

Response to the Vibrant & Viable Places New Regeneration Framework Consultation

Consultation Response 2013

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Vibrant & Viable Places New Regeneration Framework. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

We have chosen only to respond to the questions where we have experience and relevant evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Carnegie UK Trust supports the Welsh Government's proposals to move towards an outcomes-based approach to regeneration which we see as part of a wider movement towards understanding, measuring and improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

An outcomes based approach, of the kind proposed in the consultation paper, is a step forward towards considering the impact of policies on the wellbeing of people. This is particularly true of the 'whole government approach' as set out in the principles for regeneration in the consultation document. Taking a system-wide approach to the overall impact of government activity can encourage joined up working and help services consider their unintended impacts, as well as those that they proactively seek.

As the Welsh Government may be aware, the Scottish Government has moved towards an outcomes based system of performance management through the National Performance

Framework (see [More than GDP: Measuring What Matters](#), Carnegie UK Trust, 2011). We would recommend that the Welsh Government consider the experiences of Scotland in taking forward this agenda.

It is essential that an outcomes-based approach is used to influence policy development, in addition to its use as a tool for performance management. Our [Shifting the Dial: From wellbeing measures to policy practice](#) report (Carnegie UK Trust, 2012) looks at how we can ensure outcome measures are factored into the policymaking process, so that what we measure is what really matters. The report draws lessons from France, Virginia (USA), the City of Somerville (USA), the City of Guelph (Canada), Vital Signs Toronto (Canada) and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Our case study research shows that policymakers can use wellbeing measures as a way to monitor our overall progress and direction as a society. Our key findings are that moving towards wellbeing measures requires both leadership and a broad-base of support from communities and civil society

organisations. The process of agreeing what outcomes are to be achieved, and reporting on progress requires a consultative approach bringing in views from outside government, not merely a technocratic approach to developing indicators.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Q. Should other national outcomes or principles be considered?

A new outcome on engaged and empowered communities

The Carnegie UK Trust recommends that the Welsh Government consider an additional national outcome of Engaged and Empowered Communities, and that this should be the first national outcome in order to support the Communities First programme and the Welsh Government's Programme for Government objectives. A national outcome of Engaged and Empowered communities would provide an opportunity for genuine involvement of the communities in which regeneration takes place, and the option for communities to manage or own their own assets.

Community engagement

The Trust believes that in order for regeneration strategies to improve wellbeing, communities and citizens must be actively engaged in the process and empowered to take part in the decision making process. Without this underpinning principle there is a risk that regeneration strategies will not be effective.

The Trust has a long history of supporting effective community engagement. Our experience in a number of areas, including public libraries, improving local environments, broadband deployment, children and youth participation and rural development, suggests that there are a number of key components to effective engagement:

- the community as a whole must be aware of the opportunity to participate and actively encouraged to do so. Our experience across a range of policy areas is that sustainable

solutions to community problems are often community-led solutions.

- the community must be involved in defining what the problems and priorities for action are, as well as providing their views on options for delivering services.
- the organisation carrying out the engagement process must have the skills to engage effectively, and have a culture of valuing contributions from a range of stakeholders.
- the organisation carrying out the engagement must provide clear and publicly available information on their role and vision for the community.

Community control and ownership of assets

In seeking to deliver the outcome of Engaged and Empowered Communities, we would also encourage the Welsh Government to explore the option of community management and ownership of assets. Over the past 100 years we have been actively involved in community assets and empowerment, originally through grants for public libraries, playing fields and village halls, and more recently through support to the community land trust movement in Scotland and across the UK as a whole.

Unused and underused public assets can have a significant negative impact on communities, particularly where they are allowed to fall into disrepair. Conversely, we have seen how community ownership of land and assets has transformed many communities, as demonstrated in [From the Low Tide of the Sea to the Highest Mountain Top](#) (Island Book Trust/Carnegie UK Trust 2012). We strongly support opportunities for both urban and rural communities to take greater control and ownership of the assets in their locality, where they are interested in doing so. We are currently advising the Scottish Government on similar proposals through membership of the Ministerial working group on the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill.

