Sustainable
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The Sustainable Urban Fringes

(SURF)

Project

Robert Brough

Dave Melling

The Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme

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

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About Urban Fringes

- A zone of transition between urban and country areas.
- Where a broad variety of land uses and activities come together.

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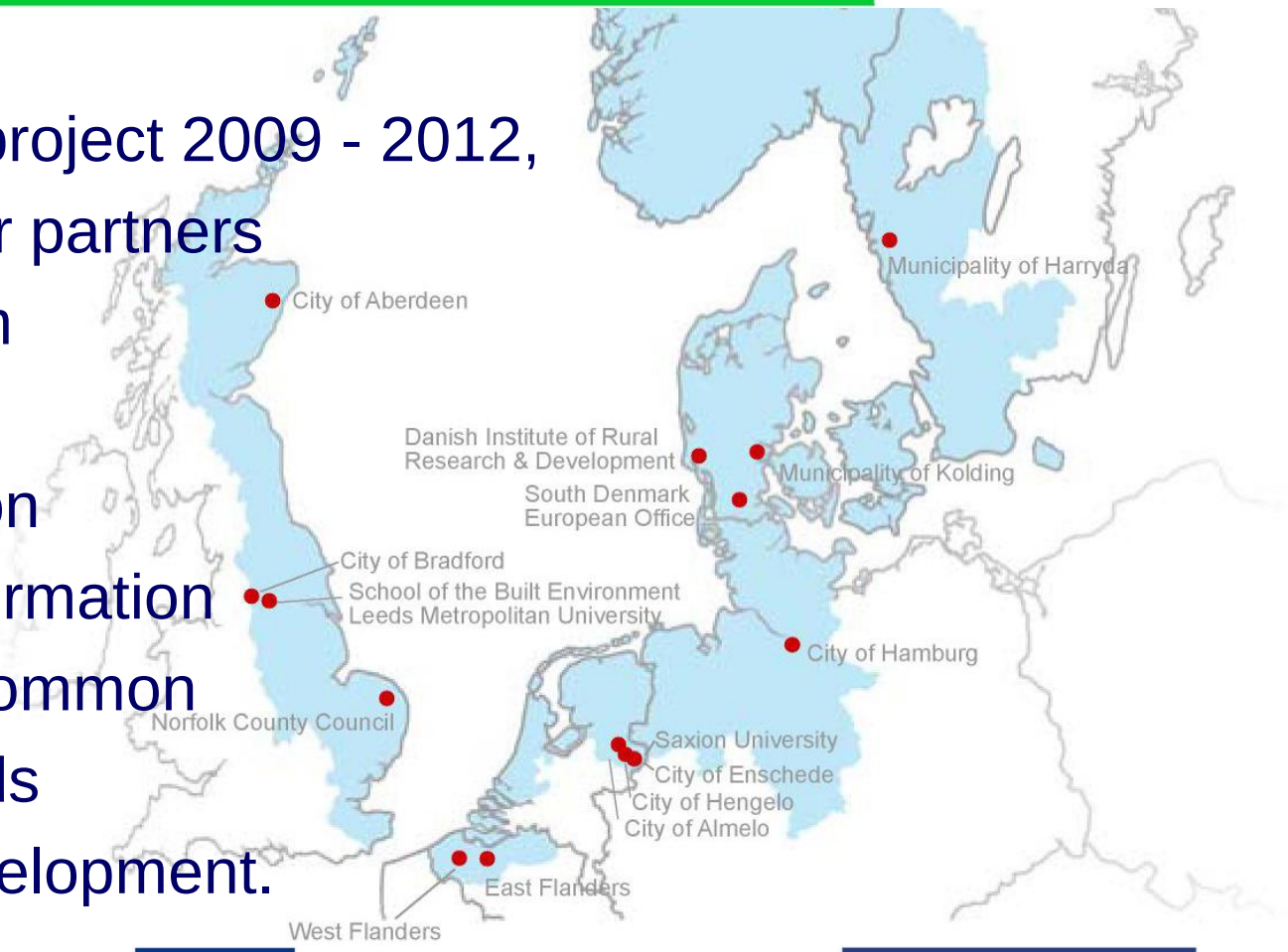
Who are the Partners?

SURF 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 development.



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The project was developed around a Conceptual and Analytical Framework which aimed to:

1. To undertake a problem analysis of urban fringe regions
2. To undertake a review of existing approaches in the urban fringe
3. To enable transnational networking on these issues and approaches
4. To find ways to integrate policies and programmes for urban fringes

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The main aim for intervening in urban fringes is the pursuit of sustainable development.

The four main quality issues identified were:

