

Community Engagement in the Planning of Neighbourhood Regeneration in Glasgow

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1. Introduction

Community engagement has become the *sine qua non* of public policy in the UK in recent years, especially under the New Labour Governments since 1997. It chimes with ‘third way’ ideology, but more specifically feeds into public service reform, where ‘community engagement brings the views of citizens to bear on the development of public services’ (Tam, 2004); and into the ‘civic renewal’ agenda, concerned with how people relate to their communities and to the institutions which serve them.

Given its community focus, it is not surprising that regeneration was one of the earliest areas of public policy to see an emphasis on community engagement; this pre-dated New Labour but was given greater prominence under the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) and then extended to a range of other Area-Based Initiatives instituted since 1997.

Whilst many would agree that ‘there is a strong common sense case to be made for community engagement’ (Rogers and Robinson, 2004), others see this strategy as one of the increasing ‘responsibilisation’ of communities (see Dinham, 2005; Flint, 2003; Barnes, 2003): rather than communities being able to ‘take responsibility’ as the

Government would describe it, they are having responsibilities thrust upon them. Further, rather than being entirely benign, there are different interests involved in processes of engagement and participation, with conflicting ideas about how and why they should be used at particular stages in any particular policy process (White, 1996).

Despite there being a range of toolkits and guides about 'how to do' community engagement (e.g. Lister et al, 2007; Communities Scotland, 2007) the evidence about its effects are not as strong as one might expect, given its prominence. A review of the literature on community involvement in Area-based Initiatives concluded that 'mixed impacts are reported' and that the 'benefits cannot be easily quantified or associated causally with particular forms of involvement' (Burton et al 2004, p.viii). A more positive-themed review of 'the benefits of community engagement' across government programmes also concluded that 'the evidence base in this area is far from solid' (Rogers and Robinson 2004, p.51).

The aims of this paper, then, are two-fold. First, to clarify what the intended benefits of community engagement in regeneration are supposed to be, according to policy theory. Second, to add to the evidence base by assessing to what extent these aims are being achieved through community engagement in the latest cycle of area regeneration in the city of Glasgow.

2. Community Engagement, What's the Point?

We begin by setting out what the aims and intended benefits of community engagement in regeneration are said to be, based on the available policy and research literature. A number of aims can be identified, and each of these is briefly explained here.

First, community engagement is part and parcel of 'good governance'. It is held to result in 'better decisions' (DETR, 2001), or 'decisions [that] are more likely to be effective and...accorded legitimacy' (Burton et al 2004, p.16), and thus to 'increase the accountability of service providers' (National Audit Office, 2004 p. 7). But irrespective of the outcome, it is also argued that community involvement is an important exercise of citizenship rights that should form part of any 'due process' (Burton et al 2004, p.iv). Thus, overall, community engagement should both demonstrate democracy and contribute to democracy.

By involving local people in decision-making processes, they should be empowered by feeling that they have had some influence on the outcomes. However, this can be difficult because community members can be kept on the margins of power, as 'peripheral insiders' (Taylor, 2000), and what is more they may be taught to work within existing frameworks with plans already laid out (Atkinson, 1999; Jones, 2003). Further, practitioners may be naïve in thinking that 'what the community wants' is a consensus position whereas what emerges from involvement reflects the relative strengths of different interests within the community (Robinson et al, 2005).

But community empowerment also has a wider meaning, in that involvement in regeneration programmes is also expected to 'give local residents the opportunity to

develop skills and networks that they need to address social exclusion' (Burton et al, 2004, p.16; discussing Burns and Taylor, 2000); it can boost the status of community organisations (Taylor et al, 2007) and lead to the 'revitalisation' of a community (Waddington, 2003). This is akin to notions of community development with long-term development of the skills and confidence of local residents (Maddock, 2005), or explicit attempts at 'capacity-building' (Docherty et al, 2001).

Community engagement is seen as an important element in a process intended to develop 'sustainable communities'. Community development as discussed above is part of this, enabling an effective sense of community to be created and endure beyond a regeneration programme (Taylor, 2003). Where a strong sense of community already exists, engagement should aid the preservation of that community so that implementation avoids the fragmentation of the community. Further, in trying to achieve communities which contain and exhibit all the qualities identified as part of any 'sustainable community' (see Kearns and Turok, 2004; Egan 2004), community engagement is said to help because communities 'provide a contrasting perspective to the view of professionals and political elites' (Burton, 2003), and their definitions of needs, problems and solutions are different to those of planners (Burns and Taylor, 2000). As one good practice guide puts it: 'Residents are 'a vital source of information about local areas' and 'a valuable source of ideas about how to make improvements' (Lister et al 2007, p.18). Lastly, community engagement is said to help the sustainability of any changes instituted within communities; in other words, if programmes are developed with community involvement, they should endure longer as the community will adopt a custodian role in relation to them: 'unless the

plans are 'owned' by the majority of residents, they are unlikely to succeed' (Lister et al 2007, p.18).

