DATA CIVICS

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Futures Institute

Community Leadership in North Edinburgh:

Report from the Knowledge Exchange Labs 2022

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Executive Summary

1.0: Introduction: the [Edinburgh Futures Institute's](#) (EFI) Data Civics team was funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to undertake knowledge exchange and shared learning with local bodies in North Edinburgh – drawing on previous research on both community empowerment and digital cultural regeneration (see Annex 2 and Annex 3). This report outlines the learning from the Knowledge Exchange Labs undertaken with local community sector, local and wider third sector, and local organisations, groups, and public sector services to understand their experiences of community leadership and community-led regeneration; and to consider the potential for a shared research agenda.

1.1: Background: the area of 'North Edinburgh' has traditionally included the five larger communities – each with smaller neighbourhoods – of Granton, Muirhouse, Pilton, West Granton and Drylaw. These developed as public housing estates to support local industries from the 1930s – although now are mixed tenure. However, high levels of poverty and inequality have been a consistent issue for local people, despite numerous investments, policy and regeneration initiatives over decades: with levels remaining high across the area currently, but particularly parts of Granton and Muirhouse. Community leadership via a complex web of now many long-standing local organisations has been crucial in advocating on housing, jobs and services – see [North Edinburgh Social History Group 2011 report](#).

2.0-2.2: Learning from the Knowledge Exchange Labs re. community leadership: two Labs were held in North Edinburgh to explore current understandings and experiences of this broad topic – and involved 23 local organisations in total and 27 local staff, activists and volunteers. A series of online and in-person visits for one-to-one informal discussions were held with 29 local bodies (and 32 people) to provide further background and context. Key learning from these discussions included:
- there are local networks, collaborations and leadership currently across the area that are working effectively together – including the R-squared network
- key challenges include high-levels of poverty; lack of resourcing and investment available to local community organisations and to support local governance and communications; and, the need for better long-term joined-up working and for extending community-led regeneration.
- there is a need to invest in community leadership support and training – and across the full diversity of the local population.

3.0: Shared research agenda: there is potential to develop a shared initiative between local organisations and the Data Civics team/EFI that is concerned for:
- Working from an anti-poverty perspective – a fundamental focus
- Learning from the pool of local knowledge, experience and skills
- Building the resilience of community sector organisations and the community economy
- Cooperation between community and public sectors (public-community partnership)
- Local participatory and digital democratic innovation
- Participatory and community-led research methods and local capacity-building

1 Introducing the Knowledge Exchange Labs process

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Oliver Escobar and Liz McFall: co-investigation, general guidance and organisation
James Henderson: research and leading authorship
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Steven Earl and Robert Pembleton: workshop assistance
Lesley McAra: Principal Investigator

2022-2023, The Data Civics Programme

This report reflects on an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded knowledge exchange project **Supporting Local Acceleration in Granton through Inclusive, Data-Driven and Participatory Engagement**. The work involved local community and cultural organisations, the Granton Waterfront Development team at the City of Edinburgh Council (CoEC) and a team of researchers from the Data Civics programme at the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) and was organised around two inter-related initiatives:

- a Knowledge Exchange Lab for dialogue with the local community and community sector

- a Civic Observatory that looks to use digital innovations to share data and learning to monitor and build cross-sector cooperation and participatory governance

Rationale and Outline of this Report

By exploring participatory dialogue and digital innovations in the context of the developing Regeneration Programme(s) in Granton and North Edinburgh, and as part of EFI's commitment to working across sectors and with communities on participatory, co-designed, data-driven projects as part of the South East Scotland City-Region Deal, Data Civics has the potential to work towards a much longer-term, joint-research bid and process. This would be concerned to sustain a focus both on the:

(a) significant challenges for place-based policy-making and collaborative regeneration approaches in seeking to 'make a real difference' in relation to local poverty and inequalities;

(b) role community leadership and locally-led digital, social, economic, ecological and democratic innovation can play in supporting and constructively challenging these approaches.

This report explores the scoping work undertaken as outlined in the following sections:

- in Section 1.1, we introduce the context of 'North Edinburgh': building understanding of the area, its history and current socio-economic trends; the developing, long-term Regeneration Programme(s) and wider policy contexts; and, current range of decision-making and planning structures at work or impacting on the area.

- Section 2 outlines the discussions and learning from the Knowledge Exchange Labs.

- Section 3 outlines key questions emerging from the Labs that can support dialogue across community sector, wider partners and Data Civics regarding a shared research agenda and bid.
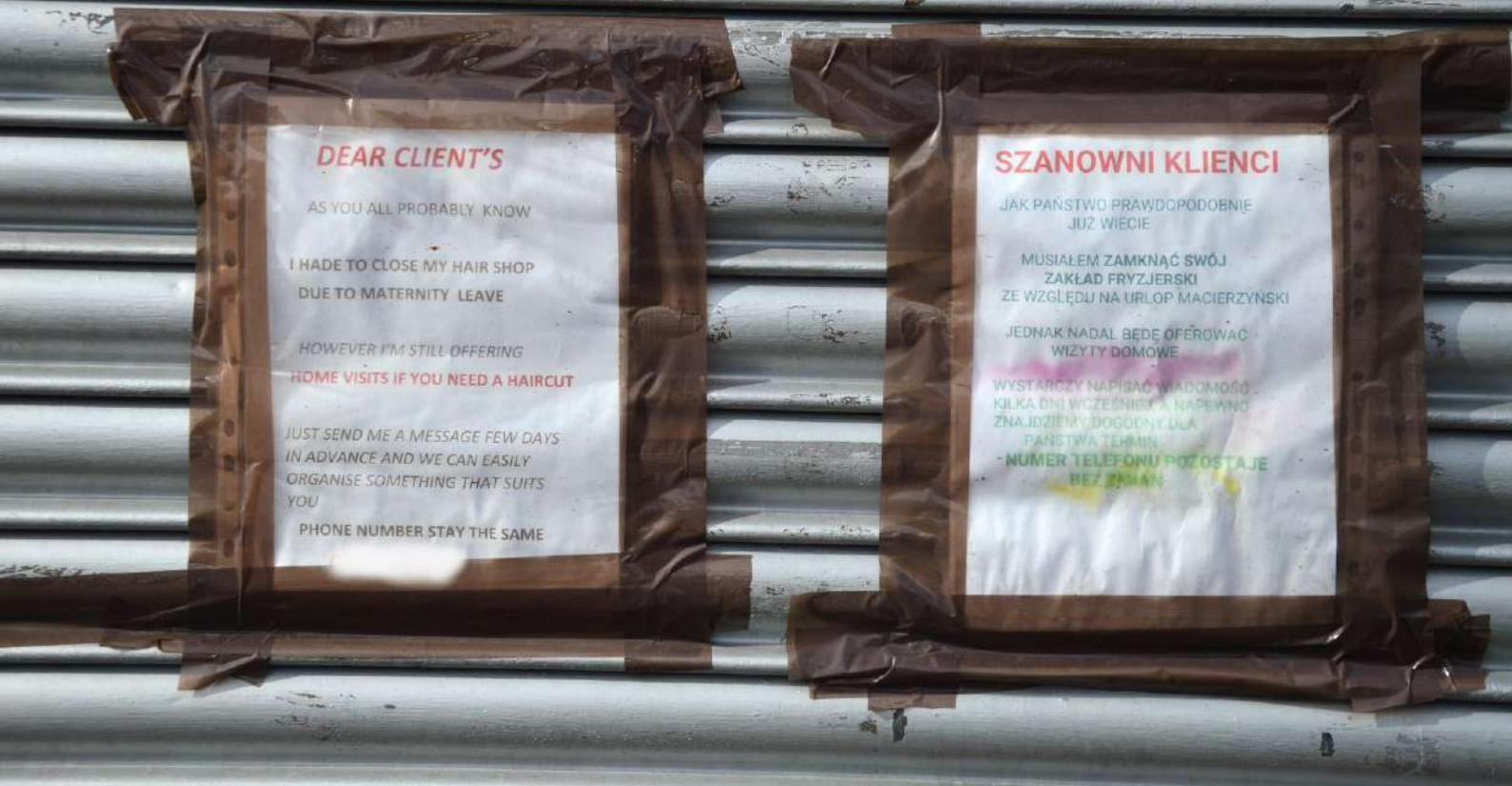
North Edinburgh: background and context

