

Shaping Neighbourhoods – Tool Summary

Authors

Add details of authors and organisation, indicating their origin in academia, industry or government.

Name	Organisation	Origin
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Info

Date:

2003 (reviewed), 2010 (latest edition)

Place of origin:

United Kingdom

Homepage:

<http://www.bne.uwe.ac.uk/who/shapingneighbourhoods.asp>

<http://environment.uwe.ac.uk/sustainable-settlements/neighbour.htm>

References:

- Barton, H. (ed.), 2000. Sustainable Communities: The Potential for Eco-neighbourhoods illustrated edition, Earthscan Ltd.
- Barton, H., Grant, M. & Guise, R., 2003. Shaping neighbourhoods: a guide for health, sustainability and vitality, London, UK: Spon Press.
- Barton, H., Grant, M. & Guise, R., 2010. Shaping Neighbourhoods: for local health and global sustainability 2nd ed., Routledge.

Latest use:

2010 book has “several new case studies”. Date of individual case studies is not specified.

Download:

Not available

Description

'Shaping Neighbourhoods for local health and global sustainability' by Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise, responds to a changing agenda in government policy and planning practice, putting issues of climate change and obesity at the centre of its concern. The first edition has proved its worth over the past five years for students and practitioners alike. The new edition deepens and extends the old with new research, more on local urban form, new tools and inspiring case studies - as well as orientating strongly towards health and climate change issues.

“This guide is concerned with enhancing the quality of neighbourhoods as places to live, work and play. The three basic goals of health, sustainability and vitality provide the starting points for planning and design policy.

Neighbourhoods are the localities in which people live. Aspirations for neighbourhoods are surprisingly consistent amongst people with very different lifestyles.

We all want neighbourhoods that are attractive, safe, healthy and unpolluted, with high quality local facilities, access to green spaces, and excellent connections to other areas. For some people - particularly the old and young and those who are home-based throughout the day - the neighbourhood is vitally important for health and well-being.

This neighbourhood guide is designed as a desktop manual for planners, designers, developers and community groups. It provides an integrated picture of sustainable, healthy neighbourhoods, with a wealth of specific detail that can help local decision-makers, and people who are concerned about those decisions, get to grips with the issues.” (2003)

“Hugh Barton explains, "Our new edition takes into account significant concerns that have become central to planning decisions in recent years. We need to develop buildings and infrastructures that are both sustainable and promote healthy lifestyles.

"The book is aimed at students, planners, designers, health practitioners and community groups so it has a wide appeal. The planning process needs to encompass a broad range of outlooks particularly in the light of dwindling natural resources and the alarming reality of climate change caused by over reliance on fossil fuels. Sedentary lifestyles are brought about largely by transport and land use patterns dedicated to the car and we need to motivate a joined up planning approach that encourages regular exercise and stronger communities."

'Shaping Neighbourhoods' provides an understanding of the underlying principles for planning healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods and towns. Readers can learn how to plan the collaborative and inclusive processes needed for multi-sectoral cooperation and develop know-how and skills in matching local need with urban form. The book also looks at new ways to integrate development with natural systems and designing places with character and good urban form. Last but by no means least 'Shaping Neighbourhoods' guides communities and advises developers in the creation of successful and sustainable places for living.

Containing many new case studies and a wealth of new research, this indispensable guide bridges the gulf between theory and practice, between planning authorities, investors and communities, and between different professional perspectives.” (2010)

Key Theoretical Background

Hugh Barton and his team have been researching the topic since the 90s and this guide is a corollary that gathers the theory and principles put forward in previous work. The research in general is strongly based in UK policy, planning practice, urban reality and statistics, as are most case studies. But also draws some key references from work from other countries. The starting point is the three pillars of sustainable development:

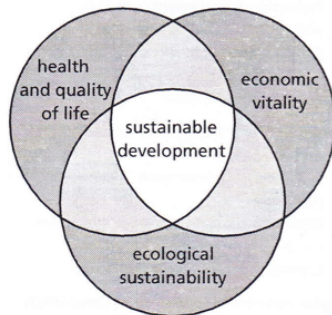


Figure 1.1
Searching for sustainable development
The trefoil diagram does not imply a weak trade-off between social, economic and environmental priorities, but the need to find solutions that marry all three

SUD Framework

In this guide the conceptual model is based on the idea of the neighbourhood as an ecosystem with several layers, from the most intimate smaller scale of people, to the global larger scale of natural resources.

