



REFORM | GLEADLESS VALLEY





We want this competition entry to initiate a fresh discussion amongst the people of Gleadless Valley into reclaiming their future and the future of Gleadless itself. This report provides the tools and ideas which we hope will form the basis for discussion between the public and the planning authorities.



88 per cent of young people aged 18-30 say they want to own their own home in the next 10 years - but the number who think they'll achieve that aspiration is falling because of a lack of affordable homes.



HOUSING IN THE UK

Weaknesses

There is an overriding concern with dealing with the volatility of the housing market and its impact on national and local economies. Access to mortgage finance remains tight, underscoring the lack of developer activity. Whilst economic growth has returned to many areas, this has caused the already overstretched housing market there to overheat. In the period of 2004-2011 there are 5bn pounds invested in new supply, whilst there are 95bn pounds used for housing benefits, with an extra 310 people turning to housing benefits every day. Restricted labour market flexibility with many people locked out of working in areas where they cannot afford to live.

There is an average of 106,500 homes builds per year in the UK, which is far from the required 240, 000 homes per year needed to fulfil the growing demand. This is the main reason behind the inflation in house prices in the UK with the average price for a house at £174,910 with another 8% rise expected in 2014.

Opportunities

There is a raise in the cap of Council borrowing – specifically on Housing Revenue Account borrowing by further 300 million pounds. According the CIH though if the cap is raised by another 7bn this would allow for 75.000 homes to be built over five years. There is a concern that the policies are moving in the right direction but with too little real weight.

A key part of the solution to recent economic and housing market instability is to rapidly increase the supply of housing by building new homes and getting the right mix of homes and tenures to suit a local area's economic and social needs. By increasing the supply of homes there will be a stimulus to the economic recovery by making a significant direct contribution to economic output and job creation and will be able to constrain the price inflation in the long-term.

Challenges

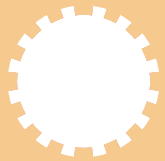
The main challenge is the provision of enough homes to counterweight the required demand, produce enough supply in the market which will offset the current inflation of prices. There is an underlying trend of rising house prices relative to income. However, recent government schemes such as Funding for Lending and Help to Buy may begin to help financing become more accessible. There is a fear, however, that these policies further increase demand without tackling the supply chain.

Reforms to the planning system and to social housing rules and accounting policies provide some opportunities for local discretion and flexibility, especially where local resources can be brought to bear. However, these new policies focus very little on physical intervention e.g. building and have very little particular focus on deprived neighbourhoods – it is all left to local authorities or local community initiative – a worrying trend that deprived areas with broken communities would not be able to make a difference.

Housing Benefit reforms in the past year may have distorting effects – leading to tenure switching and larger pressure applied to the private rented sector, which growth needs to be overseen. Affordable homes provision is another sector in which the government is lacking significantly. Policies such as the Right to Buy have reduced the available housing pool of local authorities and with little new built; housing lists have grown to incorporate 1.8 million households. Average waiting times in some parishes are estimated to more than twenty years. According to 80 % of businesses the lack of affordable housing is preventing economic growth.



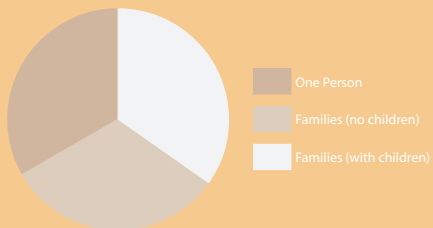
Standard of living: 6/100 (ranked as very deprived)



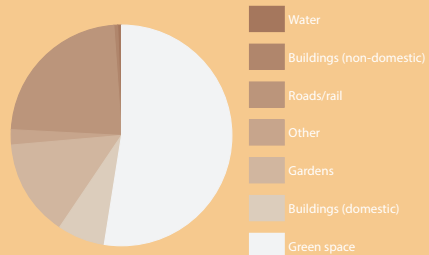
Total Crime Rate: 209.1 number of incidents per 1000 people (ranked as very high)



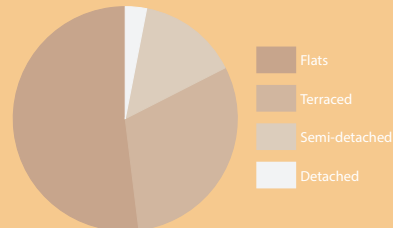
Tesco and Sainsburys have a ban in place for delivering to Gleadless due to high crime rate.



