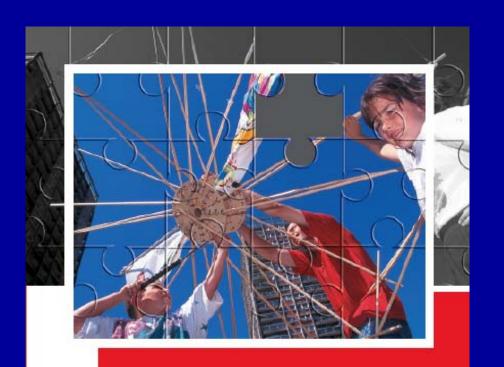Anne Power and Astrid Winkler, London School of Economics

European Urban Research Association (EURA)
10th Anniversary conference, University of Glasgow

14th September 2007

JIGSAW CITIES

Big places, small spaces

Anne Power and John Houghton

Jigsaw Cities

- Not the pre-planned solution
  - Brasilia, Garden Cities
- Organic, 'messy', many faceted
- Need constant piecing together
- Build on what is already there
- Work within existing frame
- Pull communities together
- Show resilience, survival potential

Neighbourhoods as building blocks

- Many activities and services are local
- People operate and identify locally
- Walking distance matters
- Smaller parts of bigger structure
- Environment is local and global
- Social networks depend on proximity

Big versus small

- City wide systems matter
  - public transport, water, sewers
- Local systems matter
  - most social institutions, local services, families
- Some assets are big and small
  - housing and parks
- City neighbourhoods work as part of whole
- Cities work if neighbourhoods are successful

Why Sustainable Communities Plan derailed

- Too large span of control
- 5 Growth Areas – whole South East
- 9 Decline areas – whole North
- Blunt instruments
  - Build, build, build
  - Demolish, blight
- Birmingham experience
  - Neither growth nor decline
- Can we avoid such mistakes?

5 triggers for Jigsaw Cities

- Smart growth and recycling
- Neighbourhood renewal and management
- Sustainable cities
- Mixed communities as social engines
- Changing ways of running cities

Live community-based example from Sheffield

- Community Development Trust
- Managing Government regeneration funds
- Serving local community
- Based in multi-racial neighbourhood

Netherthorpe & Upperthorpe Community Alliance (NUCA)

The neighbourhood:

- Inner-city, deprived
- 11,000 residents

  65% households on
    housing benefit
  41% on income support

- Poor transport & access to services
- Problems with prostitution & drug abuse, high proportion of young offenders

NUCA

What NUCA does:

- Bridges the gap between the neighbourhood and city wide, regional & national strategies

- Influences mainstream service provision

- Delivers services itself, where community based delivery provides added value

- Addresses market failure and increases responsiveness to local need

NUCA

Project example:
Healthy Living Centre

- Swimming pool and gym
- Health improvement projects
- Family Support Service
- Advice and Advocacy
- Community Transport
- Library
- Healthy Eating Cafe
- Counselling
- Community Language Support

NUCA

It works because:

- Services are joined up,

  more responsive to community need and demand,

  better value for money,

  accountable to the community

- Local people take ownership and responsibility

What families need to survive – learning from other European cities

- Family friendly spaces
- Small-scale local activities and services
- External support
- Neighbourhood management