



Housing to 2040: Summer Engagement Workshop Report

Suburban Infill at Fraser Avenue, Inverkeithing

Commissioned by



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“A collaborative effort has ensured a successful transformation of a place that had experienced challenges before, and it is great to see more social interactions and children playing safely in the community. That is a wonderful sign of a comfortable place for people to enjoy and live in. For this government, it is not just about ticking boxes on the number of houses, it is about what we can deliver better for communities.”

Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Introduction

This final workshop of the Housing to 2040 series, held on 11 September 2019 at the Civic Centre in Inverkeithing, focused on housing growth through suburban infill. By examining the regeneration of Inverkeithing’s Fraser Avenue, it explored how the public sector and housing associations are working together – and engaging the community – in delivering improved housing, while enhancing the assets of a place.

In the first session of the day, the group used the Place Standard tool to examine the outcome of Fraser Avenue’s redeveloped housing for the community. The discussion – with community representatives, housing professionals and councillors – assessed how the neighbourhood’s re-imagined public realm and new homes have improved the residents’ wellbeing.

Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, then joined the group at the Civic Centre. Following an introduction and group discussion, the Cabinet Secretary joined workshop participants for a site visit to Fraser Avenue’s new housing.

In the second session of the day, the group shared and discussed the lessons to be learnt for Housing to 2040 from the experience at Fraser Avenue. Themes that emerged included the importance of actively involving and collaborating with residents; the value of leadership and partnerships in building sustainable communities; the importance of tailored housing; and getting the balance right for a particular community in terms of streetscape, green spaces, amenities and housing types.

The outcome of regeneration at Fraser Avenue, as discussed in the workshop, provides compelling evidence of the positive impact such regeneration can have with regards two national priorities: reducing health inequalities and addressing the climate challenge.

Workshop Overview	
Organisations Represented	Participants included local representatives including councillors and members of the community; project team members including designers, contractors and representatives from Kingdom Housing Association, as well as planning officials from Fife Council
Date held	September 2019
Status of site	Phase one completed; phase two under construction

This report has been prepared by Architecture and Design Scotland. It includes outputs from a series of workshops commissioned by the Scottish Government. The views expressed in this report reflect the output from the sessions. The views are not those of the Scottish Government or A&DS.





Housing at Fraser Avenue

Fife Council and Kingdom Housing Association (HA) are managing a phased redevelopment of Fraser Avenue in Inverkeithing. Dating from 1956, the original neighbourhood consisted of 234 social housing units in three-storey blocks, lining a single street.

Residents complained of feeling isolated – a common phenomenon in similarly designed flats of the time – while low demand led the buildings to fall into disrepair over time. In 2004, Fife Council designated the site an 'Estate Action Area'.

In 2011, the local authority agreed to the demolition of the existing housing, and Kingdom HA, working with 7N Architects, started to plan a phased redevelopment of sustainable, high-quality housing set within a redesigned streetscape.

From the outset, local community involvement was viewed as crucial to nurturing a new sense of ownership and belonging. In 2014-15, a series of consultations was held to involve local residents (including school children) – not just in the design, but also in the phasing process.

Several design principles emerged, including a pedestrian- and cycling-focused public realm, more sustainable building materials and a people-centred, terraced street design, in contrast to the 'canyon'-like feeling of the older continuous frontage design.

The regeneration plan also includes the relocation of the local shops to the northern end of the development, so that they act as a gateway to the new Fraser Avenue and connect it to surrounding neighbourhoods by providing a conveniently located shopping amenity.

Phase one, a £7.9 million project completed in March 2019, delivered 53 homes for social rent in a phased hand-over. Phase two is currently underway and will provide 61 new homes for social rent. Once complete, the redeveloped Fraser Avenue will feature 189 homes of different types and sizes, along with shop units and green spaces.

