

PLACE - City Regions and Rural

The Agency has undertaken a large and diverse portfolio, which has focussed on the provision of quality physical infrastructure to support regional economic growth and providing a quality environment for these businesses to flourish and for the residents of the northeast to enjoy. The range and diversity of activity in this programme has been large: from establishing innovative property vehicles, developing accommodation for our high growth sectors, gap finding commercial development, and taking a long term approach to regenerating key parts of the northeast urban environment.

The Place programme was delivered through the following five activities:

- **City Region Development Programme Tees Valley & Tyne and Wear** – to work with partners to develop and implement prioritised and evidence-based investment proposals in both Tees Valley and Tyne Wear, supported by activities in Northumberland and Durham.
- **Rural** – to focus on the development and growth of a hierarchy of Market Towns with a range of appropriate interventions developed and agreed with local partners.
- **Business Accommodation** - to provide high quality premises for private sector investment in areas of significant market opportunities. Including support to the Region's innovation connectors.
- **Connectivity** – to work with partners to take forward activity including building evidence base and capacity to deliver, support for air route development, and contributing to development of digital infrastructure for next generation Broadband roll out
- **Quality of design** – working with Partners to achieve the highest BREEAM rating on all agency funded physical projects. Establishing an independent design review panel to facilitate and support the public and private sector in achieving the more sustainable and well designed environment.

The following pages provide some further detail and lessons learnt from some of our key projects carried out by Capital Development Directorate, part of the Place Programme.

Overall the lessons learnt in delivering a range of initiatives over the 12 year period were

- **Focus** – priority needs to be given to a smaller number of higher impact and strategic projects, which will deliver and support economic strategies. Not only will financial resources be depleted if investing in too many projects, the impacts will clearly will be compromised and potentially take longer to achieve. Human resources also can become exhausted and disproportionately used on lower impact and less strategic projects.
- **Skills** – ensure that the correct skills match and experience is deployed when developing and implementing credible physical based projects. Whilst general project management skills play an important role to the success of a project, it is vital that the right professional disciplines are utilised to minimise delays or abortive work and to comply with assurance procedures.
- **Partnerships** – it is essential to the success of any project that strong and appropriate partnerships are established and maintained throughout the projects life. Clear roles, delegations and responsibilities must be put in place and reviewed continuously. Also adhering to realistic and jointly understood timescale are vital.
- **Documentation** – retention and strong knowledge management systems are essential for the delivery and review of a projects. Its importance cannot be under estimated. Not only is record management and availability of documentation vital for audit, it can impact financially on projects or assets, lead to delays and hinder due diligence.

Evidence of Impact

Due to the broad scope and shift in activities under this area of activity programme, it is necessary to refer to individual activity level evaluations to understand the impact of different areas of investment. However, core to this Programme have been the activities taken forward as Quality of Place. The evaluation of a proportion of spend within this area for 2002-07 showed that the net added value of this investment programme was 0.4–2.0 to one, and that it would generate between £58.5 - £360.2m in GVA benefits.

It's important to note here that much of the spend in this area of activity is not easily translatable into jobs and consequently into GVA and, given the onset of the credit crunch and the recession, the impact this has had on private sector and public sector appetite for investment in physical regeneration. Despite this, many of the more recent individual activity evaluation reports do confirm that significant progress has been made in a number of respects, thanks partly to ONE's investment – for example in preparatory work such as site acquisition, masterplanning etc.

The evaluations showed that ONE demonstrated a key role in relation to engaging with stakeholders and communities. At least in the period prior to recession, multi-stakeholder projects, had created confidence in the prospects for growth and in the capacity of partners, and raised aspirations for what could be achieved in the North East.

There are also links below to some specific examples of Physical Regeneration¹ initiatives:

² Design Review and Enabling Service

³ Northern Design Centre

⁴ South Shields Riverside

⁵ Sunderland Software Centre

¹ QOP Evaluation - Aug 29

² Design Review and Enabling Service introduction

³ NDC legacy document (291111)

⁴ The story of SSR (2) (2)

⁵ SSC legacy document (161111)

References

1.	QOP Evaluation - Aug 29
2.	Design Review and Enabling Service introduction
3.	NDC legacy document (291111)
4.	The story of SSR
5.	SSC legacy document (161111)