The time perspective is also important if we consider that community engagement can take place at the formative stages of regeneration, when plans are being discussed, but is also important to later stages of the policy cycle, as an aid to 'better implementation' (DTLR, 2001). This is because local people have 'important knowledge and expertise' to offer along the way, and can generate creative solutions to problems encountered (Burns and Taylor, 2000). It is also a function of legitimacy: 'Being able to demonstrate that actions are firmly grounded in what local people think...will be of immense benefit in actually carrying the plans through successfully' (Lister et al 2007, p.18).

More recently, attempts have been made to link community engagement with another general objective, namely community cohesion (Blake et al, 2008). Many of the areas subject to regeneration attempts are also areas that have experienced the effects of migration and the arrival of 'new communities'. Community engagement processes are said to be a means of promoting mutual support and solidarity between groups, and in the process avoiding conflict and competition for resources between established and newer residents. Many of these arguments could equally be applied to other social groups within communities divided by generation or lifestyles. Again, one could interpret this objective as part of what is understood as 'community development', aiding a greater sense of community.

Lastly, and more recently, community engagement has been linked to health and well-being aims of regeneration, with the ‘assumption that participation will enhance well-being’ (White and Pettit, 2004). This appears to be a two-way or recursive relationship, since as well as ‘participation in community life...laying the foundations for well-being’ (Dinham 2006, p.182), physical and psychological well-being are also treated as preconditions for participation (Bergland and Kirkevold 2001, discussed in Dinham 2006). Further, people’s satisfaction with processes of engagement in relation to their expectations of it appears to matter to well-being.

These various aims and objectives of community engagement form the framework for our assessment of the impacts of such participation processes in Glasgow, discussed in the next section.

3. The Research

3.1 Aims

The aim in this study was to examine how local communities have been involved in the planning and implementation of major regeneration in their areas, and to assess the ‘added value’ of community engagement in ‘area transformation’. Based on the review discussed above, we developed the following framework for use in the research, as shown in Figure 1. This states the different aims of community engagement in regeneration and relevant criteria for evaluating to what extent each aim is achieved. We do not specifically address the individual well-being aim in what

follows as this did not form part of our study, though some of our findings may have repercussions for wellbeing.

3.2 Study Areas

Following housing stock transfer in Glasgow in 2003, where Glasgow City Council's (GCC) housing stock of over 80,000 dwellings was sold to the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), the two partners have agreed a strategy of 'transformational change' for eight housing estates across the city. We have studied processes taking place in three of these areas – Red Road, Sighthill and Shawbridge: all three study areas are post-war mass housing estates comprising a mixture of tower blocks and deck-access flats and each contains a significant proportion of asylum seekers and refugees (up to 40%) in addition to longer-term Scottish residents. Large-scale demolition of tower blocks is intended as part of the renewal of each area.

3.3 The Focus of Study: Community Engagement Structures & Processes

Central to the regeneration strategy for the city is community engagement, both in accord with national regeneration policy guidelines (see Scottish Executive, 2006), and as required by GHA's own tenant participation strategy and its statements on community engagement in regeneration (GHA, 2005/7; 2008).

During 2006 GHA in partnership with local housing organisations appointed teams of consultants to undertake development studies of the areas undergoing

transformational regeneration. The consultants 'recruited' residents to work alongside them to form a community group or forum to develop local regeneration plans. A detailed account of this process in the three study areas is discussed later. Community engagement was identified as a priority for each area as illustrated in local reports:

“We believe that the community must be at the heart of the study if it is to deliver a successful and sustainable neighbourhood and significant emphasis has been placed on consulting and informing residents throughout”

This process of working alongside the community to develop regeneration plans, and the various parties to that process, formed the focus of this study.

3.4 Methodology

A qualitative methodology was applied. A series of interviews and discussion groups were held between 2006 and 2008 with key informants from the three study areas.