A brief history of the area:

'North Edinburgh' or 'Greater Pilton' as an area refers to a body of working-class housing estates and neighbourhoods about one and half miles north of Edinburgh City Centre. These run down to the coast and the Firth of Forth in between Leith, Newhaven and Trinity to the east and Silverknowes, Davidson Mains and Cramond to the west. Industrialisation, initially catalysed by the development of Granton Harbour and the arrival of the railway in the mid-1800s, and then substantial state investment in public housing across the area since the 1930s has generated a significant body of neighbourhoods – numbering between about 8 to 10 – but which can be summarised as five 'communities': Granton, Muirhouse, Pilton, West Granton and Drylaw.

More recent decades, since the 1980s and the growing dominance of neo-liberal policy-making, have seen increasing hardship across the area and related infrastructure and social crises that include:

- the poor condition and lack of investment in existing public and social housing;

- 'de-industralisation' and the loss of local employment opportunities;

- long-standing high levels of poverty and related economic and social inequalities;

- high-levels of mental ill-health, addiction and health inequalities more generally;

- challenges in providing the needed levels of public services and spending in this context.

Understanding the current social and economic context

Rettie's (March, 2020) North Edinburgh: Regeneration: Baseline Benchmarking report, completed for the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and Granton Waterfront Development Team, brings together a range of data sources to provide a current socioeconomic profile of most of the area: Drylaw is not included within this analysis, and some of the data offered covers both North Edinburgh and Leith. It recognises the following current challenges for this area:

- Rising population – already through developments at the Waterfront, but more generally across the area with 28,000 people living there in 2019 compared to 21,000 in 2004.
- Particularly high concentrations of poverty and deprivation in Granton and Muirhouse: with 1 in 4 people across the whole area living in the 10% most deprived SIMD datazones
- Significantly-below average levels of educational attainment – for younger people and the population more generally.
- Greater concerns about community safety and with higher levels of crime and 'anti-social behaviours' reported than the city-wide average.
- Lower levels of income; poorer health outcomes; higher levels of fuel poverty; higher demand for public and social housing … than the city-wide averages.

A number of strengths are also presented in the report – improving access to local services, and access to green and bluespaces; and the presence and local access to Edinburgh College's campus.

There is limited information available on the ethnic diversity,   of North Edinburgh. Much of the council's own information is provided publicly by electoral ward (see 'decision-making' below). Anecdotal and qualitative evidence however suggests an increasingly diverse ethnic minority population in the area, and the Edinburgh Children's Partnership Service Plan 2021-23 notes:

"*Migration has been the main driver of population growth in Edinburgh since 2008 with this being from within and outside the United Kingdom. In 2019 of the 51,000 children and young people attending Edinburgh's local authority schools, 30% were Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils with this being an increase from 23% in 2014.*"

The community sector in North Edinburgh

One very clear, long-standing strength are the communities and their local organisations across the area as a whole. The North Edinburgh Social History Group's (2011*) publication *Never Give Up: a community's fight for social justice* explores local community organising and resilience since the 1940s. It describes the role of local activists, leaders and organisations in campaigning forfor housing, health, childcare, community facilities and anti-racism. Pilton Central Association, as West Pilton Community Association in the 1940s, played a key role from the 1950s as an umbrella group across the developing area. Many more community organisations have taken on leadership roles since. *Never Give Up* illustrates the complexity and range of community organisations, groups and bodies that emerged over the decades – including community associations, centres, health bodies, housing associations/coops, arts and film-making, newspaper/media, councils, and enterprises .

Whilst many focused on one or two neighbourhoods others sought to coordinate and make decisions across the whole. The closure of the community development trust in 2011, due to loss of state funding, leaves the area without such a formal area-wide body, yet dialogue and shared planning has continued, for instance through Community Conferences in 2016 and 2017. Most recently, joint-working took place across the area on food poverty and mental health during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the Response and Recovery Collective/Network ('R2' or 'R-squared') was set up to coordinate the activities of over twenty local organisations and wider civil society bodies. The recent Community Festival in June 2022, and a related documentary produced by Screen Education Edinburgh (formerly Pilton Video), illustrates the continued vitality of community leadership in the area. Community gardening and food production is another area of local development and includes Lauriston Eco-farm, Friends of Granton Castle Walled Garden and the Granton Community Gardeners, Muirhouse Community Centre, and other local community groups. This range is also reflected in the local organisations and groups that participated in our project (see Annex 1).

In this context, the Granton Waterfront Development Framework (GWDF) was approved as non-statutory planning guidance by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) in February 2020. The area's historical mix of industrial, residential, commercial, port and agricultural land use has long presented a planning challenge. In the post-industrial context of the early 2000s, Granton was the subject of several masterplans under different landowners. Despite these initiatives, the patterns of spatial inequality that have characterised Granton for decades persist. The GWDF aims to change this by adopting a public sector driven plan, focused on developable land that is now in majority CoEC ownership, and informed by local knowledge derived from public consultation. Despite this commitment to community engagement, under-representation particularly among women, minority ethnic groups, young and old people and people with disabilities nevertheless remains, as the Scottish Government acknowledges, an obstacle to the success of Local Place Plans (LPPs).

Aspirations to regenerate working-class communities in Edinburgh have often centred in recent decades on the use of publicly-owned land as a springboard for market-led housing developments – with the associated risks of gentrification and displacement of existing residents[1]. An earlier attempt in the mid-2000s at such a strategy using vacant, contaminated and publicly-owned land at Granton Waterfront, fell-foul of the 2007-8 Global Financial Crisis and its impacts on housing markets[2]. While much of that plan was abandoned a new Edinburgh College campus, a large Morrisons and the Scottish Gas offices were all completed on the site of the former gasworks just north of West Granton Road.

Today, North Edinburgh has two sizeable regeneration programmes ongoing:

- The _North Edinburgh Regeneration_ programme at Pennywell and Muirhouse featuring a community services hub (library, nursery; community-owned community arts centre) over 700 mixed tenure homes, with around 350 designated affordable new retail units at Macmillan Square in addition to the £200+ million of public and private sector investment that has already delivered Craigroyston High School and Pennywell All Care Centre.

- _Granton Waterfront Regeneration_: alongside recent housing developments at Granton Harbour and around Waterfront Ave plans are underway to deliver around 16000 new jobs, 3500 new net zero-carbon homes, new business start-up space and commercial opportunities, 200 hectares of coastal greenspaces; two transport gateways connecting to central Edinburgh and new creative, arts and cultural space including the extension of the National Gallery and the National Museum of Scotland's (NMS) existing local facilities.

