YHACS
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies
Member of
CIVIC VOICE
talking civic sense

SOCIETY INSIGHT

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"HOUSING DESIGN"
"LEVELLING UP"

HOUSING DESIGN – CAN WE EXPECT BETTER?

Leeds Civic Trust Director Martin Hamilton looks at the prospects

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Is there any real prospect for a move away from the identikit housing stock we see so often that has no sense of place, is designed on the assumption that everyone must own a car, where green space is an afterthought and where wider physical and social infrastructural needs are ignored? Because this is the sort of development that our Planning Committee is confronted with all too often. All too rarely do we see developments that we can be proud of (such as the CITU and Kirkstall Forge schemes which are pictured below).



A screenshot from Martin Hamilton's conversation with Nicholas Boys-Smith with well designed homes at the CEG Kirkstall Forge site in the background



The CITU Climate Innovation District development in Leeds City Centre. Low carbon, factory made homes designed for their location

I am writing this article to coincide with the forthcoming YHACS AGM at which Professor Matthew Carmona of the Place Alliance will be speaking about housing design. He will be talking about the Place Alliance housing audit and the assessment tool they used to score housing developments across the country. Our Planning Committee uses this (in adapted form) to assess new housing schemes in Leeds. It should be an interesting session.

In this article, I wanted to give an overview of the tools at our disposal to raise the standard of housing design ant to consider whether we need to be braver in opposing schemes that can only be described as "bog standard."

The starting point to all of this is the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). The recently revised document now enshrines good design as a key element in the planning process. Paragraph 138 states that *"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design"* – a key "hook" to hang any objections to poorly designed housing.

Incidentally, Matthew Carmona has an interesting blog on the subject of design and the NPPF. Where in the past issues such as housing supply have trumped

design quality in determining planning appeals, recent decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate suggest that this might be changing. This should strengthen the hand of planning authorities when refusing sub-standard design You can read more at his blog matthew-carmona.com

Design quality is also at the centre of the government's planning white paper. As many of you will know, the white paper has been a major concern for our national umbrella organization Civic Voice for much of the Covid period, with hundreds of people joining webinars to discuss the subject. The white paper has come in for a lot of criticism from a number of quarters not least amongst conservative MPs, which has resulted in its progress being paused for the moment. However, many of the propels to lift design quality are likely to survive any amendments to the white paper.

Central to the government's approach is the creation of a new "Office for Place" to drive forward design quality. Nicholas Boys-Smith is chairing the transitional body and he recently spoke to me at our AGM last November. You can hear a video of my interview with him here. He is the Director of "Create Streets", a body that has influenced many of the ideas contained in the white paper. A key task of the new office is to support the creation of design codes to identify standards across a geographical area - Leeds City Council is one of a number of local authorities who have been piloting the approach the white paper proposes.

But there is an elephant in the room. Over the last few years there has been an incremental widening of the rules on permitted development...

In short, the White Paper talks about "design codes" or "pattern books" that built "Bournville, Belgravia and Bath" and how these principles could be more broadly applied. The idea is that locally based design codes would set a standard for design taking into account local circumstances.

When this is allied to the proposals in the white paper for development zones, this could mean that there would be less scrutiny of planning applications for individual buildings as long as broad design principles are adhered to.

This focus on design quality must be a good thing. But there is an elephant in the room. Over the last few years there has been an incremental widening of the rules on permitted development. Extensions to houses (within certain parameters) do not require formal approval, and more recently rules around "adding storeys" and converting commercial properties to residential have been relaxed. It seems inconsistent to lay such stress on the design quality of new build developments whilst waving through inappropriate conversions.

So all in all, there is much to be positive about.

Design seems to have risen up the political agenda, but the approach is not without its inconsistencies.

Martin Hamilton
Director of Leeds Civic Trust

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Levelling Up

After two years of lockdown and restrictions on movement and travel, it's perhaps not surprising that people want a bit of escapism – and there's been plenty on offer on the television.

It might say more about me than I'm prepared to admit, but I've noticed a trend for programmes about the rich (and sometimes, the *very rich indeed*). Programmes such as *The World's Most Luxurious Holidays* (More 4), *Britain's Most Expensive Houses* (Channel 4), *Posh Weekends* (Channel 5), *Aristocrats* (ITV), *Britain's Most Luxurious Hotels* (Channel 4) are just some of the titles on offer recently. These programmes, and countless others like them, show how 'the other half' live. And, dear reader, I'm hooked! (Although these programmes often prove that money doesn't buy taste!)

I find these programmes fascinating because they are a statement about what sort of society we have become where huge wealth is possible alongside severe poverty. They serve to highlight the differences between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' (and I include in the latter group everyone not in the first – the 'have nots' here include the comfortable, the secure, the just about managing and those sadly living in true poverty).

The word 'wealth' is often associated with 'fabulous' just as, in these programmes, the word 'money' is usually followed by 'no object' – and the social divide is incredible. We live in a society (and not just in the UK) where some people have money coming in faster than they can spend it while there are people living on the streets and essential local authority and health services are being cut back aggressively.

...the government's plans for levelling up …..
they have so far been rather reticent about saying exactly what the plan is that they have in mind.

