

Community-driven place making



'Lamlash, Arran (Irvine HA)

Produced as part of the Scottish Government's Joint Housing Delivery Plan by:



Contents

Foreword	Pages 2-3
	New homes in Ardgeal, Kincaig Pages 4-5
	New homes in Helmsdale, Sutherland Pages 6-7
	New homes in Gairloch, Wester Ross Pages 8-9
	Regeneration of Laurieston, Glasgow Pages 10-11
	Regeneration of Castlemilk Park, Glasgow Pages 12-13
	New homes in Lamlash, Isle of Arran Pages 14-15

Foreword

In conjunction with a range of housing organisations, the Scottish Government has developed a Joint Housing Delivery Plan to help achieve its housing objectives. Some of the actions arising from this Plan are specific steps which may be needed to, for example, facilitate the provision of new homes.

Other actions in the Plan are about promoting good practice, and that's what this short publication aims to do. Action point 17 in the Plan begins with "people want to influence what happens in their neighbourhood", and so this booklet draws together some examples from across Scotland of how place making – in most cases involving the provision of new homes – has been driven by the local community.

This will have been the case since time began and will always be the case, but with just a short step back into the history books we see where the housing association movement was started, in the main as community led organisations, by communities who wanted to influence and meet their local needs adequately. This has been hugely successful and still allows community influence in a lot of areas.

For those outside the housing association movement it has been a more mixed picture historically. More recently, though, initiatives such as the Community Empowerment Act, Land Reform Act, Scottish Land Fund and Rural Housing Fund have provided the tools for empowering and enabling more direct influence over a wider area.

The case studies in this publication show good practice at work on a range of developments and via different interactions with communities, from those who want nothing more than to nudge development along through others to those that want to deliver, own and even manage assets.

The current strategic direction of travel is hugely encouraging for communities, although it's important that community groups are empowered to take action where they feel they have a responsibility, a capacity and a need to make use of the opportunities provided by the current strategic context and not simply because others believe they should. The clue to the essence of "community led development" is in the name!

Foreword



Before and After (New Gorbals HA)

That said, a great many communities do have the need and the will to effectively influence their neighbourhood development, and they will naturally rely on support from current leaders in the neighbourhood development field in order to build sustainable capacity within their community.

Anchor organisations such as housing associations, Rural Housing Enablers and development trusts etc. need to be accessible and be working with a clear and consistent understanding of the system and options available to communities. This sector has the potential to become mainstream and effective whilst at the same time provide a complementary addition to the various other key stakeholders.

For effective community led place-making - as per the case studies - to continue or be expanded, the new initiatives, along with the experience built up over the years with the many partnering options this can help facilitate, the sector will require clear direction and support from within Scottish Government and the planning system.

Community empowerment tools have been put in place, but so too have many other policies which sit outside the direct community development sphere, and they have the potential to create a contradiction which can conflict with and constrain community led place-making within the planning system. If the relationship and level of priority between all the relevant policies are unclear, community led or community supported development will suffer and risk being lost in bureaucracy.

This document showcases good and varied examples of place making. For Scotland to have a bottom up, sustainable place making culture moving forward, policies need to be pro-development and have sufficient priority within the planning system, sitting alongside a strong support network that works effectively with planners and policy makers to help deliver the stronger and more viable communities which are essential for a prosperous Scotland.

New homes in Ardgeal, Kinncraig



- Community driven project, facilitated by Highland Small Communities Housing Trust
- A housing model which may be used in other communities
- Low carbon footprint – 10 sustainable homes for low cost home ownership
- Land purchased through Forestry Commission Scotland's National Forest Land Scheme for affordable housing
- Wide social, environmental and economic benefits to the area, including the primary school remaining open
- 39 local companies used, and local timber and other materials
- Employment and training opportunities provided

Summary

Set in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park on land previously owned by Forestry Commission Scotland, Ardgeal is now a thriving addition to the community of Kinncraig. This community driven project was delivered over two phases. Ten sustainable timber homes were built by local contractors A W Laings, and designed by award winning architect David Somerville.

