

Community Led Climate Adaptation Planning

Study Report





With thanks to our committed, connected and insightful community researchers: Min Leng, Alison Hagarty, Denise Cant, Esther Kuperij, Ferdous Jahan Shammi, Maryanne Jacobs, Nasra Masoud, Sarah Kjellman, Isabel Simpson, Mel Esquerre and Laura Dalgetty.

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Executive Summary

Edible Estates is an Edinburgh based not-for-profit organisation which promotes greenspace as a tool for individual and community wellbeing. Our work is focussed in the city's council estates.

Edible Estates worked over five months in 2025 to facilitate community-led climate adaptation planning in four council estates in Edinburgh - Wester Hailes, Oxfords, Hutchison, and Lochend/Craigentinny. The plans were created through participative research methods, engaging over 180 residents and partnering with twenty community organisations across the four communities. The project also recruited and trained eleven local residents as community researchers.

Each community that Edible Estates engaged with had different albeit overlapping results, however, some common themes across the estates were:

- Greenspaces: local residents value the biodiversity, greenspace and waterways around them. Rather than more greenspace, participants favoured enhancement of existing greenspace, including better maintenance.
- Community resilience: participants were aware of the importance of community ties and resources in the face of a changing climate. Depending on the location, participants emphasised the protection and better use of existing community centres, or the creation of community spaces which are currently lacking.
- The desire for more information was raised; participants wanted to learn more about conserving waterways and restoring nature, about reducing energy bills and protecting their homes from extreme weather, about the climate action going on around them already, and about climate actions that they can take in their own lives such as recycling.

There is enthusiasm from participants to go further with community-led climate adaptation, in particular developing their community visions into action plans in collaboration with the Council and other stakeholders.

Context

Even with the best climate change mitigation strategies, Scotland's climate is going to change in coming decades. Current climate projections suggest that Edinburgh will face warmer, drier summers and wetter winters, which will impact ecosystems. Heavy rainfall events and storms will become more frequent and severe, bringing with them risk of flooding, damage to buildings and disruption to public services.

Our communities and places need to adapt to be resilient to these changes; as is recognised in the City of Edinburgh Council's Climate Ready Edinburgh Strategy, communities need to have a say in how their places adapt. This is supported by Adaptation Scotland, who have produced a Community Climate Adaptation Routemap to be used as a guide and template for community-led climate adaptation across Scotland.

This project sought to facilitate a community-led climate adaptation planning process in four council estate communities in Edinburgh.

The study was funded by Edinburgh Communities Climate Action Network (ECCAN) through the Green Light Fund. This report sets out the key findings from these four communities, as well as learnings from the process of organising community climate adaptation planning in council estates.

This study comes at a time when Edinburgh Council are seeking to increase the participation of residents in decision making in council estates through the creation of estate improvement groups, the community visioning process begun within this study can provide a model as to how this may be achieved.

Edible Estates has always taken an Action Research approach, where meaningful projects and services result. We intend to continue supporting these communities to achieve their goals.

Community Research

The study was implemented between December 2024 and May 2025. We took a participative, co-productive approach, the goal was to speak to communities in ways that work for them, and to create outputs which are easy for communities to engage with.

In each estate, Edible Estates worked with 2-4 community researchers (paid local residents), who designed and implemented data collection in their communities, and produced a final report or representation of their findings. Throughout the study, the community researchers were supported and facilitated by an Edible Estates development officer.

Participative Methodologies : Imagine If Training

Social enterprise Imagine If CIC were contracted to train community researchers in research techniques. Through creative and active learning sessions, community researchers learned the basics of climate change and climate adaptation, tested out new tools for community engagement, and analysed and prioritised the results of their community engagement.

Over three training sessions, community researchers were able to:

- **Understand the science of climate change and climate adaptation:** community researchers gained an understanding of what climate change means for Scotland, and Edinburgh- this equipped them to find out what climate change means for their specific communities.
- **Acquire a toolbox of workshop activities and approaches for community-led climate research:** Imagine If's training approach is fully practical- community researchers tested out a variety of climate-specific workshop activities and games for themselves. This allowed community researchers to understand which activities would be most appropriate for their communities, and to feel confident leading these activities themselves.

- **Prioritise and analyse the feedback from their communities:** In later training sessions, Imagine If introduced strategies for prioritising and analysing data; once again, community researchers were able to try these strategies for themselves, and later adapt these strategies to suit their product.
- **Meet and collaborate with community researchers from all four estates:** the community researchers were highly encouraged and inspired by meeting their counterparts from other estates. This allowed them to exchange ideas, experiences and challenges in their own estates and left them re-energised to continue their work. Fostering a positive and inspiring atmosphere motivated community researchers to carry on in their complicated and difficult community planning activities.

Data Collection

All data was collected between March and May 2025, through creative, discussion-based research tools which helped residents to engage with issues of climate adaptation, and to imagine positive futures for their area. Research tools were tailored to the age, location and context of research participants, a selection of examples are outlined in the following pages.

11 Community Researchers Recruited

17 Research Events and Workshops

20 Partner Organisations

Over 180 Research Participants

Community Research Techniques

1. Community mapping

Large maps of the research areas were used as conversation prompts. Community researchers asked participants to write down positive things about the area, and things they would like to change, and to stick them onto the map. In one estate, a historic map recorded the changes in the area over recent decades, and a future map imagined the positive changes which participants would like to see.



2. Spot-the-Difference

The Climate Ready Places tool by Adaptation Scotland was used as a spot-the-difference exercise, where participants identified potential adaptation interventions and learned about why these are important for climate adaptation. They then discussed which of these interventions they would like to see in their area, and where.



3. Adaptation Routemap Inspiration

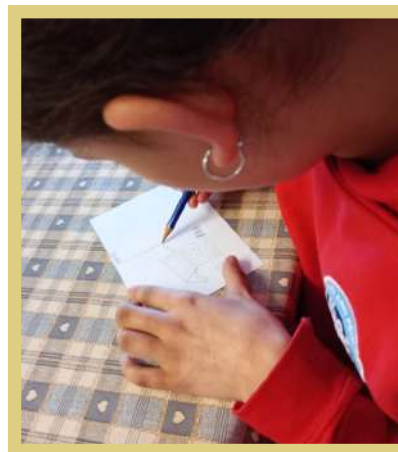
At public events, attendees were invited to sit with community researchers to discuss their thoughts on the local area. The Community Climate Adaptation Routemap graphic was used as a conversation prompt- participants were asked :-

1. Which of the actions on the graphic were already happening
2. Which actions were not yet happening, and were needed



4. Postcards from the Future / Lego Build the Future

Participants were asked to imagine a positive future for their area- and to draw it on a postcard, or build it from lego. This was often done as a follow-up, after discussion around potential adaptation interventions.