This isn't the place to debate the merits or otherwise of the tax and social security system but the divide between the very rich and the rest of us seems to be more marked than ever. This has to be a failure of government – and not just the current one. The Sunday Times annual Rich List identified a record 171 UK billionaires in 2021 (up by 24 on the 2020 figure) – and some of these are *multi*-billionaires! (Just for reference, if you have a billion pounds and spend £1 per minute, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, it would take over 1,900 years to spend it all. If you have one billion pounds invested at just 1% interest a year, it would earn you ten million pounds *every year*…..)

I think we can take it as read that the government's plans for levelling up Britain are not going to be a grand plan to turn us all into billionaires but, they have so far been rather reticent about saying exactly what the plan is that they have in mind.

Inequality exists across a number of fronts – access to decent housing, jobs and education are the obvious ones – and they are often interlinked. But what really counts is investment – making sure that the investment is effectively targeted and managed – and that might mean giving local leaders much more say and control in what the money is spent on and where it goes. Here in the north, we might think that we need levelling up more than most, but there are other parts of the UK which need the inward investment at least as much – so levelling up can't *just* be about the north/south divide – poverty exists 'down south' as well – and the government has said it will *"level up opportunities across all parts of the United Kingdom."*

In October 2020, the Institute for Fiscal Studies **published a report on levelling up** in which they state that the UK is "one of the most geographically unequal countries in the developed world; compared with 26 other developed countries, it ranks near the top of the league table on most measures of regional economic inequality."

The report points out that inequalities in different parts of London can be just as marked as between other parts of the country so the need for levelling up isn't just about London and the south-east versus the rest of the country either. Indeed, the report also highlights the inequalities within our own region with parts of South and West Yorkshire suffering inequalities more than other parts of the region as a result of the loss of the traditional mining and manufacturing industries where the impact is not just the loss of jobs – and opportunities – but also the hangover of people still suffering the impacts of injury and heath issues related to the jobs they used to do before their industries collapsed.

One possible way to level up is to focus on culture. A Northern Culture All-Party Parliamentary Group (NC APPG) was set up just last year…...

Although we're still waiting for to see the government's full proposals on levelling up (and planning!), it's not something which can be easily dealt with – the problems are too complex and deep-seated and they are not helped by the need to recover from the damage done by Covid (and that's before we consider the full impacts of Brexit whatever they are, and which have still to work their way through the system).

What the government has done already in terms of investment is to set up a number of **'levelling up' funding streams** for which bids have been invited. Interestingly, there seems to be a willingness to cede some control over how these funds are invested to local leaders (assuming, of course, that the current i *imbroglio* within government circles doesn't lead to any withdrawal of pledges made!).

Whatever levelling up turns out to be, it must be about improving living standards and creating an equality of opportunity, especially among younger people. So the need for better housing, better infrastructure (including public transport links), better education and healthcare almost goes without saying. But it's also going to be about better jobs – and new types of jobs with new ways of working (one thing Covid has shown us is that many jobs don't have to be done in an office and the traditional 5-day working week is likely to become a thing of the past with some employers already experimenting with 4-day weeks. A shorter working week offers the prospect of more leisure time

for some).

One possible way to level up is to focus on culture. A Northern Culture All-Party Parliamentary Group (NC APPG) was set up just last year to look at the opportunities for culture to drive economic growth.

Northern Culture All Party Parliamentary Group
Co-Chairs James Daly MP, Julie Elliott MP
Vice-Chairs Alex Sobel MP, Jason McCartney MP
Secretary Tony Lloyd MP

NORTHERN CULTURE CLUB

According to their website (**https://northernculture.org.uk/**), the group exists to "*promote and champion the huge economic contribution made by the North's cultural sector and build consensus. Providing a united voice on pan-Northern culture asks and priorities in order to shape and influence future Government decision making, as well as generating debate on how to boost skills, create equal opportunities for all, promote diversity and support ambitions to empower future generations, the NC APPG will work to level-up investment for Northern culture to empower future generations.*"

The group has recently published a report: '*The Case for Culture: What Northern Culture Needs to Rebuild, Rebalance and Recover*' (you can download a copy of the report on their **website here**).

The report makes the case that, in the past, the contribution made by culture and heritage has too often been overlooked by governments too focused on job creation and productivity through opening factories, etc. Again, a lesson from Covid is that place and participation matter to people.



This is something that Wakefield Council has been working on for a while. Two years ago, just before lockdown was first announced, a new Framework document **'Creative Wakefield'** was launched here. Although lockdown then slowed progress on the framework's implementation, a **Creative Wakefield Board** has been established (full disclosure – I am a member of the Board!). The Board will help deliver the Creative Wakefield vision which is '*to drive forward an outstanding quality of life for everyone [and to make the Wakefield district] a happy, prosperous, welcoming, and inclusive place where culture and creativity are everywhere and for everyone*'.

Portrait of Kevin Trickett by https://lizkay.co.uk/

CREATIVE WAKEFIELD

The Covid pandemic has created a pause and many of us have re-evaluated our lives during that time. We have thought about what is important to us, how

we want to live and what really matters. Culture and heritage have the potential to help drive regeneration and to produce opportunities for people of all ages but, if we are to pin our hopes on using these aspects of human endeavour to drive the levelling up agenda, they must be made accessible and participatory for all. There has to be a role for civic societies in helping to deliver such an agenda.

