



TRANSFORM NEIGHBOURHOODS CHALLENGE

DEEP DIVE OUTPUT

The Challenge: How can we transform neighbourhoods in Britain together?

A summary of the Problem PowWow for the GeoVation Transform Neighbourhoods Challenge facilitated at the Royal Geographical Society, London. 22 November, 2011.

Summary 16 people.

104 problems

7 themes

28 insights

“What problems are there in your /our neighbourhood(s)?”

“What barriers are stopping citizens and councils improving neighbourhoods?”

The GeoVation Challenge focused on the following 7 themes:

1. ANTI-COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR

2. INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUTH

3. COST OF LIVING

4. LOSS OF THE HIGH STREET

5. KNOW YOUR CITIZENS, KNOW YOUR COUNCIL

6. SENSE OF COMMUNITY

7. THE COUNCIL ‘BUSINESS MODEL’



I. ANTI-COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR

1.1 Anti-community behaviour

PROBLEM

How do we curb binge drinking on our streets?

WHY IT MATTERS

Residents have become fearful of walking their own streets at night. Alcohol is a factor in one of every two street crimes. 40% of patients admitted to A&E are there due to alcohol related illnesses or injuries.

1.2 Anti-community behaviour

PROBLEM

How do we make the recycling process more transparent?

WHY IT MATTERS

Up to 60% of the waste that ends up in landfill could be recycled. 90% of UK households would recycle more if it was made easier.

1.3 Anti-community behaviour

PROBLEM

How can we encourage people to adopt any best practice occurring in their neighbourhood?

WHY IT MATTERS

Why does it matter? Broken window theory has shown that keeping urban property in a well ordered condition leads to reduced vandalism and criminal behaviour. Is there a way to discover a 'good environmental community' theory that leads to a ripple effect across a neighbourhood?

1.4 Anti-community behaviour

PROBLEM

How can we discourage people and businesses from littering and fly-tipping?

WHY IT MATTERS

In the UK, an estimated 25 million tonnes a year are dropped (almost entirely food and drink packaging). 2.6 million incidences of fly-tipping occur in England every year.



2. INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUTH

2.1 Investing in the future of our youth

PROBLEM

How do we educate people about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle?

WHY IT MATTERS

In 2009, almost a quarter of adults (22% of men and 24% of women aged 16 or over) in England alone were classified as obese (BMI 30kg/m² or over). In 2009, 16% of boys aged 2 to 15, and 15% of girls were classed as obese, an increase from 11% and 12% respectively in 1995

2.2 Investing in the future of our youth

PROBLEM

How do we provide safe environments for our children to be active?

WHY IT MATTERS

25% of today's 8 to 10-year-olds have never played outside without adult supervision, while 1 in 3 parents will not permit their children, as old as 15, to play away from their house or garden.

2.3 Investing in the future of our youth

PROBLEM

How do we instill a sense of ambition in the young?

WHY IT MATTERS

With 1 million young people out of work, putting a heavy burden on the UK's benefits system, the social and economic impact of children following in the footsteps of their unemployed parents can be devastating.

2.4 Investing in the future of our youth

PROBLEM

How do we improve literacy and numeracy proficiency among adults?

WHY IT MATTERS

An estimated half million benefit claimants in the UK have poor literacy and numeracy skills.

2.5 Investing in the future of our youth

PROBLEM

How do we connect those that want to work to those who need their skills? Why does it matter?

WHY IT MATTERS

There were 1.02 million unemployed 16 to 24-year-olds between July and September 2011. One in five young people are now out of work.



3. COST OF LIVING

3.1 Cost of living

PROBLEM

How do we help families deal with the rising cost of fuel?

WHY IT MATTERS

The average cost of a litre of petrol has risen by over 60% since 2005 while the average household income has only risen by 3% over the same period.

3.2 Cost of living

PROBLEM

How do we make housing more affordable?

WHY IT MATTERS

The lack of new affordable housing means that 1.8 million households are on a waiting list for a social home.

3.3 Cost of living

PROBLEM

How do we educate people about the best ways to seek financial aid? Why does it matter?