These included:

- Initial meetings with consultants in the three areas (Autumn 2006).
- Discussions with residents who had formed a Community Forum or Development Group in each area: n=3; numbers participating in each varied ranging from 2 to 12 (April/May 2007).
- Discussion with a Registered Tenants Organisation in one area (May 2007).
- Focus groups with residents from each area: one comprising adult households and one comprising asylum seekers and refugees: n=6 (Autumn 2007).

- Follow-up meetings with consultants and GHA/local housing organisations with remit for community engagement and regeneration: n=4 (April 2008).

Key documentation produced by the three regeneration groups (development plans and baseline studies) and GHA (strategies and reports) was also examined and informed the analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 Good Governance

From a governance perspective, groups were formed in each area that comprised local residents working alongside consultants in developing local regeneration plans over approximately a six month period. The role of the community was to guide the regeneration process. The groups were described as ‘steering groups’ or ‘sounding boards’ in written reports although the role of the community in the process was never articulated as such. The groups were not formally constituted or elected on behalf of the wider community so in this respect they had no *real* power. Although they had no formal decision-making powers, the groups did play a *role* in the regeneration.

Recruitment to the groups varied between the three areas. In two areas (using the same consultants) a newsletter was circulated to all residents at the outset advising of the study and inviting participation in meetings to be held in each multi-storey block. The purpose was to give residents the opportunity to discuss what they liked and

disliked about their homes and communities and give their views on the issues to be addressed in any regeneration proposals. From these meetings a “representative” was invited to join a Development Strategy Group or Consultative Forum to “steer” the study throughout its course and to act as a “sounding board”. In another area (using different consultants) the decision was taken by the consultants awarded the tender to use the Local Housing Organisation (LHO) management committee to steer the development study.

In terms of inclusiveness, the groups differed in their composition and in the *types* of people who chose to be involved. This was partly related to the recruitment methods employed but also to the differing contexts and areas. Some areas had more intractable social and community problems with few established community structures; another area appeared more cohesive with a greater level of community activity.

In one area a large group (initially around twelve members) was formed that comprised residents who were not considered the “usual suspects” in that the majority were not involved on local committees or active on community groups. This was quite a mixed group in terms of gender and age balance and with representation from the majority of the blocks of flats. Some members in the group were reported to be vocal and cynical at the outset. In this area there is an anti-demolition campaign (also a Registered Tenants Association); some members of the campaign claimed that they had been deliberately excluded from the forum (even though one member was on the forum) and some were critical of the way that the group ran believing that the forum did not represent the wider community. Others disputed this claim.

In another area, that used a similar recruitment method, a different type of group emerged. This was a much smaller group (initially six members) and comprised mainly community activists or people who were on local committees. In this area when asked how they came to be on the group, one resident said “we just got told [told]” implying that it was expected because she was already very active in this particular area. In this area more “active” residents got involved compared to in the other area. Over time most people left the group for various reasons, leaving a remaining small core of active residents who were also members of the LHO committee.

The third group was formed from the LHO committee so here there was no opportunity for inclusion from the wider community, although the committee itself is comprised of residents. However the committee covers an area broader than the area being redeveloped so not all members lived in the regeneration area and many were home owners. Some members did not easily remember their role in the regeneration study because they were involved in a wide range of other community activities, making it less easy for them to focus on one particular community activity.

Decision-making in each area was a two-stage process, but without a clear indication of how the two elements related to each other or were to be combined, especially if they indicated different things. The first stage was through groups selecting their preferred option from a range presented by the consultants. Typically, this involved choosing between three options: a ‘minimal intervention option’; a ‘partial intervention’ option involving some demolition; and, a ‘complete intervention option’

involving demolition of most of the housing and total redevelopment with mixed tenure and other facilities. In the second stage, the wider community was then given the opportunity to either endorse the option chosen by the group, or to indicate their preferred option from those available. However, approaches to this process varied between the areas. In one area a newsletter was issued to tenants setting out details of the preferred option of the group (the 'renewal option') and residents were able to give their views via a freepost feedback form, a free telephone service or local surgeries. In this area 193 forms were returned with 'strong consensus' in favour of the proposals.

In a different area there was confusion over which option the *group* had chosen and some felt they were pushed in a particular direction:

“We had three options, didn't we?” (Area A)

“We were told that the favourite was number three, something like that...Don't get me wrong, it was the best. But it was just... I thought that the decision should have been ours, not pointed in a direction” (Area A)

Furthermore, in this area there was no consensus regarding the preferred option from community members who were asked what they thought of the four possible options when they completed a questionnaire at a consultation event. Nonetheless, the mixed tenure option (which attracted 42% support from a total of 60 completed questionnaires, where another option got a 31% vote) was presented as the

community's 'preferred option'. In this area the method of decision-making could be said to be confused and not necessarily effective or representative.

