



Good Foundations:

towards a low carbon, high well-being
built environment

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Executive summary

Good Foundations was commissioned by the Happold Trust to present a new vision of successful development; development that works for people and the planet. It was born out of an increasing concern among professionals across the built environment sector that the current system by which we plan, design, and develop our neighbourhoods is inadequate when it comes to those things in life that really matter.

As efforts to patch up the current financial system continue, and investment into development projects begins to regain momentum, this report argues that a return to business as usual is not an option. Instead, it prompts all of us, including professionals working within the built environment sector, to consider *what* and *who* development and renewal projects are really for. In the light of a growing evidence base on the social, environmental, and economic features of neighbourhoods that support their inhabitants to live a good life, this report calls into question the viability of a model that uses financial return on investment as the single and most informative predictor of development success. Instead, it explores how the built environment sector can better connect the planning, design, and development of place to meaningful objectives – the enjoyment of good lives for inhabitants now and in the future.

The UK has a rich history on which to draw when it comes to shaping and creating places that meet current and future needs in times of unprecedented challenge – from the pioneer industrialists of the early Industrial Revolution and late nineteenth century, to Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, to the subsequent legislative changes and actions by government which saw the introduction of new towns across the country. But today brings with it a different set of challenges no longer about how to deal with rapid urban population growth or post-war reconstruction – and we must again reach out to find a development model that is fit for purpose. Intractable problems are evident across many of our communities and neighbourhoods – including increasing spatial inequality, poor community relations, low levels of trust and belonging among young people, weak local economies, poor housing quality, and increased anxiety about household debt. This is now matched by the threat of irreversible climate change and the use of finite environmental resources at a rate faster than they can be replenished.

Of course, failing to address the socio-economic and environmental concerns of our times is the more expensive option in the long run, both in

terms of the costs incurred to our communities and the drain on our shared but increasingly scarce public resources. The policies, strategies, and guidance published over the last decade have begun to explicitly link the development of our built environment to people's well-being and the strength of our communities, but an implementation gap between aspirations and real world outcomes clearly remains.

Good Foundations argues that a radically different view of success is needed in relation to the way we plan, design, and develop the built environment if we are to translate the thinking that has emerged into a genuinely new way of doing things. It says that if we are ultimately concerned with building neighbourhoods that work for the people who live in them both *now* and in the *future*, then the promotion of well-being within environmental limits should be the overarching aim of development activity. To achieve this, it suggests a different, and more holistic, approach is taken which balances social, economic and environmental value with financial return.

What really matters for people and place?

The scoping research which forms the foundation of this report took place over a period of 12 months in two neighbourhoods in Peckham, London. Its aim was to explore the links between the built environment, neighbourhood regeneration, and people's well-being. It was supported by secondary research, consultations, and a workshop with people working in the built environment sector.

Reflecting on our findings, this report describes how some of the basic assumptions that drive our understanding of success, and therefore the way we approach the development of our built environment, are flawed. The amount invested or the profit made, whilst important for some stakeholders, are not strong indicators of success when it comes to how people experience their day-to-day lives. By contrast, our research in Peckham found that certain planning and design features – such as access to green space and the provision of social hubs – matter to residents, affecting how people function and how they feel on a day-to-day basis. In addition, we found that the *way* in which a development or regeneration project is delivered on the ground matters, influencing the extent to which all stakeholders feel part of the place shaping and place making process and the connections which are fostered between people within the neighbourhood.

Similarly, we do not have to look far to appreciate the important role the built environment plays in contributing to the UK's environmental footprint. At a time when 40 per cent of UK carbon emissions come from buildings alone, there is an unavoidable challenge to reduce the environmental impact of our built environment alongside efforts to recognise and support its role in promoting a good life for people.

An alternative vision of success: sustainable well-being

Drawing from the research findings, this report proposes an alternative vision of success; one where our neighbourhoods better support a good life for their inhabitants while also respecting the environmental resource

limits upon which all our lives depend. In short, we suggest that development projects should be working to promote high well-being.

Place Happiness captures three core aspects of well-being to which the built environment can contribute:

1. **Personal well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to their physical and psychological well-being.
2. **Social well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to those around them: their community.
3. **Economic and material well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to the conditions and circumstances of their lives, including their physical surroundings.

Place Sustainability captures two key ways in which buildings have an environmental impact:

1. Resources used during construction or renovation.
2. Resources used across the lifetime of its use.

We argue that this vision needs to be held and championed at the local level by local authorities, who would play a strategic oversight role to ensure any development projects contribute to sustainable well-being objectives. But applying the concepts of pH and pS will also need to be supported by changes to the development process, which will need to be led by the built environment sector itself.

A closer look at the development process

In this report, we break down the development process into three broad stages: *place shaping*, the process of agreeing a vision for a development project; *place making*, the process of embedding development objectives into design and delivery; and *reviewing impact*, the process of evaluating change. Establishing fully implementable mechanisms for shifting the culture of the built environment sector is beyond the remit of this report. Nevertheless, our research suggests that sustainable well-being could be supported by the following approach:

The development of a stakeholder value map at the place-shaping stage

It was clear from our research that more time and resources are required up front to determine how value to multiple stakeholders can be realised in practice. Too often, existing personal, social, and material well-being in communities is not adequately recognised or protected. And the carbon footprint of buildings is too often thought about only at the point of delivery – even though the sustainability of the supply chain has to be considered at the planning stage to put an effective process in place to achieve it.

Our research in Peckham indicated that local involvement at the earliest stages of the development process is critical for building community networks and fostering a sense of ‘neighbourliness’ as well as creating trust between stakeholders and the delivery of more successful developments that respond to local needs.

We suggest that the development of a **stakeholder value map** can help a project to retain existing value and create added value by working with all

key stakeholders at the earliest stages of the process to identify social, environmental, and economic outcomes that support well-being. Using a co-production approach, where professional knowledge is mutually exchanged with the information and experience held by local people, the neighbourhood features that enhance and limit well-being can be identified. Using the stakeholder value map, stakeholders can work together at the outset to agree:

- All those stakeholders who are affected by or who can affect the outcomes of the development project.
- The community assets and resources that will be retained and built upon.
- The neighbourhood qualities to be improved.
- The changes that the development project will either wholly or in part deliver.
- The changes that will directly contribute to wider, strategic local priorities.

The development of a design proof for sustainable well-being at the place-making stage

Increasingly, the interdependence of well-being and sustainability is being recognised at the conceptual level. Much more needs to be done, however, to apply this thinking to the way we design and deliver development and renewal projects. Designing for pH requires that both the structural factors (e.g., employment opportunities, income inequality) affecting economic and material well-being, as well as the personal and social dimensions of people's experience of their lives are factored into development objectives. Designing for pS requires the use of sustainable materials and technologies, the promotion of low-environmental-impact lifestyles, and a longer-term duty of care.

We suggest the use of a **design proof for sustainable well-being** to better focus on well-being and environmental outcomes, and the interdependence between them.

This should be in place *before* development activity begins to ensure that sustainable well-being is core to the development process from the outset. The design proof should detail:

- The design features and activities that will deliver pH and pS outcomes identified in the stakeholder value map.
- The professional and community resources – physical, human, social, environmental, and economic – that can be drawn upon in the delivery process.
- Any win-win opportunities for promoting high well-being and low environmental impact.
- Any trade-offs across social, environmental, economic, *and* financial outcomes that need to be made.

The use of well-being and sustainability measures to track impact

Too often, a focus on financial indicators of success can narrow attention and distort focus away from objectives that really matter to people and

communities. Part of the reason that commercial measures win out is because alternative measures of value are not being fully incorporated into decision-making processes. Even when attempts to measure effects on individuals, communities, or the environment are made, it is often the case that inadequate indicators and poor or under-resourced data collection methods obscure the real impact – positive and negative – of development projects. We suggest a number of ways that measurement could more directly support an approach to development that places people's well-being and the environment at its centre:

- The use of subjective indicators to focus on people's experience of life in a place, as well as the objective conditions of a place.
- The selection of indicators that directly correspond to the outcomes and activities identified in the stakeholder value map and design proof for sustainable well-being.
- Taking a long-term view, which looks to post-occupancy surveys and sustainable efficiency gains as markers of good design.
- Collecting data before the development process has begun, to provide a baseline for subsequent reviews.
- Regular and systematic reviews that track changes over time, to help identify what works and inform improvements.
- The use of composite indicators to discourage perverse incentives and provide an honest appraisal about potential trade-offs between outcome areas.

Recommendations

In this report, we suggest an outline for a way forward that puts people's lived experience and the limits of the planet's resources at the heart of the development process. Implementing the approach identified in this report will require further consideration, research, and application in practice. There are, however, some clear avenues for change, which we believe represent the first steps. They fall into five categories which set out the need to: work to a broader definition of value, strengthen leadership, take a different approach to stakeholder engagement, build capacity to measure what matters, and test out ideas in practice.

1. Work to a broader definition of value

- **Government should re-visit and amend planning legislation, to stipulate a requirement for buildings and development projects to create value across social, environmental and economic outcomes.** This will ensure that a wider definition of public benefit is specified in accordance with Treasury guidelines.
- **Industry experts and government need to work together to create new financial instruments. These should aim to incentivise the building of developments that deliver sustainable well-being.** There is considerable scope to look at the potential impact of alternative taxes – including varieties of capital gains, land value, and inheritance taxes – that take into account 'use value' as well as the 'market value' of buildings. Tax breaks to make conversion and improvement, rather than new-

build, more attractive to the built environment sector would be a good place to start.

- **Institutions educating the next generation of built environment professionals need to incorporate well-being and sustainability issues throughout their curriculum**, if we are to see well-being and sustainability more consistently embedded into the heart of design.
- **The built environment sector should establish an accreditation scheme**, which sets a standard for buildings and developments that works across social, environmental, and economic outcomes to achieve sustainable well-being. Recognition should be provided within the sector for innovative approaches to development and should be the basis for encouraging, rewarding, and showcasing success.

2. Strengthen leadership

- **Local authorities need to drive forward a vision for sustainable well-being.** They should be embedding sustainable well-being within formal agenda setting tools for the area, such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
- **Companies, organisations and professionals working in the built environment sector should commit to a vision statement which makes pH and pS core to their way of doing business.** The aim of this vision statement should be to shift the focus given to social and environmental outcomes in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives into the core values driving the day-to-day running of the business.
- **Bodies representing built environment professionals like the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and professional associations like the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) should take responsibility for leading a cultural shift within the sector.** They should re-connect debates on design quality with the issues that matter most for well-being and environmental sustainability. Awareness raising should be accompanied with support for practical action.

3. Take a different approach to stakeholder engagement

- **A co-production approach to engaging existing community assets and resources should become an integral part of the development process.** This requires that professionals work with, not just for, local residents, businesses, and community groups.
- **Investors need to finance stakeholder engagement at the earliest stages of the development process** to ensure it is genuinely useful to the process and its outcomes.
- **Invest in skills development.** Being able to facilitate conversations and joint decision-making which take into account the views of different stakeholder groups requires a new skills base within the sector in engagement and coaching techniques.

4. Build capacity to measure what matters

- **Government should work with the built environment profession to identify a standardised framework for measuring success. The aim should be to capture the wider social, environmental, and economic impact that development projects should be having,** in accordance with legislation and Treasury guidelines on public spending.
- **Bodies representing the built environment sector should provide guidance on measurement to support organisations looking to showcase the sustainable well-being impacts of their development projects.** A collaborative approach should be taken to sharing good practice and learning about what works and why.

5. Test and develop ideas in practice

- **A programme aiming to bring the two principle objectives – pH and pS – together in practice should be piloted. Government should work with the built environment profession and local authorities to identify sites for implementing a sustainable well-being approach to development and renewal.** Such an approach will require investment up front to resource meaningful stakeholder engagement at the earliest stages of the development process. It should also seek to test and refine the approaches outlined in this report – the stakeholder value map, design proof for sustainable well-being and the impact review cycle – in applied settings, to determine their viability and potential to enhance personal, social, and material well-being with least environmental consequence.

1. Introduction

The places that we create form the backdrop of our day-to-day lives, providing us with a visual marker of the values that we live by. They provide an insight into the priorities of decision-makers and the societal culture and conditions in which those decisions are being made. And they influence all of us when it comes to the choices and decisions we make on a day-to-day basis – from wondering if a place is safe to walk in at night, to how to get to work during the week, to whether we'll want to stay living or working in that place over the long term.

This relationship between the places and spaces we create and their influence on people's daily lives forms the backdrop to this report. Commissioned by the Happold Trust,¹ it was written to offer new insights into the connection between people's well-being – how people experience their lives – and the built environment which surrounds them, and to consider how better account could be given to these linkages through policy development and professional practice. More particularly, it considers why a focus on what ought to be shared outcomes – creating places and spaces where people can enjoy a good life now and in the future – is often abandoned in the face of pursuing short-term financial returns on investment.

We need only to look as far as the housing sector to understand the problems associated with this speculative model of development that treats financial return as the single and most informative predictor of development success. Recent events have shown that as land values and house prices plummet, the development of new and existing housing stock grinds to a halt, despite government targets to increase house building. Even in boom times, evidence suggests development based on rising property values and property speculation served only to increase wealth inequality,² which evidence now shows has negative impacts on everyone's well-being, both at the top and bottom ends of the distribution.³ And opportunities to create strong, resilient and sustainable communities also got sidelined in the urgent rush to build housing and retail units quickly to turn around a profit.⁴

A similar picture emerges if we look to the neighbourhood regeneration and renewal agenda. The investment of huge sums of government monies through area-based schemes throughout the last few decades

has done little if anything to address the gap in income inequality which is as large today as it was 30 years ago. Similarly, there is evidence to show that financial investment alone is not enough, with money entering an area often failing to be retained for the benefit of the communities who need it most, instead leaking straight back out again.^{5,6}

Looking beyond these socio-economic considerations, it is apparent that current practices guiding the development of our built environment, whether through public or private investment, also fail to adequately account for the environmental impact of the sector's activities. With 40 per cent of UK carbon emissions coming from buildings⁷ and further emissions tied in to the infrastructure which surrounds those buildings, investment decisions that are being determined by short-term financial gain alone at a time when we are facing irreversible climate change, is similarly unacceptable.

By exploring these issues throughout the report, we question the fundamental assumptions underpinning existing notions of 'success' when it comes to the built environment. We argue that a transformation of our urban neighbourhoods and the places within them can only take place if we find a way to embed social, environmental, and economic outcomes into key stages of the development process.

This report is targeted at those involved in the day-to-day creation of urban neighbourhoods and places – master planners, designers, developers, architects, engineers – as well as at local authorities and their partners who play a strategic leadership role with regard to setting the vision and frameworks which guide local action. Our approach has been to use research findings exploring the links between the built environment, regeneration and renewal activity, and people's well-being, to inform practical suggestions for approaching development projects in a different way. The aim has not been to provide definitive solutions, but to stimulate new thinking and open up debate.

Researched and written at the time of an economic downturn, when public and private investment in the built environment has been scarce, we have been encouraged by the opportunities this difficult economic context has provided for at least some within the sector to think and act more holistically. For example, we have heard from developers using the opportunity to build in longer timeframes to enable more meaningful engagement with members of the community in which the development is taking place. The risk is that as the market begins to pick up as it is now doing, we will simply see a return to business as usual where price and short-term financial gain become the key decision-making factors and markers of success. And this, despite the increasing number of policy documents, strategies, standards, and guidance notes targeted at the built environment sector, many of which pre-date the financial crisis, outlining the virtues of thinking and acting otherwise. We must therefore seize this as an opportunity. This report provides the evidence to show why this is necessary and how it might be achieved. Our hope is that it stimulates a broader dialogue and, over time, a cultural shift regarding the principles and values underpinning the way in which we plan, design, and develop our urban places and neighbourhoods.

