

Who is responsible for incorporating the notion of ‘Public Interest’ into Sustainable Urban Developments? A case study of three sites in the south-west of England

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Abstract

Public-private partnership agreements between local authorities and government agencies and developers have become the modus operandi in the UK since the 1990s for the regeneration of brownfield sites in UK towns and cities. This paper explores these relationships to identify who is responsible for insuring that the development is in the ‘public interest’, in terms of transport access and the provision of new public realm and transport links. The paper studies three case studies in the south west of England: Harbourside Bristol, Gloucester Quays and Firepool Taunton to examine, who ensures the public interest is met and how. The research involves interviews with the key people involved in the regeneration process for each of the three case studies. Early conclusions show that the local authorities and government agencies such as the now defunct Regional Development Agencies and English Partnerships were responsible for providing funding for transport developments to enable the regeneration schemes to be to be initiated.

Introduction

In the UK, the Labour Government of 1997-2010 placed the regeneration of towns and cities at the core of their agenda in what was termed ‘*urban renaissance*’ (Colomb, 2007). This urban renaissance was designed to change development from out of town locations to brownfield locations within town and city centres to create a ‘compact city’ (Rogers, 1999). This was a change from the anti-urbanisation that had prevailed in the UK from the 1960s to the early 1990s (Colomb, 2007). Between 1998 and 2008 the Labour Government produced a number of strategic guidance documents and supporting funding designed to outline the means of creating sustainable urban communities including: *Bringing Britain Together* [1998] (Chatterton and Bradley, 2000) and the *Sustainable Communities Plan* [2003], (ODPM, 2003). In relation to this steer towards regenerating urban areas many local authorities in the UK sought to identify locations where brownfield sites could be regenerated. This research paper focuses on three urban regeneration sites in the south-west of England: Harbourside in Bristol, Gloucester Quays and Firepool in Taunton.

With any regeneration project there is a desire to deliver a scheme that is in the public interest, or that delivers a ‘public good’. This can often be in contrast to the commercial realities of delivering a regeneration scheme. The three case studies provide the opportunity to explore: what the public interest is, how the public interest is delivered and who is responsible for delivering it? In two of the case studies (Harbourside, Bristol and Firepool, Taunton) the local authority was one of the principal land owners within the regeneration area, as well as the planning authority. In the other case study, Gloucester Quays, part of the land was owned by British Waterways, a statutory corporation owned by the UK Government until it was disbanded in 2012 and replaced by the charity Canal and River Trust. In each of the case studies these bodies entered a public-private partnership agreement with

developers and approach to regeneration that has become the modus operandi in the UK since the 1990s (Atkinson, 1999a; Atkinson 1999b). The partner organisations in each of the case studies therefore had competing agendas. For the local authorities and the government corporation it related to delivering an improvement to a derelict area that provides the public good and for the developers it was to ensure that this is achieved at a profit for their shareholders.

In terms of delivering a scheme that is in the public interest, accessibility and transport improvements are an essential component of what is delivered. This paper explores the delivery of the public interest from a transport perspective to identify how the term 'public interest' has been adopted by the relevant organisations in terms of delivering something to benefit either the local population or the wide public population who seek to use the site. This paper explores the difficulties of defining the term 'public interest', sets out the analytical approach undertaken before providing analysis of each of the three case studies. The paper will provide a discussion of the initial findings and early conclusions before discussing where this paper sits within the wider context of the PARCOUR research project.

PARCOUR is a three-year ESRC funded international Research Project (2015-2018), which involves a comparative analysis of urban development (of previously used land) led by public-private partnerships. The research includes nine case studies, three per country, of regeneration projects in Brazil, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK). The aim of the PARCOUR project is to study how governance forms associated with the use of contracts affect public accountability and the public interest in urban regeneration projects. The project seeks to understand whether the public can benefit from public-private contractual arrangements and if so how this differs in each country. Contracts are increasingly used as planning tools to regulate the actions of public, private, and civil actors involved in urban regeneration. The contractual relationships between these actors instigate forms of governance that vary from place to place depending on the different actors involved and their past experience. This has important implications of contractual planning for sustainable urban development, and for the public interest at large. The objective of the research is therefore to provide greater understanding of the governance arrangements in each country, how these differ and what lessons can be learnt. This paper explores this governance within a transport context.