At the outset it was recognised that the groups “should be part of future implementation options”, but over time the focus on implementation became less clear. There was no guarantee that the option the groups supported would go ahead or be delivered. The process was not embedded in wider partnership or planning structures. At this stage in the regeneration many of the decisions were being taken by GHA through bilateral meetings between stakeholders, rather than in an open and accountable way to the communities concerned. Some members of the groups were consequently sceptical about the decision-making process. They felt that ultimately they would have little influence in making final decisions about the regeneration as these would be taken by other agencies:

“It seems to me that every time somebody makes a decision, there’s always somebody else to make a decision ... and you do get the feeling that the more we talk and the more decisions [we make] will always be subject to somebody saying, oh, no, you can’t do that.there’s a feeling that whatever we decide, could very well be overruled because, you know, this is wrong and that’s wrong and so on” (Area C)

4.2 Community Empowerment

In governance terms communities has no 'real' power but empowerment plays out in different ways. One component of empowerment is *capacity building* and there was a focus on this in the regeneration process. The plans were developed through a process of capacity building in that consultants and residents shared information and worked together in regular meetings. A starting point for all was agreeing development principles for the areas, with an emphasis on sustainability and building on the characteristics of the areas. Most groups had been on trips to see other examples of regeneration (Glasgow Gorbals, Liverpool and Dundee) and to get ideas about the things they liked and didn't like to enable them to make decisions.

In some areas the focus of the studies appeared to be about developing an understanding of the complexity of regeneration and what was feasible: it was not a straightforward wish list, and the groups came to recognise that there were limits in relation to what they could expect in their new areas. One consultant explained that the plans themselves were not designed specifically around what the community identified but *contained* things they wanted. The consultants were realistic about what was possible and what was not in terms of constraints such as the position of roads and railway lines, contaminated land and schools. In one area the community expressed an interest in having a railway station located in their neighbourhood but because this was a busy route it was unlikely that services would be given permission by the railway companies to stop. Similarly, local schools could not be knocked down or amalgamated, as the community may desire, due to the wider policy and strategic context in relation to educational reform in the city already under way.

Through the process of capacity building, some groups may have gained from a raised understanding of what regeneration involves and what can potentially be achieved. A resident in one group had initially wanted to keep her high rise flat but after learning about the costs of retention and what the alternative was she had changed her view considerably:

“Now I’m one that fought and said no you’re no taking my building 'cause I’ve got one of the best buildings, as I thought.... And it was rather shocking to find out how much it was gonna cost us to do each house. So, we thought it’s cheaper to demolish and rebuild than it would be to fork all this money out”
(Area B)

In another area, at the outset, some residents were said to be cynical about their involvement. These cynicisms reportedly came from past experiences and fears of what might happen: concerns about the development of ‘yuppie’ flats and owner-occupation, and that they would be decanted to peripheral estates. At the start they said they were happy with the area as it currently stood. The process enabled them to understand how regeneration works, to think about what they wanted and to work through current social housing demand levels. Their view changed from ‘it can’t happen’ to believing the proposed changes could become a reality.

One group appeared to build its capacity beyond the regeneration process in that some members had a very detailed understanding of the area, and awareness of wider decision-making networks and processes. They remained involved in regeneration activity beyond the duration of the study through involvement in a feasibility study

for a one-stop shop and as members of the LHO management committee. However, it may be the case that the regeneration study was not the impetus for their sustained involvement as they may have gone on to do other things regardless.

All three groups experienced varying levels of input and involvement in developing plans. Most felt they got a good say; they were given a lot of information and felt they gained a lot from trips to other areas to see regeneration and how it worked. In most instances they reported good relationships with consultants throughout the process in terms of communication and working together well:

“They listened to everything we said” (Area C)

“They kind of edged it out, smoothed it out. So, the way, that no one was battling with one another” (Area B)

Some felt their inclusion was important because, as they lived in the area, they were experts in terms of knowing what they wanted and what was needed. Inclusion in its own right was regarded as important for one group. Although this group did not feel that they had particularly made a difference, one resident felt that he had been given the opportunity to have a say and be included in something where he would normally have been excluded.

When the studies were complete the majority of the residents who were involved in the process had no further involvement in the regeneration process except in a piecemeal way through the LHO, so their new capacity was not maintained. Few

appeared to know what the next stages in the process were or what their role was going to be indicating poor knowledge of power structures and what happens next in the process. Some however were sceptical about their involvement and how decisions were being made.

