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### **Professionalism and skills enhancement in the built environment: the role of higher education in a changing policy context in England.**

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# **Higher Education, Professionalism and Skills in the Built Environment: The Impact of the New Urban Agenda on Teaching and Learning**

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## Higher Education, Professionalism and Skills in the Built Environment: The Impact of the New Urban Agenda on Teaching and Learning

**Abstract:** In the mid-to-late 1990s, the New Urban Agenda initiated a rethinking of urban development strategies placing a greater focus on regeneration of central urban spaces. The skills and competencies required by urban planners and built environment professionals to successfully implement regeneration schemes tend to differ from those required for greenfield development. The working paper summarises skills and competencies required by urban regeneration practitioners and how they are delivered through public and/or private sector providers at present. The role of the newly established regional Centres of Excellence and the professional bodies of the Built Environment professions in defining skills and educational requirements and providing training are explored. An analysis of supply and demand of skills training reveals that there is a mismatch rather than a lack of provision.

The report draws on a conference where research findings were presented and discussed. It concludes with suggestions for improving the skills provision at the local government as well as community level. Skills audits were found useful tools in defining training needs. A set of sample workshop programmes outline flexible, tailor-made approaches guaranteed to address specific and identified needs.

**Keywords:** Urban Regeneration, skills gap, skills requirements, training, education, profession

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## Introduction

The Planning Network is a consortium of members from universities, professional bodies and employers which was designated by CEBE as the Special Interest Group in Planning and Regeneration in 2001. Details of the membership of the Network are listed in Appendix 3. The purpose of the project was to review how the skills and competencies required by planning and urban regeneration professionals were changing in the promotion of the New Urban Agenda and to explore how these skills and competencies were being delivered through university-based and related training programmes. An initial report on the implications of the Latham, Egan and Rogers reports was prepared as an unpublished briefing document.

The 'New Urban Agenda' is used throughout this project as a short-hand description of the changes taking place in urban governance, the need to achieve both vertical and horizontal integration between policy areas and agencies, and the consequent emphasis on partnership and inter-personal skills rather than discipline-based knowledge. The importance of these 'generic skills' has recently been highlighted by the final report of the Egan Review (2004).

The project set out to identify and review how these skills and competencies were being delivered and, following interviews with representative employers, it established where skills deficiencies exist and how they should be addressed. Following this research a range of education and training opportunities were identified and a selection was developed further for delivery. The findings from the project were explored at a conference held in October 2003.

## Current coverage of Skills

The Network's report, *Defining the educational and training needs for the new urban agenda*, (Planning Network, 2001), set out a wide range of skills required by regeneration practitioners and built environment professionals wishing to contribute to delivering the New Urban Agenda. The first part of the project aimed to map the existing education and training courses and to review how these skills are presently being delivered.

The list of skills that was originally produced was long and in some ways unwieldy. It was therefore necessary to simplify the list to the following major competencies.

### *A. Strategic thinking*

The Planning Green Paper, *Planning: Delivering a fundamental change* (ODPM, 2001), suggests that Local Development Frameworks should set out each local authority's vision and strategy for the built environment. This means being able to see the 'bigger picture' and linking with the wider Community Strategies which are developed (in England) with other public, private and community sector organisations through Local Strategic Partnerships. Practitioners need to be able to understand how policies and development proposals in local areas can influence the implementation of a wider vision addressing for example sustainability and social inclusion issues. It is also important to be able to integrate physical development programmes with urban management and other economic and social programmes.

### *B. People management*

A built environment professional does not work in isolation since they have to work with many other professions and the wider community. Much of the work is undertaken as part of a team and team working skills are important. They require skills to be able to lead and manage working groups involving the local community of residents and businesses. They need to be able to communicate with a wide range of professionals,

interest groups and individual residents. People management also requires being able to cope with conflict, diversity and change.

### *C. Partnership working*

This is a consistent theme of regeneration with different partners working together to deliver improvements to the built environment. It is important to be able to develop the right type of partnerships and to create positive structures and relationships for effective working.

### *D. Finance and risk management*

The successful implementation of regeneration proposals requires an understanding of financial investment and development appraisal in order to maximise community value and benefit from new development. The significance of an asset base and an understanding of funding sources can also be important areas of knowledge especially for the preparation of funding applications or the creation of development partnerships to implement action plans.

### *E. Project and programme management*

Regeneration proposals need to be managed to ensure their successful implementation. Practitioners need to be able to appraise projects and monitor and evaluate their operation. They need to be able to assess that the plan or proposal has satisfied its objectives and delivered its outputs and more importantly outcomes. They need to be able to co-ordinate and plan the delivery of projects.

### *F. Community inclusion*

An important part of partnership working is being able to work with communities to deliver improvements. This requires building skills within community organisations to engender participative planning and promote 'local ownership'. Practitioners need to develop skills in consulting and negotiating with stakeholders and participants and encouraging consensus building.

*G. Economic development*

This could be linked in with finance and risk management but also includes the need to understand the link between economic activity and development and how the benefits can be maximised for the wider community.

*H. Implementation*

Delivering the new urban agenda should be concerned with implementing change and ensuring that policies are successfully delivering the expected outcomes. It requires skills in managing the process and ensuring that effective partnerships have been created that can deliver their contribution to the plan, that funding is available and suitable sites or property is accessible. It also requires an understanding of and ability to promote interdisciplinary working.

*I. Specialist technical skills*

In addition to the wider generic skills built environment practitioners will also require specific professional skills to complete specific projects. These include:

- Spatial planning;
- Urban design;
- Transport;
- Environmental protection;
- Infrastructure;
- Housing management;
- Property development.

**How are these skills being delivered?**

The providers of courses delivering the types of skills identified above were analysed over a six month period. The analysis included the type of qualification, teaching and learning methods and course content. The data sources to compile this material included University prospectuses, professional magazines such as *New Start* and *Regeneration & Renewal* and the websites of the relevant professional bodies. Table 1 shows the distribution of skills provided by the courses included on the website database.

**Table 1: Distribution of Skills in Courses Surveyed**

Skills	Number of courses
Strategic thinking	20
People management	36
Finance and risk management	27
Project and programme management	24
Community inclusion	30
Economic development	20
Implementation	39
Technical skills	30

Source: Network survey of training courses

The majority of formal urban regeneration courses are offered at postgraduate level and are targeted at professionals already working for regeneration initiatives or are wishing to move into this area. These courses normally last one year full time or two years part time. Some courses are also offered on a more flexible basis so that modules can be accumulated over a longer period of time. All these courses require considerable commitment from the participants and if taken on a part time basis support from the relevant employers. The courses are necessarily academically based with limited practical work although if the participants

are already employed in regeneration initiatives there is the opportunity to link urban regeneration theory and analysis with application and implementation practice. Most courses are offered within Schools of the Built Environment or Planning, although Liverpool University offer an MBA which is strongly business-oriented and based in the Business School. The number of courses has increased during the duration of the study with Heriot Watt starting a course in October 2003 and Cardiff University offering a course to start in 2004.