Lessons Learned About Community Research

- The **community researcher approach works**. Paying and training local residents added huge value to the project, by recruiting and motivating local people who have deep knowledge and connections in the research area. We inspired, trained and mobilised community activists. The community researchers reported boosted confidence, inspiration to take more community action, and even successful job applications following their experience in the project.
- Communities in council estates face **many barriers to engaging in climate adaptation**. Using practical examples and quality research tools somewhat tackled the overwhelm, cynicism and disillusionment with which many residents in areas of high deprivation approach community action and climate change. However, in areas where residents already face several other issues, including rising costs of living, the capacity to engage in community action is still very low.
- Many **communities feel over-researched**. The issues reported by communities in this research project do not differ greatly from the issues reported in the same areas in the past. Some community members are unwilling to engage in consultation or research, as they perceive that nothing practical has changed as a result of their previous participation in consultations.
- **Community planning takes time**. While a relatively large amount was achieved during the short span of this project, a longer timeframe might have allowed for better engagement, and certainly further development of action plans.
- Subsequent **delivery of community aspirations is vital to continued engagement**. Disillusionment and lack of participation with community planning and organising follows from previous plans which never received the funding or approval for implementation.

Findings

The following pages set out the findings from each estate, alongside some general context about the area. The aims and aspirations are listed according to the five categories of climate adaptation defined in the Community Climate Adaptation Routemap.

- Restoring nature
- Improving housing and neighbourhoods
- Supporting self-sufficiency
- Moving around
- Growing skills and providing local jobs

The team in each estate used slightly different methodologies, to suit their community's interests and methods of communicating. This means that in some estates the results are prioritised, or related to specific areas, while in others they are more general. The order of ideas in these tables is random, and unless otherwise specified, the ideas do not relate to a specific location.

Lochend, Restalrig & Craigentinny

Description

Lochend, Craigentinny and Restalrig are three housing estates built mainly in the inter-war period. According to SIMD†, the area has a population of 6,600; 75% of it is considered within the most deprived 20% of Scotland.

There is one key anchor organisation: the Ripple Project. The holistic support offered by the Ripple is seen to be absolutely vital in the area, particularly as the organisation faced closure due to funding cuts in the months surrounding the study. Craigentinny Community Centre is another resource in the area, however members of the community felt it was not functioning to its full potential, during the project it was closed due to building repairs.

The area is relatively well served for greenspace and food growing opportunities with four allotment sites and two community gardens; Lochend Secret Garden and Craigentinny Community Garden. Likewise the tenements have generous shared gardens. The adjacent Lochend Park provides recreation opportunities and has an active Friends group.

Other community organisations include; Hibs Community Foundation and Edinburgh Tool Library, which are both close to the area. St Ninian's and Triduana Catholic Church has an active environment and climate group who manage the church grounds in an ecologically restorative way. Living Rent has a newly-established branch in Lochend and Craigentinny, which was founded to respond to the City of Edinburgh Council's Mixed Tenure Improvement Scheme to improve building energy efficiency, which led to significant unintended consequences for residents in the area.

The community researchers and participants felt there is a relatively strong sense of community in the area. This might have been linked to the two ongoing public campaigns in the area during the

† Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation



○ Allotments

○ Allotments

○ The Ripple

○ Allotments

○ Allotments

○ Shops

○ Shops

○ Lochend Secret Garden

○ Craigentinny Community Centre

○ Craigentinny Garden

Lochend Park



Local Methodology

Community researchers in Lochend, Restalrig and Craigentenny designed and printed a community map, which they took to several community gathering places. Passers by were invited to write the best things about their area, and things they'd like to improve about their area, and to stick these points on the map.

Following these drop-ins, the team arranged a community planning event at the Ripple, where attendees were invited to participate in several creative planning exercises including climate adaptation spot-the-difference and drawing pictures from the future.

Aspirations & Goals

The table below and overleaf lists the aspirations and goals communicated by residents during the study. The community researchers designed a zine to distribute their local findings, it folds into an easily-readable A6 pamphlet (see following pages). One side of the zine shows the suggested actions categorised by theme, while the other shows key results arranged by time-frame, from immediate actions to long term goals. The zines were printed and distributed to local organisations such as the Ripple, Friends of Lochend Park, and St Ninians and Triduana Church.

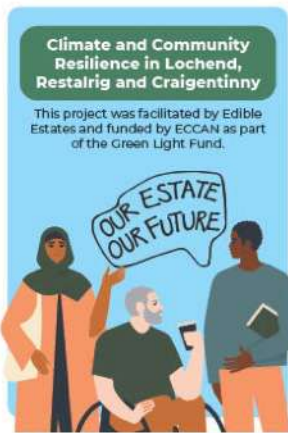
Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Protect wildlife	Fill empty council homes	Make use of Craigentenny castle	Add more EV charging	Open coffee kiosk at police box
Plant wildflower patches	Improve basketball court	Install solar panels and wind turbines on public buildings	Introduce zebra crossings	Bring back cottage hospitals
Reinstate Lochend in Bloom competition	Make it easier to access council services	Promote existing community facilities & services	Introduce bike charging facilities	Establish more local businesses

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Improve upkeep of green spaces	Increase litterpicking activities & Install more bins	Community celebrations and events	Convert old railway to cycling/walking route	Fund lollipop people
Replace cut trees	Build a swimming pool	Create more community gardens	Make bike lockers free	Educate community on waste
Plant berries and fruit trees	Bring back public toilets	Support current community gardens	Make bike lockers accessible	
More allotments	All-weather activities hub	Install solar panels and wind turbines on homes	Improve transport links to the seaside	
	Introduce an all-weather activities hub	Bring back the Refillery and Reuse store	Improve transport links to the seaside	
	Put in place a dog park	Open a community cafe	Increase cycle parking	
	Increase play parks for kids	Protect the fire station	Introduce more cycling/walking routes	
	Create a big mural & graffiti wall	Protect the Tool Library	Improve pavements	
	Improve lighting	Increase number of warm hubs in winter		
	Install outside taps for gardens	Create a community development trust		
	Introduce district heating	Save St Margaret's House		
	Address the causes of damp at home	Encourage people to start gardening		
	Outside gym area			



Community Action

The community researchers hosted an online meeting with community organisations to discuss the climate adaptation plan. They also distributed paper copies of the zine to key organisations, and donated the waterproof community map to The Ripple for future use. The organisations expressed an interest in the plan, but all were stretched for time and finances, and indicated they may not be able to contribute to implementation.



