Urban Regeneration and Impact Assessment for Social Sustainability

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Structure of the presentation

1. Social sustainability in context
2. The social dimension of EIA—concept and practice
3. Urban regeneration—a particular case for SIA
4. Research approach
5. An overview of findings
6. Some good practice examples
7. Some conclusions
1. Social sustainability in context

• This presentation reports on one research element of a European Investment Bank (EIB) funded project (2007-2009) at Oxford Brookes University, on ‘Measuring Social Sustainability’—with particular reference to the built environment and urban regeneration projects.

• The project is linked to EIB interest in supporting investment in sustainable urban development through the new JESSICA funding mechanism (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas).
Social sustainability in context (cont’d)

The social dimension of ‘sustainability’
Little consensus on definition of ‘social sustainability’

Main dimensions of social sustainability according to EU Lisbon (European Council, 2000)

- education
- employment policy to create ‘more and better jobs’
- modernising social protection
- to promote equality to counter poverty and social exclusion by ‘promoting social inclusion’

In our EIB research on urban form, find definitions by Bramley et al (2006) as helpful, with focus on:

- social equity and sustainability of community as the core of social sustainability
- and the importance of social networks, community participation, sense of place and community stability and security
Social sustainability in context (cont’d)

• Tools to measure social sustainability include, for example: indicator checklists, composite/integrated indices (eg Social Welfare Index) etc

• But focus here on the (increasingly dysfunctional) family of ‘social impact assessment ‘ tools

• In the UK, these now include:
  ---Social Impact Assessment/ Socio-Economic Impact (SIA)
  ---Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
  ---Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
  ---Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)
  ---Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
  ---and others

• The focus here is on social impact assessment tools within EIAs and the resultants ESs in the UK
2. The social dimension in EIA - concepts and practice

- **The people impacts** – on day to day quality of life – jobs, housing, health, education, safety, community and many more

- **Partial recognition** in EU and UK EIA legislation (impact on humans etc), but uncertain status in the EIA process in UK/EU

- Has tended to be the ‘poor relation’ in EIA practice, despite calls for much higher profile – from UK and internationally

- Yet—some recent **signs of increasing recognition** in practice, with more SIA inputs in EIAs, plus widening scope of SIA content, and methodological advances
3 Urban regeneration- a particular case for SIA treatment in EIA?

Why?
- often major projects;
- mixed use developments (housing, retail, employment, associated health and education facilities etc);
- usual Master Plan approach opens up possibilities for alternative land use configurations;
- inherent design flexibility has potential for development process to be shaped through community involvement

Especially in context of recent changes in UK planning system
- new Planning Act;
- Sustainable Communities agenda;
- strengthening of participation and community involvement (eg Statements of Community Involvement)
4. Research approach

• detailed and independent appraisal by the two researchers

• of the socio-economic content and associated processes, of a random selection of urban regeneration/redevelopment ESs from the extensive collection at Oxford Brookes University

• total of 20 ESs examined, all produced in the last decade (99-08)

• projects ranged in scale from a one hectare site to the massive Kings Cross (London) and the London Olympics sites

• good split between projects pre- and post- major changes in UK planning legislation in 2004/05

• appraisal pro-forma included: project details, SIA coverage or not, SIA topic range, coverage or not of project stages (eg construction and operation), methodology, plus a socio-economic quality assessment of the ES by the researchers
Example of the sites/projects—Kings Cross, London
Examples of the sites/projects—London Olympics Site
5 An overview of findings

Socio-economic assessment-- coverage and scope

• **regeneration/redevelopment projects are varied**, but most include a mix of housing in particular, plus retail, other employment provision and associated facilities and services (esp. education/ recreation/health)

• **SIA is covered in 80% of the cases**, with most ESs having a specific Socio–Economic/Social Impacts chapter (usually early in ES), and a few having rigorous and detailed supporting reports/appendices

• **the scope of SIA content has widened from 1990s experience** to cover:
  --population profile including occupational groups;
  --economic and business context;
  --learning and employment;
  --general well being including health, crime and deprivation;
  --community facilities/services; recreation and public open space; and
  --social inclusion and community integration

• **evidence of increasing coverage of health issues, normally within ES rather than separate HIA**
Socio economic assessment -- methodology

• varying impacts by project stage is covered in 50% of the ESs, although often more focus on the operational than the construction stage (yet the latter can be both disruptive for a community, and also very significant for employment). A few projects also recognise the importance of different geographical scales of impacts, especially between the construction and operational stages.

• again about 50% of the documents provide a reasonable coverage of methodology, but for the others methodology normally constitutes at best a bland descriptive picture of the current (or dated) population and employment baseline. The better studies work well though current baseline, future baseline, impacts categories, mitigation and residual issues—and make use of a range of standards.

• overall most studies are weak on the links between socio-economic components (eg between demographic profile and jobs created). A few specify impact significance criteria, cumulative impacts and impact management. There is very little coverage of monitoring.