The government has promised to publish a white paper on levelling up – it's just possible it will come out before you read this article. It should make for an interesting read whenever it finally appears.

Culture and heritage have the potential to help drive regeneration and to produce opportunities for people of all ages …….

Keeping Up

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: if civic societies wish to remain relevant, they have to keep up with what's happening around them.

This is particularly true of developments in IT.

I've banged on long enough about using social media and I'm pleased to see more civic societies using Twitter and Facebook and, more recently, video conferencing abilities such as Zoom. However, if you haven't done so already, it's time to think about how your society takes in money. Over the last two years, we've become a practically cashless society. People don't tend to carry large amounts of money anymore – and who carries a cheque book these days?

While bank transfers are an option, for taking money from members/members of the public for ticket sales, publications and even subscriptions, payment on-line and by card (or even by phone) is very much the modern way.

At the Autumn YHACS meeting, I explained how Wakefield Civic Society opened a **SumUp** account to take payments on-line (through our new on-line shop) and by card when people turn up at an event. It has been very successful! We have recruited a number of new members via our on-line shop since it opened in September and receive orders for our books as well. We're not yet competition for Amazon (give it time!) but there's no going back now.

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Paying Up

Now that I've mentioned money, it's probably an opportune time to remind members that with the beginning of a new year, annual subscriptions fall due.

Our treasurer Alan Goodrum has been contacting civic societies and individuals to ask for payment – held again at £50 for societies and £10 for individuals. If you are the person that makes the payment and hasn't yet had contact from Alan, please get in touch.

A happy New Year to you all.

Kevin Trickett MBE

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN… CRITICAL BUT ELUSIVE

In the Autumn 2021 edition of Society Insights, Kevin Trickett wrote in his *View from the Chair* on the subject of COP26: *"We need to be vigilant in our responses to planning proposals and we should be campaigning for sustainable development."*

Recent experience here in Kirklees supports this - regarding Civic Societies' involvement with planning applications - particularly one critical requirement for developers, local authority teams, and councilors.

Introduced by Natural England in 2016, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has developed into a critical component of our local authorities' planning and approval processes, bolstered by councils' declarations of Climate Emergency during 2019. *'Put simply, BNG involves the use of a metric as a proxy for recognising the negative impacts on habitats arising from a development and calculating how much new or restored habitat, and of what types is required to deliver sufficient net gain'*. The latest suite of BNG metrics and guidance was published in July 2021 and aspects of these were strengthened in the Environment Act 2021.



The opening sentence of the Government's policy statement before the Bill became law stated: *"The case for tackling biodiversity loss, climate change and environmental risks to public health is clear. The accelerating impact of climate change in this country and around the world is of profound public concern, as is the damage to nature with species loss, habitat erosion and the disappearance of cherished wildlife."*

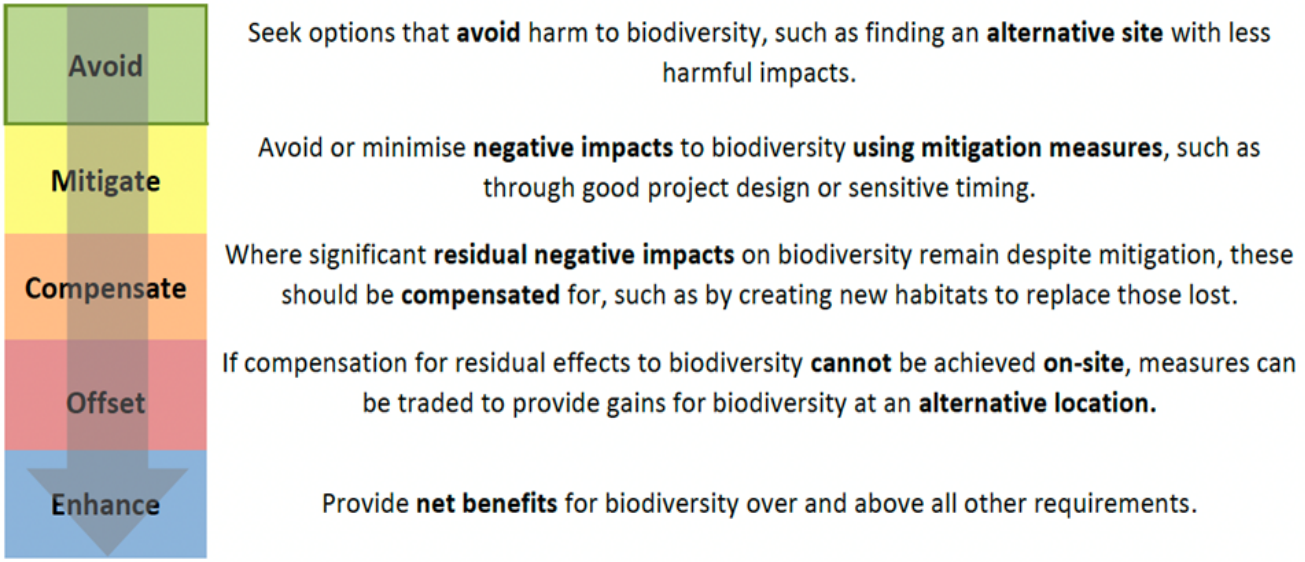
However, despite almost universal acceptance of this statement, local authorities continue to grapple with the process complexities and capability gaps exposed by the requirements of BNG. Interested stakeholders ranging from The Wildlife Trusts & other non-governmental organisations (NGOs); legal firms; and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) warn that proper resourcing and ecological expertise are essential to the policy's success. Following a freedom of information request in 2018, the ENDS Report found that only a quarter of English councils employed in-house ecological experts. But this figure falls to 16% for experts who hold chartered status in ecology – currently only available from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEE**M**).