Most University-based postgraduate courses are one or two academic years long (depending on whether they are full or part-time), although a number of universities provide the opportunity to take individual modules from the urban regeneration qualification. This became a formal arrangement at The University of the West of England where the DETR paid for places on two of the urban regeneration modules in Appraisal and Monitoring and Evaluation. These modules would still last for a term or semester and therefore would require considerable commitment. This issue has been partly addressed by the modules being offered by distance learning.

Sheffield Hallam University has worked with the Northern College to establish courses in Community Development and Community Regeneration. It offers a range of delivery modes including day university courses at Northern College and partner colleges, Saturday university courses at Northern College and also residential courses.

The University of Westminster was commissioned by the South East England Development Agency to develop a 15-week training programme on economic development and regeneration for its staff. This was delivered in-house at three key locations in the South East. The Agency subsequently invited the University to develop a three module Certificate, which will be a validated award in its own right and enable those who pass it to progress onto the University's Diploma or MA in Urban Regeneration.

The *Regen School*, which is based in Sheffield, takes a different approach to the delivery of regeneration skills. It works with individuals, often community representatives rather than professionals and identifies the

skills they require to enable them to undertake a specific task or project. In addition to formal teaching much of the training uses mentors and experts already working in regeneration. This appears to have proved a successful, if resource intensive approach.

The remainder of training tends to fall in the one day training or conference format. Many of the "courses" offered tend to be ad hoc, although perhaps linked to a wider agenda of emerging issues to be addressed by specific professional bodies or organisations. Other courses are offered by organisations with specific regeneration skills such as the Community Development Foundation that offer courses and workshops related to community development and working with neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhoods Initiatives Foundation also runs a similar series of courses but these are aimed more directly at community organisations.

The linkage between courses, other than those specifically designed to be so, appears to be limited and there is very little evidence of connection between professional bodies to provide interdisciplinary training on regeneration and urban design issues. Examples of courses combining these disciplines are, however, offered at the London School of Economics and London Metropolitan University.

There are examples of specific training and development programmes such as Community Planning offered by The Prince's Foundation in association with the Civic Trust. This was a series of 17 full-day training sessions, held between October 2001 and July 2002, which covered community involvement and participation in regeneration and planning. The course was strongly practice-based and very much concerned with the implementation of community planning.

## Regional Centres of Excellence

Despite the identification of the need for Regional Centres of Excellence in the Urban Task Force Report in 1999 these have been very slow to be established. There have been a number of feasibility reports reviewing the potential form and structure of Centres but the West Midlands (RegenWM) is now delivering a specific programme to enhance skills and knowledge.

This includes the following:

- The development of a work placement programme in the private sector for both new entrants, other stakeholders (community representatives) and existing professionals seeking broader experience;
- The establishment of a secondment programme for local authority development officers to move between authorities and into the private sector;
- The development of a small group programme for multi-disciplinary and cross-sector learning;
- In liaison with the private and public sector look at developing a specific 'Short Programme on best practice in writing development briefs'.

As a result of their consultation with developers, the public sector and academic and professional institutions, RegenWM (the West Midlands Centre of Excellence) found that a lack of information and data was recognised by all parties as a major factor in holding back better development processes and improved outcomes. To counter this RegenWM proposes to establish and maintain the following regional databases:

- **Training programmes and academic courses** offering regeneration and development skills;
- **Development sector practitioners** in both the public and private sector;
- **Project directors and champions** working on major development schemes in the West Midlands;

- The establishment of a **Regional Academic Regeneration Forum** also involving the private sector to share ideas and to work out models for collaborative working;
- The commissioning of an **employer survey on training needs in the development industry**.

It is interesting to note that two of these recommendations, a database of training programmes and academic courses and a survey of employers training needs, mirror the activities undertaken by the Planning Network.

Other Regional Centres of Excellence already exist in the South West, West Midlands and consultation is taking place about establishing one in the East of England. The Centre in the South East is being set up within the Regional Development Agency. The London Development Agency has commissioned a feasibility study into setting up a Centre in London which is due to report back in September 2004. The Scottish Centre for Urban Regeneration is based in Glasgow.

## **Skills and Knowledge specifications of Professional Bodies**

It should be recognised that the range of urban regeneration competencies are not just available on purpose-designed urban regeneration and urban design courses but also as part of other built environment courses. These competencies may be covered in specialist options or may be offered across a broad range of modules. It is not possible to review each individual built environment course to establish what urban regeneration skills and knowledge are offered, instead the accreditation documentation of the relevant organisations or relevant QAA benchmarks have been examined to establish what skills are a required content of the course. The professional disciplines reviewed included Town Planning, Housing, Architecture, Building and Surveying and Civil Engineering. The analysis reviewed the specific documents rather than the way that these guidelines had been interpreted by the individual courses or explained in wider explanatory notes.

All disciplines made reference to strategic issues and strategic thinking and in particular placing emphasis on being able to understand and analyse the influences and context of the built environment including the range of potential factors. The architecture and engineering disciplines tended to concentrate specifically on the built environment aspects rather than the wider social and economic factors. The planning and housing disciplines made greater reference to the impact of strategic thinking and the need to understand how strategy can be influenced.

People management skills were referred to directly by all disciplines except Civil Engineering but reference is made to them in overall project management. The Institute of Housing appears to be particularly strong placing emphasis not only on human resource management but also reviewing working in teams, managing time effectively and dealing with conflict. There is frequent reference to the need for effective team work.

The New Urban Agenda requires a good understanding of finance and risk management with partnerships needing to comprehend the wider implications of development. While most professional documents place emphasis on managing specific projects and the role of the professional in

meeting the requirements of the client there is reference to the broader impact which is best expressed in the RTPI education statement '...evaluate the economic and financial implications of alternative development strategies and consider how best to generate and capture added value for both particular interests and the wider community.'

The architecture and building and surveying disciplines appear to be particularly strong on requiring their students to develop skills on managing projects from conception to realisation. Planning refers to visionary and imaginative responses but does not refer directly to project management.

The New Urban Agenda places more significance on community inclusion and this is reflected in the new RTPI education guidelines. The CIH also requires strategies for regeneration, community building and sustainability to be covered. Building and surveying refers to how their work can have an influence on society, communities and stakeholders. The civil engineers refer to communication with non-engineers but architects limit their discussion to client groups.

Economic development is not referred to directly by any of the professional documentation other than reference to construction industry economics by building and surveying and architects. Planning mentions economic development in the context of sustainability.

All disciplines refer to the importance of inter-disciplinary working in the implementation of strategies, programmes and projects. Planning also mentions the importance of stakeholder involvement and public participation.

In addition to a range of courses and training that is made available an increasing number of websites have been developed to promote good practice in urban regeneration and urban design. These include the website [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) that was established by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit to provide on-line guides to what works in neighbourhood renewal. It also provides a list of events organisers and Training Providers with contact details. The website [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) provides a toolkit for evaluating economic development and regeneration

partnerships. Distance learning courses have been developed making extensive use of on-line facilities such as courses available at University of the West of England.

## Gaps in Provision

### *Knowledge about the availability of courses*

There is a wide range of literature that has identified the lack of skills in delivering urban regeneration and promoting urban design. In contrast our research has identified a wide number of courses available to provide the relevant knowledge and skills. This therefore suggests that greater knowledge is required to match the perceived deficit in skills and knowledge with the existing provision of courses and also to ensure that the courses that are available are offering the right level and type of knowledge and training.

