

Morston Sustainable Communities

Good Jobs, Good Homes, Good Neighbours

Why we do what we do



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Sustainability is a much used term and means many different things to different people:- reducing the carbon footprint of food (food miles), neighbourliness, car sharing, better insulated buildings; and everyday more definitions are added.

Morston's interpretation of sustainability is:

“The responsible growth of opportunity and standard of living, improving quality of life and reducing the consumption of resources”

We are implementing this agenda in regeneration projects in East Glasgow, Wrexham, Falkirk, Kings Lynn and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

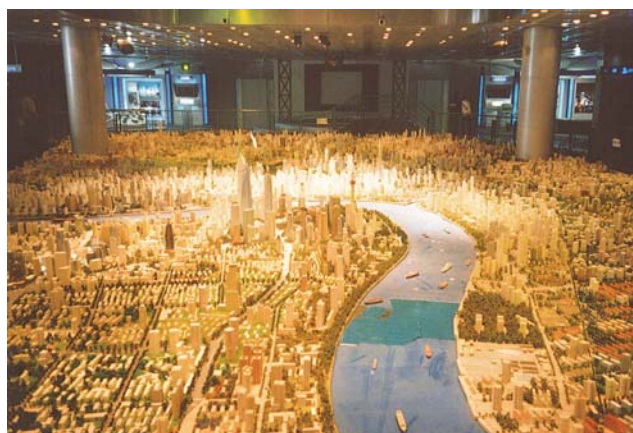


The 2005 Norfolk Fellowship Programme 'The Asian Century'

The 2005 Norfolk Fellowship Programme 'The Asian Century'; The 2006 Norfolk Fellowship Programme 'Developing Workforce Skills An International Perspective'; Demos 'The Atlas of Ideas'; The Young Foundation 2007 Programme - 'Studio Schools New York'; Norfolk Charitable Trust – Regional Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Surveys 2005-2007.

In setting our sustainability agenda we have researched model communities and international economic and education practices.

In particular; Eric Lyons 'Spirit of Span Housing'; Bonnington Square Garden Association; The Cator Estate, Blackheath; The Bourneville Village Trust; Port Sunlight Village;



Shanghai city model

We have visited and carried out research with the City Authorities of Shanghai, San Paulo, Beijing, Stockholm, Bangalore, Hong Kong, Washington DC, Boston, New York, Portland, Brussels, Helsinki, Taipei, San Francisco, Ottawa and Minneapolis.

With very few exceptions our principles of sustainability and social inclusion are warmly received and encouraged by the public and voluntary sectors where we are undertaking sustainable regeneration.

It is the case that the significant majority of public sector stakeholders, at local level, understand the issues of sustainability and are keen to work collaboratively with the private sector to deliver that agenda.

Not only does this collaboration allow an early consensus on local sustainability needs and means of delivery but equally importantly it identifies synergies, economies of scale and symbiosis that are key to making places work sensibly and well and that make them places where people will want to live.

What all mixed use regeneration projects generally have in common is their scale and that they are undeveloped. You start with a clean piece of paper which allows continuing design refinements to take place. **This results not only in sustainability in building practices and construction methods but, critically, in the proper functionality of the community.**



Design commences with an assessment of identified need and potential demand. That need defines the buildings, public and semi public spaces and transport infrastructure. Proper master planning then takes user need and buildings and makes them work together efficiently.

The uses to which buildings are put will vary depending upon specific local requirements but most certainly there will be a mix of housing, employment space and local services. The extent of educational, health and enterprise facilities, parks, recreation buildings and leisure facilities will depend upon identified need. Whatever that need, every effort to provide for it must be made.

We are already building properties which are constructed to BREEAM+ and Eco Homes Excellence standards. Our eco buildings save around 30% of the energy employed by comparable new buildings. There is grey water recycling, properties are south facing with bigger windows than standard and have very high levels of insulation. The houses are approximately 20% bigger than comparable new houses.

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Future developments will use dedicated renewable electricity sources, ground source heat pumps; photovoltaic wrapping and solar panels.

Streets and gardens are designed to get people out of their homes and walking and cycling in safety.

We have built the very first formally accredited home zone, under new government legislation, where cars, pedestrians and cyclists all have equal priority on surfaces



Building a sense of community

that also accommodate children's play areas, planters and even a random tree or two in the middle of the road. There are no private gardens and semi-private courtyard gardens **provide safe and secure places for children to play and an attractive meeting place for adults.**

Football pitches, multi use games areas, fishing pontoons, formal and informal parks and cycle ways; as many of these as possible should be part of the design mix.

