

# RIBA



Royal Institute  
of British Architects

## Sustainable communities Quality with quantity





# 1/Defining sustainable communities

## The common goal

The RIBA welcomes the Egan Review's report *Skills for Sustainable Communities*.

The Institute supports the common goal set in the report and its definition of sustainable communities:

**“Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.”**

together with the seven components of sustainable communities drawn from this definition

### Components of sustainable communities

#### 1 Governance

Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

#### 2 Transport and connectivity

Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

#### 3 Services

A full range of appropriate, accessible, public, private, community and voluntary services

#### 4 Environmental

Providing places to live in an environmentally-friendly way

#### 5 Economy

A flourishing and diverse local economy

#### 6 Housing and the built environment

A quality built and natural environment

#### 7 Social and cultural

Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities

Source: The Egan Review, *Skills for Sustainable Communities*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004



## RIBA role

Sustainable communities need to deliver on a multiplicity of fronts, as identified by the Egan Review. They need to provide quality of life and social equity, and be planned for the long-term benefit of their own as well as other communities and generations.

The RIBA strongly believes that the planning of sustainable communities needs to result in a major reduction in the use of resources and energy in construction, occupation and use. Building on new sites may not be the best way to achieve this goal and serious efforts should also be made to increase the density of development in areas already occupied and served by established infrastructure.

Many members of the RIBA will be required to play a significant role in envisioning and delivering sustainable communities. The RIBA is therefore keen to participate in the development of the skills necessary to achieve the Communities Plan and become a centre for urbanism as well as architecture. The RIBA has much to offer in training and skills for all those involved in delivering sustainable communities but is also aware of the skills gap that needs to be closed amongst its own members if they are going to contribute successfully.

*Derwenthorpe, Osbaldwick, York  
PRP Architects*





*Piggeries, Frome,  
Architecture and Planning  
Group Bristol*

## RIBA actions

The RIBA proposes to take the following actions in response to the Egan Review on Skills for Sustainable Communities:

- Participate actively in the establishment of the National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills
- Work in partnership to establish the proposed Code for Sustainable Buildings (CSB) together with an equivalent Code for Sustainable Communities
- With other bodies, develop and make widely available training on architectural and urban design issues to everyone involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities
- Maintain and expand programmes of education and training for RIBA members and students in the identified generic skills
- Work with co-professionals and others in the construction and property industries to establish common ground and joint sustainable community work programmes
- Establish an inter-professional accord on urbanism
- Work with public and private sector organisations to develop procurement methods that will effectively deliver successful and sustainable communities
- Provide and disseminate information on best practice in the design and delivery of sustainable communities
- Promote planning and tax systems that encourage increased mixed-use intensification of existing communities as well as the development of new, high quality, sustainable communities



*Holly Street,  
Levitt Bernstein Architects*

## What makes a sustainable community?

There have been many reports from Government and others grappling with the idea of sustainable communities. The Egan Review has further contributed to this by providing a 'Common Goal and a Definition of Sustainable Communities' with seven constituent components. The Review has also proposed a framework for delivery. This is very welcome, for, in a sea of words, delivery has become more and more elusive.

The RIBA strongly supports the definition in the Egan Review, but believes that it should also encompass greater responsibility to others outside the community and that it should include the aim for communities to become increasingly self-sustaining, both in skills and in resources.

A sustainable community should provide a mixture of uses, homes (rather than just housing), workplaces, commercial, leisure and social facilities. It should make places, good public spaces, spaces that work for people and encourage a vibrant and successful society. These undeniable social 'goods' need to be achieved in all new and expanded communities.

Achieving truly sustainable communities is within our capability, but it will require strong leadership, effective engagement and participation by local people, a thoroughgoing approach to sustainability, (environmental, social and economic), cross-disciplinary and departmental working, and a willingness to cast aside barriers to innovation. This will be challenging but it is essential that the early planning is carried out and appropriate infrastructure put in place to make it possible.

It will also need the intensive input of skilled architects and urban designers along with many others in the 'Core' and 'Associated' occupations (Egan, 2004), for sustainable development cannot be delivered without ensuring quality design.

