

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 18 March 2021

## Community-Led Factoring

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Notes the update on Craigmillar regeneration and the engagement that has taken place with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Neighbourhood Alliance (NA) regarding community led factoring;
  - 1.1.2 Agrees to discharge the motion on Community Factoring approved by City of Edinburgh Council on [15 October 2020](#); and
  - 1.1.3 Notes that officers will continue to engage with partner organisations in Craigmillar to improve estate management and explore opportunities for local people to become more involved in the maintenance of the estate.

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Executive Director of Place

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## Community-Led Factoring

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on regeneration of the Craigmillar estate and advises regarding discussions with RSLs and the Neighbourhood Alliance (NA) regarding opportunities for community factoring in new developments.
- 2.2 Committee is asked to discharge the motion approved by the City of Edinburgh Council on the [15 October 2020](#) and to note that officers will continue to engage with landlords and community organisations in Craigmillar to develop a joined up approach to estate management with opportunities for local people to become more involved in maintaining the management of the estate.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 On Thursday [15 October 2020](#) the City of Edinburgh Council approved an amended motion on Community Factoring (item 9.6) requesting a report back to the Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in two cycles. The motion requested that Council:
  - 3.1.1 Recognises the contribution to the regeneration of Craigmillar by the NA and the valuable local knowledge they possess. Recognises further that organisations rooted in their communities have a contribution to make to the ongoing enhancement of the area;
  - 3.1.2 Therefore, instructs officers to engage with partner organisations; including the NA and RSLs, co-operatives and social enterprises to discuss opportunities for community factoring in new developments; and
  - 3.1.3 Agrees that officers report back to the Housing Homelessness and Fair Work committee in two cycles on the outcomes of these discussions, what the next steps could be, and how they could support other local groups with similar aims.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The Craigmillar estate has been transformed through affordable housing led regeneration. This has included delivery of over 1,250 new affordable and private homes, a new primary school, Council office and hub and a new retail centre. Investment in new affordable homes alone exceeds £160million; including Council investment, Registered Social Landlord (RSL) private finance and £69million of Scottish Government grant funding. The new secondary school is under construction and expected to complete later this year.
- 4.2 In 2019 the Community Alliance Trust and the NA decided it was timely to review the outcomes delivered through the regeneration in order to get a better understanding of achievements to date and work still to be done. The process, called 'Changing Craigmillar', sought the views of local people and various organisations who have been part of the regeneration through interactive sessions and a community survey. The NA has advised that they plan to present the outcomes of this work to the community when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.
- 4.3 Over the past 15 years, poor quality, low demand housing in Craigmillar has been replaced with quality new build housing for affordable rent and home ownership. There is high demand for social rented and mid rent homes in the Craigmillar area with market homes for sale advertised at between £145,000 and £275,000. It is recognised, however, that there is considerable work to be done to deliver the aspirations set out in the Craigmillar Urban Design Framework that was developed in partnership with the community in 2005 and informed subsequent masterplans, residential and commercial development.
- 4.4 A project team from across the Council has been established to take forward the next stage of the regeneration which includes plans to turn Niddrie Mains Road into a new vibrant town centre, improve connections with neighbouring communities and re-engage with the local community to take forward the community led 'Changing Craigmillar' process.
- 4.5 In addition to the priorities identified above, it is anticipated that the Changing Craigmillar report will identify the need for improvements in wider estates management. The ongoing maintenance of new areas and the existing estate is important both to ensure the area remains attractive and has a sense of place for residents and visitors to the area but also to protect the significant public and private investment in the estate.
- 4.6 There is now a range of ownership and maintenance arrangements in place in Craigmillar. Alongside the Council there are number of RSLs who have homes in the area. These include Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, Link Housing Group, Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd and Manor Estates Housing Association.
- 4.7 Depending on the ownership and type of development, there are a range of factoring and landscape maintenance arrangements in place. In older areas owned by the Council, the landscape maintenance is carried out by the Council's Parks

and Greenspace team while in new-build areas owned by the Council, the landscape maintenance is sub-contracted to Lowther Homes once the initial defects rectification period for landscape is concluded. During the defects rectification period the contractor who built the homes is responsible for landscape maintenance, which allows time for the landscaping to bed in and any issues or errors to be resolved.

