tameside
http://www.stpeterspartnerships.org/index.html

St Peter’s Partnership and St Peter’s trading partnership was identified as an example of ‘best practice’ by Cox and Viitanen (2010) in a report prepared for the UK government entitled ‘Supporting Community and Social Enterprise in Deprived Communities: A Good Practice Guide for Practitioners’. St Peter’s partnerships began in 1998 as a follow on from the work done by the Neighbourhood renewal, Single Regeneration Budget and European-funded Ashton Regeneration Partnership. St Peter’s Partnerships is a community led organisation with all decisions being made by a Board of Trustees of seven local people, with decision-making powers, and advisers. The partnership brings local people together to promote a range of community initiatives, which aim to tackle some of the underlying and long-term difficulties of the regeneration area. The St Peter’s trustees identify four key prerogatives; ‘1) making St Peter’s ward a safer place for people to live in; 2) ensuring residents have appropriate access to skills for life and employment; 3) giving local residents the opportunity to influence key decisions which affect them; and 4) ensuring residents feel the area is a healthier and happier place to live in’ (St Peters Partnerships). With a commitment to ‘new solutions to old problems’, St Peter’s partnerships ‘plays an important role in trying out new solutions to old problems, piloting new schemes, and sharing the learning with partner agencies’.

The partnership was motivated by the asset transfer of Clyde House which was to become a business start-up unit. St Peter’s also manages several other assets including the Holy Trinity community centre, the Ashton West Doorstop Garden and Trinity Moss Millennium Green. There are three enterprises limited by guarantee which operate within the St Peter’s trading Partnership;
• **Greenscape**, which provides a professional landscaping, gardening and project management service, offering on-the-job training to local unemployed people. Greenscape gift aids surplus funds at the end of each year to the charity. In its first year of trading Greenscape gift aided £59,000 to the charity and in the second year, £93,000.

• **Enterprise Plus**, which provides guidance on finding work, training, volunteer opportunities and work placements.

• **Safeguard it**, which is a community safety and security service which works in partnership with Manchester Fire and Rescue. This venture also provides employment opportunities for local people.

Through these trading activities, the partnership has become self sustaining, generating an income which is then ploughed back into the community. This sustainability has been essential for the partnership in moving beyond short-term projects funded by short-term grants and to contribute to the regeneration of the community in the long term. The organisation has developed organically and this has offered it a degree of flexibility to respond to ever-changing local needs. Furthermore, the partnership maintains links with the wider community by establishing:

- 46 street reps who help distribute newsletters and leaflets on a monthly basis and who act as part of a two-way communication system;
- Over 70 Home Watch coordinators and 250 trained first aiders; and
- Five Residents’ Associations that continue to meet monthly. All the trustees of St Peter’s Partnership have come through this community network.

The organisation currently employs 19 people, many of whom live in the St Peter’s ward area. Also, in contributing to the social welfare objectives of the charity, the St Peter’s partnership operates several community activities in the area;

- a One-Stop Shop designed to reduce the barriers to employment and taking part in training;
- a social employment scheme that gives valuable work experience to local residents;
- a Home Watch scheme that promotes community safety throughout the area and supports a large network of active volunteers;
- a Community Fund that distributes grants (up to £5,000) to local community groups;
- an IT project that operates two IT training centres; and
- a community initiatives project, entitled ‘Community Routes’ employing a community development worker and assistant that encourages volunteering and supports and maintains the existing community infrastructure.

This example highlights the opportunities for creating self-sustaining community-led regeneration. The St Peter’s Partnership uses the revenue created from its trading arm to invest in holistic, multi-dimensional activities in the community. Cox and Viitanen (2010) suggest that 2006, when the organisation reviewed its aims and objectives, was a key turning point for the St Peter’s Partnership as it led to a restructuring of the business model. This led to the nurturing of more structured activities, created a clear and shared vision for the future, changed the organisation from simply running projects to delivering services, ended projects which were running at a loss and changed the staff and leadership to set up a wider pool of employees.

