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Housing to 2040: Summer Engagement Workshop Report

Urban Regeneration at Granton, Edinburgh

Commissioned by



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“The work in Pennywell and Granton illustrated how a place-based approach can improve outcomes as well as the long-term aspirations of the community. It is a great example of partners working together to create a new housing system that takes account of place, the climate emergency, our ageing population and changing demographic and ensuring community and wellbeing is at the heart of how we create places for the future.”

Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Introduction

This third workshop in the Housing to 2040 Summer Engagement Series took place in mid-August 2019 in Pennywell, North Edinburgh. It reflected on the emerging Granton Masterplan and what lessons can be learnt from it for large-scale urban regeneration.

The day began with a visit from Aileen Campbell MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government. As a starting point for discussion, the workshop examined the Pennywell 21st Century Homes development, which lies at the edge of the masterplan area.

Ms Campbell and a sub-group visited the new Pennywell housing site. Then followed by a facilitated group discussion reflecting on the development in relation to the Granton Masterplan – exploring how lessons from Pennywell were applied to the Masterplan, and how public-private partnership models can support the creation of diverse housing, alignment of infrastructure investment and re-imagining city areas through creative use of housing investment.

Following the Cabinet Secretary’s departure, A&DS and Scottish Government facilitators introduced Housing to 2040, and City of Edinburgh Council officials introduced the emerging Granton Masterplan. The group then used the Place Standard tool to examine and discuss the qualities of the masterplan.

Session 2 comprised a group discussion of lessons learned to inform the Housing to 2040’s vision and route map.

Workshop Overview

Organisations Represented	Local councillors and community councillors; City of Edinburgh planners, project managers and housing officers; Collective Architecture; Barton Willmore; Scottish Futures Trust, Edinburgh College and Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government; A&DS
Date held	August 2019
Status of site	Housing under construction; masterplanning

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.



Pennywell site visit with Barton Willmore Architects



The Granton Masterplan

Once famed for its industry and seagoing heritage, the area of Granton in north Edinburgh is now characterised by large swathes of derelict industrial land. Plans to regenerate the area have been in the pipeline since the early 2000s, and there have been several consultation exercises and strategies for redevelopment.

In the meantime, Granton has seen pockets of piecemeal, uncoordinated housing development due to fragmented land-ownership and the 2008 financial crisis. The Edinburgh Local Development Plan, adopted in November 2016, identified Granton Waterfront as a Strategic Development Area.

In September 2018, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) appointed consultants Collective Architecture to help prepare a development framework and high-level, delivery-focused masterplan with community at its heart.

To help shape the vision and make local people’s input integral to the process, a three-stage public consultation (themed around the Place Standard) was held in Granton and surrounding communities during 2018-19. The consultants Collective Architecture took a listening approach and returned to community venues for each of the three stages, named ‘Granton is...’, ‘Granton could be...’ and ‘Granton will be....’.

This process highlighted the importance to residents of the area’s key pre-existing features, most notably its coastal location, potential for greenspaces and historic landmark buildings.

The resultant draft masterplan aims to guide redevelopment of 120Ha of brownfield land into a new neighbourhood that provides 3,000 homes, two new transport hubs and 3km of cycleways with attention given to amenities along the proposed 10Ha of waterfront access.

The local authority’s vision for the masterplan area is for it to become one of the best places to live and visit in Edinburgh; for it to be safe and well-connected, with a range of homes, recreational opportunities, and commercial and community facilities.

Site Overview	
Location	North Edinburgh
Numbers of units; infrastructure	3,000 homes; new transport hub and 3km of cycleways
Size of site	120 hectares of brownfield land
Housing mix	Diverse housing; also commercial, retail, recreation
Organisations involved	City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Futures Trust
Design Team	Collective Architecture, Studio for New Realities, AECOM, ARUP and LUC.
Year commenced	2018 (ongoing)

It will face the Forth, but also connect to existing neighbouring communities. Granton will make the most of its waterfront location, its green spaces, and its potential for reuse of existing sites and buildings.





