



# REGIONAL NETWORKS

bringing tenants and residents together

## NEW REGIONAL WEBSITE

Visit us at: [www.regionalnetworks.org.uk](http://www.regionalnetworks.org.uk)



## DIARY DATES

### TIGHRA Annual Conference

11 & 12 September 2009,  
Thistle Hotel in Inverness

### TPAS Annual Conference

2 - 4 October 2009  
Apex Hotel in Dundee



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tenant

# participation

*making a difference!*



## A NEW HOUSING BILL FOR SCOTLAND

COUNTDOWN TO  
14 AUGUST HAS STARTED



The Scottish  
Government

ISSUE 10 SUMMER 2009

# REGIONAL NETWORKS EVENT

12 MAY 2009, HILTON HOTEL, EDINBURGH



The Minister with the Regional Network Committee Chairs

**Regional network committee members came together from across Scotland on Tuesday 12 May 2009 in Edinburgh for their second Regional Network Committee event.**

Jim Maryniak, Chair of BEEM (Borders, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian) Regional Network, chaired the event and was delighted to welcome everyone along. Jim introduced Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities and was pleased to announce that this was the first audience that the Minister would be addressing to outline detailed proposals in the draft Housing Bill Consultation that the Scottish Government published in April. Jim highlighted how very busy the committee members had been during their inaugural year including meeting regularly with the Scottish Government to

discuss a number of key policy areas. Committee members have participated in a number of Government working groups including the Regulatory Sounding Board and the Tenants Priorities Advisory Group, which oversaw research to identify tenant priorities for social housing issues, Jim said *'Who would have thought a few years ago that we would have Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) representatives, via the regional networks, on Government advisory groups with the same influence as COSLA, SFHA and other national organisations?'*

Jim then introduced Greg Hine, the secretary of the Glasgow and Eilean Siar regional network, who launched the new website for the Regional Networks. He explained that the website has been developed over the last nine months by a sub group of regional network committee members and input by the website designers. Greg demonstrated the individual website pages and how to navigate around the site whilst explaining that the website will promote the identity of the regional networks, and be a valuable source of information, which will help to improve communication channels. It will also evolve and grow over time as its usage increases. The website will allow tenants and residents across Scotland to instantly keep up to date with the latest information on what each region has been getting up to. Visitors to the website can download minutes and agendas from meetings, check the calendar for any up and coming events, contact each region with any enquiries, and see what issues are hot topics.

The website can be accessed at [www.regionalnetworks.org.uk](http://www.regionalnetworks.org.uk)

Following the launch of the website, the Minister congratulated the website sub group for developing a clear and informative website. The Minister said he was delighted to have the opportunity to meet with regional network committee members and present the newly published Housing Bill Consultation. He knew that regional network committee members had been involved in a range of policy areas with his officials over the last year and that their contributions were extremely valuable in taking these policies



Greg Hine launches the website



Committee members meeting to discuss the Housing Bill Consultation

forward. The Minister emphasised how very much he appreciated the time, effort and commitment of everyone involved, he said *'We want to use your expertise and knowledge in shaping national policy to ensure that our public services are efficient and responsive to local peoples needs. I want to see more involvement of RTOs, not just professional organisations.'* Mr Neil then went on to outline that the purpose of the Housing Bill Consultation is to safeguard social housing for future generations through

Showing support for local authorities being regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator



reforms to the Right to Buy and improving value for tenants and taxpayers by modernising how social housing is regulated. Views were also being invited on whether there is a better term than 'social housing' for housing provided by councils and registered social landlords. In addition, the Scottish Government is also considering the possibility of including provisions on private housing. It will consult stakeholders separately on these during the summer before deciding whether it is appropriate to include them in the Bill (refer to page 6 for further details for the new Housing Bill).

A lively question and answer session followed with regional network committee members raising a wide range of policy issues to which the Minister provided frank and open answers during nearly an hour of questions. Jim then thanked the Minister for attending the event and for his contributions to a very interesting and thought provoking session.