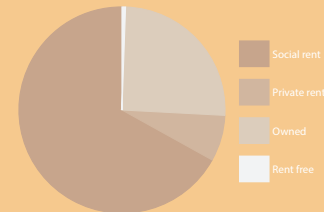
Household Composition



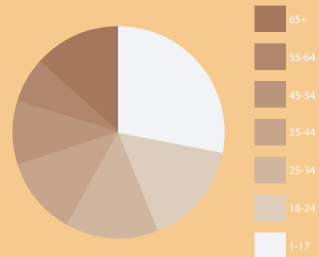
Land Use



House Types



Home Ownership



Age Breakdown



GLEADLESS VALLEY

Challenges

The perception of the estate in local and national media is as one of the worst places to live. The anti-social behaviour is one of the highest in the county and there is ban from several companies such as Tesco from delivering to the estate. At the same time official statistics show that there are many young people who live in the estate, but who have very little educational background. There is a distinct lack of youth spaces in the area and there is no secondary school in proximity, whether there are two primary schools in the estate. There is a higher turnover of residents than in other parts of Sheffield, which prevents the establishment of a long lasting community. There are existing community organisations but they rarely involve a large percentage of the residents.

There is no economy in place, with few people travelling outside of the estate to find work. The shops and businesses in the estate are not owned by people who live there and are very few. Combined with cuts to welfare and rising fuel costs this will be a main challenge

to the locality.

Most of the housing in the estate is owned by Sheffield Homes, thus maintenance responsibility is dislocated to the landlord. The streetscape of the area needs revisiting as currently there are very few pedestrian provisions with the estate mainly facilitating car movement through. The lower density of housing, the awkward typologies and the valley microclimate are some of the main challenges to be addressed when considering the built environment.

Lastly, there is no plan for the redevelopment of the area on council level. There are some identified plots of land for future housing and ideas for neighbourhood centre but there is a lack of a detailed plan for the estate. With the changes of the Localism Act and local planning, the responsibility for this has been shifted to the residents rather than a planning authority.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses in the estate stem from the layout of the original masterplan as well as from the maintenance and development of the estate in the years past.

There is an underlying problem of lack of ownership of the green space. Many of the houses and flats have little access to private open space, yet there are vast underused green areas around each of the dwellings. This ambiguous space blurs the public private boundary and encourages anti-social behaviour. There are many pocket spaces of no man's land.

There is no easy access to playgrounds which are easily overlooked. There are very little youth owned spaces.

Many of the financial institutions and shopping centres are outside of the estate or on its boundaries. There is a very poor mixture of tenure and other uses than housing inside the estate.

The housing stock in the area requires good maintenance and refurbishment. Having been built in the 60s there is

very little good insulation which results in poor acoustic and thermal environments. Many of the flats and houses are not disabled friendly and could provide challenging for life-time users.

Due to the general planning of the estate there is very poor interconnectivity. The woods which are in the centre of the estate contribute to the lack of safety and discourage connectivity between the three parts of the estate.











MANIFESTO

In the Sheffield urban folklore, Gleadless Valley is eponymous with deprivation, anti-social behaviour and crime. In 2013 Sainsbury introduced a ban to the area after repetitious attacks on its vans; a move Tesco had already enforced upon the area, creating the image of a no-go area. It seems to be abandoned by everyone, even the Sheffield Council clearly state on their website – ‘no comprehensive vision for the area is in place’. A mass housing estate with little functions apart from residential ones, resting on the steep hills of the valley, the locality seems to be in a state of limbo.

