

# *Beyond Green Developments in Broadland*

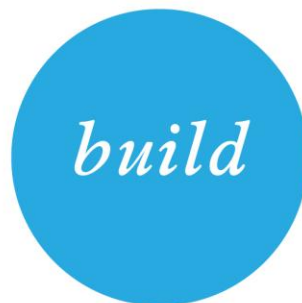
PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY,  
NEW HOMES AND PROSPERITY

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AN EXPLORATION OF POTENTIAL

*Reporting Back*  
*Stakeholder & Community Consultation*  
*June - July 2011*

*August 2011*



“our aim: the highest quality of life  
with the lowest environmental footprint in Europe”

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Beyond Green Developments is working in partnership with a number of landowners – including the Beeston Estate, Norfolk County Council, the Alderman Norman Foundation and the Morley Agricultural Foundation - to bring forward proposals for high-quality development on land to the north of Sprowston and Old Catton in Broadland. In June 2011 we invited a broad range of professional stakeholders (see appendix 1) to a series of thematic workshops exploring key issues relevant to the project. 115 people from over 45 organisations joined us to examine the potential for development on this site. During June and July we also talked with over 200 members of the public who visited our exhibition at St Cuthbert's Church, Sprowston Fête, Spixworth Fête and the Old Catton Flower Show.

The discussions at these events - the outcomes of which are contained in the main report and summarised here - established the key principles that will inform the development of specific propositions and proposals for how we might design and deliver a development that will offer the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint in Europe.

A further round of consultation events are scheduled for October 2011. These will provide an opportunity for stakeholders and the wider public to review and refine draft design and proposals.

For further information, please email [broadland@beyondgreen.co.uk](mailto:broadland@beyondgreen.co.uk)

### DELIVERY

General consensus that the existing model of housing delivery had not delivered a high-quality product in recent and agreement that Beyond Green's long-term business model was logical means of addressing this issue.

The need to work in partnership with a large number and range of partners in delivery of the project, including all tiers of government, statutory bodies, community organisations and existing and new residents.

It was thought important to provide infrastructure early on wherever possible and to be clear and open about the timescale for delivery of infrastructure throughout the project.

The impact of the: The GNDP is a front-runner for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and this will be a major determinant of delivery strategy.

Possible tensions between Beyond Green’s delivery model and the proposals for CIL highlighted, including the fact that the presumption behind CIL is that it removes as much of the responsibility for delivery of infrastructure from developers as possible – whereas Beyond Green’s aspiration is to remain involved alongside partners in these aspects of the project.

The need for establishment of a partnership-based relationship between Beyond Green and all CIL delivery partners, including the district council, GNPD and parish councils.

## **CREATING JOBS AND DELIVERING PROSPERITY**

Growing and diversifying the business base: consensus that Greater Norwich’s economy is stable and successful and doesn’t need major intervention.

Agreement that the economy is dynamic and that successful places evolve over time to meet changing economic need. A number of sectors were identified as a focus for growth and new business creation and agreement that an influx of new residents could itself create new economic activity but concern that development should not undermine efforts to generate sector-based ‘clusters’ in other places around Norwich.

Stimulating local enterprise: working at or closer to home is a growing trend with a particular appeal to many people in Norwich and Norfolk. There was enthusiasm for creating a ladder of support for small companies within a new community – from incubators, with education and support services, through ‘move-on’ accommodation for growing SMEs to market offices and industrial units. Some people thought that the potential to attract enterprises to an edge-urban location such as this would be strongly connected to the quality-of-life offer made by the wider character of the place.

Smart growth and designing workplaces into the urban fabric: there was debate about how best to design workplaces into the community – whether in business parks or areas of footfall. Debate also arose about the desirable extent of ‘self containment’. Local residents supported the creation of local jobs but were also concerned that the development should improve access to work in Norwich city centre.

Attracting people to work, visit and live: there was consensus that tourism, inward migration and investment based on sustainability and quality-of-life advantages were key areas of economic potential for Broadland and Greater Norwich. Debate about whether a degree of relative isolation, real or perceived, from other parts of the UK and beyond might be a contributing factor. There was a feeling that a development

that genuinely embodied ‘the highest quality of life and lowest carbon footprint in Europe’ could make an important contribution to addressing that.

Meeting local employment needs and using the local skills base: agreement that new development should create many jobs in architecture, design, infrastructure services and construction, as well as in the management and maintenance of new communities. Consensus that development could help by building links to local schools and colleges and raising awareness of job opportunities coming from the development including in industries such as low-carbon technologies and ‘green collar’ services. Agreement that there are key groups whose skills needed to be better harnessed across Greater Norwich as a whole, including former UEA students and older people who will form a growing proportion of the population in the coming years.

## **CREATING COMMUNITY**

Designing a place that encourages community life: there was general consensus that the design of places affects the strength of community. Stakeholders agreed that facilities need to be co-located to focus activity. There was some debate over the development of a ‘new’ community or whether it should be an extension of Sprowston and other existing places; it was generally considered better to integrate new development with existing areas.

Social infrastructure and local amenities: agreement that any new development had to achieve a high level of amenities and that it was not sufficient just to meet policy requirements but to make the place interesting and busy. Stakeholders voiced fears that provision of schools will not keep pace with population growth and that existing facilities will be overburdened. A new community centre identified as a requirement in the local area, but learning from the drawbacks of existing ones. Local residents favoured a mix of amenities offering something different to Tesco and addressing the deficit of smaller local shops in Sprowston. Some debate over where major new facilities should be located and about the relationship between density of development and the creation of a ‘critical mass’ of amenities.

Housing mix: consensus that housing should consist of a wide mix of types and sizes so that people can move home without needing to move away. Housing should be ‘tenure blind’ and integrated; no ‘ghettos’. Stakeholders generally agreed that housing should be architecturally ambitious and avoid clichés, whether standard ‘housebuilder’ products or undue emphasis on the local vernacular. Mixed views on the merits of ‘self-build’ housing but agreement on the need to enable active ageing.

Housing affordability: concern that many people are not eligible for Affordable Housing, especially first-time buyers. There was support for innovation in creating a 'ladder' of housing not just in terms of size and type but in tenure and affordability.

Community governance: agreement on the need to identify a core of people who can exercise leadership and create networks of information and support, as well as the need to get existing residents and early new residents involved in designing and, if possible, running things. Likely scale of development in the 'growth triangle' is such that it may need its own governance arrangements, however it was agreed that any meaningful governance arrangements need legitimacy and resources.

## **GENERATING ENERGY, SUPPLYING WATER AND DEALING WITH WASTE**

Water: There was general agreement that net water neutrality was the right goal for this area, although it was acknowledged that no other large-scale development has achieved this. A rainwater harvesting ring was seen as the most effective way to maximise the collection of rainwater on a large scale. Most agreed that water metering and progressive pricing are good ways of reducing potable water use. Some people advocated the retrofitting of existing buildings off-site. It was felt that water efficiency and off-site retrofit alone would not be sufficient to achieve net water neutrality and that some form of on-site water recycling would be necessary.

Energy: There was general consensus that aiming to generate all energy on site is realistic but ambitious, with particular challenges arising around creating a stable supply of energy. It was felt that an on-site Energy Service Company (an ESCO), to deliver a specialised, integrated energy supply service, or even a Multi Utility Service Company (a MUSCO) to perform the same service across all utilities, could be necessary. Local stakeholders, including local authorities, could be interested in investing in such a body. This would also present an opportunity for involving residents on-site to ensure community involvement / buy-in.

Waste: the proposed facility at Kings Lynn was considered a viable option to recycling operational waste; dealing with waste on-site via an ESCO / MUSCO was considered a potentially attractive alternative. There was discussion of the handling of construction waste from what would be a sustained period of large-scale development. Many felt that there should be a co-ordinated approach to construction waste management.

Involving new and existing residents in supporting resource efficiency: A key theme was the opportunity to involve residents in sustainable resource management strategies, whether through design and/or governance of municipal services or by incentivising households to cut their consumption of resources over time. Some felt

that local parish councils were a very positive asset to harness and could help integrate services and infrastructure to new development with the existing community.

The idea of using energy, water and waste initiatives to integrate the proposed new community with the existing community came out strongly in conversations with the general public. Ideas included: using community initiatives to increase the roll out of water meters in existing homes – including retrofitting grey water recycling where possible; having community wide food recycling schemes; to helping with energy efficiency solutions, and the installation of solar panels. It was widely felt that all new homes and public buildings should have solar panels – and that developers should be helping with that.

## **PARKS, GREEN SPACES, ECOLOGY, FOOD AND FARMING**

**The green spaces network:** Support for green spaces to act as a continuous network running through the development. A range of integrated, multifunctional green space typologies were discussed including: a farm, country park, pocket parks, green streets and green roofs.

**Connections:** Increased access to green space both on site and off site was identified as a priority, with connections between green spaces important to achieve this. The need for links to other green spaces in the very local area (including the Sprowston allotments) and further afield was identified as a topic requiring further discussion.

**The park:** discussion around the Growth Triangle wide need for a country park. Enthusiasm for the idea of a park on site taking the form of a series of linked green spaces rather than one very large space. Widespread consensus that a park would have a number of functions . Examples discussed included: areas for play, walking, dog walking, cycling, wildlife areas, wooded areas, café, food growing areas/allotments and areas for outdoor activities.

**Management and maintenance:** There was agreement that successful management and maintenance was vital in short, medium and long term. While no consensus was reached as to where the overall responsibility for management of green spaces should lie, the potential role for Parish Councils was recognised. It was agreed that involving local people was important.

**Food and farming:** There was consensus among stakeholders that all types and sizes of green spaces, buildings and connections within the development should be as productive as possible, with consideration of land outside the site. A range of models for turning local, smaller-scale food production into an economic resource were discussed, with the involvement of local people considered vital.

**Ecology:** There was widespread recognition of the importance of wildlife corridors. Agreement that habitat opportunities in an urban environment should be enhanced through parks, gardens, green roofs, green walls, balconies and street trees. Consensus that the development should enhance existing ecological features where possible, and that there was a need for specialist wildlife habitats of real value as part of the wider green space network.

**Sports:** It was generally felt that sport in the local area hasn't been planned for the long term. The Growth Triangle provides an opportunity to address this. Agreement that sports facilities on site should be accessible to everyone including teenagers and older people. Some debate about distribution of facilities.

**SuDS:** It was agreed that a holistic system which incorporates SuDS and rainwater recycling and enhances ecology and water quality is needed on the development. The scale of the SuDS system – local or more strategic – and the impact of rainwater harvesting on groundwater were both identified as areas requiring further discussion.

## **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT**

**Traffic growth and impacts:** local residents raised concerns about the impact of increased traffic, in particular the peak time congestion and concern over rat running through residential streets. There was general support amongst workshop participants for the principle of no net traffic growth but recognition that it won't be easy to achieve.

**Minimising the need to travel:** it was recognised that incorporating a mix of uses within a new development plays a key role in reducing people's need to travel. It was agreed that there is a particular need to reduce car use on the school run.

**Cycling:** there was recognition amongst stakeholders and the general public of the need to invest in joined up infrastructure both on- and offsite to encourage more people to cycle.

**Public transport and car ownership:** a number of people expressed their frustrations with the existing public transport system in Norwich and the wider area. Whilst there was consensus about the need to minimise car use there was lengthy discussion about the role of the car in a largely rural county, and particularly the parking that cars would require.

## SENSE OF PLACE

What makes a good neighbourhood? There was a fear of new development being detached from existing communities and recognition of the need to learn from the mistakes of other recent development which was considered to be of poor quality with impermeable layouts, poor quality public realm and a lack of facilities. There was consensus among stakeholders that good places need to be easily accessible with a variety of cultural, leisure, retail and business activities and services. These would preferably be located around a central market place with access to green space.

What contributes to good streets? There was a focus on pedestrian priority in urban centres, with the integration of cycle routes and a rethink of parking in both residential streets and urban centres highlighted as particularly important. It was felt that streets need to maximise opportunities for exchange, helping people feel part of things and share responsibility for their streets. There was acknowledgment that parking would remain a hot topic for much of the design process, but that the idea of putting people before cars was popular:

**Facilities and Business Opportunities:** The integration of business plots into residential areas and the promotion of mixed use development was seen as a positive move, with opportunities for a range of different working environments – from home working and small business as well as to being able to attract some ‘big’ business.

**Built form and typologies:** Discussions focused on the need for any new development to provide the highest quality of design and construction. There was a wish for a high diversity of housing types, making this not only a good selling point, but also allowing for adaptable homes and design for different needs (the elderly, for example). It was felt that this package also needed to be genuinely affordable, given the current economic climate and outlook. It became clear in discussions that people found it hard to pinpoint a particular Norfolk vernacular and the conversations focused on the need for a range of high quality buildings and distinctive design which gave a new place a unique identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Beyond Green Developments** is working in partnership with a number of landowners – including the Beeston Estate, Norfolk County Council, the Alderman Norman Foundation and the Morley Agricultural Foundation - to bring forward proposals for high-quality development on land to the north of Sprowston and Old Catton in Broadland.

We want to create a new kind of development that learns from mistakes made in the past - a proper place with superb streets, squares and green spaces and a wide choice in housing types and design; a place that has excellent health, social care and community facilities and which fully embraces 21st century issues in ecology and environmental sustainability.

In June 2011 we invited a broad range of professional stakeholders (see appendix 1) to a series of **thematic workshops** exploring key issues relevant to the project. Workshops were held on the following themes:

- Delivering place and sustainable development: Beyond Green Developments' business model
- Creating jobs and delivering prosperity: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century approach
- Creating Community
- Generating energy, supplying water and dealing with waste: new technologies and new approaches
- Parks, green spaces, ecology, food and farming
- Sustainable movement and transport
- Sense of place, identity and character: design issues

115 people from over 45 organisations joined us to examine the potential for development on this site. During June and July we also talked with over 200 members of the public who visited [our exhibition](#) at St Cuthbert's Church, Sprowston Fête, Spixworth Fête and the Old Catton Flower Show.

The discussions at these events - the outcomes of which are summarised in this report - established the key principles that will inform the development of specific propositions and proposals for how we might design and deliver a development that will offer *the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint in Europe*.

## **THIS REPORT**

This report provides a summary of issues and findings for each thematic workshop. It includes non-attributed quotations from workshop participants to give readers a fuller impression of the discussions.