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**Blacon Community Trust, Blacon, Chester**


Blacon is situated two miles from the centre of Chester and was once home to one of the largest council estates in Europe and identified in a 1984 local council survey as an ‘area of
family stress’ (Goff, 2010). The Blacon project was spurred by this survey, targeting four key strands - children, young people, green services and community resources, aiming to provide a comprehensive approach to the major social issues present in the area. The Blacon Trust is community-led, run by a board of trustees. The trustees are local residents, elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. The Board is supported by advisors and observers nominated by partner agencies. It is primarily responsible for the development and direction of the Trust, with day to day operations undertaken by the staff team under the supervision of the Trust Manager, John Every (Blacon). The work of the Trust is extremely diverse, from the creation of a cycle path to a school. The Trust provides the following key services for local people:

- Childcare/out of school care (up to 13 yr olds). 112 child places are available;
- An independent school with 25 places for 14 to 16 yr olds;
- ISSP young offenders programme for 14 to 18 yr olds, with 20 places;
- Education to employment (E2E), for 16 to 19 yr olds, with 30 places available;
- Young parent's support, up to 25 yrs olds;
- Furniture Re-use programme to recycle good quality furniture back into the community;
- Managing and developing the Community Centre in Church Way, Blacon;
- Business incubation. A new-start business enterprise named 'Firm Start' has recently been launched; and
- Regenesis consultancy. Commercial consultancy services UK-wide.

Trust Manager John Every is cited as being instrumental in shifting the organisation from an 80% dependence on grant funding in 2004 to an almost entirely grant-free model in 2010. The Trust transformed using a contract-led model, setting up BCT Regenesis as its commercial consultancy arm, providing enterprise coaching and aiding social purpose organisations to become financially sustainable. Through this, the trust had an annual turnover of £1.7m in the last year. Although the trust itself continues to make a loss, it is propped up by the profits of BCT Regenesis. There was a recognition of the need to move beyond short-term grant-dependency and create a situation whereby the activities of the Trust are sustainable beyond public funding through asset development and partnership models. The profits made by BCT Regenesis are redirected entirely into the Blacon Trust, and provides a useful model for sustainable, community-led regeneration.

5.3 Both the St Peter’s Partnerships and the Blacon Community Trust provide examples of genuinely ‘community-led’ social enterprises. A key contributor to the success of these programmes was through the establishment of an enterprising arm of operations which stimulated a move away from a reliance on grant-based funding. In place of grant-based funding are two examples of self-sustaining programmes in which profits are ploughed back into the community. The diversity of the operations in these case-studies arguably provide persuasive examples of a ‘holistic’ approach to regeneration. These examples underpin the role of key groups and individuals in driving community-led regeneration.

Cranhill Community Project, Cranhill, Glasgow
http://www.cranhillcp.co.uk/

The Scottish Centre for Regeneration identified the Cranhill Community Project (CCP) in its ‘What Works in Tackling Poverty’ series of publications. CCP was established in 2001 by Cranhill residents, local faith centres and community-based organisations in response to the changing needs and environment of the local area. Cranhill is one of the most deprived
communities in Glasgow. Figures from the 2009 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) underscore this, highlighting that five out of six datazones in the Cranhill parish boundary area fall within the 5% most deprived – three of these actually in the bottom 1%, marked over several indices including: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; housing; geographic access and crime. The deprivation that exists in Cranhill has been largely attributed to poor planning decisions with residents living in poor quality housing with an inadequate public transport network. Furthermore, the area has been a location for the re-settlement of asylum seekers in Glasgow since 2000. This factor has further compounded the strain on local support services and on community development as well as exacerbating social and cultural tensions in the area which have made it difficult for asylum seekers to integrate into the community (SCR, 2011).

