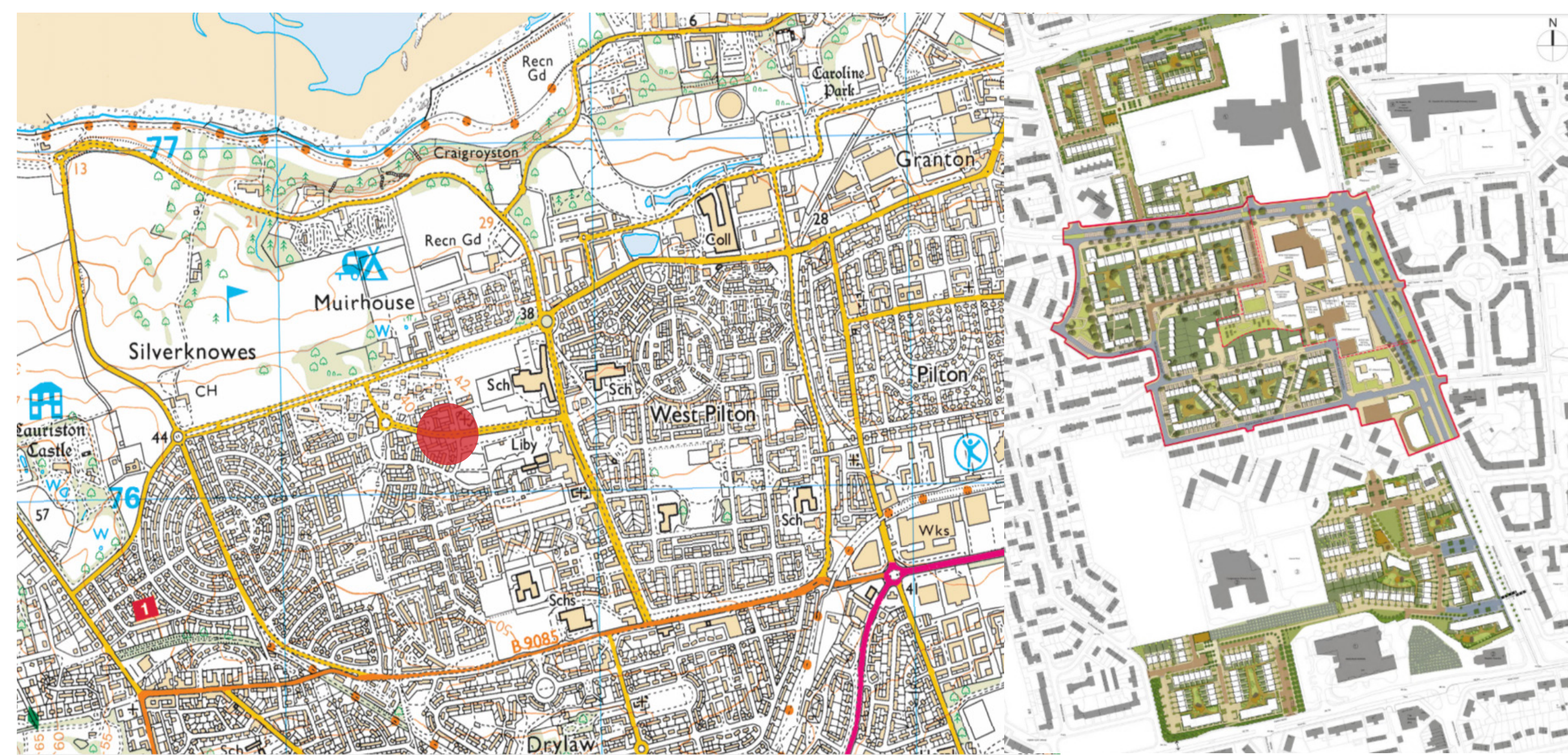




# COMMUNITY-LED PLACEMAKING: MUIRHOUSE AND WEST PILTON



Contextual Area Map - Muirhouse and West Pilton



Illustrative Masterplan in Context  
Image source: CEC/Urban Union (2012)

Existing Sketch Layout  
TOKM Parish Church

**Context:**  
Muirhouse is one of Scotland's most deprived areas, located in the north of Edinburgh. Amongst many issues, residents cite anti-social behaviour, drug use and food poverty as major problems.