Whilst it is still too early to assess whether or not the intended positive impacts of BNG on biodiversity are being achieved, here in Kirklees we detected early warning signs which may be more universally applicable for local authorities across the country.

Having witnessed a number of BNG potential anomalies in Kirklees planning applications and decisions in recent months, during Q4 2021 Huddersfield Civic Society decided to test the hypothesis *that there is a gap between the Council's Biodiversity Strategy and its deployment within the planning application process*. A sample set of 5 planning applications was assessed against Kirklees Council's Biodiversity Strategy & Biodiversity Action Plan which mandate the use use of a range of tools by developers to enable them to:

- Identify the application site's position in terms of *Kirklees Biodiversity Opportunity Zones*
- Identify *Local Ecological Networks*
- Make and submit calculations using the *Biodiversity Metric*
- Use the *Mitigation Hierarchy (see graphic below)*

Figure 2. Applying the Mitigation Hierarchy



Whilst our deployment-related hypothesis was proven, we identified a number of mitigating factors which highlighted significant hurdles and complexities which Kirklees and other councils need to address:

- Guidance for applicants from Kirklees Council is derived from detailed requirements published by Natural England . This offers 11 separate downloads comprising calculation tools; spreadsheets; and PDFs, one of which is the user guide for Biodiversity Metric 3.0, stretching to some 100 pages.
- Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Biodiversity Metric User Guide address units of measurement. The guidance is so complex as to be almost impossible to use, monitor, and enforce.

In the context of our sample set of 5 planning applications, factors 1 and 2 above raise two issues, one from the applicants' perspective; and one from the Councillors/officers' perspective:

Applicants appear able to pick and choose which aspects of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to include, and which to ignore.

Councillors/officers' decision making appears to be inconsistent re. BNG, partly driven by the sheer complexity of the Biodiversity Metric provided by Natural England. There is a lack of clarity on which aspects of BNG are ***essential*** to planning application success and which are optional. This vagueness seems to create loop-holes which some developers might exploit.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the aims and objectives of Biodiversity Net Gain policies are welcome and **critical**. However, at this stage in their deployment and from our limited sampling in Kirklees, the intended benefits for nature and biodiversity will remain **elusive** without a handful of essential ingredients:

- Appropriate resourcing in local authorities with the right levels of ecological expertise.
- Understanding and prioritisation of BNG by political decision makers in local authorities.
- Process simplification to enable all stakeholders to focus on essentials, and to make BNG reporting (including calculations) accessible to the public.
- Rigorous follow-up and tracking of applicant (developer) compliance with post-approval BNG conditions made by local authorities. Accountability for tracking should rest with the approving authority.

Notes and Links

1.To date some 300 UK Councils have declared a Climate Emergency.
- including all five West Yorkshire local authorities.

2. CIEEM 'BNG - Principles & Guidance for UK Construction & Developments' https://cieem.net/i-am/current-projects/biodiversity-net-gain/.

3. The new section 90A TCPA will make it a requirement that all planning permissions in England be subject to a condition to ensure the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development value by at least 10%.

4. https://www.endsreport.com/article/1585763/capacity-crunch-councils-expertise-deliver-biodiversity-goals.

5. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720

Mike Prior
Huddersfield Civic Society
6 January 2022

Addingham Environment Group…
…An Update

Still lots of activity going on with the Addingham Environment Group (AEG) which is of course, an integral part of the Society. Here's just a couple of project updates, plus a quick review of the Group's presence at the Village Christmas Market!

Jubilee Nature Reserve

On Wednesday 17th October Hilary Cave, our Primary School head, opened the new School Nature Reserve, we've called it the **Jubilee Nature Reserve**. It includes the new wetland we have created. We started work almost two years ago (just before the first lockdown). The final step was the Hide, designed and built by local contractors KPG (Kevin Grosvenor)

The project involved repairing and extending the outer perimeter fence, excavating basins for **two ponds and nine wetland scrapes**, building a safety fence and a pond dipping platform around the big pond (located in the former long jump sand pit !), planting the ponds and scrapes with aquatic and semi-aquatic plants and building the Hide. Funding came from a range of sources including the Addingham Beer Festival, the Addingham Totally Locally Christmas Market, Friends of Addingham Primary School and a private donation from a couple of Society members Lesley and Clive Loughlin.



This photo shows our Hide with a selection of our magnificent AEG volunteers who spent an estimated 400 hours landscaping, planting, weeding and watering. It's now ready to be used, by **wildlife** (amphibians, birds and dragonflies) and **children** (plant and animal identification, life-cycles, seasonal change). Both will be managed with a very light touch **allowing rewilding to take place naturally…**

Very sadly Barry Tiffany, one of our volunteers, who worked on the project passed away on a countryside walk just the week before the Hide was completed. The Headteacher welcomed Barry's widow Angela and daughter Nicky to the opening of the Hide. In memory of Barry the Hide is to be called "**The Barry Tiffany Hide**".

