

SURF - Sustainable URban and Rural Fringes



North Sea Programme

Partners/Countries involved

Aberdeen City Council (UK), City of Almelo (Netherlands), City of Bradford (UK), City of Enschede (Netherlands), City of Hamburg (Germany), Municipality of Harryda (Sweden), City of Hengelo (Netherlands), Norfolk County Council (UK), Saxion University (Netherlands), School of the Built Environment at Leeds Metropolitan University (UK), Province of East Flanders (Belgium), Province of West Flanders (Belgium)

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project brings together partners and experts from across the North Sea programme to exchange information and develop a common approach towards the sustainability of urban fringe areas. Urban Fringes are recognised as valuable assets, which can provide a high quality environment in an urban setting, creating vital areas for the health and well being of local communities. Urban fringes often suffer declining biodiversity, deteriorating water quality, low green space value, they are split administratively, with fragmented governance structures and they often have poor accessibility and wide social inequalities.

The aim of the project is to review urban fringe policies and develop a common approach and policy guidelines to influence regional, national and EU policies in tackling issues of governance, spatial planning and exploring potential for economic growth in urban fringes and to contribute in a balanced way to city region competitiveness.

The improvement of urban fringe greenspaces will provide a sense of place and ownership to their communities, add value to their environmental quality and will help in maintaining biodiversity. By providing accessible linkages it will reduce the dependency of urban fringe residents on car travel and will help in reducing CO2 emissions. It has also a direct relationship in improving people's mental and physical health and address issues of social and environmental justice.

"SURF has aimed to consider the opportunities presented by the urban fringe to strengthen the urban rural connection for city regions and aim to contribute to a higher quality of life experienced within Europe. The project partners have exchanged transnationally on the successful approaches used within their regions and the project as a whole has sought to simplify governance barriers and provide alternate insights into project delivery within the urban fringe. SURF has aimed to communicate the importance of the cause of the urban fringe and raise the profile of these areas higher on the political agenda's locally, regionally and throughout the EU."
Emma Watt, Project Manager for SURF at Aberdeen City Council



SURF Conference in Bradford in June 2011

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For further information:
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