It also important to remember that many of the courses offered are a response to market demand. This is particularly the case in short one or two day courses which are offered by commercial providers. Indeed these courses can only be offered if there is sufficient demand. This is also increasingly the case with longer higher education courses and ironically although the need for students with skills such as planning appears to be increasing the demand by potential students is falling and this has led to the closure of some courses, for example at Strathclyde University. The fall in demand has been particularly acute in undergraduate courses although demand in postgraduate courses is much stronger.

There is potential to link an individual or personal skills audit with continuing professional development. The audit would help practitioners to identify their existing strengths and potential and also their gaps in knowledge and skills. The audit could help to identify how they learn and the best type of training to suit their needs. This information could then be used to help the practitioner identify suitable training opportunities.

### *Mid-length courses with relevant certification*

Although there are a wide range of courses available they tend to either be postgraduate courses lasting a year full-time, and even longer part-time, or are very short training events lasting a day or so. With such short courses it is difficult to develop skills and knowledge in the time available and there would be little opportunity to reflect on the knowledge gained.

There may therefore be scope to link a series of short courses together to promote deeper learning and link this to a framework for reflection and assessment which could lead to a qualification.

*Basic introduction to regeneration skills.*

The majority of the training courses are in-depth or concentrated on a specific area of urban regeneration or urban design. There is perhaps potential to provide a basic module that would provide an introduction to the issues facing the New Urban Agenda. This could be targeted towards professionals who now work in regeneration areas but are new to the subject area for example surveyors, community development workers or health workers. There is also scope to design this training to include members of the community such as envisaged in the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's report, *The Learning Curve* (NRU 2002).

*Knowledge of the roles of other disciplines*

The courses analysed offered limited opportunity to review the role of other practitioners or provide an understanding of their key skills. There is potential to develop courses that could provide basic skills such as design principles, development appraisal, housing options or monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

*Interdisciplinary teaching*

Very few courses promoted interdisciplinary working. This is an important omission, because one of the major criticisms of implementing partnership working is the problem of organisational silos and the difficulties of different professions working together. One of the opportunities of reducing this is to promote courses and training that specifically encourage interdisciplinary working together.

*Working with communities*

It has been recognised that successful regeneration requires the effective participation of the community. While there a range of courses addressing partnership working there are few courses directly aimed at training professionals and the community together.

## What skills are required?

A postal survey was undertaken of a range of practitioners to try to establish the type of skills that are lacking in the delivery of urban regeneration and urban design. Unfortunately there was a very poor response rate, which could have been because the design of the questionnaire tried to cover too much material and therefore was not straight forward to complete and too little time was given to piloting and distributing the questionnaire. It could also be suggested that the interest in training by individual practitioners is not as strong as has been suggested in the reports discussed earlier.

It was therefore decided to organise individual interviews with a number of senior practitioners from leading regeneration agencies in the English regions and Scotland. The interview pro-forma and list of those interviewed are included in Appendix 1.

Those interviewed defined skills deficiencies differently, depending on the nature of their organisation, but were broadly agreed on the difficulty of recruiting people with the right skills and experience. Several common themes emerged:

### *Customised training*

Interviewees responded positively about the need for training customised for their organisations. The three types of organisation most relevant are New Deal for Communities, Local Strategic Partnerships and local authorities.

### *Good Practice*

Above and beyond the need for theoretical learning there is a need to understand and appreciate good practice especially how it is successfully implemented. There is scope to develop field study and case studies but also to provide mechanisms on how to evaluate delivery strategies.

### *Comparative Studies*

This is an effective way to exchange good practice and could be pursued by networks and secondments. It is important to not only compare

themes such as partnership working and community involvement but also distinct approaches by different organisations for example private developers and local authorities approach to promoting sustainable neighbourhoods.

### *Peer Learning*

Considerable attention was drawn to the need for such organisations to learn from their peers. This is important to break down barriers within organisations and highlight the range of skills and knowledge that is available as a resource to promote successful urban areas.

### *Skills*

These ranged from a need to provide training in the strategic aspects of regeneration to specific implementation issues. It was recognised that these issues were relevant to a wide audience not only to people directly involved in promoting urban regeneration but also to partners who had a wider remit than just regeneration such as the Health Board or Education Department. Of the technical skills areas, urban design and its place in the wider policy context was a recurring theme.

### *Interdisciplinary and team working*

This was based around how to encourage partnership working from the strategic level down to the implementation of development and policies at the local level.

## How should these skills be delivered?

After considerable discussion it was determined that the training projects should be bespoke for particular organisations and would follow up the initial interviews with employers. This was considered to be an innovative approach compared to the speculative design and marketing of training which is presently being undertaken by a range of suppliers. It was also determined that a tailored approach would allow for an improved learning experience for the participants and would be of greater value to the employers. A number of organisations were approached by Network members to investigate what training (in any) was being provided and whether a new in-house programme might be developed to meet their needs.

For the purposes of this study it was determined that courses should be designed for in-house delivery since this was the strong preference of the organisations that were being approached. The following courses are included here as examples of different approaches to content and delivery:

1. Example 1: Delivering the urban renaissance: Developing skills to implement high quality urban planning and design. A training programme for planning staff in Brighton and Hove Council;
2. Example 2: People for Real: A Community Planning Day based in Edinburgh with community workers, practising planners and students working together;
3. Example 3: Planning a new future for Sighthill: A joint project between Urban Regeneration and Urban Design students in Edinburgh;

**Each of these examples is explained in more detail below and the full programme is included in Appendix 2.**

***Workshop 1: Delivering the Urban Renaissance: A Training Programme for Planning Staff in Brighton and Hove Council.***

This programme was devised after a series of discussions with senior staff in Brighton & Hove Council planning department. Our approach to them was strongly supported by the Director of Planning who acknowledged that the Council faced an increasing number of planning applications, some of which involved high-rise buildings from world-class architects, while resources remained extremely tight. Development control staff, in particular, were struggling to meet their targets and often required specialist urban design and technical knowledge that was not always readily available in the department.

As a result, staff at the University of Westminster devised a challenging and intensive two-day training programme which aimed to achieve the following:

- To challenge staff to think creatively and outside their professional perspective;
- To enable staff to more easily assess their own skills base, and those of others in the department, and to acquire new skills;
- To make staff aware of current practice and techniques in urban design, planning and impact evaluation, for example through planning briefs, masterplanning, and site appraisal techniques;
- To enable staff to work independently and in teams on 'live' sites and developments currently under consideration in Brighton and Hove;
- To consider how the department might work more effectively internally, through use of consultants, and in terms of delivering a more pro-active service to applicants and local residents.

Feedback from the event was very positive and senior officers were keen to run similar programmes with other staff. However, limitations on the training budget was a serious concern in Brighton and Hove, as it is in many other public sector organisations.

### ***Workshop 2: People For Real***

This involved using a CPD event to explore the potential to train practising planners, senior students and the community together to develop their skills. The CPD event was included as part of a regular series run in the Autumn term at Heriot Watt University, normally subscribed to by local authorities and planning consultants. It was proposed to change the format of the seminar to include more discussion time and workshops. The use of open space in the South of Edinburgh was used as case study. Additional free invitations were offered to individuals and community groups in the South Edinburgh area.

