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Rural Services Network, Nottingham Trent, 26-10-2010



Whose Urban (Rural) Fringe?



**The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme**

*Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region*



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M. Wishardt, S.Littlewood, & K.Thomas



Centre for Urban Development & Environmental Management



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The Team & Rationale

12 partners

5 countries

- **Belgium**
- **Netherlands**
- **Germany**
- **Sweden**
- **UK**

Aberdeen City Council

Leeds Metropolitan University (CUDEM)

City of Bradford (Airedale Partnership)

Norfolk County Council

A 3 year project 2009 - 2012, bringing together partners and experts from across the North Sea Region to exchange information and develop a common approach towards urban fringe areas.



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The problem: existing challenges

- Urban Fringes are areas typically;
- either neglected and undervalued
and/or under developmental pressure
 - administratively fragmented
 - with no distinct identity

although there is an emerging perception of their potential positive role and value as diverse and versatile with a significant contribution to make to **quality places and sustainable development**

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A more positive approach ?

“... the functions are combined within landscapes that form a rich mosaic around our towns and cities. ... full of local character and value, drawing on our natural and cultural heritage...”

... Supported by a strong strategic planning framework, the skills of land managers and the involvement of local communities.”

1. **A Bridge to the country**
2. **A Gateway to the town**
3. **A Health Centre**
4. **A Classroom**
5. **A Recycling and Renewable Energy centre**
6. **A Productive Landscape**
7. **A Cultural Legacy**
8. **A place for Sustainable living**
9. **An Engine for Regeneration**
10. **A Nature Reserve**

(Countryside In And Around Towns)

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Multifunctionality

- Which functions can be combined and which should be separated?
- Benefits and disadvantages of combining and separating functions
- Planning and governance framework for combining / separation
- Overstretching and retaining natural features
- Issues of ownership

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The SURF project brief

- To raise the profile of the urban fringe and develop specific strategies and policies designed to provide 'sustainable and competitive' futures for them

by gathering, analysing and interpreting local, regional and national contexts, generating new ideas and identifying best practice through supporting innovative interventions and projects in partner regions

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Specifically – designated themes

Economy, competitiveness, enterprise

- **Examining diverse business opportunities for the urban fringe, and how it can contribute to the competitiveness and sustainability of an area.**
- **Reducing the effects of climate change.**

Role and value of green spaces

- Looking at the benefits quality urban fringe green spaces bring to adjacent communities.
- Examining the pressures from urban development

Spatial Planning and stakeholders

- Addressing planning responsibilities for urban fringes which are frequently divided, uncoordinated and unclear

Governance

- **Addressing the governance of urban fringes which is often fragmented, difficult to identify and lacking transparency.**





The economy theme

- Making the Urban Fringe ‘pay its way’

How can the urban fringe be ‘more competitive’?

- The UF itself increases productivity, investment, innovation etc. (rural development models)
- The cities inside the UF become more competitive and this overflows into the UF (the UF as a passive beneficiary of urban dynamism)
- **The UF and the city complement each other in ways that raises overall productivity for the ‘city region’ (regional development)**

Looking for economic complementarities in city region settings





or a 'non-economic' approach (NE)

Table 10.3: The delivery of cultural services by different landscape features

Feature	History	Place	Inspiration	Calm	Leisure/ activities	Spiritual	Learning	Escape
Water, rivers streams	Low	Medium	High	High	High	High	Medium	High
Bogs & Marshes	Low		Low		Medium	Low	Medium	
Coast	Medium	High ⁽³⁾	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High
Mountains & Hills	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
Moorland	Low	High	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	High
Grassland ⁽¹⁾	Low		Low		Low	Low		
Woodland & Trees	Medium ⁽³⁾	Medium	High ⁽⁴⁾	High	High ⁽²⁾	High	Medium	High
Field Systems	High ⁽⁶⁾	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low	High
Hedges, walls, lanes	High	High	Low	High	Medium ⁽¹⁾	Medium ⁽⁹⁾	High ⁽¹⁾	
Villages	High	High	Low	Medium ⁽⁸⁾	High	Low	High	Medium



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Who benefits?

- What is the existing and potential economic importance of these areas and to whom?
- How can the economic position be improved without harming other functions / while also improving other functions?
 - e.g. opportunities for Urban Agriculture, Rural Entrepreneurship, Agro-Tourism?
- Policy context and issues of ownership and control

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The governance theme

- Making the urban fringe work better
 - Mutual-dependency of cities and urban fringes and rural areas
 - Co-ordinating functions and collaborative governance
 - What are effective tools and strategies for participation and stakeholder involvement in urban fringes?
 - Cooperation / task division with respect to decision making (e.g. urban vs rural municipalities)

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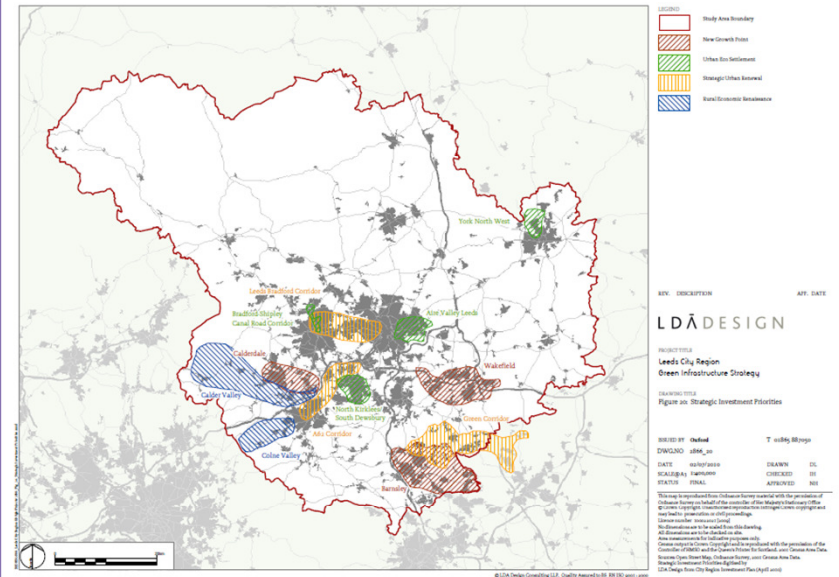
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**Bradford City Council,
Airedale Partnership**

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Project goals:

- Engage communities
- support entrepreneurship
- improve competitiveness