- 4.8 Landscape arrangements for areas owned by RSLs are either done by in-house RLS teams or subcontracted out to landscape maintenance providers. For example, Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd subcontracts its landscape maintenance to Residential Management Group Ltd (RMG Scotland), Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, which is part of Wheatley Group uses Lowther Homes (which is also part of Wheatley Group) and Link Housing Group has an estate management team which sits under Link Property, the repairs and maintenance service. Linkscape focuses on estate enhancements and external reactive repairs, whilst the large-scale grass maintenance is sub-contracted out to Idverde Ltd. Manor Estates Housing Association also sub-contracts its landscape maintenance to a company called Greenfingers Landscape Ltd.

#### **Opportunities for Community Factoring in new developments**

- 4.9 Factoring of buildings and amenity spaces involves expertise across many different areas which include, not limited to: Stairway/Window cleaning and fire safety inspections:
- cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs;
  - grounds maintenance (hard and soft landscaped areas);
  - graffiti removal, vandalism repairs;
  - managing anti-social behaviour;
  - infestation, vermin/pests in common areas of buildings;
  - refuse disposal and litter;
  - buildings insurance;
  - insurance claims; and
  - complaint handling.
- 4.10 The Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 introduced a mandatory registration process for all property factors; including a mandatory code of conduct to follow and a complaints procedure for any owner dissatisfied with the actions or failure of their property factor.
- 4.11 A community owned factoring company would require to meet a range of legislative requirements and to compete with established businesses to secure contracts from owners. In the context of this report and Craigmillar regeneration, community factoring is believed to have the most potential around areas of landscape maintenance.
- 4.12 Officers have met with the RSLs who have developed new homes in Craigmillar over recent years. Work is underway to collate information on land ownership and maintenance arrangements. This will help to identify areas that are not covered by

existing maintenance arrangements and will inform a more joined up approach to grounds maintenance and estates management across Craigmillar.

- 4.13 RSLs were asked if they would be interested in appointing a community factoring company. RSLs advised that they have existing contracts in place and would require to follow procurement rules and meet their own internal governance requirements when appointing new contractors. However, RSLs also said that they secure community benefits through their contracts, employ apprentices and would be interested in finding out more about community factoring and working with the Council and other partners in Craigmillar; including community organisations to improve estate management.
- 4.14 The NA has said that they believe that tenants and owners would be very happy to pay their factoring charge to a company employing local people and also believe that residents would be interested in working for a community led factoring company. Their own experience, however, of getting developers to provide expertise to get a maintenance company set up so that local people could gain experience at a small scale has not been successful. The developers did not secure planning permission for their proposed developments and discussions came to an end. It was suggested that building on local projects and local successes; such as the Craigmillar Alliance Trust's experience of working with disengaged children to get them involved in community gardening, might be more successful over time in creating opportunities for learning skills, employment and community enterprise.
- 4.15 Estates Management is a major workstream within the Housing Service Improvement Plan (HSIP) involving joint working with services across Place Management to review the current model of service delivery for estates management, to improve the efficiency and promote a more integrated, resolution-focused service. The aim of the project is to develop a coordinated approach across Council services, to provide effective estate management so that tenants live in places that are clean, well-managed and safe. Whether that is the common stair, the shared garden or the surrounding environment within which they live.
- 4.16 Successful estate management requires a joined-up approach across Council services and with other owners. Through the community Led Changing Craigmillar work there is an opportunity for the Council and RSLs (as the major landowners) to work with community organisations to identify opportunities for local people to become more involved in the management of the estate and to gain training and work experience in grounds maintenance which in due course could support people to find employment and/or establish community enterprises.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Officers will continue to engage with NA and RSLs to support the Changing Craigmillar process, improve estate management; including identifying opportunities for local people to improve their estate and gain skills and experience.

The above work will inform the estates management workstream within the HSIP which aims to improve estates management across the city and will also inform approach to estates regeneration in other areas of the city.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Increasing opportunities for people to gain work experience, skills and training would have a positive impact on employment prospects, physical and mental health and would support the regeneration of Craigmillar.
- 7.2 Increasing opportunities for local people to become more involved in the management of the estate and in growing local businesses would have a positive impact on the regeneration of Craigmillar.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 The City of Edinburgh Council, [15 October 2020](#).

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.