The CCP organisation was developed as a joint initiative involving local people, local churches and other community based groups. The CCP project is funded through several streams and involves a partnership with a range of voluntary and statutory organisations. The overall aim of the project is to tackle poverty and social exclusion by promoting health and wellbeing; lifelong learning; personal development and social interaction. The project evolved in response to the vision of the Cranhill Parish Church that their building be used as a community hub, offering ‘an inclusive community facility for social and leisure activity, the project has continued to evolve and seek out opportunities for volunteering and community development’ (SCR, 2011). Volunteers underpin the success of CCP. They are involved in project planning and decision-making with 31 volunteers now engaging with project delivery. The project is now essentially a one-stop shop offering variety and scale of services and activity;

- Advice and information, i.e. CAB / housing support and dedicated support for asylum seekers;
- Lifelong learning, i.e. PC & IT courses, ESOL, ECDL, certified volunteer training, personal development courses, energy efficiency schools project;
- Health and wellbeing, i.e. smoking cessation, weight management, fitness classes, healthy eating, cooking classes, understanding families and community gardening;
- Services aimed at those on a low income, i.e. low cost community café, food co-op, nearly new shop, community transport;
- Leisure classes, i.e. textiles, Zumba, salsa, DIY, drama, outreach arts and crafts programme, youth club and children’s Playbusters group, men’s space, women’s safety, textiles;
- Events, i.e. International Women’s Day, International Health Day, International Ceilidh, Refugee Week
- Lobbying, i.e. for wider health provision and better transport links.

These wide-ranging initiatives aim to tackle the social and economic deprivation in Cranhill as well as attempting to diffuse tensions that exist in the area between original residents and asylum seekers. The SCR (2011) cite the following achievements as ‘evidence of success’;

- Approximately 200 people access CCP’s services and activities on a daily basis;
- 1216 people participated in a range of activities in 2009/10;
- In 2009/10 CAB staff assisted with 637 issues generated by 441 client contacts. The vast majority of issues are benefit related, however, many clients require assistance with multiple issues including housing, employment, debt and citizenship;
- £144,000 in benefit claims was secured for CCP clients 2009/10;
- 218 people accessed education, training and learning opportunities 2009/10;
- Winners of Glasgow Community Champion Awards 2009;
There are currently 28 funding streams contributing to and supporting the project. This support is as a result of reputation, robust monitoring and evaluation systems and being able to diversify.

The SCR (2011) report has highlighted that the success of the project was seen to be reliant on a ‘close-knit’ and ‘motivated’ volunteer team. Moreover, in developing relationships between asylum seekers and the existing community, it is imperative that the settlement needs of asylum seekers are met, thus allowing them to fully participate in integration. This can be done through investment in housing support and immigration advice. The importance of robust business planning was noted, which although acknowledged as resource intensive, are crucial in securing and retaining funding. Related to this, taking advantage of the support available through local community planning, voluntary sector councils or regeneration agencies is a useful tool in securing funding. It is noted, however, that spreading the risk across funding avenues has enabled the CCP to mediate the risk of relying on a single funding source. An ‘entrepreneurial approach’ to delivering services which allows project diversity is discussed as an important lesson learned in the lifespan of the CCP. Finally, an important lesson learned by the CCP was to ensure that ‘hard-to-reach’ groups such as the elderly, terminally ill or those with substance abuse issues are contacted with consistent outreach programmes, ensuring that they are aware of what support is available through the programme.

5.4 This example of an isolated disadvantaged community highlights the work of a close-knit group of volunteers coming together to develop an existing faith-based community space into a community hub. It highlights the role of an asset held by a faith group being opened up to the wider community. Many existing ‘communities of interest’ such as faith groups already have local community facilities which provide potential spaces to develop services and activities required by the community at large.

5.5 The following example is not entirely ‘community-led’ in its approach. Although the community play a key role in the regeneration of Govanhill through the Govanhill Community Development Trust, they are part of a partnership approach. Linking into discussions explored in chapter two about the issues of overburdening disadvantaged groups, this case-study highlights action in an area with severe multiple deprivation.