The purposes of the seminar were:

- To review how the community can successfully participate in urban regeneration.
- To promote discussion and reflection on how you recognise the community,
- To explore the relationships between the professional and the community.
- To examine the issues through community participation, role play and the discussion of examples.

The organisation of the day was more difficult than anticipated. In order to be successful you needed a balance of community representatives, practitioners and students. While there was some certainty about the number of students who will attend it is much more difficult to be sure of the numbers for the other two groups. Despite extensive mailing very few community representatives expressed an interest in attending. One of the major difficulties was the length and timing of workshop. It was on a Friday and lasted most of the day. In the end the workshop was attended by one community representative and two community workers. Six practitioners also attended from a range of organisations, although predominantly from local authorities. There were approximately 25 final year and postgraduate students participating.

Although it was determined to use much of the day in active learning workshops two introductory lectures were provided at the beginning of the morning to provide a context and information base for the remainder of the day. The earlier contact with community groups had helped to provide supporting information to inform the workshops and enabled annotated maps to be provided highlighting particular concerns in South Edinburgh.

The feedback from the day was good although many felt that it would have been improved by having a greater number of community participants. The workshops were received positively and most participants considered that they had learnt a lot from the group discussions. Consideration should be given to holding any future seminar within the local community; this would provide greater access for community participants and allow site visits in the area. The length of the course should also be considered. More than one session would allow time to reflect on the learning outcomes but may be more difficult to organise and gain the commitment of participants.

### ***Workshop 3: Planning a new future for Sighthill, Edinburgh***

This project was delivered to senior planning students at the School of the Built Environment, Heriot Watt University. The purpose of the project was to encourage more co-ordination between the delivery of Urban Design and Urban Regeneration modules. Within the School of the Built Environment planning students are required to choose one specialist option in term 2. Urban Design and Urban Regeneration are both offered as options and taught by lecturers with specialist knowledge in the subjects. A one day project was devised where the students would work together to produce a proposal for one site in a potential regeneration area that was becoming available for development.

To maximise the benefit of the project both groups undertook preparatory work to provide background material and a context for the day project. The day project took part in week 6 of a ten week term and comprised working in mixed groups to produce a master plan for the selected site. Groups had the urban regeneration papers to refer to and spent the day discussing the regeneration and design principles they had been learning about in the options to date. The skills students learnt on the day included:

- Thinking about a problem from different viewpoints and approaches;
- Applying skills and knowledge to a live issue;
- Presenting a solution within a tight timescale.

The most interesting outcome from this joint project was the different approaches taken by the two distinct groups of students. Up until six weeks before both groups of students had followed almost identical planning courses. Although students were able to select their specialist option and this may reflect some bias to their perspective it was still surprising how quickly students assumed a different approach to regeneration and in some cases had difficulty understanding the viewpoint from the other side. If this has happened after six weeks it is not surprising that the need to promote partnership and interdisciplinary working is an important aspect of promoting successful regeneration. In

addition to the training that was delivered the following training opportunities were also identified:

1. The use of skills audits to identify gaps in skills and knowledge in planning and regeneration organisations and the development of a brokerage service. This may also lead on to the development of bespoke training that would be linked to all of the above, whereby in response to client need assessed during audit, the Planning Network would devise and provide training, with a view to making it replicable for provision to similar organisations.
2. Prepare and deliver training on the principles of regeneration. The target audience for this would be organisations and individuals involved in regeneration partnerships that have limited knowledge of the wider regeneration context for example health workers, teachers and social workers, the police, transport planners etc.
3. Community capacity building. This is probably more ambitious and would involve trying to link the training of regeneration and design professionals with training for communities something that has been put forward by both the Scottish Centre for Regeneration and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. This would be based loosely on the “planning for real” approach but would give greater emphasis to the skills and knowledge requirements but still be based on a real situation.

## The Concluding Conference

The project concluded with a major conference held at the University of Westminster in October 2003 entitled: *Delivering the educational and training needs to meet the New Urban Agenda: The Implications for Higher Education*. This attracted at least 45 academic staff involved in teaching Planning and Urban regeneration, as well as civil servants and practitioners. It involved a series of keynote papers and two sets of workshops on 'Assessing the changes' and 'The implications for delivery'. The summary below sets out the main findings arising from the event.

What is the extent and nature of the skills deficit in urban regeneration? What are the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective practice? How best can higher education work with other training providers in delivering the new urban agenda? The Planning Network organised a conference at the end of October to discuss these and related issues, as a conclusion to its two year investigation into skills training for the Centre for Education in the Built Environment.

The day began with a series of position papers from members of organisations with a leading responsibility for learning and skills. Bill Feinstein of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) began by outlining the Unit's approach based on the strategy set out in the *Learning Curve*. The NRU is working at national, regional and local levels through Local Strategic Partnerships and a variety of funding and delivery mechanisms to promote effective training at the right level for all stakeholders – community groups to civil servants. The official view is that all stakeholders at all levels of the regeneration chain need the following core areas of expertise:

- **Using knowledge:** analysing problems, evidence-based practice, outcome setting, design solutions;
- **Theme knowledge:** health, crime, education, worklessness, housing and the environment;
- **Inter-personal skills:** working with communities, communications, partnership working, leadership;

- **Organisational skills:** project appraisal, research;
- **Entrepreneurial behaviour:** problem-solving, spotting opportunities, risk-taking;
- **Reflective behaviour:** evaluating, learning from success and failure.

Kevin Murray addressed in a personal capacity many of the issues currently informing the Egan Review of Skills. Ten of the 14 questions recently posted on the Egan website address questions relating to professional skills. Murray took the view that in order to achieve 'sustainable communities' more emphasis needed to be placed on getting the 'upstream' planning processes right so that quality was built into the 'DNA' of each development proposal, thus reducing the need to resolve conflicts 'downstream' at the development control stage. To achieve this, all stakeholders need to raise their game and mechanisms need to be developed to embed common working practices and values to which all professions and stakeholders can subscribe.

Murray outlined the range of cross-cutting, inter-professional and mediation skills which he felt were most essential for effective delivery and floated the idea of an 'Institute of Urbanism'. This would be a generic, inter-professional body, not unlike Common Purpose, to promote integration, lifelong learning and mutual understanding between the professions involved in the built environment. The Egan review has proposed a 'Confederation for Sustainable Communities' with a similar purpose.

Other papers during the day aired similar questions and proposed equally innovative solutions. Dominic Murphy from the South West's Centre of Excellence and Craig McLaren from the Scottish Centre for Regeneration both explained how their respective organisations were tackling similar issues from their respective regional and national viewpoints. Both favoured flexible training programmes which met the needs of particular groups and interests whilst also fostering greater interchange of ideas and above all an empathy and understanding of the conceptual and professional baggage that others brought to the regeneration party.

Hayley Rose demonstrated how the Regen School, first in Yorkshire and

soon to be transferred to other regions, had developed a new model of training based on close working relationships between practitioners and local universities.