Site Overview

Location	Fraser Avenue, Inverkeithing, Fife
Numbers of units	53 homes in phase one; 189 homes (242 bed spaces) in total once complete. Housing mix for the first phase includes 2-bed cottage flats; 2, 3, 4 & 6 bed houses; 2 & 3 bed amenity bungalows and 2 & 3 bed wheelchair bungalows.
Size of site	2.75 Ha. (Phases 1-3)
Housing mix	80-90% to be affordable rented with the remainder to be mid-market rent.
Organisations involved	Kingdom Housing Association, Fife Council and Campion Homes.
Design team	7N Architects and Rankin Fraser Landscape Architecture.
Year commenced	2015 (Kingdom Housing Association appointed RSL delivery partner)

Engagement with residents continues throughout the phasing process, and takes two forms: individual consultation around the specification of interiors and who lives next to whom; and group consultations to help shape the neighbourhood. Giving tenants options and choices has been a key focus and has resulted in high satisfaction levels being reported in feedback.





Session 2: Lessons Learned for Housing to 2040

In Session 2, participants identified and discussed the wider lessons in relation to suburban infill and regeneration that may be learnt from the experiences and Place Standard findings at Fraser Avenue.

The lessons, grouped by five key themes, included opportunities, threats and ideas that could be transferable to future housing strategy and could be fed into the consultation process for the Scottish Government Housing to 2040 Vision.

“The discussions at Fraser Avenue provided lots of lessons to take forward, both in terms of current housing need and to meet our ambitions for Housing to 2040. It illustrated the importance of engagement with communities – listening to their voice and understanding the way they live. That is an essential principle now, and in the future.”

Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Lesson 1: Urban Design Priorities

Links to HT 2040 “Sustainable Communities” theme

- Good access to amenities is considered essential. Re-location of the shops is a good example of creating a place asset benefiting the wider area. This helped secure the sustainability of local businesses with positive benefits for residents of Fraser Avenue and neighbouring areas.
- Consultation ensured design providing the right mix of typologies.
- A mix and range of typologies were important.
- Design knitting together the adjacent streets was important. The sight of children playing on the eastern side of Phase 1 particularly demonstrates how this can be mutually beneficial.
- Access to open space, local amenities and retail were crucial to socially sustainable housing development
- Getting the details right e.g. pocket parks alongside neighbours
- Getting balance right including open space and shops.

Lesson 2: Listening and Collaborative Process

Links to HT 2040 “Homes that Meet People’s Needs” theme

- Residents felt listened to and this is important.
- The process focussed on people’s lives and improving their lived experience.
- Dedicated local authority liaison officers for this major project has ensured consistency from the start with the ability to follow through.
- Ambitious clients and transparency with all stakeholders were key for good governance.
- Crucial throughout has been the continuity of Council and housing association staff such as Julie Watson. Great leadership and a ‘can do’ attitude have been contagious.
- At the core was a partnership approach encompassing community, council, elected members and Housing Association - with residents actively involved in the process throughout.
- Consulting with local businesses early on ensured trust.



Lesson 3:

Houses Tailored and Built to High Quality Standards

Links to HT 2040 “High Quality Sustainable Homes” Theme.

- A flexible approach allowed homes to be tailored to tenants’ needs
- Meeting local needs and demands is essential
- Warm and energy efficient
- Critical to meet Housing for Varying Needs standards

Lesson 4:

Effective Housing System Characteristics

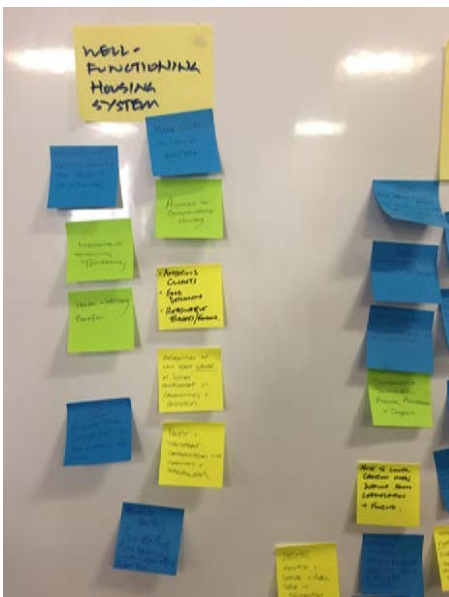
Links to HT 2040 “Well Functioning Housing System” Theme.