Social quality
Environmental quality
Spatial quality
Economic quality

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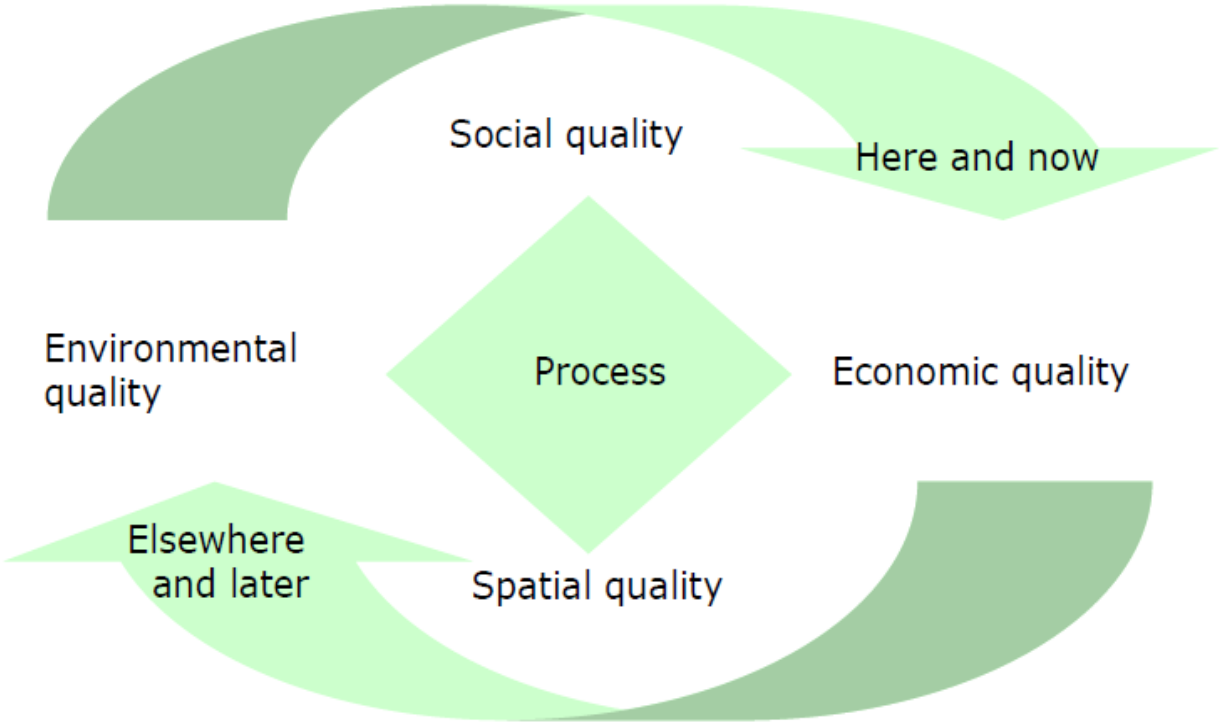

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Key themes for the Urban Fringe

1. Economy, competitiveness, enterprise

– Contribution to an areas competitiveness and sustainability.

2. Role and value of green spaces

– Benefits quality urban fringes bring to adjacent communities.

4. Spatial planning and stakeholder engagement

- The role of spatial planning in the urban fringes

4. Governance

- Is there a suitable approach?

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What is SURF doing?

Urban Fringe information sharing

- Raising awareness of the urban fringe agenda.
- Providing a common platform to exchange knowledge, strategies, policies in dealing urban fringes.

Urban Fringe Research and Analysis

- Urban Fringe SWOT analysis & analytical framework.
- Information exchange on urban fringe policy challenges.

Urban Fringe Implementation

- Production of integrated policy guidelines.
- Production of urban fringe tool kit.

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What is SURF doing?

The SURF Toolkit:

- One of the main outputs from the Project is its Toolkit.
- The toolkit which is now being prepared for publication describes some of the activities used in the project.
- They are divide into 2 categories:
- Building networks between stakeholders in the urban fringe area
- Creating synergy between different qualities in the area

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What is SURF doing?

Some examples of tools from the wider project:

- Vitual Fly Through, Gaywood river Project

  A unique platform for managing complex and varied electronic datasets for the special environment of the Gaywood River Valley

- Provincial Quality Chamber, East Flanders

  Was established to strengthen spatial planning and advise on spatial quality with new projects

- Enterprise Coaching, Almelo The Netherlands

  A way to encourage more entrepreneurs to set up in the urban fringes through use of coaches and account managers

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What is SURF doing?

Continued:

- The Stad-Land-Schap, West Flanders Belgium

  Is a platform for bringing together the municipalities in the area to help develop a unified approach to spatial planning

- The Gids Buitenkans, Enschede The Netherlands

  This is a guide for the rural areas of Enschede, it serves to facilitate initiatives, maintain and improve quality of landscape and biodiversity

- Stakeholder participation, Antwerp Belgium

  Antwerp used a number of different activities to engage with stakeholders in developing the area around the Laarse Beek water course

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What SURF Recommends

Local – Recognise and promote opportunities for multifunctionality
Build a recreational infrastructure in and around urban fringe
Engage with stakeholders and citizens
Build informal networks to support formal ones
The urban fringe is valuable for its entrepreneurs – enterprise coaches
The use of SURF toolkit
Attractive urban fringes give strength to cities

Regional -
Regional strategy including Green Infrastructure, spatial planning and competitiveness
Recognising that spatial planning is an iterative process
Give more space to stakeholder engagement to help improve acceptance
Improve regional branding

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What SURF Recommends

National/European –

Formally identify and document urban fringe use

Formulate long term visions within Europe

Develop and maintain soft governance to support existing hard governance structures

Create policies that recognise the identity and explicit needs of the urban fringe

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About Urban Fringes

Details of all the projects work and reports can be found on:

www.sustainablefringes.eu

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The Bradford Worth Valley Project

Aim:

To Engage communities so that they understand and contribute to the competitiveness of the Leeds City Region

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The context

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Consultation and data sharing

- Understanding the area and its relationship with the LA and the City Region context
- Engaging with sectors of community to test and develop awareness of the parish plan and its future
- Developing opportunities for strategic stakeholders to understand the rural fringe

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The parish plan

External facilitators to reviewed the plan and reported in three areas:

- The current situation - what was said about the plan
- Achievements so far – and lessons from elsewhere
- What happens next – a proposal for the process for undertaking the next plan

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The changing context in 3 years

- New national government
- New local authority administration
- Downturn in economy and austerity measures
- Restructuring of key bodies and strategic documents
- New priorities for LA staff
- Changes of priorities within the parish council
- The Localism agenda does not seem to be living up to its promise

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Reflections

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