

CASE STUDY

Visioning Craigmillar, Edinburgh

OVERVIEW

Craigmillar is one of Edinburgh's largest housing estates situated on the south-eastern periphery of the city, approximately 5km from the city centre. The community has long suffered from the effects of social deprivation, with low economic activity, crime, poor health and low educational achievement. These negative perceptions have contributed to the community becoming stigmatised as a place to live and by the 'culture of dependency' associated with peripheral housing estates.

Given the extent of Craigmillar's social problems, it is suggested that any solution shall have to be grounded in a community-based approach to urban regeneration and by building capacity through the process of sustainable community development.

BACKGROUND

Craigmillar was first developed in 1920s to provide adequate housing for the residents of Edinburgh's Old Town slum clearances. The



area began to flourish due to proximity of local mine workings and the brewing industry which provided employment for the community. At its peak the community was home to more than 14,000 residents.

Craigmillar continued to thrive until the decline of these industries during the 1960s and 1970s that led to high levels of unemployment. The loss of leading employers to the area soon led to a multitude of related problems

and the area was soon afflicted with crime, poor education achievement and drug misuse. Poor planning and construction was compounded with the relocation a number of the city's most problematic residents to the housing estate.

Under these exacerbated conditions, the housing stock continued to deteriorate, resulting in Craigmillar becoming the most deprived community in Edinburgh. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) statistics released in 2006 revealed that Craigmillar was considered the fourth most



deprived area in Scotland and the most poverty stricken area outside Glasgow. Many of those who have had the opportunity to leave the area have done so and the resident population is now approximately 7000.

THE PROJECT

Visionary Planning

The need to regenerate Craigmillar was first recognised in the mid 1980's, largely as a response to the area's severe crime statistics.

The City of Edinburgh implemented a number of plans to improve the quality of housing within Craigmillar, however, it was recognised the programmes were inadequate in addressing the wider issues surrounding the area's social deprivation.

The framework for the regeneration of Craigmillar, created by consultants Piers

Key Words

■ Empowerment ■ Community ■ Housing ■ Neighbourhood ■ Partnership



Gough in 2001, drew largely upon the findings of an extensive consultation period in which a range of regeneration options were provided for consideration utilising various methods such as public meetings, futures workshops, definitional studies and scoping exercises. As part of this process the community forum was founded as a body to represent local people.

Such visioning exercises created objectives central to the regeneration programme. The primary ambitions were identified as:

- Improving Craigmillar's image and reputation
- Providing diverse housing to meet the needs of key workers
- Offering new educational opportunities, with emphasis on lifelong learning
- Improving safety and security
- Ensuring the provision of green space and leisure facilities

The Interim Planning Framework

The City of Edinburgh supplemented this overarching vision with the publication of an Interim Planning Framework in 2003. The document identified key criteria necessary for successful sustainable regeneration to succeed in Craigmillar, including:

- Combating social exclusion and isolation by integrating the area into the wider city community, essentially reattaching itself to Edinburgh both physically and more importantly perhaps, in residents' perceptions. To achieve this objective, a prerequisite is to swell the population to a level which is not only permits social inclusivity, but has the ability to support a range of public services and facilities which characterise a vibrant community. This aspiration can be achieved by promoting development on vacated and derelict land.
- Strong emphasis on environmental and social considerations. The creation of neighbourhoods where people want to live and are proud to associate themselves with, places that are safe, places that are inspirational.
- Both environmental and economic sustainability. A vision of Craigmillar not

dependent upon outside intervention in terms of employment and housing whilst minimising the damage to the environment.

The Joint Venture Company/ The Stakeholder Group / PARC

The development is led by the Urban Regeneration Company 'Promoting and Regenerating Craigmillar' (PARC) – a joint venture between the City of Edinburgh Council and the EDI Group, established in 2001 with each owning 50%. A 15-year business plan was developed to deliver the regeneration programme.

A condition of Scottish Executive funding was the establishment of a Stakeholder Group representing interest from the Scottish Executive, Edinburgh City and the Craigmillar Community Partnership. Community capacity building was funded via the Stakeholder Group, with considerable focus on implementing information and communication technologies as a means of providing knowledge and learning opportunities.

The Stakeholder Group provided a forum for interested parties such as the Scottish Executive, community groups and local service providers to meet and discuss relevant issues. The Stakeholder Group were presented with the responsibility of overseeing stakeholder consultation, providing appropriate deliberation and presenting the findings of such deliberations to PARC.

The Stakeholder Group became the primary point of contact for government, city and the community in the regeneration process.

The commitment to community participation has culminated in the election of two community representatives to the PARC Board of Directors. This representation has allowed the community to become engaged in consultations underpinning the development of the Master Plan and in deliberations between various stakeholders over the adoption of the Urban Design Framework.

'The community has a key role to play in shaping the future of Craigmillar, and we would encourage as many people as possible to make their voices heard.'

PARC statement.