- Leadership and partnership approach by local authority were key
- Keep rents low
- Access to sustainable housing
- Investment ensuring affordability
- Ambitious clients
- Reasonable budget
- Honest and transparent – for both the community and stakeholders

Lesson 5:

Replicability

There’s a question as to how to replicate the Fraser Avenue process. This may not always be possible as it requires substantial time, energy, resources and will. Looking at the mechanisms that made it possible, it’s clear that having dedicated officers and visionary, enthusiastic housing association leadership were important.



Session 3: Final comments and reflections

Cecil Grant, Fraser Avenue resident:

"I believe [there are lessons to be learned from Fraser Avenue] because the experience of residents here throughout the years is totally different to how we are going to experience it now. [Large parts of] Scottish housing [stock] is similar to how Fraser Avenue used to be and I believe the purpose in the future...is to regenerate [Scottish housing stock] in a manner similar to Fraser Avenue."

Julie Watson, Kingdom HA:

"As the lead officer, I've been working closely with local residents and Fife Council officers on this project. It's been really good so far, with phase one now completed. We have 53 new homes, in which we've now housed 44 returning tenants. We have commenced the two-year building performance study with Glasgow School of Art, to make sure that what we've built is actually as good as we'd hoped, and whether the breathable wall system helps tenants' health."

Ewan Anderson, 7N Architects

"The hallmarks of this project from the outset have been a clear vision and strong, determined and motivated leadership from Kingdom Housing Association. Their energy and tenacity, their aspirations for community engagement went beyond the norm. The vision was also wide enough and included, for example, how local businesses were engaged and involved – they have become a strong part of the community."

Scott Kirkpatrick, Kingdom HA:

"We always take a collaborative approach with the community, that's what we do. But the level of engagement here was much greater than we'd done elsewhere, and it was unusual because we were looking to have tenants returning afterwards...they had endured very poor conditions for many years and the community was almost at breaking point. The engagement process was critical in building a sense of trust and belief."

Also contributing to the success was the fact that ourselves, Fife Council, the architects and contractors all shared the same mindset."

We'll be following through on the principles for phase two, doing everything we've done so far, and more. We are aware that those who are moving back in phase two and three have had to wait longer, enduring poor housing. They've shown tremendous patience, probably because they recognise this will be lifechanging. We will make sure they'll not be short- changed by being the second phase."

Next Steps

The findings of the workshop series form part of the feedback to Scottish Government to help inform their Housing to 2040 vision and a route map, which is expected to be published in summer 2020.