Zero carbon

Reducing energy used in homes either by reducing demand for energy or by making homes more energy efficient is a **national climate change priority**. It has also become a **householder financial priority** as gas and electricity prices have rapidly increased and residents face a desperate choice between keeping warm or facing massive heating bills. One of our Society members, Peter Haigh, an energy expert, offers his advice on how to save money, stay warm and reduce carbon emissions: *"UK wholesale gas prices have rocketed and this means that electricity prices have too – which means that the vast majority of us will be paying considerably more in the next year. It is also the reason that over 20 energy retailers have gone bust since the start of September – affecting over 2 million households.*

The reality is that many of us will be facing prices rises of 30% or more. So, what can be done?



*At the moment, **shopping around isn't the best idea**. Once your current fixed price deal comes to an end, the cheapest tariff will be the Standard Variable Tariff (otherwise known as the default tariff) offered by your existing Supplier. This is the tariff that is protected by the Ofgem price cap, although that doesn't mean to say that it is cheaper than your existing deal!*

*It's a good opportunity **to look at appliances that are used every day**, particularly those that are used extensively over the winter months. Lighting is a great example – a humble standard lamp with 300W bulb could use around £80 of electricity over a year, replacing the bulb with an LED one reduced the costs to around £3.50! Our Environment Group has a number of plug-in energy monitors that any householder in the village may borrow."*

Peter, our resident expert (mentioned above), provided an interesting and very topical presentation via Zoom to a 'packed house' (!) of Society members on the 26th of January. Many members went away knowing a lot more about the looming gas crisis and importantly how to keep warm, save money and save the planet.

In addition to **home energy monitors** our Environment Group has a **thermal imaging camera** that can be used to identify where heat losses occur in your home and **a box of small items** of equipment (available from the Hub) that can be borrowed to demonstrate ways of improving the energy efficiency of your home. For more information see:
https://addinghamenvironmentgroup.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/

Christmas Market
Despite low temperatures, strong winds and a village power-cut the Totally



Local Christmas Market went ahead as planned on Saturday 27th November. Our Environment Group had a stall displaying its wares and promoting its themes of **wildlife, carbon, waste and water** under the heading "**May all your Christmases be green**". Star of the show was David Bartlett (shown in the photograph) who demonstrated how much energy (and money) could be saved by switching to LED light bulbs. Also on display were items for Christmas presents !!

Hedgehog hotel (six were available for "sale" by donation to our Environment Group).

Garden **water butt** with downpipe diverter – all houses should have them!

Wildflower plug plants – sow seed in pots and plant out in your lawn 12 months later.

Beech and hawthorn saplings – use native species to plant a hedge.

Bee hotel – provide homes for our solitary bees.

Lazy dog **draught excluders** – follow the instructions to make your own from fabric filled with buckwheat husks.

Home **energy monitor** and other home energy efficiency items.

Plastic-free Christmas wrapping paper and ribbon.

A plea was made to avoid buying liquids in plastic bottles when **refills are available. Refill before recycle!**

A **wormery** – to compost food waste, especially cooked food waste and prevent waste going to landfill and causing methane emissions.

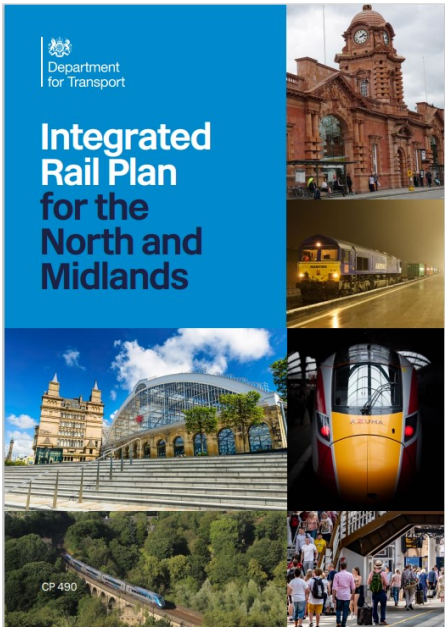


Our stall at the market, not bad eh ?

Jim Robinson

THE INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN FOR THE NORTH AND THE MIDLANDS – WOEFULLY INADEQUATE

It was inevitable that the Integrated Rail Plan would divide public opinion. In such a far-reaching Plan there will always be winners and losers where choices must be made between different possible outcomes.



We question whether this is an actual Integrated Plan at all?

It certainly is a Plan, but it seems to concern itself mainly with the core routes and makes only passing references to the secondary routes which link into them. A Plan that describes itself as integrated, should have paid far more attention to secondary routes also. However good core services eventually become, they are of little use to the great number of people who cannot efficiently access them because connecting services are not good enough. There are also important destinations that need to be accessible which do not lie on these core routes.

Unless these secondary services receive the same kind of serious consideration as the core routes, the North will simply be left with a two-tier system and the "levelling-up" agenda will not be achieved.

We note however, that a sum of £1.5 bn has been set aside for smaller schemes in the Midlands and the North, which could refer to the upgrade of certain other services, but no detail is given, not even as an Appendix to the main report. If there is to be an additional report on the development of these secondary services, it should have been made clear.

