



Planning for Environment and Resource eEfficiency in European Cities and Towns

Notes from the Peer to Peer sessions held in Cornwall

Friday 10th November 2017

Printworks, St Austell Business Park, PL25 4FD

Attended by:

Phil Mason, Emma McMaster, Colleen O'Sullivan, Robert Lacey, Louise Wood (Planning), Sharon Bundy, Andy Stevenson, Sharon Bundy, Jackie Smith (highways and drainage adoptions) Rob Bakker (Amsterdam), Christine Schwabberger, Elisabeth Riegler, Christoph Jambrovic (Provincial Government of Styria, Austria) Henry Smith (TCPA) Alister Scott (Northumbria University)

The purpose of the session:

The day was convened to use the experience of PERFECT partners and the TCPA to help inform a discussion with the masterplanning team for the West Carclaze Garden Village (Atlantic Arc Planning and Lacey, Hickie, Caley) and the Council's adoption teams for Highways and Drainage. The second part of the day was intended to discuss what would work best for further peer to peer learning between the partners.

Morning session - West Carclaze

The masterplanning team provided an introduction to the garden village site and some of the issues being presented through creating a plan for the area. The proposal is to create a whole landscape, energy and food approach to the development. 60% of the sites area of 240ha will be GI, including trails linking to a wider activity trail (the Clay trails), setting a wider bench mark for the area. A community owned solar park will help to financially support the on-going stewardship of the GI.

Key challenges were presented as a prompt for discussion:

1. Who delivers GI and what buy-in is required from those dealing with planning as well as adopting structures and drainage in the area? What are the economics of delivery?
2. What is the critical mass for community facilities and GI?
3. Restoration and ecology – varied and challenging across the site – what is the best way to address them?

4. Infrastructure and movement – non-standard ways of delivering GI, different widths of road, SUDs in open spaces and highways etc
5. Management mechanisms and vehicles

Issues:

- Clay country has poor levels of aspiration, particularly in children and needs transformational change to raise this ambition;
- A concern for the costs and method of future maintenance for infrastructure currently stifles ambition and innovation
- Different ways of delivering infrastructure will have higher up-front costs but potentially reduced future maintenance liability – how can this be squatted between the provider and maintainer of the infrastructure? Who derives the benefit?
- Drainage on the garden village site will impact downstream communities and it needs to be a solution that keeps water on the surface
- We need to move away from poor transport and space provision in order to really change things
- Environment is a core aspect of education for early years and this needs to be reflected through a different type of school and philosophy for West Carclaze.



Partners and stakeholders visiting the West Carclaze site

Exchange of experience between partners from the case study and lessons for PERFECT:

- Children are a key audience for environmental education and readily accept it, but we need to nurture this and reinforce during and after teenage years;
- The garden village needs to be a showcase for further developments by focusing on pedestrian and cyclist use of spaces;
- We should emulate Google's Ten X programme by making big steps of change rather than relying on small steps;

- Quality rather than quantity is key to a drainage strategy for the site. Water needs to be kept on the surface and reused as much as possible. Swales, rain gardens and other water storage will be practical and educational on the site.
- Connectivity is needed for green space and drainage and this requires a change of mindset;
- We need to be clear from the beginning how systems will be maintained to prevent derivative approach taken for fear of future liabilities. Drainage should be managed as a whole network for domestic and highway drainage;
- Amsterdam has a 'Water change organisation' with a 'Rainproof' water toolkit to reduce impacts of extreme events on 1940s/50s drainage system. Separate systems are provided for grey water and freshwater to reduce drainage flows. This could be a discussion point with the Environment Agency alongside a completely sealed system of water management. UK examples in peak District and highways systems at Halsbury Quarry (Albion Water).



Exploring concepts for the Garden Village proposals

Session 2 - Peer Review discussion

Lessons for PERFECT partners

Partners discussed the Cornwall stakeholder event which took place the day before, and reported the following lessons which will be taken back to their own stakeholders:

- The approach was simple, but practical and despite early worries, Councillors were very willing to take part;
- Simple, quick conversations help to tie up the subject and provide an entry to larger issues;

- Members appeared enthusiastic about the subject and there was a feeling that mindsets had been changed in couple of cases;
- Basic basics help bring together professions and lay people in active discussions;
- Site visits and fresh air between session are important to maintain focus and provide practical examples of GI good and poor practice;
- CS is looking at setting up a similar session with Mayors in Austria.



One of the completed 'planning game' sets from the Councillor event

Next steps

PM explained that Cornwall Council is trying to raise the bar for development in Cornwall and capturing the imagination of Councillors is important (as is reporting back when their ideas are utilised). The Local Plan policies adopted in November 2016 say the right thing, but change is needed to improve the approach being taken to development. Practical actions are being explored to lead the development of policy approaches (i.e. take action on the ground and use the experience to adjust policy and practice). Practice needs to be developed and displayed across the whole of Cornwall to set good examples and reduce mixed messages.

A discussion point amongst Councillors and the peer to peer group related to the methods of controlling development in each partner area and the difference that this made to the delivery of green infrastructure. It was felt that it would be useful for each partner to produce and share a brief diagram of how their planning system works. This should help aid understanding of levels of regulation and points of intervention to help understanding of compatibility for each partner.

Action: Each partner to produce a diagram of how their planning system works, levels of regulation and points of intervention.

Peer working should provide opportunities to influence other partners/stakeholders with solutions and ideas that work in other places.

Action: Partners to identify topics/opportunities for semester 3. Suggestions included: dealing with air pollution, how to encourage effective cross-departmental working, communication approaches (particularly relating to green specialisms) etc.

Action: RB to help coordinate peer to peer working timetable and potential actions

There may be a peer to peer opportunity in February/March to see exercises with members working in Austria.

Action: Partners to inform each other of events, internet events and articles and opportunities to attend other partner/stakeholder events.

AS introduced himself to the group and his role in the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Knowledge Exchange project 'Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure'. This will help to identify good practice, research and other measures relevant to PERFECT (including via www.mainstreaminggreeninfrastructure.com). A key question of the research is "Why isn't GI being mainstreamed in planning policy and decision-making processes?". This will explore how GI messages can be sold to 'normal people' and how it can be done. Outputs need to be practical rather than scientific and convey the benefits, not using the fear factor.

A key conversation around this was how to convince stakeholders and 'normal people' that natural interventions can work. South West Water (the water and sewerage provider for Cornwall) has developed an interactive 'game' to help members of the public to understand the challenges of future asset planning: <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/waterfuture/engage> This can help communicate and visualise cost/benefit issues and the role of technology in helping to brief, inform and debate. There could be potential to use this approach for planning and GI (with our own legislative backgrounds to inform the game).

Action: Partners to provide an idea of their specialisms and different perspectives as well as any policy documents or experience that might help PERFECT partners to progress.