The benefits of community ownership or stewardship can be:

- financial: leveraging in finance from other sectors and other fund raising activities.
- economic: contributing to the regeneration of the local economy which will improve the value of local land and buildings.
- social: opportunities for participation, pride in the local environment and individual and community wellbeing.

Options for community ownership of assets include asset transfer from local authorities, long-term leasing, joint or co-operative ownership and gradual equity purchase. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to identifying the correct solution for community assets but all should be considered by the public authority and community groups.

In order to understand the assets in their area, local people need to be provided with the opportunity to explore these issues together. There are many techniques for facilitating discussions about local assets, including asset mapping, appreciative enquiry and community-led planning. To be effective, they must start with assessing the views of people in the community as to what they think the assets are. This can help communities to build greater confidence and a stronger political voice with which to engage with the political system.

However, taking over community assets must come from a desire from the community to do things differently, not pressure from public authorities to take responsibility for assets that they can no longer maintain effectively.

Additional Comments on existing outcomes

Outcome One: Prosperous Communities

The Carnegie UK Trust believes that Outcome One: Prosperous Communities is central to the Welsh Government's ambitions for regeneration. Below we have outlined the importance of this outcome, particularly with regards to broadband connections and successful town centres and

seaside towns. For both of these outcomes, we draw on our experience and evidence to demonstrate the importance of these for realising prosperous communities and, in turn, regeneration.

Well-connected communities supported by transport and broadband connections

The Carnegie UK Trust particularly welcomes the inclusion of the outcome within this section relating to 'well-connected communities supported by transport and broadband connections' in order to achieve prosperity. Our [Rural Broadband – Reframing the Debate](#) report (Carnegie UK Trust and the Plunkett Foundation, 2012) suggests that governments and markets alone are unlikely to be able meet the high aspirations of rural communities when it comes to the provision of superfast broadband. Rural communities themselves, particularly in remote rural areas where distances are greater and the population more dispersed, are likely to be required play a central role in achieving the services that they require. However, this does not mean that government should 'leave communities to get on with it', but should support, encourage and empower communities to achieve the infrastructure that they need. With this in mind, we suggest that the Welsh Government should provide clear leadership on this issue, and have a robust strategy and commitment to provide long-term support for the development of community broadband solutions in rural areas, and ensure that this strategy encompasses the full range of support that community broadband enterprises are likely to need – including financial support, business advice, technical expertise and development support.

Successful town centres and seaside towns

The Carnegie UK Trust also welcomes the inclusion of the outcome relating to 'successful town centres and seaside towns' across Wales. In many towns and cities, a healthy high street mixture of retail, leisure, civic and service uses is

under significant threat. The retail crisis is being fuelled in large part by the departure of large and medium sized businesses from the high street environment.

Whilst food and drink, health services and other non-retail provision are moving into vacant retail units left behind by national shop chains, high streets are unlikely to be re-energised by these alone. They will also need to harness the spirit of innovation generated by younger entrepreneurs, capable of commercialising innovation that will tempt their contemporaries – the new, young consumers – back to town centres in the years ahead.

The Carnegie UK Trust's understanding of the economic environment suggests that there is a deficit in retail innovation on the high street but a surplus of innovation, energy and retail experience amongst younger people, many of whom are looking for real opportunities to experiment with small business ideas ([Enterprising Minds](#), Carnegie UK Trust, 2012).

In response to this research on youth enterprise and towns regeneration, the Carnegie UK Trust has developed [TestTown](#) (Carnegie UK Trust, 2013). TestTown is an innovation challenge and an opportunity for young people to make their mark. The purpose of TestTown is to inspire an enterprising mind-set in young people, civic and community organisations.

Through TestTown, the Carnegie UK Trust wants to find the next generation of ideas that will help to rebuild our town centres as places to visit, shop in and live in. Teams of young people aged 16-25 from across the UK, from all kinds of education and employment backgrounds, will be invited to submit cutting edge new business and social enterprise ideas, and will have the chance to put their ideas into practice in one town centre environment as part of a challenge competition Finals Week in mid-2013. Competitors will receive mentoring, product design support, short courses in business and innovation, and access to project development funds and Finals prizes. The project will be publicly launched in early 2013 with the announcement of a host town.