The participants themselves reflected many of the different interests in training provision: university-based planning schools, Centres of Excellence, government departments and organisations such as CUBE. While no clearly defined set of recommendations emerged because of the complexity of issues involved, the overriding feeling was that a turning point had been reached, ingrained assumptions and working practices needed to be broken down, and that in many cases professional silos remained strongly defended. However, new opportunities and funding sources were emerging and several interesting and innovative approaches were already in place. While the skills deficit was clearly evident, this was problematic in that it materialised in different forms in the different regions and nations of the UK.

Universities that run 'traditional' planning, urban design and urban regeneration programmes have much experience to offer but many define their role as being solely about high-level research and academic forms of teaching. On the other hand, the newer universities see their mission as at least in part about meeting the needs of regional and local communities. Many felt that universities need to work more closely with specialist providers in devising flexible and integrated training schemes, which make full use of block attendance, mentoring, distance and online learning. It was also argued that employers should play a bigger role in encouraging their staff to acquire new skills and to refresh others. Above all, ways need to be found to give the consumers a greater voice in expressing their needs so that the providers can respond appropriately. In a number of regions the Centres of Excellence have begun to establish their position as brokers between consumers and providers but in other regions progress has been painfully slow.

In summary, the feeling amongst participants was that all the key stakeholders are facing growing pressures to deliver but find it increasingly difficult to recruit staff with the right skills and knowledge. Employers and practitioners speak of a need for staff with flexible, team-based skills while

also requiring expertise in specialist fields. However, organisations of all sizes are not always willing to resource staff training. Government has flagged up the need for generic skills where individuals can apply skills of innovation, enterprise and vision but so far has not provided the resources, for example, to enable Centres of Excellence to have a major impact. The professional bodies have attempted to broaden their appeal but externally are often seen (incorrectly in most cases) to be reinforcing traditional professional 'silos'. For their part, universities find it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of government and practitioners in terms of numbers and students with appropriate skills, despite the launch of many new urban regeneration masters programmes across the UK. Perhaps one of the requirements for the future is a closer partnership between government, higher education, the profession institutions and employers in order to agree precisely what range of skills is required, how they can best be delivered through training and education at different levels, and who pays for it. The publication of the Egan report in April 2004 will, no doubt, sustain the debate and may help answer some of these questions.

## Conclusions

Our study has researched and identified the range of knowledge and skills required to plan, design and regenerate towns and cities. It has reviewed the availability of courses and structures to teach and learn this. It has identified that many of these skills are taught at the initial professional education stage by the different built environment undergraduate courses and that there are a number of specialist postgraduate courses teaching urban regeneration and urban design skills. There are also a range of short courses and day courses providing specific knowledge although these are seldom formally assessed. There is no evidence to suggest that these courses are over-subscribed and that the present demand for these particular courses is not being met.

There has been considerable discussion over whether urban regeneration should be recognised as a separate profession with its own educational requirements. This has been resisted up till now because it is recognised that there are a range of different professions in the built environment, economic development and social science field that are involved in the implementation of urban regeneration. The lack of a professional body does mean that there is no standard content for university courses to ensure that the necessary knowledge and skills are covered and there is no distinct CPD requirement. More specifically there is no mechanism to promote inter-disciplinary teaching and learning to help the different professional disciplines to work together to deliver the new urban agenda.

It could be argued that it is not the range of courses or even the academic content of the individual courses that need to be reviewed but the pedagogical approach to teaching this knowledge and skills, in particular the need to encourage effective and constructive interdisciplinary learning. It is also important to review how courses go beyond providing knowledge and skills to encouraging innovation and excellence in both the product and process of making attractive places.

If the existing courses are not providing professionals with the right skills we should also question not only the content of the courses but also whether the right quality of students are being enrolled on the relevant

courses. This then begs the question that the RTPI Education Commission also addressed about how to attract and retain suitable students. This is a problem that needs to be addressed by the professional institutions, government departments, employers as well as the academic institutions.

The following issues emerged from the project:

- **The skills deficit**

Almost all employers in regeneration are aware of a skills deficit and a shortage of key practitioners with relevant skills and experience. While there are many posts in regeneration being advertised, many of these are short-term and very demanding, often leading to high turn-over rates. The nature of the skills deficit is perceived differently by employers working at different levels of government and in different areas of specialism. If there is a consensus it is that specialist knowledge is still essential, but that increasingly all staff need to develop expertise in the 'softer' communication, negotiation, inter-disciplinary team working and consensus-building skills.

- **Encouraging an awareness of skills and knowledge**

There is a need for professionals to understand the range of skills and competencies that are required to deliver the new urban agenda. A more reflective element to CPD requirements may help practitioners to undertake their own skills audit and this could be supported by additional material available on the internet. This should then be linked to a database of learning opportunities. The requirement to access more training opportunities will need to be encouraged by employers.

- **Promoting inter-disciplinary learning**

The project has demonstrated the need to encourage inter-disciplinary learning but initiatives in the past have had varied success. Greater co-ordination of initial education requirements and CPD should be encouraged by the professional bodies and the integration of cognate courses into large Schools of the Built Environment in many universities may help to promote this.

One member of the Network, Anne Oxley, was Project Manager of an FDTL3 project entitled *Better Together – Poles Apart?*, which has explored issues of inter-disciplinary teaching (Appendix 3 for contact details and [www.bettertogether.ac.uk](http://www.bettertogether.ac.uk)).

- **Linking with wider community learning agendas**

The new urban agenda also demands increased community capacity, this has been identified in reports such as *The Learning Curve*. The *Regen School* is also promoting a model to develop greater skills (and employment opportunities) to the community. There is a need to review access to undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications to enable members of regeneration communities to gain relevant skills to not only help their area but also to provide them with wider employment opportunities.

- **Learning from what works (and also our mistakes)**

The interviews with employers confirmed that one of the major elements of learning is to enable professionals to reflect on their own, and others', experience. There is value in establishing and promoting websites and networks where practitioners can share experience. It is also important on training courses to make time for reflection on learning and to enable participants to share their knowledge with each other.

- **Developing a culture of lifelong learning**

Employers in all sectors should play a more pro-active role in promoting a culture of lifelong learning within their own organisations. Resources should be made available for the full range of course-based and in-house training, and incentives and rewards should be provided to encourage those who maintain and enhance their skills and knowledge.

- **Giving the customer a 'voice'**

In carrying out the project a recurring theme was the difficulty of establishing what training is needed and which skills need to be addressed. Several of the programmes in the appendix took several

meetings with the client to identify a clear brief. Different individuals working at different levels of organisations often defined the skills deficiencies and thus the remedies in very different ways. Mechanisms need to be established within and between organisations to define their learning needs and to communicate these to the providers. The Centres of Excellence should play an important role as 'brokers'.

## The Way Forward

The key message to emerge from the project is that up till now education and training has been ad hoc and partial and the content, mode of delivery and target audience of courses have largely been determined by the providers. These are primarily: universities, public and private sector training organisations, professional institutions and employers. There is a more recent trend towards promoting lifelong learning and continuing professional development but the Network is in favour of a more strategic approach which would promote a more positive 'culture of learning'.