**Rationale:**  
The Old Kirk and Muirhouse (TOKM of Church of Scotland) working in partnership with local organisations, community forums and local people to focus on community-lead developments which make a real difference to people's lives.

**Background information:**  
The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) publication ranks Muirhouse most deprived community in Scotland. The area is generally regarded as one of the most deprived areas of Edinburgh, with anti-social behaviour and drug use major problems in the area. However, in recent years major redevelopment of the area has gone underway. Much of the area's low-mid rise housing has been, or is set to be demolished as part of the City Council's plan to provide 1,100 new council houses in some of the city's most deprived estates. The Old Kirk and Muirhouse is a Parish Church located in the heart of the community.

Despite undergoing a significant amount of regeneration, the communities feel very fragmented, unhappy and frustrated with the feeling that the regeneration have been implemented 'to them' rather than 'with them' - Community Action North (CAN).

At times services have struggled to engage successfully with communities to develop resilience, capacity building and engagement across different cultures, life stages and populations. Various local community groups and voluntary sector organisations work with individuals and communities but separately in their own ways. Positive contribution to the area but these achievements are limited with lack of strategic leadership. The observation is that a 'shared vision for whole-place is missing'.

## Understanding Place: Identified Issues & Community Needs:

To understand place, we need to understand basic requirements of that place and people.

TOKM aims to review place-based approach, which is innovative, reflecting on the projects they have been doing with local organisations. We recognise that the identifying need will:

- Increase our understanding of our community.
- Ensure that we are trying to meet the real needs.
- Increase church and community engagement.
- Create a sense of local ownership and increased participation.
- Remove the chances of unnecessary duplication of provision.
- Give local people a say in the future of their community.