What may make these new Regeneration Programmes distinctive from previous attempts are their scale and public sector leadership.

Six public sector bodies providing leadership: City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), Edinburgh College, NGS and NMS (as above), Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Government

Integration within wider public sector economic development planning – South-east Scotland City Region Deal (and Data-Driven Initiative) and National Planning Framework 4

Plans that draw on public sector-led thinking such as the 'Community Wealth Building' policy and practice and '20 Minute Neighbourhoods'

Kallin[2], for instance, suggests that this might begin to look more like a social democratic approach to planning. The programme however retains a market-driven approach to housing development and therefore, as the What Works Scotland evidence review on economic regeneration processes argues, it carries with it the potential for both economic and social benefits and associated risks of gentrification and displacement of existing residents.

These programmes also incorporate elements of community-led regeneration through the extension of community ownership and/or management of local assets including a community-owned arts centre; a community enterprise hub; an urban farm; and the extension of housing developed and owned by community housing associations. These add to the existing body of community owned and managed assets via community centres and community as outlined in the Community Conference 2016 report.

[1] Durose, C., Richardson, L., Rozenburg, M., Ryan, M., & Escobar, O. (2021). Community control in the housing commons: a conceptual typology. _International Journal of the Commons_, _15_(1).

[2] Kallin, H. (2021) Chasing the rent gap down on Edinburgh's waterfront, _City 25_(5-6), 614-633.

Understanding these Regeneration Programmes within a wider policy context

Current and future community-led regeneration in the area could be connected to a range of relevant Scottish Government funding, such as the Scottish Land Fund, further linked to the UK Government's Levelling-Up programme. These can play an important role in supporting local aspirations. It's also important to see these policy initiatives within the wider context of UK and Scottish Government policy development and fiscal management.

Relevant Scottish Government policymaking programmes and themes:

Community Wealth Building: with legislation planned for the current term of the Scottish Parliament and a focus, facilitated across Scottish Local Authorities by CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies). This involves *progressive approaches* to procurement, finance, assets, employment, and ownership.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods: and accessible design of local neighbourhoods and services.

Local democracy: via the ongoing Local Governance Review and proposed Democracy Bill; and the Scottish Government's Working Group on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy.

Social Renewal: and the Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board's call to focus on tackling poverty and inequality and increasing local and community-led democracy.

Additional key regional and City-wide developments:

The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City-Region Deal (ESES CRD) and investment planning across six local authorities – including the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) programme and increasing engagement with Community Wealth Building.

The Health and Social Partnership's 'Edinburgh Wellbeing Pact' developed with local partners city-wide which aspires to go beyond short-term financing for third and community sector bodies.

The Edinburgh Poverty Commission report (2020), and the wider commitment to 'ending poverty' in the city by the end of this decade.

EVOC's development of a Regenerative Futures Fund that looks to provide ten-year unrestrictive funding to community-led organisations.

Local decision-making structures

Finally, it's worth recognising the range of local decision-making structures that impact on North Edinburgh, beyond central government including:

The City Council, its committees and councillors elected within the three local electoral Wards – Forth; Almond, and Inverleith.

The Edinburgh Partnership: the Community Planning Partnership across public services, third sector (via Third Sector Interface) and community bodies - notably, the North-West Local Community Partnership, and the three Neighbourhood Networks relating to the three local electoral Wards.

Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City-Region Deal (ESES CRD) across six local authorities and associated planning.

Public sector bodies - CEC– including the Granton Waterfront Development team and the Planning Authority, and the Local Development Plan; Lothian NHS and Board; Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership its Integrated Joint Board and associated local planning processes.

Local Community Councils: Granton and District; Muirhouse and Salvesen; Drylaw, and Telford; West Pilton and West Granton.

And informally, the Response and Recovery Collective/Network of local community and third sector bodies embedded local community networks of place, interest and identity.

Looking across this range of public and community bodies, and their related planning and decision-making activities, gives a broad sense of how residents can currently engage with and influence policy-making and resourcing decisions affecting their lives and communities.

2 Knowledge Exchange Labs and shared learning

2.1: *One-to-one knowledge sharing and Knowledge Exchange Labs*

A series of online and in-person, one-to-one discussions between the Data Civics research team and local organisations (see Annex 1 and 2) took place between March and August 2022. These were not formally recorded and are not directly drawn on here but supported building shared understandings of the area, its organisations and services, forms of community leadership and locally-led social, digital and democratic innovation.

Two Knowledge Exchange Labs were held, each involving around 20+ participants. The first Lab took place at granton:hub on 16 June 2022 in Granton and the second, at Muirhouse Millennium Centre on 1 September. These involved 'working lunches' that included: (1) short presentations from local organisations and the researchers; (2) facilitated table plenary discussion – Lab 1 focused on community-led regeneration; Lab 2 on community leadership.

The presentations were:

- Data Civics team – and community-led regeneration/ leadership and democratic innovation: drawing from What Works Scotland and Smart Urban Intermediaries
- Data Civics team – and digital approaches to cultural regeneration and business development
- North Edinburgh Arts – and its experiences of community-led regeneration and ownership in Muirhouse (at Lab 1)
- Response and Recovery Collective/Network – and local experiences and approaches to community leadership (at Lab 2).

Discussions at the Labs generated the following learning points.

2.1 Learning from Lab 1: Understanding community-led regeneration locally

(1) Current strengths

Strong partnerships and collaborations across local community/third sector organisations and groups that build trust, support sharing of ideas, and a willingness to take risks.

Vibrant community: plenty of discussion across the area about improvements, coming together more effectively, and getting involved through community activities and initiatives.

Strategic working: there is strong collaborative working too in considering strategic issues and understanding the problems the area faces – and building a shared political agenda.

(2) Weaknesses and frustrations

"What don't we know? Christie 2011. Same conversations, rewording," a lab participant told us, questioning why we still need to be having this discussion 11 years after the influential 2011 Christie Commission on the future of public services.

Regeneration Programmes:
- "sense of a widening gap in relation to deprivation"
- "residents not always feeling listened to"
- "elderly people's needs must be recognised and met"
- "more emphasis on infrastructure than on improving housing stock"
- "increasing local population but not the capacities, range and funding of services"
- "the need to measure impacts of partnership-working"
- "environmental challenges"

Increasing local poverty and associated problems with infrastructure and services:
- "the Covid-19 pandemic"
- "the Cost-of-Living-Crisis and poverty"
- "shortage of suitable housing stock and temporary accommodation"
- "lack of opportunities for social activities"
- "not 20-minute neighbourhoods: have to commute for social activities and essentials"
- "need more adult learning support for new skills"
- "need targeted interventions"
- "lack of public infrastructure – including: public wifi; public toilets; water fountains"
- "community safety: drugs, motorbikes, gangs"

Community sector and its organisational infrastructure and coordination:
- "need sustained income and resources to deliver – short-term (1-year) funding"
- "need to measure impacts of partnership-working"
- "finding suitable times to get people together is challenging"

Governance and communications:
- "need for a community newspaper (not just digital)"
- "hard to contact many groups of people to share knowledge (re. service, place, resource)"
- "meaningful engagement and input – local people have knowledge, but government too busy to listen"
- "lack of accountability and tokenism – repeating conversations, that we've already had"

(3) Areas of working that need to be developed

Short-term:

"the working of R-Squared Collective/Network sub-groups e.g. more outcome focussed"

"regeneration process: improving local infrastructure and services within new housing"

"next generations of local leaders and activists"

"need for a new community newspaper"

"developing advocacy processes for those furthest from power"

Medium- and Longer-term:

"need a community development trust – to coordinate across North Edinburgh"

"statutory services need to engage with those most in need (and long-term)"

"Local governance: need data and evaluation across whole area – not just individual organisations"

"Local governance: accountability across grassroots to decision-makers (whatever political colours)"

"linked-up solutions – working together 'outside of our bubbles'"

2.2 Learning from Lab 2: discussions of community leadership in North Edinburgh

The following themes emerged:
- what is leadership;
- opportunities, challenges and dilemmas faced;
- and, resourcing community leadership.