Responsibilities would fall as follows:

1. There should be an expectation that **practitioners** would adopt the principles of lifelong learning and take responsibility for updating their skills and knowledge;
2. **Employers in all sectors** should promote a culture of learning within their organisations through the organisation of staff development, in-house customised courses and sponsoring staff on university courses;
3. **Central government** should fund the establishment of effective Centres of Excellence at regional level to act as brokers and information exchanges between practitioners, community organisations and training providers. The proposal of the Egan Review for a National Centre should also be implemented;
4. **Central government** should consider making the preparation of a 'local learning development plan' for delivery staff and other stakeholders a condition of receiving regeneration funding;
5. **Local government** should ensure that all relevant staff developed appropriate knowledge and skills, as well as offering advice to community-based organisations about training opportunities;
6. **Professional institutions** should investigate ways of assessing generic skills in accepting new members and should also give greater emphasis to inter-disciplinary working;

7. **Universities** should keep under constant review the range of skills taught and the ways in which they are assessed. They should also develop innovative methods of teaching for practitioners in the field and work with a wide range of voluntary and community-based training organisations. Universities have much to offer the regional Centres of Excellence in applying their knowledge of how effective teaching and learning can be achieved;
8. **All stakeholders** should work much more closely in partnership and to develop challenging and innovative learning programmes which specifically meet the needs of defined client groups in terms of content, delivery, frequency, styles of learning, tutorial support, mentoring, and cost, with assessment where appropriate.

## References

The Egan Review. 2004. *Skills for sustainable communities*. London: ODPM/RIBA Enterprises.

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Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). 2001. *Planning: Delivering a fundamental change*. Planning Green Paper. London: ODPM.

Planning Network. 2001. *Defining the educational and training needs for the new urban agenda*. London: University of Westminster

Royal Town Planning Institute. 2003. *RTPI Education Commission: Final Report*. London: RTPI.

### Websites:

The CEBE website is [www.cebe.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.cebe.heacademy.ac.uk)

[www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) is sponsored by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

[www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) is sponsored by the Improvement and Development Agency

The Egan Review of Skills website is [www.odpm.gov.uk/eganreview](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/eganreview)

## **APPENDIX 1: Practitioner Interview Pro-Forma to identify need for Skills and Training.**

### ***Introduction***

The Planning Network has been funded by the Centre for Education in the Built Environment, Cardiff University, to investigate the training needs of those responsible for delivering the 'New Urban Agenda'. We are aware that, although many training events are offered, they are not always relevant, accessible or delivered in a format which is of most relevance to regeneration managers and practitioners with differing needs and levels of experience. We have already researched the range and type of courses that are available and have undertaken a preliminary survey of employers to gauge the demand for relevant training. We now wish to take this work further and to define in greater depth how the training should be structured and delivered.

We intend to pilot a number of training programmes but first we are seeking the views of a sample of employers in the regions of England, and Scotland, about their training priorities and the skills and knowledge which they feel are most lacking in their staff.

### ***Organisation of Interview***

It may be helpful to arrange to speak to a group of people in the organisation who may not only have different training requirements and responsibilities but would also be able to bounce ideas off each other.

### ***Interview Protocol***

Name of organisation:

Interviewee's role(s) in the organisation:

Identify and explore the purpose and objectives of the organisation.

What skills and knowledge are required to deliver these objectives?

In your opinion what are the strengths of your organisation in terms of the skills and knowledge of the members and workforce? i.e. what do you do well?

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What types of skills and knowledge does the organisation lack to successfully deliver its objectives?

You could use the skills list as a prompt but it is important that this question is left open so that the organisations can identify their own needs.

Does your organisation have a training strategy?

Would you find it helpful for a skills audit to be undertaken to identify potential gaps?

What type and range of skills and knowledge do you require further training in?

It may be useful to try and get an understanding whether the employer is looking to provide more knowledge about delivering the new urban agenda or skills to implement this knowledge.

How should this training be delivered?

- University Courses - Postgraduate or undergraduate, full-time or part-time
- Modules/part modules

Day courses:

- Distance learning
- Bespoke

What level of training is required?

*Introductory, intermediate, or specialist*

Who should provide this training?

*Universities, training consultancies, experienced regeneration professionals.*

Who should the training be targeted at?

*Professionals, officials, members. level and section*

How many people would require training?

*This would help to define whether the training should be internally based or a course with wider access.*

What areas of knowledge and training would you give priority to?

Do you have a training budget, approximately how much?

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Do you have a training schedule or programme and how much priority would you give to staff wishing to develop regeneration and urban design skills?

Are you aware of any barriers that are preventing your staff gaining new skills and knowledge?

Are there already suitable training courses available and do you use them? If no, why not?

**Simplified Skills List:**

- Strategic thinking
- People management
- Finance and risk management
- Project and programme management
- Community inclusion
- Economic development
- Implementation
- Specialist technical skills:   Urban Design
  - Transport
  - Environmental protection
  - Infrastructure
  - Housing management, property development

Interviews were carried out in 2003 with:

- Paul Bevan, Chief Executive, South East England Regional Assembly
- Peter Brown, Director of Policy, South West Regional Assembly
- Christina Bruce, Communities Scotland
- Andrew Fyfe, Glasgow Alliance
- Alan Howie, Development Manager, NEAR Partnership, Edinburgh
- Craig McLaren, Director, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum

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- Dominic Murphy, Director, Centre of Excellence, South West
- Michael Pyner, Chief Executive, Shoreditch Our Way (NDC)
- Martin Randall, Head of Sustainability Team, Brighton & Hove Council

## APPENDIX 2: Sample Course Programmes

### Example 1

#### Delivering the Urban Renaissance: A training programme for Brighton & Hove Council

Brighton & Hove Council (BHC) has expressed interest in CPD training in certain aspects of urban regeneration. The following working title is proposed for a two-day course to take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 2003.

#### **Delivering the urban renaissance: Developing skills to implement high quality urban planning and design to fulfil the new urban agenda**

##### **Programme**

After extensive discussion with BHC and Planning Network partners and associates the following programme was proposed:

Day One:

1000-1300 **What's on the New Urban Agenda?** Where has it come from and why, is it here to stay and what if it is? (introduction and joint lecture by Bill Erickson, senior lecturer at University of Westminster and Dr Marion Roberts, Urban Design course leader and Acting Chair of Dept of Urban Development and Regeneration at University of Westminster)

**What is *quality* and how is it achieved?** What is design? What is quality design, what is quality places? Participants will be required to submit their own good place guide to a high-quality places in and around Brighton & Hove (this will require some prior commitment to assess a particular site. A review of participants' good places will take place. And should require about 2 hours preparation)

1200-1300 Working through a hypothetical problem on real Brighton & Hove site – to include a site visit

1400-1700 **Design problem workshop?** Working through a hypothetical problem on a real Brighton & Hove site – to include an examination of real regeneration issues on a real Brighton and Hove site and a site visit.

***Intervening period between Days One and Two:***

**Resolution of issues and draft proposals.** We hope that participants will work together (we suggest an evening of beer and a take away) to propose solutions to their identified regeneration problem. They might generate a short report including sketches, photographs, models, oral presentation, song and dance (?). Creativity is encouraged.

Day Two:

1000-1300 **Presentation of regeneration solutions for chosen sites.** Followed by discussion guided by Bill Erickson and Marion Roberts.

**What mechanisms can be used to deliver high quality places?** How is it actually done within the existing or future planning policy framework, including how to integrate new quality open spaces into development. (Delivered by Andy Karski of Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design).