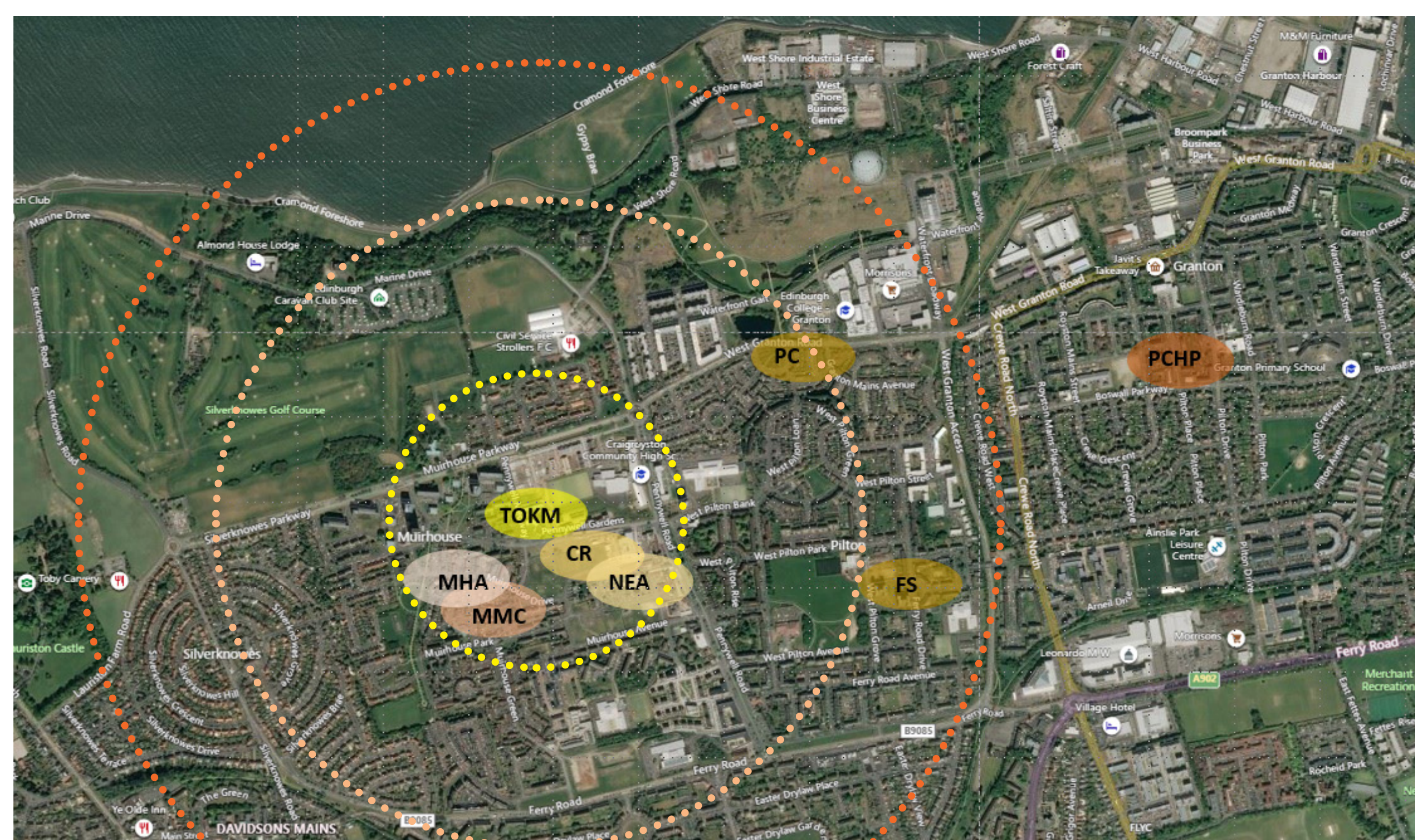
Being at the heart of community, we understand place and people well. TOKM runs various activities with continuous progress in many forms and shapes with community. Centipede Project is one of them. Centipede Project started in 2012, with a vision to bring the community of North Edinburgh together through engaging, creative events and projects.

The priority issue our work aims to tackle is poverty and social injustice. We have a poor community with many needs that we suspect could be tackled best by people themselves taking their futures into their own hands. Our unique approaches to engaging people in the community have been recognised within the church and further afield as work that is genuinely innovative and we have consistently shared our practice with others: attracting other funds, winning awards and garnering accolades in the process. The identified needs include tackling poverty through creating the climate, space and resources for attracting jobs, training and employment rather than charity and food banks. This is what Gathering Space aims to deliver.

TOKM redevelopment project would be the best way to make use of the wonderful resource that church represents within the community. Key priorities locally are spaces. The area needs enterprise, skills training, jobs learning and employment, we think that the best way to use our resources for maximum impact locally might be to create a social enterprise hub. The kinds of activities we have learned may be needed are but not limited to skills learning: on the job initiatives like wood work, child care, catering, car mechanics, horticulture and gardening etc amongst other things.

Who is my neighbour? Key questions to consider in stakeholder outreach include:

- Who is interested in having things change?
- Are they willing to participate in some way using their talents or funds?
- Are there any existing funds that could be used to make improvements or program the space?
- Are there existing organizations that could provide long-term management for the space?