Whilst inclusion was evidently an element of the process, all constituencies did not feel included. The anti-demolition campaign group in one area poses some interesting issues in the context of empowerment: they did not feel included in the processes of regeneration and that this was because their voice was not considered legitimate. They felt that decisions were being taken for them in an unrepresentative way, and they were suspicious of the motives of organisations such as GHA and the city council. Some members of this group had a good understanding of the power issues at play and managed to get publicity for their campaign, and the support of locally elected representatives.

This example portrays a scenario of *unintended* empowerment in that, in policy terms, this is not a positive example of community empowerment as it reflects a community divided. This group is resisting the process of regeneration, although not necessarily for the benefit of the wider community long term. But a different way of working may have provided opportunities for inclusion thus preventing such a situation.

“I can imagine a process where if we were properly involved, properly consulted...had free discussions it could be done” (Area C)

For one group its dual role became a distraction. This group, that was also the LHO committee, saw their involvement in the regeneration as part of their everyday role as committee members, which in some respects meant they did not afford it much priority. Through the discussion it was apparent that there was some confusion between their regular LHO activity and the regeneration study. This group also said they got bored throughout the process and did not understand what was going on. This highlights some of the issues in using an existing group such as this when it does not seem particularly interested or engaged, although established groups may work well in other contexts:

“At this moment in time I couldn’t tell you what it looked like, couldn’t remember what it looked like because by that time we were really getting bored because it was all talking about grass roots sites and all this kind of sites and that’s a this site. I mean, that’s double Dutch to us” (Area A)

4.3 *Sustainable Communities*

The interpretation of a sustainable community and how this would develop - but not necessarily be achieved - was taken at the outset through the design of the studies: groups of local residents worked alongside consultants to come up with a plan for a sustainable community that would then be “tested” with the wider community.

In one respect the plans, as illustrated in Figure 2, reflected the characteristics of each of the areas, making the most of any opportunities available. In one area there was the

suggestion of developing a riverside park to maximise the potential of the river running through the area. Another area's close proximity to the city centre presented opportunities such as significant new transport infrastructure and developing connections with a local university. One area has a strong local heritage and several listed buildings that could be put to their best use.

Whilst there are subtle differences based on area specific characteristics, the plans in the three areas are also very similar in that they represent idealistic views of sustainable communities as reflected by the design principles adopted. Each plan contains the core elements of a sustainable community - one based on mixed tenure, connections, green space, sense of place and community, access to employment and educational opportunities, and local facilities. The plans therefore reflect inherently good and desirable places to live. This may be largely because the objectives set out in 'By Design' the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's best practice guide for developing successful urban places were said to be adopted by all the groups, so the plans reflect these principles (see Figure 3).

However, whilst these principles can inform land-use and master planning, many of the elements can only be realised in practice: there is no guarantee that the social reality in the future will reflect 'sustainable communities' in this sense unless ongoing community management also reflects and strives for the same principles.

On the other hand, the community voice raises some issues about the notion of sustainable communities and whose agenda this is. Some of the issues raised by

communities about the places they live in go against the grain of what is considered the right option in policy terms: choosing the ‘housing only’ option rather than the one featuring green space and sporting facilities; the choice to use peripheral 24-hour retail facilities rather than local shopping facilities; wanting a majority of houses for social rent rather than ‘mixed tenure’; choosing to keep the high rise flats rather than the redevelopment option that includes low rise housing and new facilities.

4.4 Community Cohesion

The plans produced through community consultation recognise “sense of community”, retaining the “established community” and generating a “coherent sense of place” as important components of the new areas. They also indicate proposed community facilities such as civic and community hubs. In one area a new ‘community hub’ consisting of a ‘high quality urban square’ surrounded and activated by local retail, education, community and office users was proposed. The development of a new park was seen as “providing a community focus for leisure, education and recreational uses”. However, the process of achieving these components, and their contribution to community cohesion was not made clear.

At the same time, the wider community expressed concerns (through focus groups) about declining community cohesion at present. Most had little optimism for the future. In the past their areas were considered settled and cohesive but had become more unstable in recent years. These changes were perceived to be due to transient populations: movement between housing blocks with people being re-housed because

of demolition; new communities moving in, particularly asylum-seekers; and less stable groups being placed there. The areas were now considered less desirable and so open to anti-social and homeless tenants including 'squatters' and 'druggies'. Some felt they could not form relationships with their neighbours as they perhaps once did.

