

# Turner & Townsend reveals the true definition of "Sustainable Places"

Submitted by: Turner & Townsend

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Findings published this month in a report on urban regeneration practice commissioned by construction and management consultants Turner & Townsend highlight the need for greater co-ordination of government regeneration policy and the urban design agenda in order to avoid simply recycling poverty in UK cities. Entitled "Towards more Sustainable Places", the research was conducted on behalf of Turner & Townsend by the University of Aberdeen's Department of Land Economy and Kevin Murray Associates, supported by the RICS Foundation.

Turner & Townsend's David Hogg said, "Turner & Townsend has been involved in urban regeneration projects for over 15 years, including many ground-breaking schemes such as Glasgow's Crown Street and Raploch, Stirling which is set to be the first ever Scottish Urban Regeneration Company. We are often struck by the sheer confusion that exists within the industry about definitions, roles and responsibilities. This piece of research has given us the ability to make a positive contribution to the debate and make recommendations for achieving best practice."

The final report is the culmination of intensive interviews with 40 urban regeneration practitioners from a diversity of roles including the ODPM, community leaders, Urban Regeneration Companies and Regional Development Agencies into the significance of sustainable places, partnerships and skills in urban regeneration. It draws on experience gained in the key cities of Edinburgh, Birmingham, Liverpool and London and covers three key areas of sustainable place-making, partnerships and skills.

Phil Allmendinger, Head of Dept of Land Economy at the University of Aberdeen, said: "Previous government policy has resulted in an over-focus on density and landmark buildings in urban environments rather than the creation of places where people actually want to live. There is a huge job to be done in longer-term delivery of regeneration projects and it is essential that we understand where lessons need to be learned. Our research has created a typology of partnerships to help identify the most successful models of delivery."

The report reveals how the success of partnerships is frequently hampered by inequalities of power between government and public sector agencies, private sector partners and communities, with agendas characterised by 'silo mentality' and a focus on short-term output-driven goals. It highlights how regeneration practitioners are well-placed to deliver on the sustainable communities plan because of their wide ranging professional backgrounds and complex skill-sets, yet frequently suffer from complacency and a lack of fresh thinking.

Turner & Townsend has made a series of key recommendations as a result of the findings, including:

- The need for independent analysis and strategic support in establishing Partnership Action Plans, monitoring and benchmarking criteria to improve effectiveness.
- The need for a National Centre of Excellence supported by Regional Learning Partnerships to share best practice and provide a mixture of vocational training and CPD to support pure academic qualifications.
- The establishment of cross-professional secondments to improve understanding and nurture the right mixture of 'hard' and 'soft' skills.

David Hogg concludes, "Sustainable regeneration is often confused with redevelopment. In Glasgow's Crown Street Regeneration Project in the Gorbals, the community 'embeddedness' is starting to take place. This is because of the introduction of a mixture of new private and social housing together with new businesses and community facilities. The project has been so successful that people are queuing to purchase properties off the plans. More importantly, however, many of the early house purchasers are buying new properties in the later phases. The project has successfully changed the image of the area and created a place where people now wish to live and work. That is what we mean by sustainable places."

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Notes to Editors:

Turner & Townsend provide the full spectrum of professional consultancy services required of any Urban Regeneration project by:

- Providing project management services through all stages of the project
- Undertaking project monitoring services
- Providing commercial and cost consultancy services
- Preparing Business Cases, development briefs and strategic documentation
- Undertaking Risk Analysis and Value Management
- Advising on private sector funding and the Private Finance Initiative
- Assisting Clients with masterplanning, assessment of delivery strategies, project planning and co-ordination
- Utilising resources from a variety of backgrounds within the Construction and Property industry, with real experience of Urban regeneration

Turner & Townsend are involved in some of the country's most ground breaking and pivotal urban regeneration and sustainable developments including:

- The Crown Street Regeneration Project. For over 11 years, T&T has assisted the three client partners in the redevelopment of a 40 acre brownfield site in the Gorbals area of Glasgow and delivered one of the largest Urban Regeneration projects in the UK.
- T&T were recently appointed to provide Project Management services to Sunderland arc, the urban regeneration company set up to regenerate the city of Sunderland in the North East of England. The £1.2bn project is well underway with a total of 15 sites earmarked for redevelopment.
- T&T are providing Project and Cost Management services within a team responsible for the delivering a mixed use development strategy comprising a special model, development framework detailed

Development/design Code for Ashford, one of the four growth areas in the South East identified by the Sustainable Communities Plan.