Local trainees were involved in the construction of six homes, with much of the felled timber being reused on the site. Local materials were used where possible to minimise impacts on this environmentally sensitive area.

The tenure of the homes is low cost home ownership, through a Rural Housing Burden with a pre-emption right and an equity share (eight homes @ 65% and two homes @ 70%) protects the ongoing affordability of the homes if they are sold in the future. Additional land is being considered for a forest croft.

New homes in Ardgeal, Kincaraig

Community involvement

The Kincaraig Community Council approached The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) in 2006 following concerns over the closure of the local primary school. This sparked a survey of local household need, to establish the most suitable house sizes and tenures, followed by a search for suitable development sites.

Ardgeal was identified by the community, who were involved in all of the key stages of development, such as: the successful application to the National Forest Land Scheme; density of homes; selection of the architect; review of phase 1; design of phase 2, and the community provided strong support for planning applications.

When the first phase of four homes was developed, the community was involved in agreeing a suitable allocations policy with HSCHT, which was used for both phases. Households with a local connection are now living in all of the homes, which has satisfied the brief of sustaining the primary school roll.

The community council chose the name “Ardgeal” by referring to old maps of the area. The name is Gaelic: “ard” means height or promontory, and “geal” means white.



Successes

This is an exemplar rural housing project achieved through excellent community co-operation. The regular attendance at community council meetings was a key factor in effective community engagement. This route allowed the members of the community council and local people to discuss the elements of the project together with staff from HSCHT. This gave the community a voice and the end result is a more engaged and involved community and a good relationship with HSCHT into the future.

An option presented to the community as part of the joint working was for them to own some homes to let out to local people as a community business, although they chose not to follow this route.

The community councillors acted as an intermediary for the residents, who had questions throughout the process, and they continue to be involved and engaged.

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Challenges

Time had to be built into the project to engage properly with the wider community throughout. This adds a layer of consultation to many processes, and trying to reach consensus can slow things down. In the first phase, some changes to the layout and the specification of the homes was required to meet the financial budget set, and this had to be carefully explained and discussed with those concerned.

The main challenges were finding a suitable funding mechanism to deliver the first phase of the project, both in terms of development finance and finance for the individual purchasers. There were many economic changes at this time which impacted on its delivery.

The second phase was initially postponed due to changes in grant funding and available finance. Once complete the ten households work together to manage common areas, such as the social space in the centre of the development.

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New homes in Helmsdale, Sutherland



- Community owned homes for rent – four two-bedroom homes and three self-build plots provided
- Land transfer secured by Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, along with the first grant to kick start the project
- Fundraising by local development officer – 18 different funders supported the project
- Partnership project with Albyn Housing Association and The Highland Council, and supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Allocations policy agreed with Council and Scottish Government
- New Scottish Government Rural Homes Fund (April 2016) can now provide grant support for similar initiatives

Summary

Helmsdale is a small community located on the north east coast of Scotland in the sparsely populated county of Sutherland. Affordable housing was identified as a priority by the community as no new homes had been provided there for around 35 years and this was seen to be having a negative impact on the sustainability of the community.

Plans were developed with the Helmsdale and District Development Trust who went on to complete four homes and three plots in 2015. Importantly, the homes are owned by the community and rented to local people. Any surplus income the housing asset generates is recycled into other community projects. Housing management is carried out by Albyn Housing Association to allow a level of distance between tenants and the community.

New homes in Helmsdale, Sutherland

Community involvement

In Helmsdale, there was capacity, a strong local drive and commitment to achieve these new homes. The community was represented through the already established Helmsdale and District Development Group (now Trust) who were originally involved in managing their community hall. In the early stages, key partners including the local authority, Albyn Housing Association and Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, were invited to meetings to discuss the options for providing more homes in Helmsdale.