Defining the Public Interest

In the UK, as in much of Western Europe it has been assumed that the planning process worked in the public interest by through the process of development control. Simmie (1974: p102) explained that town planners believed their role was to: "*serve altruistically the community as a whole*". This suggested that the public interest was served by the planning process rather than the needs of the private parties proposing the development. Simmie (1974) however argues that the process of planning, placed within a local authority is in fact a political activity so it is not possible for planners to work altruistically because of this.

In the 1990s this notion of neutrality was challenged by neoliberalist approaches to planning, which saw the process as a barrier to economic growth. This is an approach that remains dominant, as evidenced by the UK Governments removal of the Planning Policy Statements, and replacing them with the National Planning Policy Framework, (CLG, 2012), a 65-page document that was designed to replace the 'bureaucracy' that existed within the planning system and the Planning Policy Statements that were designed to support the development process. From the 1990s onwards there has been a move towards a more collaborative planning process, where the planner is seen as a 'facilitator', bringing together the parties and governance process, to provide a consensus theory. Fainstein (2009) criticises this approach, as it fails to take into account the structural inequalities that exist within the system, as the developers often have greater access to funds and legal expertise than the local authorities, meaning that in reality, the planners can find it difficult to ensure the public good is delivered if their decision is contested by the developers.

At present the local authorities do have two regulatory instruments to use to ensure funding is available to deliver funding, Section 106 funding and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Both have their critics in terms of how and where they can be used (Pinnock, 2016), but they are often used to provide transport improvements that are deemed to be in the public interest. This public interest, based on transport, as well as providing affordable housing appears to sit clearly with the public sector, rather than the private sector. The question is then what happens if the system is failing to provide the public good? Murphy and Fox-Rogers (2015) explored the views of the planning community in the Republic of Ireland after the housing crash of 2008, where the planning system failed to protect the wider public interest. The authors' research found that over half of those interviewed struggled to define what the 'common good' even was, yet most agreed their role was as the guardian of this public interest in the planning process. Planners are inherently part of the process and as such are not able to complete the checks and balances of the wider system that they work in, so the question of who is working in the public interest, and how this is protected is difficult to define. Therefore for the purposes of this paper the public interest, has been defined as improvements to the public realm and transport and travel opportunities due to the completion of the development, rather than the wider definition involving housing and other potential benefits.

Analytical Approach

The research is based on a grounded theory approach and involves the collection of qualitative data that will be generated through interviews with the key people involved within the redevelopment process within each case study. This paper is based on interviews undertaken in the first phase of interviews for the wider research project and includes the results from 18 interviews across the three case studies, as shown in Table 1. The data gathered has been analysed using NVIVO software to help identify themes and issues that relate to each individual case study and where comparisons can be made between each of them.

Table 1 – Interviewees for each PARCOUR Case Study

Harbourside, Bristol		Gloucester Quays		Firepool, Taunton	
No.	Interviewee	No.	Interviewee	No.	Interviewee
1	<i>Architect and initial scheme Objector</i>	8	<i>Heritage Expert</i>	15	<i>Former Project Taunton Officer</i>
2	<i>Ex-Councillor and member of planning board</i>	9	<i>Local Councillor and former GHURC board member</i>	16	<i>Local Enterprise Partnership Officer</i>
3	<i>Member of opposition group</i>	10	<i>Developer and former GHURC member</i>	17	<i>Local Councillor</i>
4	<i>Member of Harbourside Sponsors Group</i>	11	<i>Former county council officer</i>	18	<i>Former Project Taunton Officer</i>
5	<i>Local Journalist</i>	12	<i>Local Councillor and former GHURC board member</i>		
6	<i>Ex- Senior Council Officer</i>	13	<i>Former GHURC Officer</i>		
7	<i>Director of Cultural Development Company</i>	14	<i>Ex-SWRDA Officer</i>		

Face-to-face interviews were the preferred method of completing the interviews, as this approach allows the interviewee to interpret both the language the interviewee uses, as well as the non-verbal language used when discussing the subject (Denzin, 2009). The interviews were semi-structured, as this allowed the interviewees to relax (Willis, 2007), whilst the interviewer retained control of the topics discussed. This allows the interviews to be dynamic and gather data on areas that were new to the interviewer's knowledge of the case study.