Pennywell site visit with Barton Willmore Architects



Ministerial Session

The first part of the workshop, attended by Cabinet Secretary Aileen Campbell MSP, comprised a site visit to the new Pennywell housing development, followed by a facilitated reflection on the site in relation to the Granton Masterplan. Together with the Cabinet Secretary, the group examined how lessons learned from the Pennywell housing development were applied to the masterplan.

Una Lee of CEC pointed out that ownership and control of land is vital to the ability to deliver outcomes. At the Pennywell site, this meant the purchase and demolition of a derelict shopping centre adjacent to the housing site, while for Granton the former gasworks has been bought to take forward a coherent masterplan.

Jude Barber of Collective Architecture pointed out the importance of 'knitting together' new and existing elements. Connectivity between old and new came through as key in the masterplan consultation; along with a desire by local people to reclaim Edinburgh's northern coastline. The group identified the importance of the waterfront aspect of the Masterplan – connecting the city back to the water's edge, allowing residents to walk and cycle all along it.

Michelle Fraser of CEC reminded the group that, given the long history in the area, the place-making element is key, and issues of sustainability and climate change would require a step change in development. This project could set the standard for future developments.

Stephen Tucker of Barton Willmore pointed out that the consistency and commitment of the CEC team working on these engagements over the years has really helped it gain community trust and participation.

Cabinet Secretary Aileen Campbell asked how the Masterplan would ensure, in light of the Place Principle, that all priorities are aligned and future-proofed – not just housing and regeneration but also education and healthcare – so that facilities are in place for the future community. In answer, Michelle Fraser of CEC noted that these strategic partnerships are already in place and have been part of the masterplanning process all along.

Fiona Clandillon of Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) said SFT was clear that the 'red line boundary' of the masterplan should not constitute the limits of the project.

It was necessary to work with the partners around the site to address employment, deprivation, access to jobs and so forth.

For example, the prospect of new parks and greenspaces on the waterfront offer much potential for recreation, but also for outdoor learning – local nurseries, schools and the college are talking about using such spaces in education. Jude Barber added that a joined-up approach and shared delivery on facilities like outdoor learning spaces would be both cheaper and more effective.

Stephen Tucker also pointed out that 'place' is not that easy to plan for and takes time to develop – and politics does not always allow for such time.

Elaine Scott of CEC reminded the group of that Granton has a history of piecemeal development due to fragmented land ownership, resulting in inconsistent, developer-led build. The economic downturn had provided an opportunity to address this – with the potential of the gasworks purchase to unlock an effective masterplan. The experience at Pennywell gave the local authority confidence to purchase land to enable regeneration that would knit communities together.