Once HSCHT had assisted with establishing the principle of releasing the land from the local authority, the project was led by the Local Development Officer, whose post was funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Growth at the Edge fund. The Development Officer secured the funding from various sources, following on from HSCHT's assistance in securing a grant from the Scottish Government's Innovation and Investment Fund.

Ultimately, Albyn HA provided project management during the building of the homes and now provide housing management services on behalf of the community. The end result is an empowered community who are extremely proud of achieving community owned homes.



Successes

The project attracted the then Scottish Housing Minister Margaret Burgess to view the homes in 2015. It has been hailed as a success as the community now owns assets, it has empowered the community and it helps to provide good quality homes for the people of Helmsdale. It has helped reverse out-migration by providing suitable homes for younger people to remain in the community.

The community raised the majority of the funding themselves from 18 different sources over a two year period. They have gone on to raise the profile of their community owned homes by sharing information at various conferences and events and by holding events such as a turf cutting ceremony and opening events.

The Scottish Government has launched a new Rural Homes Fund (April 2016) to assist others to achieve their ambitions of addressing their own needs. Other communities are more encouraged by the success and the timely delivery of this project, making them believe that they can do the same.

Challenges

In many ways, this project was embarking on new territory in the Highlands, and possibly in Scotland, so there were many challenges. The community did not own any land and had no capital funding so they had to start the project completely from scratch. The largest obstacle was to attract funding amidst obstructive high street lending criteria, budgetary increases from the original estimates and a volatile grant funding environment. Even Scottish Government grants were decreased during the downturn, leaving fewer funding routes available to Helmsdale.

The fact that Helmsdale is recognised as a fragile remote and rural community was strong reason for many funders to support the project and to acknowledge its merits. Despite these challenges, after a lot of hard work, the project reached fruition in 2015.

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New homes in Gairloch, Wester Ross



- An exemplar rural redevelopment project facilitated by Highland Small Communities Housing Trust
- 20 affordable homes – 16 for social rent and four low cost home ownership
- The community were the main drivers, through the Achtercairn Development Group
- A great example of a multi-partner development to attract around £7 million inward investment to Gairloch
- Wide social, environmental and economic benefits to the area, including the use of local construction firms
- 40,000 visitors per year at GALE Tourist Information Hub, University of the Highlands and Islands centre, shop and café
- New Farm and Garden Store, and new Air Training Corps – purpose built training facility

Summary

The Achtercairn development is situated in the Wester Ross village of Gairloch. This prominent brownfield site now houses twenty homes which have been delivered in two phases by Albyn Housing Association (eight homes for rent and four low cost homes) and The Highland Council (eight homes for rent). A local business (the Farm & Garden Store), a social enterprise (Gairloch and Lochewe Action Forum or GALE) and a community organisation (the Air Training Corps.) have been incorporated into the development to achieve an attractive village focal point and a place to visit.

To complete the final stage, HSCHT intends to build some homes in 2016, and the Air Training Corps will build a new training facility adjacent to the building which they previously leased.

New homes in Gairloch, Wester Ross

Community involvement

The community has been the key driver in the process of developing and improving Achtercairn from the outset. The community themselves established the Achtercairn Development Group (ADG) early in the process, inviting members of the local business association, community groups, neighbouring landowners, the local authority, councillors and Albyn Housing Association, to be involved in regenerating this centrally located brownfield site to provide wide reaching social and economic benefits.

The ADG influenced the masterplan layout: instead of housing at the front of the development, this area now accommodates local businesses, including a Tourist Information Hub, which attracts around 40,000 visitors a year. Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum (GALE) are a social enterprise who successfully opened their sustainable timber building in May 2012 after securing funding from the Big Lottery and other sources.

The ADG remains a working steering group and will provide input to the final stages of development until its completion in 2016.



of others to deliver housing, and local businesses could attract funding to their own projects which otherwise may not have been possible if the funding requirements had been presented as one package.

The community took ownership of many aspects of the development, such as providing street names which acknowledge one of the main local contributors.

