



Urban Regeneration Companies Coming of Age



Urban Regeneration Companies

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs) are local partnerships with the aim of achieving the radical physical, economic and social transformation of towns and cities in declining urban areas.

Uniting private and public sector partners, URCs are independent companies established by the relevant local authority and Regional Development Agency (RDA), working alongside English Partnerships and other local stakeholders including employers, amenity groups and community representatives.

Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force recommended the creation of URCs in 1999 to champion and stimulate new investment into areas of economic decline and to co-ordinate plans for their regeneration and redevelopment. English Partnerships developed the URC model and the first three pilot companies were launched in Liverpool, East Manchester and Sheffield.

English Partnerships helps the URCs to deliver their strategic priorities by being an active and effective partner working to its particular strengths.

This includes participating in joint venture agreements, making key acquisitions for development schemes including the relocation of current occupiers, acting as a catalyst for regeneration projects and encouraging private sector investment. English Partnerships is also working with new and emerging URCs to assist with their establishment and, where appropriate, will provide support for masterplanning, running costs and research to help them deliver their strategic priorities.

The role of English Partnerships in URCs is evolving, with the development of new and innovative funding arrangements. This includes the acquisition of problematic or empty property in residential neighbourhoods suffering from market decline. It will be working with the URCs to purchase and remediate land in need of environmental improvement and is currently developing ideas to establish special teams to help URCs prepare specific action plans.

The URC model now operates successfully in 16 areas in England and the following profiles present each URC's own outline of their current regeneration work.

Front cover images

Main: Liverpool Waterfront 2008 (artist's impression)

Top: Express Networks, Manchester

Bottom: St Stephen's Hull (artist's impression)

Above images (clockwise from top left)

New public square Vaux Brewery Site, Sunderland (artist's impression)

Bridge connecting Northbank in Stockton to the Teesdale Business Park, Tees Valley (artist's impression)

Gateway site in Redruth, Cornwall (artist's impression)

East Street, Derby (artist's impression)

The Winter Gardens, Sheffield

The Public, West Bromwich (artist's impression)

Bradford Centre Regeneration

Bradford Centre Regeneration was established in February 2003. It aims to promote the sustainable regeneration of Bradford City Centre.

The company's objectives are to:

- Transform the city centre as the heart of a great northern destination
- Promote investor confidence
- Develop and diversify the economy of the city centre
- Create employment opportunities for the people of Bradford
- Improve transport, parking and linkages
- Act as an exemplar in creating a safe enjoyable centre

A masterplan for the regeneration of Bradford City Centre was completed in September 2003. At its core, the plan is about investing in the public realm to change the city's fortunes, people's perceptions and investor's attitudes. It was drawn up by Alsop Architects Limited and Big Architecture Limited and will guide the revitalisation of the city centre over the next 15 years. The masterplan is supported by Bradford City Council, Yorkshire Forward and English Partnerships, who are actively working with Bradford Centre Regeneration to secure its successful implementation.

CPR Regeneration

CPR Regeneration has completed its Action Plan detailing 15 projects it will focus on over the next five years. This work is about getting physical projects on site to demonstrate real change. These include office and industrial employment space, housing, retail developments, arts centres and new leisure facilities of national significance. CPR Regeneration is emphasising that all its development must be of the highest quality using in-house urban design resources. Two masterplans are currently underway in the area covering West Cornwall's major brownfield opportunity area in Pool and a former mining area in Dolcoath where the community has been involved in envisaging future development. The URC has a special focus on developing land and property opportunities, but it is ensuring that real progress for the area comes from linking skills, business and community development with physical regeneration and transport investment. A team effort that will, for example, mean local labour and training schemes on land and property being developed by the URC. It will also mean business opportunities in the sub region as the URC will build local and sub regional capacity wherever possible. It is a serious effort at joined up thinking – and doing.

Gloucester URC

The Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company's (GHURC) role is to secure the private-sector investment required to transform Gloucester and make it, once again, a city of regional and national importance.

Gloucester still contains many dormant but important historic sites and buildings in its city centre and in its Victorian docklands, thus creating many outstanding redevelopment opportunities.



Gloucester Docks

Involving local people, businesses and public-sector agencies, the GHURC will create a vision of the future of Gloucester before attracting the investment and the commercial developers and end-users required to complete the transformation of the city.