1400-1700 **An analysis of own and corporate practice** A self-critical analysis of current practice to identify areas for future development. What do you need, what does the organisation need and what does your boss need to know?

**Summary:** How to achieve good regeneration and quality design; to formulate good strategy; to use existing mechanisms to get best outcome.

## Example 2

### **People for Real: Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Community.**

This involved using a CPD event to explore the potential to train practising planners, senior students and the community together to develop their skills. The CPD event was included as part of a regular series run in the Autumn term at Heriot Watt University that is normally subscribed to by local authorities and planning consultants. This to a certain extent guaranteed a wider audience. The one day event usually takes the form of a series of passive lectures/talks followed by a question and answer session which sometimes opens out into a spontaneous debate. The CPD delegates are also able to have informal discussions during the buffet lunch in the middle of the seminar.

It was proposed to change the format of the seminar to include more discussion time and workshops. The issue of the use of open space in the South of Edinburgh was used as case study.

In addition to inviting the normal subscribers of the seminar series additional invitations were offered to individuals and community groups in the South Edinburgh area who were offered free places on, and transport to the workshop. Initial contact was made through the South Edinburgh Community Development Initiative.

The purposes of the seminar were to review how the community can successfully participate in urban regeneration and in particular the planning of public space through a series of interactive workshops. These workshops sought to promote discussion and reflection on how you recognise the community, review the objectives of participation, evaluate the techniques of getting people involved, and explore the relationships between the professional and the community. Given that the seminar is about participation it was intended that the workshops were hands on and examined the issues through community participation, role play and the discussion of examples.

The organisation of the day was more difficult than anticipated. In order to be successful you needed a balance of community representatives,

practitioners and students. While you have some certainty about the number of students who will attend it is much more difficult to be sure of the numbers for the other two groups and it is not until quite late do you know actual numbers. Discussions were held with local community groups in South Edinburgh and this helped to provide background information. Despite extensive mailing very few community representatives expressed an interest in attending. One of the major difficulties was the length and timing of workshop. It was on a Friday and lasted most of the day. In the end the workshop was attended by one community representative and two community workers. Six practitioners also attended from a range of organisations, although predominantly Local Authority. There were approximately 25 final year and postgraduate students.

Although it was determined to use much of the day in active learning workshops two introductory lectures were provided at the beginning of the morning to provide a context and information base for the remainder of the day. The earlier contact with community groups had helped to provide supporting information to inform the workshops and enabled annotated maps to be provided highlighting particular concerns in South Edinburgh. The first workshop was based on the identification of issues surrounding open space and concentrated on a plan of South Edinburgh. The participants worked in groups to review the maps and then discussed the following:

The purpose and use of public space: Is it more than playing fields, parks and playgrounds? What about areas in front of shops, public buildings, common gardens and stair areas.

Why do the public value and want open and public space? Why is public and open space provided and protected in development plans?

How do you control the use of these areas? Should you control the use?

Review the open space issues in South Edinburgh either using the annotated maps provided or through discussions with community representatives.

Prepare short presentation to report findings back to the main group.

Each group was asked to appoint chair who will report back to main workshop.

The second stage of the project required each group to develop a strategy to address the issues identified in the earlier workshop. Although 45 minutes had been allocated for this workshop it proved very difficult to keep to this timescale and the groups were very keen to develop their strategies. The feedback session also took longer than anticipated but there was good discussion between the different groups and a large number of relevant issues were examined. As a consequence only a limited amount of time was available to reflect on the roles of the different participants of the workshops. It was also clear that all the participants had found the day exhausting and found it difficult to make constructive comments.

The feedback from the day was good although many felt that it would have been improved by having a greater number of community participants. The workshops were received positively and most participants considered that they had learnt a lot from the group discussions. Consideration should be given to holding any future seminar within the local community; this would provide greater access to community participants and allow site visits in the area. The length of the course should also be considered more than one session would allow more time to reflect on the learning outcomes but may be more difficult to organise and gain the commitment of participants.

### ***Programme***

This seminar will review how the community can successfully participate in urban regeneration and in particular the planning of public space through a series of interactive workshops. These workshops will promote discussion and reflection on how you recognise the community, review the objectives of participation, evaluate the techniques of getting people involved, and explore the relationships between the professional and the community. Given that this seminar is about participation it is intended that the workshops will be hands on and will examine the issues through community participation, role play and the discussion of examples.

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- 10.15 Registration and coffee
- 10.45 Introduction to the format and structure of the day: Sarah McIntosh, School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University.
- 11.00 **Examples of recent experiences in participation in Scotland:** Harry Smith, School of the Built Environment, Heriot Watt University
- 12.00 **Identification of issues** Workshops working with community members from South Edinburgh identifying issues concerning the planning and use of public space.
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Report back on issues identified
- 14.15 **14.15 Developing a strategy.** Interactive workshops to develop a strategy to address the issues identified.
- 15.00 Report back on strategies
- 15.15 **Review of the role of professionals and communities.** Workshop to reflect on strengths and weaknesses
- 15.45 Concluding comments
- 16.00 End

### Example 3

#### Planning a new future for Sighthill, Edinburgh

This project was delivered to senior planning students at the School of the Built Environment, Heriot Watt University. The purpose of the project was to encourage more co-ordination between the delivery of Urban Design and Urban Regeneration modules. Within the School of the Built Environment planning students are required to choose one specialist option in term 2. Urban Design and Urban Regeneration are both offered as options and taught by lecturers with specialist knowledge in the subjects.

The New Urban Agenda emphasises the need to promote good design to regenerate places and make areas more attractive to live in. It was therefore decided to try and link these two specialist options in a shared project. Both options used a project as part of the module assessment and discussions were held to explore the possibility of preparing a joint project. This was determined not to be possible because a joint project would not cover the wider learning outcomes of the two modules. Instead a one day project was devised where the students would work together to produce a proposal for one site in a potential regeneration area that was becoming available for development.

To maximise the benefit of the project both groups undertook preparatory work to provide background material and a context for the day project. In addition to site visits the urban regeneration group undertook an analysis of the following four areas:

1. Housing
2. Local economy and employment
3. Education and youth issues
4. Community services and retail

The day project took part in week 6 of a ten week term and comprised working in mixed groups to produce a master plan for the Napier University site. Groups had the urban regeneration papers to refer to and

spent the day discussing the regeneration and design principles they had been learning about in the options to date.

The skills students learnt on the day included:

- Thinking of a problem from different viewpoint and approaches.
- Applying their skills and knowledge to a live issue.
- Presenting a solution to a tight timescale.

The feedback from the day was relatively positive. Students felt that they had worked hard to produce an acceptable solution. The students appeared to genuinely perform the roles of their specialist option. The urban regeneration students felt that they were in effect performing two roles in the project teams, the urban regeneration practitioner and also the local community. They considered that their earlier analysis, including interviews with local service providers and community workers, had given them a greater understanding of the issues facing the area. They considered that the urban design group lacked this knowledge. The design group commented that they would have appreciated more time visiting and analysing the site.