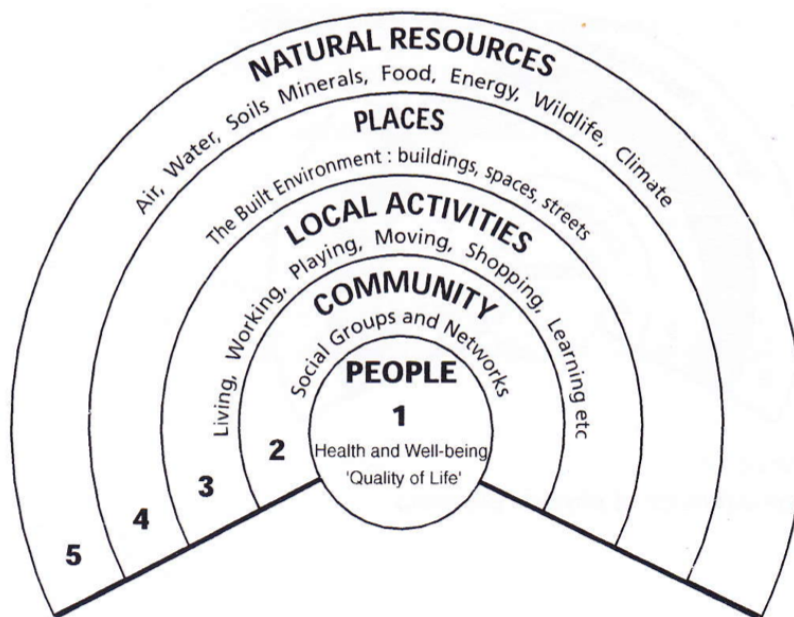


Figure 1.4
Ecosystem model of a neighbourhood

Human society:

- 1- People
- 2- Community
- 3- Local Activities

Human habitat:

- 4- Places
- 5- Natural Resources

There are synergies and impacts between these layers, and the aim of the guide is to advise on best practice for each layer, and highlight the relations.

Input

There is no specific input requirement, but specifies various documents that need to be produced during the design process, which will provide evidence of the project's performance.

Methods

There are two main checklists (Chapter 2), one for the community to assess the existing neighbourhood requirements in the pre-design phase, and one for investors to assess the development site and context in the pre-design phase and the potential impact of the development in a design concept phase. It also refers the BRE Development checklist, a predecessor of the BREEAM Communities assessment tool reviewed elsewhere in this work, for project impact assessment.

The guide specifies a planning process for sustainable development (Chapters 3 and partly 6), describing the several stages and the specific concerns regarding sustainability, all in the form of categories of topics and checklists. In this process it points to standards described elsewhere in the book.

It's the collection of these principles (Chapters 4, 5 and partly 6) that make up the evaluation criteria to guide the design phase. The guide doesn't offer specific analysis methods, but seeks to establish best practice principles and priorities making recommendations for standards and benchmarks, presented in summary tables and diagrams based on policy, statistics, other research and case studies. It presents by example or refers to possible analysis methods.

