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English Heritage

Key Issue: Sustainability and long-term management

Sustainability is not only about getting the processes and outcomes of regeneration developments correct at the early stages. A sustainable development or community is proven to be so over a long period of time and an essential element in any sustainable development whether physical or social is long-term management and maintenance whether maintenance of a building, public open space or relationship with a community.

The skills shortage in the building and construction industry represents as significant a risk to the delivery of sustainable communities as the broadening of skills across a wide range of professional groups. The review should consider whether the long-term dependencies between professional, trade and management skills have been adequately addressed not only in relation to regeneration delivery agencies but also those that will manage the areas in the long term. Sustainable Communities are likely to fail if this long-term care issue is not addressed as part of current debate.

General approach, leadership and process

1. Achieving the 'step change' identified in 'Sustainable Communities' will be a challenge and this will inevitably mean that some cultural and system changes will need to be considered. English Heritage believes that a good understanding of the historic environment lies at the core of informed decision-making for large-scale new development.
2. Multi-disciplinary teams drawn from a variety of national, regional and local bodies are increasingly taking control of major regeneration projects. These broad-based partnerships are the way forward because they can bring a variety of skills, expertise and levels of accountability to the process. Local Authorities play an important role on many partnerships. Local Authorities will also remain critical to co-ordinating delivery in the long term because they will still be responsible for many aspects of the long term management and maintenance of the schemes. They are locally accountable, have a good understanding of the local potentials and constraints and are experienced at managing change in the built environment from a wide perspective including social and environmental matters, rather than the development-led focus that specially created regeneration bodies tend to have. Local authorities do have historic environment expertise but recent surveys, such as Local Authority Conservation Provision (English Heritage and Institute of Historic Building Conservation, 2003) demonstrate that the resource is stretched very thinly and additional large-scale projects would cause problems.
3. The early execution of macro-scale master planning is essential for the successful implementation of the SCP. If this work is properly inclusive, and attempts to balance social, economic and environmental issues it should lessen disagreement at later stages. English Heritage believes that historic landscape characterisation of the type currently being carried out in the Thames Gateway and in some Pathfinder areas should form an under-pinning element of such work to ensure the environmental context is properly understood. Pre-application discussions on general development areas as well as on specific sites with the key stakeholders can offer a real advantage in minimising conflict at planning application stage. This work is probably best initiated by local authorities, although they will usually need to commission an independent facilitator. National government and regional government offices could offer training and support to ensure all local authorities affected have such skills and intend to use them in an appropriate way. It is essential that local communities affected by any proposals are involved but it must be recognised that this does take a significant amount of time. Most communities, particularly the more deprived ones, lack the professional built environment skills to be able to respond rapidly to large-scale changes in their surroundings and it takes time and money to be able to capture a representative cross-section of views on proposals. Too short a consultation period will normally result in only the most vocal and active elements of a local community expressing a view.

Professional skills

4. There are a wide range of common skill that the professionals involved in delivering sustainable communities need but particular emphasis would need to be placed on understanding place (the historical development, current use and visual appearance of a place and how it relates to the surrounding area). A common understanding of the issue would be likely to reduce conflict between specialists in the later stages of the development process. For new communities to be truly sustainable, it is also important that all professionals understand the importance of community engagement in the development process.

5. The professions have developed over a long period and although there are some divisions, very real attempts are being made to forge stronger links. To attempt to re-define the professions would almost certainly lead to widespread outcry and would be counter-productive. It would be much better to focus on improving linkages between professions, identifying gaps in coverage or areas of skills undersupply and release resources to tackle these issues.

6. At the present time, there is a shortage of professionals who are able to deal competently with the historic environment and design issues. For example, education for land-use planners has largely shifted away from developing design skills, many architecture courses do not spend long dealing with the development of architectural history and highway engineers tend to have very little aesthetic design training. Ensuring that historic environment and design skills played a significant part in all relevant courses. A cross-cutting foundation course for the whole of the sector would be too broad to be useful. Instead skills development should be concentrated through CPD and the sharing of academic modules across disciplines. The development of CPD or undergraduate courses should concentrate on the needs of the multi-disciplinary teams that are now required to deliver regeneration including the long-term management of regeneration schemes.

The long-term management of regenerated areas is not the glamorous side of the business but it is critical to success. At local authority level it has suffered from a reduction in staffing and de-skilling with the loss of posts such as the Clerk of Works. The review should consider whether local authorities and other public service providers have the right skills to deliver the long-term maintenance of regeneration schemes including the skills to manage the long-term maintenance of buildings and public space. Repair and maintenance accounts for approximately 50% of annual turnover of the building industry. Adopting a more strategic approach to long-term management and maintenance could also act as a driver for this part of the economy.

