

**FOSTERING CO-OPERATION FOR LOCAL AND  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH  
CROSS-BORDER SPATIAL PLANNING EVENT  
Armagh – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

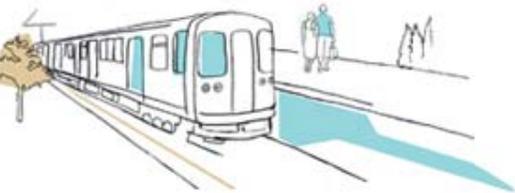
**Bristol and Leipzig:  
Driving The Sustainable Communities Agenda**

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# INTRODUCTION

- **Housing is an important element in the creation and management of sustainable communities, but it is only one of many elements – presentation provides wider context.**
- **A difficulty is that some aspects of the sustainable communities agenda have run ahead of theory – we know some things work, but we don't always know why – role for research, including reviews of best practice and of the ways in which professionals operate.**
- **Sustainable communities principles can be applied to places at various stages of development – new places, regenerating places, evolving places.**
- **The first two categories imply significant intervention, the final category can be seen as the ordered management of change – this is the core business of placemaking and involves many disciplines and professions.**
- **The sustainable communities agenda is important at all levels from local to European scales – the Bristol Accord and Leipzig Charter – and is a common activity in all EU member states.**



# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

**Regenerating  
Places**

**Evolving  
Places**

**New  
Places**

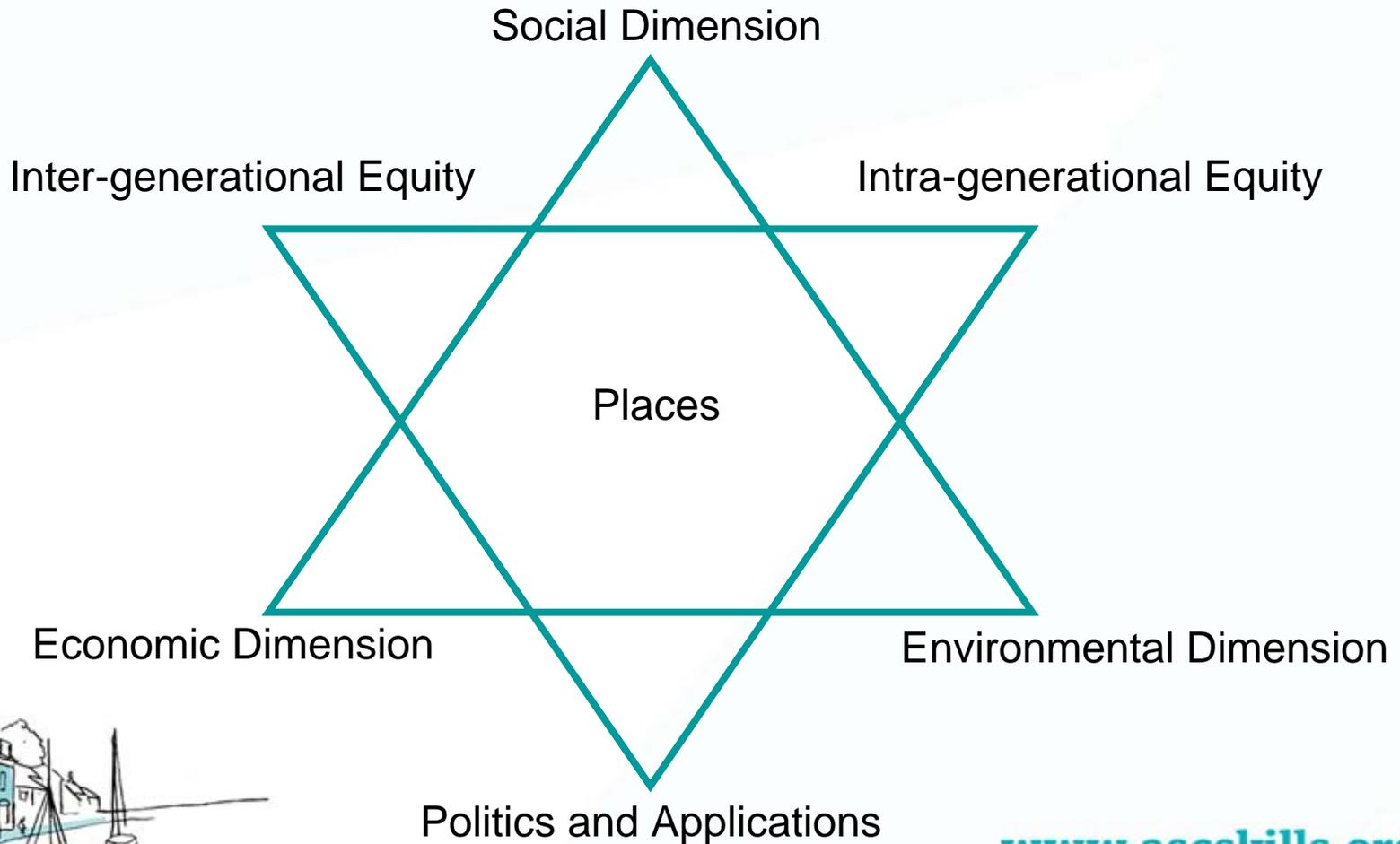


## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - BACKGROUND

- Much of the sustainable communities agenda will be familiar – it brings together theory and practice from many sources and challenges the team of sustainable communities professionals to adopt an inter-disciplinary, cross-sector approach.
- Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future – this idea crosses national and international borders.
- In reality, sustainable communities are the spatial manifestation of the sustainable development agenda – making places for people – and delivering this is the core principle underpinning planning and associated policies.
- It is also important to recognise that the sustainable communities programme and approach is not a fixed target ..... it is an agenda for change, and the implications are an essential consideration, for planning at all spatial levels, from the European Union to the neighbourhood.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



# WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

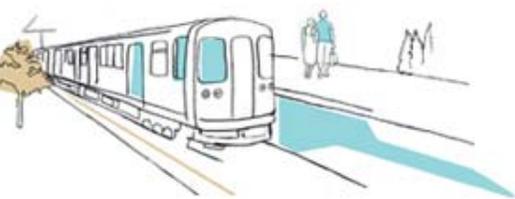
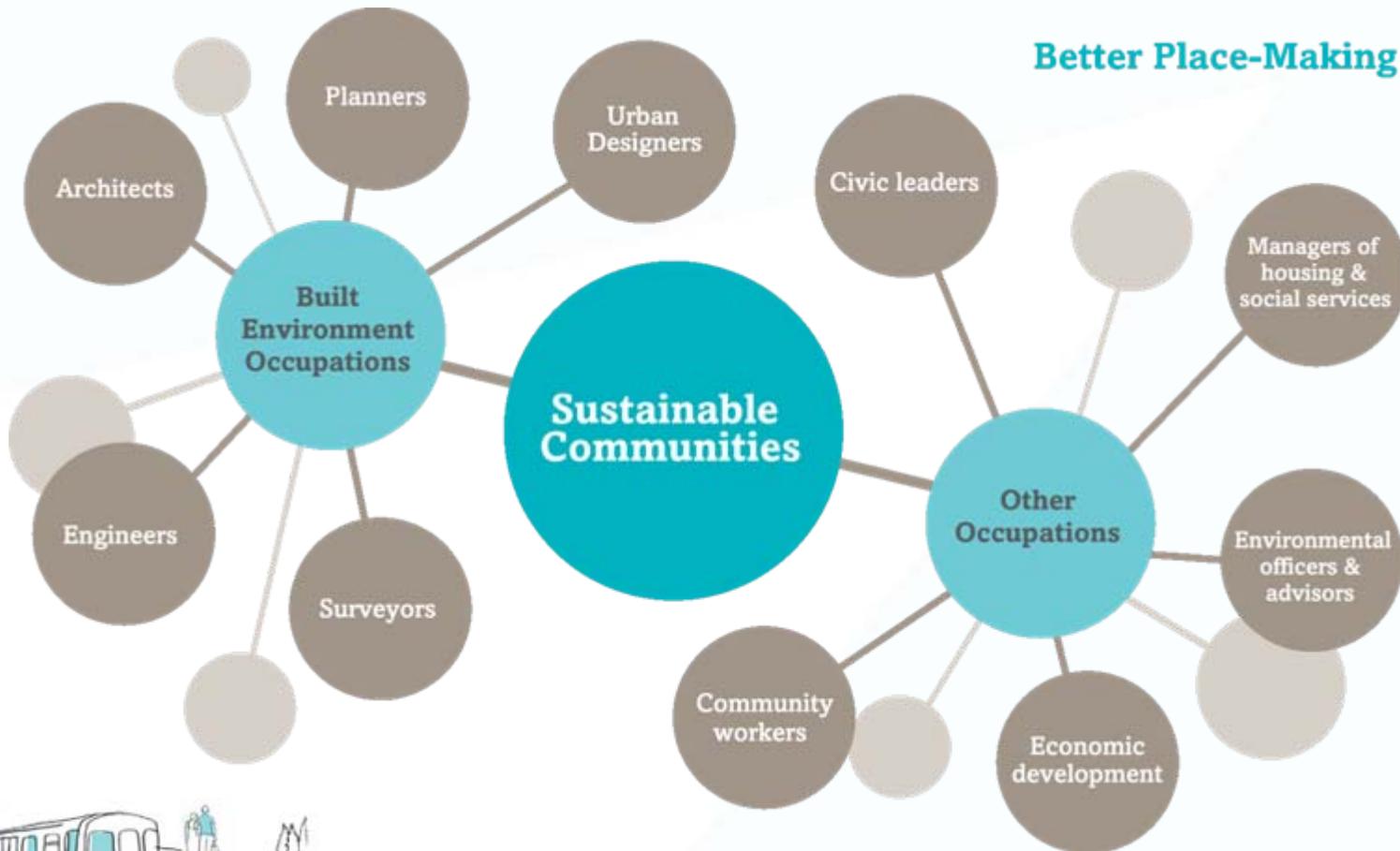
- **Eight Key Component Elements:**
  - active, inclusive and safe – fair, tolerant, cohesive
  - well run – effective and inclusive participation
  - environmentally sensitive – caring for environment and resources
  - well designed and build – quality environment
  - well connected – good services, access and links
  - thriving – flourishing and diverse economy and jobs
  - well served – good public, private and voluntary services
  - fair for everyone – just and equitable
- **And an extra essential component – placemaking, the process and skills of bring the components together in a particular place and managing the implementation of a strategic corporate plan – delivery is essential.**
- **As noted earlier, these principles can be used to create new communities or retrofitted to existing places.**
  - **Placemaking and the maintenance of sustainable communities are team activities – many disciplines and professions.**



# KEY COMPONENTS



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OCCUPATIONS



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – THEN AND NOW

- **Although the language differs, spatial planning has always advocated the sustainable communities approach – compare Howard’s Social City to the present model.**

### **Social City**

Happy people, social opportunity  
Concord and co-operation  
Beauties of nature  
Beautiful homes and gardens  
Easy access, admirable sanitary conditions  
Higher wages and abundant employment  
Low rents, social intercourse, advancement for all  
Bounds of freedom widened

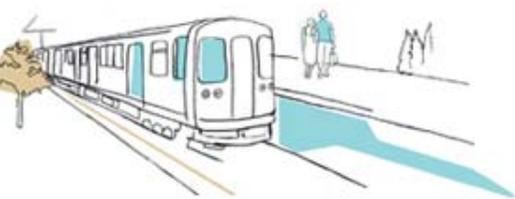
### **Sustainable Community**

Active, inclusive and safe  
Well run  
Environmentally sensitive  
Well designed and built  
Well connected  
Thriving  
Well served  
Fair for everyone

- **But practice has not always reflected leading edge thinking – some communities have proved to be unsustainable, often due to insufficient or inappropriate provision of social and economic facilities and infrastructure, absence of environmental care, lack of local ownership, or failures of implementation.**

## CHALLENGES FOR SPATIAL PLANNING

- To apply traditional skills in order to go beyond the boundaries of conventional statutory land-use planning – this is already in evidence and can be extended to ensuring effective corporate working.
- To play a central role in the placemaking team and to develop common understandings with other professionals and actors, including local residents and stakeholders.
- To ensure the full engagement of other actors – elected members, private and voluntary sectors, local community members, other relevant groups.
- To ensure effective delivery at all spatial levels and in all aspects of practice – policy, plan preparation, development control, etc.
- To ensure that planners and other professionals have appropriate skills and knowledge – initial training and CPD are essential, especially through joint delivery.



