

# Building Sustainable Communities

Seminar Series



Building Sustainable Communities



# Context

## Housing Green Paper

- Four existing growth points
- 29 'New growth points'
- Eco towns

## Empowerment Agenda

- Quality of services
- Community empowerment
- Civic participation

## Environmental sustainability Agenda

- CO2 reduction
- Tackling waste
- Behaviour change



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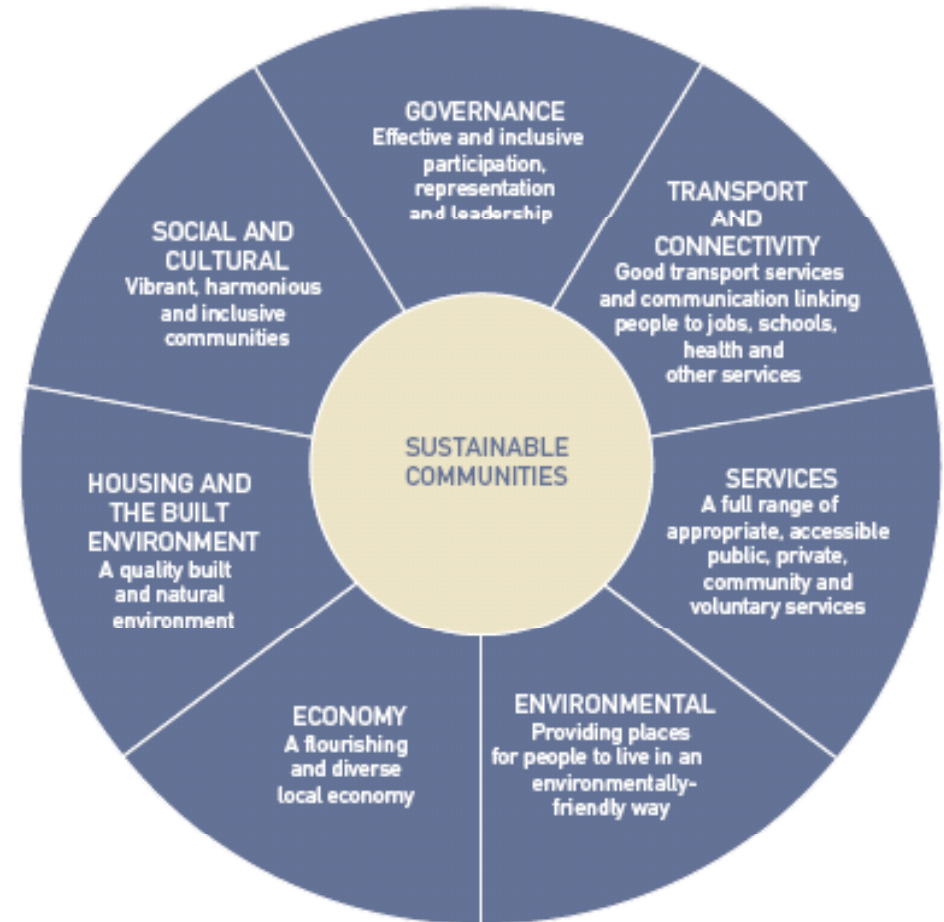
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# What is a sustainable community?

- Governance
- Social and Cultural
- Housing & the built environment
- Economy
- Environmental
- Services
- Transport & Connectivity



Source: Egan Review: skills for sustainable communities, 2004



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# An alternative view

- Physical boundaries to promote geographical identity
- Rules and laws specific to the area, e.g. car free areas
- Local myths & stories
- Visible leadership
- Strong social relationships, networks & bonds
- Rituals and rhythms
- Possibly shared belief system, e.g. garden cities, new towns, eco-cities



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# Not new territory

Practical attempts to achieve this go back 100 years and more:

- Philanthropic settlements – Bourneville, Peabody etc.
- Garden cities – early C20<sup>th</sup>
- New Towns Act - 1946
- Byker wall – 60s & 70s
- Redevelopment of urban centres – 80s & 90s



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# And a familiar policy agenda



We should try to introduce into our modern villages and towns what was always the lovely feature of English and Welsh villages, where the doctor, the grocer, the butcher and the labourer all lived in the same street. I believe it is essential for the life of a citizen ..... to see the living tapestry of a mixed community

Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Housing, after 1945



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As we build our three million new homes, and create our new communities, I want to see mixtures of tenure, size of property, and household size. We must not create tomorrow's sink estates, nor must we create walled enclaves for the rich

Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 2008



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# Aims of the seminars

To examine **transferable lessons** from previous experience

To stimulate **discussion** into the best ways forward

To **bring together** the **interests** that need to work together:

- Agencies (including the new Homes and Communities Agency)
- Housing providers
- Local authorities
- Third sector organisations