Anne Cook, the Manager of the Tenant Participation team within the Scottish Government then gave a presentation on the background to how the Regional Networks have evolved, their work with Scottish Government colleagues and how they were influencing and shaping policy. Anne then discussed the year ahead and the many challenges for the network committees as they continue to develop. This included responding to the Housing Bill Consultation, implementing a training programme for the committee members and continuing to strengthening relationships with Government policy teams.

The afternoon session focused on networking and sharing information between committees. Danny Mullen, secretary of Central Regional Network, introduced the workshop session and the round table discussions which gave delegates the opportunity to discuss issues amongst themselves. Everyone then attended workshops to consider how the networks were operating and the way forward. Regional Committee representatives then presented feedback from all workshop discussions.

Jim Maryniak closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming to a very enjoyable event. The Committees are looking forward to the work in the year ahead.



# NEW REGIONAL WEBSITE

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# A NEW HOUSING BILL FOR SCOTLAND



**It's more important than ever in these difficult times to safeguard social housing as a secure, sustainable alternative to owner-occupation. A new draft Housing Bill that the Scottish Government published in April aims to do just that.**

**The draft Bill comes with a consultation paper that sets out Scottish Government proposals to safeguard social housing for future generations and improve the value it delivers for tenants and taxpayers.**

## **Safeguarding new social housing**

The draft Bill would see an end to the Right to Buy (RTB) on new social housing, safeguarding it for future generations of tenants. The Government is also asking for views on wider reforms such as whether to remove the RTB from new tenants coming into social housing. These changes won't affect existing tenants' rights. But, in protecting any new social housing from being sold under RTB, they should encourage councils to build new houses. Over time the changes would increase the amount of housing available to rent and this, in turn, should mean shorter waiting times for people and families in need.

*'We're all for this change' says Rena Smith of Tayforth Regional Network. 'I would even go further and say that most tenants would like to see a Right to Rent replacing the Right to Buy.'*

## **Modernising housing regulation**

If you're a local authority or RSL tenant, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is responsible for regulating and inspecting your landlord to make sure services are up to the mark. Changes in the draft Bill aim to modernise the regulator's role – for example by giving it a specific legal duty to safeguard and promote your interests. A key question in the consultation is whether the modernised SHR should continue to look after the interests of council tenants.

And, for the first time, the Government wants to develop a Scottish Social Housing Charter that would describe what tenants can expect from their landlords. The Charter would be developed in consultation with tenants across Scotland, to find out what they want, as well as with landlords and other stakeholders. You'll be able to read more about this in a future issue.

## RTO Regional Networks talks to Government

The RTO Regional Networks have already been talking to the Government about the changes to regulation contained in the draft Bill. It took part in a 'stakeholder sounding board', with other stakeholders and Government officials, which met three times in late 2008 and early 2009. Rena Smith, Steve Byrne and Hugh McClung represented the network at these meetings and made sure the Government heard tenants' views as well as those of the housing professionals.

The board agreed that the purpose of a modernised regime for regulating social housing should be to focus social landlords on:

- **meeting tenants' priorities;**
- **continually improving performance and value; and**
- **commanding the confidence of public and private investors in social housing.**

That purpose underpins the draft Bill.

*'When the consultations about Regional Networks started five years ago I honestly thought all that was going to happen was that yet another system would be set up for passing information down to RTOs and that would be that' Steve observes. 'Little did I think tenant representatives would be meeting with the Housing Minister and*

*actually being involved in developing housing policy. Being one of the three representatives from the Regional Networks on the sounding board has shown me that tenants now not only have a have a real voice but that voice is listened to and acted on, for the benefit of all tenants.'*

## Have your say

The Scottish Government sent copies of the consultation paper and the draft Bill to every RTO in Scotland.