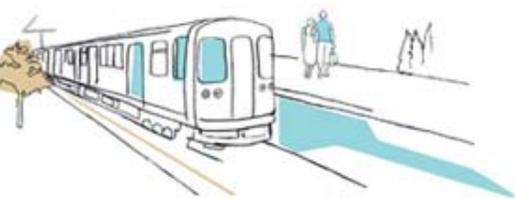
# SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION

- Skills and knowledge dimension often overlooked in the past – the assumption was made that demand would drive the provision of suitably qualified professionals and the effective capture and management of knowledge.
- But there have been too many alternative attractions and an historic lack of concern with stimulating supply, especially given the image problems experienced by much of the public sector and by many of the sustainable communities professions.
- This implies that it is essential to rebuild skills and knowledge capacity at all levels in order to ensure the future provision of sufficient competent professionals and other actors.
- Spatial planning is central to the delivery of sustainable communities, and it has to engage with the full skills and knowledge agenda.
- This full agenda is now moving forward at national and EU levels – the Bristol Accord skills and knowledge programme was further developed at Leipzig in May 2007.



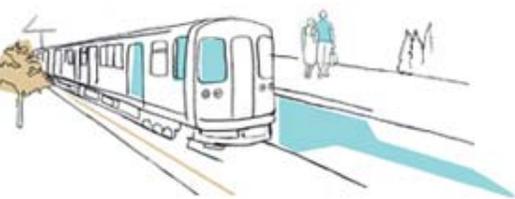
## WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?

- **Wide range of groups involved:**
  - national, regional and local government members and officers
  - private sector organisations and companies
  - voluntary and community sector bodies
  - professionals, trades people, others involved in delivery
  - local residents of all ages
- **Important to engage with young people – they can help to shape their future and they have a major delivery role.**
- **Skills and knowledge are essential ‘tools’ for all groups – there is a need to share skills and experiences in order to avoid wasteful duplication.**
- **With specific reference to planning, these skills cover technical, operational and organisational matters – planning and managing sustainable communities is a seamless progression on a continuing basis at various spatial levels.**



## KEY GENERIC SKILLS INCLUDE:

- **visioning, strategy building and innovative thinking**
- **partnership, team working, inclusion**
- **analysis, decision making and evaluation**
- **leadership and supporting delivery**
- **programme and project design and management**
- **process management and enabling change**
- **stakeholder management and conflict resolution**
- **communication**



## WHAT IS ASC DOING TO HELP?

- **ASC is a national government strategic body concerned with ensuring that skills and knowledge are available to allow for establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities.**
- **Key programmes include:**
  - Schools programmes – focus initially on 12-13 year olds and emphasis upon raising awareness and career opportunities – Making Places and other initiatives
  - Academic programmes – interdisciplinary approach to pre-degree, degree and postgraduate provision – common learning outcomes, teaching packs and modules / units of study
  - Professional programmes - emphasis on providing cross-professional CPD and refresher or transfer learning – common CPD programmes now operating
  - Research programmes – agreed with research council and others in order to support action research – first round of ASC / ESRC grants and other research projects
  - Communities programmes – to provide skills and knowledge for local authorities and communities – this includes specific courses and mentoring

UK focal point for European Urban Knowledge Network and other networks.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

- The sustainable communities programme is not a closed venture – it depends on active participation to enhance practice and to support learning and research.
- Major emphasis on learning from past and current practice – not reinventing the wheel is essential, example of national spatial strategies.
- Research and practice reviews have an important role to play in helping to develop and apply explanations, understandings and awareness of what is possible.
- It is also essential to exchange information and skills development activities at all levels, including EU level – implementing Bristol and Leipzig, is a major challenge.
- The sustainable communities model offers a template for cross-border collaboration on spatial planning and associated activities.