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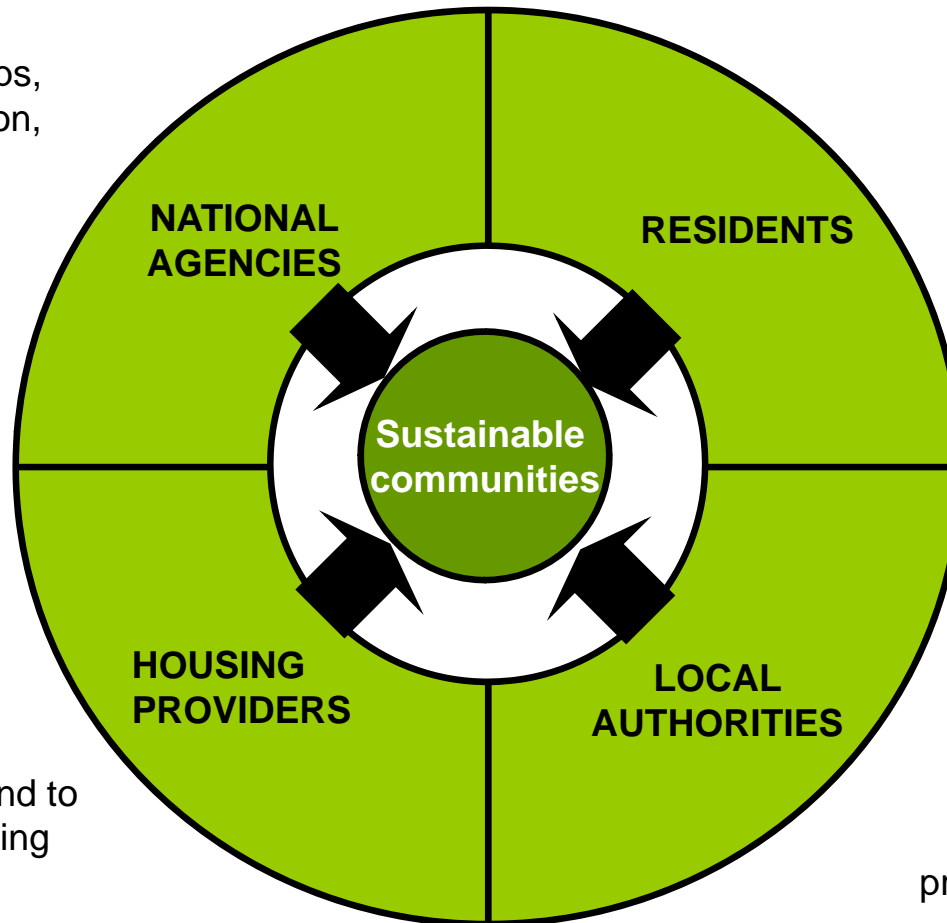
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# Stakeholder perceptions

English Partnerships,  
Housing Corporation,  
CABE, Central  
Government. etc



New residents (social  
tenants and owner  
occupiers), existing  
communities

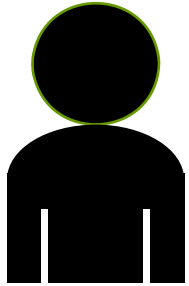
Housing  
associations  
(building to rent and to  
sell), private housing  
developers

Local  
government,  
LSPs, local service  
and infrastructure  
providers and agencies



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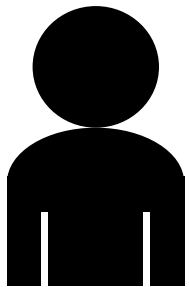
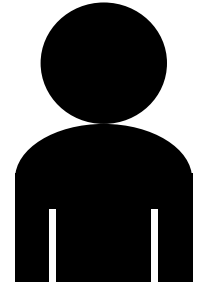


## NATIONAL AGENCIES

**HEADLINE ISSUES:**  
Targets, outputs, vision

## THE RESIDENTS

**HEADLINE ISSUES:**  
Concern, aspiration, need

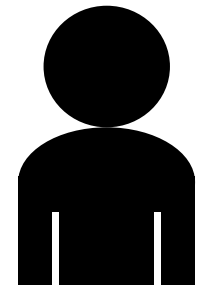


## HOUSING PROVIDERS

**HEADLINE ISSUES:**  
Profit, numbers housed

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES

**HEADLINE ISSUES:**  
Place shaping, meeting  
Social need, pressure on  
existing infrastructure,  
legacy



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# What does success look like?



- unemployment
- low social capital
- little physical movement
- low expectations



- employment
- social capital
- movement
- aspiration



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# The four seminars

## 1. 28<sup>th</sup> April – London

Building forms of stewardship that encourage participation in new developments

## 2. 19<sup>th</sup> May - Birmingham

The tensions between national policy aspirations and what residents want

## 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> June - Manchester

The link between environmental sustainability and participation

## 4. 30<sup>th</sup> June – Milton Keynes

Constructing longer term stewardship and governance



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# Outputs

- A better shared understanding of how to build on what is known
- A toolkit for broader use
- Influence over new Homes and Communities agency?