But Rena thinks it's important that the Government looks for ways to reach out beyond the formal networks. She wants individual tenants to have their say too. *'The Scottish Government will listen to the RTO Regional Network' she says, 'but a way has to be found for individual tenants, who may not be part of a group, to have their opinions heard too.'*

The Housing Minister, Alex Neil, agrees. *'It's vital to have a thriving rented sector that provides a real alternative for those who can't or don't want to buy. I firmly believe that renting should never be seen as a second best. Tenants deserve and should be able to expect the best from their landlord, whether it's a local authority or a RSL. We want to get this Bill right – and that's why the Government wants to hear from as many tenants as possible, whether or not you're part of a formal group.'*

Supported by the Scottish Government, TIS and TPAS hosted eight events during May and June at venues all over Scotland to raise awareness of the Housing Bill Consultation, hear more about the proposals, and discuss the issues. They were free of charge and open to all local authority and RSL tenants.

Whether or not you attended one of these events, the Government wants to hear from you. You can read the consultation paper and draft Bill on the Scottish Government website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations), where you'll also find a questionnaire for your comments. Some of the questions will be of more direct relevance to tenants than others, so don't feel you must answer all the questions if you don't want to. We want your comments on the areas that matter most to you. **The consultation will end on 14 August.**

You can respond online or email us at:  
[housingbill2009@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housingbill2009@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Or post your reply to:

**The Tenant Priorities Team**  
**The Scottish Government**  
**Social Housing, Area 1-H South**  
**Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ**

## DRAFT HOUSING (SCOTLAND) BILL - THE PROPOSALS

### The Right to Buy

- An end to the RTB for new social housing
- Ending RTB for new tenants
- Reforms to existing rules (for example, how decisions are made about suspending RTB in pressured areas)

### Modernising social housing regulation

- Specific statutory duty to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, future tenants and others such as homeless people
- A charter, developed in consultation with tenants, landlords and other stakeholders, that describes what landlords should be delivering for their tenants
- Landlords responsible for meeting the standards, improving performance and giving value for money
- Annual performance reports by the regulator that help tenants to hold their landlord to account
- Lighter touch regulation for organisations that perform well, but more attention for poorer ones
- Wider range of powers for the regulator to step in and make landlords take action when it's needed



## THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS!

HOUSING BILL  
CONSULTATION ENDS  
14 AUGUST - GET YOUR  
RESPONSES IN NOW

# INVESTING IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Every year, the Scottish Government awards close to half a billion pounds to Housing Associations, to subsidise the costs of their new developments. This subsidy is called Housing Association Grant (HAG), and it pays about two thirds of the costs of each new house. In the long run, the provision of this Government subsidy is the reason why social rents can be kept lower than other rents.

But it is getting harder to make sure this Government investment can buy as many new affordable houses as Scotland needs. Before the credit crunch, the main problem was the rising costs of land and construction. Nowadays, the difficulties have more to do with the cost of bank loans to

Housing Associations, the reduction in mixed-tenure developments led by the private sector and expected future constraints on Government budgets. Meantime, long waiting lists continue to emphasise how much we need the new housing.

This is why, last December, the Scottish Government issued a consultation on proposals to change our procedures for awarding HAG. We argued that we should be able to get more for our money if we channelled the subsidy to a much smaller number of Housing Associations – the

Lead Developers. Each of these Associations would take responsibility for developments over a wider area and for several years. In effect, they would become development specialists, able to introduce better and more efficient ways of putting new houses in place. Award of subsidy to Housing Associations would be competitive, so that most funding would go to those who offered the best package in terms of both quality and price.

Many Housing Associations have strong local roots in their communities. Recognising this, we also proposed that Lead Developers should group together with other Associations in their region, so that ownership of the new homes could be shared among a number of Associations. Arrangements like this already work in many parts of Scotland, particularly in the east and south.

The consultation also recognised the vital role of Local Authorities, who set the priorities for housing investment in their areas and work closely with Associations in delivering them.