A second phase of interviews that are to be undertaken after this paper is presented will seek to identify the 'missing pieces' of each case study. This will involve interviewing some

of the interviewees from the first phase, along with other people who can provide information for the study. A list of key people for each case study was identified through a desktop study and each individual was contacted by email and asked to participate. The grounded approach for this research meant that each interview was able to identify people that they thought should be interviewed as part of the project to provide a richer context to the story of each redevelopment.

Case Study 1 –Harbourside, Bristol

Bristol is the eighth largest city in the UK and as such is a key driver of economic development in the South West region as well as having a 'global footprint', albeit in a small number of sectors. The city has a long maritime history, with the dock playing a significant role in the discovery of the Americas, and the more nefarious trades of slavery, tobacco and alcohol. Due to the decline of the docks the city had and still has considerable development potential based around central area brownfield sites that have remained undeveloped for several decades. The local authority also has extensive experience of partnership working with the private sector since the 1990s. One of the sites the City Council have worked with the private sector is Harbourside.

Harbourside Bristol is a 7ha mixed-use development in central Bristol located to the west of the city centre, directly south of Bristol Cathedral. The site was grazing land for the cathedral in the 16th century and in the 19th century the floating harbour was constructed in Bristol to allow the harbour to be navigable all day, reducing the impact of the tidal range. Over this period the site became industrialised and included railway yards and tobacco warehouses, called bonds (Greed, 1996). The use of the docks declined in the later part of the 20th century, with the docks closing in the 1960s, leaving the area derelict and some areas of land contaminated. Large parts of the site were used as car parking for the city centre and car boot sales at the weekend in the 1980s and 1990s (Heurkens *et al.*, 2015). The site has not always been publically accessible and the redevelopment process, along with the adjacent Millennium Square project was designed to open the area up for public use, provided enhanced access to the waterfront and regenerate a formerly derelict site in the centre of the city.

Prior to the approval of the Harbourside development, three phases of development took place within the area adjacent to the site included in this research. The transit sheds to the north east of the site were converted into the Watershed media centre in 1982 (City of Bristol, 1984), Lloyds Bank built their headquarters in 1987 (Greed, 1996) and developer and 'Millennium funding' was used to develop Millennium Square, @Bristol and an IMAX cinema (now the Aquarium) in the late 1990s (Bassett *et al.*, 2001). Having completed the initial interviews it has become clear that the Harbourside development cannot be studied in isolation, as many of the public benefits delivered relate to the development of Millennium Square and providing the links to the earlier developments.

The City of Bristol had a poor reputation in the 1980s for redevelopment, as the left-wing Labour Council was very resistant to developers taking land within the city. *Interviewee 6* explains:

"We had a reputation in the property industry as a place where good ideas come to die."

The lack of developments taking place meant that the Conservative Government put pressure on the City Council to facilitate development by threatening to impose a Development Corporation on the city, removing the City Council's planning powers. To prevent this from happening, the City Council along with the *Bristol Initiative* business forum and the other land owners set up the Harbourside Sponsors Group in 1993 in an attempt to regenerate all of the city's derelict docks, including the Harbourside area. These are shown in Figure 1. Each of the parties signed the *Harbourside Accord*, a non-legally binding document where the parties agreed to work together to resolve issues such as land contamination and to recoup their profits once the development was completed. The *Harbourside Accord* lasted for 11 years and was eventually broken when Network Rail sold their land at Wapping Wharf, on the side of the harbour, to developers Umberslade.

The Harbourside Accord provides clear evidence of the City Council, and latterly the South West Regional Development Agency, ensuring that the development delivered a scheme that was in the public interest. As Interviewee 6 explains:

“Within the Harbourside Accord there was a requirement for a percentage of the lift in the value of the land to be put towards leisure infrastructure...the public realm was effectively secured through the leisure contribution.”