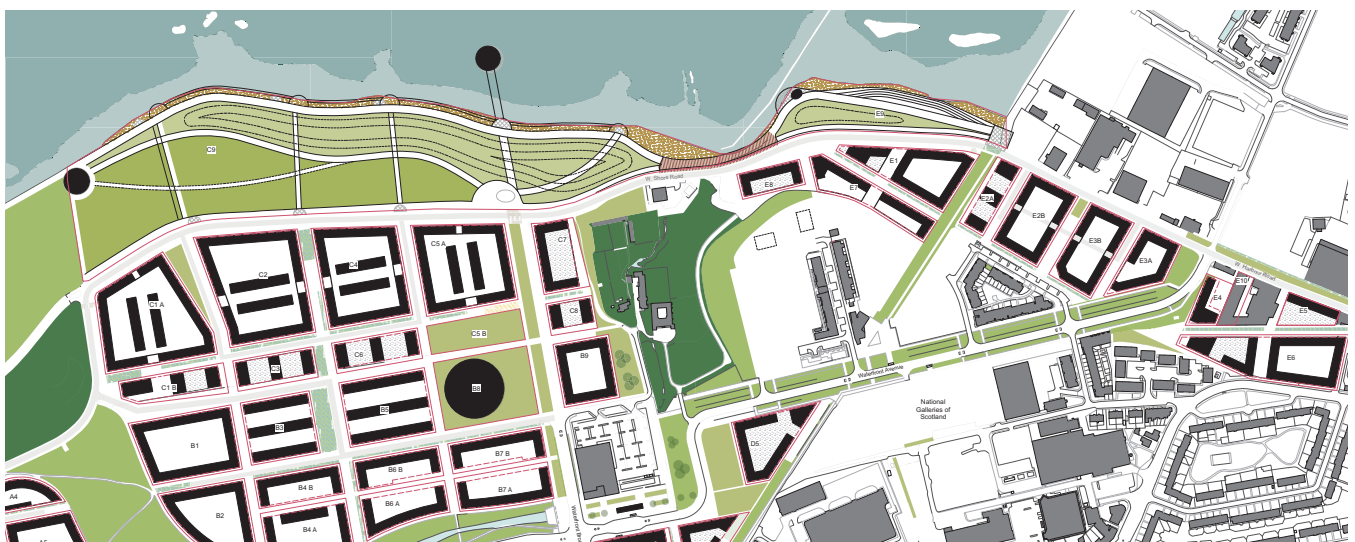
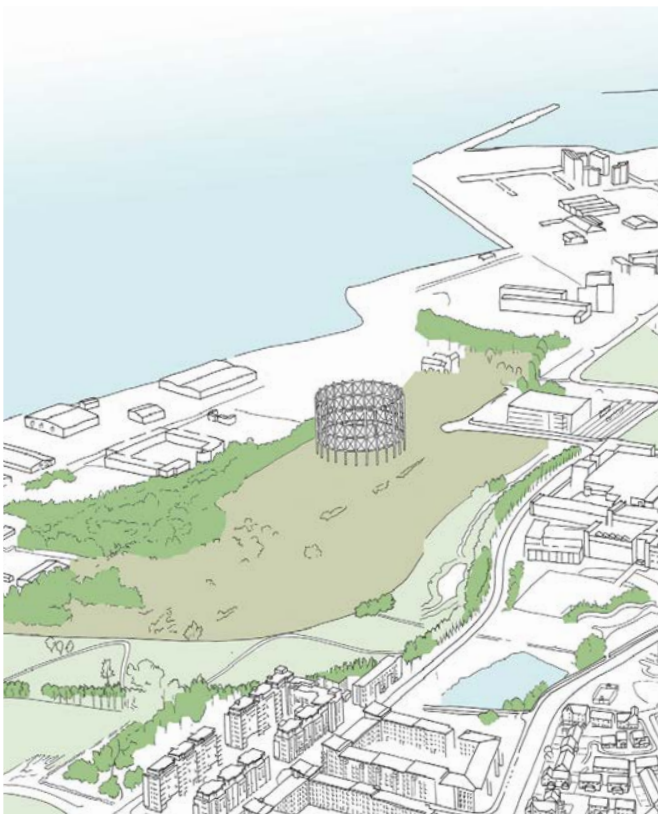


Session 1: Outcomes for the Community

Following the Cabinet Minister's departure, the group – comprising local residents, councillors, project team members and planning officials – used the structure of the Place Standard to discuss the qualities of the Granton Masterplan proposals, and impact this had on the lives of individuals and the community. A record of discussion and a full image of the Place Standard is included in the appendix.

The generally high scores given to the 14 themes reflect the group's high aspirations for the transformational change set out in the Granton Masterplan. However, this is very much dependent on overcoming the physical, social and economic disparities and barriers local people currently face. A scoring on present conditions would look very different. The proposals represent an opportunity not only to provide high-quality new housing in an attractive setting, but also improved outcomes for current residents – which those present sincerely welcomed.







