

Conditions for healthy and sustainable communities - a spatial auditing approach

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STRATEGIES FOR
CHANGE

The Oxford
Health Alliance

The project team

A project bringing together:

- Arup Sustainability
- Tony Capon, Oxford Health Alliance
- Sue Holliday, Strategies for Change

Bringing together three disciplines to foster integrated thinking:

- Sustainability policy
- Public and Environmental Health
- Planning

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Healthy and sustainable cities – why we need to think differently

What we know:

- The environment affects how we live, how we feel and who we interact with
- Environmental flows and the local ecology are impacted on by lifestyle and vice versa – water, energy, waste, mosquito pn, air quality
- Making different lifestyle choices is difficult when not supported by enabling design
- Feedback loops – from vicious to virtuous cycles

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Healthy and sustainable cities – why we need to think differently cont...

What we don't often know locally and in detail:

- How we can affect our environment to lead to better outcomes
- How can we re-vision the way we live to amplify good feedback loops
- What things need to change locally in any one location

The challenge for decision-makers:

- Type of information typically collected
- Political/bureaucratic boundaries affecting spatial decisions
- Lack of join-up in how policy is made about issues – does not mirror how people experience the world

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Healthy and sustainable cities – why a spatial audit?

Overcoming the challenges requires a new spatial understanding.

How all elements of a place interact:

- Physical conditions
 - Resource flows
 - Policy conditions
 - Governance structures
 - Infrastructure
 - Density
 - Built Form
 - Cultural, social and economic institutions and access points
- Designed to enable application across political/bureaucratic boundaries



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Healthy and sustainable cities spatial audit – how is this different?

• Policy approaches alone can miss critical spatial opportunities and disconnects

• Traditional spatial analysis does not always ask the right questions

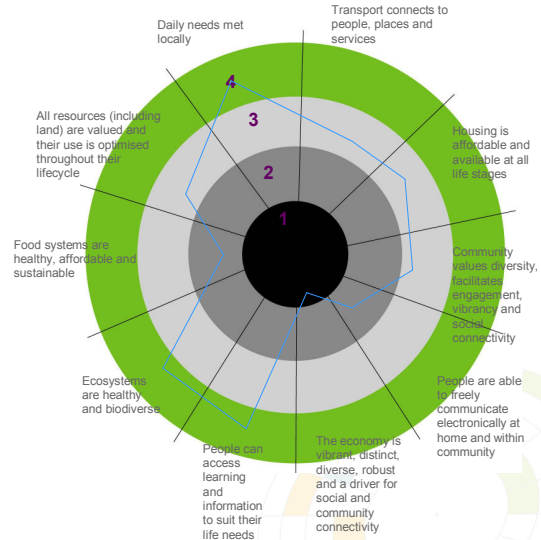
- Combining sustainability and health policy objectives
- Seeing these through a spatial lens
- Explicitly considering issues across existing boundaries
- Contextualising audit outcomes in both strategic policy and regional spatial terms

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The audit – what is it?

- ‘Conditions’ for healthy and sustainable communities - spatial and process / institutional conditions
- Audit tools linked to each condition
- Matrix approach - auditing each condition against each other and against the locale
 - Audit outcomes matched to health and sustainability objectives
 - Recommendations for strategic and spatial re-ordering

Governance



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The conditions in summary - spatial

1. *Everyday needs can be met locally*
2. *Reliable transport connects to people, places and services*
3. *Housing is available and affordable at all life stages*
 - Access
 - Connectivity
 - Transport reliability, frequency, safety, timeliness
 - Being able to remain in the community



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The conditions in summary - spatial

4. *The community values diversity, facilitates engagement, vibrancy and social connectivity*
5. *People are able to freely communicate electronically from home and within the community*
6. *The economy is vibrant, distinct, diverse, robust and a driver for community and social connectivity*
7. *People can access learning and information to suit their life needs*
 - Degree of local self-sufficiency.
 - Creating a place where people want to be



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The conditions in summary - spatial

8. *Ecosystems are healthy and biodiverse*
9. *Food systems are healthy, affordable and sustainable*
10. *All material resources (including land) are valued and their use optimised throughout their life-cycle*
 - Carbon, energy, waste, water, air, environmentally sensitive materials, aggregates....



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The conditions in summary – process/institutional

- A. Governance structures (Copenhagen principles)
 - B. Champions and leaders from all walks of life
 - C. Thinking smart, doing smart
 - D. Opportunities for engagement and empowerment for individuals and communities
 - E. Impacts and opportunities are considered holistically
- *And.....*
 - Environmental justice – access to basic environmental health requirements

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Next steps

Our programme includes:

- Fine-tuning the principles
- Developing and assembling appropriate audit tools
- Suitable locale to trial the tool

Potential application:

- Local government areas and sub-regional areas in developed and developing countries

Comments:

- Keen for feedback on this approach to ensure it is both practical and meeting a need



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