Challenges

New developments can divide opinions and existing businesses can feel threatened or displaced. While this was a factor in the early stages of the ADG, this was carefully worked through with the community and the partners involved. The ADG steering group was a strength in negotiating through any difficulties which arose and giving everyone a platform to voice any concerns. As an objective contributor it was useful for HSCHT to be involved in helping to move forward with an agreed plan.

Future

The Gairloch Heritage and Museum are hoping to relocate and regenerate a wartime building next to Achtercairn, which is owned by the local authority and currently houses the roads depot. The success of the GALE project has inspired the museum, and it is hoped that they will be able to transform this building into another showstopper for Gairloch.

GALE are continuing to develop and expand their social enterprise, the Farm & Garden Store has started trading from their new facility and the Air Training Corp will relocate to their new building shortly. Two neighbouring landowners now have access to their land and the potential to develop their large sites by Achtercairn.

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Regeneration of Laurieston, Glasgow



- 201 social rented homes, replacing four double multi-storey blocks built in the 1960s
- Driven through years of commitment from the voluntary management committee of a community controlled housing association
- A variety of house types, including apartments, maisonettes and terraces
- Twenty of the properties have been specifically designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users
- Layouts which put people before cars, with wide pavements and creative landscaping
- The first phase of an ambitious plan to transform and regenerate Laurieston

Summary

Laurieston was cleared of its traditional tenements in the 1950s and 1960s, to be replaced by four double blocks of multi-storey flats. The last of these blocks was demolished in 2015, with 201 new homes now completed in this first phase of the regeneration of Laurieston.

The homes are in a new layout of street and mews settings, with a variety of public and semi-public spaces created for local residents to meet and interact. Most have been allocated to people who were previously living in the Norfolk Court multi-storeys. The 201 homes are the biggest ever grant funded social housing project built in Scotland.

Momentum in Laurieston has since been continued with a further phase to provide 39 homes for mid market rent, through New Gorbals HA, and 69 homes for sale through Urban Union, the Association's development partner.

Regeneration of Laurieston, Glasgow

Community involvement

The driving force behind this development, as with previous ones in the Gorbals area, has been the management committee of New Gorbals HA. As a community controlled housing association, its wider membership is drawn from the Gorbals area, and the entire management committee are Gorbals tenants and residents.

The completion of the 201 homes is a landmark in a long journey which started in 2002. Thousands of hours of planning and consideration, and multiple community participation events, have gone into the development of the plans to transform Laurieston into a new urban area fit for the 21st century.

Over the years, almost 1,500 tenants and their families have been rehoused, mostly in the area. Just as it is a new start for the tower block tenants who have recently moved into their new homes, so too is it the beginning of the wider redevelopment of Laurieston. The Association is proud of what has been achieved so far, setting an impeccable standard for the rest of the area. It is the manifestation of a vision with people at its heart.

Architecture and development cannot create communities, but it can create a framework within which a new civic society can emerge, with a higher ideal of what is possible. It is still very early to tell how successful the development has been at this level, but what is clear is that this is a dramatic change for the wider local community which the Association hopes will be consolidated by the regeneration of the rest of Laurieston over the coming years.

Among other initiatives, the Association will support the development of a new sense of community and of a new neighbourhood with an interactive artworks programme combining community events with the creation of new public artworks.

2015 saw the first of what will hopefully be many Laurieston community festivals with old and new residents.

Successes

The development's design and layout have been widely acknowledged as highly successful. The grid-like quality of the city is reflected in the clearly defined urban blocks, with a wide variety of housing types – apartments, maisonettes and terraced houses, making the best possible use of corners, the southern aspect and courtyard environments.

An evolution of the Glasgow tenement, the new homes follow the traditional 'close' model of the city, but adopting more open arrangements for living, dining and kitchen spaces. Balconies replace the typical bay window, creating external spaces for residents. Deep front gardens along the main roads create a barrier between residents and the bustle of city life.