The consultation provoked a lot of debate, and we received 233 responses, including over 50 from Registered Tenants Organisations or individual tenants. We're grateful to everyone who took the time to consider our proposals and to send us their views. Most of the responses agreed there was a need for more efficient and effective investment, and agreed that clearer priorities, higher standards and longer-term programmes would help with this. But many felt that our ideas about competition were too complicated; and that our ideas for development consortia for Housing Associations were too rigid.

We have reflected on these comments, and discussed them with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), COSLA and Homes for Scotland (HfS). In agreement with those 3 organisations, we issued a statement on 25 June setting out revised plans.

Alex Neil, the Housing Minister, gave notice of the new thinking in his speech to the SFHA conference on 5 June. He explained that

the Government would not be insisting on a particular form of consortium, nor introducing complicated competition arrangements. Instead we would be working with SFHA, COSLA and HfS to work out the best ways to improve the efficiency of housing investment. Some of the ideas from the December consultation will be part of this, including standards for Associations who wish to develop new houses, more collaboration between Associations, and longer-term budgets for Associations who can make the money go further.

Despite the difficult times we are going through, there will be no let-up in the Government's determination to get more affordable housing built, to meet the needs of future tenants.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/04132312/0>

# TENANT PARTICIPATION TEAM ON THE MOVE

It's now been over a year since the Tenant Participation team moved into the core Scottish Government. As well as getting to know the team better, the move has strengthened our intention of aligning its work more closely with the Scottish Government's core aim of putting current and future tenants at the heart of social housing policy.

I am encouraged by the contributions that the Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO) regional networks have made to policies that may affect their interests. For example, during the year we consulted on changing the way in which we give grants to housing associations to develop new housing. The feedback received from the regional networks has been of great value to the project team leading on this area. The Regional networks have also been represented on a number of Scottish Government working groups which have helped to develop national policy on issues such as modernising the Scottish Housing Regulator, and Housing Allocations.

Looking forward, the Housing Bill and the setting up of an independent regulator with tenants' interests at the core

of its purpose, is an important empowerment opportunity for tenants and tenant groups.

In the new, enhanced regulatory framework, tenants will have a key role in influencing the national standards set for the sector. The regulator will be responsible for measuring landlord performance against the standards and intervening where necessary. Monitoring information will also enable tenants to get a better idea of the relative performance of their landlord.

As a first step towards setting national standards, we commissioned research on tenant priorities, asking tenants directly what type of services they value most. Representatives from the RTO Regional Networks sat on the steering board for the research project.



Aidan Grisewood

The close links between the Housing Bill and the Tenant Participation teams meant that the decision to place both areas of work in the same team was easy. Its name, Tenant Priorities, both reflects what the team does and the Government's aim to put the interests of current and future tenants first.

Aidan Grisewood is Deputy Director of Social Housing at the Scottish Government. He previously headed the Analytical Services division supporting housing, planning, regeneration and social justice issues. Before joining the Scottish Government, Aidan worked as a senior economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland and spent four years at HM Treasury covering small business and productivity issues.

# NEW TEAM, NEW NAME TENANT PRIORITIES SOCIAL HOUSING DIVISION

**In January a new team within the Social Housing Division, the Tenant Priorities Team, was established to deal with the interests of the tenants of social housing.**

The team, led by William Fleming, brings together staff working on tenant participation under Anne Cook and those working on policy to promote the interests of tenants.

The team's name says just about all there is to know about it. Our focus is on the things that matter most to social housing tenants.

The team has been busy developing proposals for reinvigorating social housing, which were originally set out in the discussion document *Firm Foundations; the future of housing in Scotland*.

These proposals are included in the draft Housing Bill and consultation paper that the Government published in April 2009. You can read more about this in the article on page 6.

Part of this work included commissioning a major research project to identify tenants' priorities for social housing. The results will be used to inform the development of the Scottish Social Housing Charter which is proposed in the Housing Bill.