Equally Well test site, Govanhill, Glasgow and the Govanhill Community Development Trust
http://www.govanhillha.org/govanhill-community-development-trust

As referenced earlier in the report, the Equally Well social policy framework in Scotland provides an example of a ‘holistic’, or a self-defined ‘sense of coherence’ approach to tackling inequality. The approach is founded on an understanding that ‘poor health is not simply due to diet, smoking or other lifestyle choices’ but rather a ‘need to understand factors underlying poor health and health inequalities such as people’s aspirations, sense of control and cultural factors’ (Equally Well, 2010). The Equally Well framework recognises that a ‘more collaborative approach is needed if we are to influence effectively the range of circumstances that contribute to people’s health and well-being’ (Equally Well, 2010). The Equally Well approach recognises, therefore, that positive outcomes in health requires a focus on tackling a range of interrelated inequalities and an understanding of the complex relationships that exist between them.
In implementing Equally Well, eight ‘test sites’ were utilised to trial innovative approaches to transforming public service provision. The Equally Well Govanhill test site provides an example of this framework in action, investigating community regeneration and development through a ‘neighbourhood management’ approach which situated the community as equal partners. Although not a case of entirely ‘bottom up’ community-led regeneration, this example provides a response to challenges explored previously, particularly providing a response to notions that the community cannot regenerate deprived areas unaided as well as issues of complex and shifting community identities. Although accurate demographic data is unavailable for the area, estimations suggest that ‘there are around 3,000 Slovakian Roma people living in the Govanhill area, and 750+ people seeking asylum; these in addition to other migrants account for the population increase since 2001’ (Adamova et al., 2007).

Moreover, a Poverty Alliance (2002) report approximated that around 30% of the Govanhill community came from BME communities, primarily Pakistanis. The Govanhill area is characterised by multiple deprivations with the proportion of lone parents resident in Govanhill higher than the Scottish average; the number of children living in workless households in Govanhill is 64% above the Scottish average; the population classified as income deprived are 85% above the Scottish average (SIMD, 2009). Figures from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) in 2009 highlighted that in the period between 2004 and 2009, there had been no significant change in deprivation.

The Review of Community Engagement in Neighbourhood Management in Govanhill: Lessons Learned and Points to Consider for Policy Makers, published by Bynner (2010) provides an overview of the attempts at ‘engagement’ in Govanhill through Equally Well. The report identifies people and communities who are underrepresented, namely vulnerable people living in private lets; asylum seekers and refugees; non-Roma EU migrants; Polish, Slovak and Czech communities, and; disabled people. The report discussed barriers to engagement resulting from language, transience, racism and culture. Furthermore, this report discussed a distrust of ‘the council’ by residents active in local groups due to experience with top-down approaches to solving problems in the area as well as all parties being overwhelmed with the scale of the problem (Bynner, 2010). These echo the structural barriers to community involvement discussed in chapter two and reinforce the governance barriers referenced in chapter three.

Although not leading the Equally Well regeneration of Govanhill, the Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDA), a community owned subsidiary of Govanhill Housing Association, have been said to be integral to advancing the Equally Well programme. The mission of the GCDA is ‘to create opportunities for local people to improve and develop their own quality of life’. Both the Association and the GCDA have been working along with community groups, residents groups and voluntary organisations underneath the title ‘Govanhill Community Action’ to play a central role in future service delivery in Govanhill (GoHA, 2010).

The structure is in the very early stages of development and as it evolves will need to develop its focus and participation by widening the involvement of residents from across communities and interest groups. The Govanhill area was awarded ‘test site’ status in 2008 and is currently undergoing local evaluation. This example highlights, however, a concerted response to the issues discussed in this report with an equal partner approach adopted to ensure that neither community groups nor governance partners are overwhelmed by the scale of the issue in Govanhill. The commitment is to a ‘holistic’ approach to tackling inequalities.