Being only a ten-minute walk from the City Centre, with bus and tube options too nearby, car ownership is not essential and the project prioritises people and pedestrians over cars. The new central street (Margaret Street) cuts through this first phase, with wide pavements and small areas of planting to punctuate the parking bays. The development starts the process of re-establishing Abbotsford Place as a broad avenue which will ultimately reconnect South Laurieston to the City Centre via a public park.

The development has won numerous prestigious awards, including Saltire awards, for both the housing and landscaping.

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Regeneration of Castlemilk Park, Glasgow



- Community driven project, led by the local community controlled housing association
- A no-go woodland area transformed into a real benefit for the whole community
- Hundreds of activities a year, attracting over 2,500 participants
- Brings important health, environmental, social and economic benefits to the community
- Features an employability initiative which is now offering paid employment on top of volunteering opportunities



Summary

Housing provision in Castlemilk has improved markedly in the last 25 years, but up until 2010, the woodlands which run through the heart of the community had not received the same attention.

Since 2010, Cassiltoun Housing Association has worked with the local community and key partners to transform the woodlands from a no-go area into a green space that brings important health, environmental and social benefits to the people living in the area.

Around 13,500 people live in Castlemilk, with more than half of the area falling into the bottom 5% of Scotland's most deprived datazones. Unemployment is high, and around 39% of the local working age population claim benefits – more than twice the Scottish average. Well over half of these people receive incapacity or disability benefits.

Community involvement

In 2010 a partnership of local bodies was established, led by Cassiltoun HA, to explore the potential for developing the Park. Other partners included:

- Ardenglen Housing Association
- Cassiltoun Trust
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Glasgow Housing Association
- Jeely Piece Club

All of Cassiltoun HA's Board members are local tenants and residents, so this already meant that the Association's input to the project was very much driven by the community's views and aspirations for the woodlands.

A wide range of consultation events aimed to capture the community's feelings about the nature of the current problems and the potential for turning things around to create a safer area which could be used for a variety of activities. Many of the consultation events were held in the Park itself, and the response from the community was really good.

The community felt that as well as being inaccessible as a result of being overgrown, many parts of the Park were unsafe, for example with broken glass meaning it was dangerous to walk without heavy footwear. Their ambition was for the Park to be somewhere that children could learn, opportunities for volunteering could be created, and people of all ages could benefit from walks and other activities all year round.

An action plan was developed on what the Park could offer, and a key element of this was the proposal to appoint a dedicated worker to co-ordinate activities in the Park.

Successes

A Community Woodland Officer was appointed in May 2011, and the first two years saw nearly 300 events held in the Park, attracting more than 5,000 participants. A busy and varied programme of activities remains in place throughout the year.

A website was set up, and publicity material has included a widely distributed, user-friendly map showing the access points and walks.

A key initiative has been, and continues to be, the employability project which provides local people with the chance to develop new skills and attain qualifications. This is funded jointly by the Central Scotland Green Network, Cassiltoun HA, the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund, Glasgow City Council and Glasgow HA. Great Gardens, a social enterprise subsidiary of Govanhill HA, is now a partner in this project. The project now offers a year's paid work for one person and six months' work for a further two people.

The employability project has had a major impact on the woodlands, upgrading paths, increasing maintenance and improving lines of sight. With two high schools, six primary schools and many nurseries within walking distance, the woodlands provide great opportunities for environmental education.

Challenges

Uncertainty of funding: Two years is the longest period for which funding for any aspect of the project has been committed, but often it is on an annual basis only. This affects the main Woodlands Officer post, as well as the funding of the events programme, making publicity for events at the beginning of a financial year difficult to get out early.

Capital funding: Most funding sources cover revenue costs: it is much harder to identify sources of funding for capital works such as lighting, fencing, signposting etc.

Ownership issues: Some potential funding sources require that ownership of the woodlands is in the hands of the applying body, but the woodlands are of course owned by Glasgow City Council. The Council may be open to exploring the potential for, say, a ten year lease to the Association, but such a period would be longer than any funding commitments and so the Association would be taking a significant degree of risk in becoming even temporary owners.