As part of the project, 661 registered tenant organisations (RTOs) were invited to participate in a written survey. Five focus

groups drawn from tenants, and one from the RTO networks were also held as part of the research.

The project also included 500 telephone surveys with individual tenants who expressed an interest in being involved in such initiatives. The questionnaire covered areas such as additional services and improvements tenants might like their landlords to provide; opportunities for being involved in decision making; and whether the amount of rent paid represents good value for money.

We received 193 valid responses to the postal survey, and would like to thank all who took part. Your views are important to us, and we will publish further information on the Scottish Government website when we have analysed your responses.

Following a review of tenant participation activity, tenant participation staff will no longer be providing direct landlord support in the way it did in the past although it will continue to provide advice on request. Over the next year or two, the team will be focussing on supporting and encouraging ways for tenants, RTOs and Regional Networks to participate in the development of the Bill and the Charter and to become more demanding customers of their landlords.

## WHO WE ARE

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# ALLOCATIONS REVIEW - GREEN SHOOTS OF NETWORK INVOLVEMENT HAVE TAKEN ROOT

After many years of hard work developing and implementing the regional networks, we are beginning to witness the fruits of our collective labours with representatives from the regional committees, sitting on sounding boards and advisory groups, established by the Scottish Government.

In 2008 the Government published the findings of two bodies of research which explored social landlords' views on social housing allocations policy and guidance. *Tensions Between Allocations Policy and Practice* set out a number of areas of policy and practice where landlords identified tensions or insufficient clarity in policy and guidance. In addition, *Improving Access and Maximizing Choice: the Applicant's Perspective of Allocations Schemes* highlighted that there was a general lack of understanding amongst applicants about how allocations systems operate.

Following publication of this research, the Scottish Government established an advisory group which has been meeting over the last few



Eric Allan and George McGuinness giving their views

months to consider the issues raised by the research and develop appropriate solutions and produce revised guidance to enable social landlords to manage the housing allocations process. This will help landlords understand the requirements upon them and make use of the flexibility they have in developing their allocations policy.

To help support and inform the review, Eric Allan from Northern Lights Regional Network and George McGuinness from Glasgow and Eilean Siar Regional Network are members of the advisory group; both of whom have commented that the experience is worthwhile and fulfilling.

Eric says *'this is where tenants' representatives should be, at the heart of developing government policies and influencing strategies.'* The group also includes representatives from the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, the RTO Regional Networks, Scottish Housing Regulator and Shelter Scotland. George commented *'this group has gelled very well together and I look forward to the publication of the revised guidance later this year, which aims to provide social landlords with the clarity and assistance they seek.'*

# TPAS AND TIGHRA JOIN FORCES



Lesley Baird and Anne Allan seal the partnership

The membership of TPAS and TIGHRA have voted to approve TPAS and TIGHRA becoming one organisation. For many years TIGHRA have successfully worked to support, develop and raise the profile of participation in the north of Scotland's rural, remote and island communities. In the past year TIGHRA decided to seek a formal relationship with TPAS. TIGHRA and TPAS have worked closely together over the past few years, preferring to work together rather than compete against each other.

At the EGM on 3 June, TIGHRA members voted to dissolve the organisation, but were assured that the name and support for rural participation will continue with TPAS. Judith McCulloch TIGHRA development manager will be working with TPAS on a variety of projects.

TIGHRA will continue to hold its annual conference, this year in Inverness on 11 and 12 September, it will have its own TIGHRA committee which will operate as a sub committee of TPAS. In the spirit of the voluntary sector

supporting each other, we will also be sharing the offices of the Highland Small Communities Housing trust in Inverness.

Calum Mackay Chairperson of TPAS says 'we are delighted to formalise our links with TIGHRA and working together will ensure participation in the north of Scotland is well supported.'

