

NEIGHBOURHOOD CO:EFFICIENT

A guide to making massive small change

Foreword



Neighbourhoods are the places in which face-to-face social interactions occur - the personal settings and situations where residents seek to realise common values, socialise, and maintain effective social control. In recent decades the neighbourhood has been replaced with the faceless estate or the pretend 'village', all aiming to provide exclusivity at the expense of community, and we have all suffered as a result of this.

The localism agenda changes the rules of the game. The neighbourhood is now recognised as the building block of our towns and cities. It is the lowest level of social, cultural and economic interaction for many. Get this right and we get a better society.

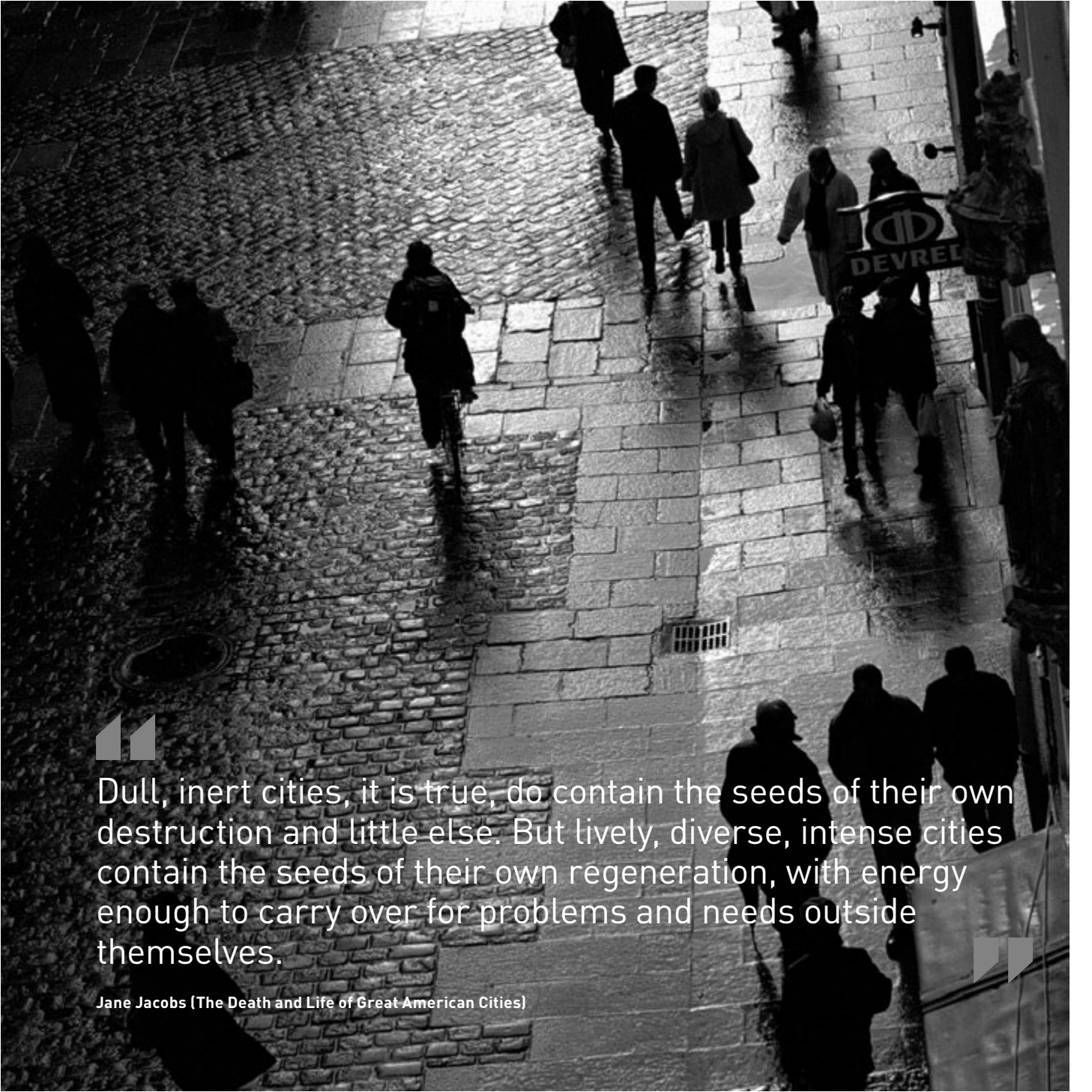
We cannot use old thinking to solve new problems, so we have thought about where we can make a real and relevant difference, quickly. Neighbourhood Co:efficient is our emerging method of learning about, doing and influencing positive change in planning, design and delivery of stable communities at this level. It gives us the tools to work with communities, local authorities and service providers in a joined-up way. We welcome your feedback!

Kelvin Campbell
Managing Director, Urban Initiatives



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“ Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves. ”

Jane Jacobs (The Death and Life of Great American Cities)

Introduction

Neighbourhood Co:efficient is a tool for making massive small change at the local level. It is an 'operating system' that optimises the 'hardware' of the neighbourhood - its land, buildings, infrastructure, networks and spaces - to run its 'software' - the human needs of enterprise, social capital, shelter and marketplace.

The Sustainable Development Commission has found that enabling communities to lead local renewal projects with a neighbourhood-scale approach is the most cost-effective way to ensure towns and cities are fit for the future creating the conditions for people to thrive. Through empowering community groups to come together to tackle issues of local priority and working in partnership with local authorities and businesses, multiple benefits can be delivered. Upgrades to our physical infrastructure can tackle climate change, deliver reliable and efficient transport networks, improve health and well being, secure a healthy natural environment, improve long-term housing supply, maximise employment opportunities, and make our communities safer and more cohesive.

We have been thinking about this for some years and through our work on a number of major neighbourhood renewal programmes, shown in the Case Studies, have been exploring innovative approaches fit for our New Economy; the Localism Bill; and our rapidly changing social, economic and environmental agendas. The real challenge lies in developing the tools to facilitate bottom-up processes in the planning, design and delivery of cities, towns and their neighbourhoods. In learning from emergent systems and applying these to the qualities of successful urbanism we have come up with the concept of Smart Urbanism - a new paradigm that is evolving as we continue to work on it.

Smart Urbanism

SMART URBANISM is our operating system for delivering massive small change and, by definition, allowing the necessary complexity in the design of our towns and cities. It is how the 'thinking' and 'rules' can be applied to fix the 'broken'. It could be termed emergent urbanism or open source urbanism (or even sustainable, collaborative or generative urbanism) and certainly has the qualities of all. It comes from two agendas: firstly, the needs of the 'Resilient City' that looks to wider social, economic and environmental issues that good urban design can address and, secondly, the 'Talented City' where the need to foster innovation, facilitate enterprise and build social capital demand a more responsive urban fabric that is both resilient, accommodating of change and that we can programme over time. As such, it looks to put in place a new top-down discipline that is more 'open' to bottom-up responses from a range of actors. It also looks to limit choice but still allow infinite possibilities. It is therefore, by its nature, freedom within constraints.

Smart Urbanism has its roots in the belief that uniqueness of place is reflected against the backdrop of a clearly defined urban order. This order, in turn, provides the necessary framework for urban variety and provides the palette for the "city of a thousand designers".

Smart Urbanism has seven drivers to foster complexity. All drivers are overlapping and self-reinforcing. All are essential:

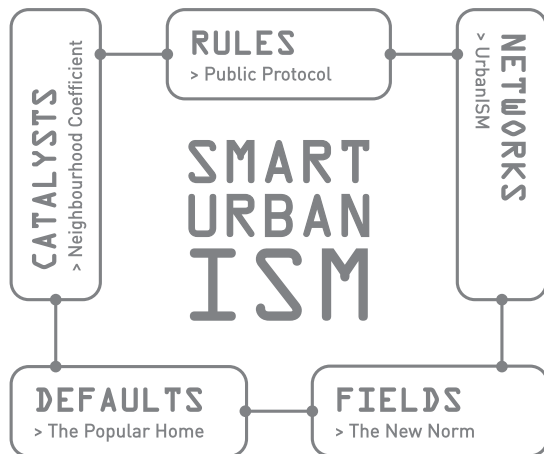
- **COMPLEXITY:** Places that offer the cumulative and collective benefits and consequences of many rich, varied and interrelated actions.
- **COMPACTNESS:** Places that capitalise on the immediate and collateral benefits of closeness, contiguity and concentration.
- **CONNECTEDNESS:** Places that offer a choice of movement modes, both to and through, as a consequence of coherent networks.
- **COLLECTIVENESS:** Places that foster civiness, sense of community, cohesiveness and build social capital through open systems.
- **CO-EFFICIENCY:** Places that factor in shared, supportive and symbiotic systems in building environmental capital in all aspects of life.
- **CO-PRODUCTIVITY:** Places that are open to emergence and change by facilitating a wide range of individual and collective actions.
- **COOLNESS:** Places that are comfortable, creative, and confident with a strong sense of identity, ethics, values and cultural capital.