## ODPM's 12 key requirements

The ODPM has set out its 12 key requirements of sustainable communities in the 2003 report *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*.

- 1 A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth
- 2 Strong leadership to respond positively to change
- 3 Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and longterm stewardship of their community, and an active voluntary and community sector
- 4 A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space
- 5 Sufficient size, scale and density, and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land)
- 6 Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres
- 7 Buildings – both individually and collectively – that can meet different needs over time, and that minimise the use of resources
- 8 A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes

- 9 Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure
- 10 A diverse, vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it
- 11 A 'sense of place'
- 12 The right links with the wider regional, national and international community

*Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, ODPM 2003 (page 4)*

## RIBA's six further criteria

The RIBA, while in full agreement with these requirements, has suggested the addition of six further important criteria:

- 1 Well designed, high quality and robust buildings and facilities that respond to local requirements
- 2 The need to use local resources and skills both in the delivery and during the life of the community, including food production and distribution
- 3 Management of cars and other vehicles so that they do not dominate the environment
- 4 Further environmental targets, including extensive use of de-centralised and renewable energy generation and an increase in bio-diversity
- 5 Good and on-going management and maintenance
- 6 Support for innovation and experiment

# One Planet Living

Sustainable communities need to achieve higher standards than the accepted norm required by the building and planning regulations. The RIBA believes that the concept of One Planet Living, referred to briefly in the Egan Review, offers a readily understandable and powerful goal.

- **Energy use in the home**

Zero fossil energy, low energy demand, Super insulation, 'A' -rated white goods, on-site waste CHP/pyrolysis plant

- **Transport**

Sustainable travel, 40% journey reduction, majority of journeys by foot/cycle, 85% reduction in car miles, home office and local employment

- **House materials**

ZED-type homes, embodied energy as present, more insulation and inert materials, reclaimed, recycled and locally sourced materials extensively used

- **Shared infrastructure**

Reduced transport and energy infrastructure, less waste landfill and processing, reduced water infrastructure, reduced material extraction and transport infrastructure, increased material recycling and reclaiming facilities, fewer airports and infrastructures

- **Waste and consumer items**

Reclaimed and recycled goods promoted, 25% reduced consumption, 25% lower packaging levels, 25% less waste than UK average (of which 25% recycled, 25% composted, 25% converted to energy in CHP and 25% sent to landfill)

- **Water**

Very low water consumption (47 litres/person/day, on-site grey water processing, rainwater harvesting to meet external water demand

- **Built land**

80 homes/hectare in core, three storey development average

- **Services**

Fewer commercial services used, less healthcare needed, less consumption, less travel

- **Food**

Low meat and dairy lifestyle, increased fruit and vegetable intake, promotion of local and organic food, less packaging

*Source: WWF and BioRegional Development Group*

*One Planet Living in the Thames Gateway, June 2003*



*Westlea HA INTEGER Home,  
Cherhill, Integer*

## 2/Delivering sustainable communities

### Delivery and capacity

The delivery mechanisms required to provide the new homes and communities envisaged will simultaneously need to tighten some requirements in order to achieve the higher standards described, whilst relaxing detailed controls within strategic masterplans to permit the greater numbers needed. Managing this conflict successfully will be the greatest challenge in achieving the sustainable communities programme.

Proposals for the delivery of the Sustainable Communities Plan have generally focused on large-scale projects involving the 'housebuilding industry' (major housebuilders and developers working at a high level with planning authorities and aiming to achieve economies of scale). The RIBA recognises that much of the plan will be delivered through this route, but is aware that the 'industry' has problems of capacity and financial ability to expand its output (Barker, 2003).

Proposals such as PIFs (Property Investment Funds) may encourage the financial participation of individual investors and provide a partial solution. But the RIBA believes that it will necessary to mobilise the private and SME sectors of individuals, small development companies and co-operatives together with smaller contractors and suppliers if the challenge is truly to be met. This sector can successfully develop small parcels within greater masterplans (in the tradition of Georgian and Victorian building out of Britain's cities) but it is also highly effective in infilling small sites within existing settlements and in bringing forward proposals for the use of otherwise uneconomic packets of land. The recent small-scale investment in buy-to-rent properties has shown the sector's strength and any proposals for the creation of sustainable communities must include it, along with the self-builders who already provide near to 10% of housing construction.