2. Well-being and the built environment: the evidence

What role does the built environment play in determining our well-being? And how can a single development project (whether small or large) best promote well-being? It seems intuitive that well-being – having a good experience of life – should be a good starting point for thinking about the success of places and spaces. After all it would be difficult to judge the success of a place if the people living and working in it don't experience it that way.

The science of well-being has grown in recent years to provide a more nuanced understanding of what it means to feel good and do well in life alongside the factors that drive well-being outcomes for individuals and communities. Yet this learning has only been translated to the work of the built environment sector to a limited extent. That said, there has been increasing acknowledgement within the sector that well-being should be incorporated more centrally into the future of development projects. For example, the *Building Happiness* project headed by RIBA's think-tank Building Futures was designed to provoke discussion on happiness and the extent to which such a goal should shape the work of built environment professions.

So, can the built environment really make people happy? To begin to answer this question, we need to understand what makes up well-being and why it is relevant to the work of the built environment sector.

Understanding well-being

Personal well-being

Drawing together the different accounts within the academic literature, our model of personal well-being describes well-being as a dynamic process (Figure 1).⁸ People have high well-being when they are both feeling good and doing well. Figure 1 describes well-being as emerging from the interaction between a person's external circumstances – for example, the conditions of their home, neighbourhood, family, working life, income and physical health – and their psychological resources or 'mental capital' – such as how much optimism, self-esteem, and resilience they can generate in adverse circumstances.

Development project

Any project seeking to add to or change the built environment. The size of a development project depends on its remit – it could be the retrofit of a single building or the development of a new neighbourhood.

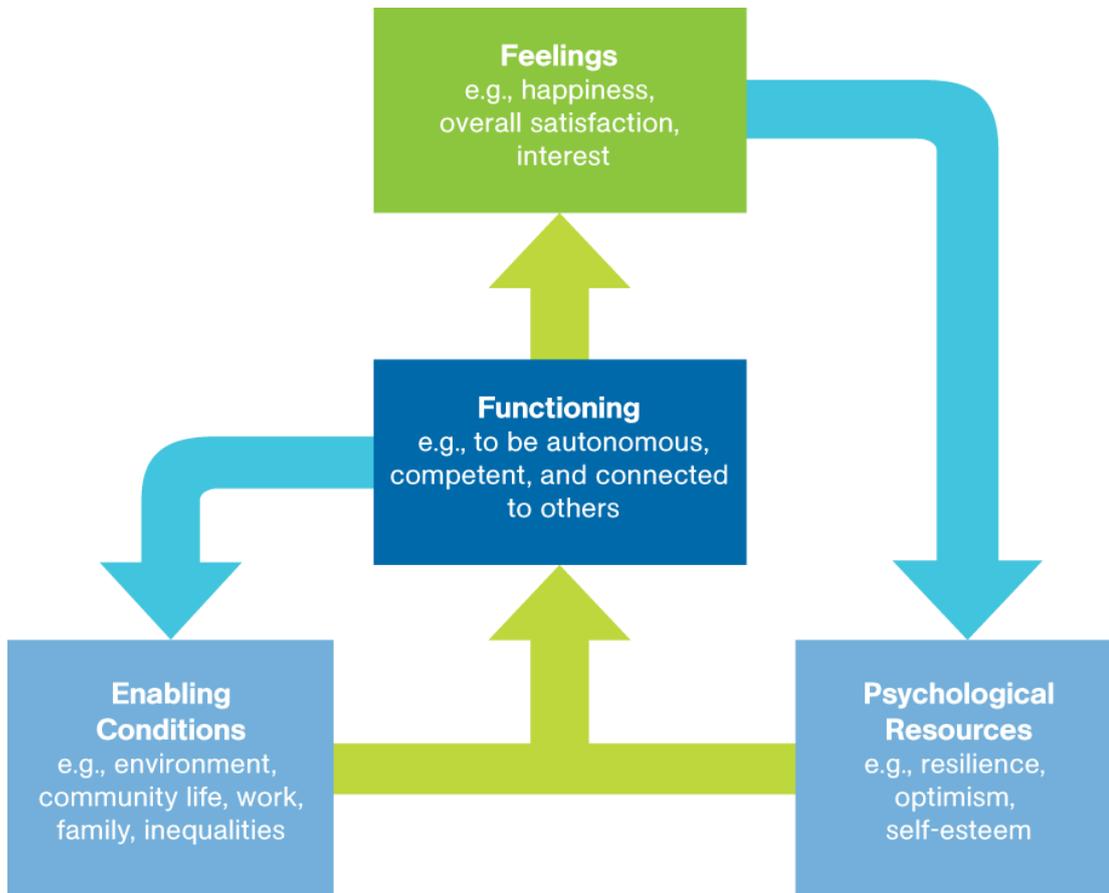


Figure 1. Personal well-being as a dynamic process.

These elements act together to influence how far someone can function well, how much of a sense of meaning and purpose they have, whether they undertake engaging activities, whether they experience a sense of autonomy and competence, and if they make connections with the people around them. This good functioning, in turn, produces the positive emotions people feel, and minimises their experience of negative emotions. Two crucial feedback loops within this process represent how experiencing positive emotions over time builds up people’s psychological resources and how good functioning can determine the kind of positive impact someone can have on the external conditions of their lives.⁹

Social well-being

A crucial factor influencing people’s experience of their lives at both an individual level and as a member of a wider community is the strength of their relationships with others. There is evidence that feeling close to and valued by others is a fundamental human need¹⁰ and the strength of our communities also depend on the connections and relations that people have within them. Social well-being, then, is a critical component of well-functioning individuals and a well-functioning community. **nef** (the new economics foundation) has argued that it is only by realising human and social assets that belong to individuals and communities that improvements in people’s lives can be made and sustained over the longer term.¹¹

This understanding of personal and social well-being reveals some key points at which the built environment has a key role in producing well-

being. Certain physical and socio-economic features of a place – accessible health provision, learning and employment sites, community centres, local shops, public transport, and so on – are likely to be able to help people to live good lives. Other conditions of place, such as high levels of inequality, are known to limit the extent to which people can fulfil their potential. People's sense of how their life is going is also influenced by their psychological and social well-being, and the built environment may also have a role to play in influencing these. For example, indicative evidence suggests that the way a building or public space is designed can promote, among other things, positive emotions,¹² trust,^{13,14} and social interaction.¹⁵

Of course, the built environment is only one of the factors which affect people's well-being. When it does influence what people do, the connections they make, and the emotions they experience, it will do so along with many other shaping factors in people's lives (e.g., family relationships, personal life events). Even so, when brought together, the existing literature and our case study work in Peckham indicate that design, and the built environment more generally have an important and tangible role to play in promoting a good life.

Through the lens of two neighbourhoods

Our case study research was designed to gather first-hand data on the influence of the built environment on the well-being of individuals and communities living in two neighbourhoods known as West Peckham and Bellenden, both in Peckham, in south London. Both neighbourhoods are within 15 minutes walk of each other, joined by a busy shopping area that runs between them. Both were identified by the London Borough of Southwark in the 1990s as areas of Peckham in need of regeneration, but the objectives and the process of change for each area were quite different. This is not surprising, perhaps, given that there are marked differences in the physical, social, and economic landscape between the two areas (Figure 2).

Differences

West Peckham		Bellenden
Peckham ward 4th most deprived in Southwark	Deprivation	The Lane Ward 6th most deprived in Southwark
Three times more renters	Tenure	Five times more home owners
58 per cent black/black British residents	Ethnicity	66 per cent white/white British residents
Newly built flats and houses	Physical design	Old housing stock on traditional street layout

Commonalities

- Facilities – share the library, Peckham Pulse and train station
- Peckham's commercial and retail centre – multiple and independent traders as well as markets; a high number of convenience outlets

Figure 2. Differences and commonalities between West Peckham and Bellenden.

While the resident populations of both West Peckham and Bellenden neighbourhoods are similar, the age and ethnic demographics are somewhat different. For example, residents tend to be slightly older and from white ethnic group (66 per cent) in Bellenden and slightly younger and from black ethnic group (58 per cent) in West Peckham. There are nearly three times as many social renters in West Peckham as in Bellenden and over four times the number of people own their property in Bellenden compared with West Peckham. Levels of deprivation are much higher in West Peckham compared with Bellenden and the local economy seems to be slightly stronger in Bellenden with a greater variety of shops on people's doorsteps.

West Peckham

The Peckham Partnership was formed as an alliance of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations in 1994 to implement the regeneration of the five housing estate developments and the commercial and shopping area on Rye Lane and Peckham High Street (Figure 3). In total, the regeneration scheme was awarded £269 million to be invested over a seven-year period from 1995 until 2002.

The Peckham Partnership received £60 million from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Challenge Fund, which was the largest SRB sum to ever be awarded in six rounds of funding and the five housing estate programmes received the majority (£52 million) of this budget. An additional £65 million was supplied by Southwark Council with a further £45 million from the Housing Corporation, £90 million from the private sector, and £9 million from other public funds including the Lottery, Tertiary Education Commission and the EU.

In 1995, the key objectives of the programme were identified as: training and employment; education; housing; community safety; town centre enterprise; health; accessibility; and effective management.¹⁶

- Postcodes: SE15 and SE5
- Ward: Peckham ward (previously known as Liddle)
- Community Council: Peckham Community Council

-
- £269 million regeneration programme 1995-2002
 - Removal of 5 post-WWII tower blocks for low-rise , lower-density housing
 - Regeneration of commercial centre



Figure 3. West Peckham.

Bellenden

Bellenden was declared a Renewal Area by the London Borough of Southwark in 1997 and the programme was to last 10 years (Figure 4). It was estimated that the total expenditure would total £12.4 million, with nearly half of this spend allocated to individual grants for home improvements. Consultation with residents revealed that they were not only concerned with the housing conditions in the area but also about the wider built environment. Therefore, money was also spent on improving the physical environment and on energy efficiency grants.

Donations have been made by Arts in Business and the Henry Moore Foundation and many business owners made contributions to shop-improvement schemes.

The key objectives of the programme were identified as: housing; Environmental; employment; economic regeneration; community development; crime; health; and finance.¹⁷

Importantly, both schemes had social objectives beyond simple improvements to the physical appearance of the neighbourhoods. Enhancing health outcomes and employment opportunities and reducing crime were objectives for both schemes. Interestingly, there appears to have been a greater focus on the economic regeneration of Bellenden than West Peckham. The regeneration process for each neighbourhood was different, with a street-by-street approach with residents remaining in situ in Bellenden compared to wholesale decanting and re-building of housing stock in West Peckham.

- Postcode: SE15
- Ward: The Lane
- Community Council: Peckham Rye and Nunhead

-
- £12.4 million renewal scheme
 - Street-by-street refurbishment of old housing stock and shop fronts



Figure 4. Bellenden.

Well-being features of place

Through the asset mapping, photovoice, and interview research (Appendix 1), the Peckham residents we talked to identified those features of their neighbourhoods that they thought led to better experience of life. In Tables 1 and 2 we have used these findings to link the different features and characteristics of the built environment to the key elements of the dynamic well-being model – functioning and feeling. We have conceptualised these elements of well-being at two levels – within individuals themselves (personal) and between individuals (social). Figures 5 and 6 show some of the photos residents took of local features supporting and limiting well-being, respectively.

The natural environment was particularly emphasised by residents as important for well-being. The parks and green spaces were celebrated by residents for making people feel good. This finding is supported by growing evidence that contact with the natural world has benefits for well-being.¹⁸ Green spaces in the form of allotments, parks, gardens, and countryside plays a role in providing an opportunity to ‘unwind’ in cities.¹⁹ Green spaces have also been reported as a catalyst of social well-being, with one study finding:

Compared to residents living adjacent to relatively barren spaces, individuals living adjacent to green spaces had more social activities and more visitors, knew more of their neighbors, reported their neighbors were more concerned with helping and supporting one another, and had stronger feelings of belonging.²⁰

Table 1. Key neighbourhood features promoting well-being in Peckham.

Feature	Personal feelings	Social feelings	Personal functioning	Social functioning
Natural environment				
Greenery and wildlife	Positive emotions (e.g., beauty, wonder)	-	-	-
Green spaces	Positive emotions (e.g., pleasure, enjoyment, happiness)	-	-	Physical vitality Social interaction
Social infrastructure				
Social hubs and spaces	-	-	-	Social engagement and participation
Social networks and interaction	Positive emotions (e.g., joy, happiness)	Sense of belonging/sense of community	-	Safety and security
Architectural design/aesthetics				
	Positive emotions (e.g., joy, happiness)	Sense of belonging (especially with local designers/artists)	Engagement and curiosity	-
Street layout				
	-	-	-	Social interaction Safety and security
Housing type/design (West Peckham only)				
	Life satisfaction	-	-	Social interaction
Local shops and services (West Peckham only)				
	-	-	Meeting basic needs	-
Social diversity (Bellenden only)				
	-	Respectful and fair treatment	-	-

Table 2. Key neighbourhood features limiting well-being in Peckham.

Feature	Personal feelings	Social feelings	Personal functioning	Social functioning
Lack and loss of community spaces/facilities	Negative emotions (e.g., sadness, disappointment)	Social isolation	-	Social engagement & participation
Privatisation of public space	-	Sense of belonging/sense of community ('them' and 'us')	-	Social interaction
Physical degradation/poor maintenance	Negative emotions (e.g., sadness, disappointment)	-	-	Safety and security
Poor defensible space	-	-	-	Safety and security
External perceptions and image	Aspirations/optimism	Social progress	-	-
Limited night-time economy	-	-	-	Social engagement and participation

Natural environment



positive emotions

physical vitality

social interaction

Social infrastructure



positive emotions

sense of belonging/community

social engagement

safety & security

Architectural design



positive emotions

sense of belonging/place

engagement & curiosity

Street layout



social interaction

safety & security

Figure 5. Photos taken by residents to show the design features they thought promoted well-being.

The benefits of living near green spaces has been identified elsewhere. In Almere in the Netherlands, high-density developments are being separated with lakes and green spaces. Thirty-six per cent of the total 61,500 acres is set aside for agricultural land, including a forest. Research has found that 'along with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, and richly planted front gardens, there is a sense of living close to nature'.²¹

People in Peckham saw the availability of social hubs and public spaces as a key contributor to social well-being. Residents of West Peckham talked about the loss of community spaces at the beginning of the regeneration programme over a decade before, which had disrupted social networks and undermined the links between local people.

It has been argued that urban design policies have tended to focus on the regeneration of town and metropolitan centres in the promotion of retail and tourist attractions as a means of developing the local economy.²² This has resulted in the privatisation of previously public space,²³ which was highlighted as a more recent feature of residential areas in Peckham that limits well-being. Public spaces at the neighbourhood level, in particular, provide opportunities closer to home for participation in social life, for opportunities to play and to make friends.²⁴ A study looking at the impact of the physical environment on well-being found that access to community facilities independently predicts mental health and vitality scores, regardless of age, sex, and socio-economic income.²⁵

Peckham residents talked about the sense of pleasure, enjoyment, and engagement they get from looking at a building they consider to be beautiful or eye-catching. The use of local designers and artists in the development of the streetscape in the Bellenden neighbourhood roused curiosity in residents and bestowed the place with a uniqueness and distinctiveness, features which are thought to be important for a shared sense of belonging.²⁶ It should be noted, however, that where features had not been adequately maintained, residents expressed detrimental impact on their well-being.

Residents of West Peckham, in particular, who had fewer shops near their homes, commented on the importance of local facilities, such as a doctor's surgery, and a shop to buy food. This echoes findings of a study by CABI which found that having poor facilities for children and poor shopping facilities nearby were listed in the top three dislikes that residents across 33 new developments shared about their schemes.²⁷ The near non-existence of a night-time economy around the high street linking the two neighbourhoods in Peckham was a concern for both neighbourhoods.