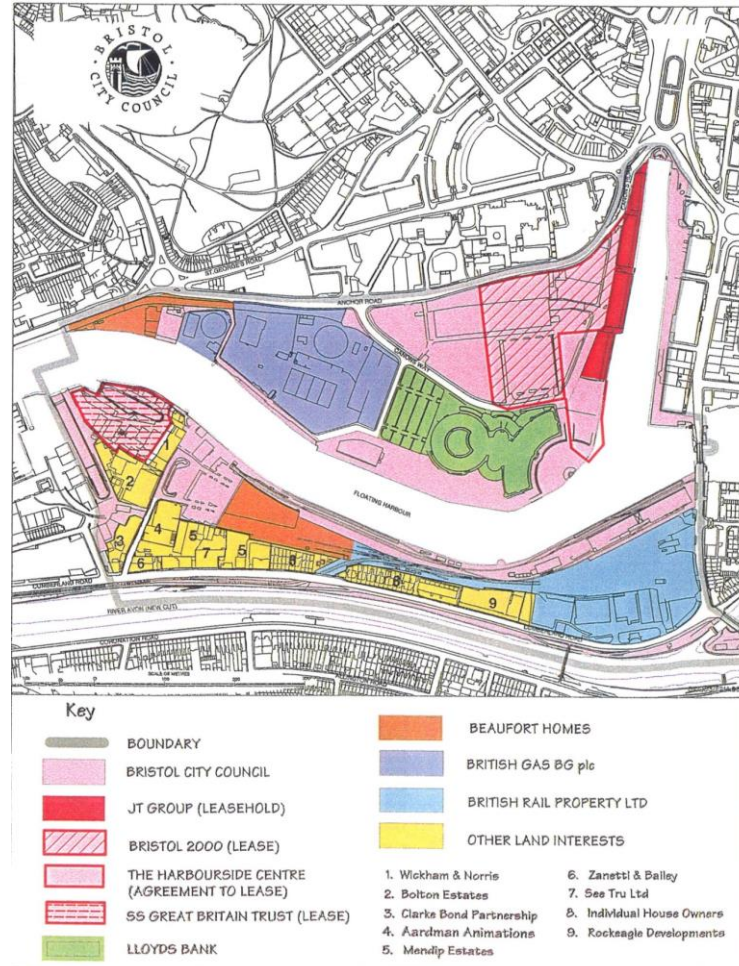


Figure 1 – Land Ownership at Bristol Harbourside/Canon’s Marsh (Bristol City Council, 1998).

The Leisure infrastructure covered in the Harbourside Accord relates to the development of Millennium Square, a public realm scheme that provided a public space in the centre of the city, close to the waterside. Due to the issues of gaining planning permission for the Harbourside development and the pressure to deliver the new public space in time for the Millennium celebrations in 2000 the public/leisure space was effectively front loaded, as most of the benefits were realised 15 years before the Harbourside development was finally completed in 2015. Interviewee 4 explains that he and his colleagues within the Harbourside Sponsors Group were very happy with the Millennium Square development:

“I really do feel it has delivered a practical output from our original thoughts... I think it has and I think Millennium Square is a fine achievement and @Bristol.”

The delivery of Millennium Square provided a public space that is used for a variety of reasons throughout the year. The second piece of transport infrastructure developed on the site was the Millennium Mile, which opened in 2014, as an area of public realm. However, as a public space Interviewee 1 was critical of the overall design of the site in terms of public access and use:

“Apart from the Millennium Mile that made real sense and is now coming together, there was no real thought of how the footfall works...If they’d thought about having what I call

the string of beads of attractions, something interesting every 4 or 5 metres and that front would have... and the bridge... then had something really going that would have worked.”

So whilst the initial leisure areas and the Millennium Mile walk way have been relatively successful the sites' design and layout have been criticised, as this has reduced the footfall though the site, as there is nothing to see or do there. This means that to the interviewees the Harbourside area of the development does not really work with all seven expressing some degree of disappointed with the final site in terms of design and layout.

Interviewee 1 also mentioned the possibility of including a bridge within the development, linking to the opposite side of the harbour. Interviewee 6 explains that this was considered and ultimately dismissed.

“We had some interesting proposals for a bridge: one in particular which was a kind of huge butterfly wings... but it would have been right in view line down the harbour of the SS Great Britain, confusing that iconic set of masts, so we said no.”

The link across the river is currently served by the cross harbour ferry, which costs 90p/journey¹. It appears that in this case the aesthetics of the existing area outweighed the public interest in providing a permanent link for pedestrians across the harbour.