7. The professional institutions should play a key part in shaping the future skill patterns; they are well-established, respected and well-placed to influence education and CPD. Changes that are brought about by the institutions, particularly if they are acting together, would be more likely to achieve success than any attempt by Government to intervene direct. Accreditation is a significant part of the role of professional institutes, not only in general areas of professional knowledge, but also in specialist areas such as building conservation. Rather than trying to introduce any new accreditation system, efforts should be focussed on encouraging the existing professional institutes to further develop specialist accreditation as an add-on to core competences.

8. See Q6. The Heritage Lottery Fund report *Sustaining Our Living Heritage* (2002) found that there were widespread shortages of people with certain skills. Many of these were craft skills but quantity surveyors, architects, engineers, conservation officers and builders with specific conservation skills were all identified. Some action in co-ordinating initiatives for developing broad built environment skills is already taking place in the construction sector. CITB- Construction Skills includes within its scope the National Heritage Training Group which has a focus on blue-collar craft skills for the historic environment. In parallel work with LANTRA (the land-based sector skills council) an aligned craft initiative the green heritage sector (e.g. for parks and gardens staff)

9. Others are better placed to respond in detail on this, but the reason for shortages are likely to be in part due to the relative attractiveness of salary, employment conditions and career potential when compared to other professions. In particular there is no clear careers path and very little opportunity

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for experienced trade people to cross the boundary into the professional world or the ability for professionals to transfer across disciplines. A more flexible and well-presented career within the built environment sector should help to attract and retain high calibre individuals.

10. There is a need to make the built environment professions more appealing. This can only be properly achieved through addressing the points in Q9. 'Rebranding' without also improving the quality of the experience of those within the professions would only achieve a larger number of disillusioned professionals.

11. The majority of local authority members are unlikely to have the right skills for dealing with the sustainable communities agenda and although member training is offered by local authorities, it is our experience that built and historic environment skills are not given the necessary weight. The fact that members may only be in their positions temporarily should not be a consideration. Many officers lack the kind of design and financial skills that help to ensure that negotiations with developers are robust and realistic and they tend to be hampered by heavy workloads that do not allow them to give sufficient time to ensure that the best quality outcomes are achieved. English Heritage is seeking to address the historic environment aspects of this shortfall in training in a number of current initiatives as well as its Historic Environment Training for Local Authorities project that will be launched in Spring 2004. CABE is also active in seeking to improve design awareness and skills within local authorities. Both organisations are actively encouraging local authorities to appoint Heritage and Design Champions, who are usually cabinet-level members, to improve the profile of these key issues. Although English Heritage is putting in significant resources to such programmes, more are needed if the kind of cultural change envisaged in this skills review are to be achieved. The omissions in training need to be addressed by all those with an interest in improving the built environment, including local, regional and national government, national agencies, the professions and academia in a co-ordinated manner.

12. Those groups outside the core professions could be given basic training so that they understand the general aims of sustainable communities and appreciate the various initiatives that form part of it. Given that the sustainable communities agenda is only likely to form a small part of their work, the training might best be done remotely (web-based, CDs etc) or perhaps through their own professional institutes. The former would be more flexible, the latter might encourage greater participation.

13. Yes, but it should not be compulsory and to do so would be counter-productive. A well-designed package of training, offered in a flexible way that made it appealing to a wide range of people within local authorities would be helpful. As most of the skills required, are already covered by existing training packages, this one would probably need to be relatively high-level but encourage the participants to develop their knowledge in a few more detailed areas through existing channels. Understanding place and the significance of the historic environment should form part of the core package because the sustainable communities initiative will physically transform whole areas and this needs to be done in a way that does not lose touch with the past.

Other

14. The development industry increasingly uses the term 'sustainable development'. It is the experience of English Heritage that, with a few notable exceptions, much could be done to improve the sustainability of most development. In particular we are concerned that the sustainable re-use of existing historic buildings is still not fully appreciated, although significant strides have been made in the residential conversion sector in recent years. There is still a tendency with many developments to see sustainability as a bolt-on consideration which is worked into the development late in the process rather than forming the underpinning basis on which the development is designed. Too often it is concerned only with energy conservation or the provision of green space with historic environment issues not being considered to any significant degree, despite the fact that taking the latter on board will create a more successful development. Within the context of the sustainable communities initiative, developers should be seen as one of the target groups for training along with council officers, members, professions etc. Wherever possible training should be provided in a form that

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appeals to a cross-section of interests so that developers and authorities, private and public sector interests all meet to discuss the complex issues that large-scale new development raise.

Another issue that should be explored further is the role of long-term and cyclical maintenance. Maintenance is the unglamorous side of the construction and building industry although DTI statistics show that in 2000 46% of all construction work was for refurbishment or repair and maintenance and that this was worth over £26 billion pounds. However, repairs backlog is an issue up and down the country. For example the English House Condition Survey estimates that the average cost to make homes decent is nearly £7,200 per dwelling, representing a total cost of £50 billion (for the 7m non-decent dwellings). Actual spend on repairs and improvements in 2000 was £25bn.