“There is no sense in the blocks now of community” (Area C)

“The biggest pain I've got with it is I don't know how many neighbours I've had to that side and that side. It's like a conveyor belt and they don't care, but you've not any time to build up any kind of relationship because they've no sooner moved in and they've moved out” (Area C)

The lack of facilities for young people was identified as a major cause of anti-social behaviour which had led to teenagers hanging about on the streets causing vandalism, fights and drug using and dealing.

“There's not a thing here for the kids to do. It's full of drug addicts, all the young'uns and it's getting to the stage where people won't go out at night because they don't want to walk the streets at night” (Area B)

There were concerns that these problems might continue to exist in the future and little awareness that regeneration might promote greater community cohesion.

“But you’re not gonna get guys spending a hundred and fifty thousand pound on you know, on a house, peeing in the street and smashing wine bottles, are you?”(Area C)

Regeneration was seen as a threat to cohesion. One issue was in relation to the criteria for new lettings: who would live in the new areas and who would be given priority after redevelopment. After the regeneration there would be fewer houses available for social rent meaning that some people would not be guaranteed a home. The policy focus on ‘retaining families’ could mean that some (without families) may not be guaranteed a new house. This has given rise to issues concerned with entitlement and integration and views on *good* and *bad* tenants. Some long-standing residents felt that they had a right to a house in the new community, whereas there were concerns from asylum seekers and refugees that there would be hostility from others if they were given priority.

“No but what I’m saying is...whose gonna get these houses? See how they categorise these people. Well, for one, I said to him, thirty odd years here, should be entitled to one of these houses before anybody else” (Area C)

“Once everything is completed and they bring in people who have not even been living [here], into the new houses ...there’s going to be a lot of bitterness and this is what’s going to be a racist thing....Why should you be in [here], I should be the one living in the beautiful house. So there will be hostility, that is if they don’t give the people [from here] the first priority to go back to where they came from you know” (Area C asylum-seeker/refugee)

Many were concerned about displacement. Some residents feared being re-housed to areas they did not know and leaving behind friends, neighbours, homes and communities. There was also the fear that once you had left your community to be re-housed you may never get the chance to return to it. These concerns were evident amongst asylum seekers and refugees as well as long-standing residents.

“We have been friends for a long time and the times that we help each other out which is going to a meeting or to town, [or can you] ‘please pick up my daughter’, now we’re going to be moved and separated again ... you don’t know where you’re going to be going, you will go to an area where you can’t mix with the people and you need a little bit of help and no one is going to be there for you” (asylum seeker)

“I want to stay here, I want the houses done up. I like the view, I like my neighbours, I like my church, I like Tesco's, I’m happy here. I don’t want to move out because if I move out I won’t get back” (long-term resident)

The anti-demolition campaign’s desire to retain their high rise flats is partly a proxy for their desire to maintain the community that they perceive still exists. This is an example of a group that has a strong attachment to the area; many are older people who have spent much of their lives living here. The group discussed how there was still a sense of community, the network of good neighbours, how they felt safe, concerns over moving out and not getting back, and the difficulties they perceived in creating a new community from scratch. Regardless of the views this group holds (it

may be that their desire to keep the flats is detrimental to community cohesion long term), the process has done little to stabilise the community or to involve the group in early discussions about the way forward and what the implications are. Rather than the regeneration acting as a stabilising force that is able to bring a community together, it has had the opposite effect of destabilising it.

In relation to the regeneration no community cohesion strategy was put in place to address the concerns of the wider community (although there may be other local strategies that are not linked up). There were opportunities for the wider community to access information about the *plans* through a variety of means and in one area the plans were piggy-backed onto the annual carnival. But the focus of community engagement was showing residents how their areas might look, not how this would be achieved or how the new community would look; it was on the concrete plans and not the more important practical and process issues these communities may face.

4.5 *Effective Implementation*

At the outset, the need for an effective delivery mechanism was identified by all consultants. When the studies were completed at the end of 2006 no decisions had been taken from GHA (who commissioned the studies) as to how the preferred options would be taken forward. There is no evidence that any agencies had signed up to the principles or to the recommendations contained in the proposals, and no guarantee that the recommendations would be taken forward. Furthermore the future role of the groups in the process was not established or discussed collectively.

When the process of producing initial final plans came to an end the groups ceased to operate in their capacity as development groups or forums for regeneration. Some extended their involvement in more piecemeal ways through the LHO committee but without the support of the consultants. In one area some members of the group went on to develop a feasibility study for a one-stop shop that was linked to the proposals and involved working with the same consultants.