Climate Adaptation Zine, contact Edible Estates for a PDF copy.

Next Steps

Going forward, Edible Estates is working with the community researchers and The Ripple to facilitate the creation of a community estate improvement group for Lochend, Craightenny & Restalrig. This group could inform Council strategy for public realm spending in the area, and could use the Climate Adaptation Plan as inspiration for these discussions.

Intro

This project engaged with residents of **Lochend, Restalrig, and Craightenny** to explore what they value most about their neighbourhood and what changes they hope to see in the future. A key focus was building a community that's resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Situated in North East Edinburgh, the estate was developed in the 1920s on former farmland and meadows. Today, residents cherish the area's remaining green spaces, particularly Lochend Park, which serves as a sanctuary for both people and wildlife in the heart of the city.

The resulting plan reflects the voices of the community, shaped by their needs, hopes, and priorities.

We also worked closely with local community groups, showing not only the wealth of activity already taking place, but also the areas where further support will make a real difference.

Nature

According to residents, one of the best things about the area are the **green spaces and wildlife**. We have gardens, community gardens, back greens and Lochend Park, which hosts an incredible diversity of wildlife, including nesting herons, Canadian geese and other migratory birds.

It is important to locals that the park continues to be cared for. Support for volunteer groups such as Friends of Lochend Park is high. Their work includes building bat boxes, litter picking events and the creation of a wetland to protect against flooding.

Residents would like to see more **native wildflowers**, especially on underused green sites such as at the end of roads. **Replanting of any cut trees** and the addition of more **fruit trees** are also priorities for the community.



Housing

Most of our community live in **blocks of flats**, built between the first and second world wars. Many of these buildings were built with experimental methods of construction. Decades later, these buildings require maintenance and improvements to address the causes of **damp and mould**.

Although retrofit initiatives are generally welcome, residents are worried about the costs, especially for those living on low incomes or in energy poverty. The current retrofit programme led by Edinburgh Council has caused owners to sell their properties due to the high costs and lack of community participation.

Residents would also like to see the introduction of **renewable energy** used on their homes. Many residents work within the trades, providing opportunities for **retraining and upskilling** on energy efficiency and **renewable energy** installation. This would open doors for **community wealth building**, as well as strengthening the local economy. Combined with a **community-led retrofit program**, this approach would empower residents to lead the transition to a more sustainable and resilient future.

Self sufficiency

We partnered with two community gardens in the area: **Craightenny Community Garden** and **Lochend Secret Garden**. Both give people the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and meet neighbours. There is also a local **fruit tree orchard**. While these gardens are valued spaces, they rely heavily on a small group of volunteers. Many feel that **additional support**, along with **better funding**, is needed to help maintain and maybe even expand these spaces to support more people.

The **Edinburgh Tool Library** is located nearby at Meadowbank and provides an affordable and accessible way to **borrow tools** for both the home and garden. Enabling people to support themselves and their neighbours in a cost-effective way.



There is a lack of working and accessible **outdoor taps** on homes. Residents would like to change this as that **garden maintenance** is easier. This could be done alongside maintenance or retrofit work on housing.

Residents also expressed a need for **public warm hubs** in the winter to support people living in fuel poverty.

Getting Around

Our estate is only **two miles from Edinburgh city centre** and **one mile from the seaside**. It benefits from a popular cycle path, as well as good bus routes. However, residents want to see improvements in the **maintenance of walking and cycle paths**, as well as the **creation of new routes**, to reduce the need to travel on main roads. There are old and unused railway paths that could be utilised for this purpose.

Residents have requested an **increase in EV charging points**, as currently there are only two local spots available and are often not in working order. The lack of charging facilities has influenced people's decision on buying electric or petrol cars. Locals also expressed a need for more **accessible bike storage** that is free to use, as well as **electric bike charging facilities**.

Residents are also concerned about **road safety** in the area, and expressed a desire to move away from cars once the **infrastructure** is created.



Recycling

Edinburgh council provides **recycling bins for glass, plastic, cardboard and food waste**. The council also provides street bins and an extra garden waste service if paid for. However, **fly tipping and littering** are significant problems in the community.

People repeatedly say that there are **not enough recycling facilities**, and some of them cannot be accessed without **significant travel** and the use of a vehicle. Some people in the community are **unable to afford the £5 Council's large item uplift fee**. This results in items left on the streets, thrown over fences or left in communal areas.

A lack of understanding of how to recycle common items is a concern for residents. In addition to this, not all residents are able to access or use the council's **online resources** which enable uplifts and reporting of waste issues. Improving how these council services are provided and how accessible they are, would help residents take control of their waste disposal.

Local services such as the **Repair Café** and **Retrofitters (Edinburgh Tool Library)** could be promoted more widely in the area and empower residents to repair and reuse. A **refill shop** could also be introduced to reduce the need for plastics and travel to supermarkets.

Improving the Neighbourhood

The most common complaint in the estate by far is **littering and dog fouling**, which really affects residents' enjoyment of public spaces. One clear and practical solution would be to **increase the number of bins** in these high-traffic areas, making it easier for people to dispose of waste responsibly.

This could be paired with a **public education programme** on the harms of dog fouling on human health, nature, and local wildlife. Combining better infrastructure with a public information campaign could help the area to become a cleaner, healthier, and more pleasant place for everyone.

Additionally, although local groups often arrange litter picking events, the council could also establish a **regular cleansing programme** that works alongside other council departments to ensure **waste is collected from the green areas before any grass is cut**. Residents have complained that litter is often cut up by council lawn mowers, adding to an already existing issue.