Comments from public consultation sessions are also integrated within the report under the same thematic headings. Specific points or issues raised during public consultation discussions that were not otherwise covered in the thematic workshops are marked with an asterisk \*.

The events summarised in this report are one stage in an ongoing process of discussions with stakeholders and followed a series of one-to-one discussions with stakeholder organisations during the course of 2010 and early 2011.

A further round of consultation events are scheduled for October 2011. These will provide an opportunity for stakeholders and the wider public to review and refine draft design and proposals.

For further information, please email [broadland@beyondgreen.co.uk](mailto:broadland@beyondgreen.co.uk)

## 1. DELIVERY

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***Thursday 16th June 14.30 – 17.00***

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The workshop consisted of a scene-setting presentation followed by a series of discussions. The presentation – which explained Beyond Green Developments’ approach, its rationale and how it can result in better outcomes than conventional development models – formed a relatively large part of the session.

### 1.1 SCENE-SETTING

- The coalition Government stands behind the consensus that 3 million new homes are needed by 2020, and 5.8 million by 2033. As many as one third of these will need to be built in large-scale developments (so-called ‘strategic sites’). Even if official migration figures turn out to be overstated, there is significant need for new, large-scale developments in the UK.
- Beyond Green Developments was born out of frustration with the development industry’s inability to deliver genuinely sustainable development: places which engender a sense of community and give a high quality of life whilst making it easy and attractive to live in environmentally sustainable ways. The culture of the industry contributes to this failure, but its principle cause is the prevailing economic model with which developers operate.
- Typically, large housebuilders pay substantial sums upfront for land, rely on a fast turnover of sales for cashflow, and squeeze the costs of planning and building to preserve profit margins and exit (i.e. sell all the houses and move onto a new project) as quickly as possible.
- *Stories of* housebuilders attempting to renegotiate with Local Authorities after having been granted planning permissions (to reduce amounts of Affordable Housing or avoid contributions towards community facilities) are relatively common
- Beyond Green Developments operates under a different model. In partnership with landowners, we take a longer-term perspective with our projects. We remain actively involved beyond the construction period, managing the places we create as long-term investments. Our success as a business is predicated on creating a positive legacy which grows in value over time.
- This means that we choose to invest more in our developments at the outset. For example, we spend more on design, building materials and sustainability measures. However, standardised types of buildings will enable us to keep costs of the individual buildings down.

- If we're going to be involved over the long term, it makes business sense to look at the whole-life economics of the places that we build. For example, we will also provide shops and services which enable residents to meet their daily needs closer to home and recycle income within the community.
- This investment in placemaking leads to places which mature, adapt and improve over time. It also provides the bedrock for more sustainable lifestyles.
- Happily, this dovetails with what many people seek from where they live. For example, when asked 'what do you value about your home?', surveys have shown that the majority of respondents refer to features outside their home – such as their neighbourhood and its amenities – above the features relating to the home itself (such as size and layout)
- How do we benefit from this approach? Beyond Green will retain an interest in a range of properties and uses. This could include:
  - renting some properties instead of selling them;
  - shared-equity and shared-ownership schemes;
  - retaining the freehold of some of the shops and workplaces;
  - providing renewable energy to residents from on-site generation.

In the short term, this allows us to receive an income stream in the form of rent or energy bills. In the medium and longer term, as the development further matures and evolves, its value will likely increase relative to the wider property market.

- Beyond Green Developments therefore has both the incentive and a vested interest to create and maintain fantastic places to live – quite the opposite to focusing on minimising costs in the short term.

## **1.2 DISCUSSIONS: KEY FINDINGS**

Two key areas of discussion emerged following the presentation:

- The delivery model – is it right, will it work, and what partnerships might be required to make it work more effectively?
- The impact of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be introduced in the GNDP area.

### ***1.2.1 The delivery model – is it right, and will it work?***

There was general consensus that the existing model of housing delivery has not delivered a high-quality product in recent decades in the Norwich area. There was also agreement that Beyond Green's long-term business model is a logical means of addressing this issue. However, stakeholders recognised the extent of the differences

between the Beyond Green business model and the prevailing housebuilder model and highlighted some of the practical obstacles to overcome.

These included the need to work in partnership with a large number and range of partners who would all have a role to play in delivery of the project. These partners included all tiers of government as well as a range of statutory bodies, community organisations and existing and new residents. It is particularly important that they think in a new way about delivery and work to a shared vision and timescales.

*“You’re not just asking the planning authority to think differently – it’s parishes, existing communities, your new community, statutory bodies...”*

*“Houses are only a small part of what you’re delivering. You’re either going to be very busy, or you’ll live or die by your partners”*

*“Your timeframes are longer than most in the public sector can afford to think right now. It all sounds great – but how can you ensure the continuity?”*

*“Are there ways in which the local authority could be interested in or able to take an equity stake in the development?”*

*“You can build a school but you also have to run a school”*

The timing of infrastructure provision attracted particular focus, with reference made to examples of projects which had not delivered on promises made at the outline planning stage. It was thought important to provide infrastructure early on wherever possible and to be clear and open about the timescale for delivery of infrastructure throughout the project.

*“The old model of the private sector writing the public sector cheques to deliver infrastructure is clearly broken”*

*“There will be cynicism about when facilities and infrastructure will be delivered. People remember Thorpe Marriot and Dussindale. Constant communication will be vital.”*

### **1.2.2 The impact of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The GNDP is a front-runner for CIL<sup>1</sup> and it was quickly pointed out during this workshop that this will be a major determinant of delivery strategy. As policy has yet to be finalised, this creates some uncertainty – however, as one participant noted, *“at least that gives us an opportunity to help influence it”*.

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<sup>1</sup> CIL operates as a specific per-square-metre charge on the gross internal area (GIA) of new development, levied to help fund provision of the area-wide infrastructure that enables it. It largely, but not wholly, replaces Section 106 agreements

Stakeholders discussed some possible tensions between Beyond Green’s delivery model and the proposals for CIL. These included the fact that the presumption behind CIL is that it removes as much of the responsibility for delivery of infrastructure from developers as possible – whereas Beyond Green’s aspiration is to remain involved alongside partners in these aspects of the project. In view of these possible tensions, the establishment of a partnership-based relationship between Beyond Green and all CIL delivery partners, including the district council, GNDP and parish councils, was considered vital.

*“I’m not sure if they saw people like you coming when they were coming up with CIL. There are obvious clashes with what you’re trying to achieve.”*

*“What we need to decide is how your business model converges with CIL. What we both want to deliver means that we have to work closely in partnership.”*

### **1.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include scheduling a series of conversations with the GNDP and appropriate stakeholders to discuss how we could work together to most effectively deliver on our respective priorities.

## 2. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND JOBS

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*Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011, 10-1pm*

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The workshop examined all aspects of economic development, business and job creation in a possible development. It consisted of a scene-setting presentation followed by a series of plenary and group discussions.

### 2.1 SCENE SETTING

- Greater Norwich has a dynamic economy with a strong labour market, but a relatively low density of high-growth and high-value added sectors. However, owing to its low reliance on vulnerable public and consumer sector businesses, it is less susceptible than the average UK place to the impacts of recession and more likely than some to emerge from recessionary periods stronger.
- There has been strong growth in jobs across Greater Norwich over the last decade, with some evidence of displacement from the city centre to edge-of-city and out-of-town locations. Growth in the smallest businesses has been pronounced, but there is some evidence of a ‘missing middle’ – a lack of medium-sized businesses that often drive both employment and output growth. Unemployment has, overall, been consistently lower than the national average.
- The GNDP Core Strategy envisages around 27,000 new jobs being created in the area by 2026. It seeks to support the knowledge economy, encourage growth in business that exploits the research base, promote sustainable tourism and raise the profile of the area. Key sectors identified in economic strategies include agriculture & food processing, creative industries, energy, advanced engineering & manufacturing, financial industry, health & life sciences and tourism.
- Development creates physical space and infrastructure to support economic growth. Experience from Europe and North America suggests that ‘smart’ urban growth can give impetus to the development of new jobs and businesses by nurturing smaller, more locally-rooted enterprises, encouraging face-to-face contact and the exchange of ideas, attracting highly-skilled people and improving the area’s brand.

#### *2.1.1 Beyond Green Developments’ aims for economic prosperity & jobs*

- Help to foster a **strong, diversified economy** in Greater Norwich that provides meaningful work for people of different skill levels and interests
- Facilitate growth in **sectors with a sustainable future**

- **Make it easier for people to work near where they live;** for businesses to be at the heart of the community, physically and culturally, and for new kinds of enterprise and new patterns of work to emerge
- Ensure that the process of physical development itself stimulates local economic gain to provide an **investment and jobs dividend from growth**

### 2.1.2 Key questions

- What will drive economic prosperity in Norwich and Norfolk over the next 30 years? Which sectors are most important to sustainable growth and job creation in Norwich and Norfolk?
- What might large-scale ‘smart’ growth on this land be able to do to help address these challenges and opportunities – e.g. through land use, property, finance or demand stimulus? What are its limits?
- What should be the balance between competing priorities e.g. creating high-value business vs. volume jobs; export-oriented vs. ‘localised’ business; inward investment vs. nurturing local enterprises? Are there trade-offs?
- How can Beyond Green form effective partnerships to enable sustainable economic growth in Broadland? Who are the key partners? What wider resources and policy levers could be brought to bear alongside?
- Are there any policy or practical barriers to the pursuit of ‘smart growth’ in Broadland?

## 2.2 DISCUSSIONS: KEY FINDINGS

Across the various discussions a number of key themes emerged. For each there were points of consensus and a clear sense of direction between participants, as well as issues that provoked debate.

### 2.2.1 Growing and diversifying the business base

There was general consensus that Norwich’s economy is stable and successful and doesn’t need rethinking or reinventing. It was felt that the key is to focus on steady growth of existing strengths and harnessing new opportunities where they arise, avoiding the gimmicks and rhetoric that sometimes hamper economic development strategies (“*it’s about organically evolving existing strengths*”). To the extent that there are weaknesses, they may be deep-seated and not easily tackled (“*There’s an issue about middle-size businesses. Maybe small businesses aren’t growing which might be a lifestyle choice*”). Many people tended to the view that endogenous growth (i.e. from within) is more likely to be sustainable in the long run than large-scale relocations to the area by established companies, although the latter would not be unwelcome.

The key for development, most agreed, is flexibility: the economy is dynamic and the physical fabric has to respond to unpredictable changes in economic structure, technological change and social forces (*“What we create has to be responsive to changes in the economy”*). Successful places evolve over time to meet changing economic need; those designed around the needs of specific industries tend to become obsolete (*“There’s a big overhang of old space in the city centre but very little meets the aspirations and image of green businesses”*).

That said, several key sectors were identified which could be a focus for growth and new business creation. These were not necessarily those with large current market shares (*“The financial services sector is big but probably won’t grow much”*) but might be sectors in which there is latent potential.

*“Regarding tourism, nowhere in UK has managed to become a truly sustainable place that’s attractive in itself – if Norwich were this could attract huge amounts of ‘knowledge tourism’ which is high volume but also high value”*

*“Don’t obsess too much about hi tech jobs – local grid, local food production etc – requires manual, artisan skills for maintenance etc”*

There was also recognition that an influx of new residents could itself create new economic activity (*“the most important thing in an economy is new people and new ideas”*).

However, not everyone agreed that housing-led development could or should be active in economic development: some expressed a view that the primary role of development is to provide space to soak up demand generated by other forces. There was also concern that development in the ‘growth triangle’ should not undermine efforts to generate sector-based clusters in other places around Norwich (*“You can’t have a Research Park based on synergies if everything is scattered across the city”*).

\* Local residents highlighted the jobs that would be created by ensuring that the new development is properly served with shops, amenities and public services, which would also draw custom from existing areas where facilities are underprovided or constrained.

### **2.2.2 Stimulating local entrepreneurship**

There was a strong sense that working at or closer to home is a growing trend with a particular appeal to many people in Norwich and Norfolk (*“I redesigned my life to work at home; I have given the biggest room in my life over to my business. It works brilliantly. I use public transport and walk everywhere”*). Supporting this trend places key demands on design, from creating home-working space to ensuring there are great ICT infrastructure and business support facilities locally; plus meeting places and good public transport to enable homeworkers and micro-

entrepreneurs to network and get around. The idea of a business ‘hub’ similar to those established in London (see [www.the-hub.net](http://www.the-hub.net)) garnered some support. However, notes of caution were sounded about over-emphasising home working as part of economic development plan (*“Working at home might be twee and nice, like basket-weaving; it’s nice as individuals thinking about working at home but some businesses need a critical mass of people working together and interacting on a daily basis. Not everybody’s going to be working from home”*).

There was support for the idea of creating a ladder of support for small companies within a new community – from incubators, with education and support services, through ‘move-on’ accommodation for growing SMEs to fully-fledged market offices and industrial units. This would help root small businesses in the community and tackle a shortage of useful spaces within the district (*“Broadland Council would like to explore new business incubation units. We have a waiting list as long as your arm”*). Some people thought that the potential to attract enterprises to an edge-urban location such as this would be strongly connected to the quality-of-life offer made by the wider character of the place.

### **2.2.3 ‘Smart growth’ and designing workplaces into the urban fabric**

“There was vigorous debate about how best to design workplaces into the community and the kinds of premises that modern businesses need. Some argued that the trend towards developing business parks which stand apart from communities and are most easily accessed by car simply reflects market demand, so the design challenge is less about alternatives than about how to integrate business parks into places (*“Broadland Business Park is the second largest employment site in the area. We should think about re-embracing business parks”*).

Whilst most acknowledged that business parks and industrial estates are popular among businesses needing large floorplates at low cost, or in certain sectors such as distribution (*“the needs of different levels of business in different sectors need to be met”*), there was also recognition of their limits. Integrating workplaces into the urban environment could especially benefit knowledge-based businesses and those seeking to attract skilled workers (*“Some businesses are more relationship-based”*) or which feed off the general bustle of urban life (*“Co-locating activities is important – footfall helps to stimulate enterprise”*).