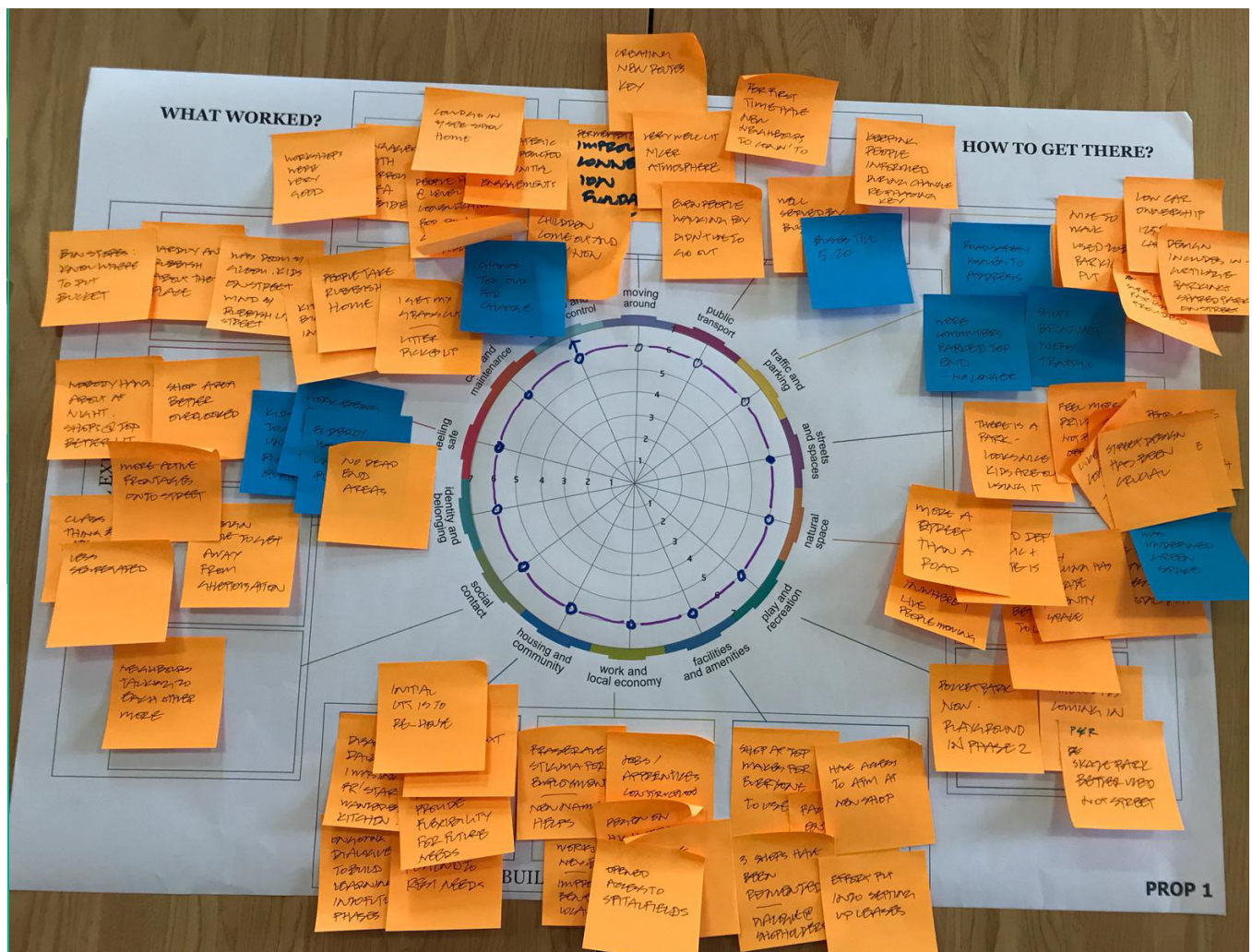
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The engagement focussed on how to rebuild a sense of community in an area that lacked of a sense of wellbeing. Earlier work done in 1990s had failed to make a difference, but now there have been notable changes in wellbeing: children playing in the streets again; people take care of their gardens now and more social connections between neighbours... ... there is a renewed sense of belonging which we'll continue to cultivate in the next phases. Arguably phase one was always going to be the hardest bit.”

Ewan Anderson, 7N Architects





Appendix: Place Standard Evaluation

The whole group discussed the Place Standard 14 themes in session 1. For each theme the group highlighted what is working well and how this was achieved - **see assets**. The participants also highlighted challenges faced and issues that remain for residents - **see issues**.

The themed dialogue is set out in full below, with each theme assigned an indicative high, medium or low score by the group.

Moving Around: High Score

Assets:

- Enhanced permeability of the site thanks to improved connectivity and routes
- Residents have a new attitude to the public realm thanks to traffic calming measures
- Children come out and play on the street and more people are walking
- The area now has a nicer atmosphere and well-lit streets, giving people confidence to go out at night

Issues:

- There's a need for more gates and fencing to mark out private green spaces and prevent desire lines through residents' gardens
- Car dependency is a clear assumption for many residents.

Public Transport: High Score

Assets:

- Well served by buses, including during the early phase of construction, thanks to strong communication with residents
- Well served by the nearby Inverkeithing Rail station

Issues:

- The construction process has hindered some routes from passing through as normal.

Traffic and Parking: High Score

Assets:

- Staggered roads slow down cars compared to the single road before. Pleasant to walk through now and residents are positive about doing so
- Disabled parking spaces are provided, so people no longer park on the pavement
- Parking spaces at 1.25 per dwelling is good for low car ownership levels. This is higher than before but used by residents.
- Residents consider the off-street parking safe now, which they didn't before.
- Design includes in-curtilage parking as well as shared parking on the street.

Issues:

- Shops now bringing more traffic into the residential area
- Signage is seen as quite minimal by some residents, who were concerned about child safety at some points of the site. Still some issues to address

Streets and Spaces: High Score**Assets:**

- Residents praise the 'good neighbourly feel' of the streets, which now seem like comfortable social spaces
- The street design has been a crucial improvement – it's no longer a canyon-like road
- Views of the Forth bridges are more striking than before.