If we are to finally really reduce the amount of time and resources that people expend in travelling to and from work, **home working and satellite working must form a critical design feature** along with community wide information and communications technology. But to avoid the mistakes of the past, where home working suffered through remoteness and isolation, **a dedicated Enterprise and Entrepreneurship building** is an essential component. Here home workers can drop in and benefit from sharing the dynamic that being 'at work' has. The centre also offers full time accommodation for businesses who do not want to work from home but who want to work within walking or cycling distance. The space is easy for small businesses and new businesses to move into and move out of and provides an ideal stepping stone in a businesses evolution. **To a developer an Enterprise and Entrepreneurship centre provides a stream of opportunities to develop commercial properties to expanding companies.**

Through collaborative working with Higher and Further Education providers the potential for incubating research and development ideas, and higher added value businesses, is clear. **Equally clear is the opportunity for the public sector to work with the community in delivering social enterprises that provide a pride of ownership, as well as an income stream to the community.**



Home Zones are a popular urban solution in many European countries



The King's Lynn Masterplan has now attracted more than half of its £1bn of funding

The extent of entrepreneurship in the economy can be stimulated by education – **so that entrepreneurship is a respectable activity** - as early as primary school. Further Education in retailing, service industries and catering can be given a practical application by those uses taking place through partnerships of students and the community in community buildings.

Collaborative working between Further and Higher Education providers can achieve significant economies of scale in terms of the built resources required.

The public and private sectors working together can provide a comprehensive health offering through both the **Primary Care Trust and the private provision of alternative and homeopathic medicine in a single building.**

Partnership working, while sometimes taking time to break down old prejudices, is an essential tool in achieving the real impact that a properly designed, properly functioning

regeneration project is capable of. But the partnership of stakeholders can only be responsible, and should only be responsible, for providing a lead; **it must be the community that has ultimate ownership and responsibility for running its own affairs.**

That may well require training and leadership but not to the extent that the public sector is the dominant force.

Residents and businesses form the core of a responsive and informed management team The Community Stewardship Board - which is engaged and has taken ownership of the evolving community ethos, a Board with strong links to the range of service agencies in the public, voluntary and private sectors. Such communities can really start to tackle homelessness, substance abuse and domestic violence which are very often inextricably linked.

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All our properties are constructed to BREEAM+ and Eco Homes Excellence standards



Communities, including faith groups, can provide inclusive support for the elderly and disabled.

Education can be tailored to the needs of employers and the community.

More people on the streets and wardening **reduces crime and anti-social behaviour, as does pride of community ownership.**

Disruptive behaviour in schools might be caused by just a few percent of pupils but affects the vast majority. Focussed expert voluntary sector support that takes ownership of these problems from headteachers can have a dramatic affect on school morale and performance.

Collaborative working, community initiatives, economies of scale, green buildings and a sustainable environment **are attractive for both employees (quality of life) and employers who recognise that many who move to a development by choice will be discerning and educated**

and likely to become a valued member of a workforce. There is a clear symbiosis of quality of life attracting good people, good people attracting businesses and those jobs attracting more people **so allowing a balanced community to grow.** Indeed in Kings Lynn this was one factor in attracting the biggest inward investment for over 50 years of £300m from a mainland European recycling plant.

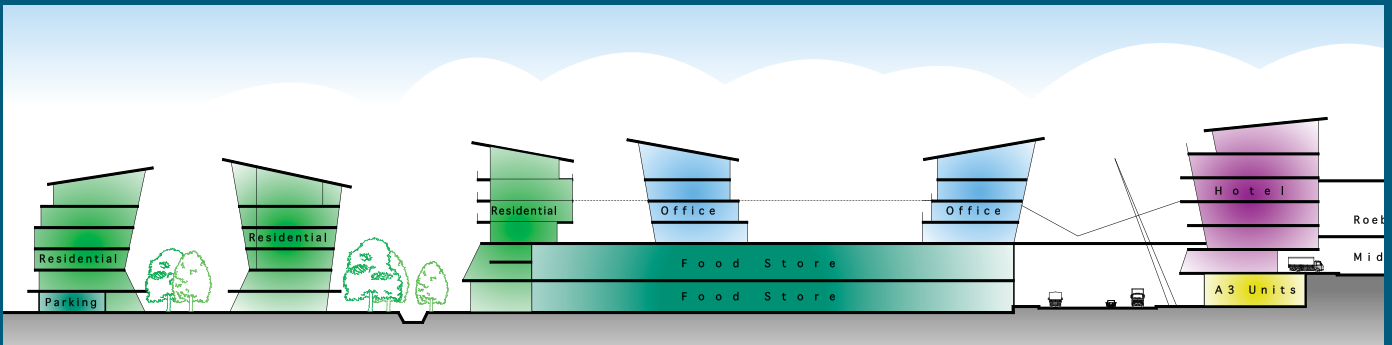
If we are criticised then it is that these ideologies are fanciful and unworkable. Of course, from time to time these aspirations will appear unrealistic. Communities without leadership, without passion and zeal, will not strengthen. But that is the nature of communities. Relations break down, community motivation stagnates but then after a year or two new people move in and the momentum gets going again. **That is the realistic dynamic of how communities work and to deny that assumes that everything can be good all the time and of course it cannot.**

Finally, there is a clear logic for the private sector to be involved in this degree of community capacity building. If a community is desirable it is in demand, if it is in demand then values are supported, whether that be by adding value to homes, or to shopping centres, or office parks.

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400 acre Whitecross Masterplan



Newcastle's £150m Waterside Development

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