There was recognition that, today, having industry close to homes is not usually problematic (*“In Norwich there are some very large industrial sheds in the middle of housing areas and there’s no sense of blight whatsoever”*), while planning policy is encouraging more interplay between different activities and discouraging zoning (*“All the growth locations should be mixed use”*). However, a key challenge would be devising urban building typologies that could accommodate, particularly, larger businesses without the extensive parking and huge footprints that business parks

offer. There was agreement that workplaces need to be adaptable to economic and industrial change.

There was debate about the extent to which it is possible or desirable to create ‘self-containment’ within a community, i.e. with the residential population of an area largely serving as its employment base. Whilst it was accepted that it is inherently more sustainable to live closer to your workplace and thus need to travel less, the reality, some felt, was that most employment would still be off site: physical and sustainable transport connections to key employment nodes around Norwich would be critical. Whilst it would be good to attract ‘anchor’ uses or employers to a development, there would be risks in creating a ‘company town’.

\* Local residents generally supported the creation of jobs locally, including on-site, but were also concerned that the development should not harm – and should ideally improve – access to work in Norwich city centre, which is a much larger and more diverse place of business, by tackling congestion and improving public transport connections.

#### *2.2.4 Attracting people to work, visit and live*

There was a strong consensus that tourism and inward migration and investment based on sustainability and quality-of-life advantages are key areas of economic potential for Broadland and Greater Norwich.

*“Quality of life is fundamental to people deciding to come here. Richard Branson came here because he came on holiday as a child, liked it and wanted to come back”*

*“When people come here, they want to stay and they want to do business”*

*“Norwich is a subtly fashionable place – it’s not over the top”*

Some felt that there has been a failure or even reluctance to promote Norwich and Norfolk fully, perhaps due to a combination of self-effacing culture, lack of confidence and even a feeling that the area’s assets shouldn’t need to be advertised.

*“Norwich often fails to publicise the quality of life here. The combination of broads, coast and medieval centre, it’s a great place to live and that’s really important for economic development.”*

*“People think Norwich is a bit of a backwater, but when they get here they’re delightfully surprised”*

There was debate about whether a degree of relative isolation, real or perceived, from other parts of the UK and beyond might be a contributing factor; but most felt that this was overplayed.

*“Norwich’s isolation is exaggerated. Maybe it feels more isolated than it actually is”*

*“Norwich airport is a jewel in our crown with connections to Europe. We have a frequent train service to London”*

As a result, many agreed, Norwich and Norfolk might be ‘underbranded’, and a development that genuinely embodied ‘the highest quality of life and lowest carbon footprint in Europe’ could make an important contribution to addressing that. There was, however, some debate about whether the branding of the area should focus more on people or companies. On the one hand, Norwich’s and Norfolk’s relative lack of scale and degree of distance from other markets does militate against mass inward investment, whereas the quality-of-life offer to people draws strength from precisely those conditions. On the other, some thought that not enough priority was being given to questions of long-term economic future (*“What markets do we want to create jobs in? What market is there? Who’s going to be paying us? We need to market ourselves beyond where we are”*)

Finally, there was agreement that Beyond Green needed to consider what elements of a strategy for its land could play directly to the visitor economy, including in complementing and relieving pressure on the Broads.

#### ***2.2.5 Meeting local employment needs and using the local skills base***

Many people agreed that very act of developing up to 10,000 homes and many other facilities in the ‘growth triangle’ over the next two decades has the potential to stimulate sustained economic development, by creating a high volume of jobs in, for example, architecture, design, infrastructure services and construction, as well as in the management and maintenance of new communities. For some, this was the biggest potential direct economic benefit from development (*“It’s an opportunity to get unemployed young people in Broadland and train them to set up and manage energy systems and so on”*). It could also counterbalance the emphasis in economic development strategies on higher-skilled sectors (*“We need to think about everyday jobs”*).

There was agreement that there are key groups whose skills needed to be better harnessed across Greater Norwich as a whole, including former UEA students (*“We have the highest undergrad retention rate in the country”*) and the older people who will form a growing proportion of the population in the coming years (*“Older more experienced people could set up businesses and pass skills to younger members of the population”*). One obvious way that Beyond Green could help is by developing links to local schools and colleges and raising awareness of the chain of job opportunities coming from the development itself and in the kind of industries that might be encouraged, such as low-carbon technologies and ‘green collar’ services.

## 2.3 NEXT STEPS

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- Considering specific facilities/strategies targeted at low-carbon, food and tourism sectors as ‘anchor’ industries of development;
- Further analysing whether there is a ‘missing middle’ and whether/what can be done to address it here;
- Making sure employment facilities have designed-in adaptability;
- Considering an ambitious approach to live-work including specific housing units and ‘hubs’;
- Working with Broadland DC and others on delivery of specific business incubation facilities and associated services;
- Exploring the potential role of a community trust or other institution in seeding small companies (including social businesses) within the area;
- Pursuing an integrated mixed-use development strategy;
- Working up and test employment typologies (of building and ‘place’) to meet different needs, including potential soft market testing;
- Delivering on a bold “highest quality of life and lowest carbon footprint” strap – and looking at how to key into Norwich/Norfolk brand/marketing;
- Raising awareness of development with inward investment and business agencies and being ‘open for business’ at an early stage for potential investors/residents;
- Developing a ‘skills prospectus’ for the development covering construction, management and operation and work with local schools, FE colleges and existing supply chains to encourage skills pipeline, working with local partners.

### 3. CREATING COMMUNITY

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*Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011, 2-5pm*

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This workshop looked at how to create a sense of community, the services necessary to sustain it, and the role of housing in attracting and maintaining a mixed community. It consisted of a scene-setting presentation followed by a series of plenary and group discussions.

#### 3.1 SCENE SETTING

- Planning policy, as set out in the GNDP Core Strategy, is that “all development will be expected to maintain or enhance the quality of life and the well being of communities”. Within the ‘growth triangle’ there is a need for a new district centre, co-located public services and community facilities such as libraries and health centres, new schools and pre-school provision, community halls and cultural facilities. A third of all new homes are expected to be Affordable Housing, and there is a need for more housing with care.
- Demographic trends indicate an ageing population: nearly a quarter of the population of Greater Norwich in 2033 will be over 65, an increase of more than 50% in the number of over-65s living in the area today. The working-age and child/youth populations will also increase, but at a slower rate. With more people living longer and reflecting wider changes in family structure, the average household will fall from 2.3 to 2.15 people.
- Four-fifths of people in Broadland own their home, but the younger population faces significant barriers to housing, with house prices again increasing and mortgage lenders requiring larger deposits. The rental market has grown to help meet these needs, but remains relatively small.

##### *3.1.1 Beyond Green Developments’ aims for creating community:*

- Generate a **full range of community facilities and amenities** easily accessible to new and existing residents, from schools and healthcare to shops and meeting places;
- Nurture a sense of community by **creating places in which people can enjoy face-to-face contact** which are welcoming, safe, amenable and resilient, and by locating facilities close to one another and to busy public places;
- **Give residents and users of the new development a say** in the creation, design, management and use of community and leisure facilities and common assets and services for the benefit of the whole community.

### **3.1.2 Key questions**

- What are the social infrastructure deficiencies (public and private services) in North Norwich and Broadland, and what new facilities could be provided here to serve a wider area – even attract people to it?
- Where in the ‘growth triangle’ should a concentration of new community facilities best go to maximise accessibility for new and existing residents?
- In conceiving a ‘new’ place, what can be done early on to help engender a sense of community, over and above providing policy-compliant levels of social infrastructure?
- Is a community trust a good idea for engendering community? How might it work and what should it do/not do? How might it relate to existing institutions, e.g. Parish councils? Could an emergent body play an earlier role in helping to shape our plans?
- What kind of homes should be provided here? Given the different housing markets of Broadland and Norwich, what is the right balance of housing types?
- What would make for appealing homes distinctive to this part of Norfolk? How can we best guard against ‘legoland identikit homes’?
- How can the needs of those least able to buy homes best be met – particularly those who aren’t eligible for public support but can’t afford to buy?
- Does population ageing affect how we should design or provide homes and wider community facilities? How?

## **3.2 DISCUSSIONS: KEY FINDINGS**

Across the various discussions a number of key themes emerged. For each there were points of consensus and a clear sense of direction between participants, as well as issues that provoked debate.

### **3.2.1 Designing a place that encourages community life**

There was consensus that the design of places affects the strength of community that develops there. ‘Social infrastructure’ – public services and facilities – is necessary to create community, but it is not sufficient: the design of homes, streets and the public realm can encourage (or not) the everyday interaction that underpins community life.

*“I live in a very narrow street which has a shared surface and no through traffic – it has pedestrian cuts through... People live nearby. You have the opportunity to get to know people in a less formal way than having to be invited round”*

*“I live on a traditionally designed late Georgian street. That environment creates a sense of community. A really important thing is front gardens and people can walk by and interact”*

There was agreement that facilities need to be co-located to create concentrations of activity during the day and bring people out and about for different reasons together at focal points. Facilities and spaces, including green spaces, should be multipurpose – for people of different ages as well as for different uses and activities. It was also felt that places need points of interest for people and activity.

*“It’s got a market place in the middle. It’s a focal, shared space with a library, post office and it draws people into the town.”*

There was debate about the extent to which new development should be planned to encourage particular types of behaviour, and recognition that people’s preferences are not always compatible. If people’s choices are to be screened in order to encourage particular ways of living, that needs to be explicit and the possible downsides understood.

*“When my kids were young we encouraged them to play football in the street, but we had to jump out of the way of cars and suffer abuse of people shouting at us – when we were given the option of making it pedestrian our neighbours said no – they don’t want other people driving there, but want to drive there themselves.”*

Finally, there was debate over whether the proposed development would be a ‘new’ community or an extension of Sprowston and other existing communities. The idea that new development should cater for existing residents was supported, but it was argued that perhaps this would be conceived more in terms of identity and human relationship than in relation to physical connections. On the other hand, there is an identified need for accessible new facilities such as schools in the existing communities and new development ought to help meet this.

\*Local residents highlighted differences between areas such as Old Catton, which is perceived to have a centre which gives a strong identity to the area, and Sprowston, which has its own identity but is seen by some as ‘suburbia’ and lacking a physical ‘heart’ around which the community coheres.

\*Local residents, particularly in Sprowston, supported the idea that new development would be integrated with the existing area, sharing an identity with it and providing facilities for existing residents.

### **3.3.2 Social infrastructure and local amenities**

There was agreement that any new development has to provide a high level of amenities such as schools, healthcare facilities, shops, restaurants, cafes and meeting places – not sufficient just to meet policy requirements but to make the place interesting and busy. It was posited that modern ‘planned’ places typically have much more open space and less over-subscribed schools, but far fewer cafes, restaurants, interesting little shops and cultural incidents than older, more evolved ones. History and tradition is on the side of established places but large new developments create energy and demand, and the challenge is how to channel that to attract and sustain good facilities – shops and activities as well as public services. Key to this was the idea of ‘corridors of activity’: understanding how and why people move about. It was suggested that the emergence of a ‘cafe culture’ would be a good sign that a new place is a success.

*“It’s amenities that make community. Local shops, post offices, pubs, restaurants, schools. We all interact in different ways and you have to give a breadth of opportunities for interaction.”*

*“The amenities and the community facilities are crucial. I live in spitting distance of 2 pubs, a post office and shops. I feel like part of the community.”*

There was a general view that one of the greatest fears of development is that development of schools will not keep pace with population growth and that existing facilities will be overburdened. There is a need for new schools with any development, and – in terms of key areas where there is existing deficiency – before- and after-school provision is crucial, as is the provision of youth facilities that young people actually want to use. In addition, a new community centre is needed that learns from the drawbacks of existing ones – is it big enough to host weddings? Does it have a kitchen? Attention to detail is important.

People agreed that if small shops and businesses whose owners live in the community can be attracted, they will be more rooted and more likely to be used. A development by Beyond Green could become (“in a good way”) a rival or counterpoint to the large-scale retail development at Blue Boar Lane, which caters for people wanting to drive to a large supermarket. However, some people expressed concern that, without a large food store, a district centre on the site might not be viable. There was also a balance to be struck between concentrating new shops close to one another and ensuring convenient access to day-to-day needs for residents across the growth triangle.

There was debate over where major new facilities – such as a sports centre, recreation grounds, secondary school and district centre – should be located. Although this would partly fall out of the design process, choices would have to be made between a focus away from the existing built-up area and one closer to

Sprowston which is seen as poorly-served by some facilities at present. There was also a trade-off identified between the provision of mobile facilities such as a library, which might suit older people, and the desire to co-locate and concentrate facilities at key nodes.

\* Local residents favoured a mix of amenities that offered something different to Tesco and addressed the deficit of smaller local shops in Sprowston.

Finally, there was debate about the relationship between the density of development and the creation of a critical mass of amenities. It was posited that a certain level of density and compactness – not ‘city’ scale, but perhaps not ‘village’ either – would be necessary to create sufficient concentration of people to make local shops and services independently viable. Views differed on whether this is desirable, whether or not it impacts on the diversity of local services.

### **3.2.3 Housing mix**

There was strong consensus that housing should consist of a wide mix of types and sizes, so that people can move home as their needs change without needing to move out of the neighbourhood; this would enable people to live closer to parents, children and friends and help to create a stable, close-knit community. Housing should be ‘tenure blind’ and affordable homes should be fully integrated with private housing; there should not be ‘ghettos’ of housing for the poor (or rich), or specialised accommodation (e.g. for students or the elderly) standing apart from the community.

Generally, there was agreement that housing should be architecturally ambitious and avoid clichés - whether standard ‘housebuilder’ products or undue emphasis on the local vernacular. Options such as modular housing, which can be built quickly and cheaply and has proven popular in continental Europe, should be considered.

*“We don’t want pastiche Norfolk homes. A new development should create its own identity. Maybe some references like Dutch gabling, but not Poundbury.”*

There was considerable debate over the implications of the suburban-rural fringe context and the likely market for housing in the area for the style of development and for issues such as the balance between the public realm and private space such as gardens. Whilst some people felt that housing should have a rural, village feel, most agreed that housing on more compact plots would be acceptable if linked to a high-standard of collective amenities.