Session 2: Lessons Learned for Housing to 2040

The group identified five key lessons arising from the discussion in session 1; all four potentially have wider relevance for the theme of urban regeneration. They include opportunities, threats and ideas that could be transferable to future housing strategy, and constitute valuable input to the consultation process for Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 Vision.

It was important to 'knit' together new and existing elements and to enable the existing place to work better. Connectivity between old and new came through as key in consultation, and the importance of getting places in between right.

Jude Barber, Collective Architecture

Lesson 1:

Strategic leadership and partnership working

A robust governance framework has been set up by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), led by a steering group and underpinned by a strategic vision. This promises an exemplar process focussed on improving place and community outcomes. Key components of this include a delivery plan, an approach to partnership working and land assembly.

CEC has adopted an approach comparable with the recently launched Place Principle, with key agencies working together during the planning process and over the longer term, designing services together and aligning policies. Land assembly at scale has enabled the realisation of a linked vision across partners and between communities.

The programme delivery plan and steering group set up have facilitated strategic leadership covering:

- Work across multiple agencies
- Community services planning alongside design, including a corporate approach to providing the neighbourhood amenities required
- Design for safety and maintainability.

Lesson 2:

Designing at scale

Following the sequential approach to design and regeneration adopted in Pennywell, a more strategic approach has been possible for Granton. This promises a broader, more place-based model to address a wide range of inter-related local needs.

Working on this scale will ensure the joined-up phasing and delivery of infrastructure elements like public transport and new schools. A place-based approach to masterplanning of housing delivery seems to offer opportunities to improve conditions for residents of the existing place, as well as delivering new housing.

It is also helping to define character areas or design codes as important criteria to be held onto over time – embedding local history and memory, creating coherent places and responding to the coastal setting and climate change.

It is helping to prioritise, for example, safe and semi-private garden spaces and play areas in each block as well as (more visibly) high quality public space and new infrastructure. The capacity for local business to set up and create activity along key routes is also built in.



Lesson 3:

Responding to the climate emergency

A step change to move towards truly sustainable development was called for – to drive as well as anticipate the changes needed to reach the Net Zero carbon by 2045 target. Are we really getting to grips with what Net Zero means for masterplanned areas? A masterplan such as the one for Granton could really help meet what this target implies for Granton and for the wider neighbourhoods around it. For instance, what if every roof was to have solar panels or every property district heating?

A bold and ambitious response to the climate emergency would require leadership and leaps ahead of policy. Are current policies and policy-makers a barrier? Are policies changing fast enough to effect change in the way housing is delivered? The group called for an urgent change in Local Development Plan and energy strategy, as well as a change of mind set at every level for those involved in new housing and regeneration projects.

Policy will take a while to catch up with the commitments, so masterplans should move ahead of policy.

Proposals for the coastal park promise significant added value in terms of health benefits, biodiversity and climate resilience from flooding.

Lesson 4:

Addressing car dependency

As part of the climate change agenda, the group felt that fresh ambition is needed to reduce impacts of current approaches to designing for vehicle access and car parking. Levels of parking to current standards are considered detrimental to placemaking whilst risking redundancy as and when car use drops in future years.

The group discussed possibilities for the future:

- The principle of locating parking at the edge has been adopted in model development elsewhere, providing parking areas to meet current standards, but which could be re-purposed in future if demand for parking declines.
- A reduction of current standards (to 25%?) would make a big difference to the quality of street design and could be considered in conjunction with improved access to public transport and provision of neighbourhood facilities within walking distance of homes.
- Providing electric charging points is essential.

Lesson 5:

Preventative Spend

The group advocated investment in good quality, energy-efficient housing in well-designed places to save money. Government (local and national) funding and support should be used to initiate and establish new exemplars and set the new norms and standards required. Councils and housing associations need longer-term certainty over funding levels to plan and deliver. Planning better means planning earlier, planning on a bigger scale and with longer term funding.

Spending more on housing and regeneration now and reducing health inequalities through better designed places could mean spending less in future on health services, especially hospitals.