The first six drivers are something we can foster. 'Coolness' is the consequence of the first six and you cannot design for it. It emerges.

THE RIGHT CONDITIONS

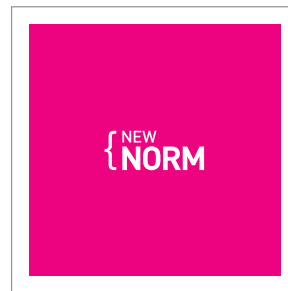
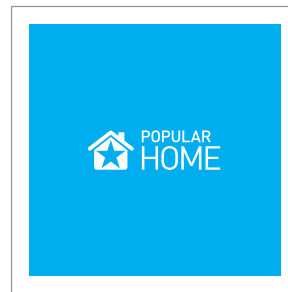
To the drivers of complexity, we must add the most vital ingredient: the five CONDITIONS for emergence: **simple rules, networks, fields, defaults, and catalysts**.

These conditions are not sequential or mutually exclusive. All are essential and ensure a continuous feedback loop to enable informed decisions to be made over time:



Smart Urbanism is underpinned by five initiatives that have been used by Urban Initiatives to develop and trial new tools: **Public Protocol, UrbanISM, The New Norm, The Popular Home** and **Neighbourhood Co:efficient**.

All the initiatives are distinct but mutually supporting; each addressed to different audiences but still overlapping; and, each promoting a different code of behaviour but with the same outcome - making massive small change.



Ten simple rules

From our understanding and thinking around complex systems found in cities, nature, business, information technology and choice architecture we can extract the lessons that have been learnt to derive simple rules that can be applied to a better urbanism.

All are mutually self-reinforcing. All are valid. So, if you don't accept the default settings, these are the rules:



1 LIMITING CHOICE < INFINITE POSSIBILITIES: This rule stresses the need for narrowing down choices as a precondition to emergent behaviour. Using effective mechanisms to narrow choices is something evolved societies have always done. Without a limiting of choice, decisions are not made and self-organisation stalls. Structuring limited but complex choices gives rise to infinite possibilities. Defaults and incentives are a way of influencing choice.

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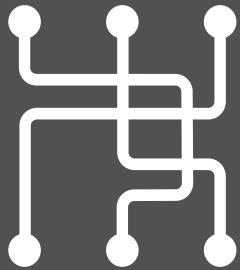
2 INCENTIVISING THE FINE GRAIN: To foster emergence we need mechanisms and (building blocks, generators and agents) and perpetual novelty. In urbanism these lie in the urban grain of a settlement. This rule implies that you need to subdivide and retain the smallest building blocks of cities. The grain needs protection and incentivising. Consolidation is seen as a brake.



3 WE WILL IF YOU WILL: This rule recognises that citizens' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live. In a bottom-up world, new roles and relationships are formed and we need new social contracts between local government and community. The words 'We will, if you will' establish the possibility of simple rules for emergence to be derived.



4 SMALL CHANGE = BIG DIFFERENCE: This rule encapsulates the concept of sensitive dependence on initial conditions such as a beating butterfly wing can create the potential for a tornado; namely a small change at one place in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere. Distributed networks have shown us that a small number of rules or laws can generate incredibly complex systems. Small changes or 'nudges' can lead to big differences.



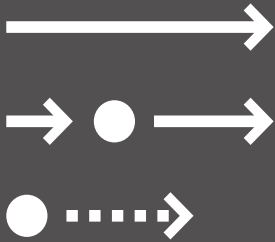
5 HARDWARE + SOFTWARE + INTERFACES: This rule recognises that multiple interactions require the hardware of physical form, the software of programmes and an easily understandable operating system. Many consider urbanism something purely physical and formal but we should definitely take a look at the soft side of the city and recognise those soft structures.



6 UPSCALE/DOWNSCALE: Scalability is a desirable property of a system, a network, or a process, which indicates its ability to either handle growing complexity in a graceful manner or to be enlarged or reduced. This rule is essential to offering choice over time - a prerequisite of incremental and organic growth and change.



7 LONG LIFE/LOOSE FIT: This rule applies to the adaptability of a place and is understood as the ability of a system to adapt itself efficiently and fast to changed circumstances. An adaptive system is therefore an open system that is able to fit its behaviour according to changes in its environment or in parts of the system itself. Long life, loose-fit' displaces 'form follows function' as a construct and universal space becomes more important as a measure.



8 INDEPENDENT TIMELINES + INTERCHANGEABLE PARTS: This rule states that many multiple actions require simple processes that accommodate maximum flexibility for changing behaviours. It stresses the importance of ensuring non-sequential, independent timelines for any individual or collective action. Interchangeability through modular systems that are constructed with standardised units or dimensions for flexibility and variety in use is a key to facilitating massive small change.



9 BOTTOM-UP NEEDS TOP-DOWN: This rule states that you can have top-down without bottom-up: but bottom-up needs top-down, albeit with a different mindset. Collaborative systems recognise that traditional top-down, command-and-control does not work in this context and managing complexity must be open and hierarchical if it is to be effective. The new top-down gives the 'light touch' essential order necessary to avoid confusion.



10 LEADERSHIP MUST BE ENABLING: This rule states that open systems are therefore organic rather than mechanistic, and require a completely different mindset to run them. The role of traditional civic leadership grows less effective in bottom-up systems – less concerned with establishing a direction for the city, and more involved with enabling and encouraging the clusters that generate the best ideas. In these conditions, strategy and feedback are more important than detailed planning.

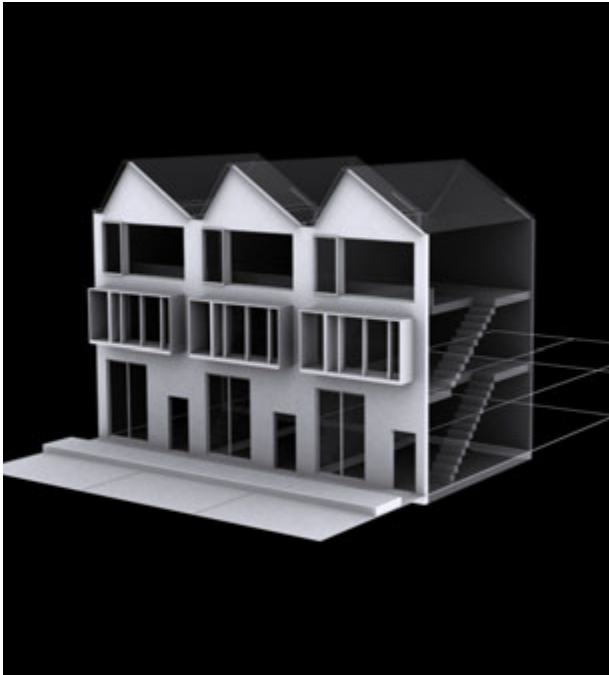
The Neighbourhood Co:efficient Toolkit

Neighbourhood Co:efficient has its roots in a pilot project approach to central government, aimed at delivering targeted funds directly to neighbourhoods to unlock new thinking, processes and outcomes in the planning, design and delivery of stable communities

The Initiative is based on stimulating the stalled housing market by initiating quick projects with a view to delivering tangible and measurable change immediately while other more radical changes are implemented by the government. This involves working with local communities to trial new ideas and accepts a willingness to experiment and make mistakes in the pursuit of developing better models.

The range of new models to be explored should include:





The Popular Home

Development of a range of new flexible housing typologies that can be further developed to reflect the uniqueness of a place and offer the widest range of choice of tenures and lifetime. This includes incremental approaches to housing design (challenging established house-building approaches), space standards, affordable housing criteria and entry levels to the housing market. It should also consider innovative approaches to housing construction including development of modern methods to ensure effective economies of scale in all our work, taking advantage of normative approaches to housing design, mass construction techniques and joint utilities provision.



Local Delivery Vehicle

Development of innovative neighbourhood-scale organisational structures and delivery vehicles that can be adapted to the special requirements of a place, the community and the Council are critical to the success of any neighbourhood project. The model focuses on long-term investment models; risk-sharing and joint ventures with the Council; and, financing models that will ensure continued management, stewardship and maintenance of the neighbourhood is sustainable. As part of this programme we should be trialing Community Land Trusts and other innovations around delivery approaches to stimulate the full range of responses at the local level.



Local Energy Solution

Development of funding, implementation and management packages to set up local energy services companies to meet the low carbon challenge. This model should be delivered on a flexible and incremental basis ensuring that the full benefits of a local approach are realised at the lowest thresholds of the community and the Council can share in its returns without exposing itself to undue levels of risk. The benefits include reduced cost and disruption; engaging communities; and unlocking smarter finance. The approach proposes an environmental dimension to the government's Big Society agenda, and a clear vision for the drive to localism.