*“No high-rise – anything over 3 storeys – please, other than community buildings”*

*“You need a mix of terraces and detached. It needs to be good quality – if you have density you must have easy access to amenities.”*

There was support for the idea that well-built homes, perhaps quite basic when initially built, can be adapted over time to suit owners' changing needs and means – and that this process of adaptation is how homes and communities achieve personality and distinction (*“Places look distinctive when residents modify them over time”*). However, there were mixed views on the merits of ‘self-build’ housing: some saw self-build or self-commissioned housing as a good way to introduce original ideas and interesting architecture into a new development where the majority of housing types would be, to some extent, standardised; others saw self-build as a *“minority pursuit”*.

However, there was general agreement that demographic change argued for extensive provision for older people: not necessarily sheltered or ‘extra care’ housing, but innovative housing types and tenures that would appeal to people wanting to age actively.

*“We need adaptable housing for ageing people. Most don’t want to move into specialist accommodation.”*

*“Downsizers might be attracted. Why not create new investment where you can buy into scheme offering space and care?”*

Finally, concerns were expressed that housing designs with courtyard parking be avoided to help discourage crime. There needs to be natural surveillance of places where cars are parked: for some, ideally, this would mean most parking being on-plot; for others, an emphasis on on-street parking would be better from an urban design perspective.

### **3.2.4 Housing affordability**

Most people shared a concern that although there is a strong policy framework for Affordable Housing, this does not of itself address the problem that many people not eligible for Affordable Housing, especially first-time buyers, struggle to get on the housing ladder – squeezed between prices rising relative to incomes and the tougher conditions placed on mortgage finance.

For some, this was felt to be a temporary problem (*“Credit will be easier when the development comes through”*) and there were differing views about the practicality of particular solutions to housing availability for affected groups (*“I’m sceptical about levels of renting increasing – people like their own homes. But shared ownership is good especially for young families”*).

But generally there was support for innovation in creating a ‘ladder’ of housing not just in terms of size and type but in tenure and affordability, so that there is not just statutory Affordable Housing for those qualifying but ‘accessible housing’ for those starting out.

*“If we can get private sector low-cost rental houses, 80% of market rent say, that would be popular”*

*“It would be good to have predictable long-term rents”*

### **3.2.5 Community governance**

There was brief discussion of the idea of bespoke community governance arrangement for the new development. Although it was generally agreed that more work needed to be done on rationales and options for governance arrangements, several important issues were raised including:

- the need to identify a core of activist people – in whatever institutional form – who can exercise leadership and create networks of information and support;
- getting existing residents in the vicinity and early residents of new development involved in designing things and, if possible, running things;
- the likely scale of development in the ‘growth triangle’ is such that it may need its own governance arrangements e.g. new parish council – this could be a challenge to, or opportunity for, existing structures and bodies;
- if there is to be something like a Community Trust it will need to have power over its own constitution and be able to govern things like shops’ rents, youth provision etc;
- it’s important not just to assume that the community will want to manage assets or take on financial responsibilities; and
- any meaningful governance arrangements need legitimacy and resources – otherwise they could become unpopular talking-shops.

## **3.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- showing through design how the places and spaces that will contribute to a sense of community can be integrated into development proposals and how existing social infrastructure deficiencies can be remedied and new facilities incorporated;
- exploring the potential for multifunctional use of facilities such as school grounds, sports fields and community halls and integrating them sensibly into the structure of new development;

- articulating a vision for a district centre or other concentration of facilities to complement/compete with the mobility-oriented development at Blue Boar, and finding the optimal location for it within the growth triangle;
- undertaking reference studies to see what 'real' places of comparable sizes support (rather than de minimis / policy-led targets);
- developing a diversity and variety of housing type and showing how this contributes to the making of a distinctive and socially sustainable place;
- considering how proposals for housing diversity will be delivered through phased development, for example through the development of a design and performance code;
- working up varied tenure options, especially for the those people stuck in the 'gap' between Affordable Housing and the ability to afford to buy; and
- working up governance proposals and understanding and articulating their fit with existing institutional landscape.

## 4. ENERGY, WATER, AND WASTE

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*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 10.00-13.00*

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The workshop consisted of a scene-setting presentation, followed by a series of plenary and group discussions.

### 4.1 SCENE SETTING

- Direct energy use in the home accounts for around 30% of the average person's total carbon footprint. Indirect energy use 'embodied' in the manufacture of goods and services for consumption also accounts for a substantial share.
- The GNDP Core Strategy demands that significant new developments be energy efficient, incorporate at least 10% decentralised and renewable low carbon energy (and more if the site allows), and maximise water efficiency is what is a relative water-stressed part of the country, achieving potable water consumption of no more than 80 litres per person per day by 2015.
- Beyond Green Developments' business model creates the opportunity for taking a more progressive approach to energy, water and waste through taking a long-term perspective on its projects. Beyond Green Developments will retain an interest in a range of properties and uses including those which requires active stewardship and management – such as decentralised energy generation and bespoke water and waste solutions.

#### *4.1.1 Beyond Green Developments' aims for energy, waste and water*

##### **Energy:**

- To provide a **stable supply of competitively-priced, low-carbon energy** for residents to insulate them against future price volatility, contributing to the East of England Plan's targets of providing 17% of the region's energy from renewable sources by 2020<sup>2</sup>;
- To empower and enable residents to use less energy in their homes and offices through **clear communication** and **easy-to-use infrastructure**;
- To maximise the carbon-saving potential of energy within the context of overall commercial viability within a '**total carbon footprint**' approach;
- To seek to meet **all on-site energy demand** with **on-site supply**;

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<sup>2</sup> Target excludes off-shore wind

- Where that is not possible, in line with The Norfolk Climate Change Strategy, to embrace the potential for **Allowable Solutions** to benefit residents in the **wider community** around North Norwich.

#### **Waste:**

- To establish waste targets that are considered a **best-practice** example of sustained waste reduction, and are at least in line with Norfolk's Mineral's & Waste Core Strategy;
- To evaluate the opportunity for **energy from waste**, taking into account planned reductions in arisings (landfill capacity in Norfolk will be reached by 2023).

#### **Water:**

- To acknowledge both the proximity of the site to the **Broads**, and the **importance of potable water** to the area;
- To establish water targets that are at least in line with the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and the (Norfolk) Water Cycle Study – with the aspiration for **net water neutrality**. This will include exploring the opportunities for **green water recycling, discharging to ground and retrofitting existing communities**;
- To ensure that the water strategy is interlinked with the requirements of the **Green Infrastructure** strategy across the potential development.

#### **4.1.2 Key questions / themes**

- Is net water neutrality the right – and an achievable – goal?
- Should we be aiming to go beyond compliance and generate all our energy on-site?
- What are the key risks relating to waste?
- What are the opportunities for really involving residents both inside our proposed development – and within the existing communities around the site?

#### **4.2 DISCUSSIONS: KEY FINDINGS**

There was a clear consensus that the aspirations that we were aiming for in terms of energy, water and waste – whilst progressive – were the right ones. There was constructive debate on whether and how these aspirations might be achieved.

### 4.2.1 Water

There was general agreement that net water neutrality (exact definition to be agreed with Broadlands and the Environment Agency) was the right goal for this area, although it was acknowledged that no other large-scale development has achieved this. The topic was broken down into various areas.

There was a shared view that, if practical, a rainwater harvesting ring would be the most effective way to maximise the collection of rainwater on a large scale, which would be crucial to achieving the toughest potable water use targets. Most felt this should be possible given the scale of likely development and site topography. On the demand side, most agreed that water metering and progressive pricing are good ways of ensuring that people take care with potable water and don't, for example, just replace water-efficient fittings and appliances after moving in.

Some people thought that to achieve overall water neutrality the retrofitting of existing buildings off-site for water efficiency would be necessary (*"There is a limit to what can be achieved on site. You'll need to work within the existing community with Broadland, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency"*). Anglian Water already works with existing communities around the site, and there may be opportunity to work with it on retrofitting programmes where appropriate.

It was felt that water efficiency and off-site retrofit alone would not be sufficient to achieve net water neutrality (*"[green water] will remain a hypothetical goal unless we tackle it"*).

The next major opportunity discussed was green water (i.e. water recycled on-site to non-potable standards, and re-used for various functions, such as toilet-flushing). There was concern among some stakeholders about how the public may feel about having a non-potable supply of water in homes, since often residents' negative attitudes are perceived as an obstacle to promoting green water recycling. However, for others, conversations with local general public had revealed a striking level of general awareness about the importance of using water efficiently, and general acceptance of the concept of green water in people's homes. It was also noted that allowing green water supplies will require intervention by the statutory bodies (*"[green water] requires an entirely new arrangement with Anglian or another water provider through an in-set agreement. Discharge permits and legal issues will be a real challenge"*); however, in the context of the Water Cycle Study currently being carried out across the 'growth triangle', there is in-principle support from the relevant bodies. There was also a suggestion that a portion of the water, once it had been treated to a certain level, could be discharged directly into the water table. This needs to be debated fully in the context of proximity to the Broads.

### **4.2.2 Energy**

There was debate about the appropriate energy strategy, focusing on two main options: either a) basic policy compliance, i.e. deploying a mix of low-carbon technologies such as photovoltaics, biomass and geothermal, but remaining highly reliant on the national grid, or b) matching demand on-site, i.e. producing enough energy on site to meet changing demand on-site.

There was general consensus that aiming to generate all of our energy needs on site is realistic but ambitious, with particular challenges around creating a stable supply of energy.

*“Having the [energy generation] kit is one thing, but having a constant, reliable supply of something to burn or rot is another”*

*“Controlling the supply is as important as controlling the demand”*

*“Is there enough local biomass?”*

A key theme that emerged was that in order to meet this aspiration, an on-site Energy Service Company (an ESCO) to deliver a specialised, integrated energy supply service, or even a Multi Utility Service Company (a MUSCO) to perform the same service across all utilities, could be necessary. Local stakeholders, including local authorities, could be interested in investing in such a body. This would also present an opportunity for involving residents on-site to ensure community involvement / buy-in (see below). However, views on the practicality and acceptability of this approach varied.

*“The obvious starting point is energy then water – and then green infrastructure. You could then layer more services on”*

*“There’s an unknowable upside that will be worked out over time, but you need to be very cautious to begin with”*

*“I am a bit of a sceptic. Residents would feel conned into a particular system”*

*“What type of commercial contracts would you have to sign as a homeowner?”*

### **4.2.3 Waste**

It was established that waste across Norfolk is currently managed under contract by WRG on Behalf of Norfolk County Council. WRG transport the majority of municipal waste to Allington landfill in Kent.

Three options for future waste management were discussed: continuation of the current strategy (i.e. Allington Kent); supply to the proposed energy-from-waste

plant at Kings Lynn; and a household and municipal recycling and compostable waste streams (and some construction waste) collected and treated on site. The general consensus was that Kings Lynn would be an adequate option; however, there were questions over whether it could be relied on to go ahead. We therefore need to have a plan B.

For operational waste, with an ESCO or MUSCO on site, dealing with waste on-site was considered potentially attractive as the Plan B, for both sustainability and commercial reasons (*“Combining the economics of dealing with waste, with the economics of creating energy is very attractive - but only if it fits into the region wide context”*). This requires further exploration with Broadland District Council as the body responsible for waste collection and Norfolk County Council, which has responsibility for its disposal.

There was discussion of the handling of construction waste from a sustained period of large-scale development. It is currently unclear where any construction waste from a potential project would go, and therefore a possibility that this could also end up in landfill. Many felt that there should be a co-ordinated approach to construction waste management (*“with all the potential development [in the ‘growth triangle’], we need a city-wide construction waste management strategy and bespoke infrastructure. We should work that out together”*).

#### ***4.2.4 Involving new & existing residents in supporting resource efficiency***

The opportunity to involve residents in sustainable resource management strategies - whether through design and/or governance of municipal services or by incentivising households to cut their consumption of resources over time - was discussed. While there was general consensus that this was a good idea, it was also agreed that *“the devil is the detail”*. It was felt that it was very important to frame it properly and have genuine representation (*“We’ve been seeing it from a traditional viewpoint of pain rather than pleasure – this could be framed in community participation and saving money”*). There was also debate around whether the community might have a physical/financial stake (through a Community Land Trust or similar), rather than just an emotional one

*“Are people emotionally buying in or physically investing in it?”*

*“If you’re going to do it, do it properly. The community must have an asset or an income stream”*

Some felt that local parish councils were a very positive asset to harness and lead with, especially through neighbourhood plans. This could potentially be a way of integrating services and infrastructure to new development with the existing community.

The idea of using energy, water and waste initiatives to integrate the proposed new community with the existing community came out strongly in conversations with the general public. Ideas ranged from using community initiatives to increase the roll out of water meters in existing homes, including retrofitting grey water recycling where possible, or community-wide food recycling schemes to helping with energy efficiency solutions and the installation of solar panels. It was widely felt that all new homes and public buildings should have solar panels – and that developers should be helping with that.

*“Catalyst for changing attitudes towards sustainable lifestyles”*

*“Prove how great a sustainable community can be”*

*“Set an example – to Government, developers and community organisations”*

### **4.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- Sharing and communicating our journey in bringing together plans for a progressive sustainable new community as an example to others (a point emphasized by a striking number of stakeholders).
- Water:
  - Follow-up meetings with Environment Agency – including the National team, Natural England and Broadlands to discuss how proposals for green water and discharge to ground can be brought forward
  - Prepare a detailed drawing of the proposed water harvesting ring for the Design Enquiry
  - Work up a business-as-usual proposal to assess as an alternative
  - Work with Anglian Water on initiatives for water efficiency, including retrofitting initiatives
- Waste:
  - Develop two waste scenarios – one if Kings Lynn [energy from waste plant] goes ahead, and one if it doesn't
  - Waste is a resource - continue to explore all options to ensure it is either used as such on our site, or by someone else – and does not end up in landfill
  - Pursue and help wherever possible, the creation of a city wide construction waste management strategy
- Energy:
  - Continue with the aim of trying to meet all demand on site

- Continue conversations with NCC regarding a potential county-wide ESCO / MUSCO
- Use the potential asset / revenues streams that come from energy generation on site as the basis for exploring opportunities for a Community Land Trust

## 5. PARKS, GREEN SPACES, ECOLOGY, FOOD AND FARMING

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*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, 2-5pm*

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The workshop consisted of a scene-setting presentation, followed by a series of plenary and group discussions.