**about 15,000 homes were self-built in 1999, representing 8.3 per cent of total new houses.**

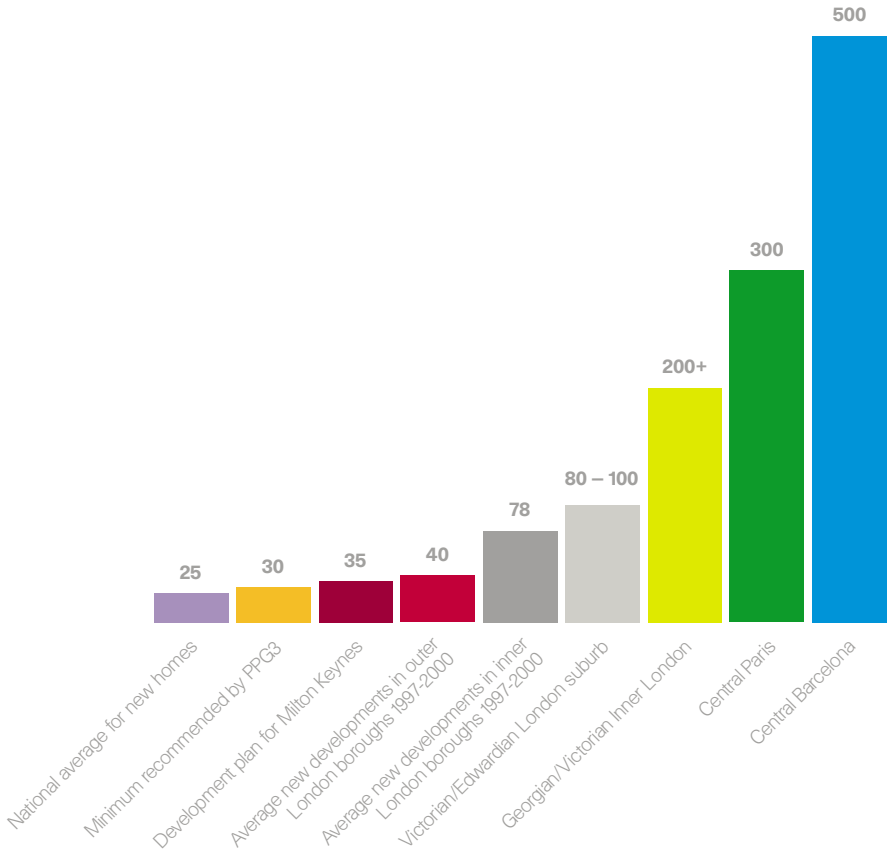
**the sector is likely to stabilise at around 18,000 homes per year but could grow to provide around 10 per cent of new homes completed each year (around 20,000 homes)**

*Source: The Current State of the Self-build Housing Market, Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2001*

# Housing densities

Units in dwellings per hectare

Source Housing for a Compact City,  
GLA, 2003 + others



## Development in existing areas

The challenge of creating sustainable communities is two-fold. In part it is the planning and delivering of new developments or urban extensions, much in the tradition of the garden cities or new towns movements of the past. But it must also take on the intensification and development of existing settlements; exploiting established social and physical infrastructures, and reinvigorating them as places whose low densities may currently make them unsustainable and beginning to decline. Some of these places may be in or around suburban towns with good transport links and others are in the hearts of our cities, where high density urban development can contribute significantly to the overall quality of life.

Densities achieved in housing developments and mixed-use communities during most of the twentieth century were far lower than that of previous generations and periods, including Georgian and Victorian developments which remain consistently the most popular form of housing in towns and cities. Low-densities in existing urban and suburban areas represent an opportunity to build more homes, workplaces and facilities in locations already served by transport and other forms of infrastructure. These areas need to be re-imagined and revitalised as sustainable communities without requiring the same degree of intervention as new settlements.