This case study demonstrates the challenges of regenerating areas that are both commercially viable and of interest for people to visit and access. Whilst the Millennium Square development has been very successful at creating a place and public space in Bristol the areas adjacent to this have not been as successful in bringing people into the area and creating a sense of place throughout the whole development. The developers have been successful in developing new housing and office space that has been sold or leased, but the long-term benefits of this area and its public realm are less certain.

Case Study 2 – Gloucester Quays

Gloucester city is the County Town (administrative centre) of the County of Gloucestershire and sits on the River Severn and is bound by the Cotswolds to the east and the Forest of Dean to the west, two areas of outstanding natural beauty. In terms of the South West Region it was designated as a Principal Urban Area by the former South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). Gloucester Quays is a retail-led development of the Bakers Quay section of the city's historic docks. The area was redeveloped by Peel Holdings in partnership with British Waterways, the two land owners in the area, as shown in Figure 2. The site includes a new Sainsbury's supermarket, a campus for Gloucester College and a retail outlet centre, with 58 outlet stores, cafes and restaurants and a cinema. It was originally intended that the development would include housing, but due to the economic downturn in 2008 this has been delayed.

Like Bristol the docks in Gloucester started to decline in the 1960s, with changes to the distribution of petroleum through pipelines saw a decline in use of the docks as commercial traffic disappeared by the 1980s to be replaced with recreational use (Conway-Jones, 2006). This caused problems to the owners of the site, British Waterways, as Interviewee 8 explained:

“We were left with a series of Victorian warehouses that were derelict or semi-derelict and nobody could see a future for them.”

This caused problems for the city, as this once busy part of the city was now decaying and no longer in use. There were two acts that saved this area to provide an area for public use that protected the heritage, the first of these was the listing of several of the buildings, as interviewee 8 explains:

“There was a proposal in the early 1970s to knock the warehouses down and build a car park because the car was seen as the most important means of transport.”

The proposal in the 1970s was designed to provide something in the 'public interest' for the city, by creating an area of car parking for the city, as this was the primary means of

¹ Cost in November 2016 (<http://www.numbersevenboattrips.com/cross-harbour/>)

transport and seen as the future of travel. This plan was stopped by the actions of *English Heritage*, who sought to list 30 buildings within the dock area to prevent his from happening. As of 2016 13 of these buildings sit within the Gloucester Quays development area. Those that have been redeveloped have been successfully incorporated into the design of the new retail area. All seven interviewees believed that this had been achieved in a manner that was sympathetic to the history of the site.

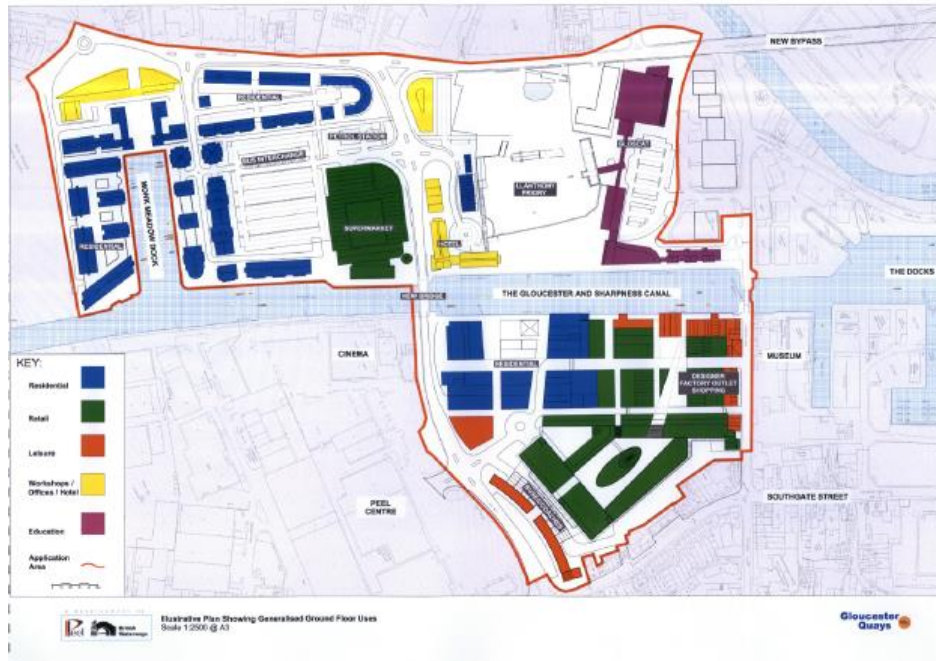


Figure 2 – Peel Holdings and British Waterways' Outline Plan for Gloucester Quays (Gloucester City Council, 2002)