### 5.1 SCENE SETTING

- Green spaces improve people's quality of life – for example recent research from the University of Essex shows that just five minutes of nature every day will benefit people's mood, self-esteem and mental health.
- We're dependent on biodiversity for sustaining the natural living systems that provide us with vital products and services (e.g. food, water, air, resources, fuel, medicine...). But, with more people living in urban than rural areas for the first time in history there's a growing disconnect between people and the natural environment.
- Climate change means hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters and an increase in extreme weather events including flooding. Urban green spaces reduce surface run-off in urban areas and provide a cooling effect of 1-2°C.
- The current system for food production, processing, consumption and disposal in the UK accounts for 1/5 of an individual's carbon footprint. It is damaging to the environment and furthers the disconnect between people and nature, leading to wasteful practices – 1/3 of the food we buy is thrown away.

#### *5.1.1 Beyond Green Developments' aims for parks, green spaces, ecology, food and farming*

- Provide a **range of multifunctional green spaces** varying in size and character - from parks, squares and streets to pocket parks, allotments and gardens. These will enable people to be active, to enjoy recreation, to grow their own food and to connect with the natural environment.
- Integrate **strong green and ecological connections** within the development and extending outwards to Norwich, Broadland and the countryside beyond.
- **Use space efficiently** to minimise impacts on agricultural land and habitat, maximise land available for local agriculture and parkland and optimise access to green space within the development.

- **Enhance biodiversity** through a network of high quality and bespoke ecological niches and habitats which embrace local species and habitat types.
- Put Broadland on the map **as a hub for sustainable food and farming**, delivering a thriving food culture through an integrated system of education, production, processing, consumption and disposal.

### 5.1.2 Key questions

- What is your favourite space in Norwich or anywhere in the world and why? Are there spaces in Broadland or Norwich that could be improved?
- Given the identified need for a country park of greater than 60ha, where in the Growth Triangle might this be best located? What would be the key features of a park within our development?
- What would be the most effective way of growing food in our development? Where should food production spaces be in relation to homes? What can we do to link food growing to the way we eat and dispose of food?
- What opportunities and challenges are there for SuDS in our development?
- How might green spaces enable sport recreation in our development? Where might these be located?
- What are the challenges and opportunities relating to management of green spaces? Which models work best?

## 5.2 KEY FINDINGS

### 5.2.1 A green space network

There was general support for green spaces to act as a continuous network running through the development in the form of a range of integrated, multifunctional green space typologies including a farm, country park, pocket parks, green streets and green roofs.

*“With a series of connected spaces that come into the development itself it can be accessed from everyone’s front door – and you can make the link from your roof to the Broads”*

It was agreed that a larger ‘set piece’ was needed as part of the network, and that this should link to smaller parks within the development. *“You need a space local to each individual but with the ability to connect to other areas”*

There was also general support for a potential to link with land outside the site to extend the green space network, for example as a larger-scale sustainable farm.

Distribution of green spaces within the development was discussed, with some debate over the best arrangement of different typologies.

*“A transect approach would work well, with more formal spaces closer to homes and less formal towards the countryside beyond”*

*“Smaller, informal spaces are better close to where people live”*

\* There was agreement amongst stakeholders and public alike that multifunctional spaces need to be well managed in order to avoid a potential tensions. Wildlife, dogs and sports were identified as particularly relevant. *“There’s incompatibility between uses like sport and dog walking”*

\* There was discussion with members of the public about which spaces and facilities were most important to them. Play areas and recreation grounds were identified as particularly important, with need for quality and variety. *“The equipment in the area isn’t all in good order, and more variety is needed”*. Local parks, (*“having a park near you would be great”*) areas of woodland and routes for walking and dog-walking were also considered important. The shortage of allotments in the area was raised as a concern by many, and others felt there was not enough available for older people.

### **5.2.2 Connections between spaces**

Given that access to the land for members of the public is currently limited (there are no public footpaths), increased access to green space both on site and off site were identified as a priority. It was agreed that connections between green spaces would be very important to achieve this. Stakeholders and members of public both identified circular walks as important for local people to connect with nature.

*“Whitlingham is a lovely place but it’s hard to get to”*

*“Any country park needs to be well connected with other green spaces”*

*“People need to be able to roam between green spaces both on site and outside of the red line boundary”*

\* *“If there were more 'country' circular paths from home we would use them”*

The potential for using edible plants as part of the character and legibility of these connections was identified. *“Community orchards, forest gardens and edible hedges – they could be the link between different spaces”*

The need for links to other green spaces in the very local area (including the Sprowston allotments) and further afield was identified as an area requiring further discussion.

### 5.2.3 The park

There was some debate over how a large country park would be best located within the Growth Triangle. It was agreed that some of it should be within the Beyond Green development site, and that woodland links between spaces would be important, but there was no clear agreement among stakeholders as to the most effective overall spatial distribution.

There was enthusiasm for the idea of a substantial park taking the form of a series of linked green spaces rather than one very large space. *“The big block idea of a park is outdated. We want to get away from the idea of one big country park that people drive to.”*

There was widespread consensus that a park should have a number of functions. Elements identified as important included: areas for wildlife, dog-walking, walking, running and cycle routes, areas for recreation, performance spaces, managed woodland, food growing areas and space for formal and natural play. *“You could easily have food production in the park. Not allotments – they should be closer to houses – but maybe horticulture and walled gardens.”*

\* Members of the public agreed the park should be multifunctional, identifying areas for play (children of all ages plus young adults) (*“young people aged 12-17 need something else to do if they don’t like sports”*), walking, dog walking, cycling, wildlife areas, wooded areas, café, food growing areas/allotments, community activities, areas for outdoor activities. It was thought that the park should cater for all ages with good facilities for young children, teenagers (*“my ideal park would have a climbing wall, food growing and a cool playground”*) and older people (*“I don’t use the green spaces in my area, I’m too old!”*), and that it should be a space which people could get to easily. (*“If you don’t own a car you can’t really get out into nature”*). Young people were particularly interested in seeing food growing facilities in the park.

It was agreed that the park would play a central role as a focal point for a community, and that it was important that the community felt a sense of ownership towards it. *“You live with the park and the park lives with you”*

There was debate around the use of existing features on site – Beeston Park and Red Hall Farm for example – with agreement that maintaining the character of the area was important but questions raised over what it is that makes these spaces valuable, how much of their character is linked to them being green spaces and whether they should be retained in their current form.

*“Working with some of the existing features on the land will give a real sense of character”*

Stakeholder opinions around the impact of the development on visitor pressure to the Broads differed. While some thought local people used the Broads a lot, many felt that visitors were more often from further afield and therefore wouldn't use a country park in their place unless it was designed for visitors rather than local people.

*“I very rarely visit the Broads with my family. We're much more likely to use our local parks at the weekend than travel as far as that”*

*“With 10,000 new homes, you need to encourage people to use what's on their doorstep instead of going to the Broads”*

There were also differing views on appropriate measures for mitigating pressure on the Broads. Some felt that a big park would meet this requirement. *“A good big park could alleviate pressure off the Broads by giving local people and visitors somewhere to go other than the Broads”*. Others suggested that given the reliance of the Broads on tourism, a focus on educating people about sensitive use of green areas and wildlife habitats would be more effective than providing an alternative destination. Concerns were raised about the traffic impact of another visitor attraction. While some replicable qualities of the Broads were identified – their sense of tranquility, focus on wildlife, natural features and recreational opportunities – there was disagreement over whether water should be used as a focus for tourism in the park. *“There's already water at Dobb's Beck, we shouldn't try to create it here”*

#### **5.2.4 Management and maintenance**

There was consensus that management and maintenance of green spaces on site was key to a successful development. *“Maintenance is a key aspect of green space provision”*

The need to consider management of all the functions of green spaces in the short, medium and long term was agreed - *“The type of space and its function will significantly impact maintenance requirements – the wilder it is, the less expensive it is to manage”* – and it was recognised that revenue streams might help to enable a high quality management regime. *“You need to identify potential revenue streams and clarify how they could be used”*

The importance of making links with external organisations such as Woodland Trust, parish councils and other landowners across the Growth Triangle as part of a long-term management strategy was identified. *“Developers across the growth triangle need to liaise on potential areas of co-operation and synergy when it comes to management and maintenance.”* A number of local and exemplar management

models were discussed, along with the need to learn from the experience of people in the local area.

While no consensus was reached as to where the overall responsibility for management of green spaces should lie, it was agreed that involving local people was vital. *“Think about it as a 100 year project. Get the community to start delivering it.”* But there was recognition that it provided its own challenges, with tensions around people wanting to have a say in what happens but not necessarily wanting to get involved or take responsibility themselves on an ongoing basis. *“Most people want to have a say, but not everyone wants to get involved”*

### **5.2.5 Food**

*“Norfolk is a county with such a focus on food and farming – you should try and capture this within the development”*

There was consensus that all types and sizes of green spaces, buildings and connections within the development should be as productive as possible. A number of different ideas for food production were identified including: mixed-scale farms, small-scale market gardens, allotments, community allotments, community orchards, food forests and edible hedges. *“Feeding the community might be possible through small-scale market gardens, community-supported agriculture schemes and allotments”*

\*A number of members of the public grew their own food, mainly in gardens and allotments. There was general consensus that more allotments, more time and more help getting started would make it easier for them to grow food. Others suggested smaller allotments or a FarmShare.

There was agreement that the use of neighbouring farms could be an effective means of increasing the site’s productive capacity and that including this as part of a network of food initiatives might have the added benefit of improving the financial viability of smaller food production schemes. A range of models for turning local, smaller-scale food production into an economic resource were identified, and again the involvement of local people was considered vital for success. *“A productive landscape starts looking after itself as it’s being used as an asset”*

### **5.2.6 Ecology**

There was recognition of the importance of wildlife corridors through the development and beyond along with agreement that habitat opportunities in an urban environment should be enhanced through parks, gardens, green roofs, green walls, balconies and street trees.

*“Exploring the connections with the wider environment will be really important when it comes to wildlife”*

*“It should be all about getting closer to wildlife”*

There was agreement that the development should aim to enhance existing ecological features where possible, and that there was a need for specialist wildlife habitats of real value as part of the wider green space network.

The potential conflict in co-location of different functions within green spaces and the need to provide space for wildlife most effectively was identified as an area for further discussion.

\*Members of the public described a number of ways in which they interact with nature in their day-to-day lives. These included walking, cycling and spending time in gardens, parks, wildlife areas and woodland as well as growing food and bird watching. *“We observe the birds that visit the garden whenever we can.”* Lack of information on local wildlife was seen to be an area for improvement. *“We can feel detached because we don’t know what we’re looking at.”*

### **5.2.7 Sports**

*“There’s a real shortage of public sports fields in Broadland – all the pitches are so well used”*

There was a general feeling that sport in the local area hasn’t been planned for the long term and that the Growth Triangle gives an opportunity to address this. There was also recognition that provision of sports facilities is only the first step, with management being key to long-term success.

It was agreed that sports facilities on site should be accessible to everyone including teenagers and older people, but there was debate about the type of facilities that should be included – formal sports provision or more informal, ‘special’ facilities.

*“Formal playing fields are virtually the only way of getting kids away from their computers, with lots of other kids involved in an organised activity”*

There was debate about how sports facilities should be distributed across the development, with advantages and disadvantages identified for both distributed and co-located facilities. While no consensus was reached on this, examples with integrated facilities for a range of sports and community activities in one place were felt to be successful.

*“You need to consider how facilities should be arranged on the development – one mega facility or a spread out”*

*“Formal sports areas don’t have to be connected to less formal spaces”*

### **5.2.8 SuDS**

*“SuDS have a whole range of benefits which all need to be considered here and at an appropriate scale”*

It was agreed that a holistic system which incorporates SuDS and rainwater recycling and enhances ecology and water quality is needed on the development. The example of Lamb Drove was seen as successful.

There was discussion over what the most effective system for the development would be. It was noted that because the geology of the land makes water creation difficult, a below ground system might work best.

The scale of the SuDS system – local or more strategic – and the impact of rainwater harvesting on groundwater were both identified as areas requiring further discussion.

## **5.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- Developing suggestions for distribution of green spaces within the development and exploring the potential for use of land outside of the red line
- Identifying a range of green space functions and typologies including connections between spaces
- Continuing to explore and test how best to work with existing features of the land
- Continuing to work with Broadland, GNDP GI steering group and other green infrastructure professionals to understand the requirements for a country park in the area
- Developing suggestions for a main park on the development site considering location, target audience, nature and functions
- Working with stakeholders to develop a strategy for long-term management and maintenance of the green spaces network
- Exploring the potential for a range of food production typologies on site and outside the red line

- Continuing to work with ecologists and other stakeholders to identify priority habitats
- Developing suggestions for where formal sports facilities are to be located and how they link to the green system
- Continuing to work with the Environment Agency and Broadland to develop an effective SuDS strategy of an appropriate scale for the area

## **6. SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT**

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*Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 10.00-13.00*

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### **6.1 SCENE SETTING**

- In Broadland road transport accounts for 26% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, compared with 16% in Norwich, where more people walk and cycle to work.
- Broadland commuting rates by car are particularly high, and on foot and by bike particularly low compared with Norwich where a large proportion of people walk to work.
- Norwich city centre is within a relatively short cycle of Beyond Green's proposed development site and there is scope for increasing cycling rates significantly beyond this as over half of journeys to work in the surrounding area are shorter than 5km.
- The Department for Transport projects that, without intervention, by 2035 there will be 42% more cars of the East of England's roads, and delays caused by congestion will be 79% higher than in 2003. There's evidence that efforts to cut congestion, increase walking and cycling and improve public transport are more successful when backed by measures to reduce traffic – for example by restraining parking and reallocating road space.

#### ***6.1.1 Beyond Green Developments' aims for sustainable movement & transport:***

- Ensure that future residents and visitors don't have to travel unnecessarily, are able to move around efficiently when they do, and don't have to rely on the private car for most journeys;
- Create a pleasant and highly walkable environment that encourages street life and face-to-face contact and makes amenities easily accessible to all;
- Improve access to workplaces, facilities and services for people already living in the surrounding area – helping them to be less reliant on their cars too;
- Cut carbon from essential car use by promoting the take-up of electric vehicles and the use of a car club;
- Overall, we think that development in the growth triangle should have an objective of no net growth in road traffic, and should set ambitious targets for walking, cycling and public transport use.