• there is some evidence of quantification—partly on demographics, employment and services/facilities provision. Interestingly 35% of the ESs use a multiplier to estimate wider economic impact. All derive the multipliers from previous studies; they range from 1.1 to 1.5
### Example of differentiation by impact stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Pre-Olympic Construction Phase</th>
<th>Olympic Games Phase</th>
<th>Post-Olympic Legacy Construction Phase</th>
<th>Post-Olympic Legacy Phase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premature loss of existing housing, industry, jobs and waste</td>
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<td>management infrastructure</td>
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<td>Potential loss of archaeological baseline</td>
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<td>Damage to built heritage from demolition and contextual changes</td>
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<td>Loss of distinct character of historic areas</td>
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<td>Improved quality of townscape and views</td>
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<td>Undergrounding of power cables</td>
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<td>Consequences of remediation</td>
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<td>Energy efficiency gains from CHP and other sustainable / renewable</td>
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<td>energy features incorporated into buildings / structures</td>
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<td>Creation of Olympic jobs</td>
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<td>Feel-good factor, social cohesiveness and community pride</td>
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<td>Encouragement to participate in sporting / healthy activities</td>
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<td>Impacts on local transport infrastructure</td>
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<td>Wind impacts on queues / crowd near large buildings (including</td>
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<td>Olympic Village)</td>
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<td>Potential flood risk due to Security Perimeter Fence at river crossings</td>
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<td>Potential impacts from existing contamination in newly public areas</td>
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<td>Additional parkland, open ground and allotments</td>
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<td>Additional / replacement habitat creation</td>
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<td>Improved accessibility / permeability</td>
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<td>Creation of Legacy jobs, with associated skills and training</td>
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<td>Improved community facilities (schools, nurseries, crèches, medical</td>
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<td>etc.)</td>
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<td>Improved buildings (e.g. “access for all standards”)</td>
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<td>Impact on household waste management infrastructure of LB</td>
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<td>Neasmark</td>
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Notes: Green = Significant beneficial. Red = Significant adverse. Cross-hatched = Significant with or without mitigation, Plain colour = Significant without mitigation.

Source: Symonds
Socio-economic assessment—quality and innovation

• **in terms of quality review**, 7 ESs were assessed as good, and another 3 as fair. In most cases these were more recent (ie 2004 onwards)

• **whilst there are some positive signs from this assessment, they relate more to the ‘product’ than to the ‘process’; evidence on the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, and especially the local community is limited**

• in a few cases there is evidence that scoping consultation has fed into the assessment, and in two cases there is evidence of serious attempts at community engagement- which is likely to become a more significant feature as planning reforms become more embedded

• there is also some very limited evidence of an interesting Sustainability /Audit approach—setting the EIS within a wider sustainability context (see case studies).
6. Good practice examples -- 1

Sustainability Considerations in Project Appraisal: Temple Gate, Bristol

• Small site-- is a mixed use development proposal for reuse of a 1.03 Ha brownfield site in the city centre to include 220 homes, plus offices, restaurants, retail, workshops, POS etc.

• As part of the planning application process, a “Sustainable Development Profile” was requested by Bristol City Council, in addition to the submission of a full ES. The “SD Profile” is a generic project appraisal framework intended to encourage developers to consider various sustainability factors in development design, planning and construction. The framework is structured as a series of 54 key questions (25 of which relate to social dimensions of sustainability e.g. consideration of community engagement, housing mix and tenure, access to community cultural and leisure facilities etc).

• Arguably the approach captures the broader sustainability characteristics that may not receive explicit coverage in the core technical chapters that comprise the ES, and as such is a useful ancillary appraisal tool. It gives clear standing to the consideration of social sustainability; provides clarity in prescribing relevant social factors; and helps to maintain integrity between project level sustainability effects and the city’s sustainability objectives included in higher level plans and policies.
Ch15 of the ES—evaluates the proposal against broader sustainability criteria that include

**Social Criteria:**
---**Community** (identity, consultation + participation, crime prevention, access)
---**Housing** (location, integration, proportion)
---**Locality** proximity of local facilities, local needs met locally)
    Education (Opportunities and initiatives), and

**Economic Criteria:**
---**Employment** opportunities
---**Enterprise** (small businesses and local economic life)

Helps to capture features of the proposal design and assessment process that ‘fall though’ the core technical EIS studies or that may not necessarily be related to sustainability
Good practice examples –2
London Olympics –Legacy planning
Good practice examples --3

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Woodberry Down

• one of London’s largest inner city housing estates-- with high levels of deprivation and a diverse ethnic population mix living in deteriorating (predominantly social) housing stock, within a poor physical environment

• Hackney Homes intend to redevelop the 33 Ha site to create a mixed use development of nearly 5000 homes of mixed tenure, along with associated community facilities. The redevelopment will more than double the number of homes

• the influx of new residents, coupled with a project duration of over 15 years, will have significant socio-economic and community impacts

• the socio-economic chapter of the ES was accompanied by a dedicated EqIA to identify both the negative and positive ‘equality target groups’, defined by the GLA to include: black and minority ethnic groups; women; disabled people; older people; children and young people; groups identified by sexual orientation; and faith communities

• for each impact, the EqIA identifies the group affected and mitigation required, as well as the party responsible for implementation. The EqIA also contains details of the ongoing monitoring/ review mechanism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Affected Group</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</table>
| Housing                  | BME households                 | Improved housing quality  
|                          |                               | Reduced overcrowding  
|                          |                               | New homes for young people  
|                          |                               | Increased home ownership levels in affordable housing  
|                          | Women- single parent households | More appropriate housing for young children  
|                          | Disabled people                | More accessible homes to enable independent living  
|                          | Older people                   | Lifetime homes support independent living  
|                          |                               | Improved insulation and heating for warmer homes  
|                          | Children                       | Reduced overcrowding  
|                          |                               | More generous bedroom and storage provision for children in social rented sector  
|                          | All Groups                     | More storage, less accidents around home  
| Employment and skills    | BME                            | Target group for construction employment opportunities  
|                          |                               | Targeted skills training  
|                          | Women                          | Children's centre facilitate women to seek employment  
|                          | Women                          | Target group for construction employment  
|                          |                               | Targeted skills training  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Mental health sufferers, including amongst BME population</td>
<td>Temporary increase in stress as result of demolition and redevelopment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community cohesion</td>
<td>BME groups, Women, including lone parents, children, gay &amp; lesbian people</td>
<td>Temporary or permanent disruption of existing social networks. Increased isolation as result of rehousing/redevelopment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>BME groups, particularly Turkish community</td>
<td>Permanent loss of facilities for social gatherings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Older women</td>
<td>Temporary or permanent - loneliness, isolation as result of decant process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Disabled people</td>
<td>Temporary - risk of individual needs being overlooked during decant and redevelopment process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>Temporary/permanent - stress, disruption, anxiety increased as result of change, including change to established routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Temporary/long term - disruptive living environment during childhood as a result of living on major redevelopment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; open spaces &amp; Wellbeing</td>
<td>Children &amp; young people</td>
<td>Possible permanent impact of private courtyards actively excluding casual use by older children including teenagers – both on their wellbeing and courtyard cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; open spaces</td>
<td>Children &amp; young people</td>
<td>Temporary loss of access to open spaces, hang-outs in public spaces, play areas during construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Good practice examples-- 4

Overall Good Socio-Economic Practice: the King’s Cross central redevelopment proposal

• baseline assessed not only for the existing situation at 2004, but also for 2006/07 (the estimated start date for construction), to take account of cumulative effects of other major developments e.g. the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

• predicted impacts disaggregated at three distinct spatial scales: site, Central Impact Zone, and Wider Impact Zone

• attempt made to define a systematic, qualitative framework for determining impact significance

• two ‘worse case’ scenarios are developed (including an explanation of assumptions) and provide the basis for impact prediction and evaluation.

• quantitative predictions are made wherever practicable, using established approaches e.g. average density ratios (FTE) and multiplier effects for employment.

• qualitative judgement is employed for assessment of less tangible factors including educational performance, crime, and community effects

• a separate chapter on health impacts draws heavily on the assessment findings to inform the consideration of the socio-economic dimensions of the proposal’s health effects.

• good evidence of responses/revisions to the assessment as a result of feedback from consultations during scoping
Community involvement—a creative process
Ideas for social integration

- Community ownership of buildings & land
- Affordable facilities
- Empowerment
- Youth inclusion in processes
- Benefits for local community from development
- Consultation & Engagement

Graph showing various categories such as Social Integration, Partnering / Policy, Transport & Movement, Physical Integration, Environment, Arts Sport Leisure Community, Time Scale / Process, Identity, Opportunity, Public Realm and Character, Design Quality, Mixed Use & Diversity, Safety, Housing, Youth, Health, Heritage, and Living.
7 Some conclusions

• evidence of improving practice, although still many poor studies
• improving practice shows a widening scope to the content of socio-economic impact studies, and a less descriptive methodology
• also limited evidence of influence of the new planning/participative regime and some cases of a steer from the LA that is having a major effect on the nature of the overall assessment process beyond the ES. As such, some authorities do seem to be asserting their authority!

• however still debateable, even in best cases, as to what extent the community can be seen to be ‘shaping places’
• also conflicting signs on the issue of integration, with both good examples of a more integrated socio-economic approach within the ES, but also use of new tools—eg SA, HIA, EqIA—which may lead to fragmentation and confusion for key stakeholders
• ascertaining the end user perspectives on such fragmented assessment is a suitable case for further research.
Thankyou for your kind attention