The Development Framework

The Craigmillar Urban Design Framework developed by architects Llewlyn Davies was approved by Edinburgh Council's Planning Committee in 2005. The framework for regeneration and new development in Craigmillar has four key aims:

- Bringing prosperity to the area in terms of jobs, security, and a family friendly environment.
- Breathing new life into the community – with schools, town centre, and other facilities alongside new housing.
- Keeping the best of Craigmillar, making more of its potential in terms of people, and the cultural, historical and natural features.
- Linking Craigmillar into the rest of the City both by physical connections and visually, by design. Craigmillar should look and function as a part of Edinburgh.

Critical to the proposed vision is increasing the existing population of 7,500 to 15,000 residents who will create and maintain a vibrant sustainable community.

PARC have designated the city's south-east wedge as the Green Quarter and intend to transform city living in Edinburgh. The community will be serviced by the Cameron Toll and Fort Kinnaird shopping centres less than a mile away in either direction. The Green Quarter will have access to 150 acres of open space including Craigmillar Countryside Park and Arthur's Seat. PARC intends to provide the most affordable housing within the city whilst not compromising on quality.

Fundamental for the realisation of this vision of Craigmillar is the creation of over 3000 new homes over a 15-year period. Major investment programmes, targeting, housing, transport, retail leisure and recreation are envisaged to create a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and visit. This development programme includes:

- A new town centre with shops, community and leisure facilities.
- New primary schools, a new community high school and library.

- 150-acres of surrounding green space transformed into a network of parks, river walkways, and open woodland and play areas.
- Improved public transport links, making it easier to travel in and out of the city centre and to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.
- More jobs and business opportunities.

Mixed-Income Housing

The key element to creating mixed communities is the diversification of housing and a mixture of tenures including private, affordable and social rented housing. Of the new housing, 33% are designated as 'family housing', with a minimum of 20% to be made available as 'affordable housing'. The remainder shall be available through the social rented sector. These developments are intended not only to improve the physical landscape but also to improve the educational and employment aspirations of local residents and to successfully reintegrate them back within the wider city.

Craigmillar has long been characterised by high concentrations of social rented housing. Within such an environment, aspirations to improve one's life would often involve moving to a more prosperous area. Mixed communities characteristically include a wide range of backgrounds and employment amongst residents. Such diversity is vital in encouraging and inspiring residents to improve their lives and remain within the area. PARC envisage that such an initiative will attract many who had previously left Craigmillar.

THE IMPACT

Community participation practices began to redefine the vision for Craigmillar, resulting in the selection of low density housing layouts within home-zone type neighbourhoods and the proposed layout for the new town centre. These features and the widespread support from local residents and for the idea the regeneration should develop places in where people take preference to cars and where accommodation is suitable for young families.

PARC have used a number of methods to engage with the community including public

meetings, workshops and open-air consultations with the intention to gather views from the local community about their perception of the regeneration process. The open-air consultations provided an opportunity to engage with individuals who would not typically attend formal proceedings but were still willing to participate. It was PARC's intention to compile all the feedback they receive and incorporate such information at the design stage. Edinburgh City and PARC have also provided an ongoing exhibition which they hope will demonstrate an ongoing commitment to community involvement in the regeneration process. This exhibition includes the architect's model for the proposed development.

Many of these groups and individuals are experienced activists and are well known in the community. Indeed, many of these individuals have lived their entire lives in Craigmillar and understand local issues often to a greater extent than those from out with the community. It is evident such representatives can provide a wealth of local knowledge from grass roots level, and indeed have the ability to influence sections within the community.

LESSONS LEARNED

Craigmillar has provided a test case for community-led regeneration on a scale not experienced previously in Scotland. The regeneration company, PARC has had to carefully balance commercial considerations with the needs of a local community.

Despite some local hostility to PARC and the regeneration, there has been a genuine attempt by PARC to involve local residents in determining the future of their community. There is evidence to suggest that such engagement and joint decision-making can be decisive in developing social inclusion. Engaging with the local community and allowing them to be genuinely involved in the development must be considered a positive step forward. Consultation with the community has been accompanied with a serious attempt to understand the problems faced. If engaged effectively, the community can provide a wealth of information on local

needs and how to meet these requirements in such a way they become the source of lasting solutions to the problems they encounter.

Capacity building is also critical if the community is to develop such problem solving abilities. Here It is necessary not only to increase the capacity of individuals such as elected community representatives have to solve problems, but augment the competencies of those bodies responsible for organising the regeneration process.

Such capacity building should not be regarded as a short term measure, but a lifelong learning process crucial in empowering communities and their organisation of the regeneration process as a partnership. It is vital that such partnerships are also perceived of as being open, transparent and accountable to their constituents.

Craigmillar aims to develop as a community where local residents can meet their aspirations. Mixed communities are seen as providing the means for this and sense of pride critical in achieving this. Whilst the requirement for change is accepted, it is also clearly recognised any development should retain the community's unique identity and heritage.

In this way, the provision of local services is expected to balance the needs of existing residents alongside the requirements of any incoming population.

This is because successful communities require people as well as places to be recognised if they are to prove sustainable. For equal to this recognition of people and place is the need to empower communities and what they can do to help sustain the regeneration process

Mark Deakin

School of the Built Environment
Napier University
Edinburgh

REFERENCES

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