# Agenda

- 10.00 – 10.35** Seminar introduction and feedback
- 10.35 – 11.30** Findings from Newcastle, with Peter Aviston, Places for People  
Discussion of questions put forward by Young Foundation
- 11.50 – 13.00** Findings from other case studies, with Maureen Worby, East Thames Group  
Discussions of audience issues
- 13.00 – 14.00** Lunch
- 14.00 – 15.00** Walking tour of Coin Street



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# Walker Riverside Newcastle



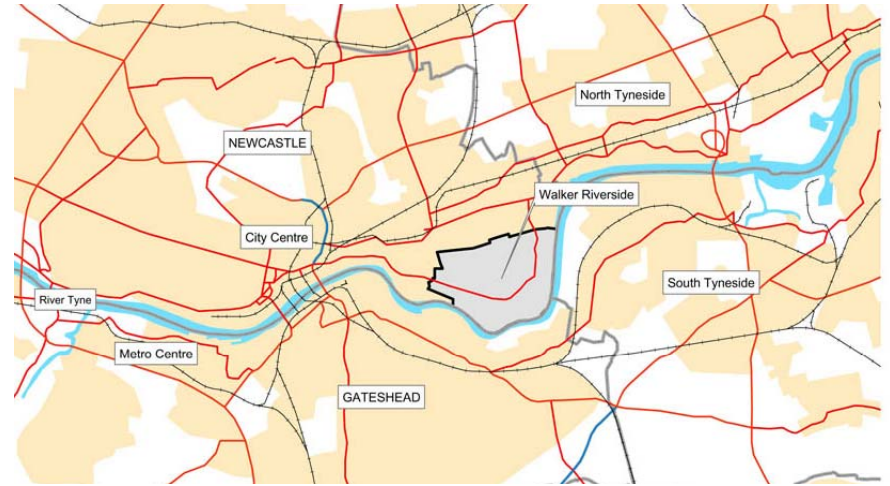
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# Background

Walker at the turn of the millennium:

- Life expectancy 10 years lower than the rest of the city
- 40% reduction in population since the 1970s
- Remaining population ageing
- Mono-tenure – no choice of housing for sale
- Collapsing demand
- High levels of worklessness and other indicators of social deprivation



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Est in 2003, the project is a **15 year regeneration programme** based in the Walker district of East Newcastle

Aiming to **demolish** approx **700 homes** and **build** another **1600**

Design codes: All **lifetime homes** that meet Eco-Homes standard 'very good'

Project partners:

**Newcastle City Council** and **Places for People**: Lead Parties  
Plus Bridging Newcastle Gateshead (**BNG**), **Bellway**, the **Housing Corporation**, **English Partnerships**; each of which are represented on the project board along **with residents and voluntary sector reps**



# Political context

In 1998 City Council adopts 'Going for Growth' strategy, involving large scale demolition program to deal with high levels of abandonment across the city

Complex local political environment – city council changed from Labour to Liberal Democrat in 2004. Approach to regeneration at a city level changed. Walker still staunchly Labour at ward level

Majority of homes in Walker managed by ALMO 'Your Homes Newcastle'



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# Community consultation

- Community led regeneration
- Structured approach from consultation through to involvement through to ownership
- A local joint Places for People and City Council Engagement Team
- Open design events at neighbourhood and 'doorstep' level
- 'Pride, passion, potential' - developing local champions of the project



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# Sustainable communities

- Some mixed tenure housing already developed and people are moving in
- Considerable work done to improve the condition of the existing social-rented stock
- Focus next five years: 'The Heart of Walker' to develop social infrastructure and a mixed use neighbourhood centre
- Difficulty in combining agency funding cycles with long term of the project life



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# Peter Aviston Places for People



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# Emerging themes



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# Other cases

## **Byker estate** – Newcastle

Estate of 1600 homes built in the late 60s, early 70s. Designed by the architect Ralph Erskine.



## **Castle Vale** – Birmingham

Estate built on the outskirts of Birmingham in the late 60s. Has since undergone large scale regeneration and is now managed by CVCHA (housing association)



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**East Thames Potential** – London  
Part of the East Thames group. Works across the organisation to ensure sustainability considerations are taken into account from the start of any development



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# Emerging themes

## Design:

- Allowing adaptability in design by including residents in the design process
- Some aspects of the design will not always function well e.g. the wheelie bins in Byker, but the larger concept can still work well
- Sometime appropriate to leave space so that future residents can decide on what they need



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## Understanding the community:

- Success in projects rooted in an understanding of the community, e.g. in Castle Vale, 25% of the population are young people
- East Thames provide five and six bedroom houses as part of their high density developments
- Need to build in strategies to ensure capacity for future community development



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## Considering sustainability from the outset:

- CVCHA changed their approach to managing people's moves so that they are involved early in the process. Found it lead to greater success and meant they could reach out to residents in other ways e.g. offering them employment training etc.
- East Thames sustainability assessment made at the start of the development process



# Maureen Worby

## East Thames Group



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[www.youngfoundation.org/bsc\\_feedback](http://www.youngfoundation.org/bsc_feedback)



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