

Outcomes Note

'Wednesday Webinar' 2 - 4th November 2020

'BACK TO THE FUTURE' – HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION

CHAIR: Ald. Jim Speers, NILGA Executive, Richhill Buildings Preservation Trust

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop elected member understanding of the importance of quality environments and their role in promoting high quality development.
2. To explore the wider policy context and how this will drive future place-making practice
3. To develop an understanding of heritage-led regeneration, practical and financial considerations for taking schemes forward, the importance of collaborative working and what good quality heritage-led development looks like.

SPEAKERS:

Iain Greenway - Department for Communities

Heritage-led Regeneration in Northern Ireland: an overview

Ald. Jim Speers & Keith Gilmour - Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Richhill, A Case Study: What can we learn from the approach taken in Richhill to heritage-led regeneration?

Paul Mullan - National Lottery Heritage Fund

Heritage Lottery Fund: Working in partnership to restore town and village centres

Rita Harkin – Architectural Heritage Fund

Architectural Heritage Fund: Working with the community to deliver heritage-led regeneration

All Presentations and videos available on the NILGA website at

<https://www.nilga.org/nilga-networks/place-shaping-and-infrastructure>

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES:

Videos on Richhill and Ederney available on the NILGA Website, as above.

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business-and-investment/regeneration/belfast-entries-project>

KEY ISSUES

- Understanding what we have
- Building in heritage work into climate action including how traffic moves round towns
- Need for collaboration – central-local, public, charity and private
- Need for LDPs to be visionary for and reimagine local places, including where people will be living

DISCUSSION POINTS:

Working better with Developers

How do we encourage developers to value and respect our built heritage rather than as a hindrance to profit? How do we ensure heritage buildings are not demolished?

- Use good examples of where developers have succeeded e.g. Titanic Hotel, Merchant Hotel and the benefits of/profit in authenticity and distinctiveness.
- Need to make the case for heritage so that everyone recognises the opportunities and uses imagination.
- Policy needs to be in place to guard against cheap and quickly built developments

‘Living over the shops’

Has COVID-19 discouraged the push for encouraging LOTS?

- It may be too early to tell in relation to this, but it is a real opportunity for revitalising town and village centre spaces.
- We may need to return current retail units to the housing units they once were. Opportunity for small scale pilots to test out ideas.
- Land and properties surrounding/ behind old retail units can assist in improving the access to and quality of relevant areas. Additional benefits re tackling dereliction and improving community safety
- Reviewed affordable housing policy could take LOTS into account

Data, Records and Collaborative activity

- We need to better understand what we have
- ‘Heritage at risk’ register focusses on listed buildings. DfC looking at expanding this to include potential uses of these buildings.

- Councils could 'join up' better with government departments on knowledge of and activity related to local heritage assets, better utilising connection with community plans.

Public sector owned assets and community wealth building

Greater consideration should be given to public sector owned heritage assets, who these are sold on to (and for how much), and how to help create a culture locally of community ownership of heritage assets.

NEXT STEPS

- Need to consider the links between community asset transfer community wealth building and wellbeing.
- Dilapidations Bill to be brought forward at NI Assembly – NILGA to participate at Committee Stage, to improve how councils can work with developers
- Build heritage work into review of community plans
- Need to explore VAT issues for developers operating on/ refurbishing heritage assets, and how this can be changed after EU Transition. This is counterintuitive in terms of decarbonisation.
- Need to look at finance issues for councils e.g. change in rates when changing use from retail to housing as part of wider review of council finances

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