The second act that saved the historic docks occurred in 1980 when Gloucester City Council purchased one of the buildings, North Warehouse, from British Waterways for £1. The City Council regenerated this building, whilst at the same time creating the Historic Docks Conservation Area, ensuring that all future developments at this site were in keeping with the history of the site. What is in keeping in terms of creating a public space has been debated. Interviewee 8 explained that the current conservation officer was not in favour of bringing trees into the area. This was because the docks were previously a working environment and the introduction of trees does not reflect this.

The conflict between past and present use challenges one of the three major transport improvements that have been made since the completion of Gloucester Quays: the public realm enhancements, the construction of High Orchard Bridge and the Southwest bypass. The public realm work was a £7.5m enhancement to the route between the existing city centre and the new Gloucester Quays development. This was designed and approved by the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company (GHURC) and funded by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and English Partnerships, two government bodies. The GHURC was an arms-length organisation set up to oversee the redevelopment of seven key sites across the city and included members and received funding from the local authorities and government agencies within the area. With hindsight benefits of spending this money on the improvements have however been questioned by Interviewee 9, a former GHURC board member:

"The day that it was opened [Gloucester Quays Retail Outlet] and that public realm work hadn't been done people were making very easy linkage between the two, so whether that was a good use of money I don't know?"

Gloucester Quays opened in 2008 and the public realm works were finished in 2010 (GHURC, 2010). The public realm works were signed off by the GHURC, despite a significant reduction of resources due to the economic downturn and it is possible that despite the members of the GHURC delivering something that they believed to be in the

public good, with hindsight several interviewees believe the funding could have been better used elsewhere in the city to provide services or infrastructure that were in the public interest.

To facilitate access to the Docks, which are to the south west of the city, two major sections of transport infrastructure were delivered. The South west bypass was secured in the early 2000s thanks to the support of the local MP, who managed to convince the then Transport Minister to provide £12m to the scheme, with £6m coming from private developers (Dhandu, 2015). This was then delivered by Gloucestershire County Council as the Highways authority. This road had previously been known as the 'road to nowhere' and allowed access to the Gloucester Quays for people travelling via the M5 from the north, as it provided a bypass of the city centre.

The second piece of infrastructure was the second 'road to nowhere', between the bypass and St Ann's Way within the Gloucester Quays regeneration area. This was the High Orchard Bridge, a £6 million lift bridge that allowed tall ships to continue to navigate the canal to the dry docks. This was funded by SWRDA and English Partnerships to facilitate access to the shopping centre and enable the development of new housing on the western side of the canal. In addition to this the local authorities were able to use Section 106 funding to pay towards this and other infrastructure, as Interviewee 10 explains:

"There was a substantial one [Section 106 payment]: the whole road junction around the Quays and the new bridge. We made quite a sizeable contribution to the cost of the High Orchard Bridge."

The Gloucester Quays case study demonstrates that the local authority and the government agencies through the arms-length GHURC were responsible for ensuring that the public good is delivered in terms of providing accessibility to the new regeneration site and making sure the developers paid their contribution to this. The developers are however significant beneficiaries of this investment, as their site would not be accessible without the government funding into making the transport infrastructure. The GHURC's arms-length nature meant that it was able to act in relation to the best interest of the city's economy, whilst attempting to meet the competing agendas of each party. This fine balancing act means that whilst some schemes were relatively successful in providing a public good that all interviewees agreed with such as the new bridge, other aspects such as the public realm, may not have delivered what was required for Gloucester in the long term.

Case Study 3 – Firepool, Taunton

Like Gloucester, Taunton is also a County Town (administrative centre), of the County of Somerset in the South West of England; it is a small to medium-sized town with an expanding population. The town has a long history, dating back over 1,000 years. In 2006, Taunton was named as a 'Strategically Important Town or City' by the then Government that allowed the County Council to win funding to undertake large-scale redevelopment of the town centre. Taunton is the location of the County Council's offices, the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) and the head offices of several large UK companies.

