Case Study 10
Inverclyde Green Network: Concept to Case Study

Through the ‘Area Renewal and The Inverclyde Green Network’ project Inverclyde Council has taken forward an innovative approach to establishing proposals from Concept to Case Study within five areas of Greenock and Port Glasgow. The project places the Green Network at the heart of future area regeneration and establishes a means of securing long term benefits for Inverclyde’s communities and visitors. This is achieved by setting out how three strategic links and two neighbourhood parks can be enhanced and delivered via early action projects.

Context
Inverclyde is facing up to its challenges; several of its neighbourhoods demonstrate some of the lowest life expectancy and highest levels of deprivation in Scotland. The area benefits from a very rich resource in terms of historical, cultural, human and natural heritage. However, whilst access to green areas is not particularly difficult, it is considered important to provide and promote more high-quality greenspace and better link these with existing elements of the established Green Network.

Project Background
The regeneration of Inverclyde is being driven by investment in key priority areas. The ‘Area Renewal and the Inverclyde Green Network: Integrated Masterplanning of New Neighbourhoods’ report was completed by ERZ Ltd in December 2010. It recognised that the Green Network is crucial to the wider regeneration of the Local Authority and that the redevelopment of significant parts of the area offers a unique opportunity to resolve or mitigate many of Inverclyde’s underlying deprivation problems.

“\nThe provision of key linkages around Inverclyde impacts on land or estates which we own but more importantly offers direct health and environmental benefits for the 7,000 tenants and 2,500 associated home owners to whom we provide a service.\n
Angela Spence
River Clyde Homes

It went on to highlight the need to create strategic legible green links between the Clyde Waterfront and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The creation of a network of usable routes and open spaces through residential areas and the creation of two community parks were seen...
Key Points

- Studies have identified the potential of green network developments in mitigating some of Inverclyde’s social, economic and environmental problems.
- The Local Authority has adopted a priority based approach to urban regeneration which focuses specifically on five key areas.
- In each area, the approach delivers a sustainable, long term solution to local problems maximising local opportunities and potential.
- The area based solutions include a list of costed projects which, when linked to existing and future initiatives, will enable Inverclyde’s Green Network to be fully established.

as significant steps towards establishing a well-connected Green Network and reducing the overarching problem of neighbourhood isolation. Through the ERZ Report, five green network areas emerged as the key ‘next steps’ for action. This report, with a brief from Inverclyde Council was the basis for consultants Ironside Farrar to take forward and develop concept designs and ideas in consultation with project partners, landowners, stakeholder groups and the communities that bound the sites. The resultant Case Studies Report, builds on existing Inverclyde area assets, core paths, cycle routes, rail and bus stations to provide three key links between the Waterfront, through the town centres and onwards into Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The Report specifically addresses localised issues of neighbourhood isolation which are largely due to the area’s topography and the severance caused by wider area transport linkages. The Report also outlines detailed proposals for the three strategic links and the two neighbourhood parks with an approximation of costs for specific elements.
What it Does

The project aims to secure a sustainable, long term future for Inverclyde that can better meet the needs of its local communities. It highlights the opportunity for new investment to establish routes around existing green transport hubs, area assets and current/future developments. Three strategic links and two proposed neighbourhood parks were further developed as Early Action Projects and illustrated with plans and 3D visualisations to provide a tool for use in funding bids.

Proposals were progressed to meet the amended Vision for the Green Network in Inverclyde:

‘By 2025 Inverclyde is widely recognised as an attractive place to live, work and spend leisure time. The area’s stunning setting, outstanding natural resources and the provision of high quality new facilities and developments are reflected in the level of investment, creation of a vibrant local economy and the related population growth. Community engagement ensures residents have taken ownership of and are actively involved in managing their environment; local people and visitors have a wide range of opportunities to experience and enjoy the area’s natural and cultural heritage. The Green Network has been a key driver for area regeneration, connecting the Waterfront and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park and establishing strong links within and between communities. Development of the Green Network has delivered and continues to deliver a broad range of economic, community, health and environmental outcomes.’

CSGN Support and Learning

The Area Renewal and the Inverclyde Green Network Case Studies project were assisted through the 2011/12 CSGN Development Fund.

Action Plan projects proposed meet all five key themes of the CSGN Vision. Specifically actions include: reinforcing and linking to the high quality business developments along the waterfront (A Place for Growth), investment in biodiversity measures within neighbourhood parks (A Place in Balance), improving route
perception and developing well overlooked, easy to access new paths (A Place to Feel Good), engaging with local communities and improving sense of ownership (A Place to Belong) and integrating habitats (A Place for Nature).

“Operating on a number of scales – strategic, local and neighbourhood – the original ERZ concept study represented a breakthrough in innovative thinking on the potential of Green Networks to be fully embedded in area renewal and wider regeneration, and as a result were raised in the Council’s Main Issues Report in May 2011.

The case studies taken forward by Ironside Farrar are therefore equally critical to the future regeneration process in Inverclyde, being more focussed on actual implementation than the original concept. It is hoped that they will also be taken forward in Inverclyde’s emerging Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan, due to be published later this year.”

Aubrey Fawcett, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Environment, Inverclyde Council

Future
Moving forward, the identification of viable funding sources and the progression of the Early Action Projects within the report will be the key project drivers. The phased approach highlights priorities as being:

- the achievement of a Disability Discrimination Act compliant route or spaces wherever possible
- improved green network awareness through signage, marketing and promotion
- elements to improve biodiversity, outdoor education and reinforce green corridors
- upgrades to key public spaces in association with wider area works.
Outcomes

Healthier Lifestyles: achieved through better path networks, better connected greenspace; opportunity for participation in physical exercise, a more active community and improved awareness of lifestyle patterns.

Enhanced Quality: of the urban environment and countryside around settlements increasing awareness of opportunities for visitors and residents to access/experience the natural world. Building on assets and ensuring improved pride of place and identity.

Engaged Communities: individual and community development, through participation in new education, training, employment and volunteering opportunities.

Sustainable Development: a more sustainable balance of greenspace which fits within varied future management regimes and better suits varied user needs.

Improved Community Ownership: supporting more positive attitudes towards the public realm, as measured by reduced litter, vandalism, graffiti and increased public use.

Increased Funding: utilising the Green Network Case Studies report to unlock potential funding opportunities.
Location

A map showing the location of the Inverclyde Local Authority is shown below.

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Contact

Charlie Cairns
Area Manager - Lower Clyde Greenspace
Inverclyde Council
Tel: 01475 712464
charlie.cairns@inverclyde.gov.uk

Project Partners

Inverclyde Council Regeneration & Planning Service
Riverside Inverclyde
River Clyde Homes

What is the CSGN?

The CSGN is a national development within the National Planning Framework which aims to make 'a significant contribution to Scotland’s sustainable economic development'. It involves public agencies and stakeholders (those with an interest in our work) working together to align their policies, programmes and actions to achieve a common aim. That aim is to change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area.

Getting in Touch

To discuss this case study please contact: Stephen Hughes, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Central Scotland Green Network Support Unit. E-mail: stephen.hughes@centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

For further information on other case studies please visit: www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org