Session 3: Final comments and reflections

Jim MacDonald, Chief Executive, A&DS:

"The aim of this workshop is to try and understand what we need for the communities that we'll be creating to 2040 and indeed beyond. How we create the sustainable places that will allow people to live their lives, not just in new housing now but in new communities tomorrow. We're already seeing stories which will help us understand what that vision for 2040 needs to look like. Stories that are not about drawings and visions in the eyes of designers or planners, but from the people who live here."

Elaine Scott, Housing Services Manager, City of Edinburgh Council:

"We've talked about the importance of mixed tenure developments, a mix of affordable and private housing... and how it's not just the buildings themselves that are important but the space between them, it's how we ensure that there's space for kids to play and all the things that are important to local communities."

It's important to engage with the community early on in the process to find out what's important to them. And that can both inform the masterplan for the area, and the procurement process."

Kerry Heathcote, Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance, Edinburgh College, and West Granton Community Trust member:

"From a West Granton Community Trust perspective, we can't fault the community engagement, it's been excellent with lots of opportunities to input into consultations."

"From a Trust point of view, the green space beside the gasworks is currently underused, and therefore feels unsafe. As housing density increases, the numbers using it should increase, so it should feel safer, which will encourage others to use it more. Generally, the community feel that safety, a sense of belonging and control and social contact will all be so much higher once the new developments are in."

"However, a question remains about whether West Granton Road will become a hard boundary, isolating the existing neighbourhood to the south from the fabulous new developments to the north. How can that be prevented?"

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.

Photo Credits

Images courtesy of A&DS, Collective Architecture, Aerial Photography Solutions for City of Edinburgh Council.

“We want people to have a warm, affordable, safe, secure home and feel connected in their communities. That means taking a holistic view right across the whole housing system about how we can do things better and respond to community needs.”

Aileen Campbell MSP, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government



Public Transport: Medium Score

Assets:

- New bus services and a potential extension of the tramway is proposed
- However, things are designed to work at a neighbourhood level – without relying on ‘big things’ to come such as the tram
- Other modes of transport to and from the development being considered – water taxis, high speed cycle routes and communal cars.

Issues:

- Current public transport provision is unreliable – journey times can vary, taking anywhere between 20 to 60 minutes to get into town by bus
- Existing infrastructure; potential tram route is safeguarded – however there is currently no planned public transport access to the waterfront
- Proposals need to work with or without the tram as there is uncertainty about if and when it might be delivered
- Transport links and infrastructure are fundamental
- Connectivity is crucial, including how people are connected to infrastructure.

Traffic and Parking: High Score

Assets:

- Speed limit control included throughout to make area more pedestrian friendly
- Car parking is to be provided on street, ensuring back courts become areas for play and recreation
- No basement parking will be provided so all land can be landscaped and planted on without planting limitations.

Issues:

- Testing 25% parking for residents – need to be ambitious on parking.

Streets and Spaces: High Score

Assets:

- There will be a hierarchy of spaces; neighbourhood parks, coastal park, local neighbourhood areas
- Four storey developments will be the average density
- ‘Accent buildings’ to be provided at key points which will help with orientation
- Housing density designed to maximise sunlight into central courtyards
- The street proposals will be thought about along their length, allowing character to change.

Issues:

- How do green connections work at street level?
- Some pre-existing hierarchies may present barriers
- Marina development has a separate masterplan (to this area) and the group had considered how this should be knitted into the Granton Masterplan.
- Transport moves need to serve this as well (Collective/CEC are aware that whatever infrastructure is implemented needs to serve the marina development too).

Natural Space: High Score

Assets:

- Developing views out to the waterfront
- The strategic parkland proposals along the coastline will give communities access to the landscape at scale. Coastal land and views will become amenity for everyone.
- Seven different character areas are proposed, responsive to topography and climatic factors
- Publicly accessible new parkland around coastline will include new facilities and amenities.

Issues:

- Wind and the exposed nature of the site may be a challenge to tree planting.