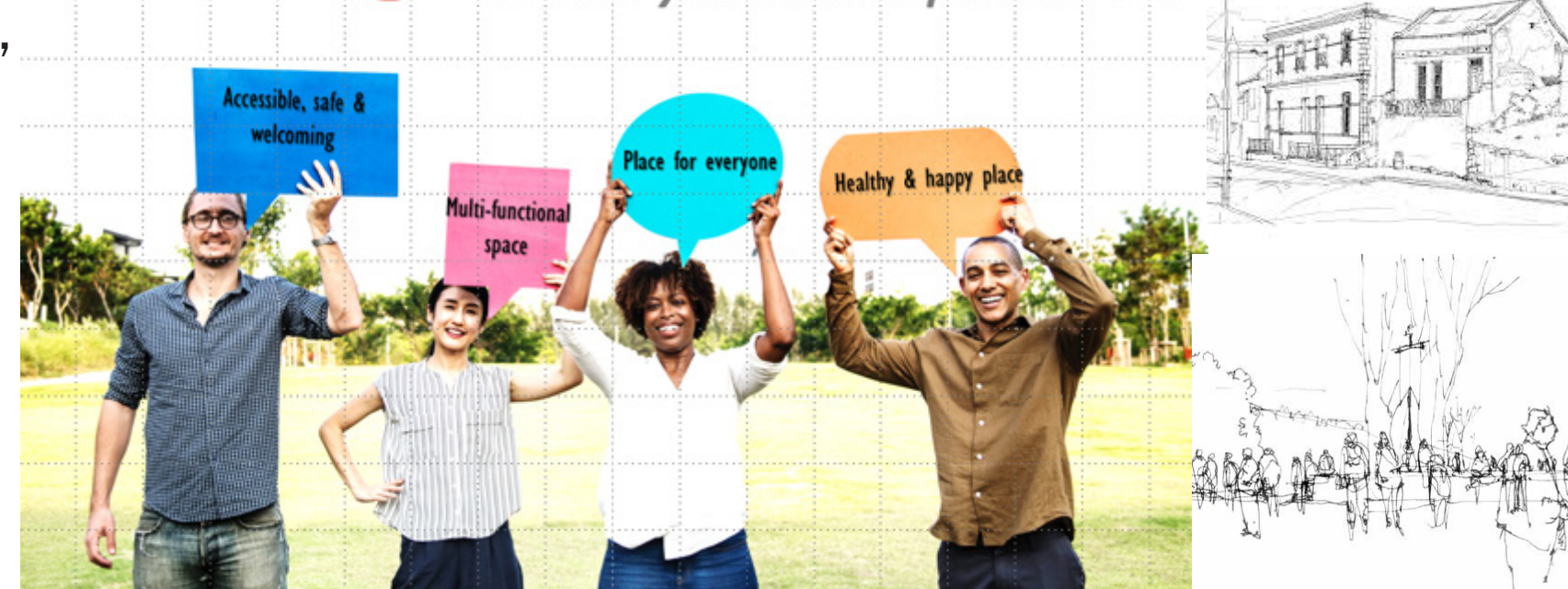
There are several organisations who could be collaborative partners



Need a space within our community. Space to come together, to listen, to reflect and to learn from and celebrate one another...  
Gathering Space, which is welcoming, bright, flexible, modern, accessible and comfortable



## "Space where people find their place"



## "Adaptable place for generations to flourish"

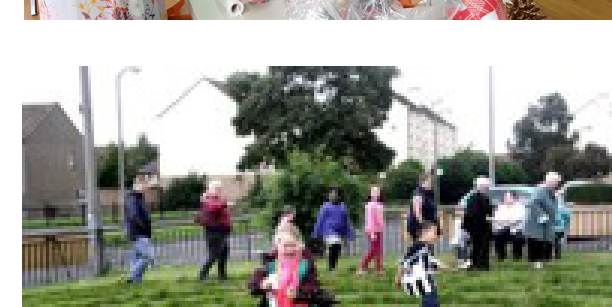
**Accessible**-ramps, hallways, toilets (for wheelchair users)  
**Welcoming and bright**-church and entrance area (inside and outside)  
**Multi-functional**-flexible halls with divider which allow various groups to use for different purposes.  
**Safe, comfortable and warm**-building to use for various activities

**Activities for everyone** (Place for All)  
All age and every culture to use as a: secret space, family room/small cosy space, informal chill-out area, childcare/crèche, social gathering space, respite space, art/craft room/display areas, outdoor climbing wall, chalk wall, fun room for teenager and young adults, computer room (if people do not have access to internet or computer at home), cinema, music room, AV sound system, better lighting system, evening café, café with community catering facilities, larger kitchen, accessible toilets with changing rooms, communal office space, support base for employment and to adapt future requirements as and when needed, office and meeting space.

