

Management Committee

Date: 30th September 2015



SURF Alliance for Action - Bute

1.0 Purpose

This report will provide an update to the CPP Management Committee regarding the progress of the Alliance for Action on Bute.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that this report is considered by the CPP Management Committee and any areas of further engagement by CPP member organisations with the Alliance for Action are identified.

3.0 Background

In 2011-12, in its role as Scotland's independent regeneration network, SURF delivered a participative study on the impacts of, and responses to, recession-based policy decisions in two contrasting case study disadvantaged areas: the neighbourhoods of East Govan in Glasgow and Gallatown in Kirkcaldy, Fife. That collaborative investigation was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Scottish Government. Through this work, SURF noted a striking degree of enthusiasm for a more coordinated approach towards connecting assets and investments from a wide range of local and national partners and developed an 'Alliance for Action' in these areas. In March 2013, the Scottish Government committed support for SURF's proposal to use its unique role, experience and cross sector networks to develop a collaborative 'Alliance for Action' initiative to enhance resilience and practical outcomes in communities and to identify and promote constructive debate on wider policy and resource considerations for supporting community regeneration.

The Alliance activities are focussed on building trust and cooperation and the influential but objective nature of the collaborative Alliance for Action initiative has enabled agencies to consider options and enter into constructive discussions with each other. In communities where there have been historic mistrust between public bodies and the community, SURF's 'honest broker' role has been an effective medium for rebuilding mutual understanding, providing opportunity for co-operation and joint working going forward. In 2014 Highlands and Islands Enterprise commissioned SURF to carry out a feasibility study into establishing an Alliance for Action in Rothesay and Bute.

The study identified 3 main themes : **Place, People, Process.**

Place -Rothesay has tremendous assets, however

1. Rothesay's functioning is affected by
 - The look of the town

- Issues of ownership of properties
- Overhang of redundant listed buildings, how many can the town sustain, what is the future for these buildings, should they all be kept?
- Lack of a modern hotel
- Cost of getting there. The ferry fares were almost universally described as a barrier to growth
- Rothesay felt distant from decision makers.

People - Rothesay has significant civic life, however

2. Despite there being a large number of voluntary and community groups there are concerns about:
 - Capacity
 - i. people are busy doing other things
 - ii. lack of knowledge and skills required to drive forward
 - iii. an almost universal view that people would support another approach to the issues
 - iv. a view that an external facilitator might help move issues forward.
 - Focus
 - i. no group that had the specific interest in the development of the town centre
 - ii. no clear vision for the town and its future
 - iii. no identifiable USP for Rothesay .

Process - Rothesay has a number of issues which need to be tackled

3. Bute, despite being an island, is managed (it is said) remotely. From the perspective of Argyll and Bute Council, It is part of Bute and Cowal Area Committee. In Community Planning terms it is part of Bute and Cowal Community Planning Local Group. As a result there appears to be no specific focus on Rothesay.
 - Planning policy options
 - There are issues of leadership
 - There was a perceived lack of coordination. There appeared to be no relationship between the various investments in the Town
 - There is no Masterplan or Action plan for the Town
 - The catalyst role of the Pavilion project.

It was concluded from this feasibility work that Rothesay / Bute is a location which would benefit from a holistic approach to Town Centre Developments as part of Regeneration project which sought to maximise opportunities for community participation. As a result of this an Alliance has been established with support for HIE. The key element has been to engage the Community in leading the process of change in an independent manner, focused on the needs of their community. The consultee group was enthusiastic about the possibility of establishing an Alliance for Action on Rothesay. No assumptions were made about any of the Community Planning Partners participation in the Alliance although their engagement was recognised as important.

4.0 Project progress

The Alliance, including community, business and public sector representatives, has met as a group on five occasions since its inception in Spring 2015, to discuss and agree upon a route forward. The meetings have been well attended with a forward looking approach and are led by members of the community, with SURF providing a support/facilitative role. A senior representative from the Scottish Government attended an Alliance meeting earlier this month and spoke positively about the opportunities this approach presented for the community. Some of the proposed short to medium term activities being considered by the Alliance include:

- A Charrette - SURF will submit a proposal for a charrette to the Scottish Government on behalf of the Alliance
- The Community Council and the Isle of Bute Trust are considering a joint proposal to the Scottish Towns Community Capital fund
- Using the outputs of the public meetings to develop a list of projects and to identify the means by which funds may be acquired to deliver these
- Developing a processes by which young people might get more directly involved in decision making about their town through working with the school, the youth workers and Achievement Bute.

Building upon work initiated by Bute Community Council around the population decline experienced on the island, and taking cognisance of the previous consultation and planning carried out, the Alliance held its first Public Meeting on the 2nd of September. This was a positive event which built upon previous consultation and visioning work on Bute and was attended by 70 people. This event gave the opportunity for the community to discuss a vision and priority projects for Bute. A second public event will be held on 1st October to progress with this work.

A clear early outcome of the Alliance for Action work has been the formation and development of a wide range of working relationships across the variety of organisations engaged with the Alliance to date. Work is ongoing to engage further organisations and individuals to widen the Alliance and ensure that everyone who wants to take part is able to. Council officers and Councillors have participated in the Alliance, together with other public sector partners, and their input has been invaluable. Notwithstanding this, there is an opportunity for Community Planning Partners to engage at a more strategic level and to consider suggestions about how some processes could altered or amended if a need were established by the Alliance.

In particular, consistent with the objectives of the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement, the Partners could consider leading on some of the issues raised by the Alliance if asked to do so. In this way the CPP could be seen as a key contributing partner to the Alliance and the outcomes it seeks to deliver over time.

5.0 Conclusions

The Alliance for Action on Bute has developed successfully over the 6 months it has been in existence, drawing in a wide range of stakeholders and enabling all partners to work

together not identify a vision and priority projects for Rothesay and the island of Bute. Support from Scottish Government and a number of other key organisations has been established through the work of SURF and there is a key role for CPP members to play in supporting the Alliance to progress and identify and implement actions and projects.

6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	Economy/Community
Consultations, Previous considerations	Alliance for Action, Bute Community, HIE, ABC, Scottish Government.
Resources	Opportunity for engagement for CPP members
Prevention	Alliance for Action is implementing a holistic way of working on Bute which has the potential to break down barriers and enable more positive project delivery.
Equalities	Alliance for Action is accessible to all and works hard to ensure that all groups and members of the community have the opportunity to engage.

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