Surprising it might seem, that there are active organisations in the community - there are litter pick days being organised, protests against raising taxes and a strong desire for a better future. Gleadless boasts one of the best views and areas of natural beauty in Sheffield, it has good transport links and promising future. We believe that the trap in which Gleadless has fallen is not unavoidable. We want to initiate the dialogue about Gleadless Valley by providing a proposal of a possible feature, a feature which could be achieved with relatively cheap ways, with a strong lobby in the council and active residents. We believe that there is a community in Gleadless Valley trying to escape the perceived image of the area. Our proposal will provide them with a tool, which could be used to stir the waters and initiate the discussion about the future of the area.

Masterplan

1. Proposed new social hubs / community centres in Newfield Library, Fleury Crescent, Raeburn Road and Blackstock Road
2. New allotment spaces
3. New housing typologies and densification of existing infrastructure using prefabrication methods and a collective custom build network.
4. Transformation of existing disused frontage garages to live-work spaces and workshops that can contribute to the revitalisation of the local economy.
5. Improved Blackstock city centre.
6. Establish better links with the forest areas. Explore the possibility for public tree walkways and a forest school.

Key to Masterplan	
	Proposed New Housing
	Economic Centres
	Educational Centres
	Proposed Allotments
	Potential Industry
	Visitor Wood Paths
	Tram Stop
	Main Roads



PRECEDENTS



Incredible Edible

Growing in Todmorden

A local campaign for local cultivated, harvested and consumed food.

Beginning with herb gardens to planting and growing vegetables and trees around the small town of Todmorden, working with public bodies and utilising unused land in schools, railway stations and fire stations as cultivation areas.

The idea locally conceived, organised and executed shows how communities can improve and manage their space. Todmorden has now evolved economically, socially and aesthetically and there is nothing stopping communities elsewhere to succeed in similar ways.



WikiHouse

An open construction set that allows anyone to design, download, and 'print' CNC-milled houses which can be assembled with minimal formal skill or training.



Collective Custom Build

A framework for sharing the risk of a development between shareholders and work towards more affordable and better designed homes.

ISSUES & RESPONSES

Issue

Response

Disproportional amount of anti-social behaviour in comparison to other parts of the city and well above UK median crime rate.

Resolve bad masterplanning and public space design issues that are conducive to high crime rates such as lighting and security.

Spread out social hubs – library, pubs, clubs. Very bad facilities for young people to socialise and not easily accessible play spaces for children.

Transform Newfield centre to a new social hub consolidating amenities and producing opportunities for socialising.

Blackstock road not working as a local centre.

Explore suitability of area to host possible festivals and events that will attract young people.

Lack of local economy and amenities.

Change ownership patterns at a policy level and provide cheap rent options.

No passive security in alleys and walkways. Lack of privacy and distinct threshold between road level and private space.

Densify streets and provide adequate lighting during the night. Distribute the disused green spaces in front of the unit entrances to the homeowners to be used as private gardens re-establishing boundaries between public and private.

Grass areas not maintained. Lack of ownership of green spaces.

Create a shared or leased model of ownership to the green land as it can be turned into community allotments or children play spaces. Opportunities for learning and interacting.

I

No secondary school

Gleadless Valley is one of the ten wards in Sheffield which are getting worse in the past 10 years. Sheffield Council has no future plan or vision for the area.

Lack of accessibility to dwellings. Not wheelchair friendly.

33% of the housing typologies are maisonettes. As a result it is hard to find occupants. Bedroom tax will make it even harder.

School completion and retention rates are significantly worse than Sheffield average.

R

Propose a new secondary school adjacent to the new hub of Newfields.

Following the Localism Act 2012, communities can take action through the Right to Build and Right to Challenge policies. Already online active community of Gleadless needs to engage with proposing a plan voted in a referendum that will use these policies and opportunities to reform Gleadless.

Proposed lifts to be fitted to housing blocks which produces a new typology more inkeeping with the diversification of housing types that will attract families to Gleadless. Collective custom build prefabricated houses can easily densify the existing built fabric with new family units.

Educational opportunities can be integrated into the reform process - enabling access to educational and learning facilities of all educational levels.



CASE STUDY



Park Hill Phase 1, Sheffield

Opened in 1961 with the intention to be a thriving community for Sheffield's council tenants it quickly descended to a sink estate suffering from similar problems such as Gleadless Valley: poorly lit walkways made people feel unsafe, petty thieves finding a getaway and finally deteriorated to abandonment.

Now its regeneration involves rebuilding the interior apartments and changing the residential mix from council houses to a combination of social housing, affordable and private owners in order to prevent gentrification.

The project was shortlisted for the Strling Prize 2013.

POLICIES

Local Policies

Skills for Life

Policy background: There is a strong drain of potential from Gleadless Valley with the average percentage of 20-26 year old living in the area significantly worse than the average in Sheffield.

Policy outline: We believe that council estates should not mean exclusively housing. A local policy which creates apprenticeships for young people from the area, whilst subsidising their potential employer could be a stimulus for craftsmen to employ or move closer to the area.

Right to "Browse"

Policy background: There is a rising population in Sheffield of young families, high graduate renter and increasing number of elderly citizens. Yet most of the flats in Gleadless are maisonnettes - too big for a single person or a couple and too small for a young family. 32% of the housing stock is therefore unfit to meet future demand.

Policy outline: A council policy executed through Sheffield Homes should be the adjustment of the 6 storey maisonnette flats by equipping them with lifts, providing disabled friendly facilities and re-configuring the layouts of floors to provide 1 bed or studio flats - suitable for graduates and elderly people. At the same spare land around the flats needs to be identified and new homes built.

THE NEXT STEP

Mass Housing Policies

National		Mass Housing			
Right to Know	Right to "Browse"	Renegotiating Open Space Ownership	Appropriation of Disused Car Facilities	Land Provision for Self-Build Housing	
Policy background: In deprived areas there is little knowledge how to use the rights stemming from the Localism Act. Effectively those communities cannot take advantage of the rights they have.	Policy background: In Gleadless and other estates there is a real problem with internet literacy and access to computers. With the closure of libraries and benefit cuts, this problem will deepen.	Policy background: Typical for mass housing developments in UK is a lot of open green space. This leads to lack of ownership, provides low passive security, instigated anti-social behaviour and costs money to maintain, whilst not providing a good habitat for wild animals.	Policy background: The 60s was the age of the car and many estates catered for this in their extensive road layouts. There was provision for garages as everyone was encouraged to own a car. With good public transport and expensive fuel these ideas need rethinking.	Policy background: Mass housing estates lack the spending potential of more affluent citizens and thus further marginalise communities, instead of integrate them. At the same time they often neighbour or incorporate unoccupied lands.	
Policy outline: Projects at deprived areas which aim at educating communities or instigating neighbourhood planning process by artists and institutions should receive preferential treatment at applying for funding.	Policy outline: Deprived areas should be catered for specifically. Citizens in those areas should have access to use a computer on a affordable price and within twenty minutes from their neighbourhood.	Policy outline: Patches of 'grassland' could be identified and shared ownership scheme could be initiated, in which the public uses the land for allotments, private gardens, building their own playgrounds. Rent could be minimal, saving maintenance from council and encouraging community engagement.	Policy outline: Council estates could provide cheap accommodation for start-up businesses. With rising rents many garages and homes are or will be disused. A council policy could be the provision to those spaces to local workmen and artists, thus new small economy in place is created.	Policy outline: We believe that by providing council land around and in mass housing estates to preferential rates for self-build houses, different demographic landscape can be created. Self build could be the solution to the housing shortage and rising house prices in the UK.	
Future Research					
Investigation of potential funding bodies such as the Arts Council England, University research grants. Priority given to deprived areas research.	Refinement of constraints and definition of affordable access to internet. Revision of Library cuts policies.	Business model of maintenance vs communal benefits and potential for local economies. Allotment precedents to be examined in detail.	Survey of empty units and used ones. A marketing strategy for attracting small businesses and generating economy in place. Analysis of demand in the area and appropriation to it.	Analysis of demand for self build housing and campaign to promote it. Analysis of land cost vs maintenance costs and preliminary rates for land lease at preferential rates.	



Shareholders:

