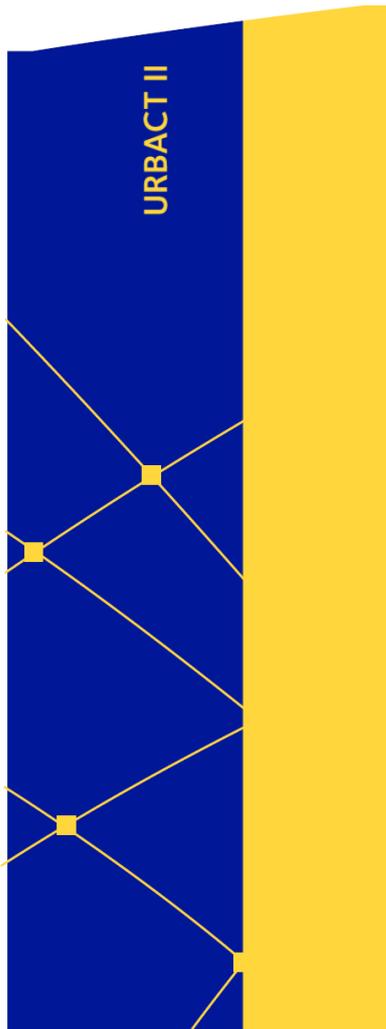


SUITE

Local Action Plan of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne





LAP - City of Newcastle upon Tyne
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Urban Village (UV)

Background

Urban Village (UV) a mixed community – for people who want to live in high quality affordable accommodation in a vibrant city centre mixed and mutually supportive community, for example:

- people who are ready to move on from supported housing
- people leaving health / care facilities, drug rehabilitation, etc
- graduates who want to remain in the city
- key workers
- people who are involved in business start ups



Adaptations of the concept

The principles behind the UV does not depend wholly on new build. Supported Housing Schemes can be developed in existing areas that provide

the mix of uses that together would add up to a UV. Via this approach we would be integrating new facilities into existing schemes for people moving from supported housing. This is also appropriate for what we term “Transitional Tenancies”. Example of this approach in the city include - Bevans (30 units), Star Centre (20 units) Salvation Army (8 units) Centrepont (6 units) and the proposed 40+ units for Tyne Housing in the Ouseburn.



There are pros and cons in not concentrating any particular group in a specific area. But there is no reason not to consider both developing an UV in the Crisis (a National Homeless Charity) sense and applying the principles to the pepper potted accommodation for this client group. This is an extension of the successful arrangements Newcastle City Council and Your Homes Newcastle, the Council’s management agent, have developed to facilitate a holistic approach to the housing market eg the Pathways to Independence, Preventing Eviction Protocols and the Housing and Employment Compact. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in the reduction of YHN evictions to just 43 over the last 6 months, the lowest rate of the core cities.



We are in the process of developing a pre-tenancy training programme to create a robust system for supported housing providers to prepare people for sustainable independence and to help reduce the duplication of the provision of support services. YHN will develop the “passport” to independence so it’s clear from the landlord’s perspective what is needed to sustain a tenancy. At present the emphasis of support services can be more about advocating for their clients’ “right” to independent accommodation rather than helping their clients to address the reasons for their ineligibility and ensuring they have the skills and support they need to make the transition to independence.

Actions taken (Local Action Plan)

We have looked at who the market currently failing and what the UV can offer? and How many units are viable?

The table below shows the expressions of interest in 1 and 2 bed accommodation in Sheildfield advertised through Your Choice Homes between April - March 2010

	1 bed				2 bed			
	Total bids	Ave bids	Max	Min	Total bids	Av bids	Max	Min
Flat	1736	78.9	170	20	2140	71.3	171	13
Flat Multi	1372	39.2	63	8	1964	39.3	90	9
House					74	74	74	74
Maisonette					154	38.5	44	25
Totals	3108				4332			

The viability and demand is dependent upon the offer. There are no robust statistics available on demand for this type of product, but the information above is indicative of the demand for 1 and 2 bed council accommodation. The level of demand is tied to affordability and the quality of the accommodation. Inevitably the price increases, as does demand, with improvements in the quality and location.

This suggests that the levels of demand are sufficient for a purpose built UV or a number of purpose built UVs. Crisis recommends a minimum of 100 units to create the economies of scale required to co-locate extensive support services. However the more services provided on site the more that defines the needs of the community eg drugs users support and mental health workers. This can then focus community opposition. However, the principles can be applied to a range of smaller units serving a similar client group across the community. But, this loses the advantages of an explicitly mixed community and the mutual support that potentially brings.

What other services should be available:

Support services will be determined by the needs of the community. It would be inappropriate to accommodate people who cannot demonstrate readiness for independent living. A primary need of people who are moving to independence is protection from bad influences and this can be “supported” by the design of a secure but transparent and open environment where staff and residents interact.

Outcome

We were unable to secure funding or find a suitably sized site near the city centre where land values currently constrain such a holistic approach to housing delivery. We have however completed a development on a smaller scale 5km from the city centre integrated into an established neighbourhood providing supported accommodation for 25 households.



Challenges

- concentration of supported accommodation in or near the city centre
- availability of sites
- availability of private finance
- borrowing vs. rental income
- capital grants from Homes and Communities Agency
- availability of European funding
- private investment
- cross subsidy with health funding streams

Future Issues

The aim is to resolve the concentration issues with respect to supported accommodation in certain areas of our city centre. Further work on education and community cohesion to dispel the myths surrounding modern supported accommodation.

SUITE Network Impact

The participation within the SUITE network gave insight into potential solutions to the issues we face in Newcastle like many other post industrial European Cities with compact, historic urban cores.

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