**Space with provision of carpark, storage and recycling facilities, natural lights, sky light, bigger windows and automated doors, plants inside and outdoor greenspaces.**

**Activities for everyone** (Place for All)  
All age and every culture to use as a: secret space, family room/small cosy space, informal chill-out area, childcare/crèche, social gathering space, respite space, art/craft room/display areas, outdoor climbing wall, chalk wall, fun room for teenager and young adults, computer room (if people do not have access to internet or computer at home), cinema, music room, AV sound system, better lighting system, evening café, café with community catering facilities, larger kitchen, accessible toilets with changing rooms, communal office space, support base for employment and to adapt future requirements as and when needed, office and meeting space.

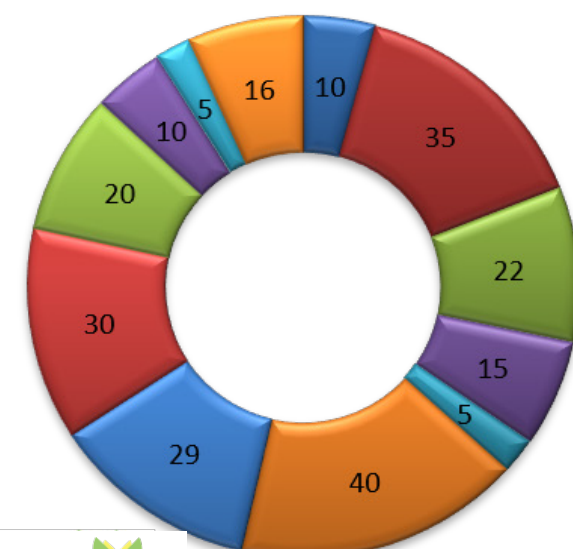
**Space with provision of carpark, storage and recycling facilities, natural lights, sky light, bigger windows and automated doors, plants inside and outdoor greenspaces.**



**POWER OF 10+**  
**HOW CITIES TRANSFORM THROUGH PLACEMAKING**  
Image source: www.pps.org/article/the-power-of-10



285 People were asked "What would make Muirhouse a better place to live?"



- Improve Community Centre
- Develop Green Spaces
- Play Facilities
- Improvements to General Environment
- Activities for Children
- Improve Community Safety
- Social Opportunities/Activities for Everyone
- General Tidy Up
- Social Space for Young People
- Improve Housing
- More Police/Community Wardens Presence
- Sport Opportunities

**Conclusion:**  
Working with local people, various local organisations, forums and groups, it is very clear that the communities feel very fragmented, and frustrated with lack of facilities and amenities to live, work or visit.

Despite all the different funding streams and regeneration projects over the years, here we are again, looking at yet more physical redevelopment. We have a community that has a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills but has too often been an afterthought in decision making. We recognise that the rhetoric has changed: public services seek early interventions and a more preventative approach. We understand the importance of creating spaces that bring people together to share and create things of their own. We know that loneliness and social isolation are as harmful to one's health as smoking.

**Looking forward:**  
We have complex issues to discuss; from the impact of climate change to the role of the state in looking after our welfare. Can we organise our lives to better look after those that need care? These are challenges which the world faces, and we have to create democratic structures and ways of working which allow everyone to be part of developing solutions to these problems.

It's essential to examine place-based approach to help bring together public agencies, the third sector and communities to work together to plan and deliver services which make a real difference to people's lives.

As a Muirhouse and West Pilton community, we do want to be part of making the change at a local, national and international level which creates a more equitable, fairer and peaceful world.