With demolition and construction accounting for 24% of the total annual waste produced in the UK and the energy produced from non-renewable sources consumed in building activity accounting for about a half of the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide, the link between sustainability and maintenance becomes clear.

Providing incentives for maintenance would strengthen this important sector of the economy and deliver results in terms of sustainability.

English Heritage is happy for its response to be publicly available. None of the contents of this response need to be treated confidentially.

Construction Industry Council

This response has been compiled by CIC on behalf of ConstructionSkills and CIC members (a full list of which is attached) following consultation with colleagues at CITB and CIC members.

ConstructionSkills is the new Sector Skills Council (SSC) for construction, which is a partnership between CIC, CITB GB and CITB NI. In common with other SSCs, our objectives are to:

Reduce skills gaps and shortages and help employers and employees to make informed career and personal development choices

Improve productivity and business performance in the sector

Increase the opportunities for everyone in the workforce to develop their careers and improve their productivity, as well as ensure equal opportunities for all sections of the workforce

Improve the supply of learning options, including the development of apprenticeships, higher education courses and national occupational standards.

CIC is the representative forum for the industry's professional bodies, research organisations and specialist trade associations. CIC's members represent over 500,000 professionals who are engaged in commissioning, planning, designing, constructing, regulating, managing and maintaining the built environment, and more than 25,000 firms.

We are greatly concerned that the Egan Review of Skills may duplicate work already covered by the remit of ConstructionSkills. Additionally we feel strongly that ConstructionSkills, with its remit to address skills issues across the construction industry, should be fully involved in this Review of Skills and any follow-up activities. It is regrettable that there has been no dialogue between the Review team and ConstructionSkills.

We are keen to see a clear and unequivocal definition of 'sustainable community'. The accepted definition of sustainability is as a balance between economic, environmental and social issues, but the definition in the context of the review seems skewed towards the economic and social issues as opposed to the environmental aspects.

In addition to the lack of linkage to the relevant Sector Skills Councils, the review has apparently ignored several other current initiatives which are providing leadership to the professions' joint approach to skills development. These are listed below and each is picked up in more detail in our responses to specific questions:

Futures Group - all built environment professions working collaboratively to achieve greater unity and collaboration, particularly in the area of developing generic skills:

Accelerating Change in Built Environment Education (ACBEE);

Development of Generic Core Learning Modules/Common Learning Outcomes;

Professional Skills Survey;

Occupational Standards Framework for the Built Environment

Each of these areas of activity should be investigated by the Review Team.

General approach, leadership and process

1. Skilling up alone may not achieve the step change described in the Sustainable Communities Plan. However, skills development is important and must react to, and in some instances lead, necessary changes in systems, processes and culture.

Other issues that ought to be addressed to help deliver sustainable communities include:

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Declining availability of public sector housing (this could be addressed, for example by encouraging reinvestment of income from 'rent to buy');

Planning processes, which should both be speeded up and encourage a holistic approach so that communities have access to homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, transport, etc which work together;

Empty and under-used housing stock which may have a detrimental affect upon communities and inflate house prices, the problem of empty housing may at least be partly addressed through maintenance;

Clearer definition of the roles and responsibilities associated with achieving sustainable communities;

Lack of employer investment in some regions;

The need to increase regeneration and use of brown field sites;

The need to increase social responsibility amongst the community as a whole.

2. It is appropriate for Local Authorities to hold an operational responsibility for delivery of the sustainable communities agenda at a micro level. Additionally, a strategic national approach is needed which addresses issues such as training and building/fire/water etc regulations, and provides guidance and support to Local Authorities.

3. The current public inquiry process is adversarial, gives large developers an advantage over smaller firms who are less able to afford the cost and time of disputing planning decisions, and is not conducive to speedy delivery of development. The planning process could be speeded up if uniformity in process were achieved through adoption of national guidelines for development and the principles of development were accepted within a geographical area. These changes will have to come through legislation and best practice guidelines will also have their part to play.

Professional skills

4. Everyone involved in delivering sustainable communities needs a range of generic 'soft' skills including communication, customer service and time management skills. Other areas where professionals will increasingly require greater proficiency include: community liaison; IT and communications technologies; economics, health and safety, understanding of issues relating to environmental impact and knowledge of community issues; and understanding of each other's roles. Industry already has a substantial amount of work in place which identifies generic and specialist areas of skills, competence and knowledge.

At the same time there will be new specialist skills needs for the development of sustainable communities.

The Professional Institutions in the built environment have established a Futures Group which is embarking on an ambitious programme leading to increased integration between the Institutions. One strand of this work is the development of generic business and other core skills as a core activity across all professions

5. Professional distinctions provide recognition of the role and training an individual is likely to have. Therefore any change in professional designations must be informed, well thought out and taken forward with the inclusive backing and support of the professional bodies. The development of professional formation across the built environment has been a continually evolving process of refinement and renewal.