(1)The Cost-of-Living-Crisis – the fundamental challenge of poverty and inequality locally:

*"Poverty is not a disease but it is sore"*

"You cannot lead change if you are living in poverty, (we) need to eradicate poverty first"

The current *Cost-of-Living-Crisis* is taking place within the context of long-standing poverty and inequalities (economic, social, health), and is creating yet further severe challenges for local people – key issues include:

"Local community centres under threat: the five in North Edinburgh are all needed!"

"People and organisations need resources – both as temporary answers and long-term solutions"

"Whilst there may be opportunities (through crisis) to create change, there are big issues here – too big for community leadership alone."
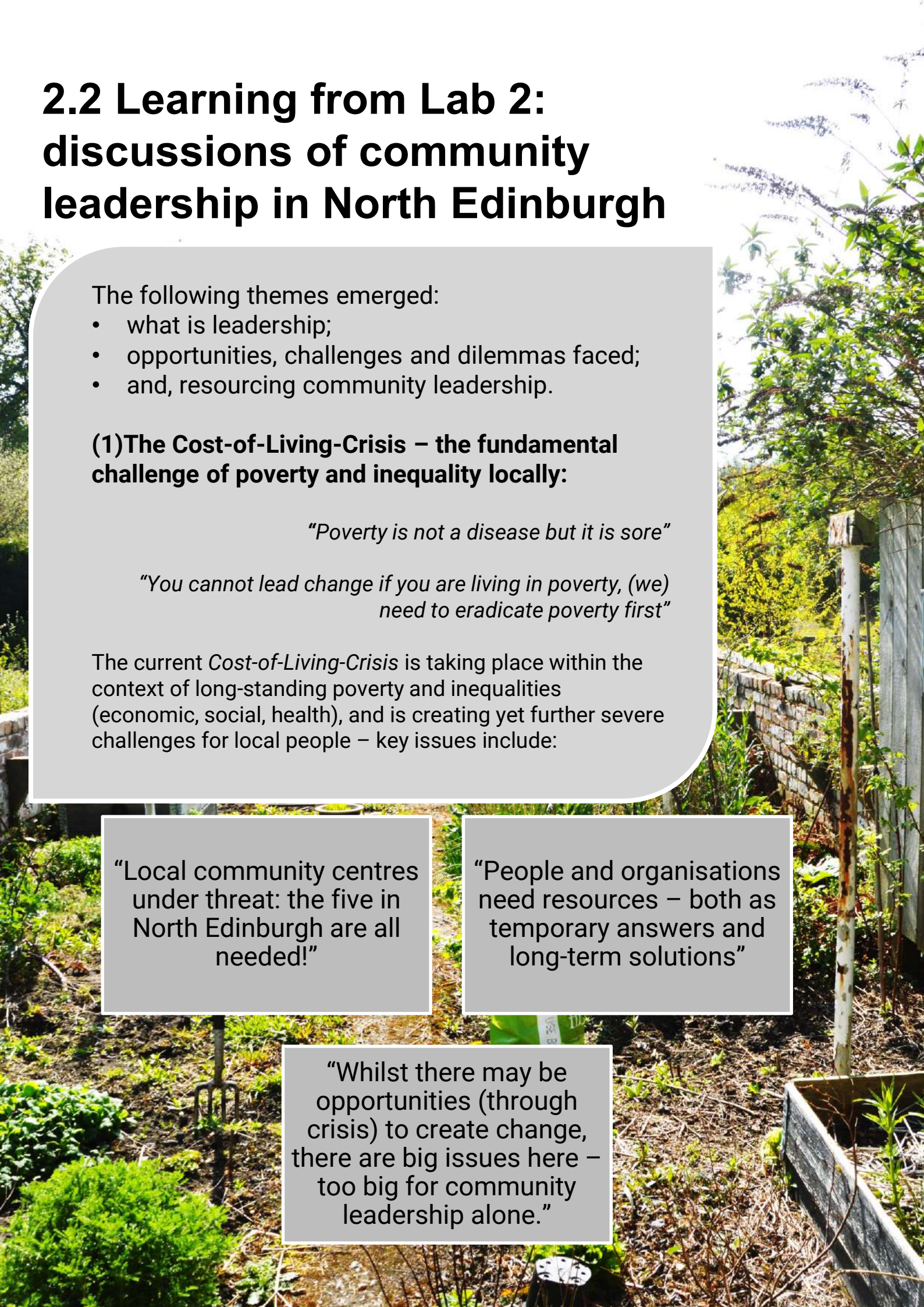
(2) Complex networks of community leadership in this area:

- Diversity of leaders: across different neighbourhoods, activities and social backgrounds and identity.
- There are the different roles to be played, including:
- ➤ *unpaid leadership positions (e.g. activists, volunteers, Board members);*
- ➤ *paid leadership positions (e.g. within organisations, councillors);*
- ➤ *leadership between different neighbourhoods*
- ➤ *with/by young people;*
- ➤ *focused on facilitating community safety.*

(3) Community leadership is a highly-skill role and it's important to:

- recognise, value and learn from existing community leadership – using their knowledge and understanding their ways of thinking, and seeing 'how they get the job done';
- understand the barriers they face and their need for time and resources to build and sustain trust within and across communities, and working safely in complex situations;
- work together to:
- ➤ *define what brings us together and what people want to do and create;*
- ➤ *figure out how to tackle and remove structural barriers;*
- ➤ *generate stories and use data to make the community's case.*
- it is not about moulding views, it is learning and shaping together based on needs.

(4) A long-term vision of community leadership – current and future:

North Edinburgh is a 'living example' of what is possible. Screen Education Edinburgh began as Pilton Video and now works city-wide too. Urban Funding in the 1970s led onto long-standing local assets, including a community school and community newspaper.

- There is a need to invest in and support existing community leaders and their development
- 'New' community leadership often emerges through emergencies/crises and the struggle for change – including recently the Covid-19 Pandemic and now the Cost-of-Living-Crisis – and needs to be fostered too … and over the longer-term.
- Facilitating 'new' community leadership of all ages to emerge and grow by building skills and confidence through:
  - ➤ *informal activities, e.g. teachers/schools, sports, networks of community gardeners, neighbourhood parks*
  - ➤ *formal leadership opportunities, e.g. petition/advocacy work, local governance, participatory budgeting*
  - ➤ *participation and storytelling: creating shared narratives of action, change, resistance … making links to others internationally*
  - ➤ *digital and social media – including film-making*

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(5) Extending community leadership and making decisions locally:

- Building skills to develop and sustain community organisations/leadership
- Using examples of community organisations that are leading collective responses
- Community Wealth Building as a *potential* opportunity to circulate and hold-on to local money/finance that builds the local economy and community

And this begs a number of related questions, including:

What sorts of decisions, resources and localities would be involved?	Are there opportunities through Participatory Budgeting?
What type of relationship with such decision-making have with city-wide structures?	What types of relationship with national policy-making are possible?

