



Sharing Opportunities
for the urban edge

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Connecting Urban & Rural

A conference sharing the findings of the Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) Project is set to take place in Aberdeen, UK on 28 June 2012.

The one day event aims to highlight the competitive advantage offered by urban fringe areas and offers delegates the chance to find out more about the European urban fringe projects which have informed the project research and analysis programme.

This work has revealed opportunities for the urban fringe to contribute to the resilience and sustainability of cities and regions, by creating attractive recreational areas, improved greenspace and prospects for new employment opportunities.

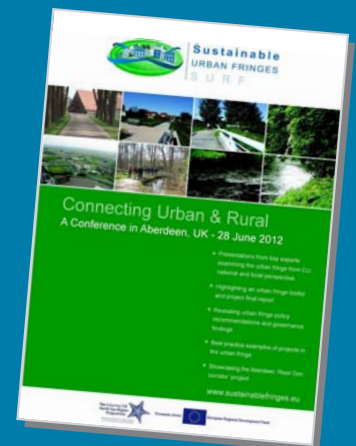
- Presentations from key experts
- Launching a new Urban Fringe Toolkit
- Revealing urban fringe policy recommendations
- Examining successful approaches to urban fringe management
- Sharing new thoughts on governance approaches
- Study tour of the Aberdeen 'River Don corridor' project



The event is aimed at practitioners, politicians and interested stakeholders.

To find out more or book a free place contact - Alison Leslie
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Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) was approved by the Interreg IVB Programme in September 2009. The project brings together partners from 5 countries across the North Sea Region.

The SURF project is split into 4 workpackages dealing with-

1 Project Management

2 Publicity & Communications

3 Review & Analysis

4 Testing & Implementation

Urban Fringe Workshops

New perceptions, functions & governance?

A series of urban fringe workshops were held at the Regional Studies Association European Conference in Delft on 14 May.

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project presented a series of 3 workshop sessions at the European event, with a theme of "New perceptions, functions and governance? The workshops aimed to explore the emerging challenges and perceptions of the urban fringe and the potential for new policies, tools and institutional arrangements.

There were 2 paper sessions looking at:

- Bridging the regional and local
- Locating the environment in the city-region fringe

An additional panel session shared learning from the experiences of SURF partners developing projects in the urban fringe. This work has shown how the urban fringe can contribute to the sustainable development of cities and regions.

Urban Resilience

A presentation on the SURF project and the value of the urban fringe in contributing to green and resilient cities was made to delegates attending the 2012 Resilient Cities Conference in Bonn, 12 - 15 May.

Report on Local Landscape

A recently produced State of the Environment report highlights the local importance of Norfolk's Gaywood Valley landscape, environment and wildlife.

Green Routes for Connectivity

The development of two new green routes has demonstrated the value of the urban fringe in providing residents in city regions with access to leisure and green spaces.

The "Rondje Enschede" route encircling the Dutch city of Enschede was opened in March. Aimed at cyclists, walkers and runners the 40 kilometre route, around Enschede, runs along the edge of the city providing a new leisure route and enhancing connectivity between urban communities.

Study Examines Ecosystems Approach

What are the financial, environmental and social benefits of protecting green spaces?

SURF partner Norfolk County Council was one of only 4 case studies selected to participate in the Embed project which aimed to measure the advantages of taking an ecosystems services approach and uncover the value of natural capital.

The Gaywood Valley project area was of interest to the study because it provides a comparison between options for flood alleviation. The project is also innovative in its approach of combining socio-economic issues with the management of land and water.

The project findings are outlined in a report titled, "Embedding an Ecosystems Approach in Decision Making". Find out more at www.embed.org.uk



To raise awareness of the route a series of events have been organised to encourage local residents to use and interact with the space. These link in with national campaigns and new art initiatives.

In June, the first phase of a new recreation route along a reconverted railway track in the Province of West Flanders will be officially opened. The Stroroute will provide valuable access to leisure for cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Allowing local people access to open space in a predominantly agricultural area.



Theme Visit to Dutch City

SURF delegates from Saxon University in the Netherlands and Aberdeen in the UK, took part in an information exchange in February, to find out more about the Hengelo approach to spatial planning & stakeholder engagement.

The packed learning programme included: urban fringe field visits; presentations & discussions with local officials; and a meeting with volunteers involved in the Foundation for the Weusthag Park in Hengelo.

The visit allowed SURF partners to build a picture of the project area and view the progress being made.

