Sustainable Urban Development and Spatial Planning in the UK and Europe – Policy Implications for Armenia

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We are responsible for:

- **supporting local government** by giving them the power to act for their community - without interference from central government

- **helping communities and neighbourhoods** to solve their own problems so neighbourhoods are strong, attractive and thriving

- **working with local enterprise partnerships and enterprise zones** to help the private sector grow

- **making the spatial planning system work more efficiently and effectively**

- **supporting local fire and rescue authorities** so that they're able to respond to emergencies and reduce the number and impact of fires

Headline Messages

- **Armenia is a highly urbanised country** but the growth of Yerevan and other big cities does not provide a sustainable model of urban development for the future.

- Challenge is **how to manage economic, environmental and social outcomes in existing cities in a more sustainable, self sufficient, decentralised wa**y. What principles and plans are needed to guide development in the future?

- **What can Armenia learn from the UK and Europe?** Our experience is mixed and uneven – there's no silver bullet – but it offers key principles and approaches that could be helpful in future.

- Overall message is that it's **the way policies are made that is often the key to success**. Governance is one key to the future development of Armenian cities and its urban system.

- There are many UK and European practices, initiatives, tools, experiences and evidence worth considering. But it's **attitudes, values and decision-making processes** that will determine whether cities become more sustainable, and a better spatial balance achieved between the dominant Capital Yerevan and the rest of urban Armenia
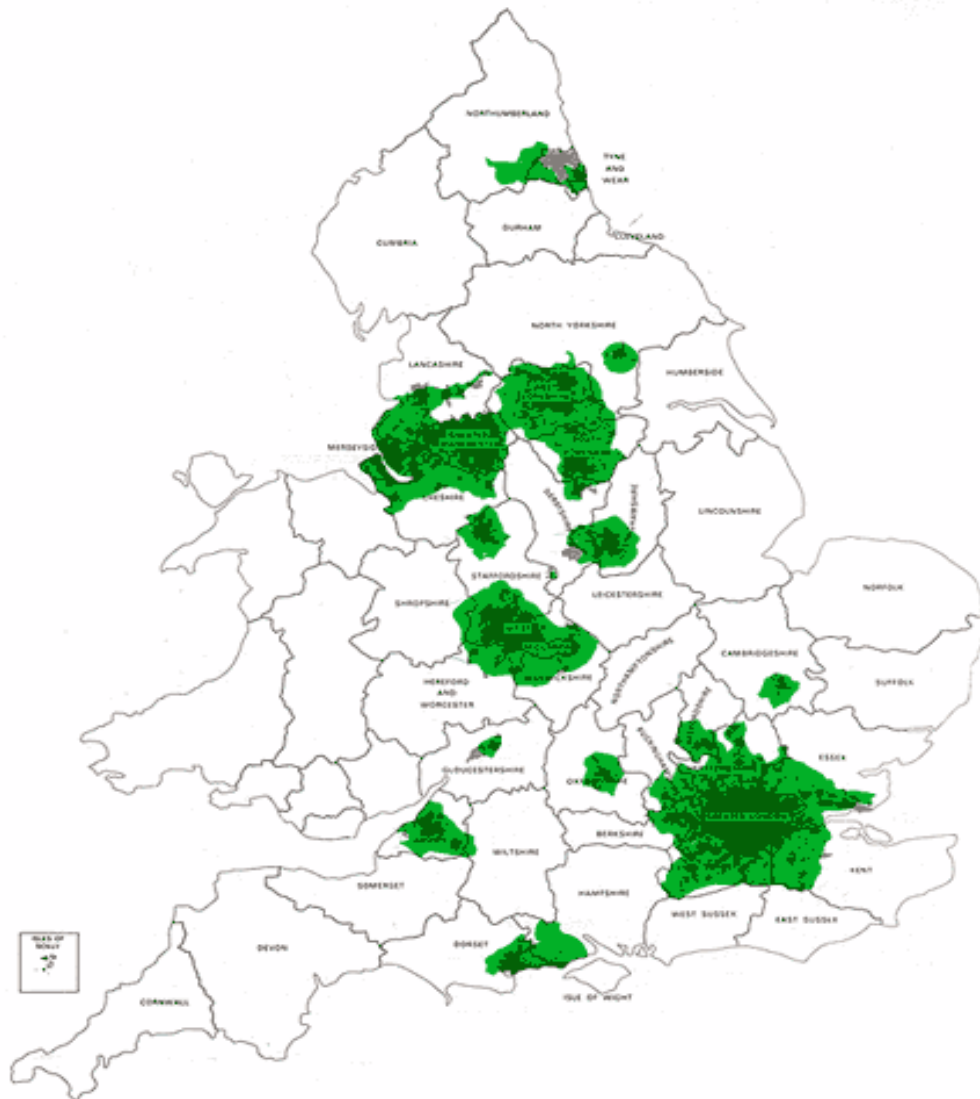
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Policy Challenge and Policy Context in Armenia

- **Urban challenge in Armenia** – understanding the main drivers in urban development – demographic, economic, social and environmental forces.

- **A few large cities dominate the urban hierarchy** leading to unbalanced polarised development with significant social and environmental challenges.

- **Yerevan** – growth, suburbanisation, sprawl, economic dominance leading to congestion and housing problems.

- **Meeting the costs of urban redevelopment** – retro-fitting older urban areas to make them more sustainable and desirable places.

- **Can governance in Armenia deliver successful urban regeneration?** What governance challenges at national, regional and local level need to be met. Moves towards greater decentralisation and localism?

- **Recognising the need for change**. What changes are being made to address these issues?

Example of UK's National Planning Policy Framework - 2012

- **Presumption in favour of sustainable development** – at the heart of the planning system

- **Reaffirms Government's commitment to maintaining Green Belt protections** - to prevent urban sprawl

- **Maintains 'town centres' first policy approach** and sequential test

- **Provides a framework for local and new neighbourhood plans** introduced in Localism Act

* **Encourages development of brownfield over greenfield sites**

- **Good high quality design** seen as an essential part of sustainable development

- **Reaffirms protection for historic environment and heritage**

- **New duty to co-operate introduced** - local authorities to work together to address strategic planning issues

- **Confirms planning's role in tackling climate change**/ helping transition to a low carbon economy

Approved Green Belt Map of England

UK Green Belt Land: Key Facts

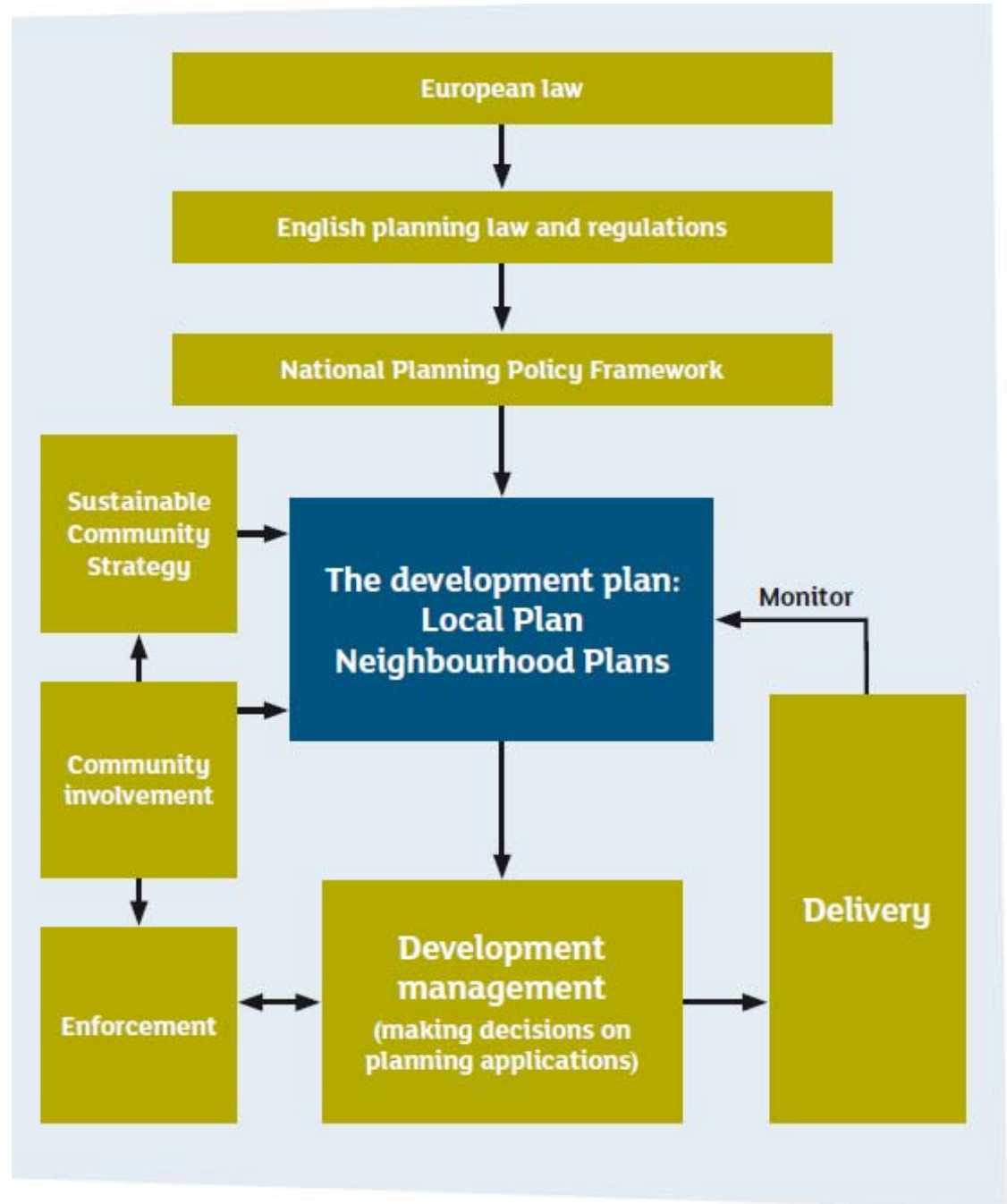14 green belts, covering 13% of England (Wales & Scotland have their own policies);

Green Belts mainly rural, only 7% developed;

Property prices 20% higher than average in Green Belt, but land prices lower;

Only 0.4% new houses in 2007 built on undeveloped Green Belt;

Area of designated Green Belt doubled since 1978.

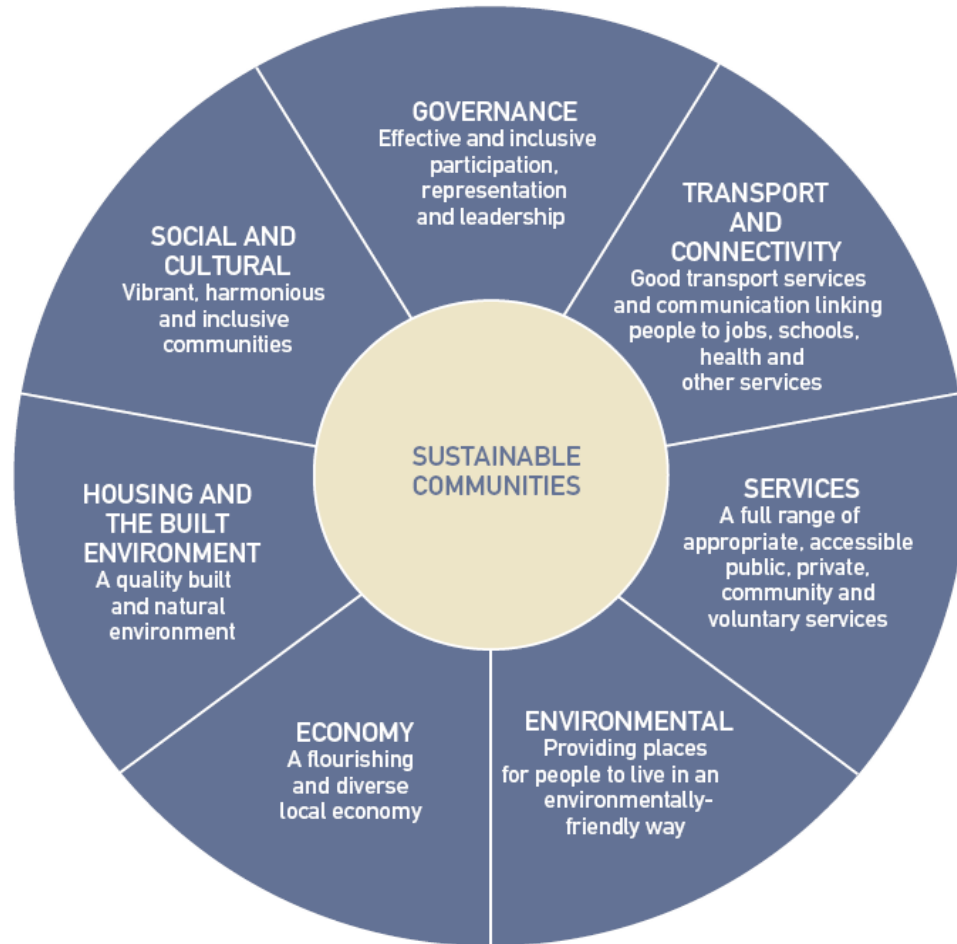**The Key Components of UK Planning**

Pursuing sustainable development – seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment and in the quality of peoples lives by:

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages,

- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature,

- replacing poor design with better design

- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and

- Widening the choice of high quality homes

Plans and decisions need to take account of local circumstances so that they respond to different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.

Key Ingredients of a Sustainable Community/ City

Key Ingredients for Sustainable Cities

Topic	Areas to cover
Governance and objectives	- Political landscape and leadership - Administrative landscape/coherence - Scale, impact, and trajectory of main issues - Overview of current targets - Local pressure group/hot issues
Funding and resources	- Summary cost benefit analyses of options - Outline of public/private funding sources and strategies
Reduction in use of non renewable energy	- Building insulation & codes; district heating - Urban planning /density/growth - Transportation – freight and human - Green energy generation
Wider environmental issues	- Waste, water, air quality - Local eco systems
Building the market for green jobs and services	- Human capital/skills training - Local/regional market stimulation & support - Local innovation
Citizen motivation/protection/ addressing poverty	- Advice/co-production/anti-poverty - Consumer protection and regulation - Take-up campaigns/nudges/trust measures

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Legacy Park, London – the future

European Union: Policy Frameworks for Sustainable Cities and Urban Policy

- On-going intergovernmental process to develop **"an explicit European consensus on the objectives and principles of urban development"**, the '**Acquis Urbain'**" (EC 2011)

- Starting point is the common understanding of Europe "**as a polycentric urbanised continent with urban regions of all sizes".**

- **Key documents in developing this process have been:**
  - Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, May 2007
  - Marseille Statement, November 2008
  - Toledo Declaration, June 2010
  - Poznan Conclusions, November 2011
  - Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, 2011
  - Cities of Tomorrow, Report 2011

- **Reference Framework for Sustainable European Cities: http://www.rfsc.eu/**
  - a toolkit to develop an integrated approach to European urban development

- **European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) -http://www.eukn.eu/e-library/**
  - a network of EU Member States involved in urban policy making. Provides strategic, expert and independent knowledge support

OECD Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC)

- **RDPC has 3 Working Parties**: Urban Policy, Rural Policy, Territorial Indicators

- **Committee and Working Parties** meet twice a year.

- Discussion of issues concerning **regions and cities plus undertakes peer reviews**/ disseminates best practice.

- **Current work programme 2015-16**:

    - sub national contributions to inclusive growth
    - contribution of cities of all sizes to resilient economies and societies
    - rural – urban linkages for integrated regional development

- **Publish regular regional, metropolitan and national level urban policy reviews**, plus thematic studies.

- **Maintain Regional and Metropolitan Databases**. Metropolitan Governance Database forthcoming.

Communities
and Local Government

Making Cities Resilient: Hyogo framework for Action - building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters

5 priorities for action:

1.Governance: ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with strong institutional basis for implementation

2.Risk identification: identify, assess and monitor disaster risksand enhance early warning

3.Knowledge: use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

4.Reducing the underlying risk factors in various sectors – environment, health, construction etc

5.Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response

Words into Action: A Guide to Implementing the Hyogo Framework

Key Lessons/ Messages for Sustainable City Policy in Armenia

- **Need for an overall national framework to guide sustainable compact city development** but responsive to local circumstances.

- **Decentralise powers and levers** that cities need to drive development and growth. Need more bottom up than top down approaches.

- **Involve local people and communities** actively and creatively in decisions to enhance and improve places (e.g. neighbourhood planning)

- **Understand the costs and benefits of sustainable city policies** – always a trade off (e.g. development leapfrogging the green belt)

- **Mixed use development and high quality design matter** – ensure they reflect character and identity of surrounding areas

- **Strengthen local governance and leadership -** to enhance cooperation across boundaries and within communities

* **Need for Government Departments to work together** to develop and deliver more sustainable/ 'green' approaches to development.