### 6.1.2 Key questions

- Is traffic neutrality across Greater Norwich a realistic and desirable aim? If not what should the aim be?
- If we were all successful in meeting this aim, what would be different about people's travel habits? Which people would see the greatest change in their travel habits compared with today?
- What are the major barriers to achieving that change – physical, psychological or political?
- What would be the key elements of a sustainable transport strategy for Greater Norwich to overcome those barriers and achieve traffic neutrality whilst radically tackling carbon emissions from transport?
- What are the short (0-10 years), medium (10-20 years) and long term (20+ years) actions (hard and soft interventions) to deliver those elements?
- What would we do on site, what would we do off site in partnership with others, what's already planned/in policy?

## 6.2 KEY FINDINGS

### 6.2.1 Traffic neutrality

\* Local residents raised concerns about the impact of increased traffic – in particular the potential for making roads more congested at peak times and concern over rat running through residential streets.

There was general support amongst workshop participants for the principle of 'traffic neutrality' – the aim that for every additional car journey created by a new development measures are put in place to enable and encourage an existing car journey to be taken off the road - for example by investing in bus services that serve neighbouring communities or creating safe routes for cyclists.

*“A community which is a new way of doing things hopefully won't be dominated by car dependence – facilities such as car clubs should mean people don't think they need to own a car.”*

*“We should minimise the need for people to own a second car”*

It was agreed that achieving this would require a focus on changing existing residents' habits, *“the travel habits of people living on the urban fringe should be*

*those of an inner urban area” and that ‘soft’ education and engagement measures such as Sustrans’ Smarter Choices programme would have an important role to play.*

*“Travel planning for schools in Norwich has proven very effective and cheap.”*

It was recognised that efforts to ‘sell’ the benefits of walking, cycling, car clubs and public transport should consider issues above and beyond simply carbon saving, such as enjoyment, convenience, cost and health.

The achievability of traffic neutrality was questioned by some, particularly in the short term. *“Getting people out of their cars will take more than creating walkable places”* and it was acknowledged that traffic neutrality is a potentially difficult concept to communicate to politicians and the public. Meanwhile others felt that net traffic neutrality was not a sufficiently ambitious target.

The extent to which it would be possible to influence travel behaviour outside the confines of the proposed development site was questioned, and it was pointed out that achieving traffic neutrality might require significant investment outside the Growth Triangle. It was recognised that delivering off site interventions (both hard and soft) would require partnerships between developers, local authorities and transport providers.

### **6.2.2 Minimising the need to travel**

It was recognised that incorporating a mix of uses within a new development – retail, community services, and employment alongside homes - plays a key role in reducing people’s need to travel.

*“Recent developments are too car dependent, so people only walk from house to car and don’t get to know their neighbours.”*

*“People need to be very content with the place that they live so they don’t need to go somewhere else on their day off.”*

*“Supermarkets attract trips and traffic. People don’t tend to drive as much to medium sized supermarkets.”*

It was agreed that there is a particular need to reduce car use on the school run. *“You need safe routes to walk to and from school.”*

### **6.2.3 Walking and cycling**

\*There was widespread recognition amongst professional stakeholders and the general public of the need for and benefits of increased walking and cycling, and associated support for measures to increase cycling, including investment in joined up infrastructure both on- and off-site.

*“I’d love to bike but it’s too dangerous, we don’t have bikes coming into the city centre from the outskirts which I would like to see... just cycle routes dotted around from Spixworth to Catton.”*

*“Cycling is not always practical for young or old as current roads not built for their use”*

*“Cycle paths are essential as are safe crossing points for cycles/pedestrians on main and country roads”*

Road danger – and perceived danger – was seen as a particular barrier to cycling.  
*“Cycling into Norwich now you take your life into your hands at some points.”*

There was some scepticism about the extent to which cycling can be increased, particularly for orbital journeys within and beyond the Growth Triangle. There was also debate about the extent to which dedicated cycle lanes are necessary to encourage cycling and what the implications of these might be.

*“More cycle lanes means less space for cars so it’s a political issue”.*

It was unclear what support there might be for off-site reallocation of road space, for both cycle facilities and to improve the reliability of public transport.

#### **6.2.4 Public transport**

A number of people expressed their frustrations with the existing public transport system in Norwich and the wider area.

*“I live only 5 miles outside Norwich but it can take an hour by bus and can be very expensive.”*

There was consensus that in order to achieve high levels of public transport use, it will be essential to ensure that services are both attractive and reliable, particularly at off-peak times.

*“We need to improve the quality of experience on buses, and also overcome extreme negative perceptions.”*

*“Public transport needs to be attractive and reliable; reliability is a bigger issue than perception.”*

*“We need to ensure public transport meets people’s aspirations – clean, fast, cheap, reliable, and goes where they want it to go – and people need to understand what’s available”*

It was agreed that public transport services outside the site (such as Park and Ride) should be accessible to the development and that opportunities for integration

should be explored. There was acknowledgement that political engagement would be required to improve services in the wider area and influence the next generation of service provision e.g. changing the way buses are operated.

The need to address orbital journeys within and beyond the Growth Triangle, subsidy of public transport in the early phases of the development and the route of any Bus Rapid Transit system were all identified as areas requiring further discussion.

### **6.2.5 Streets within the development**

There was some discussion about the appropriate design and function of streets within the development. Participants expressed a variety of perspectives on how streets should be used and what the associated design implications might be.

*“Could you have wider areas with trees, space for cycle ways and walkways? The road would be wide enough for emergency vehicles but not too wide”*

*“If you’re going to have wide roads you’d have to have separate areas for pedestrians and cyclists as drivers will speed, so perhaps on balance I’d rather have narrow ones”*

### **6.2.6 NDR / NATS**

The workshop didn’t set out to specifically address the NDR/ NATS, but they came up in a number of discussions.

There was recognition that uncertainty over funding for and the delivery of the NDR will affect the project. *“Proposals need to be flexible to respond to uncertainty over the funding for and timing of the NDR”* but that the process of debating these interventions could itself be a useful hook *“NATS and GNDP process represents strong collaborative model. There is something to build on.”*

There was debate about the extent to which the NDR is necessary to deliver growth, and whether the NDR would encourage more car use *“Implementing NATS and the JCS already requires a significant shift towards more sustainable modes”* *“Putting in the NDR in early could entrench [driving] habits.”*

Within this context there was also debate about the appropriate nature of an inner east-west route that passes through rather than bypasses development, specifically whether it should be open to general traffic or just pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

### **6.2.7 Parking**

Whilst there was consensus about the need to minimise car use, traffic and congestion, there was fairly lengthy discussion about the role of the car in a largely rural county, and particularly the parking that cars would require.

There was no clear agreement amongst stakeholders on how to deal with parking and the role parking restraint could or should play as part of a sustainable movement strategy.

*“Without parking provision people park all over the place – we need to be realistic about the likely use of cars.”*

*“I’d make a strong vote for charging for on street parking – potential revenue stream for management which could be valuable”*

*“Restrictions in on street car parking is too crude a mechanism but there is demand for housing without cars”*

*“People like to see their parked cars – therefore need for parking within their curtilage”*

*“Be outstanding in how you manage parking – make adequate provision for parking to ensure people don’t park in spaces you’d rather have for other uses”*

### **6.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- Continuing to develop and test the target of traffic neutrality as an overall aim for our development proposal, and promote it as an aim for the wider Growth Triangle.
- Developing street typologies that will demonstrate how walking and cycling can be prioritised on all streets planned for the site.
- Developing specific propositions on reducing car use for school run in the project travel plan.
- Continuing to work with Norwich Cycling Campaign, Sustrans and The County Council, Braodland District Council and Norwich City Council to identify opportunities for offsite improvements to make walking and cycling safe and attractive and exploring the potential for partnerships to deliver offsite improvements.
- Exploring opportunities for improving the prioritisation and reliability of existing bus services as well as establishing new or extending existing routes to serve our development.
- Exploring the potential for integrating the development with Park & Ride, and for this to serve the early phases of build out.

- Developing transport scenarios with and without the NDR, focusing on establishing the amount of development that is possible on our site if the NDR does not go ahead or is delayed.
- Identify an appropriate parking level that will provide spaces for those that need to own a car without compromising ambitions for maximising the use for sustainable modes of transport and establishing a car club.

The workshop consisted of a scene-setting presentation, followed by a series of plenary and group discussions.

### **7.1 SCENE SETTING**

Our approach to thinking about designing places is based around the idea of a walkable neighbourhood. Rather than thinking about planning in a zoned way - placing homes on residential estates and employment on remote business parks, we prefer to integrate the places where we live, work, shop, relax and play in the same neighbourhood. In many ways this is a more traditional way to design places. Up until the early- to mid-20th century, places and the activities in them were planned in a much more integrated way than they have been more recently.

Research<sup>3</sup> suggests that by placing facilities and services within walkable access of homes has a significant impact on quality of life. People who live in a walkable neighbourhood are often more civically involved than those who don't. The ability to walk to key services, shops, playgrounds, a post office, a café increases social capital by improving personal, community and career connections.

#### ***7.1.1 Beyond Green Developments' key questions***

- How should we use urban form and massing to create a sense of place?
- How should connections be made between where people, live, work and play?
- How should we use local vernacular and materials to create a sense of place?
- What features of buildings and their construction help create identity?
- How might architecture differ in a neighbourhood centre to a residential street?
- What are the distinctive features on our site and in the surrounding area that we should embrace and celebrate as outstanding features of any new place? Which of these features could be used to seed a sense of place – both physical and non physical?

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<sup>3</sup> *Examining Walkability and Social Capital as Indicators of Quality of Life at the Municipal and Neighborhood Scales*; Shannon H. Rogers, John M. Halstead, Kevin H. Gardner and Cynthia H. Carlson; Applied Research in Quality of Life; Volume 6, Number 2, 201-213, DOI: 10.1007/s11482-010-9132-4

## 7.2 KEY FINDINGS

### 7.2.1 Summary

Stakeholders recognized the importance of a sense of place. Examples ranged from Wymondham, Aylsham, Loddon to the Unthank Road:

*“... it has everything you want. You can walk down the road, get a paper, bread from the bakery and meat from the butcher, but you can also walk to the city.”*

The importance of a place having a mix of uses with great connections to Norwich and the surrounding areas was seen as very important; as well as the variety of buildings and places to accommodate them. While it was easy to describe places in the centre of Norwich, characterised by narrow lanes, small courts and distinctive stone and flintwork, or to picture the market square of a market town, it was harder to describe the buildings or spaces characterised by much of the growth that Norfolk towns have seen in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Buildings and spaces have become diverse and diffuse. Sprowston itself was described as not having *“a have a particular focal point. Lots of roads but not streets, squares and places of interest”*

This is not to say it was felt that Sprowston lacked a sense of place. Because if anything has come out of the workshops is that community is the glue that holds place together; and it is that we shouldn't be too prescriptive in our approach, because good places come about as a function of how people use them and evolve over time. What they need to be is adaptable and affordable.

What we have heard is that we have the opportunity to provide the framework for this to happen. We have the opportunity to create spaces for existing and new communities to live, work and play – that will foster new relationships and partnerships. This place should be characterised not by trying to distill the look and feel of other places in Norfolk, but by responding the challenges presented to us at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – for example the need to think differently about how we build and insulate our homes, how we supply and use energy and water, how we travel around, where and how we work.

### 7.2.2 What makes a good neighbourhood?

Initially outlining concerns, many stakeholders described traffic often being too fast and noisy, which was of concern especially at peak school times. There was a fear of new development being detached from existing communities and with poor links to city centres – a problem made worse by new supermarket-led developments. More generally there was general concern that much development in recent times had been of poor quality with impermeable layouts, poor quality public realm and a lack of facilities – leading to antisocial behaviour and litter problems in certain public spaces.

Discussions then focused around places people knew. There was consensus among stakeholders that good places need to be easily accessible with a variety of cultural, leisure, retail and business activities and services. These would preferably be located around a central market place with access to green space. As well as a clear centre and hierarchy of streets, it was agreed that places should take spatial realities and topography into account.

*“It’s got a market place in the middle. It’s a focal, shared space with a library, post office and it draws people into the town. A car has to wait or go round – it’s the nature of the town.”*

*“It’s amenities that make community. Local shops, post offices, pubs, restaurants, schools. We all interact in different ways and you have to give a breadth of opportunities for interaction.”*

*“The places we admire haven’t been planned – they’ve evolved very slowly over long period of time but without controls; the places we find ugly have been developed very quickly according to a plan”*

The Unthank Road was used as a good example:

*“It has everything you want. You can walk down the road, get a paper, bread from the bakery and meat from the butcher, but you can also walk to the city”*

It was agreed that a wide variety of activities needed to be catered for - both on and off streets and including the potential for public events. The provision of amenities would

*“The amenities and the community facilities are crucial. I live in spitting distance of 2 pubs, a post office and shops. I feel like part of the community.”*

*“A breadth of opportunity for different kinds of interaction”*

A range of different amenities were discussed as being important to a community, helping to encourage community involvement and participation even at small scales. Particular importance was given to their location within walking distance from people’s homes. Amenities discussed included:

First class schooling; doctor’s and dentist’s surgeries; community centres and youth clubs; open spaces, parks and woodland; local shops; active church/chapel; library and Sure Start centre; proximity and easy access to both city and countryside; pubs; quiet roads where it’s safe for kids to play; good convenient bus routes.

Stakeholders identified this development as an opportunity for a new type of neighbourhood but noted that it was important to make links with existing communities and learn from mistakes of other developments. It was felt that new

neighbourhoods could develop their own characters and identity setting new standards and developing a sense of safety and security, particularly if a clear vision was in place.

