



Sharing opportunities
for the urban edge

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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



Connecting Urban & Rural

Over 80 experts and practitioners from across Europe attended the “Connecting Urban and Rural” Conference in Aberdeen on 28 June 2012.

The event aimed to share opportunities for the urban edge, recognise the competitive advantage urban fringe areas can offer and look at successful approaches to urban fringe management.

Conference delegates heard from a wide range of experts, including keynote speaker, Sabrina Lucatelli, Policy Adviser from the European Commission, DG REGIO.



Working in the field of Rural Cohesion Policy and Territorial Cohesion in the Department of Environmental Policy, Sabrina has responsibility for the implementation of the preparatory action on “Partnership for Sustainable Development”.

Sabrina spoke to delegates about working in rural urban partnership

for sustainable development.

In a film message screened at the conference, Deputy First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon recognised the contribution the urban fringe can make to sustainable growth and welcomed the success of the approach taken in Aberdeen. Highlighting the opportunity for cities across Scotland and beyond to learn from and replicate these successes in their own urban fringes.

The conference was formally opened by Aberdeen’s Lord Provost, George Adam.



Find out more about the conference and SURF project findings inside this edition or visit our website.

Connecting Urban & Rural Conference Update



SURF Project Manager, Emma Watt, outlined the conference aim of building recognition of the role the urban fringe can play in enhancing the quality of life of city regions.

The event also unveiled the findings of the SURF project, following a 3 year research process, which has tapped into a range of practical urban fringe projects taking place across Europe.

New recreational and access routes, improved green spaces, increased community involvement and new employment opportunities are just some of the benefits realised through the range of project approaches.

This research programme has produced local, regional and European policy recommendations; governance insights; and led to the production of a toolkit to assist the management of urban fringe areas.

Find out more about the Connecting Urban & Rural Conference on our website.



Conference Chair: Huibert Haccou, Saxion University

Speakers Included:

Dr Alister Scott RELU Programme & Professor of Spatial Planning and Governance, Birmingham City University



Alister's research work explores themes including; specialist sustainable rural land use, spatial planning, public engagement and landscape problems. He is currently leading a research-council funded project 'Managing Change at the Rural-Urban Fringe' as part of the RELU initiative (Rural Economy and Land Use).

Rachel Smith Analyst, Centre for Cities (UK)



Rachel Smith is an Analyst at Centre for Cities, developing evidence and policy thinking for UK cities. Centre for Cities is a research and policy institute, dedicated to develop and implement policy that supports the performance of urban economies.

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Planning & Infrastructure at Aberdeen City Council



Gordon has responsibility for the development of both physical structure and development plans for Aberdeen and the north east of Scotland as well as economic development strategies. Delegates were able to hear about what the SURF project has meant to Aberdeen and the River Don Corridor.

Reinhard Henke PURPLE & METREX Networks



Reinhard is a Senior Policy Advisor and a Technical Representative of his region in both the METREX and PURPLE networks, and regional manager of the Interreg IVB NWE C-Change project. The PURPLE Network is working strategically to put the peri-urban zone onto the European map.

Jon Jordan UK Contact Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme



Jon Jordan is the UK Contact Point for the North Sea INTERREG Programme. Contact Points assist partners in the development of project ideas and the implementation of agreed projects. Since 2001, Jon has been a Director of European Policy Solutions which gives advice on EU policy developments and funding opportunities.



Expert session

Kevin Thomas

Kevin Thomas is Senior Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University. Kevin is the SURF Work Package 3 leader, looking at "Review and Analysis" and spoke about the SURF search for an urban fringe governance model.

Rolf Oldejans

Rolf Oldejans works as an advisor on spatial policy at the City of Enschede. Rolf has led on Workpackage 4 for SURF, "Testing and Implementation" and was able to present on the regional, national and European policy recommendations that have come out of the SURF project.

Dr Bauke de Vries Saxion University, Netherlands

Bauke de Vries is a Senior Lecturer at Saxion University of Applied Science in Deventer, the Netherlands. Working to deliver Workpackage 3 for SURF, Bauke outlined details of a Toolkit for Urban Fringe Management which has been delivered as part of the SURF project.

SURF builds PURPLE links

SURF Findings set for Publication



Reinhard Henke - PURPLE Network

Representatives from SURF met the PURPLE (peri-urban regions platform europe) Network in Brussels in September.

The PURPLE Network was established in 2004 and brings together members from across the EU to raise awareness of the specific peri-urban agenda at European, national and regional levels. The network are working to highlight the need for specific policies or support for peri-urban regions in Europe.

SURF has built dialogue with the network and PURPLE representatives have spoken at two Sustainable Urban Fringes conferences, as well as commenting on the SURF position paper and final report.

The meeting allowed further discussion on opportunities for the two groups to work together, following a recent PURPLE invitation for SURF to join the network.

SURF Extension

The Sustainable Urban Fringes Project has been granted a 6 month extension which will allow the project to run to the end of February 2013.

The extension will be used to disseminate information and learning on the final outputs and report back on how useful these are in practice.

The findings of the SURF project are set to be released with the publication of a SURF Final Report and Urban Fringe Toolkit.

The documents highlight the findings of 3 years of research which has tapped into the direct learning experiences of a range of practical urban fringe projects.



They examine information gathered from projects taking place in SURF partner city regions and focus on effective management and development of the urban fringe.

The SURF Final Report outlines information on key commitments due to be delivered under the SURF project, including:

- Approaches to urban fringe governance.
- Regional, national and European policy recommendations.
- Dynamic approaches to urban fringe planning, development and management.