We recognise that there is an increasing need for multi-skilling and a more holistic approach could:

- help address evolving skills needs;
- improve professionals' respect and understanding of each other's roles;

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- allow easier career progression within the industry;
- avoid wastage of resources through duplication and competitive work (for example promoting careers in the industry as a whole might have more positive affect than institutions competing with each other).

Greater multi-skilling could in part be achieved by a more cross-disciplinary approach to education, rather than necessarily requiring changes to professional distinctions. As indicated above (question 4) recent and ongoing work and practice is already moving towards this objective within the construction industry. Any non-statutory new initiative regarding the development of skills for sustainable communities which does not have the enthusiastic commitment of the existing professional bodies will inevitably end up in competition with them.

The government has to an extent reduced opportunities for an holistic approach by spreading the remit for construction related professions across a variety of government departments.

It is likely that changes in technology, legislation and working/procurement practices may result in new professional specialisms developing (for example Home Condition Survey Inspectors) as well as market led blurring, declining or growth of some professions.

6a. It should be noted that there is already substantial activity in addressing this issue. For example, Accelerating Change in Built Environment Education (ACBEE) was established as a means of focusing on the need to raise standards in built environment higher education and to encourage universities, industry and the professional institutions to deliver courses that are more relevant to industry's needs and give students real experience of multidisciplinary teamwork.

It is likely that many existing professionals will be thrust into a sustainability focused role, rather than trained for it, so training to integrate sustainability thinking into the day to day and strategic management of projects is important as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). There is a danger of professionals continuing past activities without the necessary radical shift towards investing and developing for the future.

All education and training programmes need to be updated on a regular basis to take account of changing technologies, regulations, legislation and social/demographic trends. The industry is clear about what it needs from its professionals through its strategies and newly developed performance measures. However, it does need government direction and funding to enable academic providers to respond to industry needs.

6b. There is definitely a case for crosscutting interdisciplinary common core learning for professionals in the built environment. Different professions should not be isolated from each other in their training, education, Initial Professional Development (IPD) and CPD. The output of many courses would be improved if greater emphasis was placed upon imparting knowledge about the construction process, what happens on site, the roles of others in the professional team etc.

CIC is coordinating work with several Professional Institutions to produce an agreed schedule of common graduate learning outcomes for eventual inclusion in Professional Institutions' requirements for recognised Higher Education courses. We are also investigating the potential to develop a generic approach to CPD across Professional Institutions.

6c. Common core learning could be delivered through generic core modules within course programmes, probably in the first year of an undergraduate course, or as a foundation course possibly in the form of a vocational A'level. Employers and Professional Institutions should be consulted on the content of common core learning prior to a judgment being made on the mode of delivery. Existing professionals should also maintain up-to-date common core knowledge and competence through CPD.

There is already a platform of delivery agents and it makes no sense to add new organisations into the field. The best agents for delivering and benchmarking common generic learning are the professional bodies working in unison. The framework of Occupational Standards for the built environment

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provide the means for benchmarking and inter-relating the sector's academic, vocational and profession qualifying programmes.

7. Professional Institutions' membership requirements have a significant influence upon HE programmes and other aspects of skills development. As membership of a Professional Institution is a means of gaining professional recognition, currently for up to 500,000 people, it is logical for this to continue. Professional Institutions are being encouraged and supported to ensure their requirements reflect the changing needs of industry. In order to achieve delivery of the right generic skills for the future it is essential for the Professional Institutions to work in unison.

8. Within ConstructionSkills CIC is conducting an extensive Professional Skills Survey. We would suggest reference be made to the findings of this research (a report will be published in February) rather than research duplicated.

Additionally it is recommended that the Task Force refer to the CIC Construction Professional Services Survey report (downloadable from www.cic.org.uk) and CITB Skills Foresights Reports (downloadable from www.citb.org.uk) for information about demand for skills, and Higher Education Statistics Agency figures for information about trends for enrolment on relevant degree courses.

9. As mentioned above (8) CIC is conducting an extensive Professional Skills Survey. We would suggest reference be made to the findings of this research.

ACBEE, as mentioned above (6a), was formed to focus on the need for built environment higher education and the industry it serves to attract, recruit and retain sufficient graduates. Any activity needs to be industry driven and may require changes in employment conditions, in tandem with activities such as the CITB ConstructionSkills Positive Image Campaign, the school centred Curriculum Centre Initiative and National Construction Week. Better quality information, and better university/industry links, as recognised by the ACBEE will be critical in the longer term. The image of the industry is probably the greatest influence on recruitment to the professions: ConstructionSkills is targeting this key issue.