Anne Allan chair of TIGHRA says 'TIGHRA has now come full circle, as the organisation was an offshoot of TPAS many years ago. We have always

*worked well together, and now that we are back under the one banner, we can continue to provide the specialist help, advice and guidance for both tenants and landlords in Scotland's rural and remote areas.'*

It's exciting and interesting times for TPAS we are looking forward to a bright strong future together.

For more information please contact Lesley Baird at TPAS, tel 0141 552 3633 or email [lesley.baird@tpasscotland.org.uk](mailto:lesley.baird@tpasscotland.org.uk)

# THE INAUGURAL FRANCES NELSON MBE AWARD

**In April 2009 the Tenants Information Service announced the introduction of the Frances Nelson MBE Award in memory of Frances Nelson MBE. The award was introduced in TIS' 20th Anniversary year to commemorate the contribution that Frances made to the tenants' movement in Dundee and throughout Scotland. Frances was Convenor of TIS from 2003 until she sadly passed away in February 2009.**

The award was open to any tenants' or tenants' and residents' organisation in Scotland. The organisation should have made a positive contribution or outstanding achievement to the tenants' movement by working to represent the views of its members.

TIS received eighteen nominations for the award. The judging panel represented the tenants' movement, the council sector and the Registered Social Landlord sector and met on Wednesday 3 June to decide which group should win the award this year. After much deliberating the judges decided that Glendoe Terrace Residents Association in Inverness was the well-deserved winner. The association has worked over the past eleven years to represent their members, take account of their views and as a result secured a long-term future for their area. At one time Highland Council was considering demolishing the houses in Glendoe Terrace, however, after a survey was carried out in the area the

association is now working jointly with Highland Council to secure long-term investment which includes new heating systems, bathrooms, kitchens, rewiring and external improvements.

The judges were impressed by the association's determination to keep working on their issues and not to give up at the first hurdle. The judges believe Frances would have been impressed that the tenants managed to prevent the demolition of council housing in Inverness. There were two runners up in the award this year. These are Gilfoot and Girvan Crescent Tenants and Residents Group in Newmilns, East Ayrshire and Osborne and Winton Court Tenants Group in Cockenzie, East Lothian.

TIS would like to thank all the groups who were nominated. It reflects the valuable role that tenants, and residents, groups play in shaping housing services across Scotland.



# TIS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS!



TIS Committee



**The Tenants Information Service (TIS) celebrates its 20th Anniversary this year. TIS has played a major role in shaping the legal framework for tenant participation in Scotland and developing good tenant participation practice.**

Ilene Campbell, Director of TIS said: *'TIS has grown from a small organisation of just two staff to a team of eighteen, with projects in East Lothian, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross and East Ayrshire. We would like to thank everyone for the support we have received to develop our services.'*

TIS is a national organisation providing support to tenants and landlords to work together to

improve housing conditions and services. TIS can offer a range of services to help you to get the most from tenant participation and improve service delivery.

Elaine Zwirlein, Director of Housing at Dundee City Council said: *'TIS has been invaluable in supporting the Council and tenants to work together to review the repairs service and to work towards delivering the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.'*

Dave Falconer, Chair of the Tenants Forum at Servite Housing Association said: *'TIS has supported us now for almost three years to develop our Tenant Participation activities and strengthen our Forum. Independent advice from TIS has been essential in assisting tenants and staff to work in partnership and to listen to each other's points of view for the benefit of all Servite tenants.'*

TIS are planning a number of events to mark its achievements over the course of the year. If you would like to find out how TIS can support you contact us by email [info@tis.org.uk](mailto:info@tis.org.uk), tel 0141 248 1242 or visit our website [www.tis.org.uk](http://www.tis.org.uk)