The SURF Toolkit brings together tools that partners have used to establish urban fringe projects in their own areas. The Toolkit details information on the tools used and aims to inspire others in the sustainable development of urban fringe areas.

The publications will be available from the project website or on request by emailing: alleslie@aberdeencity.gov.uk



Tour of River Don Corridor

Delegates attending the Sustainable Urban Fringes dissemination Conference, "Connecting Urban & Rural" had the opportunity to see first hand the environmental, social and economic benefits of SURF during a study tour along the River Don corridor, in Aberdeen.

During the tour there was the opportunity to meet local experts and community representatives to hear about the positive impact of the project and learn more about a new

city planning framework. The framework aims to guide and inform officers in assessing the access, recreational, landscape, cultural and historical, environmental, wildlife and community engagement implications of any development proposal along the corridor.

The document is area specific and primarily integrates aspects of the Council's Core Paths Plan, Open Space Strategy, Nature Conservation Strategy as well as other strategies, policies and plans that help deliver a high quality natural environment and access to good quality open spaces, which help to make the River Don Corridor a place where people want to live, work and invest.

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 this newsletter the spotlight falls on SURF project partner Harryda and our academic partners Leeds Metropolitan University, UK and Saxion University, the Netherlands.

Harryda



The project aims to investigate conditions for restoring walking tracks to make them more convenient and attractive for people living in Gothenburg and the neighbouring municipalities.

The Municipality of Harryda belongs to the western region in Sweden and is a close neighbour with Gothenburg. Stretching almost 15km from north to south and 30km from east to west, it has an area totalling 268 square km.

Forests cover half the area and lakes about one twelfth. Project work has included:

- Engaging in negotiations with multiple landowners.
- Producing a report, "Green Corridors in the Gothenburg Region".
- Analysing the use of land with respect to regulations at local, regional and national level, resulting in a compilation of knowledge of the Swedish legislative process.
- Stimulating further funding opportunities to refurbish and develop existing walking routes.

Leeds Metropolitan University

Providing a body of knowledge on the present state of academic and practical knowledge on the planning and development of urban fringes. This was used to construct a conceptual framework which was used to steer the project and show the relevant themes, issues and processes.

CUDEM (Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management) at the University, undertake research and analysis of peri-urban spaces.

Work for SURF has included:

- Leading project research and analysis under Work Package 3.
- Leading theme research in:
 - Governance
 - The role and value of green spaces
- Undertaking a study of urban fringe governance.



Saxion University

Spatial planning and sustainable development are important areas of research in the Centre for Urban and Environmental Development, at Saxion University for Applied Sciences.

- Saxion University have led the development of a SURF Toolkit for urban fringes.
- Leading theme research in:
 - Spatial planning, including participation and bottom-up collaboration
 - Economy, enterprise and competitiveness.
- Contributing to a range of overarching SURF outputs.

SURF Recent Achievements

Approval of the River Don Corridor Spatial Plan in Aberdeen and publication of a local events booklet....

A second colloquium series took place in Hamburg and planning for a third series in autumn...

A Masterclass Conference on Ecosystem Services was held in Norfolk in July...

Approval of a Spatial Implementation Plan for a horticultural cluster areas in East Flanders...

Rondje Enschede launched a Facebook page to encourage use of the new recreational route...

Antwerp held a SWOT meeting in June bringing together participants from four municipalities...

Norfolk published a Community Toolkit and launched a summer events guide...

Results of the "Landscape Vision for the Vegetable Region" presented at a West Flanders seminar...

Around 300 people attended the opening of the reconverted Storroutte in West Flanders...

The Laarsevent (Day of the Park) took place in Antwerp in May highlighting the Laarse Beek project area and SURF...



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

Comparative Study on Leeds and Hamburg

Students learn from SURF

Students at Leeds Metropolitan University have produced a comparative study which aims to identify and compare the challenges and opportunities facing two European urban fringe areas in Leeds and Hamburg.

The MA Town & Regional Planning students from the School of the Built Environment, produced the report following a transnational exchange of learning to Hamburg. The visit was

to gain an understanding of the definitions, background and policy behind sustainable urban fringes.



View the report on the SURF website.

Position Statement

The need to make smarter use of space to enhance sustainable urban development in city regions was underlined in a recent position paper produced by SURF.

The paper titled "Competitive advantage for city regions - the need to create new urban fringe policy", was produced to highlight the multifunctional opportunities offered by the urban fringe and to call for greater recognition of these areas in European planning policy.

The position paper was recently approved by the North Sea Commission Sustainable Development Thematic Group on the first stage of a journey for submission to the European Commission.

Sustainable Greenhouse Cluster

Over 100 stakeholders attended an event to learn more about the results of research into sustainable greenhouse clustering in East Flanders.

The event was hosted by the Province of East Flanders in collaboration with the Provincial Development Agency.

The potential for developing an energy cluster was highlighted and an integral water model proposed.

The study aims to identify the potential for Leeds and Hamburg to establish a best practice policy to tackle the problems associated with urban fringe areas and help revitalise both areas.

In addition, the comparative study will contribute to the work of the Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project, of which Leeds and Hamburg are key partners.

Events

- SURF partners Saxion University presented a paper at the International Federation for Housing and Planning, 2012 World Congress in Gothenburg 16 -19 September.
- Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Leeds Metropolitan University are hosting a city region conference on 4 October. The event is aimed at delegates who have an interest in the urban-rural fringe areas of the Leeds City Region and beyond.
- The "Quo vadis Suburbia?" Conference is set to take place in Hamburg on 24 and 25 January 2013.



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.