*“Creating liveliness is difficult! We’ve got used to having much more space per person. So we need to be clear – some places will be more vibrant than others – a new urban feel.”*

*“What makes a place work depends on what people do in it”*

*“There hasn’t been any vision or coherent thought process. It has been piecemeal. People are nervous of the ‘vision’ because the visioning of the 1950s didn’t turn out so well. It was like sociological experimentation which went badly wrong. This has meant there’s a cultural nervousness about ‘visioning’ ”.*

### **7.2.3 What contributes to good streets?**

Discussions focused on pedestrian priority in urban centres, with the integration of cycle routes and a rethink of parking in both residential streets and urban centres highlighted as particularly important. It was felt that streets need to maximise opportunities for interface and exchange, making visible the infrastructure of daily lives – helping people feel part of things and share responsibility for their streets. There was acknowledgment that parking would remain a hot topic for much of the design process, but that the idea of cars as guests and people first was popular:

*“Giving pedestrian priority to the whole space would really improve it – let traffic through but give pedestrians a clear visual priority”*

*“There’s a real lack of cycle ways because it’s a conservation area.”*

*“Be outstanding with how you deal with parking”*

*“Without provision people park all over the place – be realistic about the likely use of cars”*

*“People like to see their parked cars – therefore need for parking within their curtilage”?*

*“I’d make a strong vote for charging for on street parking – potential revenue stream for management which could be valuable”*

Many references were made to streets which were terraced or referred to more traditional types, which engendered a sense of community.

*“I live in a very narrow street which is a shared surface and no through traffic – it has pedestrian cuts through. It’s a more human scale than a traditional estate*

*street. People live nearby. You have the opportunity to get to know people in a less formal way than having to be invited round”*

*“A traditionally designed late Georgian street. That environment creates a sense of community. A really important thing is front gardens and people can walk by and interact”*

*“The missing thing is kids playing in the road. When my kids were young I encouraged them to play football in the street. We had to keep jumping out of the way of cars”*

#### **7.2.4 Facilities and Business Opportunities**

The integration of business plots into residential areas and the promotion of mixed use development was seen as a positive move, with opportunities for a range of different working environments – from home working and small business as well as to being able to attract some ‘big’ business:

*“I like the idea of a home where I – and perhaps a couple of people – can work – with proper office facilities”*

*“In Norwich there are some very large industrial sheds in the middle of housing areas and there’s no sense of blight whatsoever”*

*“Broadland Business Park is the second largest employment in the area. We should think about re-embracing business parks”; “Residential development has crept up around purpose built ‘Business sheds’ in the locality”*

*“Co-locating activities is important – footfall helps to stimulate enterprise”*

*“The needs of different levels of business in different sectors need to be met”*

*“There’s a big overhang of old space in the city centre but very little meets the aspirations and image of green businesses”*

*“All the growth locations should be mixed use”*

#### **7.2.5 Built form and typologies**

The conversations focused on the need for any new development to provide the highest quality of design and construction. There was a wish for a high diversity of housing types, making this not only a good selling point, but also allowing for adaptable homes and design for different needs (the elderly, for example). It was felt that this package also needed to be genuinely affordable, given the current economic climate and outlook. It became clear in discussions that people found it hard to pinpoint a particular Norfolk vernacular and the conversations focused on the need

for a range of high quality buildings and distinctive design which gave a new place a unique identity:

*“Key issue is about finding the form first...then beauty will grow out of this”*

*“Solar power on new builds to fit in with style and design but not on older buildings”*

*“I don’t have a front garden which I think is beneficial as I am forced to talk to people.”*

*“Mix terraces, detached. Needs to be good quality – if you have density you must have easy access to amenities.”*

*“We don’t want pastiche Norfolk homes. A new development should create its own identity. Maybe some references like dutch gabling, but not Poundbury.”*

*“We need adaptable housing for ageing people. Most don’t want to move into specialist accommodation.”*

*“Norfolk vernacular is quite diverse and diffuse” – “any attempt to condense it into an essence of Norfolk is doomed to failure”;*

*“Build it and they will come provided you build it nicely – and build a full range”*

### **7.3 NEXT STEPS**

The discussions suggested a set of potential next steps for Beyond Green to consider. These include:

- Identify a range of spaces and opportunities within the public realm, working with Gehl Architects to develop an identity for the development
- Develop urban design options that have a dense urban grain but are also very green, as well as a mix of uses and facilities
- Ensure that connections to centres are made clear – prioritise modes of transport and make explicit connections between the residential and mixed use areas.
- Develop a range of street typologies to explain what the streets will be like. Ensuring reference to traditionally scaled streets which encourage interaction and that trees and green spaces are part of the streetscape and public realm.
- Alongside an integrated mixed-use strategy for the neighbourhood centers, develop a range of building typologies which are adaptable. Looking to

popular existing housing typologies, whilst ensuring the designs can provide a range of housing types.

**June-July 2011**

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Participants in the stakeholder workshops and visitors to public exhibitions at three fetes were invited to participate in an interactive survey about their ideal future community. Over 150 people took part.

Survey participants were asked eight questions about their ideal future community:

1. What spaces are important to you?
2. How do you want to get around?
3. What's most important to you in a home?
4. What public services will people need most?
5. What sort of shops will we need?
6. Where might people work?
7. How will we use resources better?
8. How do you imagine sourcing your food?

The full results of the survey are set out in appendix two. Participants made some interesting and clear preferences, the highlights of which are as follows:

- Participants advocated a wide range of open spaces, including a country park, areas of woodland and wildlife habitats. Many also voted for a town park and town square.
- Walking and cycling emerged as the preferred modes of transport, with participants considering 'safe streets' as the single most important space in a new community. While private cars were still considered an important part of people's lives, buses also featured prominently.
- The quality people valued most in a home was its being 'green and cheap to run' followed by having 'affordable mortgage or rent'. These reflect perhaps the current economic climate but also the recognition that greener homes have economic advantages – a win, win for householders. Participants preferred 'traditional' to 'modern' design and a significant minority would like to be involved in the design of their homes.
- Community centres and sports centres headed the list of community facilities, with secondary schools and public libraries also considered important to a new community.
- The results for shopping were particularly interesting: independent shops gained overwhelming support, followed by newsagents/convenience stores with, perhaps surprisingly, a farmers' market a close third and ahead of conventional supermarkets. Does this mean supermarkets have had their

day? Or is it that there are already enough of them in the area and people want greater choice and local character?

- When asked where people might work in the future, a strong preference emerged for shared workspaces, small workshops, and homeworking, all of which featured higher than either conventional office blocks or factories. This suggests the need for adaptable and innovative forms of localised business premises and support. It also illustrates how important excellent communications technology is enabling a strong local economy. Many respondents also envisaged people working outdoors – reflecting the importance of agriculture to the area.
- When asked how resources (energy, water and waste) could be used better in a new place respondents said that people would need to change their habits and behaviour to use less. A ‘site-wide clean energy network’ was also a high priority, as was ‘driving less’ – a recurrent theme throughout the consultation.
- As well as sourcing food from local shops, there was widespread support for ‘growing food at home’ (again perhaps reflecting tough economic times but also growing environmental awareness). A ‘community supermarket’ was preferred to another mainstream supermarket.

## APPENDIX 1: workshop attendees

At the workshops Beyond Green was joined by a broad range of stakeholders from statutory bodies, the local planning authority, academics, charities, healthcare, private sector developers and local and private planners. They were also joined by members of Beyond Green Developments' consultant team:

Paul Murrain – Urban Design

iCube – Urban Design

Gehl Architects (Copenhagen)– Public Realm Strategy

Bidwells (Norwich)– Planning

Colin Buchanan – Sustainable Movement

Peter Brett Associates – Resource Efficiency

Environmental Perspectives – Environmental Impact Assessment

Ecology Consultancy (Norwich) – Ecology

### WORKSHOP ATTENDEE LIST

Anglian Water

Bastin Steward Ltd

Broadland District Council

Broadland Land Trust

Church House

Environment Agency

Forestry Commission

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

Hudson Associates

Hyder Consulting

Land Trust

Local Design

Lucas Hickman Smith Ltd.

Millennium Babies Project

Natural England

NHS Norfolk

Norfolk Association of Architects

Norfolk Constabulary Police Architectural Liaison Service

Norfolk County Council

Norfolk Rural Community Council

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Norwich City Council

Norwich Cycling Campaign

Norwich International Airport

Norwich RFC

Norwich School  
NPS Planning Consultancy, Lancaster House  
NPS Property Consultants  
Norfolk Constabulary  
Old Catton Parish Council  
Operational Partnership Team  
Plan Local Consulting  
Salhouse Parish Council  
Smallfish  
South Norfolk Operational Partnership Team, Norfolk  
Constabulary  
Spixworth Parish Council  
Sprowston Clergy  
Stanley House  
Sustainable Living Initiative  
Townley and Bradby  
UEA Low Carbon Innovation Centre  
Unthank Road  
Walcis Farm  
Wherry Housing Association  
Wroxham FC

## APPENDIX 2: public interactive exercise results

### Beyond Green Developments survey June 2011

#### Help us plan the community of the future: what would feature in your ideal place?

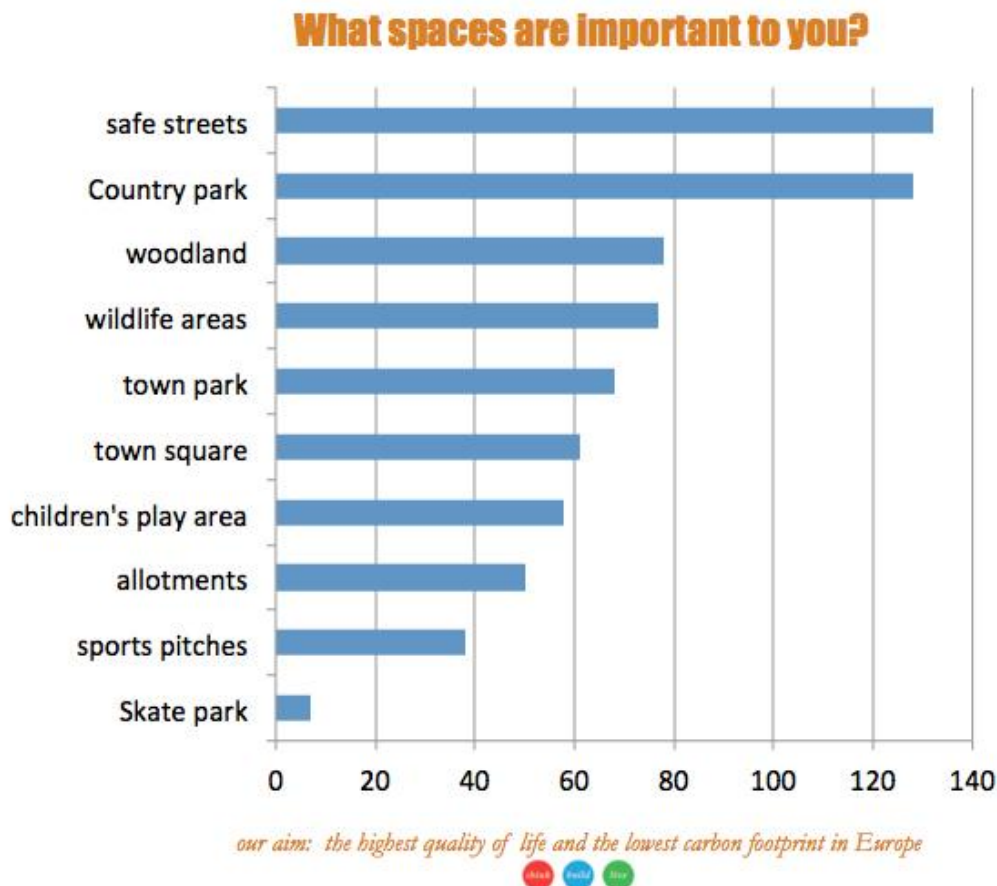
We asked participants eight questions:

1. What spaces are important to you?
2. How do you want to get around?
3. What's most important to you in a home?
4. As well as primary schools and GP's surgeries, what public services will people need most?
5. What sort of shops will we need?
6. Where might people work?
7. How will we use resources better?
8. How do you imagine sourcing your food?

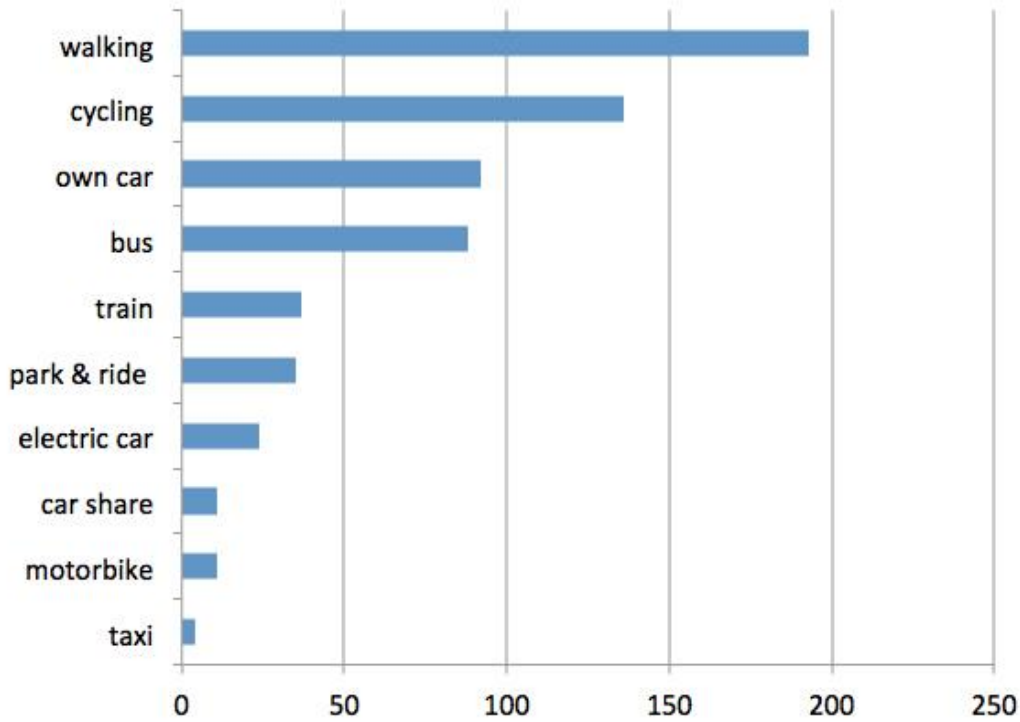
For each theme, participants had three votes to decide what they thought was most important in a new community. We counted the votes and scored them:

- 1stchoice: 3 points
- 2ndchoice: 2 points
- 3rdchoice: 1 point

The results were as follows...