Pontefract Civic Society is particularly concerned about this issue, as Pontefract Line services are the only ones in West Yorkshire which terminate at the County Boundary and do not connect with anything at all. High on the agenda of any consideration of Northern connectivity must be the elimination of the illogical termination of services at Knottingley. These services are wasted opportunities for onward connection to the wider rail system and are the very antithesis of inter-connectivity in the North.

The Society has long campaigned for the restoration of former service links to Goole linking with Hull and North Humberside and to Askern and Doncaster, linking with both South Humberside and the East Coast Main Line. This pattern gives practical connectivity between West Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and much of Eastern England and makes much better use of the current truncated, unconnected services. Moreover, these developments would be relatively easy to implement and constitute "quick-wins", so that the objective of improving connectivity could achieved far sooner.

The Plan rightly draws attention to the need to provide a viable alternative to the excessive use of the private car in meeting the Government's environmental and climate change objectives. The lack of, and inadequacy of these secondary, supporting services works against these objectives. The lack of a direct link between West Yorkshire and South Humberside is a good example of this, where currently the awkward indirect link via Doncaster provides every incentive to make the journey to this important area by private car, using the motorway system.

It will be difficult to meet inclusivity targets if secondary services are not significantly improved, because it makes it more difficult for much of the population to access the main city areas for employment, education and leisure. In short, there is a very real danger that the perceived North/South Divide will become a smaller-scale North/North Divide unless secondary services receive a higher priority.

….It will be difficult to meet inclusivity targets if secondary services are not significantly improved….

The Rapid Transit scheme proposed for the Leeds District is wholly desirable and we note that it may eventually reach as far as Pontefract, although we would not wish to see it replace the heavy rail services. It is likely to be at least twenty years away and its scope may well alter in such a long-time frame. In any case, although Leeds will always be the main destination for the Five Towns area, it cannot be assumed that good connectivity is only required in this direction. It is not sufficient to ensure that only travel within the City Region is improved; it is important also to improve links to destinations outside the area and particularly those that do not lie on the core routes - such as Lincoln.

The improvement of service connectivity on our secondary routes is of great importance in the "levelling-up" agenda but this document does not pay sufficient attention to it and to that extent, falls short of its intended scope and does not truly reflect the meaning of its title.

Paul Cartwright, Chair

www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk
www.facebook.com/PontefractCivic
www.twitter.com/PontefractCivic
www.instagram.com/pontefractcivicsociety

What does 'Levelling Up' Mean To You?

A good friend tells me to answer the question on the exam paper, not to digress.

"Levelling up" is already a cliché.

The absence of the proposed government white paper doesn't help for clarity and as time passes so its purpose becomes increasingly opaque. So, while in the beginning perhaps there was the prospect of a levelling up shopping list the call "no more money" has become increasingly loud (despite gestures such as locating part of the Treasury to Darlington). There's also been an awakening that levelling up is seen to be a zero-sum game as witnessed following the Chesham and Amersham by-election result. Whatever may have been hoped from the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, the outcome was undeniably underwhelming for Yorkshire.

At the last YHACS event we were pointed to Colin Speakman's book "*Yorkshire - Ancient Nation, Future Province.*" An engrossing read with a premise if not compelling but certainly challenging. (Proof-reading could have been more accurate: Ripon's 2011 population lost 10,000 people - 16,700 to 6,700! - and it's Undercliffe Cemetery in Bradford, not Underhill. Perhaps I do digress.) On reading recommendations, and also directed toward levelling up, "*The New Snobbery*" by David Skelton identifies a significant change in perceptions of class across and within the nation and offers an explanation for the "red wall" contribution to the 2019 general election result.

Putting these two books together perhaps offers an alternative approach to levelling up. Rather than an infrastructure shopping list (much as this would be welcome), investment in the regional communities through devolution and in education could offer a more sustainable way forward.

A further point on levelling up is that it's more than a regional issue, it's urban and rural. Agglomeration economics explicitly propels the benefits of the metropolitan. The recent North Yorkshire Rural Commission has pointed to the disadvantage and deprivation of the sparsely populated areas of this region and the lower investment priority to the detriment of these communities.

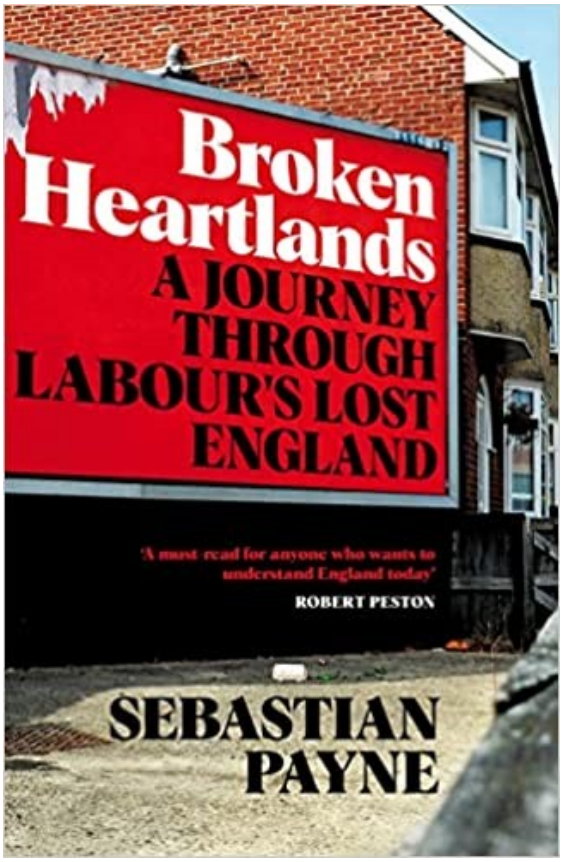
So, what does levelling up mean to me? Primarily a necessary change in national attitude. Each part of the nation makes a contribution to the whole and these will not be the same and certainly not of the same monetary value. How might this be best expressed? Through more transparent governance. Delegation is a stepping stone but the ambition needs to be devolution. Mr Speakman's premise that Yorkshire should be recognised as a cultural province is a start. (But why not others?) Mr Skelton's case for devolved decision making (not just delegation from Whitehall) as a means of stimulating ownership and accountability rather than externally imposed budgets and targets is appealing. If it works for the devolved administrations then why not England?

