

Roundtable 2:

The Mix, Stowmarket. 23 October 2018.

Supporting the needs of communities in the future

Headlines:

- Big demographic changes that we have to work with
- Give more power ability back to communities to do what they want rather than top down directives.. loosening uses.
- conversation/ engagement with communities.. how we get them on board? Still haven't got his approach correct.... really got their engagement or feedback.. Tom Barker worried about this. (Q is who are the community? Focus so far developers, Public Authorities but not communities since if we don't get them on board we will have failed.. think about local area forums which feed into neighbourhood forums)
- Nudging enabling. Encouraging certain behaviours. Intentional communities.
- Need big picture and let people work within this.
- Flexibility is key to allowing people to shape their places... encourage this and be positive about it.
- Future proofing is about allowing open ended outcomes so that opportunities are not killed, innovations allowed.
- How do you combine guidance nudging giving direction with allowing for more free decision making? Which allows for future changes.. how do communities have a say in this.
- Connectivity is crucial within and between settlements to allow possibilities.
- Thought leadership.... a vision of the future direction...too top down?
- New investment models.
- Design a system.. not masterplanning but servant planning. .. not top down but bottom up.
- Local plans measured against this vision but also should encourage it
- Q. Where does Suffolk Design sit? High level or low level or both !!

Yolanda Barnes:

Background to changing behaviours and demographic

Suffolk part of a global phenomenon of changing behaviour in society vis a vis Baby Boomers BB and Millennials ML

Driven by investment finance of BB generation: Pension funds invested in assets of big buildings/ grids which now have to pay out to BBs.

BBs want different things from previous generation as they retire. NORCs, (naturally occurring retirement communities), want good urban environments, walkable neighbourhoods with a lot going on, want to be less car reliant. Important role of technology, care robots.

Relevance to housing: not that every home needs to be a lifetime home because a lot of stock needs to be retrofitted – could be no wheelchairs in 20 years' time – solution has to be urban. Need to think about lifetime neighbourhoods not gated communities. Looking for diversity in houses so people can move in neighbourhood.

Dilemma of making things difficult is more healthy than easy movement ramps.. etc.

MLs will be generating income but lack capital and deposits. But aligned with BBs in what they are looking for in communities. Currently not much movement across sector because people are stuck... because of lack of capital and deposit across the world. BBs helping MLs get on ladder where they can. new and different types of tenure required and to be encouraged, CLTs, shared ownership to overcome lack of deposits. Owner occupiers perform the service of not costing housing benefit. If people are in lifetime renting the housing benefit bill will be astronomical when MLs retire. Capital rich baby boomers need to help millennials into housing – repurposing of semi-detached on suburban plots – mews to downsize to. Cost of moving to downsize too much. Incidence of let to rent – letting a small owned flat to rent a family home. Various innovative forms of ownership CLTs, shared ownership to overcome lack of deposits. Potential for new ways of development rather than standard.. should enable new ways of doing things in addition to top down stuff (which isn't working anyhow)

Patrick Devlin:

Importance of good place making eg: Google headquarters in Kings Cross – a development where young people wanted to be. Applies equally to older people. We didn't do this as telly-conference. Good news for architects.

Rural change – houses from farm labourers to commuters – so transport.

Questions for SDG:

- What is potential for balanced communities?
- What size can small communities support in terms of services?
- How can they be connected? eg: Oxford, MK, Cambridge Arc
- Life time homes... a question or is it diversity ... or both
- Are current plans fit for purpose?
- Do use classes inhibit flexibility adaptability?
- At what walkable scale can things be provided?

Other changes happening:

Retirement and old age:

- Belgium – middle of each village had an apartment block – older people's developments, moved out with a lift up to door but still in middle of community they always lived in. Others questioned whether this was appropriate response.
- No retirement age now – Barnet – older women's co-housing – 4.5k emails showing demand for intentional communities - [are intentional communities driven by fear of compulsory communities]
- Lots of older people live in homes that are not great to live in – leads to bed-blockers
- If you want me to move out need to show me something close to where I already live
- In US, Aus, NZ retirement housing is 6-7% of market – 0.5% here.