When the groups were asked about the final plans, two groups were quite vague about their content even though they had been written up and disseminated to the wider community:

“We can tell you about the small picture in parts but the overall area and all, no”
(Area A)

“There’s plans, drawings... mock-ups. That’s all it is” (Area C)

The wider community also showed a lack of awareness of the plans even though there had been several opportunities to view them and to feed back views. Focus group discussions with residents in these areas (approximately six months after the plans were developed and disseminated to the wider community) found differing levels of awareness about the proposed regeneration. Many had a vague sense that something was about to happen but they lacked specific detail. This lack of awareness may reflect a level of complacency and lack of faith in their delivery.

“No [knowledge of proposals]. I just know that they’re going to remove these buildings and shift us to some other place”. (Area A)

“I think this area, they are going to build 700 new houses; they are going to build a leisure centre... they’re going to do it to make it a better place. I read about that [in a local newsletter]” (Area B)

There was greater awareness from both the groups and the wider community of the types of houses that were proposed rather than how the *community* would look. This may have been because housing is considered the most ‘realistic’ part of the proposals in what are complex areas. The housing demolition and new build strategies may be the only realistic commitment in that demolition is on the horizon and there is a new build strategy in place, whereas the ‘community’ aspects of the plans may be considered more abstract and less likely to go ahead.

“The only thing that we know that is concrete is the new build [housing]” (Area A)

Some group members expressed their views about the ambitious nature of the plans feeling that they may never become a reality, highlighting the complexities in turning them into something tangible.

“There’s nothing final. It’s what it could be, and, and really, it’s, how we get there, you know. They don’t know where the funding’s coming from because they don’t have any money. They have to look at Europe but how do we look at

that? This is why we wanted to speak to the people down at the Gorbals, they funded a lot of money through Europe, but how do you get that money? We're mere mortals, we just live in a house. We're not European bureaucrats, you know" (Area C)

"None of us is under any illusions, you know, that it's gonna happen, if you know what I mean?" (Area C)

Similarly, in other areas, there was a feeling that the actual reality was a long way ahead: for some the process had not met their expectations, for others they might not be the beneficiaries.

"We're no actually gonna see whether we get what we want until they're done" (Area A)

"I mean, people keep saying, well when is this gonna happen, when is that gonna happen. I'll no be here, I'll be kicking up the daisies" (Area B)

A series of concerns about physical and social problems in the interim were identified by the wider community. Many felt that the focus on regeneration was preventing more immediate concerns in these areas that are experiencing neglect and upheaval from being addressed. Many of those who want to remain in the areas felt they would have to put up with poor living conditions, damp, problems of rubbish, vandalism, rats and things not getting fixed indefinitely. There was awareness that the regeneration might take between ten and twenty years but the real concern was what

would happen to the people and their neighbourhoods in the interim and during the transition. The slow implementation diverts attention from ongoing problems.

“You see what we’re living in, it’s not acceptable in this day and age....I’ve got a steel gate on my door because of the drug problems [here]” (Area C)

“Wind howling through your house, your window sills are soaking, your doors don’t fit right... if you’ve got a plumbing problem in a flat, three or four houses can have the same problem before they find it” (Area A)

Many practical concerns were raised by asylum-seekers and refugees. Their most frequently mentioned disruption was the implication to their children’s schooling. They did not understand the logistics of where they would be going to school both during and post the transition. They were especially worried as this was one of the most stabilising factors in their lives and suggested that to minimise such disruptions careful planning and consultation must be maintained with parents. Other practical concerns included whether they would need to get a new general practitioner and if the move was going to incur extra costs; if so would these be met by GHA.

There was a lack of awareness about issues such as timescales and when or if things would start to happen, who would be given priority in terms of getting the new houses, and how it was going to affect people’s everyday lives.

“What I would like to know is, they’re talking about building new houses, I would like to know is, are the flats coming down? I don’t want to be sat in my

flat for the next 10 year and then to be told your flat's not coming down, you're not getting a new house and I've [been] stuck up there all that time" (Area A)

Thus, implementation, and how the plans might become a reality, seemed a long off way off for most people in the study.

6. Conclusion

We identified seven aims of community engagement specifically in relation to area regeneration: two relate to the governance and implementation of public policy; four relate to community-level impacts of engagement itself and the outcomes of engagement; one relates to individual wellbeing.