Neighbourhood Services Model

Development of processes to draw together all service providers in a single and focused approach to ensure effective and scaleable neighbourhood infrastructure and services are delivered. This should include innovative approaches around community mobilisation and the use of community charters, local agreements and new social contracts – 'We will, if you will'. As part of this programme we should look to new forms of revenue finance to maintain the long-term future of 'software' projects that foster community action and responsibility.

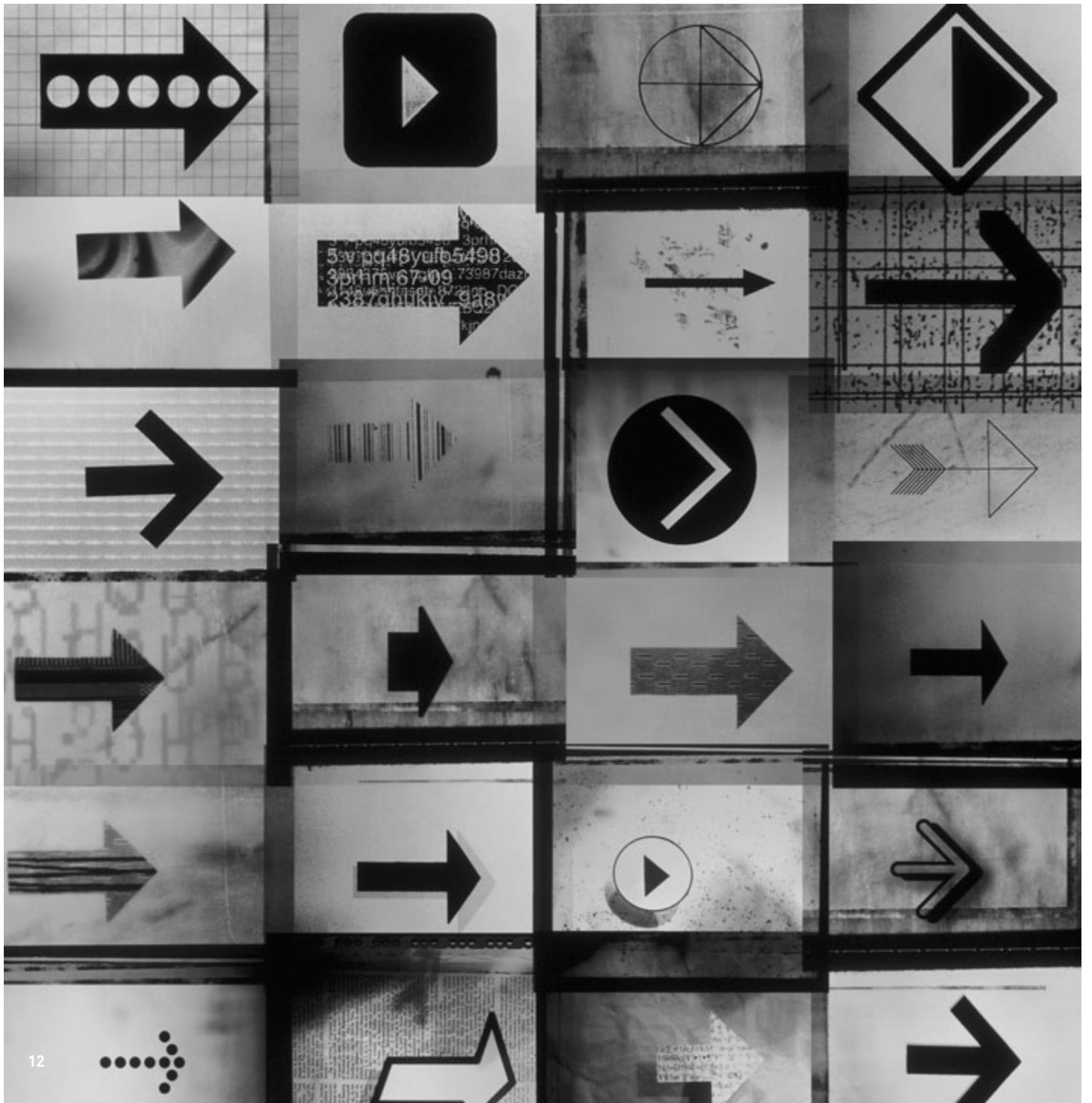


Social Enterprise Model

Development of a range of innovative approaches in diverse and complex neighbourhoods to building social capital and fostering local economic development through micro-economic initiatives, community enterprise and links to training providers. This includes development of local building companies, partnerships with local contractors and local building suppliers to ensure that the social and economic benefits of new housing construction are realised locally.

A New Procurement Process

Development of flexible, targeted and incremental land release strategies that deliver serviced land to the market at a range of scales - the individual plot for self-builders and those seeking bespoke solutions; the 'lot' (a collection of plots) that could involve a small number of units to be built by local small builders and RSL's; the urban block that could open opportunities for larger local contractors and agencies; to the whole phase that could entice the national housebuilders. This process could allow the full range of catalysts, creative land release strategies for a range of players.A



Catalysts

A catalyst has a greater purpose than to solve a functional problem or to provide an amenity. It involves the introduction of one ingredient to modify others. It is the stimulator of change working with the primary generators of urban form - networks and fields - to energise and open up possibilities.

What are the catalysts?

In our old top-down world, catalysts were the big flagships of regeneration - the cultural project, the new bridge or public space, even the new foodstore? This would be the big idea that would trigger change and put a place on the map. This has been largely hit and miss and many places comprise of flagships only. Radical processes of transformation are changing the cities and landscapes we inhabit. The traditional instruments of architecture and urban planning are increasingly unable to address the new agenda.

In a bottom-up environment this all changes. Here, the catalyst is not a single end product but a mechanism that changes a market and impels and guides subsequent development.... It is innovative and dynamic! Its purpose is the incremental, continuous generation of urban fabric. It can take non-physical forms and can be social, cultural, economic or environmental. Quite often it is as much something you do as what you do not do.

There are a number of catalysts we can consider that could trigger positive change and increase the prospects of emergence. Some involve intervention; others involve standing back. Some can be used alone or in combination with one another. All are valid.

[CATALYSTS: An agent that stimulates or precipitates a reaction, development, or change]

Diffusion of Innovation

In our neighbourhoods, a catalyst is anything that mobilises the energy of the massive small and fuels emergence at the local scale. They are the triggers for community formation.

Neighbourhoods are classic self-organising systems. They form as specific clusters: around uses, activities, community groups or even social classes. Nobody tells people where to go to, they choose to move to places that best serves their physical, social or economic needs.

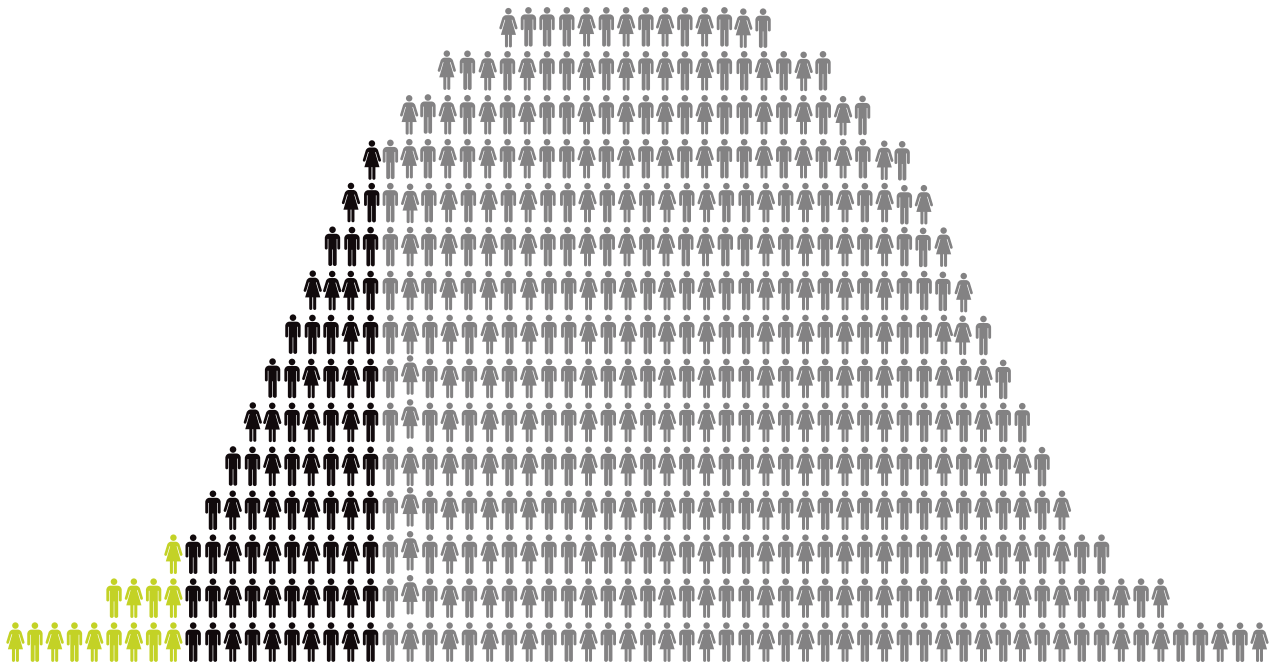
Every place forms its identity around its own catalysts and these are many and diverse: urban pioneers who made the first move, good schools, the best cheese shop in town, immigrant arrival points, old buildings looking for new lives. That is why creative quarters emerge around specific sectors (theatre, media, design professionals), why the lawyers go to their legal precincts, why gay neighbourhoods are colonised, why ethnic groups come together, why young families gentrify declining areas.