Another solution suggested by residents is to **create a local dog park**, giving dog owners a specific area to enjoy with their dogs and freeing up other green spaces for children to play.



Community Wellbeing

Our estate has a strong sense of community but there are not many indoor community spaces available to use.

Residents have told us they want to see **more local businesses**, especially those that encourage a stronger sense of connection, for example spaces like **cafés and restaurants**. **Restoring existing sports facilities**, such as the basketball court at Lochend Park, and **developing all-weather community spaces** in venues like Craightenny Community Centre would also support community wellbeing.

Currently, Craightenny Community Centre is an underutilised space due to extensive repairs needed, while The Ripple Community Hub's funding future is uncertain. St Margaret's House, home to artists, charities and activities for all ages is in danger of closing and being sold, further **reducing the community's available indoor space**.

Residents are interested in exploring the idea of creating a **community development trust** for the area. This would allow them to purchase or manage buildings for the community, which in turn would allow the community more control over their resources and services.

Community celebrations and events to improve community pride and participation would also be welcome such as **community fairs, parades, public art projects** such as **murals** and a **Lochend in Bloom** competition.

Oxgangs

Description

Oxgangs is a council housing estate of approx 1,300 homes, built in the post-war period however, as in other estates, much of this housing is now privately owned or rented. The housing is a mixture of bungalows, low-rise houses, maisonettes and high-rise flats.

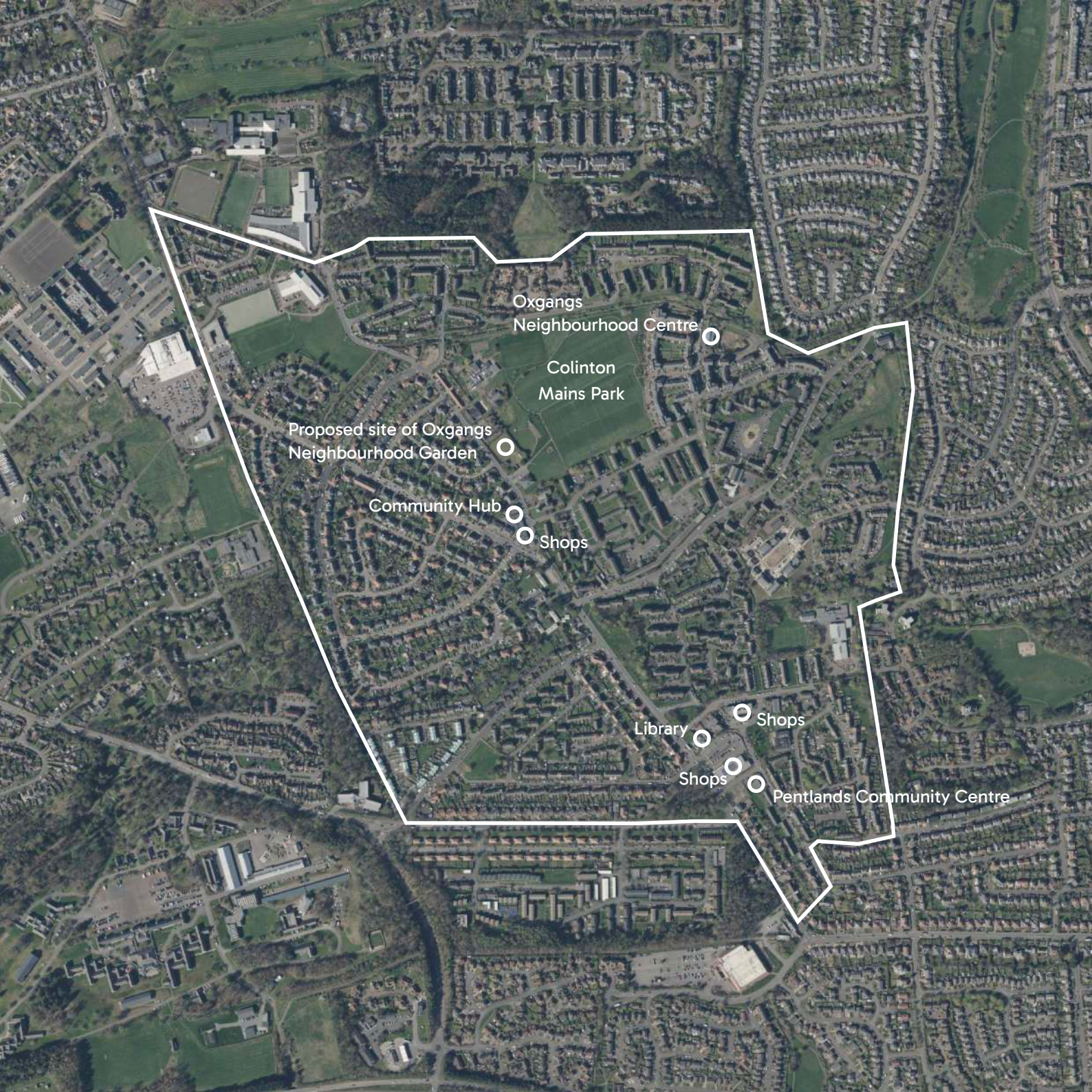
According to the SIMD†, the area has a population of 3,700; approx 45% of households are considered to be in the most deprived 20% of Scotland.

There is a feeling among Oxgangs residents that due to its being smaller than other estates and its wealthy neighbours, the area receives less support, has fewer community organisations and a lesser sense of community than other council estates of Edinburgh.

There are two community centres in Oxgangs; the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre and Pentlands Community Centre, residents expressed a feeling that these centres were less accessible and well-used than they would like. The local library is a key community resource, as is social enterprise Best Bib n Tucker, who run community arts and crafts activities. Oxgangs Community Church has recently renovated a Hub space on the high street which they invite local groups to use free of charge.

Two new community groups have recently been established in Oxgangs; Oxgangs Community Gardeners, (supported by Edible Estates), takes care of local green spaces and is lobbying the council for use of a derelict bowling green as a community garden. Oxgangs (North) Residents Association aims to run events to bring residents together as a community.

† Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation



Oxgangs
Neighbourhood Centre

Colinton
Mains Park

Proposed site of Oxgangs
Neighbourhood Garden

Community Hub

Shops

Library

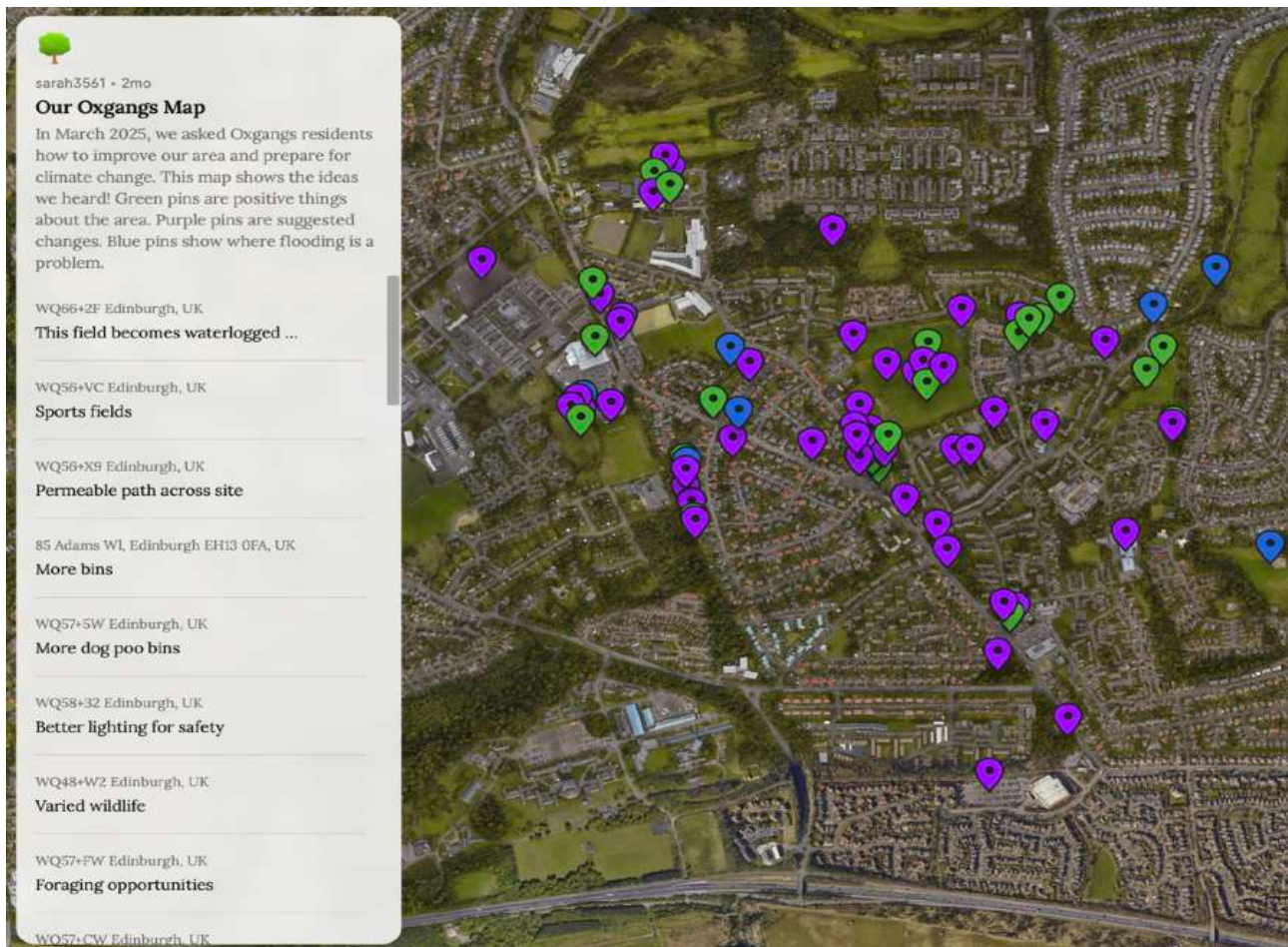
Shops

Shops

Pentlands Community Centre

Local Methodology

In Oxgangs, results were gathered through mapping workshops and creative exercises. Those actions which were related to a specific place have been placed onto an online map (see below page), which can be viewed here: <https://padlet.com/sarah3561/our-oxgangs-map-j203zfc25ck81uph>



Oxgangs Aspirations & Goals

The table below lists the aspirations and goals communicated by residents during the study. Residents in Oxgangs raised several issues, for example a desire for greater community connection and identity; this could be achieved through various kinds of community events, or local businesses and cafes. Another key theme was flood prevention; residents said that flooding is common after heavy rain, and can prevent public and private transport out of the area.

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Support animal and insect populations; e.g. beehives, hedgehog habitats, ponds	More rubbish bins and dog poo bins, report fly-tipping, reduce litter	Community litter picks and drain cleans,	More night buses- there are currently no night buses on Clinton Road.	Community green-grocer, vegetable delivery van, markets, bakery
Improve planting on the Pentlands to reduce runoff and flooding	More windows on schools for more sunlight	Create a community garden and orchard	Transport solutions for snow and floods and severe weather	More growing in schools
Clean and upkeep the nature signs	Green roofs on public buildings and bin hubs.	Offer sharing opportunities:	Better cycling and walking infrastructure	Hold outdoor classrooms next to Firrhill
Window-boxes for high rises	Create rain gardens	Food-sharing popup events	Fill potholes in cycle lanes,	Increase community growing in Firrhill
More planters especially around centre.	More activities for young people†	Better access to GP (more appointments)	Safer roads and road-crossings. Increase pedestrian crossings.	Shopping mall at Redford Barracks

† Add play park equipment for older kids, sports pitches, places to hang out and get food, youth clubs, safe places. Repair and improve play park equipment- for all ages, gymnastics equipment etc.