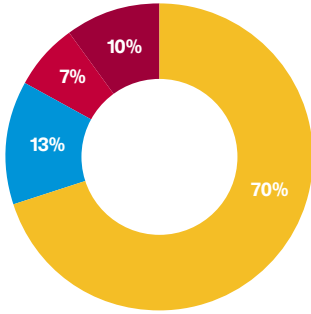
Such areas and communities also have the ability to re-invent and invest in themselves. Planning restrictions could be eased in defined areas, through the use of the new Local Development Orders, to allow much greater use of redundant land and a greater mix of uses in previously mono-use zones. Grants should be made available for neighbourhood renewal that significantly increases accommodation on under-used land and that encourages more intensive use of existing built-up areas and brown-field sites.

## RIBA proposal for 'densification areas'

The RIBA has published proposals to create 'densification areas' in cities. The proposals address the problem of providing greater supply in areas identified as needing high design quality and innovative new development, while reducing excessive regulation. The proposals include:

- Identifying parts or zones of the city, around the public transport nodes, where the infrastructure provides accessibility and the development pattern is capable of intensification.
- These 'densification areas' (in development terms the obverse of conservation areas) would be categorised, in consultation with local authorities and local amenity groups, as opportunities for high design quality and innovative new development.
- Within these areas development licences would be offered to existing landowners permitting the holder to develop their plots at higher density. These licences would be a 'building permit' equivalent to a planning permission.
- Licences would be in the form of a legal agreement that granted the holder consent subject to compliance with a set of rules and the payment of proscribed tariff of fees.
- A possible set of conditions for the granting of a licence might permit:
  - either B1 or residential use on existing B1 or residential sites
  - uses to change freely over the life of the building
  - floor plates no more than 150m<sup>2</sup>
  - total floor area of an individual development at a maximum of 900m<sup>2</sup>, and heights to a maximum of 18m
  - building blocks constructed to a minimum of 6m apart
  - redevelopment of any existing building within the designated area provided the building being replaced was not listed
  - no car parking and no replacement car parking
- Applicants for licences would have the assurance of knowing that provided they met the rules as outlined and paid the fee they would obtain their permit.

*Ref. R. Zogolovitch, 2003*



### Comparisons of tenures in England

<b>70%</b>	owner occupied 14,789,000
<b>13%</b>	local authority 2,816,000
<b>7%</b>	RSL 1,426,000
<b>10%</b>	private rented etc. 2,191,000
	<b>TOTAL</b> 21,222,000

Source: ODPM Stock Estimate from Housing Statistics 2002

## Fiscal incentives

In order to ensure high standards of sustainability are achieved it is recommended that significant incentives are provided, including alterations to the VAT rate and other measures. For example, the RIBA believes that VAT on works to existing buildings should be reduced to 5%.

The World Wildlife Fund has suggested a range of fiscal incentives for increasing the supply of sustainable homes.

- Stamp duty relief on the first sale of sustainable homes and rebate of the stamp duty paid on land on which sustainable homes are built or premises which have been converted into sustainable homes
- Reduced VAT rate of 5% on accredited supplies
- Abolition of the zero VAT rate on the construction of new buildings for residential use – replace with a reduced VAT rate conditional upon achieving sustainability rating. New residential build that does not achieve the sustainability ratings would be taxed at 17.5%
- Capital allowances for expenditure on the conversion of premises into ‘sustainable’ residential dwellings for the rental market

Source: Fiscal Incentives for Sustainable Homes, WWF, 2002



Angell Town, Burrell Foley Fischer



... No-one now seems to have anything but good words for the new towns. They have achieved what they were meant to achieve: they are self-contained towns for living and working; they have achieved a rough social balance...they have more than repaid the public investment in them...

*Peter Hall,  
London 2001, 1989*

## Learning from experience

We have been here before. The plan to build new communities around our cities follows on from model communities, new towns and garden cities projects. There is much to learn from how well, and how badly, we have done in the past. Some new towns and communities have been very successful, have bedded in well and are well liked by their inhabitants, others have suffered decline and have not been able to renew themselves from one generation to another.

The new towns were in part successful because they offered a range of facilities (public and private) that had not previously been available to their residents. Those that failed to do so, such as Thamesmead, were conspicuously unsuccessful. The new towns also provided a forward looking, socially-mixed environment that was in tune with change in society. Sustainable communities will likewise have to anticipate changes in social expectation.