10. The industry as a whole needs to be positively branded. It is important to raise public awareness that the industry offers many opportunities for professional level careers and attract a broad range of entrants into the industry. A whole industry approach would reduce the risk of duplicating promotional work and help to reduce fragmented promotion of the professions. However, real change is likely to have more impact than branding in the medium to long term.

11. There are a number of generic skills and common areas of knowledge needed for those involved in the development of sustainable communities (see our response to question 4).

Whilst it would be advantageous for all those working in this area to have generic competences and knowledge, this would be impossible to enforce (except in relation to architects as their title is subject to statutory regulation) without significant legislative changes. Any attempt to compel elected council members to demonstrate specified knowledge and competence would potentially damage the democratic process.

Development of sustainable communities is too broad an issue for relevant skills to be the responsibility of a single organisation but should be the responsibility of all relevant professions and industries. Government (national and local) should take a lead in the development of sustainable communities. Therefore government should support relevant industries in taking responsibility for skills through the relevant Sector Skills Councils. Where the market fails to deliver the skills needed, government should intervene by providing financial support to students on courses in skills shortage areas, provide additional funding to relevant HE and FE departments, fund promotion of relevant careers, and entice employers (especially SMEs) to train new entrants and existing staff.

12. Many groups may have a role to play in delivery sustainable communities, including:

- members of the public as community participants, clients, tenants and owners of property;

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- landlords, public and private, as they have a role in maintaining properties and discouraging anti-social behaviour amongst tenants;
- the insurance industry;
- the police and others involved in the legal system;
- social services;
- teachers and careers advisors, so that they can give their students/clients more informed guidance about relevant careers;
- councillors and other non professionals involved in planning decisions;
- business managers, who could benefit from being made aware of the potential business benefits of investing in locations with affordable housing, good transport links and relatively high unemployment.

For these groups facilitation of awareness should be a key aim, with training signposted for those who wish to participate. Outside the core professions compulsory training would be largely inappropriate and, as previously discussed (question 11) compulsion for training would require legislation. Work is already in hand to help support clients and client advisors.

Also see 13

13. It is imperative that those entrusted with the decision making for local communities should understand the longer term implications of their actions. Sustainable communities require all involved to act in concert, with vision, foresight and accountability. Appropriate training on an ongoing basis would help this process.

However, as indicated in our response to question 11 compulsion would present problems in relation to elected council members. Training must as always be delivered by appropriately qualified and competent individuals and organisations. As the range of issues relating to sustainable communities are broad it may be that a number of different organisations, or new specialists, should provide training. The contents of training courses should be guided by relevant bodies, such as Professional Institutions and CABE, and by the industry's Occupational Standards.

Other

14. Awareness and commitment to sustainable development is inconsistent and in some cases poor. Many people have yet to see the business case for, and urgent need for, sustainable development and may be waiting to be pushed by legislation. Additionally sustainability tends to be understood in terms of 'green' environmental issues rather than the broader agenda suggested in 'Sustainable communities: building for the future'. If 'green' environmental issues are not the core focus of the Egan review then perhaps sustainability is not the most appropriate word to use to promote broad awareness.

Examples in the development industry of enlightened and changing behaviour leading to more sustainable solutions should be promoted, disseminated and rewarded with support from Government (nationally, regionally and locally) and those involved, encouraged to share with others to develop wider take up.

We should be looking at maintenance and 'whole life costing' as key aspects of achieving sustainable communities.

We are happy for this response to be quoted.

CIC Membership at July 2003 Full Membership

ABE Association of Building Engineers

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ACA Association of Consultant Architects
AcostE Association of Cost Engineers
ACE Association of Consulting Engineers
ACBS Association of Consultant Building Surveyors
APM Association for Project Management
APS Association of Planning Supervisors
BIAT British Institute of Architectural Technologists
BIFM British Institute of Facilities Management
BRE Building Research Establishment
BSRIA Building Services Research and Information Association
CIBSE Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
CIOB Chartered Institute of Building
CIRIA Construction Industry Research and Information Association
CQSA Consultant Quantity Surveyors Association
DSA District Surveyors Association
GF Ground Forum
ICE Institution of Civil Engineers
ICES Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors
ICWGB Institute of Clerks of Works of Great Britain
IHIE Institute of Highways Incorporated Engineers
IHT Institution of Highways & Transportation
IMBM Institute of Maintenance and Building Management
IoP Institute of Plumbing
IStructE Institution of Structural Engineers
LI Landscape Institute
NFDC National Federation of Demolition Contractors
NHBC National House-Building Council
RIBA Royal Institute of British Architects
RICS Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
RTPI Royal Town Planning Institute
SCI Steel Construction Institute
TRADA Timber Research And Development Association

Associate Membership

ACED Association of Civil Engineering Departments

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AOHOS Association of Heads of Surveying