So far, up to the period beyond regeneration planning and into the early stages of implementation, community engagement had made contributions to these aims, but some more so than others. There are weaknesses in relation to community empowerment *beyond* regeneration, community cohesion and effective implementation in particular.

To overcome these weaknesses, community engagement needs to meet the standards of *democracy* and *accountability* as well as inclusion. It needs to embrace the whole processes of decision-making, not just a tightly defined stage within community master-planning, and to clarify these decision-making processes and power structures for communities.

Community engagement should deal with regeneration *processes* as well as components. The aim of achieving sustainable communities was interpreted as a question of spatial planning, not as a question of community development for the existing or future community. Many residents' concerns were about *how* to 'sustain' the current community and how to solve the existing problems such as lack of care, drug and alcohol issues and community cohesion. It was not clear from the plans how this transformation would happen in these areas from their current unsustainability.

There is a need for clarity over the *extent* and *limits* of agency commitments to the regeneration plans. There was no commitment from the stakeholders with regard to taking the plans forward, or acknowledgement of their limitations (although things may have moved on since the study was completed). Communities were not aware of how the proposals would be funded and transformed into a reality; indeed some did not believe that they would become real, putting into question their purpose in the process.

The ways in which communities will be governed and managed after redevelopment is a further consideration. To date, this has largely been through the local housing organisations (LHOs) that cover the regeneration areas. In the future LHOs will play a lesser role as these areas may become mixed-tenure communities as the majority of the houses are owner-occupied and fewer are socially rented. Consequently, these communities will be reshaped and may be very different compared to how they stand at present.

Finally, there is the need to maintain *continuity* in community engagement between planning and implementation: community members involved in developing plans had no sense of any further involvement beyond this. If this does not happen then any gains may be eroded.

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Figure 1: Aims of Community Engagement in Area Regeneration: An Assessment Framework

Aim	Criteria
Good Governance	<p>Inclusive and representative participation.</p> <p>Democratic decision-making.</p> <p>Accountability procedures.</p>
Community Empowerment within regeneration	<p>Knowledge of decision-making processes.</p> <p>Influence of the community upon decisions.</p> <p>Community awareness of how to exercise power.</p>
Community Empowerment beyond regeneration	<p>Capacity building within the community.</p> <p>Knowledge and awareness of wider decision-making networks and processes.</p> <p>Confidence and ability of the community to seek change in other arenas and forums.</p>
Sustainable Communities	<p>Regeneration plans containing component elements of sustainable communities as per best practice.</p> <p>Durability of plans and implemented changes.</p> <p>Meeting people's desire to stay together and retain a community.</p>
Cohesive Communities	<p>Enhanced sense of community.</p> <p>Engagement across social groups contributing to social harmony.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of needs and rights of others.</p>
Effective Implementation	<p>Awareness of how plans were to be implemented.</p> <p>Community involvement in implementation phase.</p> <p>Confidence that plans will be realised.</p>

Well-being	Personal development, psychological health and physical health of individuals.
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Figure 2: Examples of Community Features Contained in Regeneration Plans

Area	Proposed Community Features
Area A	<p>Improving the passive supervision of the parks and the facilities within the parks</p> <p>A new community hub with improved shopping and community facilities</p> <p>A new community hall</p> <p>A new railway station</p> <p>A new sports complex</p> <p>New play facilities</p> <p>General improvements to the streetscape within the area through planting of fruit bearing trees and creation of home zones.</p>
Area B	<p>Opportunity for a new health centre</p> <p>Redevelopment of the shopping arcade</p> <p>Traffic calming measures and public realm improvements</p> <p>Creation of one-stop-shop to form the heart of new civic hub</p> <p>Better access to park with new lighting and public realm works</p> <p>Creation of riverside park</p> <p>High quality public square</p> <p>Very sheltered housing</p> <p>Better pedestrian linkages</p>

Area C	<p>Significant new transport infrastructure</p> <p>Improvements to the public realm</p> <p>New community hub consisting of a new high quality urban square surrounded and activated by local retail, education, community and office use</p> <p>Development of new park providing a focus for leisure, education and recreation uses.</p>

Figure 3: ‘By Design’ the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment’s Best Practice Guide for Developing Successful Urban Places

Feature	Description
Character	“A place with its own identity”
Continuity and Enclosure	“A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished”
Quality of the Public Realm	“A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas”
Ease of Movement	“A place that is easy to get to and move through”
Legibility	“A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand”
Adaptability	“A place that can change easily”
Diversity	“A place with diversity and choice”