Lack & loss of community spaces/facilities



negative emotions (disappointment)

social isolation

social engagement & participation

Privatisation of public space



sense of belonging/community ("them and us")



social interaction

Physical degradation/poor maintenance



negative emotions



safety & security

Figure 6. Photos taken by residents to show the design features they thought limited well-being.

Although they do not comprise an exhaustive list, these findings point to key features which, if designed into a place can, first, play a role in reducing the negatives (e.g., fear of crime and social isolation) and, secondly, help to stimulate positive feeling and functioning at both the individual and social level. Importantly, people's experience of their quality of life in Peckham was not only related to the physical infrastructure of the neighbourhoods but was also perceived to be linked to social and economic aspects of design.

The importance of good process

Regeneration and renewal are about change and yet for most of us change, and the uncertainty that comes with it, can be a psychologically challenging activity.²⁸ In general, research suggests that we are loss averse – that is, we tend to experience losses more than gains (Figure 7).²⁹ If we apply this knowledge to the business of changing and redeveloping neighbourhoods, it follows that the way in which development and renewal are planned, communicated, and managed has the potential to impact the people involved.

In Peckham, we found examples where the process had worked well – where people experienced positive feelings from playing a direct role in local regeneration activity. Mostly, being actively involved in the development process through choosing street-level designs or helping to manage community gardens was important for stimulating social interaction and strengthening social networks. This sense of 'neighbourliness' was sustained long after the renewal work ceased and was identified as one of the core neighbourhood assets in Bellenden that supported people's individual well-being.



Figure 7. Good process as a protector of well-being.

We also found examples where the development process had not worked well, serving to undermine people's sense of autonomy. Interestingly, the aim of engaging residents in the development process was initially absent in the stated objectives for the West Peckham project. In hindsight, it was recognised that this lack of focus on developing community involvement during the regeneration process in West Peckham had contributed to a 10 per cent reduction in the feelings of involvement in the local community and in participation in groups between 1998 and 2002.³⁰ A mid-term review of the regeneration scheme pointed to the need for a community development objective but it was considered too late in the lifetime of the programme to observe positive effects by the end of the process in 2002.³¹

There were clear cases where residents recognised the value of existing features in the built environment, but their views were not considered in the planning and design process. The Manager of the local nursery in West Peckham recalled the loss of an adventure playground to make way for housing:

The head of planning lacked any concept about what the kids were saying. It took forever to convince them that it was not just the physical playground that was important, it was the human contact between the workers and the young people.

The loss of community spaces like the playground and a community hall happened as long as 13 years ago, but local residents still reported feelings of loss, anger, disappointment, and sadness at losing these facilities. The result was the dismantling of important social networks.

It seems that what happens during the period of neighbourhood change matters for how the neighbourhood functions afterwards, and that residents themselves are an important source of knowledge for identifying the local assets required to support long-term social outcomes. While developers are not usually attached to the places they seek to develop,³² local residents have a deep and practical knowledge of how a particular place works.³³

The regeneration of West Peckham is broadly representative of the top-down model of development with centrally set budgets, targets, and outputs. This is in contrast to other examples of local communities taking the development of their high streets into their own hands. For example, in autumn 2006, the local business community, residents, and the local council of Brentford worked together to change their high street. Using High Street UK's community planning process, they planned a sustainable future for their town – which includes a vibrant shopping area that preserves the town's distinctiveness and heritage while promoting a diverse and independent retail environment.³⁴ Taken together with our findings about how it was viewed by residents, the implication is that the process for development activity – and the way this can either galvanise or ignore the energy, passion, and expertise of local residents – needs to be a key consideration from the outset.

The disconnects

Both the West Peckham and Bellenden projects set out objectives at the beginning of their renewal projects. But the process of agreeing these objectives failed to connect with the full range of stakeholders in the areas, particularly local people. The process of setting objectives was sometimes detached from the development of appropriate indicators to track the progress of the regeneration projects.

- **A lack of a shared vision**

A key problem which emerged during our case study research was the lack of shared vision for an area, stemming from the failure to properly engage all stakeholders in setting development objectives.

We found indicative evidence from the Peckham research to suggest that interpretations of 'successful development' and 'high well-being' differed considerably between different stakeholder groups. One of the biggest areas of difference existed between the priorities of the local authority and local developers, on the one hand, and those of local residents and businesses on the other.

Peckham's commercial centre, for example, is economically thriving under some definitions. The area experiences lower vacancy rates than the national average (9 per cent compared to 11 per cent nationally), has a high footfall, and attracts visitors from across London. This was something the local authority was looking to promote. But our case study research indicated that, for the residents we worked with and interviewed, the local high street was an area of significant local concern and one identified as limiting well-being. They certainly valued having a local high street, but they were worried about the choice on offer and poor environmental stewardship; and they were afraid of crime after dark, perceived to be linked in part to the lack of a night-time economy. Among the residents we spoke to, the high street was not often seen as a positive local asset. We should note, however, that this assessment does not take into account the views of shop vendors and shoppers, who depend on the area to supply competitively priced food and specialist African produce.

While managing differing conceptions of value in engagement exercises with local residents, business, and visitors can be a complex and difficult process, our research suggested that it is crucial to use approaches which balance these different perspectives. Thinking about the outcomes most important for local people and embedding them into local authority objectives is also important.

For example, it remains to be seen whether the economic activity stimulated by the renewal of Bellenden has provided value to those members of the community who were economically deprived. An interview with a local estate agent suggested that house and rental prices had risen as a result of the regeneration so that some existing residents were priced out of local housing and facilities. The priority to 'increase confidence so that private sector business and owner occupiers invest in the area' may be a reasonable priority within the local authorities' regeneration objectives for Bellenden. But to ensure the objective is met, it should be aimed at the primary beneficiaries of development and renewal activity: local people. The process of recognising local people as legitimate stakeholders in creating a vision for a local area was, as with much regeneration activity in the UK,³⁵ largely missing in both renewal schemes in Peckham.

- **A lack of measurement**

The objectives set out at the beginning of the renewal process in both West Peckham and Bellenden also seemed to be disconnected from ongoing measurement. There was a mid-term and end-of-scheme review carried out in West Peckham. But important data was often missing, making it difficult to track the impact against objectives.³⁶ The available data makes it difficult to work out whether any changes have been made to economic activity rates following the renewal work in Bellenden. Other data, like access to natural spaces, or access to employment by public transport, walking, and cycling seems not to have been collected.

Well-being as a legitimate aim of development projects

Current research indicates that the built environment can influence how people feel and function in a number of ways. In Peckham, access to the natural environment and the provision of social hubs were particularly important to residents' experience of local life. Importantly, design features of the built environment do not only have the capacity to promote well-being: if they are designed badly, they can limit personal and social well-being, too.

Interestingly, our research has shown that the *how* affects the *what*. In particular, the *way* in which renewal activity is delivered on the ground matters for people and place. The need for a shared vision and a measurement system linked directly to this vision seems critical for charting success.

While it is beyond the scope of the built environment professions to *make* people happy, they clearly have a role in creating and shaping places in ways which help promote positive feelings and functioning, and help safeguard against people's sense of well-being being undermined. If we

are ultimately concerned with building neighbourhoods that work for the people who live in them, then well-being should be a legitimate and important aim of development activity. The remainder of this report builds on these findings to explore how the built environment sector currently fails to systematically place well-being at the heart of development activity and what needs to be done to create a step-change in the way we plan, design, deliver, and evaluate success in the future.

3. Vision and value

What is the overall vision for the places where we live, work and interact? To make improvements in any context, we need a clear sense of what we are aiming for. We need to know what represents success so that we know when we've got there.

Clearly the different actors in any development project are going to have different aims, wants, and needs. But this is true in other areas of life as well. In a well-functioning system, a shared overarching goal can provide some coherence between otherwise diverging interests. In the National Health Service, for example, patients want access to medical treatment with minimal delay; doctors want to spend enough time with them to diagnose and treat them; while managers aim for as many patients to be seen by doctors within a given time period. There are certainly areas of potential conflict between these different aims, but they are usually kept in balance because everyone involved is working to the same overarching goal of achieving the best health outcomes for as many NHS patients as possible.

The built environment is not that different. There are different stakeholders with different aims. Residents and employees want to live and work in places which facilitate everyday activities. They want to get around, access local services, visit open spaces, and meet other people. Developers may also share the objective of creating well-functioning places, but their activities are also concerned with generating a financial return for their investors.

Local authorities are arguably the custodians of citizens' well-being, with strategic oversight for this within a geographically bounded place. This aim was supported by the 2000 UK Local Government Act, which gave local authorities the power to promote the social, economic, and environmental well-being of their areas.³⁷ The power has since been reinforced by the place-shaping agenda, which has been defined as 'the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens'.³⁸ A new regime of Comprehensive Area Assessments similarly focus on places as a whole, rather than individual services, and prioritise the experiences of local residents and communities as key evidence in the assessment.

Despite this remit, local authorities still come under enormous pressure – especially in the current context of dwindling financial resources – to

accept offers and contractual conditions from developers if it means securing financial investment into an area. In practice, this often means that the financial imperative and traditional financial indicators – units sold and profit – take precedent. This narrow focus can come at considerable cost to the lived experience of individuals and communities, as well as to the environment, despite quality of life and the environmental outcomes often stated in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements for the area.

Why maximising financial return is flawed as an overarching goal

Within the current market system, the profit motive provides a source of energy to development, particularly in the private sector. But if improving the lives of people and the strength of our communities is an important, if not *the* important, objective of development projects, it is hardly surprising that there is a mismatch when the need for a financial return drives out other criteria of success.

The use of financial return as the single and most informative predictor of development or renewal success is based on a number of flawed assumptions:

- 1. That investment into an area will always improve the economic situation of its residents.** This is called into question by evidence showing that despite public investment in deprived areas, the relative economic position of these neighbourhoods has not changed much over the decades.^{39,40} Research has also indicated that, while money may flow into deprived communities, it tends to flow straight out again.⁴¹ nef's Local Alchemy action learning programme on local economic development has found that inward investment can be spent on goods and services produced somewhere else, or spent in businesses employing people not living in that community.⁴²
- 2. That well-being is directly and strongly related to economic circumstances.** This is not straightforward. The research shows that while people's well-being is correlated with income,⁴³ there are a number of other factors which we know have equally strong effects on well-being. These include social connections and personal relationships, attitudes to life events, meaningful activities, and having goals.^{44,45,46} At UK national level, the growth of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) over decades has not led to increases in the average level of reported life satisfaction.⁴⁷
- 3. That the market will make sure the profit motive produces buildings, places, and spaces that meet people's needs.** As findings indicate, this is far from the case. A recent report from CABE, widely discussed as confirming the existence of 'rabbit hutch Britain'⁴⁸ suggested that 'private housing designs provide inadequate space for significant numbers of people' and led the Commission to question whether 'some recently built homes are fit for purpose'.⁴⁹ Our public spaces are also failing to meet our

needs with only half (51 per cent) of people of England feeling safe outside after dark in their local area.⁵⁰ Housing shortages caused, as the British Social Housing Foundation has recently identified, by ‘the failure of housing supply to respond to changes in demand’⁵¹ mean that people often have restricted choice in where they live. And because many aspects of built environment are a public good, it is simply not possible to rely on the individual preference satisfaction of classical economics to ensure that relevant needs are met.

- 4. That maximising economic activity now is the best route to well-being in the future.** We know that continuing to maximise economic output (as measured by GDP) on the basis of our current model – which aims to turn more and more physical raw material into economic gain – is simply not sustainable into the future, given the limits of our finite world. The UK is far exceeding its fair share of the planet’s ecological resources. Through the embodied carbon in building materials and the carbon footprint of delivery, the current development model is contributing to the deterioration of the global environment despite its fragile and worsening state.⁵² Building in a carbon-intensive way is simply no longer sustainable, and will fail to represent a cheaper option in the long run.

A narrow focus on financial return is therefore not the best organising principle for the built environment sector. It perpetuates many of the sector's problems: investment in the physical infrastructure of our neighbourhoods and towns which does not benefit local communities either economically or in terms of their broader experiences of life; places and spaces which do not meet the needs they were created to fulfil; and buildings and spaces which fuel our carbon-hungry lifestyles. All these put our future well-being at risk. This is not to suggest that the sector somehow abandons profit as a motivation, but rather to suggest that it needs to broaden its motivation to encompass the ‘triple bottom line’ so that it is actively seeking to create positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes as well as a financial return.

Getting beyond financial return

The built environment sector is not unfamiliar with the idea of looking beyond the financial imperative. There have been a number of policy innovations in the last decade that reflect aspirations for a broader remit.

For example, a recent Cabinet Office paper discusses the concept of ‘quality of place’ which it defines as ‘the physical characteristics of a community that affect the quality of life and life chances of people living and working in it’, and cites a steady stream of policy innovations since 1999 which have treated improving quality of place as a key goal.⁵³ Similarly, CABI has also called attention to the links between investment in public space and quality of life and greater happiness. Its recent 10-year review also discussed responding to climate change by better design, saying that ‘good design and sustainable design are indivisible’.⁵⁴

In 2003, the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) launched the sustainable communities agenda, which set out the need for communities that ‘develop, economically, socially and environmentally’ and which ‘respect the needs of future generations as well as succeeding now’.⁵⁵ This agenda was taken forward by the Egan Review and the Academy for Sustainable Communities (later incorporated into the Homes and Communities Academy) which published a values framework for sustainable communities. The Urban Task Force, chaired by Lord Rogers, made recommendations for an ‘urban renaissance’ based on the principles of design excellence, social well-being, and environmental responsibility.⁵⁶

CABE’s most recent publication, *Future Health: sustainable places for health and well-being*, argues that health, well-being, and the environment should be viewed as interdependent, requiring joined-up thinking and collaborative decisions early in the development process. Other policy areas have also been recognising these sorts of links. Improving the quality of the built and natural environment, and building friendly neighbourhoods where people want to live, have been identified as a key intervention for improving public mental health.⁵⁷

Despite these developments, the question of how to overcome the huge structural biases in the built environment sector which result in the prioritisation of financial return to the detriment of other outcomes has yet to be directly addressed. Part of the challenge is the scale of the built environment sector and all the different professions that it contains. This makes it difficult for broad policy statements to have much traction in affecting how the sector as a whole operates. Either policy papers set out very broad issues without concrete implementation mechanisms, or else they are addressed at a narrow profession within the sector and thus cannot shape the direction that the sector as a whole is moving in. In a brief review of the most prominent outcomes frameworks covering planning design, construction, and place management, we found that the frameworks are fragmented, either by the outcome categories which they address or by the particular activity within the development process at which they are aimed.^{58,59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,69,70} There is no overarching framework to which the individual sets of outcomes and guidance collectively relate.

These tensions point to the need for much greater coherence about the ultimate goals of development projects. What is missing from this wealth of guidance is an overarching organising framework that can provide a vision, which can be shared by the different professions working within the built environment sector. This gap contributes to explaining why existing advice to the industry, much of which is based on very sound principles, is still failing to fundamentally change the outcomes it aims to achieve. It has not challenged the existing drivers of development activity and has therefore failed to result in transformative and positive change to our communities, neighbourhoods, towns, and cities. It has left an implementation gap between stated aims and real-world outcomes.

While we have been moving in the right direction, there are a number of factors which all point towards a need to quicken the pace. These include the economic recession, the UK's middling to poor performance on international indices of well-being,^{71,72} and the urgency with which we need to respond to the threat of climate change. Something more is needed to translate the thinking which has emerged over the past 10 years into a genuinely new way of doing things, which is taken up by all professionals working across the built environment sector.

A broader definition of value

The issue of value is paramount in the built environment sector. A question asked of any development project is whether it represents good value, either for its investors or from public investment? Currently, these questions drive the narrow and misplaced focus on the financial benefits of any built environment activity.

But the question is fundamentally useful. The important consideration is how the issue of value is treated. As Richard Simmonds of CABI exemplifies when writing about design quality,

Valuation and accounting methods often give low priority to design quality as a generator of value for business...Badly designed places impose costs on their occupiers, their neighbours and on society. A key reason why these costs are not taken into account is that they are not paid by the people that make the decisions but by the wider community.⁷³

What is needed is a much broader definition of value. But what constitutes value? Our consultation with sector professionals suggests that this question makes all the difference between creating places that increase well-being, and failing to do so. In fact, the Treasury's definition goes some way beyond narrow financial return. Its *Green Book* defines value for money as:

The optimum combination of whole-of-life costs and quality (for fitness for purpose) of the good or service to meet the user's requirement. Value for money is not the choice of goods and services based on the lowest cost bid.⁷⁴

The Treasury also makes clear that the concept of 'benefits' should not be restricted to those which already have a market value:

Wider social and environmental costs and benefits for which there is no market price also need to be brought into any assessment. They will often be more difficult to assess but are often more important and should not be ignored simply because they cannot be easily costed.⁷⁵

As the Treasury emphasises here, the value of goods, products, or services is inherently subjective. It depends on the process of people valuing it. In a market, people have to decide how much money they are willing to pay. In a system with broader parameters, people can incorporate a wider range of factors into decision-making processes. This

broader understanding of value is critical to incorporate into decisions about the shaping and making of our built environment.

Our research in Peckham demonstrated the important role of the built environment in determining well-being. But it also showed that the amount invested or the profit made are not strong indicators of success when it comes to capturing people's lived experience. Critically, development and renewal activity is not a good in itself. When managed badly, it can have little or a negative impact on well-being or on the long-term sustainability of a building or place. When managed well, it is designed with features – such as access to green spaces and the provision of social hubs – that do affect how people function and how they feel. In addition, a development process that engages local people can strengthen the connections people make with their neighbours and their neighbourhoods.

Well-being, then, is a legitimate aim of development activity, which needs to be more consistently recognised across the sector. Similarly, we need to get much better at developing our neighbourhoods in ways that reduce the UK's environmental footprint.

An alternative vision of success: sustainable well-being

It is clear that there is a pressing need to connect the planning, design and building of place to meaningful objectives – the enjoyment of good lives for inhabitants now and in the future. Drawing on our research findings we propose, therefore, that the built environment sector adopts an alternative vision of success – one of sustainable well-being (Figure 8).

Sustainable well-being

Good lives that do not cost the Earth, now or in the future

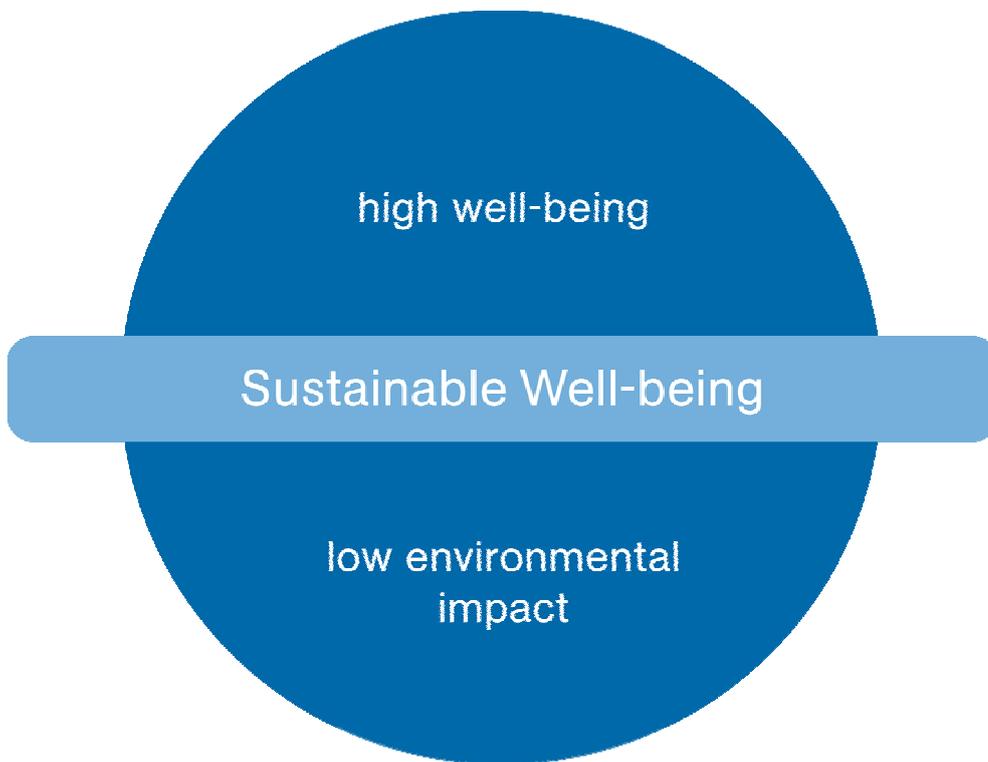


Figure 8. The elements of sustainable well-being.

Sustainable well-being constitutes two interdependent aims at a neighbourhood level – promoting well-being and reducing environmental impact, in order to improve people’s experience of life now *and* in the future. Different professions within the built environment sector, as well as local strategic organisations, will all have different roles to play and different strategies to pursue in contributing to this aim. At a local or neighbourhood level, we therefore need a simple way of making sense of this to guide the built environment professions and those who shape its activities, including local government. In order to do this, we introduce two key guiding concepts for achieving sustainable well-being: *place Happiness (pH)* and *place Sustainability (pS)*.

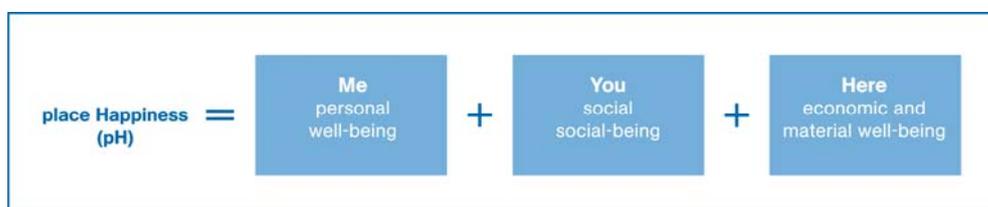


Figure 9. The components of place Happiness (pH).

As outlined in Figure 9, pH captures three core aspects of well-being to which the built environment can contribute:

1. **Personal well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to their physical and psychological well-being.
2. **Social well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to those around them; their community.

- Economic and material well-being** – people’s experience of life in relation to the conditions and circumstances of their lives, including their physical surroundings.

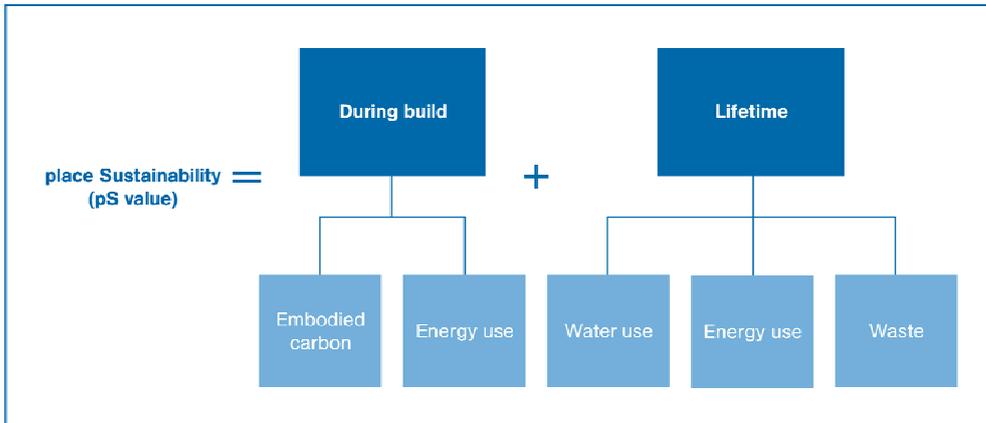


Figure 10. The components of place Sustainability (pS).

As outlined in Figure 10, place Sustainability aims to capture two key ways in which the built environment has an environmental impact:

1. Resources used during construction or renovation.
2. Resources used across the lifetime of its use.

These two key concepts, pH and pS, together provide an overarching vision of what the built environment professions should be aiming to achieve through their everyday work. Combined, they provide the overall vision of building sustainable well-being.

Summary

In this section, we have unpicked the assumptions underpinning the speculative model of development and outlined an organising vision to challenge the over-emphasis of financial returns alone. While establishing sustainable well-being as an overarching objective of development activity is an important step in driving forward change, this needs to be matched by action.

To make a real difference, we need a development process that can enable the broad concepts of pH and pS to be applied to a local area or specific development. Identifying some mechanisms that could more explicitly factor sustainable well-being into the design and delivery of our built environment is the focus of the remainder of this report.

4. Embedding sustainable well-being into place shaping

Applying the principles of sustainable well-being to places will vary from area to area, depending on local circumstances and existing resources. How can it be applied to different places? How important is engagement with local people? Are there any general principles to guide the place-shaping process?⁷⁶

This section discusses approaches which can help to incorporate sustainable well-being into local contexts. It argues for the importance of leadership and stakeholder engagement at the earliest stages of the development process, before a specific project proposal has been conceived. We introduce the idea of a stakeholder value map as a possible mechanism for applying the vision of sustainable well-being in practice. It has been designed to encourage consideration about how development projects can create value for *all* by building on existing resources and responding to genuine opportunities for local area improvements.

Place shaping

The process of agreeing a vision for a development project, as part of the preparation phase

The importance of leadership

Creating the conditions for sustainable well-being is vital. This requires a commitment to the vision of achieving high well-being and low environmental impact and the strategic capability and leadership to ensure this vision, in turn, influences practical action.

Local authorities, together with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership, are in a central position to own and hold this vision. It is part of their remit to promote the well-being of citizens, and to create the economic, social, and environmental conditions which best help to achieve this. Indeed, many of the activities they seek to undertake to achieve this will already be set out in the local Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

Yet despite this, the reality is such that local government priorities, targets, and initiatives are not always adequately aligned towards promoting high well-being at least environmental cost. The plethora of service plans and statutory performance targets may usefully focus the attention of individual service departments but do not always serve to

create a broader, strategic vision to help guide the activities of the local authority itself, or the activities taking place within its geographical boundary.

As a result, developers are often not held accountable for ensuring outcomes across the triple bottom line – social, environmental, and economic; communities fail to be mobilised and actively engaged early or effectively enough in development projects which will affect their lives; and decision-making on issues relating to planning, development, and neighbourhood renewal fail to place enough emphasis on well-being or sustainability appraisal at key points in the process.

Stronger leadership on a sustainable well-being agenda, both for elected members and at the officer level, is needed if a cultural shift in policy and practice is to be achieved.

Box 1. Visionary times

The UK has a rich history on which to draw when it comes to having the vision and leadership to create places better able to meet current and future needs.

The pioneer industrialists of the early Industrial Revolution and late nineteenth century were keen to decentralise factory plants from the main urban core so as to combine opportunities for living and working in a healthier and more pleasant environment. Philanthropic in their motives, at least in part, Britain's leading industrialists experimented with new forms of settlement and created new communities, many of which continue to function well and be desirable places to live today. The earliest of these examples is Robert Owen's New Lanark in Scotland (c.1800–1810), which was followed by the development of the textile mill town of Saltaire, near Bradford, by Titus Salt in 1853–1863.⁷⁷

Perhaps better known of Britain's philanthropic new towns, however, are those developed in the late nineteenth century. Bournville evolved as a suburb of Birmingham when George Cadbury relocated his cocoa and chocolate factory from the city centre (c. 1879). It combined a new factory site with the development of a model village designed to 'alleviate the evils of modern more cramped living conditions'. At Cadbury's own expense, new housing was developed with significant attention also given to the health and fitness of Cadbury workers through the provision of sports grounds, an outdoor swimming pool, bowling greens, and a fishing lake as an integral part of the new settlement's urban plan.

Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement – known more commonly today as 'the new towns' – built on these early philanthropic 'company towns' to create a new type of settlement which combined the best of the town and countryside together, albeit on a larger scale. Howard was hugely influential in urban planning and practice in Britain, including the development of the Green Belt and the creation of both Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City.

By the interwar period, growing concern about living conditions in Britain's towns and cities and the growing disparities emerging on a regional basis led again to pioneering work by those we might today refer to as the place shapers and place makers of society. Notably, the Barlow Commission and its Report published in 1940 marked the start of a number of influential legislative changes and actions by government, particularly in the post-war period. Included within these was the New Towns Act of 1946, overseen by the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning. The first new town following the Act, Stevenage, was designated in 1946 and was rapidly followed by a host of others with over 25 new towns designated over the following decades, including Milton Keynes in 1967.

As with the unprecedented problems which arose in the early industrial cities due to attempts to manage urban population growth and achieve post-war reconstruction on a grand scale, we, too, now face unprecedented challenges. They may be different to those faced before, and in turn require different solutions, yet the question asked by the urban pioneers of the nineteenth and early mid-twentieth century remains the same. Do we have the vision and leadership to meet these challenges?

At the practitioner level (e.g., developers, architects, builders, and so on), social value is too often seen as an add-on and something dealt with in research projects or CSR initiatives. It is therefore not centrally embedded into their day-to-day business in the same way that monitoring profit margins and the project balance sheet usually are. Any efforts to retrospectively counter the impact on communities through CSR initiatives or community development work are bound, therefore, to be piecemeal.

The consequence of these failures both within local government and industry is that well-being and the environmental impact of developments is not thought about early enough in the process, if at all. Too often, existing personal, social, and economic well-being in communities is not adequately recognised or protected. And the carbon footprint of buildings is thought about at the point of delivery – even though the sustainability of the supply chain has to be considered at the planning stage to put an effective process in place to achieve it.

Accountability at the local level

Given its formal place-shaping role in the twenty-first century, the local authority is probably best placed to carry a responsibility for the vision of a place, particularly because it already holds a relationship with the local community and strategic partners. Its knowledge of the local strategic context will enable it to interpret sustainable well-being as it relates to local circumstances.

In its role as a ‘holder’ of the vision, the local authority has a responsibility to be a ‘leader of ideas’ and to stimulate discussion within the local community about the conditions of place that are important for a good life, both now and in the future. Part of the challenge is to set out why sustainable well-being is a legitimate and important strategic vision. Leadership also entails getting buy-in from its strategic partners, particularly by stimulating enthusiasm for the pS agenda as something that complements pH rather than sitting in tension with it. Through embedding the overall vision of sustainable well-being within strategic frameworks (e.g., local area agreements, sustainable community strategies, local development frameworks) the local authority should be responsible for delivering in a consistent and balanced way, against social, environmental, and economic outcomes.

Case study 1. Barangaroo: In balance

The vision set by the Barangaroo Delivery Authority (BDA) for the new city waterfront development at Barangaroo in Australia sets out four overarching objectives: water positive, zero waste, carbon neutral and community well-being. To ensure a balance across the triple bottom line, the BDA built Social Return On Investment (SROI) analyses into the commissioning process. This required that developers bidding to develop the 22-hectare site completed SROIs to forecast the social value they could generate from the investment. The community well-being objective includes social well-being, connectivity and integration, access and mobility, social equity, healthy living, cultural recognition and development, and knowledge and learning.

Each bidder was also required to propose a mechanism for developing an internationally comparable benchmark for measuring progress against environmental and social outcomes. The BDA is taking an innovative approach to factoring in a broader definition of value in the delivery of a major development that will be home to over 22,000 workers and residents.

See http://www.barangaroo.com/keyfacts.cfm?menu_id=2 for more information

Stakeholder engagement

If we want to promote well-being through the way we shape our places and developments, it makes intuitive sense that any application of sustainable well-being principles to an area must start with engaging local people. Rather than beginning the development process with a top-down idea about the need for a community centre or a green space, we have to start with information about how people behave, the personal and community resources they have available to them, and how they interact with the world around them. Local people have direct knowledge and experience of the physical and social infrastructure that enhances and limits well-being, which should be actively incorporated into the place shaping process.

Unfortunately, stakeholder engagement still rarely moves beyond bland tick-box consultation exercises aimed at capturing people's views about a plan or design, once the local authority and the design team have created a vision.⁷⁸ As a result, engagement rarely happens early enough in the process – at the 'visioning stage' – so that local people have a genuine role in identifying what is of value and where value needs to be created.⁷⁹ Tools like *Our Sustainable Neighbourhood*⁸⁰ and *Plugging the Leaks*⁸¹ can be used to help increase environmental and economic literacy among communities and generate a shared understanding of the local resources between community members that can be used to improve a local area. It is only by understanding how money flows in and out of a local economy,

for example, that a community, or a local authority even, can make informed decisions about how it wants the local economy to develop.

As we found in our research in Peckham, giving local people the opportunity to help steer the course of local development activity is important for strengthening social networks and building greater confidence within a community to take actions forward and influence positive outcomes in the future. Engaging stakeholders, then, is not only important for people's perception of the sector or the success of a development – for example, a well-used community centre or local park – but for the relationships, energy, exchanges, and mutual support systems that sustain community life over the longer term. This 'core economy'⁸² is an important resource that needs to be identified for protection and promotion as part of any development process.

Taking a co-production approach

Stakeholder engagement can be made more effective and participatory by taking a co-production approach.⁸³ Having recently gained interest in government policy and service settings, co-production can be applied to development and renewal projects as a mechanism for engaging people's assets and growing informal networks of support. There are four key principles of co-production:

1. **Valuing people as assets** – to explicitly incorporate their life experience, knowledge, skills, talents, energy, and enthusiasm into the design and delivery of developments.
2. **Reciprocal working** – to move beyond voicing opinions in consultations to incorporating an active role for individuals and communities.
3. **Growing social networks** – to foster and promote individuals to make connections and networks that will better sustain community life.
4. **Celebrating community contribution** – to recognise the contribution of everyone's work equally to generate a sense of collective value that will benefit both people and place.

Critically, a co-production approach places the skills and expertise of professional and local people in balance, requiring that mutual exchange and reciprocity take precedent in encounters between professionals and beneficiaries. Not everyone comes to the table knowingly skilful. Sometimes, coaching techniques can be used to release enthusiasm, talent and expertise. nef's Action Research programme has found that coaching techniques are particularly useful in achieving sustained change in disadvantaged communities. By supporting action and promoting local networks for support, the technique releases energy, skills and enthusiasm to build a community's confidence about its own ability to determine its destiny.⁸⁴

More often than not people will take part in different ways, but everyone's contribution should be recognised equally. The aim is to ensure that local people have an active role in the shaping of their built environment rather than being passive recipients in the development process.

A stakeholder value map

We suggest that the process of applying sustainable well-being to a local area can be supported by the development of a stakeholder value map, which can help a local authority or a developer to retain existing value and create added value by working with stakeholders at the earliest stage of the process (Figure 11). A local authority could use the stakeholder value map before it accepts development proposals to identify existing resources or areas of improvement. Equally it could request in tender documents that developers take this approach as part of the proposal process to identify how best to convert the objectives of pH and pS into a set of specific development outcomes, that are directly linked to local area priorities. There are a number of stages to completing the stakeholder value map:

Stakeholder value map

A map that converts pH and pS objectives into a set of place-specific outcomes for improving well-being and reducing environmental impact

1. Identify all those stakeholders who are affected or who can affect the outcomes of the development project. These can include local residents, community groups, local businesses, local government, investors, developers, architects, and so on. Identifying appropriate stakeholder groups to be involved in the mapping exercise will in part depend on the different spatial levels under consideration – the local authority area, the ward, the town, the neighbourhood, the street or the home. A co-production approach to engaging stakeholders should be used to complete the map.
2. Identify the community assets and resources that will be protected, retained and built upon. These should be assets and resources that already contribute to pH and pS. As we saw from our research in Peckham, the features of a place that are likely to hold well-being or sustainability value are likely to encompass more than the obvious, physical markers of community life – the streets, public buildings, a tourist area. They are also likely to include the social networks and the sense of belonging or neighbourliness, which makes a place ‘work’. We have therefore suggested that various different kinds of neighbourhood features or qualities are looked at – including physical, human, social, environmental, and economic.
3. Identify the neighbourhood qualities to be improved as part of the development process. Because we know a range of psychological, social, environmental and economic factors influence well-being, opportunities for improvement should be considered beyond the physical infrastructure of place.
4. Specify the changes that the development project will either wholly or partly deliver. Importantly, the stakeholder value map combines professional and local knowledge to inform the selection of outcomes, which will guide development priorities.
5. Specify the changes that will directly contribute to wider strategic local priorities. These should be set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This last stage is important because it directly links the development outcomes to the wider aspirations of the community, and, critically, provides a collective focus and

purpose for development activities that is broader than financial gain alone.

On completion, the stakeholder value map should be a public document that all stakeholders feel they 'own'. This will help both local and professional stakeholders to track progress against an agreed set of outcomes.

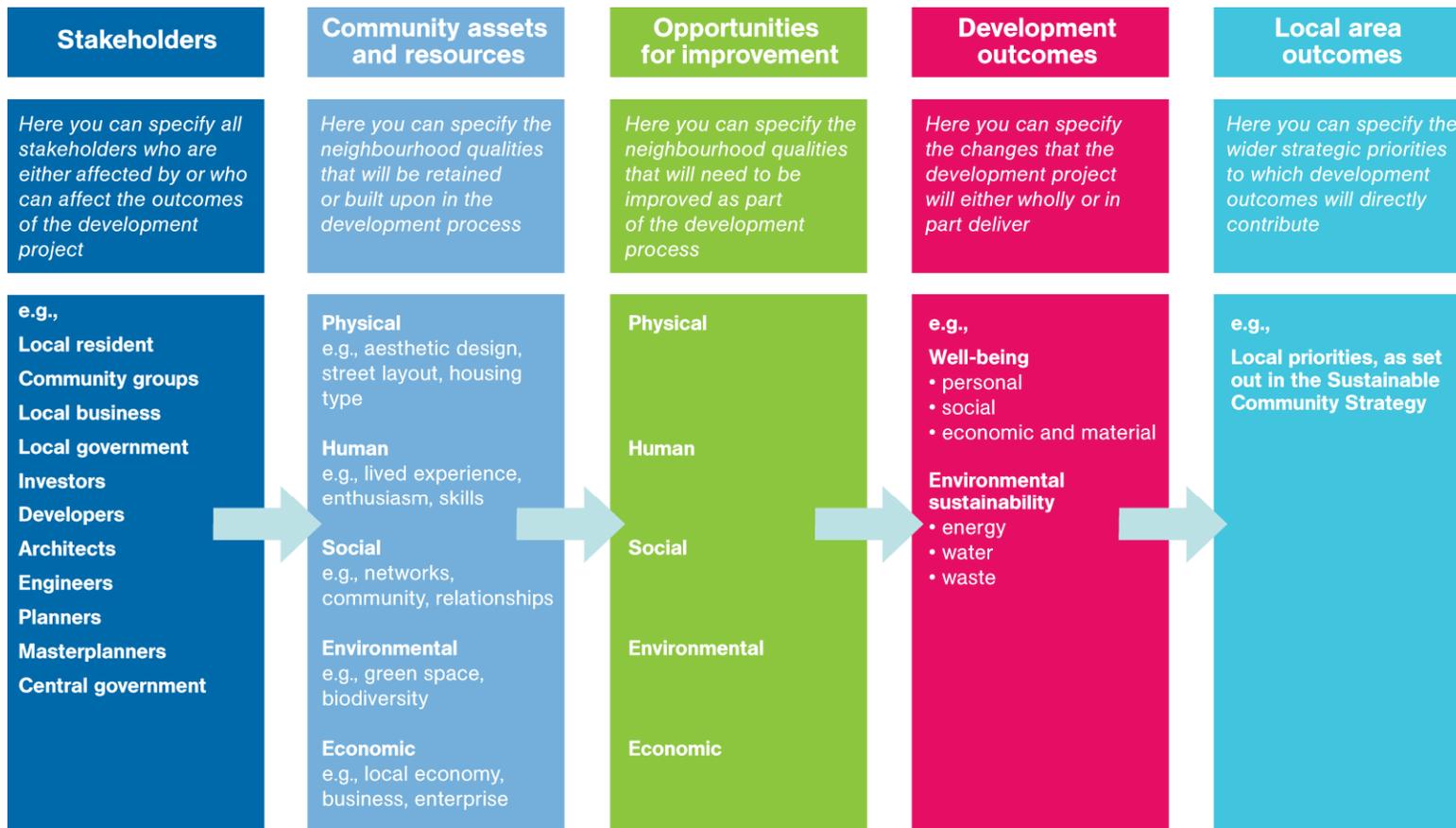


Figure 11. Stakeholder value map: an outline

Implementing the stakeholder value map

We have seen that there is an important role for leadership and stakeholder engagement in putting the overarching goal of sustainable well-being into practice in a local context. The stakeholder value map is a mechanism for thinking about area outcomes based on identified needs but first and foremost available assets and resources. The challenge for the place makers (e.g., architects, developers, engineers) is to turn the stakeholder value map into plans and designs that will deliver measurable improvements in pH and pS.

5. Designing sustainable well-being into place making

There are examples in the UK of well-designed neighbourhoods, which successfully combine sites of economic transaction, social interaction, home life, and leisure. Equally, there are an increasing number of developments that are embedding environmental sustainability into the design process. Even so, examples which are designed to explicitly and simultaneously promote high well-being and low environmental impact remain few and far between.

Once development outcomes have been identified and agreed locally, a number of key questions arise around their implementation. How do we embed sustainable well-being into what we do? What features of the built environment will promote pH and pS? How can they be designed into a place? And what win-win approaches can be identified which create sustainable well-being?

This section outlines some different ways of working that could more effectively design-in pH and pS. It introduces a design proof for sustainable well-being as an approach to carry through the overarching vision of sustainable well-being into the design briefs and proposals of all built environment projects.

Designing for life now

As we described in Section 2, well-being is a dynamic process, reflecting the interplay between people's external circumstances, their psychological resources, how they function, and how they feel. Designing for pH, therefore, requires that both the impact of structural factors (e.g., employment, income inequality) affecting people's well-being as well as the personal and social dimensions of people's experience of their lives are factored into development objectives.

Supporting economic and material well-being

The impact of structural inequalities on place, and the problem with attracting investment into some areas, means that some of the assets that are basic to pH are sometimes lacking. With any development or renewal activity, money is poured into an area. But we know from experience that

Place making

The process of embedding development objectives into the design and delivery of the built environment.

it often leaks straight back out as it is spent on goods and services produced outside the community. The trickle-down model of investment – creating wealth in an area which then cascades down to the most disadvantaged communities – is a false promise.⁸⁵ The Docklands is probably the most striking example but the same criticism can also be levelled at the Millennium Dome, the Excel centre in Canning Town and inward investment schemes throughout the country – many of which have failed to result in better livelihoods or well-being for the existing local population.⁸⁶ But there are alternative models of investment, which don't just focus on investment in the physical assets of a place.

Case study 2. Local economic development in Sheffield, UK

When it organised a £1 billion development initiative, Sheffield City Council asked its five construction companies to commit to delivering 10 per cent of their work through social enterprises. Using **nef**'s Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) methodology, researchers followed the source of income derived from one of the contracts to see how it was spent and re-spent within the local area. They found that every £100 spent on housing generated an additional £125 for the local economy. It also found that 20 per cent of the total contract was spent in the immediate area of the construction project, which was one of the most disadvantaged areas of Sheffield.

For more information on LM3 see <http://www.pluggingtheleaks.org/>

Over the past four years, **nef** has developed and piloted a new approach to local economic development based on understanding how money and other resources flow into and out of communities. The Enterprising Communities Framework describes economic, social, and environmental characteristics of neighbourhoods that support them to thrive and places them in a common framework.⁸⁷ The economic characteristics it specifies include:

- A strong local asset base of financial and physical resources.
- A responsible enterprise and business sector which is diverse in terms of size, social and private ownership of the goods and services produced.
- A responsive public and business sector working to strengthen and invest in the local economy.
- Positive local money flows, so that money that comes into the local economy stays circulating there before seeping out again.

Case study 3. Irrigating inward investment in Durban, South Africa

A pioneering project carried out by **nef** in partnership with BioRegional, Thekwini Municipality and Tongaat Hulett Developments is looking at ways to get money from a new tourist and housing complex along the Durban coast in South Africa to flow into nearby lower-income communities (an approach termed ‘irrigating inward investment’). In practice, this means working with community members, the developer, and the municipality from the outset to understand how enterprising opportunities can be opened up from the development project, and to support business creation and employment and skills training opportunities in the construction and post-construction phases of the development.

For more information see <http://www.bioregional.com/about-us/around-the-world/bioregional-south-africa/>

Promoting personal and social well-being

Just as economic and material well-being is important for the way people experience their lives at a local level, so are a wide range of psychological and social factors. The recent Government Office of Science Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Mental Well-being drew on the work of over 400 scientists across the world to think about how to improve people’s well-being throughout their lives. They commissioned **nef** to identify, from the evidence-base, activities that people can do to build well-being into their daily lives. The resulting *five ways to well-being* are: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, and give.⁸⁸

Connect and *give* were designed for individuals, but they were identified because they speak directly to the social component of people’s well-being. The principles of *connect* and *give* can also, therefore, be applied to social groups and communities. There are already examples of how the five ways can be used to help shape policy and business strategies. They have already been incorporated into mental health strategy documents⁸⁹ and are being used as a framework for well-being at work by Business in the Community, the membership organisation which supports businesses to make a positive impact on society.⁹⁰

As Figure 12 shows, the *five ways to well-being* messages could also be a useful tool to help built environment professionals incorporate well-being into planning and development. We can encourage people to be active by making sure that developments have indoor and outdoor spaces to enable them to undertake physical activity. This does not only mean sports facilities but also parks or community allotments, and active transport features like walking and cycle paths. We can encourage learning through life by promoting local history and a shared understanding of the area using public art, design features which commemorate key local figures and events, and central and accessible exhibition and library facilities. Beautiful and unusual features will make people stop and take notice, as will spaces designed for relaxation and reflection.



Figure 12. Embedding the *five ways to well-being* in design.

The interpersonal connections promoted by *connect* and *give* are enormously important to both the personal and community elements of pH. We know that the number of friends people have within a 15-minute walk of their homes is a good predictor of local crime rates.⁹¹ This is probably because informal connections also provide a kind of natural surveillance in an area, which deters criminals. The greater trust people have in others, the less likely they are to be afraid of crime. In fact, it has been argued that the core economy of family, neighbourhood and community and civil society underpins a range of other aspects of society, including the market economy.⁹² Social connections between people are an important source of trust, support, exchange, and enterprise, which keep communities resourceful and places vibrant.

It has often been assumed that a concrete facility, like a community hall, is enough to improve the sense of community in an area. But what we actually need is a broader definition that looks beyond the physical infrastructure of a place to support some of its non-material features, because buildings are not always enough to get people interacting or exchanging, which we know is one of the keys to strengthening the core economy of family, neighbours and community.⁹³

It is only by taking a broader definition of design to incorporate the 'spaces in-between' that we have realised, for example, the important role

that pedestrian-friendly areas play in our neighbourhoods. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation looked at people's social interactions in housing estates with different tenures, and found that people needed to be able to interact in the street if they were going to get to know their neighbours.⁹⁴

Case study 4. The benefits of car-free public spaces, Sutton, UK

At the BedZED sustainable community in London, a car-free public space at the heart of the estate is a safe and social space for children and adults. A survey in 2007 showed that BedZED residents know an average of 20 neighbours by name compared with the UK average of 3.

For more information, see <http://www.bioregional.com/what-we-do/our-work/bedzed/>.

Case study 4 shows how designing to achieve pS can also design in pH, by inadvertently promoting a number of the *five ways to well-being* in its design. These win-win opportunities exist because the things that promote people's well-being are not necessarily carbon intensive and the things that are good for the environment (e.g., biodiversity, cleaner air) can also be good for us. This might explain why international research has shown that people who use less carbon report similar levels of well-being as people who consume seven or eight times as much.⁹⁵ A recent CABI report advocates the interrelationship between health, well-being, and sustainability and the role of design in identifying simple solutions that promote win-wins across the three agendas.⁹⁶ Therefore, it makes sense to think about using the *five ways* in design features as a strategy for delivering pH *and* pS at the same time.

Reflecting the dynamic nature of well-being in project design briefs

In much the same way as identifying win-win opportunities is important, carrying out checks and balances on how different objectives are being met by a design brief is an essential part of the development process, which is often neglected.

Critiques of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder programme,⁹⁷ which aims to tackle areas with weak housing developments to improve the material conditions of an area, have argued that this strategy has often come at the expense of the psychological and social well-being of existing individuals and communities, when applied in practice. Journalist Anna Minton's book, *Ground Control*, describes Pathfinder projects in England that have forcefully removed people from their homes, caused high levels of anxiety and stress, and broken up families and communities.⁹⁸ While economic deprivation may have been a driver for regeneration, pursuing local economic outcomes came at the cost of other well-being outcomes, like strength of the local community, resilience, and feelings of autonomy and competency. Worse still, high levels of displacement through the compulsory purchase of land and mass demolition of existing homes meant that the new investment brought into an area bypassed existing communities. Regeneration of the built environment in these cases has

largely served to benefit wealthier people keen to buy houses and start up businesses rather than people who had been living in the neighbourhoods previously.

The formulation of design objectives for a particular development cannot, therefore, be detached from consideration of the key stakeholder groups who should ultimately benefit, or the balance of social, environmental and economic outcomes that is required for achieving pH.

Designing for a sustainable future

pS means, at the least, using resources no faster than a rate which can be maintained for the long term. This is going to mean a significant reduction in resources used in the creation and maintenance of the built environment, both during any building work and then during the lifetime of those buildings.

The use of sustainable materials and technologies

Low-impact building materials and techniques for reducing energy usage during development are becoming increasingly available throughout the built environment sector but their use is still not widespread. The government's code for Sustainable Homes is being increasingly used as a means of assessing the green credentials of new buildings. Its gradual scale, which goes up to Code 6 (zero carbon), gives investors and developers efficiency levels to aim for from all starting points. This is stimulating innovation in the built environment sector, particularly by exploring natural building materials, such as clay, hemp, and sheep's wool, which have less of an environmental impact and, in some cases, greater physical health benefits.

Case study 5. The well-being impact of materials

Marshalls, the UK manufacturer of natural stone and concrete hard landscaping products, has thought about the well-being impact of its materials. While company staff are well versed in the economic and environmental impact of their building materials, they recently worked with **nef consulting** to raise awareness internally about the positive feelings, social connections, feelings of safety, and health benefits that can accrue from features of the built environment, such as street lighting, the provision, location and design of street furniture, and the quality of materials used.

For more information, contact **nef consulting** <http://www.nef-consulting.co.uk/>.

For example, the National Non-Food Crop Centre, which is funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, has built a house made from hemp grown and harvested in the UK. It cost £75,000 to construct, which is comparable to a brick house. But the fuel bills are expected to be a third or a quarter lower.⁹⁹ The Natural House being built by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment has a construction price tag of £100,000 but its bills are expected to be half that of a brick house and it takes 12 weeks to build as opposed to 6 months for a traditional home.¹⁰⁰ Fuel poverty is increasingly becoming an issue for lower-income homes as fuel prices increase and the impacts of the recession on the real economy take hold. There are opportunities, therefore, for sustainability to promote the material well-being of some of the most vulnerable groups in society. While these developments are currently experimental, they are important for showing the viability of building in a different way, which can meet triple bottom line outcomes for communities, as well as a financial return for investors.

Promoting low environmental impact lifestyles

Of course, resource use associated with the built environment also depends on the behaviour of the people who are going to live in a development.¹⁰¹ Features that help to reduce lifetime resource use and promote low-carbon living will need to become standard elements of design. We have to be able to design in such a way that it encourages people to use resources carefully. At a minimum, this is going to mean waste separation and recycling points instead of litter bins; safe and well-connected walking and cycling paths; and visible energy meters in public buildings and the home.

Responsible consumption of energy and water use and production of waste is dependent upon the awareness of users of a building or the built environment, more generally.¹⁰² Increasing the awareness of users should be proactively built into the design of spaces and places to promote low-carbon lifestyles. The use of meters, for example, provides direct feedback to users about the environmental and financial impacts of their

energy or water usage. Other features of the built environment, like visible and accessible recycling bins, provide cues and ‘nudge’ people to act in a pro-environmental way.¹⁰³

Case study 6. Promoting low environmental impact lifestyles

Crest Nicholson and BioRegional Quintain have created a sustainable *one planet living* community in Brighton’s New England Quarter. The concept went beyond delivering housing that was carbon neutral at the point of development to raising awareness about what residents can do to live with minimal environmental impact. By recycling, taking the train, buying fair trade, growing their own food, and connecting with neighbours, residents are encouraged to adopt the *one planet living* philosophy.

For more information on the *one planet living* philosophy, see http://www.onebrighton.co.uk/carbon_footprint.aspx.

Designing to reduce user impact on the environment can also bring opportunities to improve well-being at the same time. As discussed earlier, win-win design features could include many of those that would arise through designing in the *five ways to well-being*, such as providing natural spaces that encourage social connections and physical activity rather than public spaces which encourage increased levels of consumption. It is also often the case that some elements of pro-environmental behaviour – such as turning lights off or using less water – also positively impact household bills, which would contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty currently affecting about 5.4 million homes in the UK.¹⁰⁴

A longer-term duty of care

With pS as a key objective, the long-term maintenance of the built environment becomes central to the costing and planning of buildings across the life of the design. The sustainability of design features and materials impacts the life-cycle value of development activity.¹⁰⁵ There are significant environmental costs to replacing worn out features or buildings rather than maintaining and upgrading existing assets. And there are well-being costs, too. In our research in Peckham we found that poor maintenance of art sculptures affected how people perceived the quality of where they lived. People reported feeling sad and disappointed that money had been spent on Peckham but not enough to keep it looking nice after the regeneration programme had finished. Other research suggests that the quality of the environment impacts on the extent to which people feel a sense of belonging and custodianship toward it.^{106,107}

Too frequently, insufficient capital investment results in the design and build of places that do not last. Given how many resources are used in the building process, pS means moving away from a cycle of construction and demolition within 40 years, which has happened in many places in the UK, including West Peckham. The Future Communities programme at the Young Foundation focuses on community participation and place

management. It uses the concept of stewardship – the ongoing process of managing, maintaining, and tending a community – to ensure the management of assets has a strong connection to the local community.¹⁰⁸ Stewardship can take many forms, from the traditional local-authority-led model to new organisations or community-led initiatives. For example, in Peckham, there are examples of community-managed gardens that are well looked after and something residents we spoke to are proud of.

The notion of stewardship could be expanded to ensure sustainable resource use into the future. The resources that need to be set aside upfront to invest in maintaining a place over its lifetime should be allocated to appropriate building materials but also to community capacity. Instead of disempowering the very people development and renewal activity are supposed to benefit, a different approach could create, as one stakeholder in Peckham described it: ‘a system which is a self-sustaining, nurturing process’.

A recent report by the Cabinet Office argues that a co-production approach should be central to improving services ‘because of emerging evidence of its impact on outcomes and value for money, its potential economic and social value and its popularity’.¹⁰⁹ If we apply this approach specifically to the built environment, there are examples where greater empowerment of communities in the delivery and maintenance of their living environment has had transformative results. For example, on the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham, alienation, rioting, and chaos were stopped by involving tenants in the management of their housing.¹¹⁰ More recent examples of community involvement in the economic and environmental fabric of neighbourhood life include citizen-managed micro-finance and citizen-managed energy generation.

A design proof for sustainable well-being

As we learnt from our research in Peckham, there is a need to get better at translating outcomes into design features that will actually deliver positive change that becomes self-sustaining. But how do we do this? How can we ensure that early consultation is channelled through into the design and development proposals that are taken forward? And how can local communities play an active role in the development of their neighbourhood? Our suggestion is for greater understanding and focus on the factors that positively influence well-being and environmental outcomes, and the interdependence between them. We suggest using a design proof for sustainable well-being, which can be used to consider how outcomes will be met through activities and available resources *before* development activity begins. This way, sustainable well-being is core to the development process from the outset.

There are some key steps in the process of completing a design proof for sustainable well-being (Figure 13):

1. List the pH and pS outcomes agreed by stakeholders in the stakeholder value map (Section 4).

Design proof for sustainable well-being

A plan that identifies the design features and activities that will deliver pH and pS objectives and specifies the resources that will be drawn upon in the delivery process.

2. Identify the design features and activities that will deliver these outcomes, drawing on real examples and research in their identification.
3. Specify the professional and community resources – physical, human, social, environmental, and economic resources – that will be drawn upon to achieve these design features and activities. The blend of locally available assets and resources will have been identified in the stakeholder value map but they may also require further capacity building or scoping, which can be built into the design proof.
4. Specify any win-win opportunities for promoting high well-being and low environmental impact. This may involve predicting the well-being and sustainability impact of design features and activities identified.
5. Specify any trade-offs across social, environmental, economic, *and* financial outcomes that need to be made. Activities that bring a win to one outcome area (e.g., economic and material well-being) could also bring a loss to another outcome area (e.g., energy use). Running suggestions or decisions through the value filter may involve completing a desirability and feasibility assessment of each design feature and activity, which will help to inform if and how trade-offs can be made.
6. Seek final agreement and acceptance by all stakeholders.
7. Revisit and amend throughout the design and construction process as unforeseen opportunities and barriers arise. The guidance by CABE, for example, suggests regular value-management workshops at several points in the development process to brainstorm opportunities for adding value.¹¹¹ These meetings with all stakeholders could be used as a mechanism for revisiting the design proof.

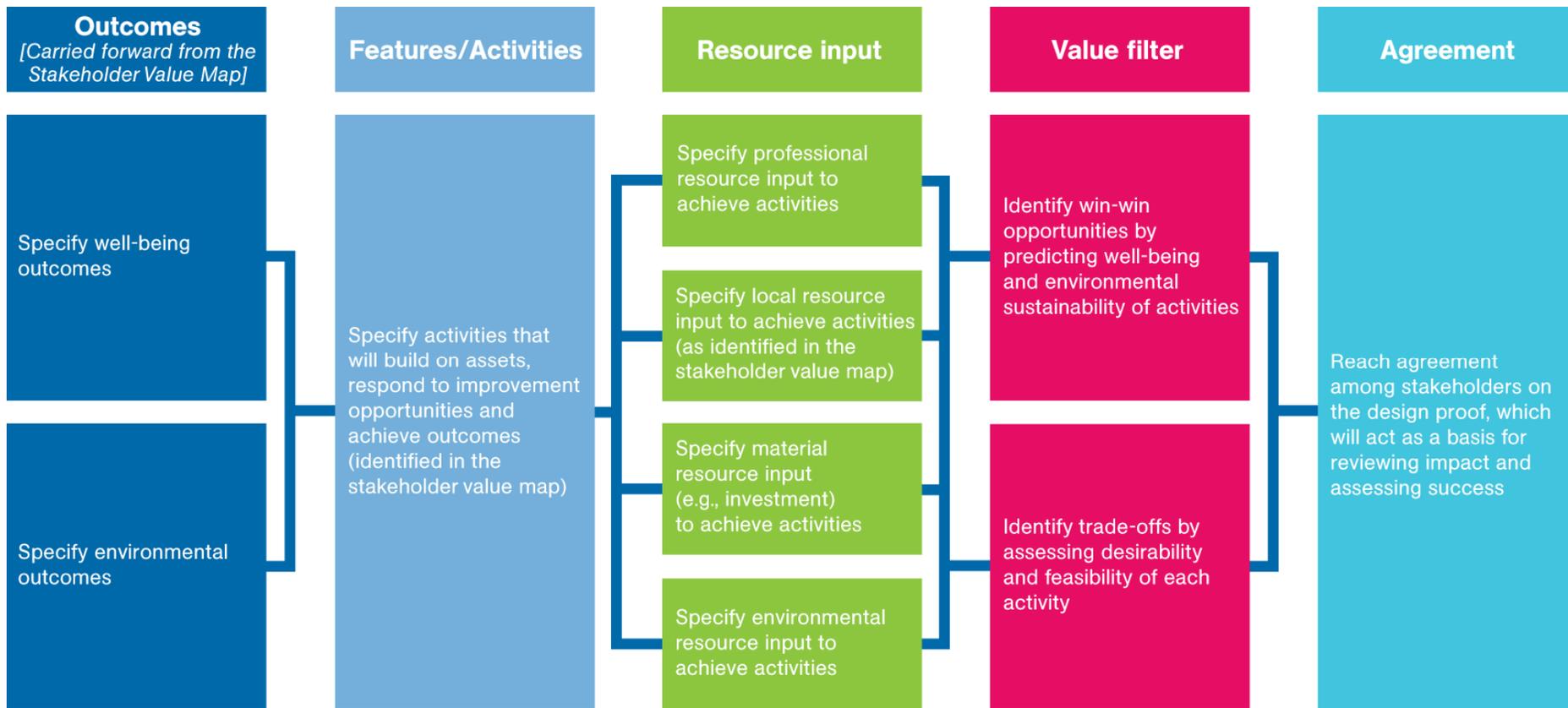


Figure 13. Design proof for sustainable well-being: an outline.

In many ways the design proof for sustainable well-being is not so different to the process that built environment professionals currently undertake to construct a project design brief.¹¹² But the process of completing the design proof has important differences in emphasis, which would need to be recognised if it was to be added to or incorporated into standard practice. By starting with pH and pS outcomes, and by factoring a value filter into the process, it goes some way to ensure that the impacts of design features and activities are not just assessed against cost, but also against the social, environmental, and economic value that they can generate for the local community.

Furthermore, the design proof requires that all stakeholders be involved in its completion, and it also requires that community resources are actively identified and employed in the design and delivery stages. For this reason, co-production and coaching approaches to stakeholder engagement discussed in Section 4 are equally important in this stage of the process.

Knowing what works and understanding why

Increasingly, the interdependence of well-being and sustainability is being recognised at the conceptual level. Much more, however, needs to be done to apply this thinking to the way we design and deliver development and renewal projects, so that actions on the ground are directly contributing to the overarching objectives of pH and pS. Despite some of the latest research and innovative practice, there is some way to go in making these objectives a reality. The development of tools and techniques will need to be supported by a review process that is informative about what works and why. The next section looks at how we measure the effectiveness of design at promoting pH and pS. Ultimately, it is only by working out the full value of developments – beyond their narrow financial returns – that the built environment profession can get consistently better at drawing on all its available resources to make places work for people and the planet.

6. Reviewing impact: measuring for sustainable well-being

We have explored how pH and pS can provide a guiding vision for the built environment sector, and how sustainable well-being can be designed into our places. But these changes in the way that we work need to be supported by new ways of measuring and identifying success in the built environment sector. If we could find a better way to recognise and reward different outcomes, we might have some chance of creating incentives to meet broader goals than profit alone.

Previous research carried out by **nef** shows how ways of measuring and valuing can have a big influence on the activities which are undertaken in a sector. In short, what gets measured, counts. The work concluded that ‘focusing chiefly on direct financial considerations’ can lead decision-making ‘dangerously astray’.¹¹³ They can narrow attention and distort focus away from objectives that really matter to people and communities. But measuring differently can provide useful information about the social, environmental, and economic value that is or has been generated by a development project, which makes it easier to work to a broader set of outcomes. Knowing where and how improvements to well-being and environmental sustainability are being made can incentivise a shift from the default position of being driven almost entirely by outputs that are easy to measure like profit or number of units sold.¹¹⁴

This section takes a critical look at measurement to identify some approaches that can help to prove and improve how different kinds of value can be generated. Where relevant, it signposts work that has already taken place to identify potential indicators. It concludes by summarising the different approaches to development that we have suggested at the place-shaping, place-making, and reviewing-impact stages in the process.

What’s wrong with current measurement?

Part of the reason that commercial measures win out is because alternative measures of value are not being fully incorporated into decision-making processes. Therefore, it is easy to fall back to the default position of worrying about ‘investment in, money out’. Where attempts to

measure effects on individuals, communities, or the environment are made, it is often the case that inadequate indicators and poor or under-resourced data-collection methods obscure the real impact – positive and negative – of development projects. The built environment sector currently puts far too little emphasis on asking people what they think of developments after they move in, even though post-occupancy evaluation is an important way of learning whether a development project has in fact achieved its intended outcomes. CABE's 2005 exercise which asked residents of new housing *What it's like to live there* represents the exception rather than the rule.¹¹⁵ When it does happen, a one-off measurement at the end of the building process can all too often become a tick-box exercise which, unsurprisingly, fails to influence the way that real-world development is carried out.

Capturing impact and showcasing value: How can measurement be improved?

If sustainable well-being is to be the overarching objective of the majority, if not all, development projects, then such a transition will need to be supported by a measurement framework that can capture the wider social, environmental, and economic impact that projects are having. This will provide the recognition for early adopters and the impetus for other development projects to follow suit. There are a number of ways that measurement could more directly support an approach to development that places people's well-being and the environment at its centre.

1. The use of subjective indicators

It is difficult to say that a development project has been a success if the people living there don't experience it that way. There is a need, therefore, to focus on people's subjective experience of life in a place, as well as the objective conditions of a place. Measuring how far improvements to place contribute to improvements in people's well-being can be achieved by directly asking people to report on their experiences using subjective indicators. The science of well-being has demonstrated how such indicators can be used systematically to produce robust experiential data.¹¹⁶ See Box 2 for some examples of indicators already in use.

2. The selection of indicators that link to outcomes

The process of identifying indicators has to follow the identification of a project's target outcomes and activities. In this way, measurement indicators directly correspond to the change the development project is supposed to bring about. In the context of this report, indicators would be chosen that can provide information on the outcomes and activities identified in the stakeholder value map and the design proof for sustainable well-being.

Box 2: Measuring well-being

There have been considerable advances recently in measuring personal, social, and wider place-based well-being. While more research may need to be carried to create a measure that can be usefully applied to a development context, there are some measurement tools already available which provide a useful insight into the kind of indicators that could be used to track improvements in well-being outcomes.

Personal well-being: Two headline indicators from **nef**'s *National Accounts of Well-being* measured personal well-being and social well-being. The personal well-being indicator measured a number of different components: emotional well-being, satisfying life, sense of vitality, resilience and self-esteem and positive functioning. Examples include:

- How much of the time during the past week have you enjoyed life? (*answer scale from 'all or almost all of the time' to 'none or almost none of the time'*)
- My life involves a lot of physical activity (*answer scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'*)

Social well-being: The *National Accounts of Well-being* social well-being indicator measures the extent and quality of people's interactions with each other, both in their close relationships with family and friends, and also their sense of trust and belonging among a wider group. Examples include:

- How much do you feel that people in your local area help one another? (*answer scale from 'a great deal' to 'not at all'*)
- I feel close to the people in my local area (*answer scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'*)

Economic and material well-being: The Place Survey was developed to provide indicators informed by citizens' views and perspectives of their local neighbourhood area as part of the standard National Indicator Set (NIS).¹¹⁷ Examples include:

- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (*answer scale from 'very satisfied' and 'very dissatisfied'*)
- From your home, how easy it is for you to get to the following using your usual form of transport: local shop, GP, post office, public transport facility, etc. (*answer scale from 'very easy' to 'very difficult'*)

Previous research by **nef** has also identified the importance of measures that indicate the strength of the local economy, which are not currently incorporated into the NIS. For example, we have developed tools to measure the proportion of locally owned businesses¹¹⁸ and the impact of investment on the local economy.¹¹⁹

Box 3. Measuring environmental sustainability

It is likely that measures to capture the environmental sustainability of buildings will need to reflect two key ways in which buildings have an environmental impact: during their construction or renovation and during the lifetime of their use. In general, more work has been carried out to identify the embodied carbon of buildings than the footprint associated with their use.

The impact during building can be measured with established tools like the Environment Agency's *Carbon Calculator for Construction Activities*, which measures both the embodied carbon in the materials used in construction, as well as carbon emission equivalents based on the diesel, electricity, gas, and water consumed during construction.¹²⁰

The main lifetime impacts of buildings include water usage, energy usage, and waste production. Of course, unlike embodied carbon, lifetime impacts don't result purely from the decisions of those involved in creating a building but also from the choices of its users. Even so, as we saw earlier, the design of a building can still facilitate or discourage sustainable use. But measuring impacts are less straightforward. As Bioregional discovered when it tried to monitor resources used in its BedZED development, individual meter readings are covered by data protection restrictions; the co-operation of individual users is therefore required.¹²¹ Instead, developers will have to work out some new methods for getting this information. This might include:

- Building-in meters to measure how much electricity, gas and water is used by a development as a whole, rather than just in each residential or business unit.
- Setting up formal agreements with residents and businesses to collect their individual-meter readings.
- Getting commitments from utility companies to provide aggregated data for the development.

Monitoring how much waste is produced presents a particular challenge. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) produces waste statistics by local authority,¹²² although local authorities themselves may well have access to their own, more detailed data. An automated weighing system which recorded the weight of non-recycled waste in a communal waste collection area might be one solution.

3. Taking a long-term view

Measurement can often be short-sighted, even on long development projects spanning over a decade. This lens might be suitable when success is measured against outputs – sale price, profit margin, or even number of design awards won. Outcomes, by their very nature, take longer to realise. This is why post-occupancy surveys that measure the effectiveness of a building or neighbourhood design in promoting well-being at the ‘use’ stage are so important. These kinds of assessments shift the focus from theoretical assumptions about what will affect change to direct feedback about what really works. A longer-term view of good design is particularly important for the sustainability of environmental efficiencies that are in part determined through the use of buildings and spaces (Box 3).

4. Collecting baseline data

Assessing impact involves evaluating the change that has taken place as a result of a development project. Therefore, the collection of baseline data before the development process has begun, provides a benchmark for subsequent reviews.

5. A regular and systematic review process

To identify if change has happened, at the very least measurement should take place before and after a project has been completed. But for development projects that span years rather than months, a regular and systematic review process which revisits data collection to track changes over time is important. As we discovered in Peckham, it is not only the end design that influences the well-being of individuals or communities; the process of getting there also has an impact. Similarly, early decisions in the life course of a development project can have significant affects on its overall environmental impact. Regular measurement can also provide information about the distance travelled to achieving specified outcomes. This insight can inform the identification of any future activities to maintain or build on progress, which can be measured in the next review process. A regular and systematic review process is described as a cycle in Figure 14.

Impact review

An evaluation framework and set of indicators to assess the impact of development activity against pH and pS objectives.

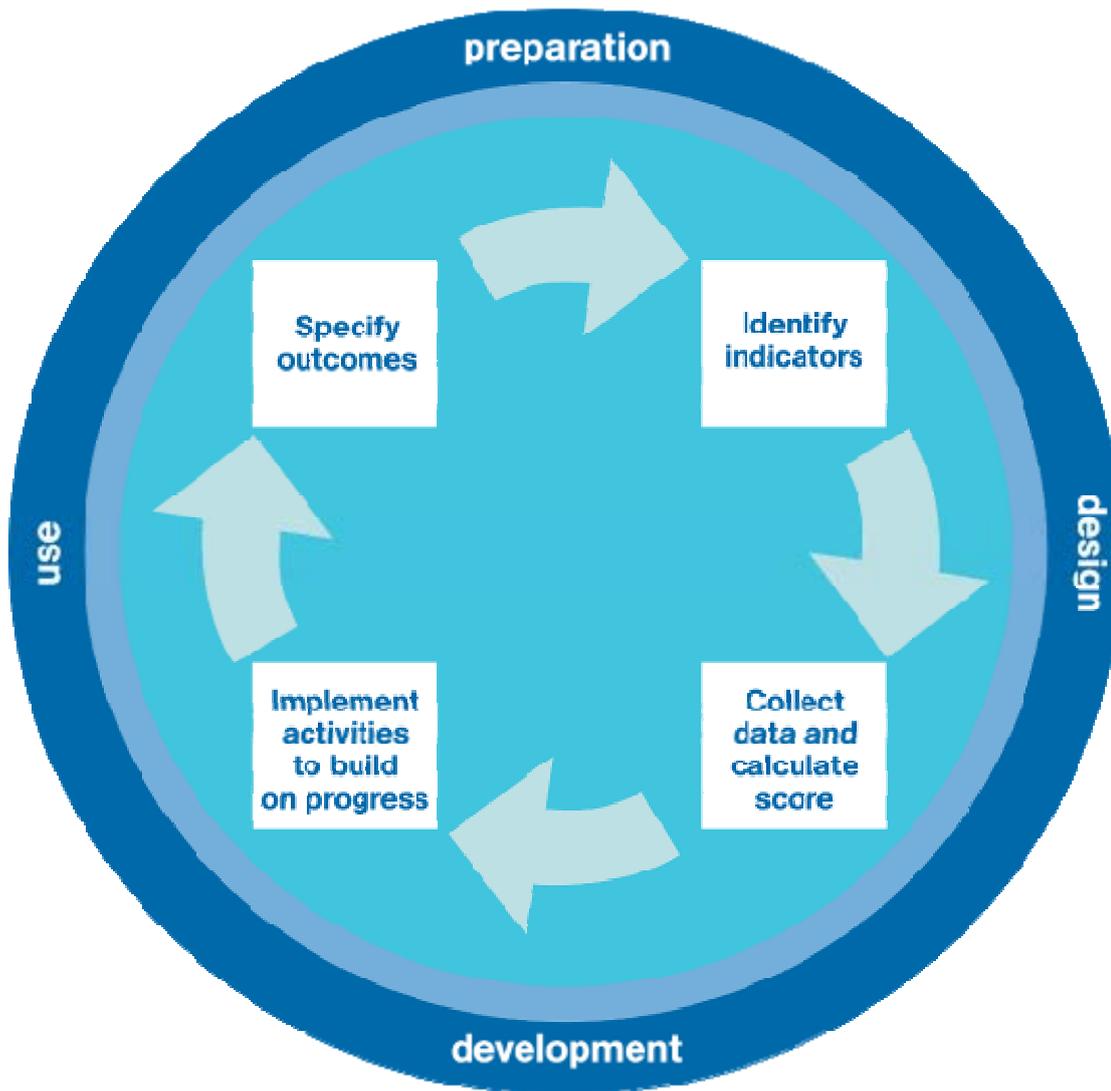


Figure 14. The impact review cycle.

6. The use of composite indicators

We have suggested that multiple factors contribute to pH and pS. As such, a composite indicator is likely to be required to combine multiple indicator sets, which may all use different scales. Composite indicators can be important when value needs to be generated across multiple outcome areas. First, by linking different outcomes together, they can discourage perverse incentives to score well in one area and not the other. Secondly, they can offer an honest appraisal about trade-offs between outcome areas, and the impact this will have on overall performance. While more research is required to think about how to best standardise and combine indicators for the built environment sector some attempts have already been made to link well-being and sustainability outcomes in one index. For example, Caerphilly County Borough Council has devised an index based on **nef's Happy Planet Index** to tie well-being to environmental sustainability in an efficiency measure. This way, it can determine the carbon efficiency with which its policies and activities contribute to what really matters – happy and meaningful lives (Case study 7).

Case study 7. Living better, using less, Caerphilly, Wales

In March 2008, Caerphilly County Borough Council approved a new sustainable development strategy called *Living better, using less*, which sets out to reduce resource consumption whilst making sure people lead happier and healthier lives in the area. The Council will measure progress towards these outcomes using the Caerphilly Sustainability Index, which is based on nef's *Happy Planet Index* (HPI). It uses the HPI equation as a key element of explaining what the local authority defines as sustainability:

$$\text{Living better, using less} = \frac{\text{Long, healthy lives} \times \text{Satisfied lives}}{\text{Resources consumed}}$$

As part of the monitoring process, a survey of 6,000 residents of the county borough is to be undertaken to collect data and inform future activities and interventions. Caerphilly has already begun work on projects like community gardens, green gyms, and a sustainable commissioning model, which will enable the Council to select contracts on the basis of value generated across the triple bottom line.

For more information, see

http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/sustainable/pdf/sd_actionplan_2009_10.pdf

It is true that commercial measures of success are well established in comparison to measures of well-being or environmental sustainability. While more research needs to be carried out to identify a definitive measure of success that can encapsulate a broader definition of value, this section will summarise some approaches to measurement that can help to prove and improve where value is generated.

Thus, just as local people should be involved in producing a stakeholder value map and design proof for sustainable well-being, they should also be involved in measuring the outcomes of the development process.

Towards a new approach

In the preceding sections, we suggested that we need a new way of shaping and making our built environment. In this section we have suggested that a new way of working should be supported by new ways of thinking about measurement, which can better support development projects work towards a broader set of outcomes than financial return alone. In so doing, we have effectively sketched out a new approach to development of our built environment, which is summarised in Figure 15.

Figure 15 sets out key steps of the development process arranged broadly into the three stages we have outlined – place shaping, place making and reviewing impact. We suggest that each stage can be supported by using some of the approaches identified in this report.

The first stage of the process – place shaping – most closely aligns with the ‘preparation’ phase outlined in RIBA and CABE guidance.^{123,124} We argue that a new vision of high well-being and low environmental impact needs to be applied to a local context. This can be supported by a different approach to stakeholder engagement which favours mutual exchange between local people and professionals. The idea is that all stakeholder groups likely to be affected by a potential development project – for example, developers, local government, local businesses, and residents – work together to create a stakeholder value map. This sets out how any proposed development or renewal project will retain existing and create added value for all stakeholders. The aim is to agree development outcomes that feed into or support local area outcomes.

The second stage of the process – place making – carries on this collaborative process to identify how sustainable well-being can be designed into a new development, renewal or retrofit project. A design proof for sustainable well-being should be agreed at the outset, before development activity begins, to identify the design features and activities that will deliver pH and pS outcomes. It specifies the resources – professional and local – that will be drawn upon in the delivery process. It loosely equates to the ‘design’ phase in existing industry guidance.^{125,126}

The third stage of the process – reviewing impact – involves a new approach to measurement that can more effectively assess the impact of development activity on pH and pS. As a minimum, measurement should be carried out before and after development activity and for longer projects more regularly, to provide feedback on what works and to inform a cycle of continuous improvement.

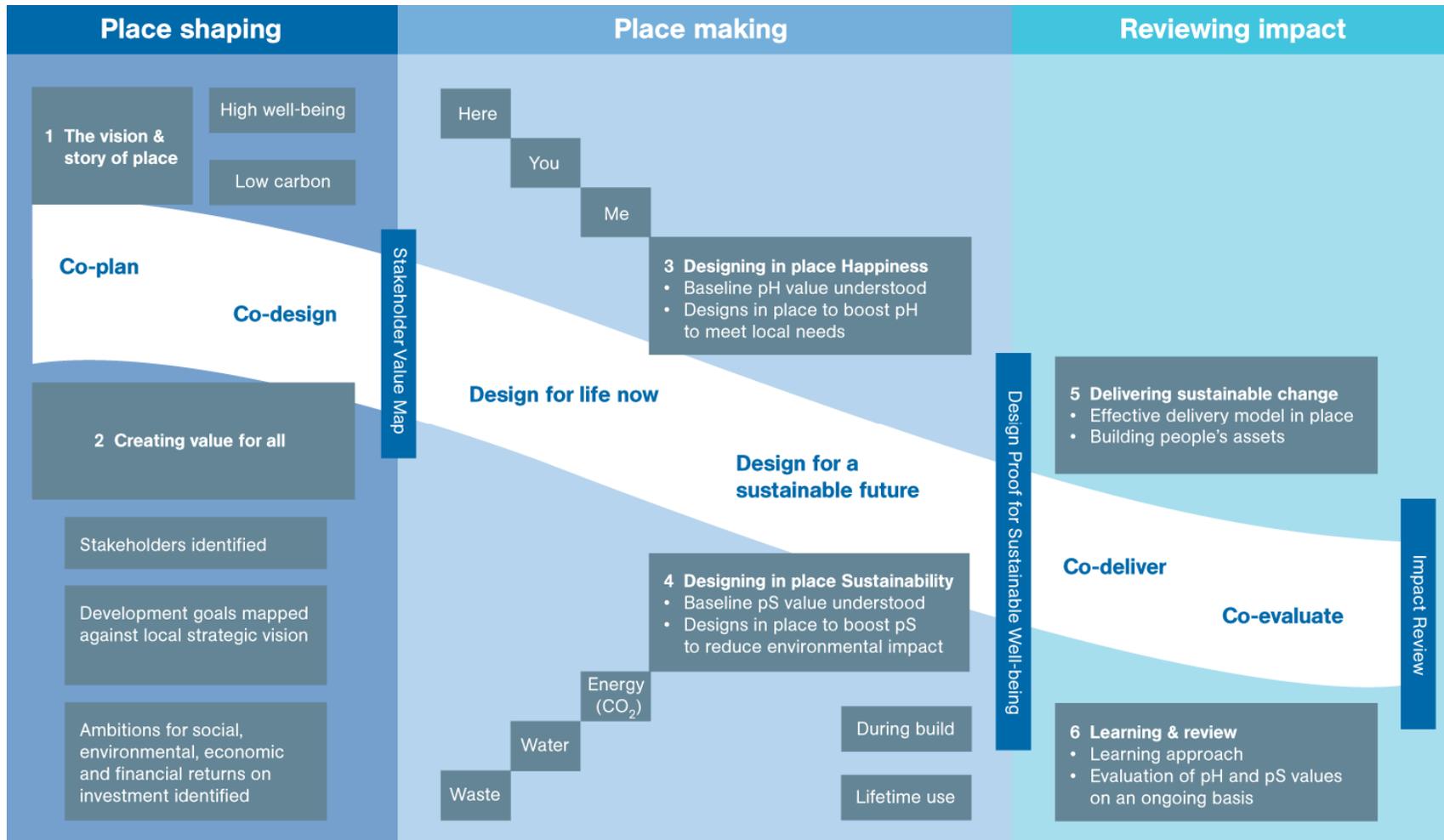


Figure 15. A process for creating sustainable well-being.

7. Recommendations

Our aim in this report has been to set out a new vision of successful development which works for people and the planet. We have suggested some ways to make a vision for sustainable well-being a reality in the way that we value, design in, deliver, and measure a broader set of outcomes that go beyond financial indicators of success. Here we present our recommendations to achieve the changes required.

Some of the barriers to shifting the culture of the built environment sector relate to the broader economic system within which the sector operates. **nef**'s recent report, *The Great Transition*, sets out many of them; for example, the myth of infinite growth which fails to recognise our existence in a world of finite resources and the failure of prices to reflect true social and environmental costs and benefits. As the report recognises, removing these barriers 'will require fundamental changes to the way we live our lives'.¹²⁷

But, while the need for this whole system change is undeniable, there are some tangible things that can be done within the sector straight away to shift aspirations and expectations about the kind of built environment we want to form the backdrop of our day-to-day lives. Some of the case studies in this report have highlighted the beginnings of a different approach to development and renewal projects, which aligns more closely with the ultimate goal of sustainable well-being. But a quick assessment of 'business as usual' in the sector makes it clear that there is still a long way to go.

In thinking about how to make the transition to a different development model, we make some suggestions aimed at central government, local authorities, industry, and educational institutions. These suggestions are intended to encourage debate and stimulate further thinking about the issues explored in this report, not to offer definitive solutions. They are far from exhaustive, but they represent some clear avenues for change, which we believe represent the first steps in achieving a built environment that promotes the well-being of its residents with least ecological consequence. They fall into five categories which set out the need to work to a broader definition of value, strengthen leadership, take a different approach to stakeholder engagement, build capacity to measure what matters, and test out ideas in practice.

1. *Work to a broader definition of value*

To achieve sustainable well-being, there is an urgent need to balance local social, environmental, and economic outcomes with financial returns in the way we legislate, finance, teach, and celebrate the development of our built environment.

- **Government should re-visit and amend planning legislation, to stipulate a requirement for buildings and development projects to create value across social, environmental, and economic outcomes.** This will ensure that a wider definition of public benefit is specified, in accordance with Treasury guidelines.¹²⁸ Within a legal framework that encompasses the triple bottom line, there would be scope for planning and compulsory purchase permissions to be granted or denied on the basis of the local social, environmental, and economic value that they will generate or erode.
- **Industry experts and government need to work together to create new financial instruments. These should aim to incentivise the building of developments that deliver sustainable well-being.** There is considerable scope to look at the potential impact of alternative taxes – including varieties of capital gains, land value, and inheritance taxes – that take into account ‘use value’ as well as the ‘market value’ of buildings. We need to work out if they could discourage speculative investment and better recognise the social, environmental, and economic value of buildings and developments. Tax breaks to make conversion and improvement, rather than new-build, more attractive to the built environment sector would be a good place to start.
- **Institutions educating the next generation of built environment professionals need to incorporate well-being and sustainability issues throughout their curriculum,** if we are to see well-being and sustainability more consistently embedded in the heart of design. These are concepts that are not part of the core curriculum for architects, for example. Where courses are available, they lie outside the route prescribed for a professional career in architecture. Existing taught courses attempting to bridge the skills gap may provide valuable insight into the kind of content that should be included in the curriculum.¹²⁹
- **The built environment sector should establish an accreditation scheme, which sets a standard for buildings and developments that work across social, environmental, and economic outcomes to achieve sustainable well-being.** Recognition should be provided within the sector for innovative approaches to development and should be the basis for encouraging, rewarding, and showcasing success.

2. Strengthen leadership

Driving forward development activity to achieve sustainable well-being requires strong leadership both within local government and within industry. In going against the established way of doing things, we need leaders who recognise and articulate clearly the benefits that a sustainable well-being framework brings to development activity, particularly for people and places.

- **Local authorities need to drive forward a vision for sustainable well-being.** They should be embedding sustainable well-being in formal agenda-setting tools for the area, such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
- **Companies, organisations and professionals working in the built environment sector should commit to a vision statement which makes pH and pS core to their way of doing business.** The aim of this vision statement should be to shift the focus given to social and environmental outcomes in CSR initiatives into the core values driving the day-to-day running of the business.
- **Bodies representing built environment professionals like the CABE and professional associations like RTPI and RIBA should take responsibility for leading a cultural shift within the sector.** They should re-connect debates on design quality with the issues that matter most for well-being and environmental sustainability. Awareness raising should be accompanied with support for practical action.

3. Take a different approach to stakeholder engagement

A development process that delivers a built environment which enhances people's well-being will necessarily require that greater consideration is given to how individuals and communities function and feel. A different approach to stakeholder involvement is needed to move beyond tick-box consultation to the facilitation of active participation at the earliest stages of the process.

- **A co-production approach to engaging existing community assets and resources should become an integral part of the development process.** This requires that professionals work with, not just for, local residents, business, and community groups. The design and delivery of developments should not be pre-planned by built environment professionals (e.g., planners, architects) but rather reflect a mutual exchange of different knowledge and skill sets.
- **Investors need to finance stakeholder engagement at the earliest stages of the development process to ensure it is genuinely useful to the process and its outcomes.** The benefits of releasing skills and energy in the community upfront and of making sure that development outcomes are fit for purpose should outweigh the costs of carrying out the exercise, which would remain minimal in relation to the total development or renewal budget.

- **Invest in skills development.** Being able to facilitate conversations and joint decision-making which take into account the views of different stakeholder requires a certain skill set. If the built environment professions are going to truly empower people to shape outcomes and affect change, then we need a new skills base within the sector in engagement and coaching techniques. A better understanding of the underpinnings of effective engagement, and the value it adds, should help to facilitate a shift away from the tick-box approach to consultation.

4. Build capacity to measure what matters

Different measures of success create different ideas about what is important. We need better measurement tools to assess the impact of development activity on the things that matter most – people’s experience of their lives and the Earth’s finite resources.

- **Government should work with the built environment profession to identify a standardised framework for measuring success.** The aim should be to capture the wider social, environmental and economic impact that development projects should be having, in accordance with legislation and Treasury guidelines on public spending.
- **Bodies representing the built environment sector should provide guidance on measurement to support organisations looking to showcase the sustainable well-being impacts of their development projects.** A collaborative approach should be taken to sharing good practice and learning about what works and why.

5. Test and develop ideas in practice

- **A programme aiming to bring the two principle objectives – pH and pS – together in practice should be piloted. Government should work with the built environment profession and local authorities to identify sites for implementing a sustainable well-being approach to development and renewal.** Such an approach will require investment upfront to resource meaningful stakeholder engagement at the earliest stages of the development process. It should also seek to test and refine the approaches outlined in this report – the stakeholder value map, design proof for sustainable well-being and the impact review cycle – in applied settings, to determine their viability and potential to enhance personal, social, and material well-being with least environmental consequence.

Appendix 1. Project methodology

Project research took place over a period of 18 months in total and was divided into two key stages. The overall aim of the first phase was to explore the literature on the links between the built environment and well-being and to carry out a case study with residents in two different neighbourhoods to find out what features of development most promote and most limit well-being. The aim of the second phase was to use what we had learnt from Phase 1 to challenge the culture of the development sector and provide an overarching vision that balances social, environmental, and economic outcomes in pursuit of a built environment that improves the lives of people within the ecological limits of the planet.

We used a range of different methodologies to inform the thinking and ideas set out in this report.

Phase 1. Secondary research and consultations

We wanted to identify the features of developments and neighbourhoods that best promote well-being. Phase 1 began with a review of key policy documents and academic literature to examine the relationship between the built environment and well-being. While the policy focus for this project was the UK, the literature review also examined international examples. We also carried out consultations with individuals and those representing programmes of work – including the RIBA’s Building Futures team – to shape the background review and inform the selection and development of a case study methodology.

Case study research: through the lens of two neighbourhoods in Peckham

The aim of the case study research was to gather first-hand data on the influence of the built environment on the well-being of individuals and communities. We used small-scale qualitative research to find out the views and experiences of residents living in two neighbourhoods known as West Peckham and Bellenden in Peckham, in south London, and used this to explore the issues emerging from the literature review. Our samples were low and we do not claim to represent the views of the Peckham communities, or wider population. However, they do provide an insight from an experiential perspective and a methodology which could be further tested as part of a larger-scale research programme.

In order to examine how much the design and the renewal process can positively and negatively impact on personal and social well-being, we used a variety of techniques:

- [Asset mapping and photovoice](#)

The asset mapping exercise intended to capture the assets – defined as ‘something of value’ – within a neighbourhood of importance to its residents. We explored whether the assets identified by residents had a role in promoting personal well-being or the success of the neighbourhood.

The photovoice component was a key aspect of the asset mapping activity. We asked residents to take photographs of their neighbourhood, specifically focusing on the characteristics of the local area that they felt enhanced and detracted from their well-being. Residents were also asked to identify the features of their neighbourhood that they valued and thought were important for local residents more generally. We then asked them to tell us how their images influenced their lives and the success of the neighbourhood.

Three residents from West Peckham and five from Bellenden completed the task of taking photos and reporting back. Of these eight participants, half owned their homes and half rented their homes from a social landlord. Seven of the participants were female, seven identified themselves as being white and one participant stated ethnic group other than white (unspecified). Participants were between the ages of 25 and 64.

- [Stakeholder interviews](#)

The aim of the stakeholder interviews was to explore the context, perceptions, and experiences of regeneration and renewal of West Peckham and Bellenden from different perspectives. They were designed to draw out lessons to inform regeneration and development in the future from people who have been closely involved in the process. In total, six people were interviewed: two employees of Southwark Council who had worked on regeneration and renewal projects in each neighbourhood, a local historian, a resident from a local voluntary sector organisation in Bellenden, an estate agent based in Bellenden, and the Manager of a nursery in West Peckham.

- [Biographical interviews](#)

The aim of the biographical interviews was to capture residents’ attitudes to their neighbourhood and its assets and to explore how this related to their personal well-being. We interviewed four residents in total: two men (both from Bellenden) and two women (one from Bellenden and one from West Peckham). We only interviewed residents who had lived through the regeneration and renewal schemes in each neighbourhood so we could also explore the relationships between people’s experience of the renewal process and their personal well-being.

- [Secondary data review](#)

We drew on census data as well as data from local area MORI surveys, local authority reports, and evaluations of the regeneration and renewal schemes.

Findings from the case study research helped us see the factors influencing well-being ‘through the lens’ of two neighbourhoods. As previously acknowledged, the findings were indicative rather than representative. But where the case study findings have reflected the conclusions of the secondary literature, they have provided added confidence in, and lively illustration of, the evidence on the links between the built environment and well-being.

Phase 2. Workshop and ideas development

The overall aim of the second phase of research was to use the findings of Phase 1 to challenge current ways of working in the built environment sector. This involved looking at existing guidance and frameworks for defining value and measuring success at the practitioner level (e.g., the developer, architect, builder, and so on), as well as the outcome indicators guiding local authorities and their strategic partners. All these set the context within which engagement and commissioning relationships occur.

We also held a workshop in July 2009 with professionals across the built environment sector to discuss the barriers and opportunities involved in shifting towards a new approach to development which places greater emphasis on well-being and outcomes across the triple bottom line – social, environmental, and economic. With a range of professionals from developers, planners, civil servants, and architects on hand to apply their experience and knowledge, we specifically explored:

- A core set of outcomes beyond simple financial return for assessing the success of future developments and the incentives needed to make a cultural shift in the sector happen.
- A new way of working which helps providers and users of the built environment alike to collaborate in the process of development, including some of the identifiable steps which can be taken to overcome existing barriers to change in the sector.

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the process of managing, and designing building projects into five key stages. While the client is mentioned in the Preparation Stage, there is no mention of active engagement with wider stakeholder groups to identify needs and objectives as part of the appraisal and design brief activities.

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<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/placesurveymanual0809> [11 February 2010].

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LM3 enables organisations to measure the impact they have on a local economy by tracking where the money they receive is then spent and re-spent. The purpose of tracking and measuring this spending is to identify opportunities to get more money circulating locally. Deprived communities can achieve more local circulation of money by strengthening linkages in their local economies.

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