Leicester Regeneration Company

Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC) is responsible for promoting the physical regeneration of central Leicester. Established in 2001, its mission is to improve the image and environment of the city, and to further its economic prosperity.

LRC has produced a masterplan that will steer regeneration in the city over the next 10 to 15 years. It identifies five key areas for redevelopment. These include:

- Creating a new office core around a realigned railway station
- Developing the waterside with a mix of leisure, housing and retail
- A new Science and Technology Park at the Abbey Meadows site, linking the National Space Centre
- Extending the city's Retail Circuit including the extension of the Shires Shopping Centre
- Creating a new community, north of the St George's area of the city



Leicester Riverside

Profiles

Catalyst Corby

Catalyst Corby is leading on the £4 billion regeneration of Corby in Northamptonshire. Significant housing growth building some 28,000 new homes and creating 30,000 new jobs, together with redeveloping the town centre, new infrastructure provision and housing renewal will deliver a confident and sustainable Corby over the next 30 years.



Station Business Park
(artist's impression)

Corby is also playing a key role in delivering the Sustainable Communities Plan as the town is located within the Milton Keynes-South Midlands growth area.

Derby Cityscape

Derby Cityscape has been established to create a dynamic new vehicle to accelerate physical and economic development in the city, and there are many exciting developments already underway and in the pipeline, including:

- 1,600 'city living' dwellings
- Trebling in size of the 'Eagle' shopping centre
- Construction of a new state of the art passenger interchange incorporated within 'Riverlights' a major mixed residential, leisure and office development

Derby offers high quality business, residential and leisure development potential with an enviable quality of life which will be further enhanced with the implementation of the masterplan proposals for the city centre.

Hull Citybuild

Hull Citybuild's primary role is to bring forward developments and create a thriving investment climate for the city, creating jobs and an attractive compact city centre core.

Following detailed consultation and collaboration with its partners, Hull City Council and Yorkshire Forward, the community, residents and businesses, Citybuild launched the Hull City Centre Masterplan in March 2004. Concentrating upon realising waterfront opportunities for development, and reuniting the city centre with the waterfront, the Masterplan delivers a coherent and comprehensive framework for future investment.

Development has already begun and site work on Phase 1 of Island Wharf, a prime office site, is due for completion in autumn 2004. St Stephens is a £160 million mixed-use city centre development led by ING Real Estate, demolition is nearing completion and site work is due to start late 2004.

Liverpool Vision

In 2000 Liverpool Vision published the Strategic Regeneration Framework. The framework set out an exciting blueprint for a growing, living and changing city centre to be a powerful engine for the regeneration of the whole of Merseyside. The process of transformation is well underway and over the next five years – leading up to European Capital of Culture in 2008 – the city centre will benefit from a massive £2 billion of new investment.

The Paradise Street Development Area, Europe's largest 'retail-led' regeneration scheme will create 1 million sq ft of retail space and create a vibrant new retail heart. The £750 million development will create 4,400 permanent jobs and up to 3,500 during the construction of the scheme. The city's world famous waterfront is seen as crucial in developing Liverpool's growing reputation as a tourist and visitor destination, and key developments in the city's Commercial District are re-establishing the city as an international business centre.

New East Manchester

New East Manchester – one of the first three designated urban regeneration companies in the country – was formally established in autumn 1999.



Central Park Transport Gateway (artist's impression)

Its remit is to lead a major £2 billion (public and private) investment programme delivering major physical transformation of an older industrial area, and integrating the activities of special initiatives, public agencies and other bodies to improve social conditions and economic prospects for existing and future residents and businesses. The last year has been particularly important, following on from the staging in the heart of East Manchester of the 17th Commonwealth Games in summer 2002. The major business, employment and housing initiatives, which were in planning stages at that time, are now being realised.

Sheffield One

Sheffield One was created to lead the transformation of the city centre into a driver for economic growth across the whole region. Its ambitious regeneration programme has already made the city Yorkshire's creative and cultural capital and with £250 million of new development underway, Sheffield is rapidly becoming one of the UK's top business locations. High profile schemes such as the Heart of the City, the New Retail Quarter, e-Campus and Castlegate are attracting major investment and thousands of new jobs to the city, putting Sheffield well on the way to achieving the company's vision of a vibrant, cosmopolitan and successful European city.