5.6 The examples discussed in this section highlight the diversity in approaches to regeneration involving the community both in a leading role and as equal
partners. The St Peter’s Partnerships and the Blacon Community Trust highlighted examples in which members of the community took the lead in providing sustainable enterprising solutions to wider regeneration in the area. The Cranhill Community Project highlighted an example whereby the community was integral in establishing a ‘one-stop-shop’ to meet their needs in a deprived and fragmented area. The example of the Govanhill Equally Well test site was included to present an example in which the levels of deprivation in the area are too severe for the community to tackle without the presence of local service providers as equal partners. This links into the theme discussed earlier that neither the state nor the community should have the sole responsibility for tackling severe deprivation. Each case-study, however, has specific contextual factors that have contributed heavily to their outcomes (for example, strong leadership, past experience and community dynamics). This reiterates the issues with transferability and ‘scaling-up’. The examples discussed in this section are bespoke to their contexts. There must be some provision for flexibility at the local level to enable community-led programmes to respond to their contexts.
6 CONCLUSION

6.1 In the current economic climate of austerity and a commitment to making savings in public spending, there has been a heightened focus on devolving power to communities to take a leading role in the programmes and policies which aim to improve their areas. The report has discussed the various factors contributing to and deterring community-led approaches to regenerating deprived areas. Although the focus on community participation, engagement and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups has become increasingly prominent over a number of decades, there remains a lack of clarity on what is meant by each of the terms, let alone how to achieve them more broadly. Using a tool such as the 'ladder of participation' goes some way in acknowledging the spectrum of participation, and attempting to separate 'community-led' from 'engagement'.

6.2 The focus of participatory methods on disadvantaged areas, particularly in tough economic times, has the potential to open policy-makers to charges of overburdening society’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups with taking a driving seat in reversing the deprivation, and providing much needed services, in their areas. A disproportionate focus on disadvantaged communities can lead to remonstration from those living in deprived areas, arguing that they are being unduly targeted to become involved in community-led regeneration, when their counterparts living in more affluent locales do not receive the same level of attention, if at all.

6.3 The report has highlighted, through examples such as the Equally Well test site in Govanhill, that some communities lack the capacity to lead regeneration. There must be an acknowledgement that community-led regeneration is not an appropriate approach in some contexts. Further to this, the report has discussed the issues of scale surrounding community-led regeneration. Issues of inequality with a regional, national and, sometimes, global root, are expected to be reversed with narrow, local programmes which often focus heavily on ‘quick-fix’ physical responses in the built environment and overlook the social and economic consequences of inequality. What is required is a more ‘holistic’ approach to regeneration which simultaneously targets the multi-dimensional social, economic and physical aspects of deprivation.

6.4 Community-led regeneration, as this report has shown, can take place as the result of several models of community activity. Community asset transfer, participatory budgeting, social enterprises and informal grassroots activity were each discussed and case studies provided in this report. Important points to note which arose from this discussion was a lack of robust evaluation of such models and the necessity of adopting appropriate timescales. Many of the more innovative models, such as participatory budgeting, had not progressed beyond a short-term pilot study in the UK. Therefore, despite showing considerable promise as a mechanism for achieving community-led regeneration, any long-term impacts had not yet been analysed. Successful projects were context specific. As a result, this
raises questions about the notion of transferability when community-led programmes need to be bespoke to their contexts.

6.5 The report has discussed various barriers and obstacles to community involvement in regeneration including structural barriers and barriers relating to the system of local governance. Such issues, at times referring to deep rooted socio-economic barriers and at others, practical and personal barriers, often interact, with the latter exacerbating the former and vice versa. Achieving equality in who participates in community-led regeneration requires an overhaul of the routes to, and structures of, participation in urban governance. The catch-22 of participation, whereby established community activists are labelled as ‘the usual suspects’, emerged as an omnipresent theme in the literature surrounding community-led regeneration. Although, rather than viewing the ‘catch-22’ as an insurmountable barrier, the relative value of widening participation to ‘hard to reach groups’ as well as the ‘usual suspects’ in undertaking community-led regeneration must be noted.

6.6 The report has also discussed the risk in making crude assumptions about the reasons behind (non)participation, whether it be ‘apathy’ or ‘laziness’. Although it must be noted, that the barriers discussed do not occur in a vacuum and, as a result, do not occur evenly across all areas targeted with regeneration. As such, in some instances the barriers and obstacles discussed are not in operation. The reasons for non-participation can be the product of a myriad of interacting structural, practical and personal factors.
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