(6) Infrastructure to help further build community leadership:

Inclusive, welcoming and safe community learning spaces: that can help generate local dialogue, networks, relationships, and longer-term trust, *and a community learning loop*

Library that provides context and updates on what is happening locally, includes council projects/funding, and generates new approaches to consultation and collaboration

New digital approaches that help identify 'the voices' that are only shared online

Networks of networks to build connections (meet the movements) where local action groups and formal bodies come together – time and spaces for honest conversations

Community researchers in service to the community and building *continuous conversations*

Some options:

Community leadership college;

Drop-in and one-stop-shop to support local connections

Lunches, e.g. faith-based and other community venues, bring a good mix of people

3 Developing a shared research agenda: issues and questions for deepening dialogue

The discussions above illustrate the potential for building a shared research agenda between 'North Edinburgh' – the community sector and other interested local stakeholders – and the Data Civics research team to support the roles of local community leadership, community-led regeneration and local digital, social and democratic innovation; and that can inform such development more widely in Scotland, UK and internationally. This dialogue needs to be developed further and we propose to do this through a joint-research bid to the UKRI Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIP) scheme, which is already under way: the application for Phase 1 of the scheme was submitted by the Data Civics team at EFI in January 2023 and the result is expected by April 2023.

The emerging research agenda focuses on six themes:

(1) Working from an anti-poverty perspective
(2) Drawing on the pool of local knowledge, experience and skill on community leadership
(3) Building community sector resilience as a long-term platform for local leadership
(4) Constructive cooperation between community, civil society, state and business
(5) Local participatory and digital democratic innovation – where next?
(6) What types of research methods and processes are going to be useful?

(1) Working from an anti-poverty perspective

"This needs time to develop and investment in community leadership … however, not everyone has that luxury of time: many people face a very immediate emergency in simply heating their homes." (Participant)

High levels of poverty and inequalities (economic, social, health) are long-standing for many living in this area – and not only the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods (according to SIMD reports): two-thirds of those in Edinburgh in poverty live outside these, taking into account challenges concerning housing, income, employment, food and fuel, and with associated impacts on physical and mental health and well-being. In particular these inequalities and related questions of power need to be understood in relation to socio-economic class, but also more widely via disempowerment through age, disability, ethnicity, faith/belief, gender and sexuality (in no particular order – all are actively intersecting, and powerful).

This poses key issues, including:

Talking both realistically and aspirationally about what community leadership and community-led regeneration could achieve currently – as both doing practical things and advocacy-for-social-justice – in relation to local poverty and inequality; and the social structures that sustain them.

How the focus on poverty via the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, the Community Wealth Building policy agenda, and the local Regeneration Programmes are/could be used to make practical and campaigning impacts on local poverty – housing, employment, services etc.

In what ways those trapped in poverty locally, and those at risk of such poverty, could be practically involved in any process, given the extreme stresses they live with, and without adding further to their distress and challenges?

(2) Drawing on the pool of local knowledge, experience and skill on community leadership: toward a community leadership college?

The extent and range of, often long-standing community organisations, groups and related networks across the area illustrates the depth and complexity of existing community leadership – from activists and volunteers to local staff and representatives. Discussions in the Knowledge Exchange Labs suggest the value of:

• Looking to further extend local community leadership and networks e.g. younger generations and newer residents
• Exploring different options for supporting and investing in community leaders and community groups e.g. 'community leadership college', peer-support networks

There is scope, too, to draw on and learn from experiences of other working-class areas and communities e.g. as per Smart Urban Intermediaries research in Govan and three other European cities; What Works Scotland community anchor research in Govanhill, Kirkcaldy and South Uist; and, likewise, via developing research evidence and community networks, potentially internationally.

This poses key issues and questions to be recognised and considered, including what:
• types of knowledge, experience and skill for community leadership are most useful?
• sorts of networks, organisations and groups can extend and deepen community leadership?
• forms of resource, investment, learning and training need to be developed and how?
• Potential is there is for digital innovation and supporting community learning?

(3) Building community sector resilience as a long-term platform for local leadership

The 2016 Community Conference included a report outlining the examples of the ownership and management of local assets and the substantial and growing range of community organisations. The coordinating work of the R-Squared Collective/Network across local organisations and groups offers a crucial and innovative way forward in building and advocating for community sector resilience as do other local networks including the Youth Organisations' Collaborative and Community Growers. Local organisations are drawing on a variety of sources of income to sustain themselves both short-term and longer-term including:

• public service contracts, grants, partnerships and asset transfer
• grants from national funding programmes, civil society foundations, and corporate sector
• trading activities – community/social enterprise and related subsidiaries

Yet, the challenges are considerable: two local community centres have recently been under threat of closure; the websites of many local organisations illustrate a patchwork of shorter-to medium-term funding (and, the vastly increasing energy costs and the cost of living crisis are putting financial pressures on organisations and their people). In seeking to support community sector resilience, what roles can digital, social and democratic innovation play in sharing learning, data, action planning and communication at community and policy levels?

• How can we explore and evidence complex local coordination across the community sector, and build and support community sector resilience and leadership? Are the models Data Civics have outlined combined with the community anchor model (Annex 2) helpful to communities, practitioners and policymakers? What alternatives are there?

• Is the emerging policy context – as outlined in 1.2 above – able to support longer-term (10+ years) investment in the local community sector and supporting community leadership?

(4) Constructive cooperation between community, civil society, state and business

We use the words 'constructive cooperation' to emphasise the aspiration for purposeful working together towards shared goals, mutual benefits and a wellbeing economy/society – as opposed to financial profit-driven partnerships, often restricting communal access to key resources. The above discussions of community-led regeneration and of the Cost of Living Crisis make clear a common understanding that it is the relations between communities, community/local third sector, wider civil society and the local and central state and other public sector bodies that are crucial – working together:

- to generate an effective regeneration to meet the needs of current and future citizens/residents
- to build effective anti-poverty measures – 'to end poverty in Edinburgh by 2030' (EPC, 2020)

What is perhaps less apparent is the role of the business sectors within this. Housing and property developers, and construction firms are obviously involved within the regeneration itself. However, alongside larger employers and infrastructure providers such as these, are the roles of local-to-regional firms of all sizes and sectors – including private, public and cooperative/social enterprises. The experiences of the development of Community Wealth Building in Preston and Lancashire, for instance, points to the potential for economic and social development through shared working to reduce unemployment and poverty – using procurement, local assets, locally-directed finance, fair employment, diverse ownership models, cooperative learning, and cross-sector leadership. These issues can be viewed both as open questions, but also elements of a forthcoming research agenda exploring:

How communities, community sector and community leadership can engage on a more equal footing with other sectors – public/state, wider civil society and business/market

What roles of community leadership can play in facilitating suitable wider culture-change (for instance, in providing training and advice or acting as social justice champions)

How digital and social innovation can support sharing knowledge and effective dialogue, especially relation to regeneration

(5) Local participatory and digital democratic innovation – where next?