Play and Recreation: High Score

Assets:

- In-block approach providing safe and secure amenities for residents in each block
- Sport and recreation: starting a conversation about what people need? It's about providing the right infrastructure for coastal communities.

Issues:

- Who pays for it and who manages it?
- Climate resilience is key.

Facilities and Amenities: High Score

Assets:

- Service planning builds on what is there
- New school, nursery and skills facility will be provided
- A learning strategy is being developed for the area
- Amenities that will be provided include: marina, galleries and collections, retail and large business headquarters space with small retail centres
- Gallery facilities should be seen as learning spaces for everybody
- Proposed new health centre, primary school and nursery, small retail uses. A commercial strategy is being developed.

Issues:

- Phasing of development is very important. There needs to be a degree of flexibility alongside critical timely delivery of certain infrastructure.

Work and Economy: High Score

Assets:

- Aligns with the City's economic development proposals for the region – providing opportunities for small and medium enterprise
- Small businesses, start-ups, retail and workspaces to be encouraged
- Workshops will be given on how to leverage investment
- Integral to City's plans for learning, skills and work as part of the city region deal
- Work is being done to build on presence of existing businesses to grow opportunities, alongside other opportunities such as a new marina
- Action being taken to influence new capital projects in the area, e.g. building in potential for learning spaces at National Gallery building.

Issues:

- Current deprivation levels, pockets of poor socio-economic conditions and inequality of opportunity to be addressed.

Housing and Community: High Score

Assets:

- Starts by meeting housing needs and demand assessment
- Build to rent beneficial as part of the housing mix
- Aim for tenure blind in terms of design – tenure should not make character of the area.

Issues:

- Pennywell was 50-50 private and social housing. A suitable tenure mix is yet to be determined for Granton. What do we need in the city? Housing of all tenures for those who need it, e.g. people who work in the city but can't afford to live here
- Social rented accommodation needs to work within parameters of government funding [funding challenge]
- Lack of mid-market rental to address.

Social Contact: High Score

Assets:

- The cultural facilities of the area provide opportunities
- Existing shops at West Granton Road (Lidl) etc.
- Opportunity to use waterfront for leisure and business uses
- By physically connecting the area there is more opportunity to meet your community
- Work is being done to pull existing cultural institutions together to develop local networks and build new connections.

Issues:

- Nothing specifically identified.

Identity and Sense of Belonging: High Score

Assets:

- Scottish Futures Trust has done work with National Galleries and National Museums Scotland to look at opportunities to open their currently inaccessible sites to the community.

Issues:

- There are physical gaps which serve to enforce the idea of 'them' and 'us'
- It will be important to enhance the crossing of West Granton Road and foster through-links for existing community to new development. West Granton Road as a social and physical barrier – without action, there is a risk of further ghettoisation of the West Granton community
- The museum and gallery facilities should be encouraged to be more open and engage with the community.

Feeling Safe: Low to High Score

Assets:

- Defensible space is key to feeling safe and secure – the block form builds this in
- Active (24 hour) use will ensure areas are overlooked
- Private and well-defined garden spaces are planned
- Active uses being designed in throughout at street level to encourage footfall of people and movement
- Design of public spaces to feel local in scale and not too big.

Issues:

- Significant change is required to overcome presently poor conditions.

Care and Maintenance: High Score

Assets:

- Intent to encourage more community stewardship
- Need for strategic partnerships in place
- Factoring arrangements are required for new housing – being designed for maintainability
- Community stewardship was different but important in Craigmillar.

Issues:

- Council should do more to highlight its investment.
- How to tie in investment and housing programme.

Influence and Sense of Control: High Score

Assets:

- Consultations have provided plenty of opportunity for local residents to get involved
- Extensive work to foster participation and engagement using Place Standard and other tools
- Gathering local knowledge, aspirations and issues to be addressed.

Issues:

- Potential for consultation fatigue to set in.

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