The Firepool development in Taunton involves the redevelopment of several separate areas to the north of the town centre, as shown in Figure 3. The site was identified as a 'strategic employment site' in Taunton Deane Borough Council's Taunton Town Centre Action Plan in 2008 and regenerates the former cattle-market site and railway goods yards between the town's railway station and the town centre. The cattle-market site is owned by the Borough Council, whilst the goods yard was previously owned by Network Rail and both sites are being developed by different developers: St Modwen for the cattle-market and Crest Nicholson for the Goods yard. This means the question of who is responsible for ensuring both schemes deliver the public good is more complex.

Added to the split in regeneration sites, provision of transport infrastructure to serve the new sites is also split. Somerset County Council was awarded £15m from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 towards the delivery of the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR), a new road to remove traffic from the town centre (DfT, 2013). The NIDR passes through the goods yard development and runs between the former cattle-market and Taunton railway station. The road was due to open in 2015, but is now expected to open in 2017. The new

highway was expected to have a slight adverse impact on biodiversity, water quality and heritage (Somerset County Council, 2011); however the economic case and the reduction of congestion were seen as benefits that outweighed the adverse effects. At the public inquiry for the redevelopment Interviewee 18 explained that he had to make the business case for the road in relation to the whole Firepool scheme:

“I had to stand up at the public inquiry and say that the Firepool redevelopment would not take place without the NIDR being funded”.

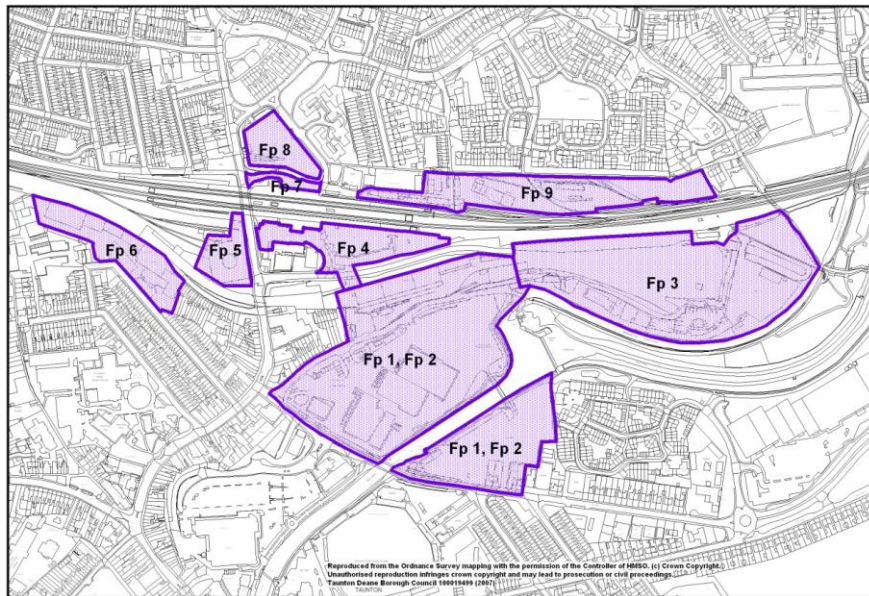


Figure 3 – Firepool, Taunton (Taunton Deane Borough Council, 2016)

The construction of new highways is at odds with the findings of the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment’s (SACTRA) (1994) report *‘Trunk Road and the Generation of Traffic’*, which concluded that the introduction of new highway infrastructure actually acts to induce more traffic onto the network rather than alleviate the existing traffic problem and this is still believed to be the case now (Metz, 2016). This case study out of the three challenges the notion of the public good, as it raises the question as to whether the construction of a new highway is actually in the public interest? The new road will sever the existing railway station from the town centre, although an at-grade crossing will be provided as part of the station improvements. The crossing will be designed to link to a ‘pedestrian boulevard’ through the Firepool site that will enhance the route for pedestrians between the town centre and the station, so there will be some pedestrian benefits within the scheme. In addition the expected benefits of this new road are more likely to be felt by the anticipated reduction of traffic in the town centre, rather than in the Firepool development. Taunton Deane Borough Council’s plan to improve pedestrian facilities in this area of the town through traffic calming measures once the NIDR is complete. The second area that is expected to benefit from the NIDR is the East Reach Air Quality Action Management Area, which sits outside the Firepool site.