What does all this mean for Suffolk which is 43% rural with villages?

Thoughts on villages

- What is opportunity in a typical rural community?
- What could be the hub of a village ? Not now post office or bank.
- Village Hall needs new model
- Most village halls not sustainable because people don't want them
- at a certain level community can run a 'hub' where commercial operation can't.
- Community concierge – somewhere you can get your bike fixed, get a coffee, drop off deliveries – shared workspace – meeting room to hire.
- decentralised - one village as a hub
- villages need more housing
- villages want 5, 10, houses – housebuilders want 100+
- Not urban but dense and walkable

What makes successful places?

- Use classes too specific.. doesn't allow flexibility of use. Mixed use places... fine grain messy stuff is seen in successful places.. lots of different uses..
- successful places have simple spaces that can be re-used.
- planners need to set place, house builders build the houses.
- all housebuilders talking about place – you turn up and see the neighbourhood
- What does good design look like – pretty or good neighbourhoods.
- What doesn't work
- but in Plymouth .. good placemaking by planners but undermined by housebuilders bidding against each other.

What we need to address

- Health - We are talking same language but not connected with built environment. designing health and social care together around local populations
- Are current local plans fit for this future?
- Opportunity of neighbourhood plans.. grassroots movement .. how do you get people involved in these.
- Growth needed is large scale plus 3-20 house to support smaller communities.. not to be swamped. Emphasis more on connectivity and placemaking.
- how we move to sustainable transport?
- retail dying what brings people into communities is changing
- Driverless cars
- affordability of running homes
- Need younger people involved.
- Need to involve SALC – town and village forums
- discussion with communities around community hubs

Driving:

- Young people driving – license applications down nationally but question whether this is happening in Suffolk
- Is number of young people applying for licenses going down a target
- driving is a life skill
- model is about putting cars in communities

Exemplars and models for settlements and housing:

- Hub and spoke model of villages
- Cambridge /MK/Oxford arc,
- Florence – student hotel scheme (previously a palace, then civic service office, now used for different things at different times – student accom. let out in vacations – needed other facilities – study rooms, conf. facilities – hi tech businesses happy to have students there – schoolkids come to do homework in study areas – serious investor in this because need long term net income schemes)
- massive move to PRS
- Unite market leaders of student housing but Goldman Sachs moving in
- block chain as a way of changing the model of ownership

How design guidance might work or needs to be:

- Intentional planning .. positive steps to identify behaviours we want to influence .. nudging,, think about principles which encourages this.. some villages will stay the same ,, some will grow but need to allow this? What are outcomes we need to influence and see...
- We've been too top down.. communities can look after themselves..
- its only planning if we predict the future and cater for it
- Design guides are too top down – design a system
- developing a guide not the object – plea to those people round the table
- guidance needs to say what we are responding to
- how do we draw this (all above) into something realistic for design guide

Miscellaneous

- Suffolk known for thought leadership will attract and retain the right people

Attendees:

Andrew Cuthbertson, Suffolk County Council

Cllr Gerard Brewster, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Jack Boswell-Joel, BECG

Joshua Holmes Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Kate Lowe, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Keith Moore, Environment Agency East Anglia
Mark Chapman, Taylor Wimpey - East Anglia
Nick Khan, East Suffolk Councils
Sandie Robinson, West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group
Simon Phelan, West Suffolk Councils
Sophie Pryor, Carlyle Land and CEG
Cllr Susan Glossop, St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Tom Barker, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Professor Yolande Barnes, The Bartlett Real Estate Institute, UCL
Zoey Banthorpe, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Carols Hone, Ipswich Borough Council
Philip Ridley, East Suffolk Councils
David Collinson, West Suffolk Councils
Karen Chapman, Suffolk Growth Programme Board
Anthony Hudson, Hudson Architects
Jen Bundock, Hudson Architects/SDG Project Manager
David Tittle, Design South East
Chris Lamb, Design South East
Wayne Hemmingway, Hemmingway Design

Speakers:

Professor Yolande Barnes, The Bartlett Real Estate Institute, UCL
Patrick Devlin, Pollard Thomas Edwards