



Who makes the town? **Materials and delivery.**

Time frame

Presentation and discussion of material should take 45 minutes.

Lesson notes

The lesson can be opened by asking the students, 'How do things get built?' The leading answer to the question is that land and landowners are the primary requirement for the instigation of a development. Reinforcing other factors that are involved based on the students' replies, the Powergram chart is introduced. Note that different actors in the process will have different desires and needs regarding a development and these may conflict.

Briefly review the chart by identifying key players and their roles in the development process. There are: Suppliers, Producers, Mediators, Users.

Suppliers:

- The Landowner. A site is required to develop a project. If there is no land there is no project. The site can be empty or have existing structures or development (like a park) which may have to be demolished. The landowner may not be involved in all stages of work. For the Oxford Westgate site project example, a development company was hired to investigate development options for the site. Landowners may also form a consortium. Possible activities: students can investigate types of development consortium.
- The Funder. The financial institution(s) provide the money to realize the project. Small funding can come from local banks. Large funding comes from merchant banks, insurance companies, pension funds. Most pension funds are interested in generating income. There are also private and public investment schemes that can finance projects.

Producers: In Britain all developments require planning permission

- The Developer. The plan needs to be 'packaged' for the landowner. This means a developer will investigate the feasibility of the development and initiate the formation of plans by the architect and planners. The developer also secures planning approvals and project funding for the development. Financial returns are key to most developments. At this point the lesson can be supplemented by the video Power and the Built Form (high or low quality).
- Architects, Urban Designers & Planners. Once a plan has been packaged the design work on the built form can begin. The needs of all the different actors need to be negotiated and translated into the designs. Designers use design principles related to the qualities they wish to create when developing the built form. (See Urban Design Qualities)

Mediators:

- Politicians. Elected officials represent the interests of their constituents but they rely on the Local Authority for information, facts, and details about proposals and will be influenced by the



recommendations of the planning officers. Here you can show The Role of the City Councillor video (high or low quality).

- Planning Officers. There are two stages in the planning process:
 - the initial phase is the outline plan, a basic diagrammatic scheme explaining the type of development, scale and patterns of use. This outline plan will often be used in order to generate investment.
 - the second phase begins when the outline plan has been approved. This is when all the detail of the proposal must be presented.
- Different groups of planners are involved during both phases: historic planners look at aspects of historic concern, such as visual compatibility; strategic planners look at the overall needs of the community, such as housing, commerce, and industry; traffic planners look at traffic flow and volume and circulation patterns. In addition to these specific areas of concern, Planning Officers review visual impact and appropriateness, service systems (e.g. can vehicles enter the site?), safety concerns and impact on sustainability.
- Highway Engineers. Construct roads connecting one community to another.

Users:

- Ordinary users like yourselves.

Dialogue stimuli:

- Ask students: Are there areas in your community which you would like to see changed and improved? Have you participated in any events relating to planned developments in your community, such as meetings, workshops or surveys? From this discussion you can lead into issues of user participation. You can use the video clip The Role of the City Councillor (high or low quality), which discusses negotiations for a skateboarding park requested by the young people in the community.
- Ask students to suggest ways in which community opinion about a proposed development can be gathered, e.g. questionnaires, on-site observations, meetings etc.
- Discuss how users can put pressure on local councillors to address their concerns, e.g. through participation in the local authority's public consultation exercise or by canvassing their representatives.

Other teaching materials

Included in this package are two video clips - Power and the Built Form (high or low quality) and The Role of the City Councillor (high or low quality) - which introduce the students to different actors involved in the planning of the built environment.

The Powergram chart illustrates these different actors, their roles and influences on the decision-making process of a development.

For additional information on the planning system the following is recommended:

- Plan Your Planet - Teacher's booklet (2002), The Royal Town Planning Institute (Southern Branch) pp 9-16.



Organising the classroom

During the lessons students work both individually and as a whole class.

In role playing exercises, students work in groups of 2-3 depending on class size.