The second change to Taunton’s transport infrastructure relates to the enhancement of the existing railway station. Taunton station provides the town with good links to Bristol, Exeter and London, so there is a desire for people to access the town via train rather than car to help reduce traffic congestion further. Interviewee 16 explained that the station had seen a significant increase in patronage in the last ten years, although many of this was for people travelling away from Taunton. Taunton Deane Borough Council, with the support of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Network Rail were successful in 2013 in being awarded £4.6m of Local Growth funding to improve the station. This was matched by local contributions for a total project of £8.8m. This included the construction of a new multi-storey car park to cater for the increased rail patronage at the station, with improved accessibility via the NIDR. The plans for the station include improved public realm and links to the town centre, a public

transport/taxi interchange plus alterations to the station layout to improve access to the town centre.

Within the Firepool Case Study, it is clear that several of the measures of delivering the 'public interest' are related to travel by private motor vehicle. The nature of such a development has an adverse impact on local air quality and biodiversity, so the question of the 'public good' in this case study needs to be considered for the wider-town rather than the site. The NIDR is designed to reduce traffic in the town centre, and congestion at East Reach, both areas where there is expected to be an improvement to the local environment. In this case the public good has been defined in terms of benefiting the economy and local environment outside the development area.

Discussion

In all three case studies the regeneration process has been designed to open up areas to new developments to areas that were previously inaccessible to the public due to their previous use. In all cases this has inevitably involved providing highway/car access to the sites and this can create conflicts between public use of space. In Bristol this was overcome by the construction of an underground car park at Millennium Square, but this cost £4 million to construct. Such a solution would not be possible at Firepool, due to the potential flood risk to the site. In Gloucester the new retail centre required the construction of a multi-storey car park on the site, to enable access to shoppers and people wishing to spend their leisure time at the docks. There are significant economic benefits to this approach and this is something that Taunton Deane Borough Council will be hoping to achieve at the Firepool site and it can be argued that this is the main driving force for this scheme, with every other benefit deemed to be secondary. The key challenge is delivering the parking for both the station and the new developments in a way that is not detrimental to the public realm.

What is also evident from all three case studies is that they cannot be viewed in isolation, as individual projects. The public good in terms of transport and access may be provided elsewhere, as is the case with the NIDR, which is designed to improve air quality at East Reach within the city. Whether this can be achieved by building new highway infrastructure is highly debatable however.

In all three case studies the governance structures are complex, but it is clear that in each case government bodies, be it local councils, or government agencies are responsible for ensuring the public good is delivered through the regeneration of brownfield sites. The private sector are left to develop, once they have received outline permission and reserved matters and it remains up to the public authority bodies to ensure that what is delivered is in the public interest.

Early Conclusions and Future Work

The early conclusions from this work are that the public sector organisations are responsible for delivering the public good when it comes to new developments being completed, as part of the public-private partnership. The local authorities in two of the case studies (Bristol and Taunton) have dual roles, both as the land owner and the planning authority, which could potentially create a conflict of interest. In Bristol the City Council created the Harbourside Accord to form a public/private partnership in an attempt to keep this at arms-length. This has not happened in Taunton, and the land ownership has remained with Taunton Deane Borough Council.

To ensure transport and access schemes are provided the local authorities are able to use Section 106 funding to ensure that people can access/egress the sites safely and link to the existing infrastructure and surrounding towns and cities. This has produced two high quality urban realm areas in Bristol and Gloucester, which remains the aspiration in Taunton, once the development is complete.

It is clear that central government funding is essential for the construction of new highway infrastructure, with both Gloucester and Taunton benefiting from DfT funding to provide new highway infrastructure to link the sites to the existing highway network. In both cases this

was provided to the County Councils, who are the highway authorities due to the two-tier local authority system.

The Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) was also influential in delivering all three schemes and formed another level of Government that no longer exists since their dissolution in 2012. In the Taunton case study, SWRDA's role was replaced by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), who helped the Borough Council and Network Rail secure central government funding for improvements to the rail station. It is clear from these case studies that the central government funding provides a crucial role in any development and the provision of new transport amenity that is in the public interest. What is unclear from the findings at this stage is the role central government in defining what is in the 'public interest'. This will be reviewed and compared with the planning systems in the Netherlands and Brazil in years two and three of the PARCOUR project.

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