St Paul's Place (artist's impression)

Tees Valley Regeneration

Tees Valley Regeneration is in business to create irresistible development and investment opportunities and to deliver sustainable and meaningful economic activity for the long-term development of the Tees Valley.

The URC came into being in 2002, the stakeholders being the five councils that comprise the Tees Valley; Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees; One NorthEast; and English Partnerships.

Tees Valley Regeneration has a remit to lead a £1.5 billion investment programme in land, property and infrastructure and this makes it the UK's largest Urban Regeneration Company.

In 2003, the URC merged with the area's inward investment arm – the Tees Valley Development Company (TVDC) – itself a creation of the five Tees Valley councils. Now Tees Valley Regeneration combines the expertise of both companies and creates a single driver and catalyst for the whole Tees Valley.

Walsall Regeneration Company

Walsall Regeneration Company, incorporated in March 2004, expects to attract £600 million of public and private sector investment, remediating 120 hectares of land and creating 15,000 jobs over the next 15 years.



IMI Site

Roger Tym & Partners has been commissioned to produce a Regeneration Framework and Delivery Strategy to shape that programme.

Key areas will be Walsall's town centre, its Waterfront, and Darlaston Strategic Development Area – including the former IMI site.

Major projects already ongoing include Shannon's Mill, a £50 million scheme to transform a 19th century mill into a 250,000 sq ft factory outlet centre, and the Walsall Waterfront, a £150 million mixed-use scheme.

RegenCo Sandwell

RegenCo is the URC producing a masterplan to bring 23,000 jobs and £1.6 billion investment into West Bromwich and its surrounding towns.

Situated in Sandwell, just 10 minutes from Birmingham, RegenCo's area has many of the ingredients needed for a prosperous society – strong communications both locally and to the rest of the UK, the talent pool and heritage of innovation which built the UK's industrial heartland as well as a green environment with over 20 miles of canal side.

West Bromwich town centre is the site for The Public – Europe's largest community arts project. RegenCo sees extracting every drop of potential from this development as a major part of its remit – for instance developing a *sense of place* as well as shifting perceptions of what West Bromwich stands for.

Sunderland arc

Sunderland arc's proposals are some of the most ambitious plans in Wearside's history.

It aims to bring 10,000 jobs to Sunderland, transforming key sites in the city centre into thriving, vibrant communities with retail, leisure, housing and office space to rival any European city and create two new bridges by world renowned architects.

There will be large, beautifully designed public squares linking the centre with the river and spectacular artworks to draw visitors to the city.

The arc's plans predict attracting £996 million total private investment to Sunderland, supported by £346 million of public funding to create an estimated 305,000 sq m of commercial, retail, leisure and public space and between 3,000 – 4,000 houses and apartments.

The New Swindon Company

Established in 2002, The New Swindon Company is focused on regenerating the town centre of Swindon. Its Regeneration Framework, due for completion in 2004, is aimed at creating a successful, competitive centre that has all the essential ingredients that one would expect to find in an economy of Swindon's size and importance – from more employment, broader retail offer and excellent civic, cultural and education facilities to more town centre living and bright, vibrant open spaces. The key transformational projects, which will be outlined in the Framework, will deliver some 3,000 new homes, 90,000 sq m of new offices and 100,000 sq m of new retail and leisure.



Swindon Town Centre

West Lakes Renaissance

West Lakes Renaissance, the Urban Regeneration Company for Furness and West Cumbria, is spear-heading the economic regeneration of the west coast of Cumbria. Working in partnership with four local authorities and other local agencies, the company has an ambitious investment portfolio stretching from Morecambe Bay to the Solway Firth.



The Marina in Barrow (artist's impression)

The company's primary focus is to act as delivery vehicle for large scale infrastructure and development projects. It aims to secure the long-term commitment of the private sector by investing resources into key facilities.



URCs form an important part of the Government's policy for the renewal of towns and cities as outlined in the Urban White Paper (November 2000). They are seen as an effective means for organising and delivering major regeneration projects in key urban locations, and as part of a comprehensive, strategic regional and sub-regional policy led by the Regional Development Agencies. URCs are important drivers for delivering on Government commitments to achieving the objectives set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan.

www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/programmes/urcdev/index.htm



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