The most successful of the new towns were built around existing or newly provided infrastructure. This provided for both physical and social needs; allowing good access and providing a focus for community activity and the development of social capital. The RIBA is firm in its belief that adequate infrastructure should be in place in advance of new development.

The other significant lesson to be drawn from historic success stories is the importance of adequate density and mixed-use. Both are now mantras of the regeneration movement but are not always adequately realised, if at all. Mixed use, in particular, is complex to achieve and not always immediately profitable for developers. Promoters of sustainable communities, together with planning authorities must be prepared to require mixed-use and mixed tenure even if this unpopular with developers and funders.

As communities mature they also need to be able to change and develop. Flexibility and robustness come into play. Buildings that can accommodate a number of different uses over time allow a community to evolve sustainably. No development should be too prescriptive so as to straightjacket change and innovation.

## Setting standards

Sustainable Communities will not earn their name if they are no more sustainable than any other development in the country. They need to perform better – socially, economically and environmentally – than equivalent developments elsewhere. They should also be capable of beneficial comparison with similar communities across the world.

The Egan Review (2004) suggests indicators in each of the identified component areas, although almost all of these are after-the-event indicators and may have little impact on early planning, design and implementation decisions. The main recommendations of the Sustainable Buildings Task Group (2004) for buildings are more challenging, particularly the proposed establishment and implementation of a Code for Sustainable Buildings (CSB) based on the well established BREEAM/EcoHomes standards. But, as Egan recommends, a similar set of benchmarks for sustainable communities must urgently be produced.

In addition to adhering to the new CSB, the RIBA believes that the standards required of sustainable communities, particularly in their overall use of resources, should be maintained at a consistently higher level (at least 15%) than the national norm. Sustainable communities should always be aiming to achieve best practice outcomes.

### RIBA recommendations:

- **Adequate infrastructure and suitable buildings to achieve the goal of One Planet Living**
- **Densities of sustainable communities to be in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare overall**
- **All developments to be mixed use and mixed tenure**
- **Transport access points to be within 10 minutes' walk of all homes**
- **Social infrastructure to be in place early in the development programme**
- **Sustainable communities to be planned to have a minimum 50% local employment rate**
- **Central Heat and Power (CHP) systems to be installed to serve developments**
- **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to be incorporated into developments**
- **Developments to have robust, distributed energy supplies included renewables**
- **Services infrastructure should be oversized to accommodate easily installed upgrades**
- **BREEAM/EcoHomes standards of very good/excellent should be achieved and/or Advanced (or Zero Heating) Standard (Best Practice Programme General Information leaflet 72)**
- **Products specified to last life of building/60 years/BS 'long-life'**
- **At least 30% by volume of materials and resources to be sourced from within 50 miles of the development**

## Strategic planning and masterplanning

Strategic planning and masterplanning are essential to ensure that the crucial early decisions over a development are properly considered and worked through.

### Strategic planning

Strategic planning provides the overall vision for a region and the pattern of development across a wide area. Strategic planning needs to involve a wide range of stakeholders in order to build a vision for an area. It should enable:

- Protection and enhancement of valued existing features such as landscapes, heritage and sites of special scientific interest, waterways
- The design of new developments to benefit from the pattern of the terrain and any existing developments and features
- Good transport accessibility to sub-regional and regional centres and facilities
- A regional mix of broad uses, including agriculture, industry, parks, towns and villages, along with other facilities
- Communities to be defined, identifiable entities of sufficient scale and size to support appropriate amenities
- Communities to be as self-sufficient as possible and reasonable



*New Islington, Manchester, Alsop Architects*



*Lacuna, Kent, Clague Architects*

## Masterplanning

Masterplanning is a core skill required in the development of a vision for an area. It needs to embrace social and economic issues as well as physical development and it needs to adapt and function over a long period – long after a development is notionally complete.