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Cleanup rivers and streams	Improve community spirit (murals etc)	More renewable energy	Cycle route on Oxgangs Rd North	More local shops
Replace trees which have been cut down and plant more trees and orchards.	Solar panels and wind turbines on public buildings, houses & bin hubs	Improve local identity and pride; include Oxgangs in the Council ward name	Communal bicycles and scooters at parks (geo-tagged for protection)	More growing in schools, fruit trees, ponds, low-maintenance plants
Increase the amount of plants in the area; more grass, less concrete, reduce car parks to create grassy areas	Improve community image: Oxgangs in Bloom, history tours, plant swaps, guerrilla gardening, advertise good things about the area, foraging workshops, food sharing opportunities, apple days	Outdoor gyms, community bbq, little libraries (in library foyer?) or seed libraries	Improved safety - in parks, on roads for cycling at night, in wooded areas, cameras and lights	
More trees, hedges and plants in general	Activities for older people	Tool Library		
Improve plant diversity in greenspaces and school playgrounds;	Improve existing green spaces - add benches, public toilets, trees, flowers, paths.	More opportunities to be neighbourly		
	Better maintenance of green spaces	Allotments and greenhouses		
	Organise community events e.g. art in the park	Re-use water, collect grey water. Rain gardens		

Community Action

A local launch event was held in Oxgangs, to celebrate and publicise the study findings. During event attendees were invited to join local groups such as the new community gardening group, and tenants & residents association which were formed as a consequence of Edible Estates' community engagement activities. Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre also provided sign up forms to become committee members of the community centre.

A local participant in the project organised a wildflower nature walk, to respond to a desire for more knowledge of the plants in the local area.

Next Steps

In response to suggestions of more fruit trees, and more community events, Edible Estates supported the Oxgangs Residents Community Association to apply for Edinburgh Council's Grow Your Own Fund, to establish a community orchard.

Oxgangs Community Gardeners are continuing to lobby for a community garden at the former bowling green at Colinton Mains Park, at time of publishing this report it appears almost certain this will go ahead.

The Oxgangs community researchers are further developing their findings towards the development of an action plan which prioritises these actions according to two criteria: ease of implementation, and potential impact. The action plan is available on request.

Edible Estates are supporting Oxgangs Residents Community Association & Oxgangs Community Gardeners to work with the Council to establish a community estate improvement group for Oxgangs which would facilitate residents to participate in decision making regarding the public realm.

Wester Hailes

Description

Wester Hailes comprises five housing estates built in the 1970's and 80's. According to the 2011 Census, the Wester Hailes population was nearly 11,000; it is expected to be moderately larger than this now. According to the SIMD, 80% of Wester Hailes is in the most deprived 20% of Scotland.

There are a large number of community organisations in Wester Hailes; WHALE Arts, SCORE Scotland, the Community Wellbeing Collective, the Health Agency, and the Calders Community Flat, among others. Wester Hailes Growing Communities (WHGC); a greenspace charity which manages three community gardens and school farms in two of the primary schools.

Wester Hailes was the first community in Scotland to produce a Local Place Plan. This extensive document was created by the Wester Hailes Community Trust and partners, who are now working to implement some of the projects on the plan. There is a Mosque in Broomhouse which is attended by a large number of Wester Hailes residents, and is very interested in community support and action. WHGC is working with residents to create new community hubs in the Calders Janitors House, and Greenway Microhub.

Local Methodology

Community researchers in Wester Hailes felt that there was a key issue with engagement; the same people appear at all community meetings, while a majority of Wester Hailes residents, for various reasons, remain disengaged from community activities. Due to this fact, and the fact that Wester Hailes already has a detailed Local Place Plan, the community researchers focused on widening engagement, and engaging residents in the local place plan, as well as getting their views on climate adaptation.



Janitors House

Shops

Community Flat

Wester Hailes High School

Calders Community Garden

Sighthill PS

Gate 55

Greenway Microhub

Greenway Garden

The Bridge Church & Cafe

Canal View PS

Shops

Whale Arts

Healthy Living Centre

Clovenstone Garden

Clovenstone Community Centre

Clovenstone PS

Wester Hailes Aspirations & Goals

The table below lists the aspirations and goals communicated by residents during the study. Residents highlighted several issues, including damp in homes, litter and antisocial behaviour in green spaces, and poor maintenance of existing green spaces. Residents suggested solutions such as installing more bins and benches, and providing more support to community litter picking and green space organisations in the area.

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Clean up water in the canal	Improve access to/ awareness of community gardens	Create more fun things to do locally, museums and galleries	Install secure bike storage	Turn unused buildings into local businesses, community cafes, and sports facilities
Rewild: Do a local wildlife survey, plant more wildflowers, etc.	Improve housing - reduce mould and leaks, protect buildings against high winds,	Encourage community care for communal spaces e.g. stairwells.	Reduce air pollution, so that walking, jogging and cycling is more pleasant.	Provide jobs for locals who are already volunteering in the community
Improve the management of existing green space	Improve maintenance of communal stairwells,	Improve insulation	Install more seating benches	Minimise environmental impacts of new construction
Stop mowing over the top of litter or flowers.	Reduce Litter†	Install solar energy in the community	Better grit and sand on roads in cold weather	Access to green jobs for locals

† Litter: Provide a litter picking kit in every community garden, report fly-tipping in the canal. Support the community litter picking initiatives by uplifting the waste that volunteer pickers collect. Get more young people into litter picking

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Plant more edible plants, fruit trees in gardens and community orchards	More spaces and activities for young people, especially during holidays - e.g. play parks or green space infrastructure for teens, better sports fields/courts	Build more community openness/ knowing your neighbours, checking on neighbours	Better planning for extreme weather; including communal grit stores and sandbags.	Raise awareness/ education on recycling, biodiversity, climate change, healthy food, time outdoors and connection to nature
Plant hedges or small trees to minimise disruption to pavements and houses	Improve safety in parks and streets- fix street lighting promptly. Encourage high footfall and prevent drug dealing in parks.	Create spaces for swapping food and other items, to reduce waste	More segregated cycle paths, and improve road quality on cycle paths.	Connect local and global issues, and lobby government to help countries which are most affected
Provide a free tree to every household.	Improve recycling infrastructure.	Improve access to cheap fresh food.	Protect transport links during storms	
Take better care of newly-planted trees.	Install more/larger bins and dog poo bins. Empty the bins more frequently.	Support existing community spaces and provide more community spaces	Ensure good quality, safe walking routes	
Convert derelict and tarmac spaces to greenspaces.	Install public toilets on the canal for pedestrians	Grow more food in the community		
	Create dog parks			
	Install green roofs			
	Reduce vandalism			



Community Action

As a final output, researchers in Wester Hailes designed a collaborative art piece based on a sunflower; positive aspects of the estate (as reported by participants) were placed on the petals, while suggested climate adaptation actions were placed inside cardboard "seeds" in the centre. This piece of art was displayed at the City Chambers at a launch event on 7 May 2025.

