

Edinburgh Greenspace Project Wins Landscape Accolade

A project which has been instrumental in bringing innovative and practicable solutions for vacant and derelict land to the forefront has been honoured in the prestigious Landscape Institute Awards 2012.

Optimised Environments (OPEN) scooped the Strategic Landscape Planning award for its pilot temporary greenspace study, which it conducted in partnership with the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT), following the Trust's successful funding application to the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Development Fund.

The feasibility and mapping research study aimed to explore the potential for bringing vacant, derelict, and 'stalled' land back into beneficial use in the short or medium term, by using the spaces as temporary greenspace sites and other interim land uses.

OPEN identified actions which achieve environmental and social benefits and proposed landscape solutions that are fundable and maintainable on a temporary yet self-sustaining basis.

Keith Geddes, Chair of the CSGN Partnership Board, said:- "A key priority of our Development Fund is to support strategic greenspace projects which help to address the prevalence of vacant and derelict land across Central Scotland.

"The OPEN study in partnership with the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust represents a huge step forward in this field. The ideas for site usage for amenity, recreation and growing food are creative and innovative and effectively promote the value of landscape architecture. I have no doubt that the impact of the study will extend far beyond Edinburgh and inspire landscape architects across the CSGN."

Liz Stewart, Fundraising and Communications Manager at ELGT, said:- “After over two years of work with OPEN and other partners in pursuit of this project, we are delighted that the study has been recognised by The Landscape Institute. As we continue to go forward beyond the feasibility study, to identify and deliver real projects on the ground, the study has been influential in garnering support from partners citywide – local authority departments, developers, housing associations and community – helping us to establish credibility and buy-in to vacant land improvement. The challenges of working on vacant and derelict land are many and varied, but the support from the CSGN Development Fund has been vital in unlocking opportunity and funding in the development of these projects.”

Pol MacDonald, Director at OPEN, said: “We are delighted to receive this award for a truly ground breaking study which has revealed an outstanding opportunity to help regenerate redundant and vacant spaces in Edinburgh. These spaces have a huge potential to enhance the city and to enhance the communities which live within and around the sites. We hope that a good number of the proposals actually come forward to fruition.”

The next round of the CSGN Development Fund is now open for applications. For more information, please visit <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/csgndevelopmentfund>

The Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust works to make a positive difference in quality of life for Lothian communities, by improving local environments and green network. Since 1991, the Trust has carried out over 500 projects worth over £11million, ranging from the restoration of Victorian viaducts and local landmarks, to the creation and improvement of community parks, cycleways, community gardens, woodlands, business premises and other open spaces.

ELGT also works to engage people in their local greenspaces

through community growing, conservation volunteering, outdoor activities to benefit health and wellbeing, and environmental education.

For further information about ELGT, please visit <http://www.elgt.org.uk>

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments set out in the Scottish Government's second National Planning Framework. With a wide ranging remit, far beyond just a 'green initiative', it aims to improve the social, physical, cultural and environmental health and well-being of Central Scotland, as well as assisting the area to meet the challenge of climate change.

Stretching from Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Dunbartonshire in the west, to Fife and Lothians in the east, the CSGN encompasses 19 local authorities across 10,000 sq km and has the potential to benefit 3.5million people, equating to 70 per cent of Scotland's population. For further information about the CSGN, please visit <http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org>

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