You cannot design these places by zoning them but you can create the conditions for them to emerge - and you can provide the catalysts to stimulate them.

Catalysing any positive action, such as changing a market's perception of an area, requires an understanding of how innovation is diffused and ultimately adopted as the prevailing market view. It is now well accepted that a diffusion process in any social system follows a curved pattern in which the adoption of a new approach begins with slow change, is followed by rapid change and ends again in slow change as the product matures or new alternatives develop.

People adopt innovations at different times and at different rates. The adoption process tracked through the diffusion curve is a decision-making process in which an individual passes from the initial knowledge of an innovation to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to a choice to adopt or reject it, then to its implementation and the use of the new idea, and finally to confirmation of this choice.

To put this into action, we need to introduce 'innovativeness'. Everett Rogers in his acclaimed work 'Diffusion of Innovation' recognises the importance of the innovators and the early adopters in bringing the majority along.



Innovators

Innovators are venturesome, have multiple sources of information and show greater propensity to take risks. They are motivated by the idea of being a change agent in their community. They are willing to tolerate initial problems that may accompany new approaches and are willing to make radical shifts to solving such problems.

Early Adopters

They are the popular social leaders - are the visionaries in their market and are looking to adopt and use new approaches to achieve a revolutionary breakthrough that will achieve dramatic competitive advantage in their lives. They typically demand personalised solutions and quick-response, highly qualified support.

In the context of the new Localism agenda, we can take this thinking into working with communities to transform their neighbourhoods. We are not just talking about radical innovation: but any shift from the status quo will involve some form of innovation. Many people in their communities will be the agents of change. They will be the innovators or the early adopters. We need to harness their energies in our bottom-up world.

Innovative Land Release Strategies

It is in the creative release of land that we can make a big difference in catalysing action. Where the old ways of defining a use and marketing it for specific uses have failed it opens up the door to new thinking.



Jeroen Saris, an urban strategist from Amsterdam, has developed an interesting model for urban development in which you should have at least a period of five years to an open an area, attract people with ideas and forget about strict rules. Those are the ingredients for experiments and creative development. “Development companies should not only be focused on investors, but also on ideamakers. Those idea investors should not be paid in cash, but in rights to use the space for a certain time. Everyone is part of urban development.”

Whilst this may be seen as being radical, there are many instances where innovative land release strategies could be used to stimulate positive change.

Here are some examples of how we can do this:

Meanwhile uses

The potential of meanwhile or temporary uses have long been seen as motors of urban change and it is only in recent years, through a range of successful cultural and economic projects that we can assess their true effect as catalysts.

We have seen the effects of the occupations by temporary artist's colonies in places such as Soho in New York, or Temple Bar in Dublin and the regenerative effects they have had. We can also witness the success of the street market as a temporary event.

Meanwhile uses thrive in places where things have stalled and people do not know what to do. The uncertainty and openness attracts and inspires others.

The work of Klaus Overmeyer and the Urban Catalyst project has shown that :

'Temporary uses are generally not considered to be part of normal cycles of urban development. If a building or area becomes vacant, it is expected to be re-planned, built over and used as soon as possible. Temporary uses are often associated with crisis, a lack of vision and chaos. But, despite all preconceptions, temporary uses can become an extremely successful, inclusive and innovative part of contemporary urban culture.'

He shows that apparently spontaneous and unplanned uses revealed patterns and mechanisms. Meanwhile uses do not emerge accidentally but are guided by different factors and rules. The users are urban players that act deliberately and follow certain visions.

His research team has come to the following conclusions, which are summarised as follows:

- 1** Citizens become temporary users in order to follow different aims: Users are motivated by the aim to claim vacant spaces as breeding grounds for the development of ideas, as niches or as a parallel universe in relation to the regulated urban environment.
- 2** Specific vacant sites attract specific meanwhile uses: While choosing certain sites or buildings, users follow precise spatial criteria such as retreat, exposure or niche.
- 3** Meanwhile uses flourish with a minimum of investment: These uses can recycle and appropriate existing structures and spaces with minimal interventions.
- 4** Meanwhile uses are mostly organised in networks and use clusters: The clusters are characterised by distinguished use profiles. A cluster is sustained by complex internal networks, which generate synergy effects. Initial temporary programs often attract similar uses to the same or a nearby site.
- 5** Meanwhile uses are initiated through agents: In many cases, temporary uses only become possible through the determined action of key agents, who bridge the gap between the different milieus of the users, the site owner and municipal authorities and therefore create a protective umbrella which allows for the flourishing of temporary use.
- 6** Meanwhile uses are a laboratory for new cultures and economies: These uses can create a unique environment of experiment, where ideas can mature in time, leading to the foundation of many start-up companies.

Without doubt, 'Meanwhile Uses' is emergence in all its forms. It only requires allowing it to happen.



Free Idea Zones

A Free Idea Zone (FIZ) is a form of 'white land' - an unzoned part of the city - with 'fields' laid out that can be released incrementally. This is a zone where new ideas can be explored, often ideas that have not yet been fully formed and experimentation is deliberately encouraged as an innovative economic development strategy. This is emergence at its lowest level and works well in rapidly evolving economies. It is an alternative to a traditional business park model, which rigidly lays out its wares for the market to accept. Here, new companies can bite off what they need and set up at little cost to develop their offers. These are the 'fertile fields that facilitate a form of commercial squatting that can be formalised over time. It is ideally suited to government or city development agencies and its regeneration potential is currently being explored by The London Development Agency and Newham Council in the Royal Docks area of London.



Greyworld

Greyworld is a version of the FIZ but applied to existing underused urban fabric. It values 'messiness' - a state that defies description, but has so many possible qualities for enabling emergence. Classically it is in old industrial buildings, in spaces under the arches or in low-grade backlands. Greyworld is an economic development zone, identified in a planning document as an area where the lowest rung on the economic ladder is protected at all costs. It implies a deliberate turning of a blind eye to any activity that may arise. Staying away is a deliberate intention, particularly in keeping planners and health and safety away. This like formalising meanwhile uses with the express intention of keeping them there.



Test Beds

This mechanism can be used to change market perception of an area and involves creative use of land to catalyse change. It involves setting aside serviced land to accommodate demonstration projects and early wins and can take the form of:

- 1 National neighbourhood challenge pilot programmes.
- 2 Ideas competitions where local people offer solutions that can be trialed as part of neighbourhood development projects.
- 3 Local housing expos by local builders to test new housing models, methods and materials.
- 4 Show home projects, either temporary or permanent that could act as benchmarks for prototyping and quality.
- 5 'Grand Designs'-type projects, working with urban pioneers and early adopters.
- 6 Community self-build projects.
- 7 Incentive pricing of serviced land with special offers for first in, deferred land payments and discounts for early delivery.

Baugruppen

Vauban in Freiburg, Germany has long been regarded as a good example of bottom-up urbanism. What is particularly unusual and distinctive about Vauban is that the majority of development was by Baugruppen: small owner-cooperatives, typically comprising fewer than 20 households who want to develop and own their own houses.

Part of the attraction is the opportunity, in contrast to standard speculative development, to act as a catalyst by influencing the design of their residential environment before moving in. As landowner and land developer, the Council divided land into small plots and allocated it preferentially to Baugruppen and small/local builders, with bids also being assessed against criteria favouring families with children, older people, and Freiburg residents.

Vauban's mandatory small plot sizes were significant because these allowed small developers to become involved: the largest public sector developer in the first new build phase, for example, built less than 10% – and the largest private sector developer built less than 13% – of the units.

Compared to conventional housing developers, the Baugruppen approach has several distinct advantages:

- 1** It overcomes the producer-consumer gap inherent to speculative housing and the short-termist 'in/out' behaviour of conventional developers. Combining developer and owner development roles means that the balance between upfront capital costs and longer term running costs makes energy-efficient and low-energy design more attractive. Overall costs are also lower, since Baugruppen appropriate the developer's profit.
- 2** The Baugruppen promote community-building, cooperation and common activities between future neighbours, and enable conflict-testing in a community.
- 3** The small development plots and the large proportion of new residential development built by Baugruppen (and designed by a wider variety of architects) generates a more architecturally diverse district, with the individually-designed façades creating genuine rather than artificial diversity in terms of visual character.