The Wester Hailes Community Trust has recently adopted the Wester Hailes Railway station, becoming responsible for aesthetics and upkeep of the station. With some extra funding, the Trust hopes to recreate a version of the Sunflower to decorate the Wester Hailes Railway Station.

Next Steps

Wester Hailes Growing Communities (WHGC) are working with council officers and Wester Hailes Community Trust to establish a community estate improvement group (CEIG) for Wester Hailes and the Calders. Further community visioning exercises are being planned to identify key public realm actions to propose to the Council through the CEIG.

WHGC have commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the viability of restoring tarmaced areas to greenspace and installing rain garden planters as a nature and flood remediation measure.



Hutchison

Description

Hutchison is a small council estate, built in the post-war era. Originally all of the 330-350 homes were social housing; now around three quarters are estimated to be privately owned or rented. According to the SIMD, the population of the area is 2,750, whilst the area is not within the 20% most deprived, the individual rankings for housing, crime and skills and education are very low.

There are relatively few community organisations inside the estate. Edible Estates supports a community garden in Hutchison, which serves a function as a community meeting space. St Cuthbert's Primary School located in the estate is involved in the community garden. There are also a number of bowling greens surrounding the estate, with varying levels of activity. Residents of Hutchison often use Saughton Park and the Water of Leith as green spaces; the Water of Leith Conservation Trust centre is close to Hutchison.

Local Methodology

Ideas were collected through mapping workshops at the community garden and other locations, which were then collated into a small online survey, where respondents selected the most important actions, in their opinion.

The community researchers re-created the Climate Adaptation Routemap with an illustration of a tree, (see following pages), created by community researcher Sarah Kjellman, populated with actions specific to Hutchison. The actions at the centre of the tree represent those which received the highest number of votes in the online survey. The illustration is now on show in the community shed in the garden, and a PDF is available from Edible Estates.



○ St Cuthberts PS

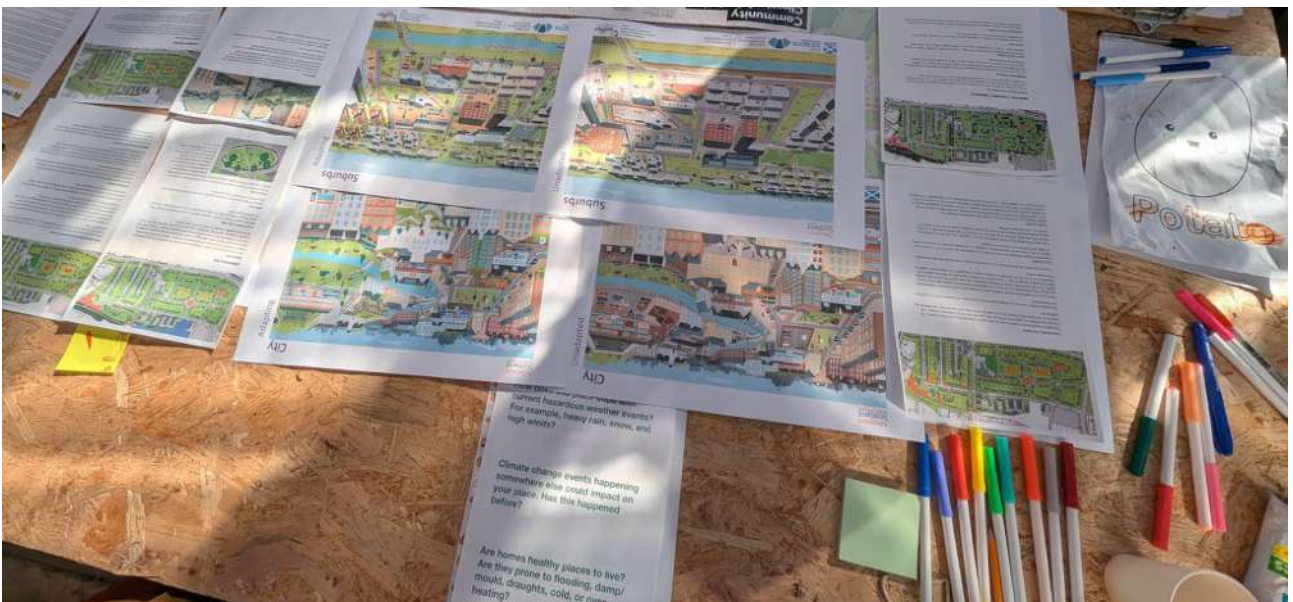
○ Hutchison Community Garden

Hutchison Aspirations & Goals

The table below lists the aspirations and goals communicated by residents during the study. Residents expressed a wide variety of desires, from reducing car traffic around the school to tackling litter and overgrown pavements. Residents also wanted places and organisations which could bring the local community together; such as a community cafe or community-owned business. Finally, residents wanted to see more done with the green spaces in the area, many of which are simple amenity grassland; suggestions included sensory gardens, wildflower meadows, trees and benches, among others.

