

your *green.* business opportunity

Case Study **07** Hope Homes: Knockroon

The Knockroon vision combines residential, retail, business and community use buildings with sustainability at the heart of the development. This is not only evident in the design of the buildings and public realm, but also through the high level of local engagement which takes place with neighbouring communities.



Bringing change to life

Business Benefits

- Sustainability attracts interest - footfall to the site is high and it is hoped this will convert into house sales.
- Hope Homes is generating additional work by developing a reputation for sustainable housing.
- Working with the local community has enabled the business to create green garden products which are sold to schools and visitors.

Wider Benefits

- The local economy was boosted by an increase in jobs during the construction phase.
- Local residents and school children have benefited from on-site training and opportunities to engage in the development.
- A wide variety of habitats have been created for local birds and mammals, trees and hedgerows have also been planted.

Recognition

Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative : Exemplar Project

Context

The Prince's Charitable Foundation purchased Dumfries House and the surrounding estate including Knockroon Farm in 2007, with the ambition to create a new model for economic, social and ecological renewal in East Ayrshire.

Following an extensive Enquiry by Design workshop in 2008, a masterplan for Knockroon was developed and approved. The idea was to create a showcase community estate with a distinctive design, taking into account local architectural traditions, whilst incorporating the latest in sustainability measures.

Knockroon is very much part of this vision. It is located adjacent to a key public transport route and close to the railway station at Auchinleck. The development is connected to Cumnock, Auchinleck and the Dumfries House Estate by a series of green routes for walking and cycling. The Knockroon neighbourhood will be separate from Auchinleck to preserve the separate identities of the two settlements. When complete, the project will number up to 700 homes, with an education facility, businesses and a community hall.



“Creating sustainable and green neighbourhoods is all about finding solutions that will stand the test of time – not about gimmicks or quick fixes.”

Hank Dittmar, Chief Executive, The Prince's Foundation.

Selling homes using Green Infrastructure

The masterplan recognises that the provision of a quality environment is an effective marketing tool. It not only attracts potential house buyers but also businesses to locate in the area. Research has shown that such spaces are more attractive to buyers and investors and that people are willing to pay more for high quality environments.

As well as a comprehensive system of access routes linking into local greenspace, the buildings and landscaping include features to encourage sustainability and wildlife. For example, gardens have been designed with assistance from the Scottish Wildlife Trust to support the local ecology, raised beds are also included to facilitate 'grow your own' activities. Gardens include composters, water butts and log stores. Bat boxes, hedgehog access routes and insect hotels have also been installed and there are a variety of boundary treatments and maintenance regimes utilised to encourage wildlife in the village.

People value these features and want to be part of a community which considers greenspace and supporting local wildlife to be important.



Community Engagement

The local community played a key part in the development of the masterplan and expressed a strong desire to participate in the build as much as possible. This ambition has been realised throughout the project in various ways.

For example, school children have planted trees and the developers have hosted many presentations to local groups such as the Rotary Club, Women's Institute etc. The developers try to make themselves as accessible as possible and are happy to tell people what they are doing and discuss the masterplan. Over the past year some 12,000 people have visited the site.

In addition to this, the Knockroon Enterprise Initiative brings together pupils from Auchinleck and Cumnock Academies (two local villages) to create sustainable garden products such as compost boxes, log stores, invertebrate hotels, bumblebee nests, water butts, bird feeding tables and bird nesting boxes.

This work experience is very real, with trainees working and taking breaks with regular employees. The activity fits in with the Curriculum For Excellence and the school children appear to get a lot from the experience. For the developers, it creates green infrastructure for use on the site. It also generates some modest income from on-site

sales. However, the developers consider that the benefits are much longer-term as, eventually, they hope the positive experiences of people invited to visit and children working on the project will increase the sustainability of the project and lead to home and business sales.

"The work going on at Knockroon with Auchinleck and Cumnock pupils highlights this driving force and strong ambition for the future of young people."