Our earlier research with [Smart Urban Intermediaries](), and current developing work on digital and urban commons, begins to explore the potential for locally-led digital, social and democratic hubs and innovation. These have generated some resonances for some in the Knowledge Exchange Labs with discussions highlighting the potential of:

•   An accessible Live Library of local resources, printed and online
•   A trustworthy digital resource for reaching online 'the hard-to-reach'
•   The value of publicly provided Wi-Fi connection and related infrastructure.
•   Digital literacy and online harms awareness, from computer skills and online security to digital strategy planning for local business.

Certainly the one-to-one discussions with local organisations flagged the provision of local digital training across all ages and illustrated the potential of the digital technology and innovation to extend cultural creativity and regeneration activities (e.g. granton:hub, Screen Education Edinburgh).

More generally, there was recognition of the potential to extend local decision-making and coordinating of resources and organisations – currently as the R-Squared Collective/Network with prospect to establish a Development Trust. But there were also 'mixed feelings' about consultation processes ("not enough"; "too many"). Locals highlighted that several similar processes were not leading to action, with many new generations of governmental or academic bodies "reinventing the wheel."

The Scottish Government's Local Governance Review is flagging the importance of greater local democratic activities, both (a) at local authority level and the types of decision-making to be undertaken there, and (b) at community levels and the potential to extend decision-making there – including via community development trusts. To summarise key issues and future research questions:

What types of participatory, deliberative (e.g. citizen juries) and representative democratic processes could be explored, and in relation to what (e.g. participatory budgeting, community investment funds)?

What types of democratic education and learning might be developed with/for local residents/citizens, and how, and shared where?

How does digital innovation support this – deepening dialogue, sharing information, supporting community research, increasing democratic accountability?

(6) What types of research methods and processes are going to be useful?

The final key discussion to be had is in relation to the forms of research undertaken – so methods and approaches rather than content. The one-to-one discussions, desk-research and the Knowledge Exchange Labs have highlighted that, alongside participation and partnership with academic researchers in recent years, there is a growing body of locally-led action research, community history and project research. These involve several projects relating to local experiences and local action during the Covid-19 pandemic including, but not limited to, projects by the following institutional bodies: Fresh Start, the Pilton Community Health Project, the Spring Chickens, as well as work undertaken by the North Edinburgh Social History Group.

Further there is an aspiration to generate research methods that don't put pressure on local residents to invest their time and energies in research and consultation processes – with limited impacts ('consultation fatigue') and in the context of many trapped in poverty – but rather to invest in locally-based researchers paid to facilitate 'continuous conversations' via participant observation.

There is potential then to build from local experience and capacities – and from the Data Civics research team's own experimental methodologies focusing on participatory research, observation and digital methods – to generate a research programme of substance that invests in local people and organisations as well as university-based researchers.

To summarise these considerations as a carry-home message, we are looking forward to:

mapping local research capacities and aspirations, and further building local capacities

working together to explore research processes and methods that would be useful/relevant

designing a joint research plan and bid – and aims, objectives and research questions

Annex 1: List of Local Organisations and Services Involved in the Knowledge Exchange Process

Many thanks to all organisations, groups and services and individuals who have supported and informed this project. For the sake of simplicity, we acknowledge the organisations, groups and services, but recognise the support of many individuals within those bodies: in some cases, two or more staff members, activists or volunteers participated from a local body in the Knowledge Exchange Labs and/or informal meetings.

Types of participation:
L1 = participated in Lab 1
L2 = participated in Lab 2
M = meeting(s) online and/or in-person for informal information-sharing and discussion

Participating local organisations, groups and services:
Amazing Harmonies [L2]
Citizens Advice Edinburgh [L2]
Edinburgh Palette (West Shore Rd) [L2; M]
Edinburgh College [M]
Empty Kitchens [L2; M]
FACENorth [L2]
Fetlor Youth Club [L1]
Fresh Start [L1; L2; M]
Granton Castle Walled Garden [L1; L2; M]
Granton Community Gardeners [M]
Granton Goes Greener [M]
granton:hub [L1; L2; M]
Granton Waterfront Regeneration Team (City of Edinburgh Council) [L1; L2; M]
Granton Youth [L1; M]
Lauriston Eco-Farm (Edinburgh Agro-ecology Cooperative) [M]
LIFT (Low Income Families Together), Muirhouse Millennium Centre [M]
Muirhouse Housing Association [L1; L2; M]
Muirhouse/Pennywell Regeneration Team (City of Edinburgh Council) [M]
MYDG (Muirhouse Youth Development Group, Craigroyston Community High School) [L1]
National Galleries of Scotland (Community Development) [L1; M]
North Edinburgh Arts [L1; M]
North Edinburgh News [L2]
North Edinburgh Social History Group [L1]
North-West Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership [M]
North-West Edinburgh Locality Partnership (Lifelong Learning, City of Edinburgh Council) [L1; L2; M]
Pilton Community Health Partnership [L1; M]
Pilton Equalities Project [L1; L2; M]
Pilton Youth and Children's Project [M]
Port of Leith Housing Association [L2]
Project Esperanza [M]
Royston and Wardieburn Community Centre [M]
Screen Education Edinburgh [L2; M]
Spartans Community Football Academy [M]
Stepping Stones [M]
Tinderbox Orchestra [L2]
'Twenty-minute Neighbourhood' Team (City of Edinburgh Council) [M]
West Granton Community Trust (Prentice Centre) [M]
West Granton Housing Cooperative [M]

We would also very much like to thank the wider (local) Response and Recovery Network/Collective (R-Squared) and its coordinators for their support; and the Development Trust Association Scotland (present and former staff) for their input early-on.

Annex 2: The Data Civics research methodology and early actions
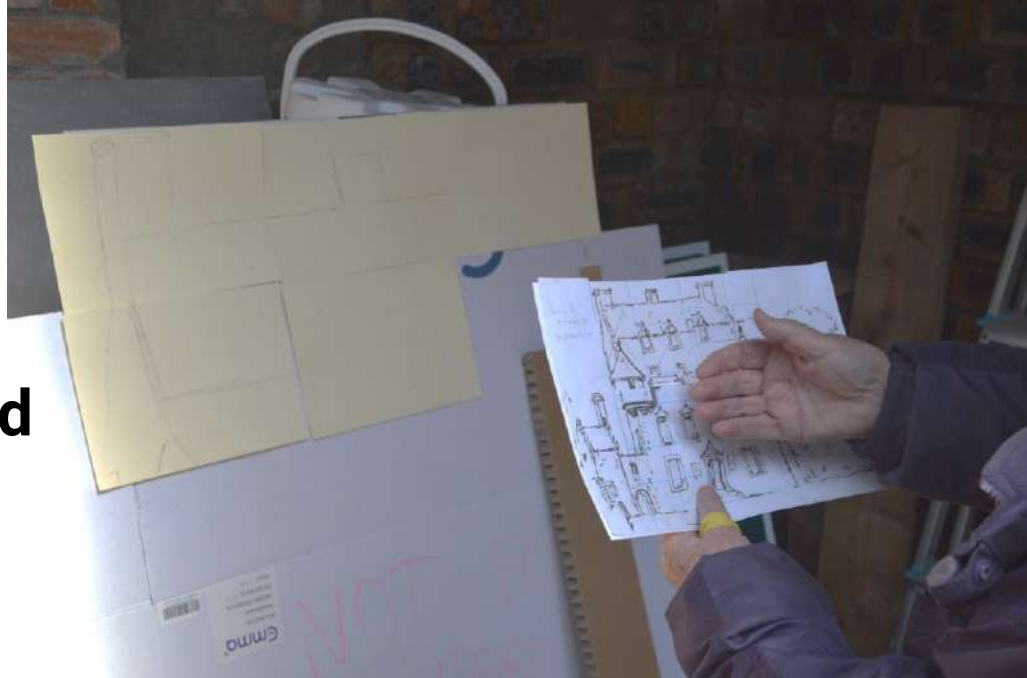
The University of Edinburgh-based Data Civics project is a theme within the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). Our main questions revolve around (a) whether data-driven innovations (DDI) can shape the way we see and govern our cities, regions and nations and (b) how can we harness DDI to support people and communities facing multiple, social and economic challenges in their local areas. We build on our existing experience with the previous Granton Civicscope and Covid Arcadia projects that combine digital, participatory, and creative methods to offer multiple perspectives on the place-based challenges of social inclusion, spatial (in)equality and community representation.