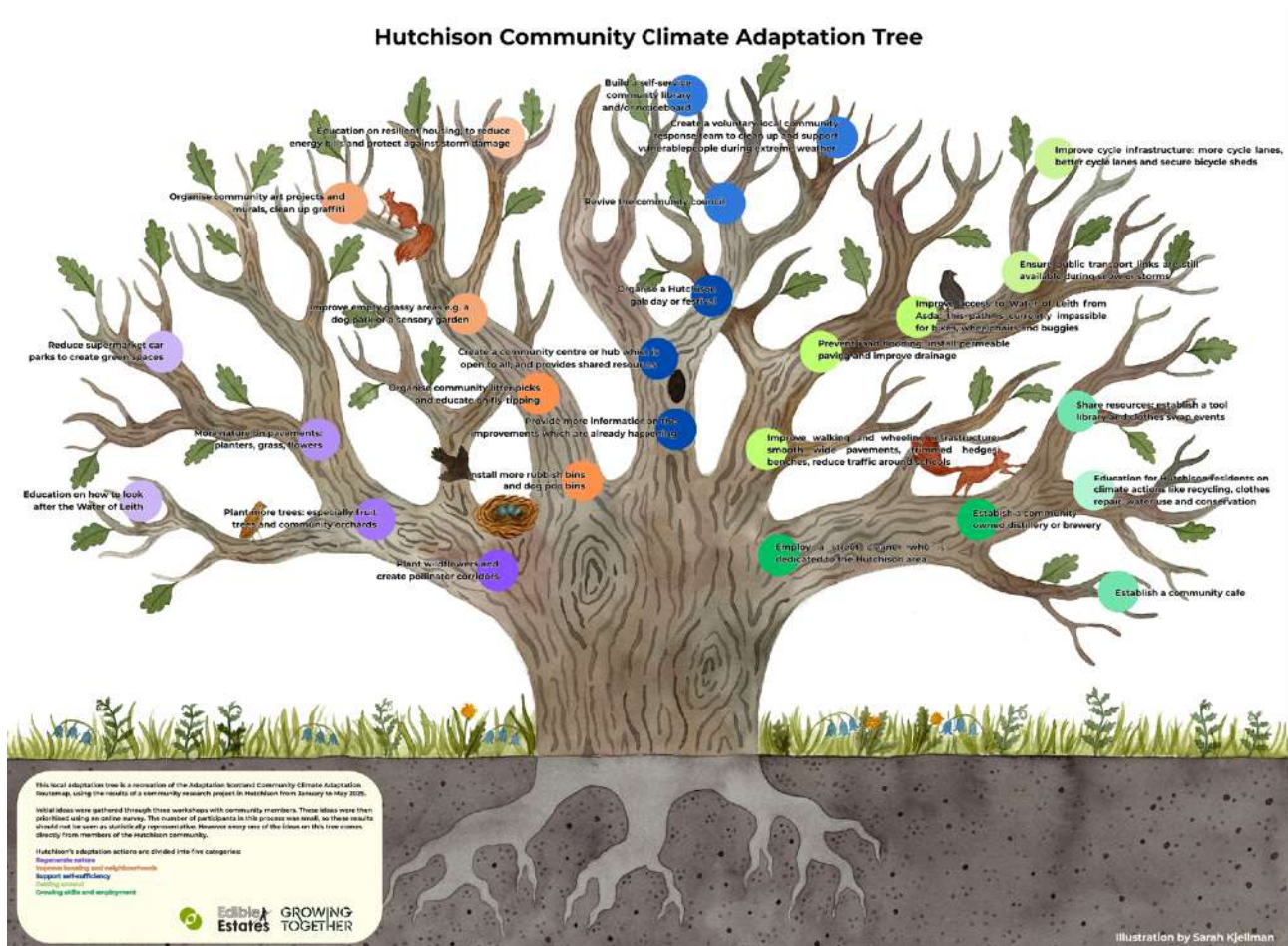
Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Plant more trees	Organise community art projects such as murals	Organise a Hutchison gala day or festival	Ensure transport links are still available during snow or storms (e.g. buses)	Establish a community cafe, with a shared oven that community members can use
Plant fruit trees and community orchards	Improve empty grass patches so that they are more attractive to spend time in (e.g. greenspace outside the Corn Exchange)	Create a community response team of local volunteers who can help to clean up, or support vulnerable residents during extreme weather	Establish walk-to-school groups or walking buses so that more children can walk to school	Education for locals in climate skills like recycling, sustainable water use and conservation, repairing clothes or electronics
Plant wildflowers	Create a sensory garden	Create a community cafe	Install secure bicycle sheds	Set up a tool library
Protect bees and other pollinators	Install more rubbish bins and dog poo bins	Create a community centre or hub that's open to everyone in the community (e.g. in a local bowling club)	Make pavements wider and smoother so they are easier and safer to walk on. Trim hedges along pavements.	Employ a street cleaner who is dedicated to the Hutchison area

Restoring Nature	Improving Neighbourhoods	Supporting Self-Sufficiency	Moving Around	Growing Skills & Jobs
Turn supermarket car parking spaces into greenspaces (e.g. some spaces in the Lidl car park)	Hold workshops to inform locals about how to save energy and reduce their bills	Host a community kitchen, where residents can bring their food to cook together and save on energy bills	Create more cycle lanes, or improve existing cycle lanes (one participant was explicitly against more cycle lanes)	Establish a community-owned brewery
Improve pavements - adding planters, grass, or flowers	Organise community litter picks and leaf clearing	Build a small self-service community library	Improved drainage to prevent flooding on the roads	
An education campaign about how to protect the Water of Leith	Hold workshops to inform locals about protecting homes against extreme weather	Build a community noticeboard for local events	Improve the path connecting Asda to the Water of Leith for bicycle and wheelchair access	
	Monitoring of flytipping / junk left beside bins / education around how to use bins properly	Provide more information about the work that is already happening to improve Hutchison	More benches on walkways, particularly on route from shops to homes.	
	Create a dog area/park	A community council	Replace tarmac with permeable paving to prevent flooding	
	Clean up the graffiti	Events for sharing clothes/ other surplus	Improve road surface for cars, bikes and pedestrians crossing roads.	
			Reduce car traffic around schools	



Next Steps

A meeting with community researchers and the community gardener was held to discuss the suggestions from the climate adaptation plan which might be relevant to garden activities. The Hutchison Gardeners are going to join with other community gardens across the SW to establish a new SCIO South West Growers which will see to act on the climate plan.



What Next?

Community organisations and community researchers expressed a strong desire to work on implementing the climate adaptation plans they had contributed to. They also expressed that acting on the plan, and quickly, is important to avoid contributing to the existing consultation fatigue that residents feel.

Edible Estates is seeking funding opportunities to continue working in these estates to:

- Prioritise which actions should be taken first;
- Identify the key organisations for implementing each action;
- Work with other community organisations to implement the most impactful and least costly actions;
- Take steps towards implementing longer term actions;

Many of the aspirations for climate adaptation relate to the public realm. Being as all four communities are former council estates, there is potential for residents to lobby the Council to incorporate these ideas into their spending plans of the Estates Improvement Programme and the new Community Led Improvement Programme (CLIP).

The Council has highlighted their desire to establish 'community estate improvement groups' to provide a forum for better dialogue between council housing staff and residents. All four group participating in this study have indicated that they wish become involved in CEIGs in their area. Edible Estates will seek to support them in this goal.

To find out more please get in touch hello@edibleestates.scot





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