The masterplan needs to integrate many patterns and usages to create a development that will become a community. The plan should establish a three-dimensional framework of spaces, buildings and connections taking into account:

- The siting of the development and the integration into its context
- Connections both inside and outside the community
- The provision of infrastructure
- Minimising resource use and encouraging local supply of goods
- Distribution and mixture of uses, including homes, schools, shops, health care, leisure and employment
- Networks of movement for different forms of transport
- Ease of accessibility for all within the community
- The physical shape and massing of the buildings and spaces (but not the style or detailed design) including suggested relationships between buildings and spaces
- Sunlight and air movement
- Urban and extra-urban views and vistas
- Social interaction and community activity
- Issues of privacy, safety, health, security and nuisance
- Evolution and change
- The participation of residents, employers, users, local representatives and other stakeholders in the development of the design

See also CABE's *Creating Successful Masterplans*, March 2004

## Urban codes

Some of the features of the masterplan may be formalised as 'urban codes'; rules by which individual elements of the plan can be developed and designed. Such rules can offer useful clarity and guidance to give the overall development coherence and cohesiveness, but they can also be over prescriptive and stifle both innovation in and evolution of a community.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently encouraged the use of urban codes in the development of sustainable communities and the Egan Review likewise recommends them to the same degree as masterplanning. Yet urban codes are not a magic formula for successful communities and are certainly not a replacement for high quality urban design – they are a small part of it.

The RIBA believes that good urban codes can produce excellent results, particularly when they allow for a diversity of design responses to individual buildings, spaces and uses. They can be very positive in allowing a range of different designers and developers to contribute separate elements of an overall development. But they also have the potential to become a dead hand and a recipe for undesirable conformity.

The RIBA supports the development and evaluation of pilot urban codes, being carried out by CABE and the ODPM and awaits the outcomes with interest, but until further evidence becomes available, the RIBA recommends that coding should be approached with a degree of caution.



*Abode, Harlow  
Proctor and Matthews Architects*

...in relation to a regional spatial strategy... local development documents... or a local development plan. The person or body must exercise the function with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

*Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004*

## The Planning system

The sustainable communities programme presents a major challenge to the planning system in its new state and the RIBA welcomes the ODPM's intention to reinvigorate the planning service. Many more staff with a design background are required to administer the programme and to enable high quality advice to be provided and decisions made within a reasonable time frame.

The RIBA recommends that the planning system should acknowledge the importance of the professional skills that are engaged in both proposing and assessing planning applications. The Egan Review, along with many others, recognises the shortages of skilled people in many of the 'core' occupations. Yet the planning system chooses not to differentiate between those with skills and those without. There is little incentive to ensure that the appropriate skills are engaged in the planning system under current arrangements.

The new planning structure, based on National Planning Policy Statements, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, has a strong commitment to sustainable development. The Government's planning policy emphasises the role that good planning has in facilitating and promoting sustainable patterns of urban development. The RIBA is promoting the inclusion of a similar necessary link between sustainable development and high quality design.

To create sustainable communities within these guidelines, local authorities need to show leadership and to encourage appropriate and well designed new developments. Decades of low output figures for housing has created a shortfall that will require new attitudes towards such development to overcome.

The Sustainable Communities Plan creates an opportunity to 'road-test' new approaches to planning, that allow proposals to come forward for enlightened new developments and increases in infill in existing areas. Masterplans, once agreed, should allow rapid planning decisions to be made if detailed proposals are in accordance with the intentions of the plan. CABI has floated further ideas for consideration including Licensing Proven Development Teams and Design Audit, the RIBA's own proposal for a development licensing system is detailed opposite.

## RIBA proposition for a Development Licencing System

- **Following strategic planning studies, potential sites to be identified for masterplanning and development**
- **Briefs and output specifications to be developed for possible sites. The briefs to be sufficiently open-ended to allow imaginative and innovative solutions**
- **Bids to be sought from provider consortia for a 'Licence to Develop' based on a multi-faceted submission to provide the facilities required**
- **Such bids will be judged on:**
  - The quality of the masterplan proposals including appropriate mixes of uses and tenures
  - A plan for the ownership and civic and democratic engagement with the management of the development
  - A resource use and sustainable management plan
  - A statement on the design and construction standards to be achieved
  - The initial programme of development
  - Input from local consultation
  - The financial bid (including any public investment)
- **The winner of the bid will be obliged to:**
  - Develop the plan into agreed proposals together with the local authority and other stakeholders.
  - Enter into a development and management plan with the appropriate authorities and providers of facilities and services
  - Construct infrastructure and then implement the agreed initial programme of development including an agreed mixture of facilities, homes (with various tenures, etc) and environments
  - Publish a set of development guidelines and standards for development within the community that has been agreed with the local authority
  - Further planning consents for development will not be required if it falls within the masterplan and is delivered in accordance with the development guidelines and standards