Baugruppen, however, need support from the City planning department and from independent consultants, and also more time to work up their proposals. Forum Vauban ran workshops and also formed a technical support unit.



Using Urban Pioneers as Catalysts

Urban Pioneers are Everett Rogers' innovators and early adopters. Their energy an initiative can be mobilised as potential agents of change in projects where the market is weak.

This idea has its roots in the belief that many places will not be transformed into great urban living and working neighbourhoods, in the manner that we all want, if we follow the 'same-old, same-old' way. This assumes that if we follow the well-trodden path of competitive dialogue with a master developer we will not be successful. We therefore need to find a new way to work with local people to develop a new offer and boost the local economy by building their own homes and businesses.

An Urban Pioneer programme can be used to stimulate a stalled housing market by initiating quick projects with a view to delivering tangible and measurable change immediately. This involves working with the innovators and fostering the early adopters in local communities and the private sector at the local level, to trial new ideas and processes. It accepts a willingness to experiment and make mistakes in the pursuit of developing better models. Using Rogers' statistics, the innovators would need to account for 2.5% and the early adopters 13.5% of the total of the total housing numbers. If we were looking for 1000 homes in the future, we would need to find 25 innovators and 135 early adopters.

The Urban Pioneer programme has four phases:



Phase 1: Phrasing the Proposition

This stage involves developing the content and branding of the proposition to create a buzz around the project. It includes developing an early plot 'parcelling' diagram and loose design codes based on the agreed development framework for the neighbourhood and produce some early concepts to trigger interest. The local authority needs to establish a steering group to define:

- 1 the ground rules for the project;
- 2 the land release strategy;
- 3 the means of delivering the programme; and
- 4 risk assessment and counter-measures.

As part of this process early market testing of this proposition is undertaken amongst the local creative community - working with local builders and developers to gauge its potential effectiveness. This phase sets the agenda for the longer term transformational change of the neighbourhood and provide us with the metrics for measuring the long term success of the project.



Phase 2: Promoting the Proposition

This stage will involve raising city-wide awareness amongst local individuals, collectives and organisations of the programme and invites them to become the 'innovators' (the 2.5%). This is done using the local press and television channels using the form of an Ideas Competition, where interested parties could express how they could take up opportunities to build their own homes or workplaces. Winners are offered plots or lots at zero cost or with some form of deferred payment and clawback conditions, provided they deliver to an agreed programme. The competition would be judged on the basis of their innovativeness as well as the commitment and ability of the successful participants to deliver on what they promise.



Phase 3: Documenting the Process

In order to diffuse innovation to a wider audience, the programme works with local media groups to produce a documentary of the process to learn from successes and failures in the pursuit of developing better models. This could take the form of a television series based on selecting a group of 'contestants' to participate in the Programme and could be on the lines of a 'fly-on-the-wall' series. We would be looking for an ideal cross-section of 'family' and 'business' groups who best represent the neighbourhood's social, cultural and economic diversity.



Phase 4: Building the Projects

This stage involves the innovators building their projects, possibly using a 'Grand Design'-type approach to bringing together the 'contestants' with local architects and builders to build their homes and/or business units in the neighbourhood, focusing on the principle of Build Local. The projects should seek to demonstrate a wide range of responses from self-build to formal procurement, from individual to collective, from full ownership through to rental. In this way we will need to work with local social landlords, building societies and investors. Nothing should be exempt.



Phase 5: Making Progress

This stage will involve moving from the innovator stage to the second stage – the implementation of a further 13.5% of the total scheme to accommodate the early adopters.

The Urban Pioneer programme gives us an ideal opportunity to allow new ideas to emerge from the bottom-up. It demonstrates all the positive qualities of emergence at the local level and galvanises change. This programme is now being trialed in Middlehaven in the north of England, a place that has suffered from trying all the big solutions and where there has been a significant failure of the housing market. It is early days but its outcome could be significant for many of the stalled projects out there.

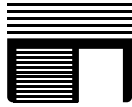
Sparks

These are catalysts where specific higher-order generative uses or activities are introduced to trigger related activities - the civic infrastructure, public spaces and social, cultural and economic infrastructure. In other words, the 'sparks' for generating urban fabric and the local accretion of urban life.



SUBSIDISED WORKSPACE

GIVING LOCAL RESIDENTS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SPACE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AT AFFORDABLE RATES TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO SET UP NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY.



RETAIL SUBSIDY

ENCOURAGE A RANGE OF RETAIL USES ALONG EDGWARE ROAD AND CHURCH STREET TO CREATE A DISTINCTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL CENTRE.



1. Local Economic Triggers

The availability of affordable workspace is the single largest catalyst for economic development at neighbourhood scale – small units in the back lanes, space under the arches or over the shop, live/work space and the local creative industries building. This is where meanwhile uses and Greyworld can play a major role. The secret lies in using the potential income streams for these activities to plough back into other initiatives.

The success of local economic catalysts is well proven in the work of the Shoreditch Development Trust where affordable workspace is given to the trust as part of planning obligations arising out of local development projects. This has resulted in an increasing cluster of business start-ups: an activity that has a massive impact on the local economy. This could be extended to more formal innovation hubs, enterprise centres, business incubators and mentoring schemes. In all instances these should be coupled with adjustable business rates, which could be linked to turnover.

2. Local Shopping as Catalyst

Small, independent shops can provide a hub for communities, providing local jobs, promoting local entrepreneurial activity and keeping money circulating in the local economy. The New Economic Foundation has done a lot of work on promoting new ideas to counter the impacts of the major foodstore or national brands that dominate on our main streets. This is also shown in the London Assembly's report on 'Cornered Shops' which promotes the concept of 'Shop Local'. There are now a number of schemes where this principle has made a difference:

- Local cooperatives and buying schemes such as the People's Supermarket;
- Community shops such as local post offices;
- Local loyalty cards such as the Wedge Card; and
- Local marketplaces and pop-up shops.


There are opportunities where zoning legislation, building on the proposition for Neighbourhood Development Zones, could promote a proportion of local independent shops on the main street. France has excellent examples of this where the local butcher and baker are treated as a community resource and their business rates reflect this. In all instances adjustable business rates and even differing parking controls can be used to trigger different responses.

NEIGHBOURHOOD BOOKING SYSTEM
 DEVELOPING A NEIGHBOURHOOD BOOKING SYSTEM THAT WILL HELP TO IMPROVE THE VISIBILITY AND USE OF EXISTING AND NEW FACILITIES.





SCHOOL OF EVERYTHING
 OPENING UP ACCESS TO SCHOOL FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF CORE SCHOOL HOURS


3. Neighbourhood Management

Having a dedicated management team for the neighbourhood could be seen as one of the most effective means of triggering transformation of the area.

The National Association of Neighbourhood Management describes neighbourhood management as residents working in partnership with mainstream service providers, the local authority, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors, to make local services more responsive to the needs of their area. It is a process that recognises the uniqueness of each place; allowing the people that live, work or provide services in it to build on its strengths and address its specific challenges.

Operating in a defined area and at a scale that people identify with, crucial to its success is the neighbourhood manager; advocate, mediator, facilitator, influencer and negotiator for positive change. It does not involve large amounts of money - rather using existing resources in a better way.

This is well demonstrated through the work of the Church Street Management Team on London, which has provided the catalyst to the development of its Neighbourhood Plan; its public art and cultural programmes; and the management of its street market.

4. Community Ownership

The catalytic effect of well-managed physical assets, such as community and faith centres, parks, and redundant buildings, are well recognised in the development of active communities and viable community-based enterprises. Asset transfer refers to local communities' ability to acquire land and buildings, either at market value or at a discount, in order to deliver services that meet the neighbourhood's needs. It is seen as one way in which local authorities in particular, can support the development of the social economy, and thereby meet their wider strategies for renewal and improved delivery of local services.

Indy Johar's work on 'Scale Free Schools' points to the need for a different approach to the provision of school buildings and services. Why can't the whole community become the 'school', with just a central core and then just activate underutilised buildings and resources to build a strong sense of community? In this way schools can scale up or scale down to meet the communities needs and not treat learning as a factory activity.

Our work on 'Start with the Park' for CAFE showed the benefits of community ownership in developing and maintaining green spaces. Places that are 'owned' are places that are loved.

NEIGHBOURHOOD GREEN ENERGY SUPPLY

NEIGHBOURHOOD WIDE INITIATIVE TO BULK BUY CHEAPER GREENER ENERGY TO HELP TACKLE FUEL POVERTY

early win





COMMUNITY ORCHARD

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN GROWING FOOD AND TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE PUBLIC REALM THROUGH PLANTING FRUIT TREES.