At least it's a point of view.

Christopher Hughes
Chair, Ripon Civic Society

REVIEW OF 'BROKEN HEARTLANDS: A JOURNEY THROUGH LABOUR'S LOST ENGLAND'

The subject of *'Levelling Up'* pops up from time-to-time, like a debt collector on the doorstep in *'Broken Heartlands: A Journey Through Labour's Lost England'*. Sebastian Payne is the Whitehall Editor of the *Financial Times*, and the only journalist to predict the 'Red Wall' victory during the 2019 election. ***'Broken Heartlands'*** is a road trip book in which Payne visits former Labour strongholds to discover why they voted Conservative.



YHACS locations which Payne visits include Wakefield, where he marvels at the Hepworth and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Don Valley, where he visits the i-port, and Grimsby, where he ventures onto the docks. Early on, Payne tries to get a definition of levelling up from Rachel Wolf, who co-wrote the 2019 Conservative manifesto. She says Levelling Up is *"akin to a slogan people can project whatever they want onto" – an effort to show first time Tory voters that their lives are better than they were five years ago."*

Throughout the book there is scepticism, not just from Labour politicians, but also George Osborne, that Levelling Up will turn out to be nothing more than a fund that delivers small, scattered improvements to communities. Osborne argues that the true test of Levelling Up will be if the town you were born in, *"feels like it's going somewhere…there's pride in the past. There's also enormous optimism about the future."* Or as Labour's Angela Raynor puts it, moving BBC staff from London to Salford's Media City would not be an example of levelling up. The real measure would be how many kids from Oldham got jobs in Media City. *"Unless you deal with a structural inequality…all you're doing is putting a nice shiny building in a town for people that are already doing very well."*

In the Don Valley, Payne visits the 'i-port' on the Great Yorkshire Way, an intermodal port that can take containers from both road and rail. *"Doncaster may be firmly in the north, but thanks to the phalanx of motorways and railway, in terms of infrastructure it is essentially the middle of the UK."* The biggest employer in the i-port is Amazon, and many of the jobs are on zero hours contracts.

In Bawtry he meets Nick Fletcher, the new MP. *"His first year of commuting between London and the Don Valley has further highlighted the gap with the capital. 'You realise the opportunities that just have not been up here, and there's*

jobs down there that people don't know existed.'" Fletcher ties his future success closely to real gains from Levelling Up.

In Grimsby, Payne admits that, *"my knowledge of the town was limited to the stereotypes its residents decry."* The perils of these whistle-stop tours are clear from Payne's opening sentence, approaching Grimsby Docks: *"Many of the sloping warehouses and decaying offices from the fishing era are listed and cannot be put out of their misery. For the first time visitor, these abandoned structures cast an inexorable shadow of decline over the town."*

Fair enough, it is a first impression, but Payne could have been directed to the renovation Creative Start were doing on the docks buildings even before lockdown. Nevertheless, the mood of decay fits the theory that Grimsby was, *"overlooked as successive governments took easier routes to create wealth in the south east and big cities."*

Payne identifies the isolation of Grimsby: *"There are no major settlements en route. Or, as (Martin Boyers of Grimsby Fish Dock Enterprises) put it, 'It has to be a destination. You cannot pass through it.' This remoteness has forged a particular identity." And Alan Burley of the West Marsh Community Centre echoes this: "'You don't pass through here, you come here. And when you are here, you make the most of what it is.'"*

Former Labour MP Melanie Onn emphasises, *"the uniqueness of Grimsby. 'It is misrepresented as having very little going for it. Sometimes even locally, people will talk it down, but in actual fact it's got a huge heart, and communities you don't find anywhere else.' Due to its geographical remoteness , the strong feel of neighbourhoods, which has been lost elsewhere in England's towns, remains here."*

Current Conservative MP Lia Nici sums it up by saying, *'If we were writing a brochure for Grimsby, you wouldn't put on there, "It used to be great but now we've no fishing here", you would say we have everything we need. We have coastline, great spaces to live, countryside, we have great engineering skills, pharmaceutical skills.'*

I said the subject of Levelling Up re-appears like a debt collector throughout the book and the final page concludes that one of the prime minister's greatest challenges, *"is to prove that levelling up is more than just a slogan. Voters will be unforgiving if he fails."*