Issues:

- None identified.

Natural Space: High Score**Assets:**

- The site's permeability provides better walking routes out and improved access to the coastal path
- The parks are now well used by local children
- Better views over the surrounding landscapes; adjoining spaces now feel safer to get to.

Issues:

- Previously undefined green space has been lost.

Play and Recreation: High Score**Assets:**

- Parks have been redesigned to reflect residents' needs and preferences
- The playpark on Spencerfield (eastern side) knits into the existing housing layout, helping to 'darn' the two places together
- Ballast Bank Park is under two minutes away
- The local skate park is well used by all ages and has reduced anti-social behaviour.

Issues:

- As the site is not fully delivered yet, the play needs of children are not currently met
- More could be done to provide access to play spaces during this time
- Traffic at pinch points of the site have been a concern to child safety.

Facilities and Amenities: High Score**Assets:**

- Three shops have been relocated.
- The shops are now more attractive and easier for residents to use thanks to the new shop location at the northern end, and frontage onto the street. The new location of the shops also means it easier for everyone to use including neighbouring streets.
- Effort was put into discussions with shopkeepers and setting up leases (to keep shops and move the old ones)
- Residents have access to ATM at the new shops.

Issues:

- None identified

Work and Economy: High Score**Assets:**

- The project has generated construction jobs and apprenticeships for local residents through Kingdom HA's Construction Academy
- The local onsite baker now has a new, better-used premises
- The stigma attached to a Fraser Avenue address – when it came to applying for jobs with key local employers – has largely gone
- Improved premises mean increased the footfall to shops, so benefitting local employment
- Regeneration on the high street has led to a more positive community spirit
- Improved access to Spittalfield Crescent, breaking up the previous isolation of the 'canyon'.

Issues:

- Residents are still taking up employment further and further away due to a lack of opportunities in Inverkeithing.

Housing and Community: High Score**Assets:**

- The community engagement-led approach ensured that homes were tailored to the needs of incoming residents. Those with disabilities could choose how their home was adapted. For example, one resident's disabled daughter was involved from the start, with the developers adjusting the size of the kitchen to cater for her needs
- The initial commitment was to re-house residents, so keeping people informed of changes and rehousing was key
- Work was done to establish the best combinations of immediate neighbours
- An ongoing dialogue will ensure that learning from the first phase is built into future phases.

Issues:

- The process has been slow for many residents

Social Contact: High Score**Assets:**

- There are plans for a community cinema
- Residents now face less stigma from people in surrounding neighbourhoods
- The redevelopment has brought new neighbours to connect with
- People are less stressed and angry with each other and neighbours talking to each other now.

Issues:

- Some jealousy (or perception of) from neighbours
- There is a shortage of free spaces for teens.

Identity and Sense of Belonging: High Score**Assets:**

- Reduced ghettoisation and separation, more inclusivity
- Class divide is less pronounced now that people are involved in the whole area.

Issues:

- None identified.

Feeling Safe: High Score**Assets:**

- The street design, with active frontages, improved shop area and no more dead-end areas, has made residents feel markedly safer overall
- Nobody hangs about at night. The shops at the top of the road are better lit
- Every dwelling has private amenity space.

Issues:

- Elderly issue with uneven surfaces of pavements
- Wider problems in Inverkeithing include a lack of spaces for teens, meaning they socialise in a nearby abandoned quarry. Work is being done to look at this wider problem.

Care and Maintenance: High Score**Assets:**

- More people now mow their lawn and take pride in their private outdoor spaces, as these are more clearly defined now
- Clearly defined spaces for bins mean that people use them more
- There is less rubbish on the streets and people seem to take pride in their neighbourhood.

Issues:

- None identified.

Influence and Sense of Control: High Score

Assets:

- There is a high sense of influence due to the consultation process. People were happy the way it was done in phase 1 and this has given confidence in the process
- The two-tier nature of the consultation – one with the community relating to the public realm and the other with individuals around their housing preferences – was positively received
- All strategic moves resulted from initial engagements.

Issues:

- Phasing may have meant some felt left out of the first phase but this is also seen as a positive, with the process evolving over time
- Big changes may not be appropriate to older residents who may prefer smaller adjustments.

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