BACH British Association of Construction Heads

CHSG Construction Health & Safety Group

CIMCIG Chartered Institute of Marketing Construction Industry Group

CICA Construction Industry Computing Association

CPBEM Council of Professors of Building Engineering and Management

FoB Faculty of Building

FPS Federation of Property Societies

ICM Institute of Construction Management

RSME Royal School of Military Engineering

SCHOSA Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture

SCL Society of Construction Law

SPONGE (a network of young construction professionals focusing especially on sustainability)

TAG Local Government Technical Advisers Group

TeCSA Technology and Construction Solicitors' Association

English Nature

General approach, leadership and process

1. Yes, whilst enhancing the practical skills necessary to create a sustainable community is important this has to be linked to an organisational culture change which recognises that separate actions should integrate with, and support, broader sustainable objectives. There needs to be clear roles and responsibilities set out for what is expected of local authorities, construction clients, designers, contractors and those with a supporting role (consultants, architects, landscape designers etc). Cross-cutting teams are needed to deliver the broad agenda of the Sustainable Communities Plan and we would advocate the approach taken by Kent County Council in re-organising staff into multi-disciplinary teams.
2. Yes, these are the democratically elected bodies charged with delivering the components that make up a sustainable community. However, the local authorities themselves must seek to deliver this with the close involvement of the community they serve and the community plans, and the local strategic partnerships which underpin this, should provide the main focus for this. In areas of major regeneration and growth, such as in Thurrock, it may be necessary to create a Development Corporation to facilitate this on behalf of the local authority. The relevant Regional Assembly will also play an important role in a producing a sustainable regional strategy to guide local decisions.
3. It is how local authorities will implement the reforms brought about by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill which will be key. Community involvement in the plan-making process should be integral and secured through the Statement of Community Involvement. Developers should undertake public consultation exercises, where developments are likely to be controversial, before planning applications are submitted to make sure the views and needs of the existing local community are properly accounted for (tools such as Quality of Life Assessment can be used for this purpose). Pre-application discussions with local authorities and statutory agencies are also very useful to flag up any potential issues and should be promoted as good practice.

Professional skills

4. Yes, all these professionals should have understanding how their actions contribute and integrate with overarching sustainability principles. This needs to form a core part of their professional training and development. Forums for discussions and sharing best practice are also essential to promoting innovative ideas and making new ideas acceptable. A good example is Forum for the Future's 'Engineer of the 21st Century Inquiry' where a group of young engineers set out to develop a vision for any engineer working amidst the challenges of the 21st century, and to inquire into the 'state of the profession'. Just how well equipped was it to respond fully and positively to the number one challenge of the coming decades - that of sustainable development?

One of the most effective ways of encouraging these skills and knowledge must be through the adoption of standards for design, for example the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Award Scheme (CCEQUAL) developed by the Institute of Civil Engineers.

5. There needs to be a reassessment of the involved with a greater emphasis on the trans-disciplinary skills necessary to ensure sustainable development. Areas of skill which may need addressing include green space/public realm management, stakeholder engagement and ecosystem functionality.
6. Yes, there probably is a need to have a cross-cutting foundation course built into the training and continuing professional development of the key professions linked to the delivery of sustainable development, including the areas suggested in the answer to question 5.
7. The professional institutes should not themselves entirely dictate the skills needed to ensure sustainable communities, although they have a key role in the wider debate. They should instead

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ensure that they provide the kinds of skills that support a sustainable community. The institutions are always likely to be pushed by market forces and demand in relation to skills development i.e. it is not in their interest to do it without the right incentives. If government creates the right market demand for these skills then delivery should follow on (e.g. through building regulations and tightly defined design criteria for new developments).

8. We believe from what is reported in the press that there are shortages of key professionals in local authorities with the problem being more acute in the south-east. Our Area Teams report that the high turnover of planning staff involves greater efforts on their part in building relationships and understanding of nature conservation issues. Where we do have more concrete evidence is over the proportion of local authorities employing ecologists. According to the Association of Local Government Ecologists of the 410 local authorities in England and Wales only 150 have at least one ecologist in post. English Nature considers that the objective of creating sustainable communities is seriously prejudiced by the relative lack of such expertise.

9. The pay and status of the core professions is failing to attract sufficient high calibre entrants to enter or stay in public sector positions. As suggested below, there is a need to reinvigorate the public service professions and to broaden their appeal to talented young job-seekers. Pay is of course a strong part of the equation but also job satisfaction is also vital. Expanding the skills needed to provide sustainable communities could enrich these professions and make the work more appealing.

10. Yes. The re-branding needs to accentuate the positive and creative nature of core professional areas and to counter the perception that the work is entirely regulatory, bureaucratic and driven by central Government.

11. It is our perception that planners can be influenced by the short-term perspective particularly in deprived areas where the economic regeneration is the key driver. The planning professions need to regain confidence in taking a sustainable development approach which will ensure greater community benefit in the long term. High quality planning is required to sustain the sorts of environments which support equitable economic and social well-being.