BROKEN HEARTLANDS: A JOURNEY THROUGH LABOUR'S LOST ENGLAND
by
Sebastian Payne
Macmillan - £20.00

Graeme Bassett
Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust

A New 'Streets Of Scarborough'

This article is written in the hope that what we are doing in Scarborough might appeal as an appropriate project for societies in other towns and villages. In 1973 two members of Scarborough and District Civic Society, Raymond Fieldhouse and John Barrett, embarked on an ambitious project. They decided to carry out a survey of the streets and buildings of Scarborough '*which were thought worthy of the attention of all who are interested in architecture and urban development.*'*

The result was a 58-page book which described many items of interest in Scarborough's built environment. There were no photographs but Raymond Fieldhouse contributed twelve monochrome drawings in black fibre tipped pen. The book was popular with residents and visitors and a revised edition followed in 1977. In 2007 the Society updated and expanded it with over 30 black and white photographs. By 2021, only 14 years later, the Society decided that, once again, an update was required. A team of volunteers toured the town on foot looking for additions and amendments to the townscape. It was decided this time to start incorporating engineering works such as Marine Drive, Royal Albert Drive and the Harbour with its magnificent East Pier. More emphasis was given to the outstanding contribution made to Scarborough by its remarkable borough engineer, Harry W. Smith. And this time there will be colour photographs.



The Grand Hotel



Scarborough Town Hall

Researching the entries has not been easy during the pandemic but thanks to the internet it has to be much easier than it was in 1973. It helps if you have members of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Royal Institute of British Architects in your membership who can easily access their respective libraries and archives. Examining planning applications and the Historic England listed building database are other useful sources and you might be lucky enough to find a retired planner or architect who has knowledge of recent developments.

We are very fortunate in Scarborough, we have a town '*into which some of the wealth of the industrial north was poured.*'* This has provided amongst other things, '*almost unmatched opportunities for studying the development of domestic architecture of the better kind from 1845 (when the railway came)*



The Spa

*to 1914.'**

Compiling a new edition of *The Streets* has been a fascinating exercise, you may learn a great deal about your town. And you can hopefully sell the result and make an income for your society. I recommend it as a worthwhile project.

Peter Cooper
Scarborough and District Civic Society

*** Quotations from the original 1973 edition of *The Streets of Scarborough***

Photos courtesy of Alison Cooper

Leeds Historical Lectures In Your Lunch Hour

Leeds Civic Trust will be hosting its annual historical lecture series this February via Zoom. As always, Dr Kevin Grady will speak each Wednesday lunchtime for an hour about the history of Leeds. One of the lectures – you will note – has a wider appeal, where it discusses the architectural "one-upmanship" that was seen in the West Riding in the late Georgian period. This and the other lectures promise to be fascinating as always. Click on the link to reserve a place (free of charge of course).

[The History of Briggate, 1207-2022 Tickets, Wed 2 Feb 2022 at 13:00 | Eventbrite]
In 1207 Maurice Paynel created the manorial borough of Leeds. Today we know this 'new town' as **Briggate.** This lecture traces the history of this fascinating historic street which remains at the heart of city life.

[When the Streets ran with Blood: Butchers, Slaughterhouses & More 1710-1914 Tickets, Wed 9 Feb 2022 at 13:00 | Eventbrite]
'When the Streets Ran with Blood' tells the story of butchers, cattle markets and slaughter houses from the 18th century to the present day, going back to the days when the Leeds butchers' Shambles was in Briggate, the Cattle Market was on the site of Kirkgate Market, and the site of today's Victoria Quarter was occupied by seven large slaughter houses.

[Rivalry, Emulation & Civic Pride: West Riding Public Buildings, 1800-1840 Tickets, Wed 16 Feb 2022 at 13:00 | Eventbrite]
Competition between towns and cities has always been particularly strong in Yorkshire and the North of England. This lecture looks at the lively rivalry between them in the provision of civic amenities during the late-Georgian period.

['Civic Pride Proclaimed': Leeds Town Hall, 1858-2022 Tickets, Wed 23 Feb 2022 at 13:00 | Eventbrite]
As **Leeds Town Hall** and its wonderful organ are undergoing a major programme of renovation and remodelling, this lecture looks at the history of this remarkable building and its evolving use to the present day.

Martin Hamilton

YHACS
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

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Please send any articles, comments, letters or questions to the editor:

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The Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) is the distinct voice of the civic society movement in the Yorkshire and Humber region, and our vision is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the region by engaging citizens not only in the protection of local heritage but also in the promotion of sustainable economic development and urban renaissance.

Future Events/Dates In 2022

Tues 8th Feb: Civic Voice event - The Value of Civic Societies in Planning
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/appg-for-civic-societies-value-of-civic-societies-in-planning-tickets-249111036817

Tues March 15th: Civic Voice event - A Review of Statements of Community Involvment:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/appg-for-civic-societies-a-review-of-statements-of-community-involvement-tickets-249130605347

NEXT YHACS MEETING

SATURDAY 29TH JANUARY 2.30 – 4:00 PM
AGM AND MEMBERS MEETING

GUEST SPEAKERS :
Matthew Carmona – Professor of Planning and Urban Design at The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL
Ian Harvey – Director of Civic Voice

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