5. Infrastructure Triggers

The provision of better local energy networks, district wide heating systems, sustainable urban drainage schemes and retrofitting projects provides a ready catalyst for neighbourhood transformation. The 'Future is Local' report by the Sustainable Development Commission presents an unrealised opportunity in the UK to catalyse this potential at the neighbourhood scale, through:

- Engagement of residents can be secured through governance approaches most appropriate to each community and providing investors with a viable scale of project;
- Efficiency measures become feasible at whole-street and neighbourhood level that simply don't stack up at individual home scale, including most low-carbon/renewable energy technologies and transport;
- Access to private investment is increased as neighbourhood scale provides 'critical mass', enabling scarce public money to be more effectively leveraged.

We now need practical, the 'how' of managing change: building capacity at local level, sharing best practice nationally and facilitating engagement by supply chain businesses, funders and policy-makers.

6. Soft Catalysts

Neighbourhoods are often recognised as the places where dynamics of social cohesion are most tangible within the city. Within the overall urban dynamics, neighbourhoods have also been the breeding grounds for socio-economic development projects, grassroots initiatives and social innovation, especially in the social economy.

Not all triggers need to be hardware. Sometimes softer catalysts such as empowerment of the community through neighbourhood planning programmes and capacity building initiatives amongst civic leaders can have a greater lasting effect on neighbourhood transformation. This extends to:

- social enterprise activities;
- greening projects and urban orchards;
- social and cultural programmes;
- neighbourhood watch; and
- social network developments.

One of the best examples of soft catalysts is access to seed finance at the local level: micro-finance to set up local businesses; community banks and credit unions; and, local guarantee funds for community self-build schemes.

Running Pilot Programmes

Pilot programmes are excellent ways of catalysing change through demonstration. We recommend that local authorities and neighbourhoods wishing to initiate a pilot programme, follow the following course of action:



1. Develop a Starter Pack

This involves a basic set of rules to start the process and providing the management to get it up and running and evolve it.

- **The Rules of Engagement** – Setting out clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all players;
- **The Project Programme** – Agreeing key milestones and deliverables throughout the programme; and
- **The Definition of Success** – Clearly spelling out the criteria to reward successful innovation.

2. Establish a Hit Squad

This can be an extension of the local authority operating as a dedicated interim management team until a fully-fledged delivery vehicle is in place. It covers the key roles of all players:

- **The Project Initiator** - Focus on early wins and manage highly visible projects such as building show-homes, demonstration projects and active community participation in integrating new communities;
- **The Development Packager** - Breaking the project down into bite-size chunks to enable a wider range of implementation strategies;
- **The Place Promoter** - Providing the branding, communications and marketing functions for the programme;
- **The Supporter** - Provide support throughout the process on such matters as legal, procurement, policy implications;
- **The Programme Coordinator** - Providing the necessary client-side project management and costs control; and
- **The Capacity Builder** - Working with the Council and neighbourhood team to raise standards, focus efforts and leave behind an intellectual legacy.

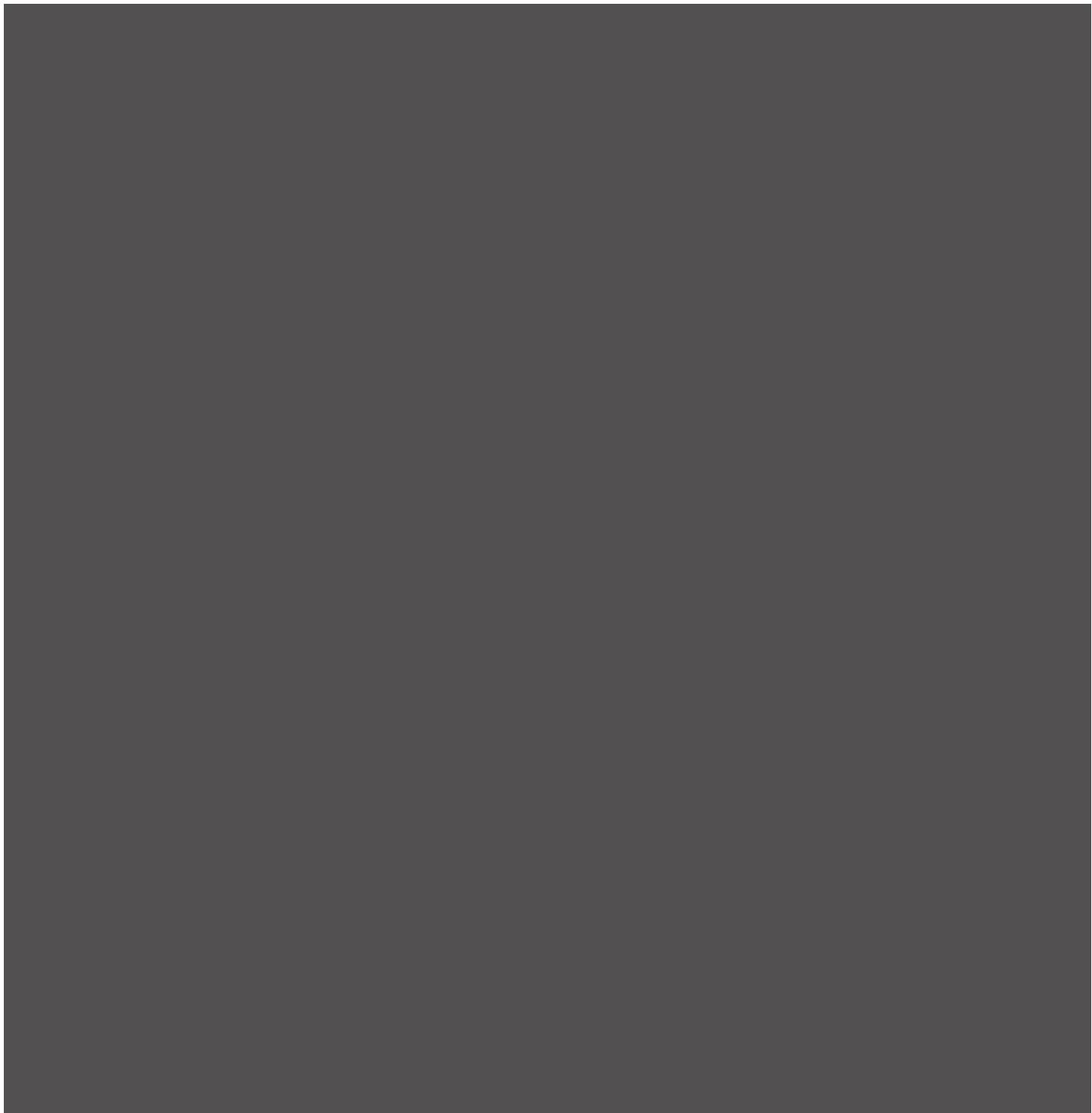
3. Monitor the Process

This involves a basic set of rules to monitor the process and providing the management to review and evaluate its success. It also includes the mechanisms to share ideas.

The programme should identify targets however and these could be, say:

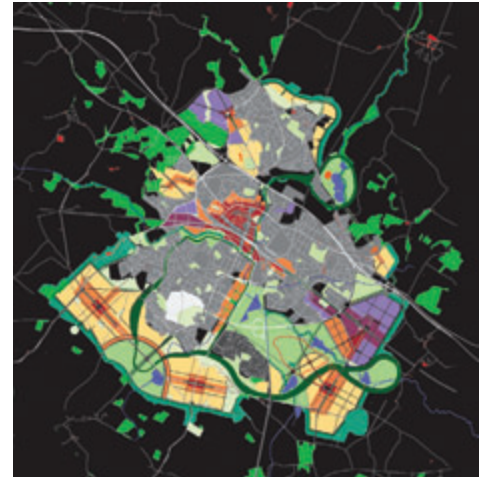
- First projects by a certain date to force action;
- Quantum of new homes by a certain date;
- No of local jobs created by a certain date; and
- National Exhibition in say, five years.

The Neighbourhood Co:efficient pilot projects will offer a strong brand and will create a 'buzz'. They will promote more experimental and high visibility projects that will capture the imagination of politicians and the wider community. They will be rooted in a strong understanding of local economics and the spatial fixes that the economies of these places demand. It will address the issues of social inclusiveness, environmental concerns and cultural diversity, amongst others.