Outcome Two: Learning Communities

The Carnegie UK Trust believes that regeneration is linked with the skills of individuals, families and communities and welcomes national Outcome Two: Learning Communities. In this section we address the outcome of 'a skilled and confident existing and future workforce' by drawing on our work with young people and their views on enterprise education and enterprising opportunities for employment.

A skilled and confident existing and future workforce

In order to achieve the national outcome of Learning Communities, the Trust welcomes that regeneration policy will support 'a skilled and confident existing and future workforce' in Wales. Our recent research project [Enterprising Minds](#) (Carnegie UK Trust, 2012) explores the attitudes of young people to enterprise, education, and the future in a changing economy. It focuses on how students view practical enterprise – starting a business or working self-employed – and the contribution education systems make to the understanding of these work types.

The research found that college students in Wales rated more 'pro-enterprise' than their contemporaries anywhere else in the UK. They were more likely to see themselves starting businesses after college, were generally more confident that enterprise had been incorporated into their educational experiences, and were more inclined to admire and seek to follow the examples of enterprising people. Colleges in Wales are at the forefront of enterprise education, which comes through in the number of young people who told us they feel inspired to be successful entrepreneurs. The research shows that meeting successful business leaders and entrepreneurs from their own communities encourages and inspires students to think in more enterprising and creative ways – and that Welsh colleges have been particularly successful in providing this kind of support.

The Welsh Government should therefore capitalise on this entrepreneurial spirit among its young people and work with colleges and supporting organisations

to create more opportunities to develop practical enterprise skills that build on their retail experience and extracurricular interests. This may include student-led projects, competitions, and opportunities to design retail ideas with industry experts.

Outcome Three: Healthier communities

The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes the inclusion of national Outcome Three: Healthier Communities in the Welsh Government's regeneration policy and its focus on the health, safety, sustainability and quality of communities. In the section below we outline the importance of a sustainable and quality local environment in particular for regenerating Wales.

The Carnegie UK Trust believes that in order to achieve national Outcome Three, healthier communities, a 'sustainable and quality local environment' is essential and therefore we are pleased that this is recognised within the outcomes in this section. Our experience from our [Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities](#) research (Carnegie UK Trust, 2012) shows clearly the impact of the local environment on the wellbeing of individuals and communities. The report provides case studies of community-led projects from Belfast to Glasgow to tackle issues such as vandalism, graffiti and litter which have a disproportionate impact on those living in the UK's least affluent communities.

Our research found that the community must be involved in defining what the problems and priorities for action are for their local environment, as well as providing their views on options for delivering services. Our experience shows clearly that local people may well have different priorities to those assumed by service providers.

The Trust therefore recommends that the Welsh Government supports local authorities to:

- increase the priority given to tackling environmental incivilities, particularly in deprived urban areas, given the impact these have on individual and community wellbeing.
- work in partnership with local communities to

identify the main incivilities problems in their neighbourhood and think about how these might be overcome.

- provide information, advice and support to community led groups who want to tackle environmental incivilities in their area.
- provide small-scale funding to local community groups seeking to tackle the problems of incivilities in their area.
- seek to build into procurement processes obligations upon environmental contractors to either work with or provide financial support to local, community-led projects seeking to tackle incivilities in their area.

Q. What more can be done to achieve greater coherence and cross cutting action across departments?

Community outcomes, such as the ones identified by the Welsh Government are themselves cross-cutting and rely on the involvement of a large number of public services, and in many cases are also reliant on the voluntary sector. Agreeing joint outcomes, shared between departments can help overcome some of the difficulties but one of the key barriers to joined-up working is operating to different targets and indicators. Even where the outcome is agreed, departments may have different target priorities. Virginia Performs, the inspiration for Scotland Performs, pioneered the model of having shared, cross-departmental indicators. Combined with staff training and awareness raising activities this has helped public servants to see the value of their work as part of the whole. In Scotland, using single outcome agreements there are moves to joining up agreed outcomes and indicators between local public services but also in partnership with the third sector. While the Programme for Government includes a large number of indicators, we were unsure of whether these are viewed as shared indicators, as they are in Virginia. The Welsh Government should consider whether the outcomes approach could be supported by further work at the indicator level.

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913 and we are delighted to be celebrating our centenary in 2013. Please see our website for further information on our centenary plans.

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