

Theme: New Growth Points and Eco-towns

BBP Regeneration is a specialist property and regeneration consultancy providing advice to public and private sector clients at all stages of the development process. Our experience in property development and our understanding of its economic, social and political context helps clients achieve their regeneration objectives effectively and efficiently.

This newsletter discusses the Government's New Growth Point and EcoTowns initiatives and profiles;

- The key concerns which must be addressed in developing deliverable new urban settlements under these plans.
- How BBP are helping to develop the strategy for the development of a substantial new settlement at Shoreham by Sea on the Sussex coast.

Planning and Delivering Growth Points and Eco-towns

The government has recently invited proposals from the public and private sectors to address the major challenge of accommodating the expanding urban population in the UK. This has been presented under two headings - New Growth Points and Eco-towns. These programmes are being considered simultaneously by the Government, who will fund infrastructure and other enabling costs for selected schemes.

Whilst both of these programmes aim to promote sustainable urban growth, New Growth Points focus on expanding or even merging existing Settlements, whilst Eco-towns are intended to be entirely new settlements.

At the heart of both proposals are 3 objectives:-

- New settlements should balance housing and employment along with leisure, retail and community services.
- They must demonstrate sustainable growth with cumulatively positive impacts on local and sub-regional economies and markets.
- They must be zero carbon exemplars of environmental technology.

For New Growth Points, a significant challenge will be to accurately profile and the integrate existing local economies into a new, larger settlement both progressively and strategically.

For Eco-towns, the challenge will be to develop a successful, integrated economy from scratch, establishing the connections between related uses within the constraints of marketability, development viability and cash flow.

Government has indicated that proposals must be demonstrably sustainable from a socio-economic standpoint as well as in their environmental impact. However, most importantly, these schemes must show that they will be deliverable - and successful - in the short term as well as the long term.

This highlights the importance of detailed socio-economic baselines and modelling of projected key employment sectors, the resultant demographics, income patterns and household composition. Such data will determine what should be developed and will be as important as collation of information on physical constraints such as transport, utilities and geo-technical issues which must also be undertaken as part of pre-masterplanning scoping studies.

This process requires skills in regeneration which can span these disparate elements and draw them together to reach meaningful conclusions regarding what should be built, how the different elements can be funded and co-ordinated and how should development of the inter-dependent functions be phased. This is particularly the case with supporting uses such as community infrastructure and also retail or leisure uses which add significantly to the marketability of a new location but may not be fully utilised until the population has expanded sufficiently.

Whilst there are many examples in the UK of successful and less successful new town developments it is important to also take in to account lessons learnt from international experiences. With this in mind BBP Regeneration recently led a study tour to the Swedish "eco-town" of Hammarby Sjostad in the suburbs of Stockholm and the Western Harbour in Malmö amongst other Scandinavian exemplars. The environmental standards - including tried and tested Scandinavian technologies for environmental and waste management - are years ahead of the UK. It was, however, striking how other social and economic sustainability objectives were not demonstrable priorities. Our report summarising experiences that could be applied to regeneration in the UK is available for download on the BBP website at <http://www.bbpregeneration.co.uk/publications/>

BBP Regeneration has extensive experience in developing substantial new communities from Chatham Maritime in the 1990s to our more recent work at Northstowe, South Cambridgeshire. We are currently helping SEEDA develop a new settlement of up to 10,000 homes near Shoreham by Sea on the Sussex coast.



Approaches to the development of new settlements in Scandinavia have been studied by BBP.





New shorefront development in Malmö

“New developments... need to be built in truly mixed communities with strong economic underpinnings to support jobs and sustainable growth.....Now we want local areas to come forward with ideas on how to put these principles and ambitions into practice”

Yvette Cooper MP



Shoreham Harbour



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Shoreham Harbour

BBP have been working on behalf of SEEDA to develop a delivery plan for a significant urban extension spanning large areas of the Port of Shoreham in Sussex and the existing adjacent communities. The scale and characteristics of the proposed development have the potential to become a leading example of a New Growth Point or Eco-town.

When completed the proposed development has the potential to accommodate in the region of 10,000 new homes (including 40% affordable), alongside significant areas of employment floorspace, retail and leisure facilities and high quality transport and community infrastructure.

The establishment of the development as an exemplar of sustainable development is an overriding objective. This has included managing the demand for travel, and formulating a high quality, integrated public transport package with enhancements to existing stations and a new Rapid Transit System. BBP's recent study trip to Scandinavia demonstrated the importance of upfront investment in transport infrastructure, the potential offered by innovative technological solutions to energy waste and water management and the importance of high quality physical design.

The approach taken by BBP, based on extensive experience with similar projects elsewhere in the country, has been to carry out a full 'scoping study' prior to attempting to prepare a masterplan. The scoping study has involved the appointment of a multidisciplinary team of consultants so as to gain a full understanding of key issues such as:

- Transport
- Flood risk management (under the new regime imposed by PPS 25)
- Planning and policy
- Local and sub-regional economic development
- Port operations

Many of the challenges faced at Shoreham are likely to be faced in other areas across the country where growth is planned as part of Government agendas such as New Growth Points and Eco-towns. We believe that it is critical that the issues associated with these challenges are faced head on at an early stage in order to ensure that growth aspirations are realised through deliverable schemes.

We offer advice right the way through the life-cycle of physical regeneration - from identifying land use opportunities to delivery and management.

Specifically our combined skills and experience lend themselves to:

- **Strategic planning, particularly in areas of high growth** – including advice in the pre-masterplanning stage; scoping studies; projecting housing, employment and infrastructure requirements; preparing evidence for LDF examinations, and specialist inputs to masterplanning and planning applications
- **Unlocking development opportunities** – by looking at more creative and efficient ways of using public and private sector land and buildings in urban areas where there are significant constraints
- **Structuring delivery arrangements** - including setting up public/private partnerships and delivery vehicles, neighbourhood management, advising local housing companies and community land trusts, and assisting local authorities with new development powers.
- **Ongoing delivery, management and governance** - including working with ALMOs and development land trusts, helping to secure funding, and overseeing neighbourhood management and community involvement.

We have provided many of these services in the past, for either local authorities or RDAs, and are in the process of undertaking several related activities at present in the new town of Northstowe in the East of England, and in Shoreham Harbour on the South Coast. These projects have included scoping works, early stage planning advice, masterplanning inputs, and advice on setting up governance structures and delivery vehicles.

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