Case studies

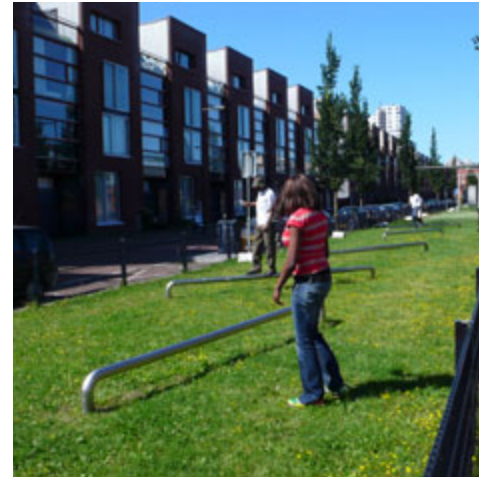
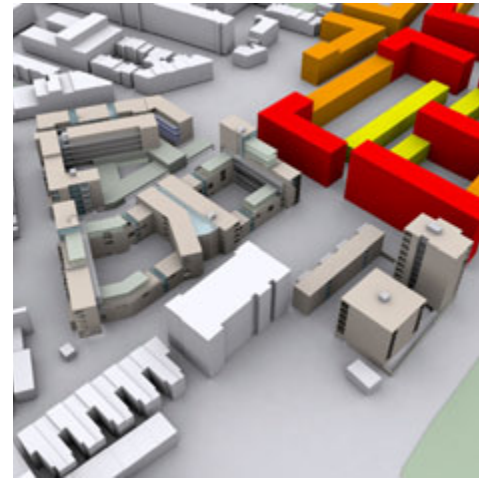
Urban Initiatives has been testing the Neighbourhood Co:efficient tools through our recent work. Case studies are presented on the pages that follow.



Ashford

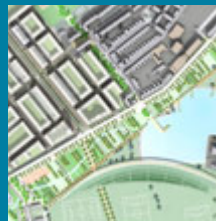
Urban Initiatives has completed a Development Framework for Ashford Town Centre, forming the basis of the first Area Action Plan within Ashford Borough Council's LDF. The town centre lies at the heart of the broader Greater Ashford Development

Framework, which plans for the sustainable growth of Ashford to near double its current population. The proposals for the town centre establish a new hierarchy of urban streets to replace the current one-way ring road, and define a series of distinctive quarters as focal points for growth.



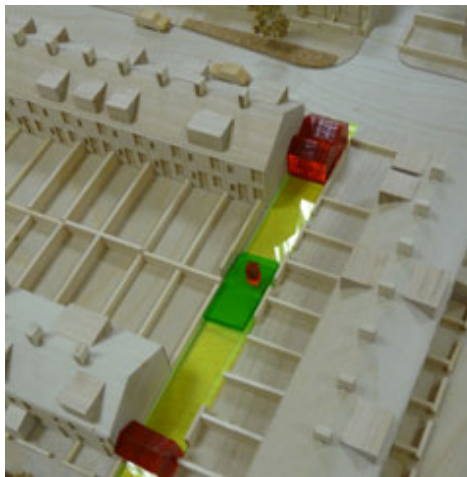
Architectis Panel Aylesbury Area Action Plan

PREPARED BY
URBAN INITIATIVES
JUNE 08



Aylesbury Estate

Urban Initiatives has been appointed to develop an Area Action Plan and Master Plan for the Aylesbury Estate, a large housing estate of 2500 homes on the southern edge of London's Central Zone. The challenge is to enable the delivery of the comprehensive regeneration of the estate whilst ensuring the highest quality of design and sustainability. This high profile estate has been master planned several times before and little has actually taken place. As a result the team has overcome the significant consultation fatigue through a number of innovative techniques including the establishment of a Neighbourhood Team, a Neighbourhood Game, and targeted methods such as texting and arts competitions.



BARKEREND

Area-Specific Proposals

WALKING

1. BEECH GROVE

- Close and open the existing open green space on Beech Grove and re-use these as local play areas.
- Create a new housing area on the adjacent vacant land north of the Greenway.
- Develop new family housing in existing streets.
- Close some housing including a site of new family housing to address local needs.
- Place new houses near the Greenway to improve safety and security.
- Consolidate resources on the improvement, maintenance, and management of Barker Grove and Bechford Drive to improve cross-neighbourhood walking routes.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

2. GILPIN STREET

- Create new attractive walking routes around the new Fisher Green!
- Reallocate existing Greenway M20 territory on Fisher Street, and support businesses to relocate elsewhere within the neighbourhood.
- Reallocate part of Gilpin Street allotments and create additional resources to improve the remaining allotments.
- Develop new housing in existing streets.
- Re-use some housing including a site of new family housing to address local needs.
- Place open houses near walking routes & allotments sites to improve safety & security.
- Create a new public open space on Fisher Street.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

3. BARKEREND CENTRE

- Create a new public space at Stannard Street and Barker Grove for commercial activities.
- Encourage retail and dining along Stannard Street, commercial, and to make environmental improvements.
- Reallocate part of Barker Grove to create 'High Street' walking routes.
- Create a safe and well-used street on Stannard Street.

PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK
(only one dot per person please!)

- Going in the right direction
- Going generally in the right direction, but some aspects need more work
- Going in the wrong direction

City of Bradford MBC



Bradford, Laisterdyke

Urban Initiatives was commissioned by Bradford City Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Laisterdyke area of Bradford. We took a “twin track” approach to the neighbourhoods of East Bradford. At a local scale, the material quality, fitness for purpose, and setting of the bye-law housing are extremely poor. We worked with local people to develop mechanisms for the improvement of private housing standards, for public realm investments to make best use of committed funds, and for the engagement and ‘leverage’ of the area’s community and cultural capital.

In parallel, there we identified a strategic opportunity for substantial growth and focus as a sub-regional centre for cultural shopping and leisure. By reinforcing the existing repertoire of ethnic restaurants and retailing, and developing its place-distinctiveness on the Leeds-Bradford corridor, local employment and training can be complemented and extended. We believe this twin-track approach can transform the life chances of this community while retaining and enhancing its character and confidence. The emphasis is not only on ‘decent homes’ but also on ‘decent neighbourhoods’, not only on the “local economy” but also on the “ritual economy”.

The plan was finalised in 2009 and the recommendations are being used by the Council to progress a series of interventions that will improve the physical and social performance of the area.



Church Street

Westminster City Council to prepare a masterplan and delivery strategy for Church Street and Paddington Green, to encourage long term physical, economic and social sustainability. The vision is to create a high quality, sustainable, mixed use urban neighbourhood that is attractive to residents and visitors, that is full of life and enterprise, and that integrates successfully with the surrounding areas.

Despite its central location, Church Street and Paddington Green are a forgotten part of London. The area is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Much of the housing within the neighbourhood is owned by the City Council, although there are a high proportion of resident leaseholders which add to the complexity of delivery proposals.

The area is characterised by poor quality development and a struggling economy and although the City Council has made great progress over recent years with its programme of neighbourhood renewal, more imaginative interventions are needed to bring about real change.



Clonburris

We have created a masterplan for sustainable urban development unprecedented in Ireland, in response to the unique opportunity presented by this location and its outstanding public transport and environmental assets. Centred on a new mixed-use Main Street adjacent to the planned rail and metro interchange station, the Eco-District creates a series of interlinked 'walkable' neighbourhoods, providing significant shopping and employment area, excellent public transport services, between 11-16,000 new homes, and a range of community facilities including schools and major parks. The Planning Scheme establishes a new benchmark for sustainable urban quality in Ireland, setting out clear performance standards that new development is required to meet, including targets to address climate change and carbon reduction policy.



Dublin Northern Fringe

Urban Initiatives has prepared an urban design framework and access strategy to guide the development of three major development sites on the northern fringe of Dublin.

The work involved proposals to open a new station on the Dublin-Belfast line and create a major suburban focus around the station which will involve a mixed use development

of high density living and working. The scheme proposes the creation of a new activity spine linking shopping, community facilities, the station and the coast. This spine links into an important quality bus corridor which serves the northern part of the city. A design code was prepared to guide future development and ensure a strong sense of place.



Knowle West

Urban Initiatives was appointed to prepare a regeneration framework for the Knowle West neighbourhood in Bristol. The project aims to provide solutions for suburbs that are built on the principles of the Garden Cities Movement and the associated problems some of these areas have faced. The scale of interventions we are promoting range from a strategic level, such as connecting Knowle West to wider Bristol, down to a micro level, such as individual private home improvements.

Despite its relatively central location, the area is disconnected from its surroundings, extremely deprived and suffers from poor quality housing and a failing retail centre.

We are currently progressing masterplan options for the area and have been working closely with the resident focus group prior to our wider public consultation event scheduled from October 2010.