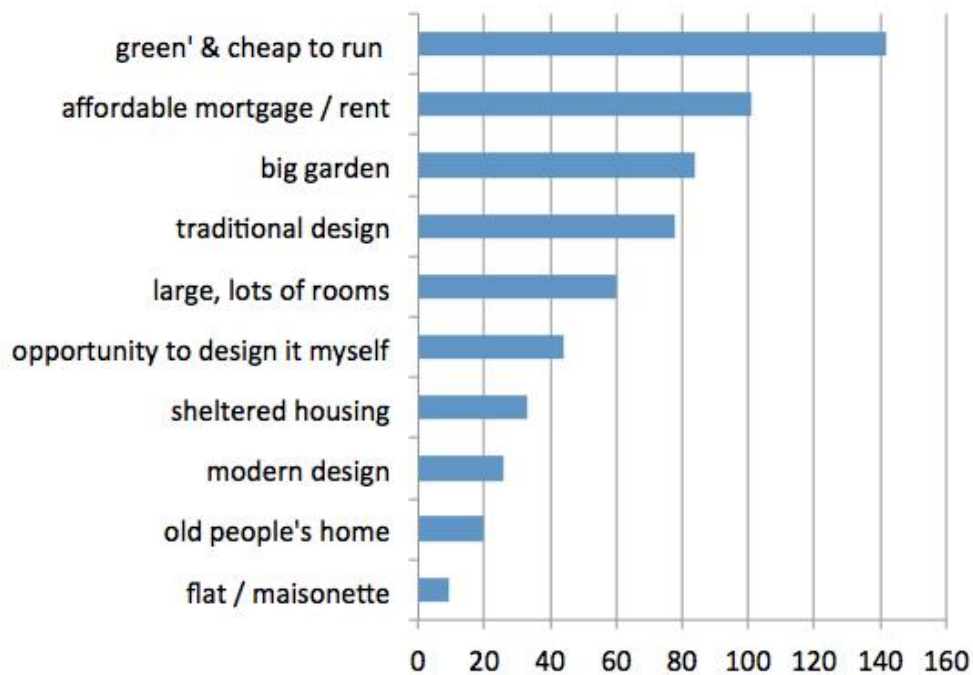
## How do you want to get around?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



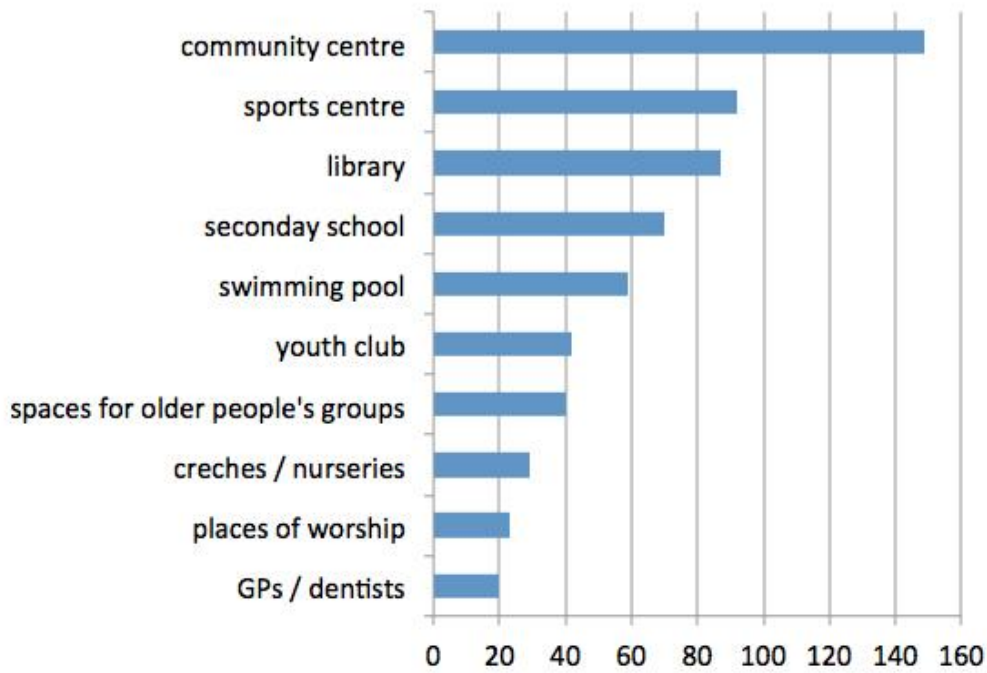
## What's most important to you in a home?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



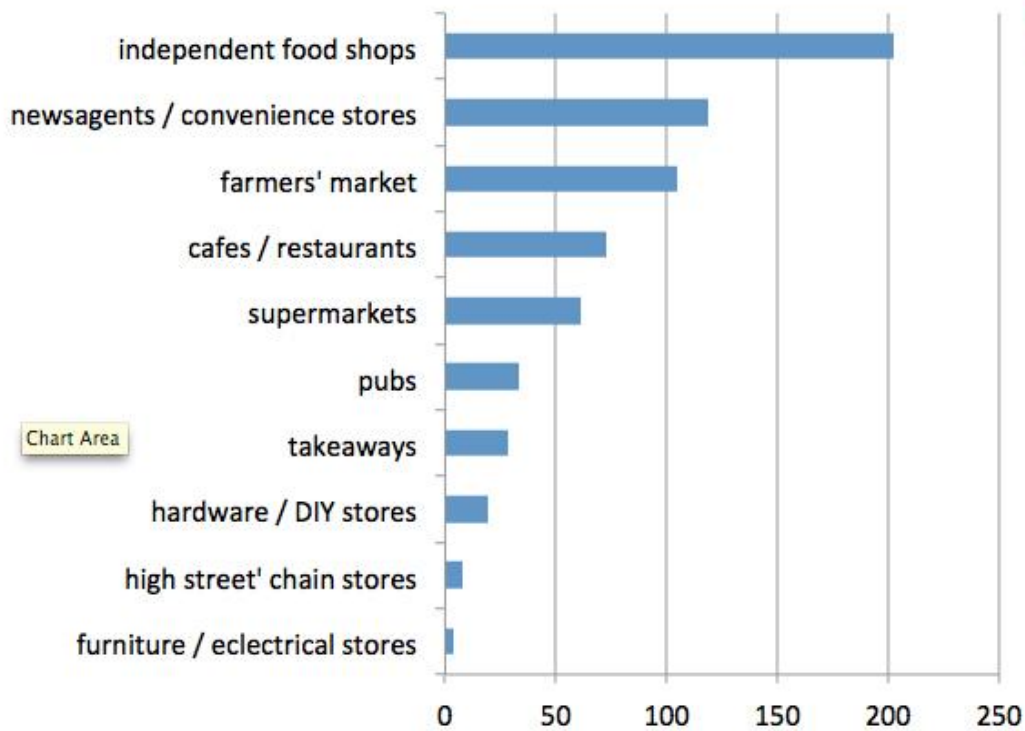
## As well as primary schools and GP's surgeries, what public services will a community need most?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



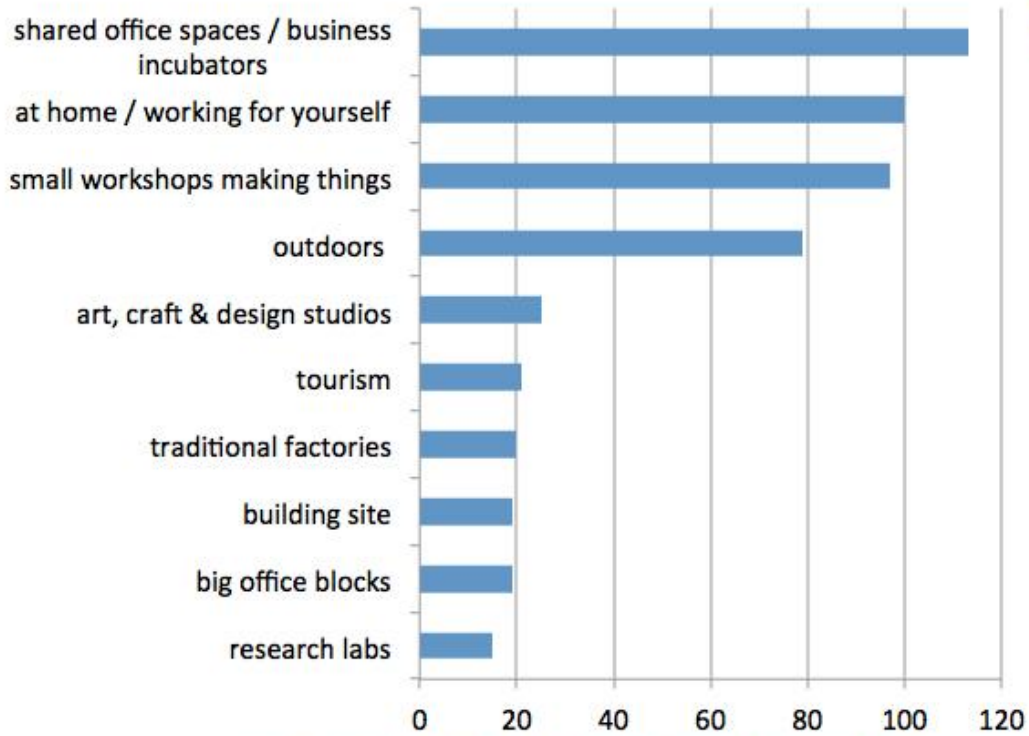
## What sort of shops will we need?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



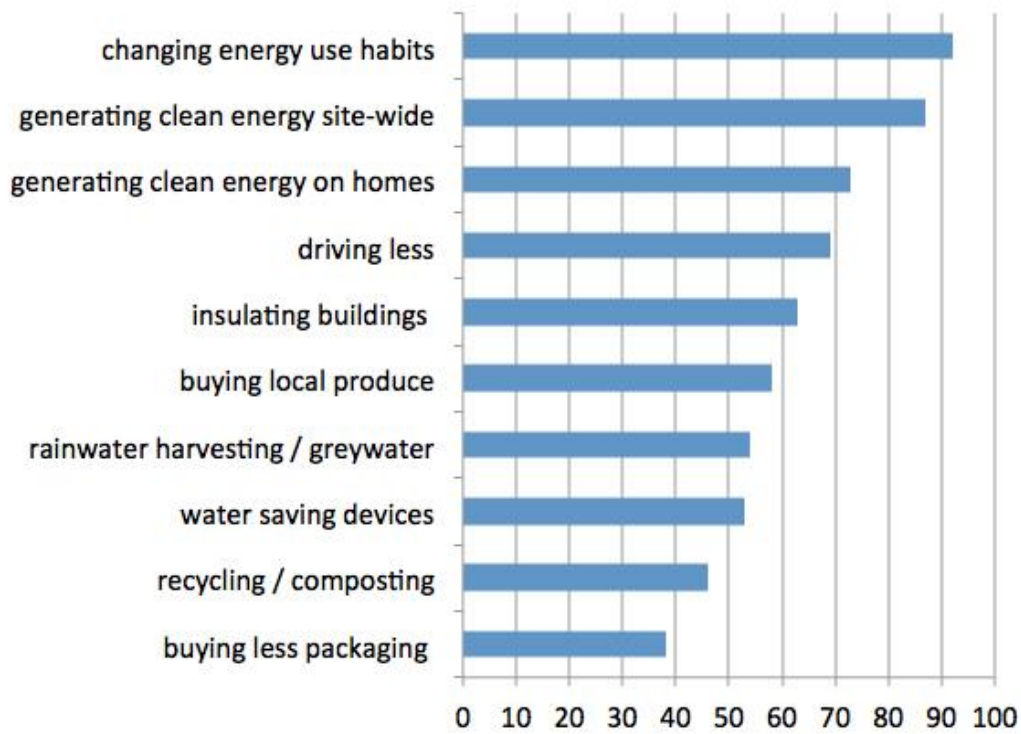
## Where might people work?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



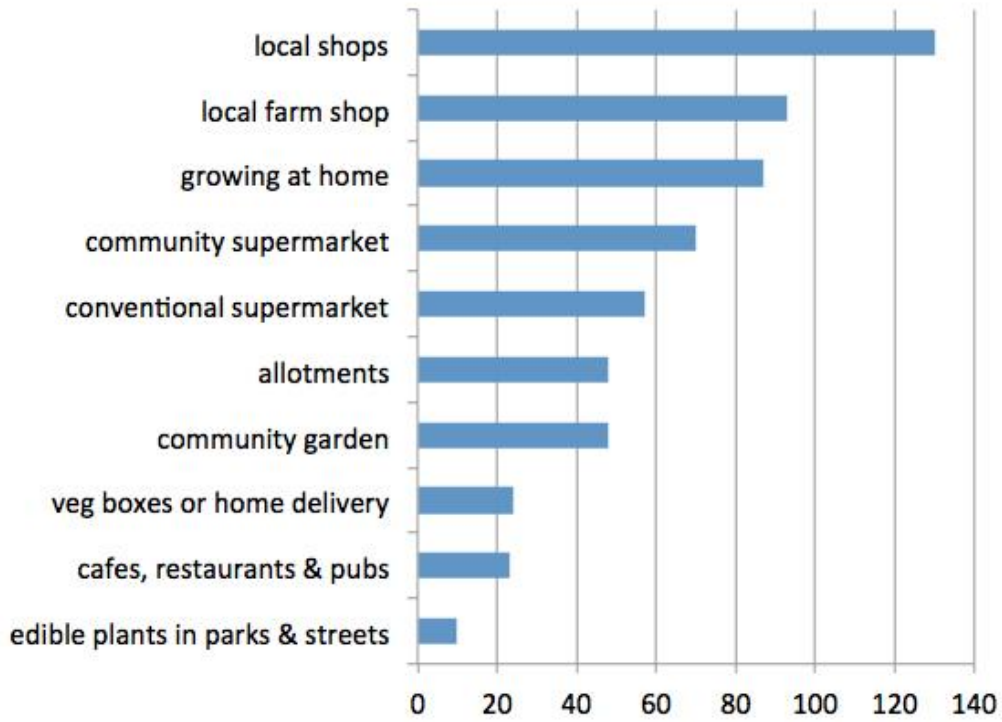
## How will we use resources better?



our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe



## How do you imagine sourcing your food?



*our aim: the highest quality of life and the lowest carbon footprint in Europe*

