



Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

Briefing Note The People and Communities Fund

Introduction

1.1 This Briefing Note provides GWSF members with an update on the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund (PCF).

1.2 The Briefing summarizes the background to the PCF, outlines the key types of activities which CCHAs have received funding for, and provides a breakdown of the share of the awards allocated to the housing sector over time.

1.3 With the Scottish Government's 2017-18 Spending Review approaching, the Briefing also summarises GWSF's views on how the PCF might best support CCHAs' community regeneration activities going forward.

Background

2.1 Community-led regeneration is at the core of the Scottish Government's regeneration strategy¹. The [regeneration strategy](#) recognises the need to target funding to tackle area inequality and to involve and empower communities to take action themselves.

2.2 The People and Communities Fund² was launched in 2012, specifically to promote and support the regeneration of communities. It builds on the former Wider Role Fund which was open specifically to RSLs, with the PCF providing funding to support all types of local community anchor organisations (RSLs, Development Trusts and others) to deliver outcomes which respond to the aspirations of their communities.

2.3 The People and Communities Fund focuses on tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion.

2.4 In 2015-16 the PCF benefited from a new £10 million Empowering Communities Fund, resulting in a PCF of £13.4m out of a total funding pot for community-led activity of £19.4 million in 2015-16.

Analysis

3.1 In 2015-16, there were 220 applications to the People and Communities Fund, and 197 projects received funding totalling £13.4 million. A range of diverse initiatives was funded,

¹ Achieving a Sustainable Future: Regeneration Strategy, The Scottish Government, 2011
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/12/09110320/11>

² People and Communities Fund <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/community/pcf>

focusing on: activities for young people; fuel poverty; volunteering; money advice and support services; skills training and employment; healthy eating; confidence and capacity building; arts and digital inclusion projects; tackling social isolation and supporting older people; improving community spaces.

3.2 The remaining budget from the Empowering Communities Fund was allocated to projects that support a wide range of community-led initiatives (including community empowerment and community asset transfer).

3.3 As the table below shows a total of 52 housing organisations received £5.725m funding for 84 projects in the 2015-16 round of PCF funding, and this represented 42.8% of the budget. 113 other third sectors organisations received £7.647m in funding for 113 projects, corresponding to 57.2% of the overall fund.

PCF 2015-16

	RSLs	Other bodies	Total
Projects	84	113	197
Number of organisations	52	113	165
Value	£5.725m	£7.647m	£13.4m
% share	42.8%	57.2%	100%

3.4 The PCF budget for 2016/17 is £10.8 million, which represents a reduction of £2.6m from the 2015-16 budget. 190 projects will receive funding.

3.5 The table below outlines the PCF budget since its inception in 2012. The total funding amount for the three year period 2012-15 was £18.3m, an average of £6.1m per year. In 15/16 the Fund increased considerably by £7.3m to a total spend of £13.4m. For 16/17 however it has fallen to £10.8m, a reduction of £2.6m.

PCF 2012 - 2017

People and Communities Fund	£m
12/13	6.1
13/14	6.1
14/15	6.1
15/16	13.4
16/17	10.8

3.6 In terms of PCF funding for all housing organisations under both the PCF and the previous Wider Role Fund we can see in the table below that this has been reduced year on year from £12m through Wider Role in 08/09 to £5.096m for 16/17. This equates to a substantial reduction of £6.904m overall.

WIDER ROLE AND PCF FUNDING FOR RSLs

Housing Association Funding	£m
08/09	12 (WR)
11/12	6 (WR)
15/16	5.725
16/17	5.096

3.7 If we examine PCF funding for GWSF members from 2012 through to 2017, in the table below, we can see that the number of members receiving funding increased by 7 from 23 to 30 associations, and represents almost half of GWSF members. This is a welcome increase and we believe that if the PCF pot was increased then there would be further scope for more of our members to become involved.

3.8 In the PCF funding period 2012-15 GWSF members received £4.8m (an average of £1.6m per year). The table below also highlights the reduction in PCF funding for GWSF members from £3.4m in 2015/16 to £3.1m in 2016/17. Some members indicated that this reduction mean they had to limit the scope of their projects moving forward.

PCF FUNDING FOR GWSF MEMBERS 2012 - 17

	12-15	15-16	16-17
Projects	43	47	45
Number of organisations	23	30	30
Value	£4.8m	£3.4	£3.1

Making the case for maximising the PCF

4.1 Crucially, since the PCF has been reduced in real terms for the year 16/17, GWSF is reiterating the 'ask' from our manifesto document published earlier in the year that: "The Scottish Government should demonstrate its continued support for CCHAs as community anchor bodies by increasing the amount of regeneration funding directly accessible by local organisations. In particular, the much valued People and Communities Fund should be maximised so that local services developed with and for local communities can flourish."

4.2 The fact that PCF funding is given *directly* to community anchor organisations rather than being funnelled through an intermediary body (such as a local authority) is a vital factor in supporting regeneration activity in communities. Obviously, we want to see this *direct* funding stream from national government continued and increased.

4.3 Across Scotland poorer communities are bearing the brunt of the Westminster Government's continued austerity and welfare reform policies. Community Controlled Housing Associations are often the key community anchor organisation within these neighbourhoods and are doing more than ever before to support people in a range of ways. We understand that the PCF is currently being reviewed by the Scottish Government and we trust that the government will continue to recognise the crucial role that the PCF plays in allowing these supportive projects and activities to happen and we are arguing that with a reduced PCF the most disadvantaged communities in Scotland will lose out.

4.4 We welcome the Scottish Government's development programme which aims to see the completion of 50,000 new homes by March 2021. Alongside this and in keeping with the

SG's focus on 'holistic regeneration' we think the PCF is a vital component in meeting both physical and social regeneration aims and in helping to create and maintain resilient and sustainable communities.

4.5 Reflecting feedback from our members we would like to see a new, related fund dedicated to capital development grants for community organisations which wish to provide halls and other facilities requiring capital expenditure.

4.6 We would assert that year-to-year short term funding is not the best or most strategic way to support long-term planning and regeneration activities taken forward by community anchor organisations. We recognise the Westminster-placed limitations on the Scottish Government's Budget planning process, but would, for the record, want to reiterate the huge value of making PCF awards available over a longer time period, as has previously been the case for at least some funding periods.

4.7 Finally, we welcome the new mechanisms under the Community Empowerment Act in relation to asset transfer and participation requests. We also welcome the extension of the Land Fund to include bids from urban areas. We believe that these measures, combined with a robust PCF moving forward, offer real opportunities for our members as they continue to work with local people to help to tackle poverty, reduce inequality, and improve their communities.