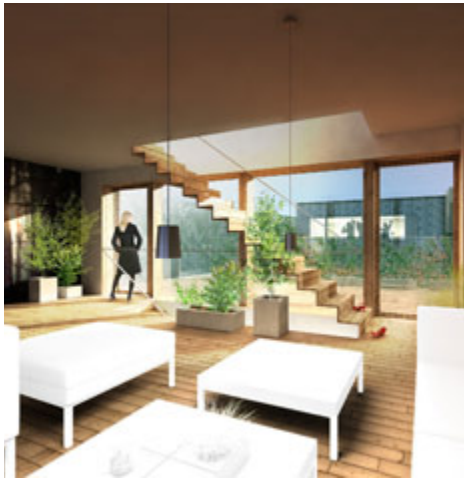
We are also working with the Council to progress detailed works on a number of key sites to help signalise early change and attract people back into the area.



Middlehaven

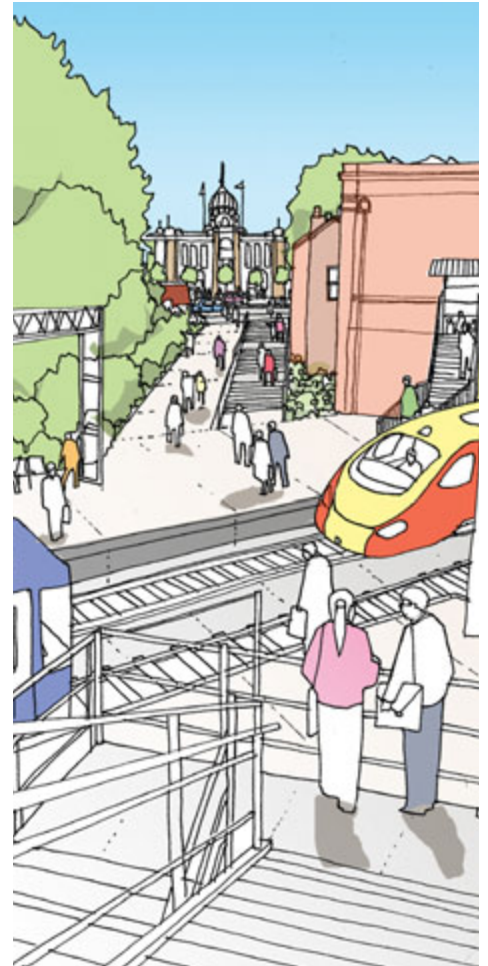
The Middlehaven Partners, ONE North East, The Homes & Communities Agency, Middlesbrough Council and Tees Valley Unlimited commissioned Urban Initiatives to provide a masterplanning framework underpinned by sound commercial advice for Middlehaven, Middlesbrough.

The masterplanning framework builds upon the earlier Greater Middlehaven Strategic Framework to provide a 10-15 year deliverable masterplanning framework for the area. The project aims to reposition both Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley both in terms of increasing design quality and improving market confidence.



Scotswood

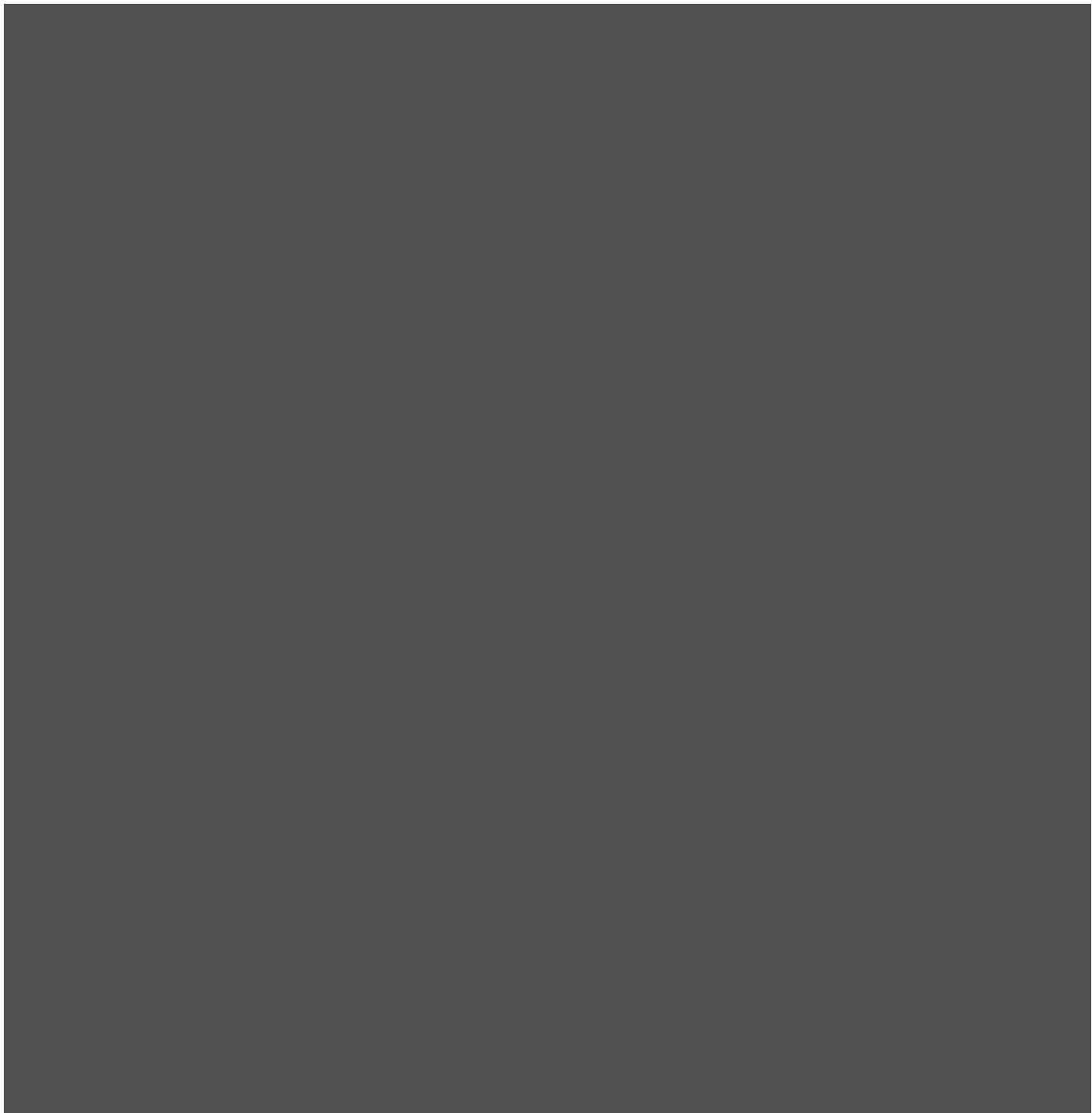
The Scotswood project provides an opportunity to create a step change in development within the West End of Newcastle and demonstrate neighbourhood regeneration within an area of housing market failure. All homes will meet the relevant standards as well as enabling a 'long-life loose-fit' approach to housing. Urban Initiatives completed an Outline Planning Application including the planning, transport and design and access statements and inputs into the Environmental Impact Assessment that led to a successful consent in 10 weeks. The Scotswood Masterplan has received full support of CABE and English Partnerships and won the Francis Tibbalds Urban Design Award 2009. Urban Initiatives were retained to produce a comprehensive set of Design Codes and Development Guidance, to run an international Architectural Competition in partnership with RIBA to generate new innovative forms of row houses and to support Newcastle City Council through the CPO and developer procurement process. Having established a temporary landscape on the cleared site comprising a meadow of wild flowers, site preparation and infrastructure works will commence later this year.



Smethwick

Urban Initiatives has been commissioned to prepare a Neighbourhood Renewal Plan for the Windmill Eye area of Smethwick. For more than a decade, the neighbourhood has suffered the impacts of extensive housing clearance, high residential turnover, and 'stand-alone' retail provision. Yet the area's assets – which include a diverse and friendly population, proximity to Birmingham city centre, a fine urban park, and good public transport services – suggest it has the potential to be a great urban neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Plan will guide major committed investments in physical change, such as the new Sandwell & Birmingham City Hospital, new housing development, and potentially a new primary school and Town Health Centre. However, in order to improve the lives, livelihoods, and health of residents, we are also working with local residents and stakeholders to identify ways to generate and spin-off local training and employment opportunities, improve the offer of the local high street and market, and deepen contacts between the diverse ethnic and religious communities.





Further Information

Neighbourhood Co:efficient needs to be considered in the context of our other tools:

- **Public Protocol+**
A guide to successful community collaboration
- **Urban ISM**
Integrated Spatial Modelling for growth and change
- **The New Norm**
Discovering the lost art of subdivision
- **The Popular Home**
Developing a pattern book approach to long-life loose-fit housing

These can be downloaded from our website:

<http://www.urbaninitiatives.co.uk>

Reading List

If you're interested in finding out more about planning, urban design or community involvement, you'll find the following websites helpful:

www.cabe.org.uk

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

www.placecheck.info

Placecheck

www.communities.gov.uk

Communities and local government

www.planningportal.gov.uk

The Planning Portal

You should also have a read of 'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice' (CLG, 2000).

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