## Procuring quality and quantity

The great challenge to all participants to the sustainable communities programme is to deliver the quantity envisaged but more importantly to deliver the quality. As the Sustainable Building Task group note in their report: 'Some recent commentary has presented the debate in terms of quantity versus quality, but it is not. We need both. High quality buildings, which are constructed and perform in an environmentally sound way are central to the Government's drive for sustainable communities.'

The Egan Review makes clear the number of different occupations (separated into 'core' and 'associated') that are needed to deliver the programme and also the leadership that must come from the local authorities to achieve it. There will be a steep learning curve for all the parties concerned, as few will have had any involvement with such a programme during their working lives. A collaborative approach between all the participants and intensive hands-on involvement will be required. There is no scope for a single agency, whether in the public or private sector, to implement a major project on their own.



*The Point, Bristol, Feilden Clegg Bradley*



Fulham Island, London, CZWG Architects

This approach fits well with the recommendations of Latham (*Constructing the Team*, 1994) and the earlier Egan report (*Rethinking Construction*, 1998) as well as the RIBA's own procurement policy (*Building Teams – Achieving Value*, 2001), but runs counter to the thrust of the Government's main procurement initiatives, which look for single points of responsibility, price certainty and transfer of risk. If the sustainable communities programme is to be successfully delivered it is clear that it will need to involve private, public, community and voluntary sectors working in partnership together, minimising conflict and looking to achieve value and quality rather than lowest cost, lowest risk or fastest delivery.

The Egan Review is an important step in establishing new ways of procuring such building developments that are efficient, non-adversarial, collaborative and encourage participation from a wide and diverse range of providers, stakeholders and consultees. But such needs have long been recognised and a great deal of experience already exists in the built environment professions in achieving involvement and buy-in from communities. These skills will be essential in the redevelopment of old and the creation of new communities with sustainable credentials.

Procurement methods must first ensure the infrastructure is in place that will serve the new communities and then allow for a diversity of supply of individual buildings, using different sources of finance and a variety of tenures. Large 'volume' providers will have their place but so should small-scale joint ventures and individual homebuilders. Achieving success will require the continued involvement of, and leadership from, a public body, whether a local authority or a specially constituted company or trust, which can drive the project forward and act in the community's interest.

## **3/Developing the skills**

### **Skills and training**

The Egan Review rightly identifies the need for all the groups involved in delivering sustainable communities to gain the skills necessary to properly play their part. There is a great deal to be learnt but also many skills that need to be shared and taught. The proposed National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills will be ideally placed to facilitate and co-ordinate this exchange.

The RIBA is keen to contribute to the work of the National Centre and to work with CABE, UDAL, CIC and other professional institutes to develop and deliver joint training and CPD courses in the skills required.

The RIBA has substantial experience of directing training and courses for both students and architects and proposes to widen the scope of this training to all of the occupations involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities. This will require broader provision than is currently available (see below), and the RIBA intends to develop this with its existing partners; universities, manufacturing companies, charities and research and training bodies, as well as new providers.

#### **RIBA provided and endorsed training courses:**

##### **Current**

- RIBA curriculum for qualification as an architect
- Project management - provided in liaison with the Association of Project Management
- A diverse CPD programme, including leadership, partnering, collaborative working, public participation, health and safety, business skills, etc

##### **Anticipated**

- Client advice
- Construction management
- Business management
- Briefing for planning officers and elected members of planning bodies in partnership with other bodies

*BedZED, Sutton, London,  
Bill Dunster Architects*



The core syllabus for training as an architect in the UK is both broad and rigorous. It covers areas under the following five thematic headings: Design, Technology and Environment, Cultural Context, Communication and Management, and Practice and Law. The syllabus specifically requires qualifying architects to demonstrate understanding of the welfare of future generations and the development of a sustainable environment. [Tomorrow's Architect, RIBA Outline Syllabus for the Validation of Courses, Programmes and Examinations in Architecture, 2003]