Join us on LinkedIn

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project has a discussion group on LinkedIn. Why not join the group and have your say? Visit www.linkedin.com

Spotlight on SURF partners

In each edition of the SURF newsletter we will catch up with the work of some of our partners. In this edition, the spotlight falls on Antwerp and Enschede.

Antwerp



The project aims to improve the quality of the urban fringe in the north east of the Province of Antwerp. The Province is working to create accessible green spaces around the major cities.

With a primary theme focus on the Role and Value of Green Spaces, Antwerp has been working to establish a multifunctional project in the urban fringe structured around the valley system of the river Laarse Beek in the north west of the province. Work has included:

- Establishing 2 Steering Groups which bring together different government officers and stakeholder groups.
- Creating a playable functional fish stair to combine ecology, recreation and education.
- Developing an online communication tool to inform the public about the landscape and green spaces.
- Interacting with the public and stakeholders through events, guided walks, information material, questionnaires etc to engage them in the process - this participative approach has been an essential part of the project.

Enschede



The project aims to create a distinct and sustainable urban edge around the city of Enschede and design an attractive recreational route along the official border between the rural and urban areas.

With a primary theme focus of Economy, Competitiveness and Enterprise, the Enschede project is:

- Working with neighbouring cities and area authorities in the Twente region - this has led to a common vision and implementation plan for the urban fringe which creates a recognisable and sustainable zone.
- Creating an identity for a new urban fringe recreational route "Rondje Enschede" which encircles the city.
- Collaborating with urban fringe businesses for a joint approach to communication showing opportunities for the urban fringe.
- Working with SURF partner Saxion University in the production of a study on the financial benefits of investments in urban fringes in Enschede.
- Making innovative use of students in projects through a cooperative approach with municipalities, knowledge institutes and companies.

SURF Recent Achievements

A presentation on SURF policy work was made to representatives of the Periurban Park Project, Euroscapes and ERRIN at a Brussels seminar...

Production of spatial analysis & monitoring for Hamburg's urban fringe areas...

Public consultation on River Don Corridor Framework - a new item of supplementary guidance to support Aberdeen's Local Development Plan...

Completion of a second SWOT process and Reflection Reports by SURF partners - these will be available on the website in July...

Publication of the 2010 - 2011 Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) Annual Report...

Sessions on the virtual flythrough tool were held with schools in Norfolk, as well as outdoor learning sessions to train teachers...

Raising awareness - project partners have engaged SURF Champions for their local project area...

Development of a SURF Position Paper in consultation with SURF partners & relevant networks to forward to the EU Commission...



Find out more about the SURF partners on our website www.sustainablefringes.eu

Urban Fringe Research



Students learn from SURF

Experts from Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK, accompanied a group of 20 students to Hamburg in April.

Providing a transnational exchange of learning, a joint lecture was held with students and academic staff at Hafencity University in Hamburg. Kevin Thomas, Senior Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University made a presentation on recent debates about the urban fringes in the UK

and about the SURF project. His presentation was followed by a discussion between British and German students. The UK students also had the opportunity to learn about Hamburg's fringe areas.

The SURF project has been very effective in enabling students at Saxion University in the Netherlands to become involved in transnational work on interesting real life projects.

Second year students in Environmental Sciences and Urban and Regional Planning will visit European urban fringe projects in May. The students have been in contact with SURF partners in the UK, Belgium and Sweden. During the visits students will gather information as reference cases for ideas they are developing for key projects for the urban fringe in Enschede.

Suburbia Launch of new Discussion Series



More than 50 people attended the start of Hamburg's second colloquium series at the end of April. The colloquium series aims to bring together stakeholders from Hamburg and its metropolitan region as well as scientists and practitioners from Hamburg and elsewhere to discuss topics concerning the urban fringe area.

The topics of this series are:

- Regional Cooperation
- Demographic Change in Suburbia
- (Cultural) landscape in the fringe area
- Retail and new centralities
- Transport and development axes in suburban areas.

The series will continue in autumn 2012.



Two Saxion students in Urban and Regional Planning are working on their final bachelor thesis within the municipalities of Almelo and Wierden.

The students will develop spatial plans for the urban fringe area between Almelo and Wierden.

The work of the students serves as an elaboration of the Regional Vision for the Urban Fringes in Twente.



Project Partners are:

- Aberdeen City Council - (Lead Partner)
- School of the Built Environment at Leeds Metropolitan University
- City of Bradford
- Norfolk County Council
- City of Enschede
- Saxion University
- City of Almelo
- City of Hengelo
- Province of East Flanders
- Province of West Flanders
- City of Hamburg
- Municipality of Harryda
- Province of Antwerp



The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) Project is part of the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme and is partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund.