Freiburg and Netherlands Study Tours

Dr Caroline Gamlin
Joint Director of Public Health
NHS Somerset and Somerset County Council

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Who attended?

Almost 50 participants with leadership roles in relation to Local Authorities in the South West

September 2008 (13) - Vauban and Rieselfield

September 2009 (18) - Vauban and Rieselfield

February 2012 (17) – Houten, Leidsche Rijn, GWL Terrain Amsterdam, Kop van Zuid Rotterdam
Purpose

• to see how healthy sustainable urban developments work in practice
• investigate policy and design for healthy communities and sustainable settlements
• to bring lessons back to the SW - realities of progress towards healthy communities and sustainable settlements
• to build understanding between public health and planning professionals
Freiburg

• 230,000 inhabitants, 30,000 university students
• a green city – solar capital
• Vauban – former French barracks, 3km south of city, 5000 inhabitants, 600 jobs
• Rieselfeld – former sewage works, high density housing 3/5 story buildings, plan 12,000 inhabitants, 1000 jobs, built around tramline
Keine öffentlichen Parkplätze vorhanden
• Limited access to car parking – on edge of developments in multi-storey car parks or parking lots
• Flexible financing of development
• High quality urban design
Key Lessons

• strong leadership and a powerful team of local political, economic and technical personalities provided momentum to the vision over 20 years

• good quality public transport system- designed and run for maximum modal share – and is backbone to the city

• multi-functional buildings and spaces (eg multi storey garage is a net generator – solar panels, cycle hub has bicycle hire, parking, café, travel bureau, solar energy collectors)
Key Lessons continued

• high quality public facilities and local shops are provided up front supporting community interaction

• good access to nature and plenty of trees and vegetation throughout

• mixed tenure and dwelling types offering a social mix. Housing is of a high quality with good access to children’s play areas and communal open space
Key Lessons..../continued

• strong values have driven the nature of development, with the aim on improving quality of life and promoting environmental sustainability
• coherent strategies link transport, street design, settlement patterns etc prioritising the ease of local government and paying attention to the role of public transport
Netherlands

• Houten

• Leidsche Rijn

• GWL Terrain, Amsterdam

• Rotterdam
Houten

- 50,000 people (4000 in the 70s)
- Commuter town to Utrecht
- “Bicycle city” 2008
- Ring road for cars
- Long term vision
- Community buy in
- Working with water not against it
Houten
Leidsche Rijn

• 30,000 new homes and 180 commercial and public buildings
• Neighbourhoods within the development are individually designed and constructed with varying architecture and layout
• Children’s play space is integrated into residential areas, no fencing
• Flood management - 80% of surface water retained within the settlement
GWL Terrain, Amsterdam

• a former municipal waterworks located 3km from the centre of Amsterdam
• regenerated in 1989 into a car-free residential area (645 dwellings with a mix of tenure)
• environmentally friendly design permeable to adjacent neighbourhoods and offers a vibrant example of low-carbon community and sustainable practices in the built urban environment that encourages community activities and engagement
Rotterdam

Former harbour area, Kop van Zuid, is located on the south bank of the Meuse River. It was redeveloped into a new town centre thanks to the vision of the city authority.

Afrikaanderplein, a former football ground, is adjacent to the Kop van Zuid area and was redeveloped into a very functional public park offering weekly market, playground and aviary in an area of the city characterised by cultural diversity.
Rotterdam
Rotterdam
Lessons learned

- creative solutions for small spaces
- allotments
- integrating green space into development
- local public art developed with the community
- planting to encourage wildlife;
- community-driven design of open space
- provision of communal facilities and to share uses in buildings and spaces
Lessons learned../continued

• schools as important parts of the community
• house level “in-fill” for young professionals
• markets and their role in social cohesion and the local economy
• human scale is achievable through the layout, building design and landscaping
• having a vision that covers all scales so opportunities can be maximised when they arise
How applicable in the UK?

• North East Bridgwater – Morrisons distribution centre, 2000 houses, new primary school, commercial centre, recreational facilities

• Moving Bridgwater forward- 4 million from Government local transport development fund, new and improved cycling routes

• Could use landscaping/green space better