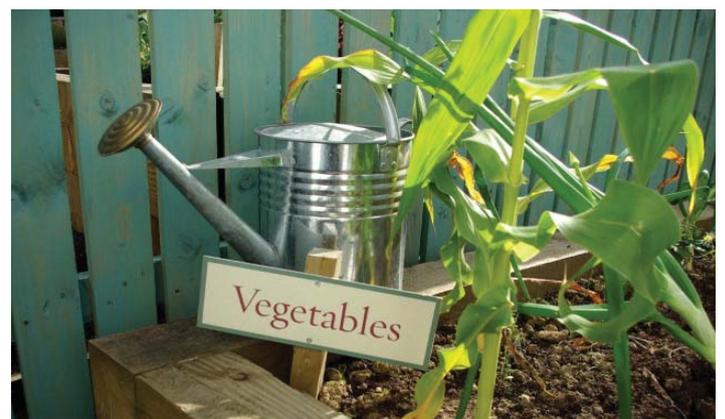
**Councillor Stephanie Primrose,
Spokesperson For Lifelong Learning.**

A Reputation for Sustainability

As the developer of a showcase sustainable project with community engagement and greenspace quality placed firmly at its heart, Hope Homes and its partner ZeroC, are benefiting from a great deal of positive press and public relations. This is having beneficial impacts for the rest of the business. In particular, the developer has been commissioned to create bespoke homes in other parts of Scotland for people who have been impressed with what they have seen at Knockroon.

"The [Knockroon Enterprise] Initiative is a great example of how schools and employers can work together to help young people learn about the world of work, making their learning journey more interesting and preparing them for the start of their working life."

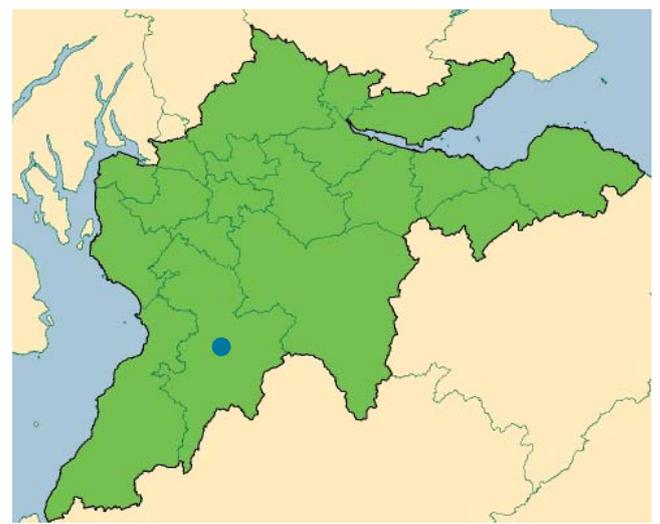
**Michael Russell, MSP Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Lifelong Learning.**



Costs and Value

- Throughout the planning process the development has benefited from excellent support from East Ayrshire Council due to the demonstrated commitment to sustainability.
- The sustainability and environmental ethos underpinning the development has generated press articles equivalent to at least £14,400 in advertising fees with an estimated worth of some £43,200 in PR value.
- The positive PR has driven people to seek out the development and visit the site. This has contributed to house sales and the decision of a business to move into the growing community.

The map shows Knockroon in relation to the CSGN area



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The CSGN will change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area.

What is the CSGN?

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments in the National Planning Framework 2. It is the biggest greenspace project in Europe and will help to make Central Scotland a more attractive and distinctive place to live, to visit and to do business. The CSGN has wide political and partner support and an all encompassing remit, far beyond just a 'green' initiative, with economic development central on the agenda.

What are these Case Studies for?

These case studies demonstrate that green network and green infrastructure approaches can save money and create better solutions for businesses. They are intended to inspire other businesses to take similar approaches and to inform interested parties, such as planning authorities, in order to encourage a supportive environment for such initiatives.

Getting in Touch

To discuss this case study please contact:
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For further information on the CSGN and other case studies please visit: www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

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