The most interesting outcome from this joint project is the different approaches taken by the two distinct groups of students. Up until six weeks before both groups of students had followed almost identical planning courses. Although students were able to select their specialist option and this may reflect some bias to their perspective it was still surprising how quickly students assumed a different approach to regeneration and in some cases had difficulty understanding the viewpoint from the other side. If this has happened after six weeks it is not surprising that the need to promote partnership and interdisciplinary working is an important aspect of promoting successful regeneration.

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY**

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2002/2003

URBAN REGENERATION OPTION

**SCHOOL OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

COURSE/YEAR: MATP 3, MATP 4, MURP

CO-ORDINATOR: SARAH McINTOSH

## **PROJECT**

### ***Introduction***

"We, the Scottish Executive, are committed to building a Scotland where everyone has access to the opportunities and benefits of a fair and equal society. Our aim is to tackle the inequalities between communities by narrowing the gap between the disadvantaged and everyone else. We want a Scotland where every person can contribute to, and benefit from, the community in which they live."

"...we want to build communities:

where people feel safe in their homes and their neighbourhood;

where people have a sense of belonging and trust;

where people want to live;

where people have the opportunity to learn, work and play; and

where people can grow up, work, bring up children and retire."

(Scottish Executive June 2002 Better communities in Scotland: Closing the gap.)

The purpose of this project is to develop the objectives of urban regeneration and social justice and to prepare a regeneration strategy for the Sighthill area of Edinburgh. The project is divided into two parts, the first part involves a group investigation into one sector of regeneration and this is followed by the preparation of an individual regeneration strategy bid. A one day exercise has been planned with the Urban Design Option class to work together on a masterplan and regeneration strategy.

### ***Aims***

- To develop skills in preparing a regeneration strategy
- To review the components of urban regeneration
- To identify good practice in the implementation of regeneration strategies

- To increase awareness of the potential of realising urban regeneration opportunities from development proposals

### ***Working Method***

#### *Phase 1 Group briefing papers and presentations*

The class will be divided into four groups and each group will be required to prepare and present a briefing paper on one of the following topics:

1. Housing
2. Local economy and employment
3. Education and youth issues
4. Community services and retail

The briefing paper should include an outline of the relevant regeneration issues, a summary of the specific issues facing the Sighthill area, a review of existing policies and initiatives operating in the area, examples of good practice in other regeneration areas and a framework of potential improvements.

The briefing paper should not exceed 4 pages and will be the subject of a presentation to the other groups. These briefing papers will also be an important starting point to the one day workshop with the Urban Design group.

#### Project timetable

Week 1 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Hand out project
Week 2 21 <sup>st</sup> January	Introduction to Sighthill area
Week 3 28 <sup>th</sup> January	Project tutorials
Week 4 4 <sup>th</sup> February	Presentation of Housing and Local economic and employment briefing papers
Week 5 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Presentation of Education and youth issues and Community service and retail briefing papers

Week 6 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Workshop
Week 7 27 <sup>th</sup> February	Project tutorials
Week 8 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Project tutorials
Week 9 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Hand in regeneration strategies

### *Phase 2 Regeneration Strategy*

The project will require you to review the potential development opportunities for the Sighthill area and to assess their likely benefits and constraints to urban regeneration in Edinburgh. Following a review of the issues involved you will then be required to prepare a regeneration strategy to demonstrate how the identified potential for urban regeneration can be maximised. This report should be able to support a bid for government funding.

The key principles of the social inclusion partnerships have been outlined by the Government as:

- **Co-ordination** - social exclusion requires a multi-dimensional approach. Programmes which tackle unemployment, low educational achievement, poor health or bad housing are important in their own right, but they are not sufficient. In most cases single focus programmes tackle the symptoms not the causes. They need to be brought together so that they are client based rather than service oriented.
- **Prevention** - the government has provided substantial resources to support programmes that offer routes out of exclusion but in the longer term we should seek to construct a society in which the need for such programmes is greatly reduced, even if it cannot be eliminated entirely. Instead of seeking to cope with problems after the event we should try to prevent them happening in the first place.
- **Innovation** - we should not underestimate the value of many programmes that are seeking to tackle social exclusion in Scotland; indeed there are many examples of good practice here which we should

extend more widely. But new ideas and new approaches are required if we are to achieve a significant breakthrough in reversing social exclusion in Scotland.

During this phase of the project it is important that you define your understanding of what urban regeneration is and identify criteria by which it can be evaluated. You will be aware from your earlier research that there are many definitions and it is up to each individual student to decide what urban regeneration incorporates and the issues and factors that should be taken into consideration. It will also be significant to understand and identify the geographical boundaries of the study area.

When assessing the potential benefits and constraints of the development you may consider it relevant to suggest alternative land uses or developments that might offer greater potential for urban regeneration. These should be discussed fully in your report and specified in the development strategy. In addition to evaluating the possible benefits it is also necessary to consider funding arrangements and essentially who would finance alternative development proposals.

The regeneration strategy should cover the following issues:

1. A vision setting out the long-term progress which the partnership plans to make in tackling problems of social exclusion;
2. review the development potential of the area and how it relates to other developments in Edinburgh;
3. document existing policies, programmes and projects relevant to these problems and potential, assess their impact and record the scope of existing plans (e.g. Communities Scotland, Scottish Enterprise operational plans);
4. demonstrate how to integrate development patterns and facilities with the needs of adjoining areas and communities, particularly the regeneration initiatives focused on Wester Hailes;

5. set out new regeneration proposals which:
  - a) reflect a comprehensive approach;
  - b) co-ordinate and fill gaps between existing programmes to promote social inclusion;
  - c) seek to prevent people becoming socially excluded;
  - d) encourages the commitment of all the relevant local partners, including representatives of the voluntary and private sectors and have the involvement of the local community at the heart;
  - e) focus on the most needy members of society;
  - f) set out associated output measures;
  - g) identify an exit strategy and how the proposed improvements will be sustained;
  - h) describe how the regeneration strategy's impact will be monitored and evaluated.

Each student should prepare a report to Communities Scotland that would review the potential for regeneration in the Sighthill and would provide the relevant background information for a bid for funding. The report should not exceed 2500 words and be supported by relevant maps, illustrations, tables and other graphical material.

### ***Hand- in and Assessment***

The regeneration strategy should be handed in by 4pm on Friday March 14th. This report will comprise 40% of the module mark. The briefing paper and presentation will comprise 20% of the module mark.

### ***Health & Safety***

Please be aware of your personal safety at all times. Do not act recklessly or irresponsibly in undertaking this project. This means that:

- you must not enter private land or premises without prior permission of the land owner and the client

- if visiting the site or project area after dark or have a meeting outside the college go accompanied, tell someone where you are going, and when you expect to be back
- do not climb walls or fences to get a better look at sites or other land or property
- be aware of traffic at all times
- ensure that any form of transport you use is safe and suitably insured
- refuse offers from strangers to “show you around” etc.

***Meetings with outside organizations***

Once all the available information has been reviewed you may decide that you require further specific information, this may involve organising meetings with the relevant agencies. *This should be discussed in advance with Sarah McIntosh* so that such meetings can be co-ordinated.

### APPENDIX 3: Members of the Planning Network at 31 October 2003

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Higher Education, Professionalism and Skills in the Built Environment: The Impact of the New Urban Agenda on Teaching and Learning

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