## NEW LEGISLATION | HOMELESS ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

New legislation come into force on 1 April 2009 which means that RSLs will be required to notify the relevant local authority when they take court action to repossess a property. Many RSLs already do this as good practice, but under section 11 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 it will become a statutory requirement. RSLs will

be required to pass certain relevant information about the court action to the local authority, giving them early notice of households who may be at risk of homelessness due to eviction. Local authorities can use the information received to inform strategic planning of homelessness services and may also choose to act in individual cases to

help prevent homelessness occurring, where possible. A similar duty has come into force for private sector landlords and creditors. More information is available from the Scottish Government website at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/homeless/s11>

# CVN JUNE 2009 UPDATE ON OPPORTUNITIES

Since the launch of the **Community Empowerment Action Plan** in March, the **Scottish Government's Community Engagement Team** have been developing appropriate ways to increase local people's learning, working with a range of partner and stakeholder organisations. Community activists and volunteers have also provided comment and suggestions.

A number of resources and opportunities are now available, that you may be interested in:

The Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF) now have a **Networking Assistance Programme (SNAP)** to enable community activists and volunteers to attend events, seminars and forums organised by SURF. This programme will cover event fees and travel and subsistence costs incurred for attending. Check out the SURF website at [www.scotregen.co.uk](http://www.scotregen.co.uk) for information on upcoming events and to register for the regular newsletter and updates, or contact Susanne Richardson at SURF by telephone on 0141 585 6849.

Local People Leading now have a **Knowledge and Skills Exchange Programme** to promote and stimulate learning and exchange of expertise across the sector, through visits to other relevant organisations and projects across Scotland. Community groups affiliated to those networks currently involved with Local People Leading will have access to this Programme. Check out the LPL website at [www.localpeopleleading.co.uk](http://www.localpeopleleading.co.uk) for more information and updates on what's happening across the sector or contact Angus Hardie by telephone on 0131 260 9501.

The Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) have produced a **Development Trust Learning Resource Pack** to help raise awareness of what Development Trusts are and how they work. Comrie Development Trust in Perthshire has been used as a case study for this pack. Check out the DTAS website at [www.dtascot.org.uk](http://www.dtascot.org.uk) for more information and to request your free pack, or contact Aileen Tulloch at DTAS by telephone on 0131 220 2456.

The Community Engagement Team will be hosting a Learning and Networking in Regeneration Event in late autumn. If you are involved in regeneration in your local community and would like to showcase your project, please contact Wendy-Louise Smith by email at [communityengagement@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communityengagement@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0141 305 4186.

For updates on progress with the Community Empowerment Action Plan and other opportunities for community activists and volunteers to learn, network and share experience, check out the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/engage>

Or contact the Community Engagement Team by e-mail at [communityengagement@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communityengagement@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0141 305 4186.

# THREE NEW LEARNING NETWORKS LAUNCHED BY THE SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR REGENERATION

The Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR) has launched three new Learning Networks focused on:

- Delivering community regeneration and tackling poverty;
- Creating mixed and sustainable communities; and
- Creating vital and vibrant town centres and local high streets.

The learning networks are a cross-Government initiative that aim to give practical help to organisations and individuals involved in decision-making and providing front-line services in each of these three areas.

Offering a new way of helping members, the learning networks:

- are responsive to members needs and helps them to deal effectively with common problems and issues;
- enables members to learn in a way that suits them;
- provides a dedicated coordinator, an allocated budget and access to a group of experts, tools and good practice; and
- provides its services free.

The learning networks help members to:

- learn from other people and organisations facing the same problems, through online networking and taking part in events, seminars, workshops, learning groups, peer-review sessions and project development programmes;
- access good practice and evidence of what works, including case studies, publications and research from the Scottish Government and other specialist networks or capacity-building programmes;
- work with a bank of experts who will provide advice and share their experiences through master classes, meetings, seminars and workshops or as a critical friend;
- access resources such as toolkits, online learning programmes and skills-assessment tools; and
- identify any new research, tools and resources you need, which we can then commission on your behalf.

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to become a member of one (or more) of the SCR learning networks, go to:

[www.partnersinregeneration.com](http://www.partnersinregeneration.com) or  
email [contactscr@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:contactscr@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)