Inspired by Patrick Geddes's Civic Observatory, we forward this vision to the 21st century by using social media, internet platform, locative ethnographic, archival, and photographic data to generate local insights. We co-design projects, experiments and toolkits with individuals and organisations working collaboratively to improve the flow of evidence and data between stakeholders as part of the EFI's commitment to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland's City Region Deal.

In this project, we joined forces with community-led regeneration experts to inform our concern in ensuring that as Granton is further developed, locals who are apart of its social and cultural-economic landscape have required tools – especially digital tools – to be a part of and benefit from these developments. In the following page, we offer some examples of our recent activities with Granton as our primary focus.

Our rationale and approaches

Helps us understand

- Digital footprints
- Platform presence
- Online toolkit
- Support network
- Computer skills

Data Civics: Inclusion Lab+Digital Observatory

Community-Led Regeneration

- Covid-19 aftermath
- Place-based participation
- Local bodies
- History/economy
- Creative industries

Data-Driven Innovation

Methods

- Digital audit
- Stakeholder engagement
- Photography
- Community mapping
- Knowledge exchange
- Experimentation

Several businesses rely on digital searchability. Google Maps offers a good example of what several customers might use as a tool to search what they need. However, algorithms used for the operation of such platforms in order to sort and rank results can also make the online presence of some organisation more invisible rather than visible, due to a host of variable. Such effects were particularly understood during the Covid-19 pandemic. We began a digital exploration that was informed by and online audit of business representations on Google Maps, Twitter, TripAdvisor, and Instagram. This was followed by a physical audit via photographic place-based excursions and walk-arounds, leading to a systematic cross-pollination between online and physical audits, paired to ethnographic interactions with locals who commented on place-based issues. The result was a catalogue of over 80 businesses, companies, charities, and sites, and led to the following observations. Certain businesses, especially local craftmaking ones are rather invisible on physical sites and can only be found online, as there is no space for them to showcase their local craft. Others have no digital footprint at all, whereas some businesses have automatically generated representations and unclaimed profiles. Several industrial businesses use distinct platforms (such as Yell, Moovit, Indeed, Cylex, Infobel, FourSquare, Jooble) but are not to be found on mainstream platforms such as Google Maps, rendering their searchability very uncertain. This highlighted the issues of:

- Need for well-defined digital management strategies
- Need for physical spaces for local artists to showcase their arts and crafts

Example 1: The Granton Digital-Industrial Observatory
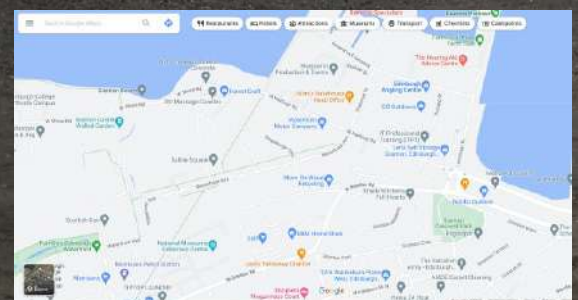
GRANTON DIGITAL-INDUSTRIAL OBSERVATORY

By Dr. Kath Bassett, Addie McGowan & Vassilis Galanos

s which we should consider highlighting on our instagram due to them being good examples and/or being 'hidden gems' which could benefit from more attention (unique to area)

|	Traditional	Social Media		Locative Media	Other	Notes

Example 2: Digital Management Consultation Sessions

Further to the lessons learned during the Lab sessions outlined above and our online audit, we want to ensure that North Edinburgh locals have the skills necessary to think more on the management of their digital footprints and develop your digital management capacities, both at an individual and an organisational level. Between September and November 2022, we have been offering a series of 45-minute Digital Management Consultations, where locals had a chance to talk, in confidence, through any issues encountered with their digital footprints, and a space to brainstorm and strategise. We focused on getting to know about local businesses and their development over the years; how digital platforms are currently apart of working-practices.

Example 3: The @uoe_efi_civics Instagram Account

Our informal interactions and immersion into both physical and online environments of Granton highlight the role of intermediaries as frequent inhabitants of the locative social media space: charities, communal spaces, volunteers, health organisations, information centres, historical settings, business parks, and real-estate managers are using Instagram a lot. We have thus embarked on an online journey sharing photo-essays and poetic reflections based on our research, communicating some of our findings and additional interpretations through our Instagram account (@uoe_efi_civics).
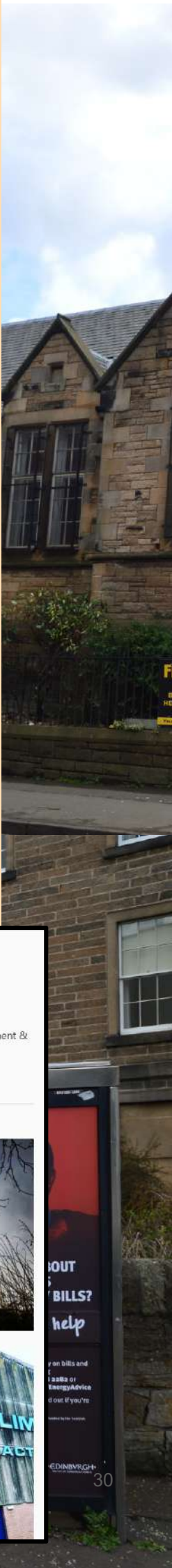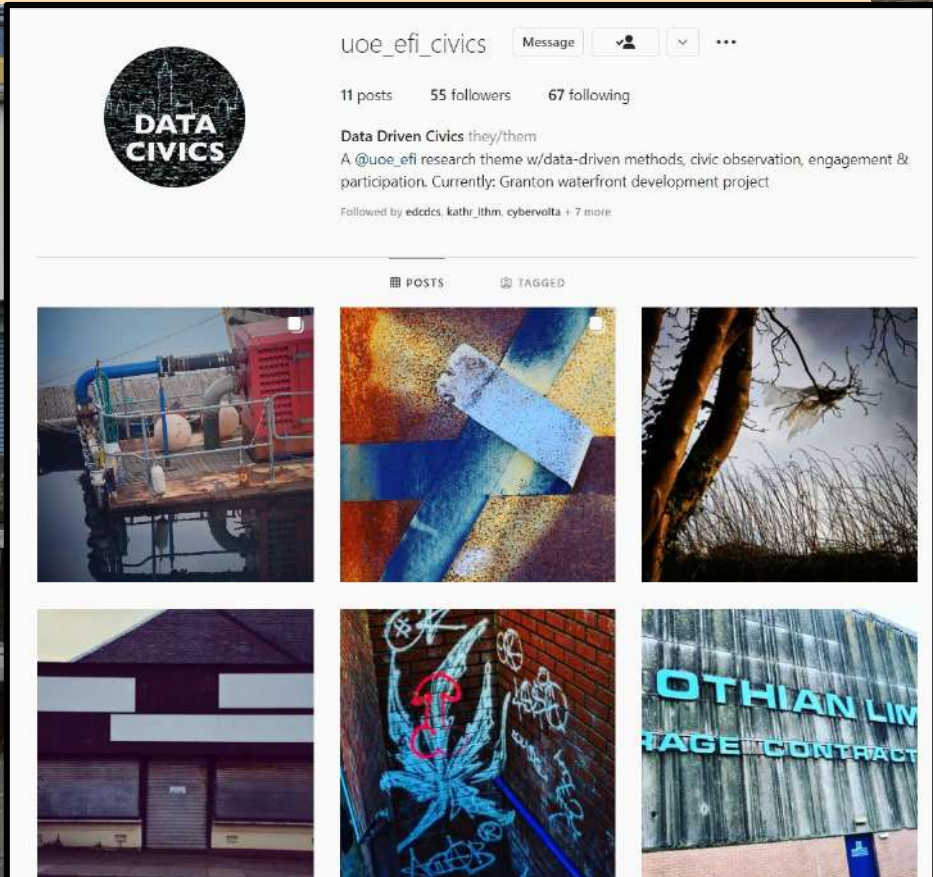
Annex 3: Previous Learning materials: community empowerment and digital participation