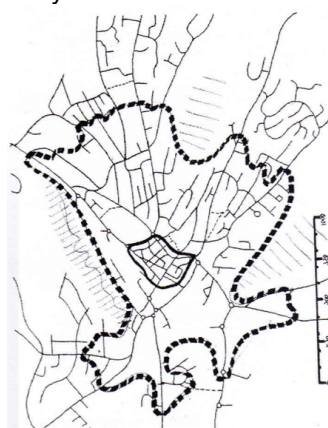


Figure 4.8
Catchment analysis

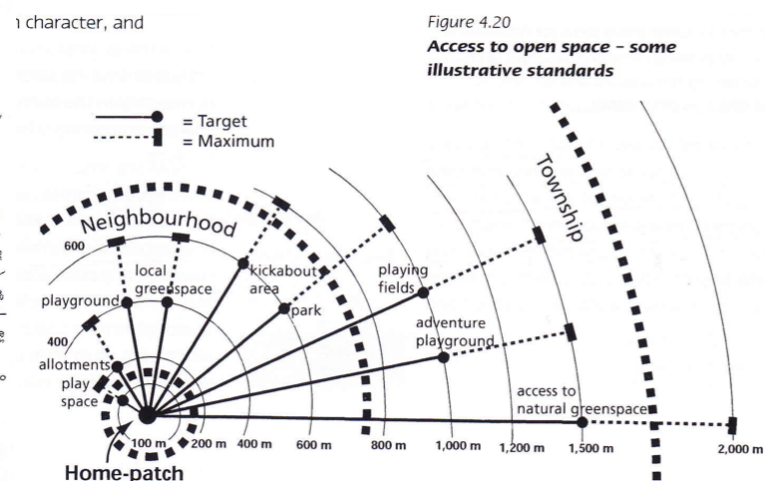


Figure 4.20
Access to open space - some
illustrative standards

Output

Does not offer any specific evaluation output, it's the result of the planning process and design project, including a "spatial framework" and "design codes". Eventually, some of the suggested methods have their specific outputs.

Shaping Neighbourhoods – Tool Review

Comments on the tool regarding the various assessment criteria.

General

Application (Scale and Design Phase)

The guide is intended to give a good overview of the planning process, and sets a range of design principles and priorities towards sustainability. It includes a variety of checklists for different phases but none specifically for evaluating during the design phase.

The investor's checklist is designed for 3 stages of the development process. The first is about the development location and makes interesting links with the wider region and context, which are helpful in design. The second checklist is for context analysis and verifies that the process covered the relevant topics. The third is about the impact of the development, and as such more directly relevant to design. It doesn't provide design indicators, but sustainability indicators: has an issue been dealt with, rather than if it has been dealt with in a specific design way.

The overall structure is not immediately clear, this can be confusing if trying to use the guide for a simple and direct evaluation.

Sustainability Principles

It clearly establishes the relation and distinction between sustainability goals and design principles. Which leaves the process more open to different designs, by not compounding the design into sustainability.

OBJECTIVES	DESIGN PRINCIPLES					
	Stakeholder involvement	Increase local autonomy	Connectivity	Diversity	Response to place	Adaptability
Social						
1. Community	●	●	○	○	○	○
2. Equity	○	○	○	●		
3. Healthy living	○	●	●	○		
4. Safety/security	○		●	○		○
5. Choice	○	●	●	●	○	○
6. Local decision making	●	●	○		●	●
Economics						
7. Wealth creation	○	○	●	○		○
8. Employment	○	●	●	○		○
Environmental						
9. Environmental quality	○			●	●	○
10. Wildlife and countryside	○		○	●	●	
11. Natural resources	○	●			●	●
12. Greenhouse gases	○	●	○	○		

If this makes any sense, that's another question! It's a highly complex and abstract exercise.

But there isn't a mapping of the design principles nor the sustainability objectives to the ecosystem model, which leaves this level hanging and completely separate from the rest of the more detailed design guidance. Which is based on said ecosystem model of the neighbourhood.

Assessment Criteria

There is no clear set of criteria and everything is cross-referenced. This highlights the dependencies and synergies, but also creates a degree of repetition and overlap.

Indicators and Methods

There isn't a clear list of indicators for design evaluation but rather tables and lists of principles.

Although it doesn't offer a specific method, there are several principles that indicate how one should go about analysing and measuring things.

If we consider all the indicator lists available, one could extract a set of indicators. Maybe the amount of repetition in itself is an indication of the importance of certain topics.

The neighbourhood appraisal checklist, which originally brought me to this work is not suitable for design evaluation as the large majority of indicators relate to collection of information with stakeholders and site data of various types. Can be a useful tool for creating the programme, and a sustainable one at that, or to evaluate the programme and the programme creation process itself.

Output

Nothing to say as there is no specific output.

Specific topics

Urban Form

At the most detailed level proposes the use of design codes and some other normative measures like density gradients. These are to be associated to the important points in the networks.

The centre is not assumed to be in the middle, on the contrary is suggested that it should be at the edges where the greatest movement routes are located.

Mobility and Accessibility

A great deal of importance is given to aspects of mobility and accessibility. In particular specific methods for calculating catchment are suggested. All transport modes are extensively covered. Several tables cover access to different amenities and services, with standard distances. It addresses a very comprehensive range of facilities.

Local/Global Context

Great importance is given to the context. The notion of complementarity with other neighbourhoods is introduced, so it doesn't advocate the neighbourhood as a complete unit.

Also gives consideration to access to the region in terms of jobs and

Has a multi-scale model of the neighbourhood, and considers interactions across those scales.

It also accepts that there are different neighbourhoods.

Discusses the definition of neighbourhood itself, how to define its boundary. Sticks to the natural and urban character limits principle, although defined in part by the population.