Risk and reputation issues: Now recognised by the local community as having a highly proactive role in looking after the woodlands, there are strong expectations that the Project will deal with all issues arising in the Park area, even where a problem is not in the gift of the Project to resolve, such as removing a tree which was blocking an access route.

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New homes in Lamlash, Isle of Arran



- 50 homes for social rent and six for shared equity, by Irvine HA
- Creation of a new community
- A response to very poor housing conditions on the island
- No mains gas – development uses air source heat pumps
- Strong community links cultivated during construction process, including with local schools

Summary

In 2014, Irvine Housing Association completed a development of 56 homes in Lamlash on the Isle of Arran. This was a rare opportunity for residents of the island to access high quality affordable housing on a relatively large scale. A development of this size is unprecedented on Arran in recent years.



New homes in Lamlash, Isle of Arran

Meeting the needs of an island community

Housing demand on the island is high, with locals generally forced out of the market due to the tourist industry. The cost of private lets is high, with seasonal fluctuations whereby houses are let as holiday homes over the summer months so people can only get housed over the winter. Much of the employment on the island is seasonal too as it is dependent on tourism. The cost of living on the island is much higher than on the mainland with residents unable to benefit from low-cost supermarkets or internet shopping.

Such is the nature of the housing crisis on the island that the allocation policies used on the mainland were not appropriate, and so a bespoke lettings initiative was created to ensure that the needs of the islanders would be addressed – everyone who has been housed has a connection with the island, e.g. through being brought up there or working there.

Whilst the Association knew there was a housing crisis on the island, as it began interviewing prospective tenants, it became apparent that the situation was worse than had been anticipated. People were living in appalling conditions, from caravans with no heating to cramped bedsits riddled with dampness. People on the island generally had no other option but to accept this as part of island life as the choices available on the mainland simply do not exist on the island. Many of these people were also living in remote parts of the island which, during the winter, become completely cut off, rendering the homes virtually uninhabitable.

Successes

Of the 56 homes built, 50 were made available for affordable rent with the remaining six being sold under

the shared equity scheme. The six people who purchased would not otherwise have been able to afford home ownership. The development is a mixture of one and two bedroom flats and two and three bedroom houses, meaning that a new community has been created with a diverse range of people, from the young to the old and families.

Taking into account what it knew about the island, the Association was determined to provide the best value for money homes that it could. There is no mains gas supply on Arran and so the new properties had air source heat pumps installed – the first time Irvine HA had undertaken such an initiative. Also, the homes are insulated to the highest standards and have other energy savings devices installed including low energy light fittings.

Building strong community links

Irvine HA does not have a base on the island, so throughout the construction process it worked hard to build relationships with other organisations to ensure best value for money. This includes local contractors who carry out repairs and maintenance works on the properties. The Association holds monthly surgeries on the island, and the local CVS allows it to use their office premises to host these.

The development itself sits in close proximity to Arran High School, and throughout the construction the Association engaged with local school children, including carrying out a time-capsule burial with the local primary as site works commenced. The local primary school children also came up with the street name of 'St Molios Park' – Molio was an Irish monk who lived as a hermit on Holy Island around 590AD. The Association also worked with Arran High School, providing two days' work experience on site for the teenagers undertaking the construction course at school.

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Development Trusts Association Scotland

www.dtasscot.org.uk

DTAS is the national body for development trusts in Scotland, supporting you to unlock the potential within your community



Glasgow and West of Scotland
Forum of Housing Associations

GWSF

Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

www.gwsf.org.uk

GWSF's purpose is to promote, represent and campaign on behalf of local community controlled housing associations in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, and to share information and best practice



The Highland Small Communities Housing Trust

www.hscht.co.uk

HSCHT is a registered charity set up in 1998 to help rural communities secure long term solutions to their local housing needs



Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

www.sfha.co.uk

SFHA's core purpose is to represent and support Scotland's housing associations and co-operatives