What Works Scotland: the following webpage offers an introduction to topics relevant to joint-working between the local community sector and the local public sector, including community anchors, community engagement, community sector, co-production, mini-publics, participatory budgeting, place-based approaches, tackling poverty, third sector interfaces. Topics | What Works Scotland

Of particular interest to those concerned for community-led approaches:
- Community anchor model (involving development trusts and/or community housing associations): Policy briefing: Exploring the roles of community anchor organisations in public service reform and social change | What Works Scotland; and 2018 Community Anchor research report
- Scoping the community sector (as a complex interrelated set of local organisations and groups): Community Sector inquiry; and 2020 Community Economy Discussion Paper
- Social enterprise and dignified food provision: Fun, Food, Folk: The Centrestage approach to dignified food provision | What Works Scotland
- Strengthening community councils: Strengthening Community Councils: Exploring how they can contribute to democratic renewal in Scotland | What Works Scotland
- Community-based community links worker approach: Learning about community capacity-building from the Community Links Worker approach in Insch, Aberdeenshire (2013-16): a collaborative action research inquiry (cycle 1) | What Works Scotland

There is a much wider body of research from What Works Scotland – including on action research, economic regeneration, and developing public sector partnership-working and we always welcome potential collaborations: What Works Scotland | Supporting effective public services in Scotland

Smart Urban Intermediaries: a European project in four communities (Denmark, England, Netherlands, Scotland) including Govan, Glasgow:
web-page: Smart Urban Intermediaries - Connecting people. Changing Communities. (smart-urban-intermediaries.com)

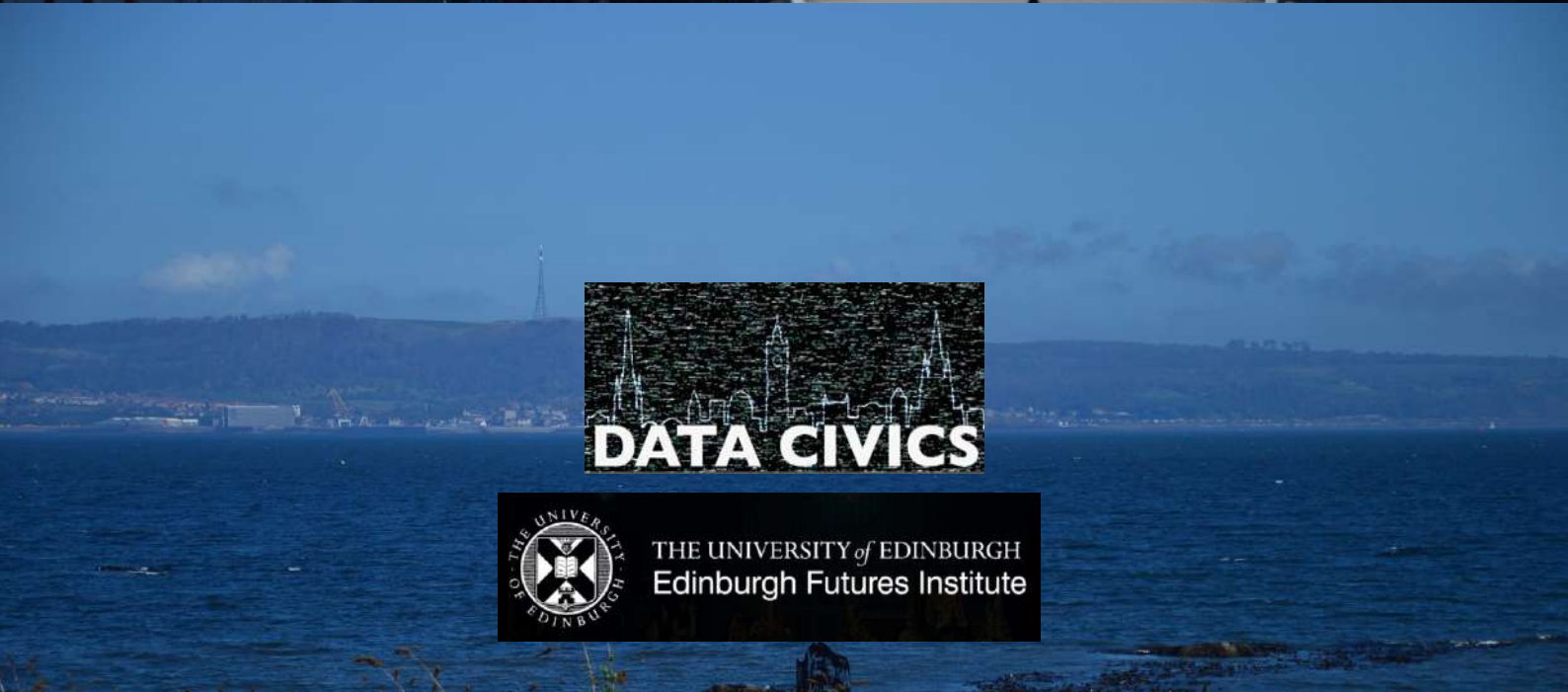- publications page: Smart Urban Intermediaries - Publications (smart-urban-intermediaries.com)
- the Scottish Policy and Practice briefing: Supporting-Smart-Urban-Intermediation-Scottish-Supplement-2019.pdf (smart-urban-intermediaries.com)

For some initial thinking on **Community Wealth Building and Community Leadership,** view:
https://www.surf.scot/scotregen/building-a-shared-agenda-for-the-community-wealth-building-in-scotland/

DATA CIVICS

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