But the RIBA is also aware that many of its own members have much to learn if they are going to contribute to the urbanist agenda and be at the 'core' of delivering Sustainable Communities. The Institute will be encouraging its members to gain the full range of skills required, building on the considerable range of abilities that architects gain from their training and subsequent experience of designing and delivering complex projects. Specifically the RIBA will be offering courses and training events, both for its members and other occupations, aimed at providing the necessary skills. It will also provide information on other suitable training programmes. The RIBA will continue to monitor members' training through its online CPD recording programme.



## Generic skills

The RIBA understands the real need to develop the generic skills identified in the report as well as a common understanding, thinking and language between the existing different professions. Providing access to obtaining and developing these skills will be an essential task of the new National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills, but many others will also have to provide training and courses.

### Generic Skills

- Inclusive visioning
- Project management
- Leadership in sustainable communities
- Breakthrough thinking/brokerage
- Team/partnership working within and between teams based on a shared sense of purpose
- Making it happen given constraints

*The Egan Review: Skills for Sustainable Communities, 2004*

The RIBA specifically proposes a combined training and mentoring programme to equip both individual professionals and companies with the necessary skills, based around the design and implementation of the first sustainable community projects. Those that are commissioned to work on the programme must also commit to working with other less-experienced groups and individuals on projects in order to share knowledge and experience.

It is essential that the early stages of the sustainable communities plan are exploited to develop our national skill base for the later stages of its delivery.

## The National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills

The RIBA fully endorses proposals for a new National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills.

The Institute recognises how important it is that the different disciplines involved in the delivery of sustainable communities come to together to develop their skills, learn from one another and establish a common language. The RIBA, from its own experience, is aware of the experience and capacity that already exists to deliver training in these skills. It anticipates that the National Centre will be able to draw these together, building on their work where possible and adding additional facilities only as necessary.



*Princesshay, Exeter, Panter Hudspith Architects*

## **4/Conclusions and recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

- The RIBA welcomes the Egan Review and endorses the common goal set in the report
- The RIBA also emphasises the need to achieve a major reduction in the use of resources and energy and to plan for the benefit of other communities and generations
- The RIBA will participate actively in the delivery of sustainable communities, particularly through the National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills
- The RIBA will advance the cause of urbanism and the Sustainable Communities Plan through inter-professional activities, training and professional development
- Sustainable communities should develop out of an inclusive process of vision-building to meet the aspirations of stakeholders
- Sustainable communities should provide a mixture of uses; homes, facilities and good public spaces to encourage a vibrant and successful society
- Sustainable communities need to achieve significantly higher standards than the norm with real reductions in carbon emissions and waste, and greater self-sufficiency
- Leadership and the utilisation of a wide range of skills will be necessary to achieve the communities programme
- The significant capacity in the small developer/contractor and self-build sectors (up to 20% of the total) should be included in the sustainable communities programme
- The development of new communities needs to run in parallel with better use of existing settlements using Local Planning Orders and other incentives
- A robust set of targets and benchmarks need to be set for sustainable communities including and developing the proposed Code for Sustainable Building (CSB)
- Procurement methods should encourage collaborative working and a wide range of suppliers and participants



## Recommendations

- Develop and adopt robust standards and benchmarks to be achieved by sustainable communities
- Local authorities to ensure that they have the leadership capacity to deliver successful sustainable communities
- Existing settlements must be intensified and regenerated alongside the development of new communities
- Long-term strategic planning and masterplanning to be used to create well-worked out frameworks for the development of sustainable communities
- A wide body of stakeholders must be involved early in the thinking and planning of new developments
- New methods of planning should be developed and tested in order to deliver the sustainable communities programme
- Adequate infrastructure must be in place early in any development
- A wide and diverse range of providers and participants must be used in the creation of sustainable communities
- Tax and other fiscal incentives should be used to encourage community and sustainable development
- The new National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills should be used to develop the skills of all participants in the sustainable communities programme
- Foundation courses and key skills courses should be established for the training of built environment professionals

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