12. The concepts behind sustainable communities need to form part of the pre-qualification training for these professions and feature in continuing development. For example, health workers need to understand some of the benefits deriving from access of greenspace and a healthy environment. Sustainable community objectives should form part of the school curriculum.

13. Elected members have the authority to make decisions against the advice of their qualified officials and so it is important that they too receive training in the work they do. This is available through such avenues as the Town and Country Planning Summer School. The LGA and IDeA might be able to develop training for elected members further than they currently do.

Other

14. Not entirely. The development industry could play a wider role in this area and this requires efforts by bodies such as the House Builders Federation and the professional organisations like RICS. Sustainability must be promoted as a selling feature and encouraged by rewarding and recognising developers who meet high sustainability standards. The ODPM needs to push this much harder in the Sustainable Communities Plan. There is a plethora of advice, information and standards about how to achieve better building and open space design - it is not so much a 'gap in expertise' as a 'gap in incentive'.

English Partnerships

English Partnerships welcomes the review of skills undertaken by the Task Group. As one of the key delivery agencies identified in the Sustainable Communities Plan, English Partnerships has a number of interests in participating in this work, both for its internal staff training and development and also for the wider sector with whom the Agency works and from whom it will draw its staff in the future.

KPMG/Urban Catalyst Skills Review for English Partnerships

In March 2003 English Partnerships asked KPMG/Urban Catalyst to undertake a review of the core skills required to promote and manage successful urban regeneration and development. The brief for the consultants was to gain an view as to the desirable skill set, a real or perceived skills "gap", the capacity within the market to deliver such skills and potential responses from English Partnerships to address this. The aim of the project was be to inform future personnel development and training programmes that English Partnerships would put in place. It also aimed to support the development of thinking at a policy level on the nature of the skills shortage and possible cross-industry approaches to training and development. The project is managed by a Steering Group comprising representatives from English Partnerships, CAGE and ODPM.

The methodology for the project to date has been as follows:

Stage 1 - Analysing the skills needs within the regeneration sector relative to the skills availability and identifying the nature and extent of the 'gap' between them.

Stage 2 - Identifying and evaluating the options for filling this gap and selecting a preferred option against a set of evaluation criteria.

This work was commissioned in advance of the Egan Review of Skills on 8 April 2003. The English Partnerships/KPMG/Urban Catalyst team has worked closely with the Egan Secretariat at ODPM to ensure that the two pieces of work inform and complement each other and on 10 November met with Rebecca George, chair of the Skills Sub Group to discuss the work in more detail. We wrote to Rebecca George following that meeting to set out English Partnerships' approach.

It is important to note that the English Partnerships/KPMG/Urban Catalyst work is focused primarily on the skills required for today and tomorrow's leaders in physical regeneration and therefore represents one section only of the area the Egan Review is considering.

The KPMG/Urban Catalyst team has now completed the first two stages of the work for English Partnerships and copies of the reports have already been passed to the Secretariat. These reports provide the basis of English Partnerships response to the Egan review and we are also providing specific responses and comments to the Consultation questions as follows.

Not all of the questions are appropriate for English Partnerships' comment and so we have focused on those most closely connected with our own role and programme.

General approach, leadership and process

English Partnerships agrees that a step change is needed to ensure that the challenges of creating and delivering sustainable communities as set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan are met whilst retaining the emphasis on design and quality identified as key to an urban renaissance. We share the concern of many partners that design quality is at risk in the need for more houses faster and we are working to ensure that design quality remains a priority in everything that we do. Skills development and training are key to this.

Local authorities have the democratic mandate for their areas and are thus uniquely placed to take forward the delivery of policies on housing and regeneration locally. We would suggest however that key to the whole process would be for all agencies to co-ordinate better and to work more closely.

This should be a central Government requirement and central Government should lead by example. There are a number of agencies charged with taking forward the sustainable communities agenda, including English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation and we are convinced that it will be the transparent co-ordination of national, regional and local strengths that will work best to deliver sustainable communities.

Professional skills

KPMG/Urban Catalyst looked at this area in some detail in their work for English Partnerships and we would refer you to their Stage 1 report on this. A number of one to one interviews were held, together with workshops and seminar sessions and their findings have therefore a wide validity.

In terms of skills and training across the core professions, we have identified the need for a change in employer culture so that skills and training are given a high priority within the organisation and are embedded within its culture. We would not necessarily recommend a foundation course but would prefer the emphasis to be on first attracting the right people into the sector and then on providing training as far as possible on a live project basis. This approach is expanded in our letter to Rebecca George.

We are not convinced that a major re-branding exercise is needed for the sector and are concerned that this might distract from the core issues. We fully support however the need to attract the highest calibre of new entrants into the sector and KPMG/Urban Catalyst's proposals around leadership training (specifically their Stage 2 slide 14) set out some options for this.

One proposal which has been put forward by KPMG and Urban Catalyst is to set up a "shop window" for regeneration and this proposal might also be relevant for sustainable communities. This could be largely web-based and relatively resource-light. English Partnerships has some experience in this through our best practice work with Urban Regeneration Companies in developing and maintaining their website and we would be interested to be further involved.

English Partnerships has identified local authority members as key to the successful delivery of sustainable communities.

We have recently agreed to have agreed to work with Design for Homes and the Civic Trust to undertake a series of 10 training events targeted at local authority planning committees and staff. Design for Homes and the Civic Trust are packaging the events as coach tour and discussion visits to "best practice" developments together with discussions about what makes these places work to inspire attendees to deliver higher quality through their own planning systems. Their vision is education by example rather than by lecture series. The objective is to broaden the understanding of planning's current focus, notably higher density and urban design and to illustrate how PPG3 target densities feel like when applied intelligently to development. They aim also to remind local planning authorities how better quality housebuilding is needed to attract the people needed to develop and drive a local economy.

This work is aimed at only one area of the sustainable communities agenda but the model, as it develops, may be more widely applicable.

Other

English Partnerships is working with CABI and the Housing Corporation to set up a Growth Areas Housing Quality Forum. This will bring together senior representatives from organisations with a stake in the housing growth areas - house builders, RSLs, development agencies, local authorities, and others - with the objective of promoting principles and practice of design quality across the growth areas. The purpose of the Forum is:

- to identify and address issues relating design quality in the delivery of new housing - barriers, opportunities, innovations;

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

- to identify demonstration projects (from the growth areas with other case studies as appropriate) where schemes have delivered high quality design and where lessons can be learnt and disseminated
- to provide a forum for the dissemination of best practice on related matters and initiatives

We hope that this programme will contribute to the provision of information to the development industry and the ideas within it could also apply to the development industry's sources of information about sustainable communities.

We hope that these comments and English Partnerships' own skills work will contribute to the emerging conclusions of the Task Group. We very much support the work of the Task Group in developing the vision for skills development and look forward to playing our part in its delivery.

We are happy for any of our comments to be reproduced or quoted in connection with the Egan Skills Review.

Housing Corporation

General approach, leadership & process

1. Yes
2. LA's are important for co-ordination. However, effective delivery requires a partnership approach. The lead may vary depending on the nature and scale of the individual projects. Regional Housing Boards are also key from a housing perspective.
3. Fast tracking of projects which meet sustainable community criteria.

Professional skills

4. Integrated team working/partnering
5. No. New grouping made up of mixture of professionals. Those that can demonstrate knowledge of sustainable communities and partnering.
6. No. Need to get away from 'silo' mentality. Yes. Run competition and invite organisations to offer their proposals
7. Changes in curriculum
8. None
10. Yes it would help
12. Information provision. Drawing these groups in at a project level would be useful 'training' and essential to delivery.
13. Yes. As with 6 (c) this should be put out to competition.

Other

14. The key issue with overcoming the barriers to sustainable development in the development industry is the lack of perceived benefits to their operations by including sustainable development into their business management. The benefits have not been fully quantified to the industry and as such, are seen as non-core business or reflective of a niche market who are interested in the environment. There needs to be a concerted effort to articulate the benefits of sustainable development to their operations and ensure that sustainability principles are included in mainstream developments. Best practice practitioners should disseminate their work and outcomes to the sector and reliable information distributed to the industry to gain their involvement. Skills and training development needs to include a dialogue of the benefits of sustainable development so they can practice it in their chosen role in the development industry.

Learning and Skills Development Agency

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) is a strategic national resource for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training. Our activities include research, with partners, to inform the development of policy and practice for post-16 education and training. We work across the post-16 sector in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, providing support for colleges, work-based training, adult and community learning, and schools, with a particular focus on quality and implementing change.

We welcome your Review of the skills needed by built environment professionals to help deliver the vision and aims set out in the 'Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future'. We have a strong interest in the field of education for sustainable development, and have been leading work to take this agenda forward in the learning and skills sector.

Whilst we have not worked specifically with the built environment professions, we have undertaken closely related work through the Learning to Last projects that we have managed on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council. These projects have highlighted a number of examples of innovative approaches to introducing the concept of sustainability to learners, which we believe the Review might usefully draw on. We suggest that incorporation of sustainable development education concepts in learning materials for all related trades and professions would help to better inform the development industry about these issues.

The outcomes of these projects have now been drawn together into the web-based Learning to Last Toolkit, which was recently launched by the Secretary of State, Charles Clarke. This can be found on the internet at <http://www.lsd.org.uk/Sustainable/Toolkit/>. The Learning and Skills Council is committed to taking forward the development and production of a strategy for sustainable development in the learning and skills sector. LSDA is keen to continue to support this activity.