WHY IT MATTERS

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicts that household debt will be £1,823bn by end 2015 which is a growth of £159m a day. This would take the average household debt to £72,341 per household



4. LOSS OF THE HIGH STREET

4.1 Loss of the High Street

PROBLEM

How can we help local independent businesses remain on our high streets?

WHY IT MATTERS

Vacancy rates in town centres, which are standing at around 14.5% across the country, are three times what they were in 2008.

4.2 Loss of the High Street

PROBLEM

How do we make our high streets an attractive place to run a business?

WHY IT MATTERS

Government figures show sales figures on the high street grew by just 1.5% from 2005 – 2010, compared to 11.5% growth in out-of-town malls, and a whopping 71.5% soar in non-store (mail order and internet).

4.3 Loss of the High Street

PROBLEM

How can we better connect local businesses to the citizens they directly and in-directly serve?

WHY IT MATTERS

Traditional views of 'community' tend to include innate connections with a wide range of local services. Contemporary views need to accommodate, for example, more transient populations and the rise of out-of-town shopping centres.



5. KNOW YOUR COUNCIL, KNOW YOUR CITIZENS

5.1 Know your council, know your citizens

PROBLEM

How do we ensure public services and resources are accessible for all ages?

WHY IT MATTERS

An increasingly older demographic in the UK (by 2025 a third of the UK's population will be over 55), living longer than ever before, means public services will be under increasing strain due to volumes of demand but also will need to accommodate the particular accessibility requirements of an elderly population.

5.2 Know your council, know your citizens

PROBLEM

How do we convince our citizens that councils do much more than just light their streets and empty their bins?

WHY IT MATTERS

Councils in the UK deliver 800 services to improve the lives of their citizens.

5.3 Know your council, know your citizens

PROBLEM

How can we make what the council is responsible for, and what we are as citizens, transparent?

WHY IT MATTERS

If citizens could better see the link between what they pay in council tax, what it's spent on and overall council performance (within limited funds due to austerity measures) then better understanding and, perhaps tolerance, may be achieved.

5.4 Know your council, know your citizens

PROBLEM

How can we 'incentivise' individuals in to helping tackle and solve community issues?

WHY IT MATTERS

Umbrella terms don't enable people to appreciate and get under the skin of complex issues in their own communities. Community cohesion will invariably be improved if people in those communities can see what's 'in it for them': a better society that's local to them.

5.5 Know your council, know your citizens

PROBLEM

How can we make the public more aware of the assets that are available to them?

WHY IT MATTERS

Council tax payers can look up online some of the 180,000 assets listed so far. It's estimated that property held by 600 bodies, including 87 councils, could be worth £385bn.



6. SENSE OF COMMUNITY

6.1 Sense of community

PROBLEM

How do we tackle the effects that an ageing population is having on society in general and on particular neighbourhoods?

WHY IT MATTERS

The average age of Britain is on the increase – in 20 years one in four UK adults will be a pensioner which will put a massive burden on the benefits system and public health care.

6.2 Sense of community

PROBLEM

How do we establish a sense of community in the neighborhoods in which we live?

WHY IT MATTERS

Today we are members of multiple communities often separated not only by geography but by time and digital space; the places we play, work and live are not as easily bounded as once they were.

6.3 Sense of community

PROBLEM

How can we ensure that residents of all ages remain engaged with community issues?

WHY IT MATTERS

Why does it matter? While many clearly exhibit passion about certain issues of national importance, there is still a perception by some that younger people these days are increasingly disengaged with community issues and those who are, tend to be older do-gooders.



7. THE COUNCIL 'BUSINESS MODEL'

7.1 The council 'business model'

PROBLEM

How can councils become less risk adverse so they can tackle big challenges innovatively?

WHY IT MATTERS

Councils need to 'accept not avoid' risk yet 99% of councils surveyed have no risk strategy for new era of community involvement.

7.2 The council 'business model'

PROBLEM

How can councils stay the course for tackling challenges that span changes in government and councilors'?

WHY IT MATTERS

Large challenges such as obesity and ageing will take decades to tackle but election cycles can mean an opposing change in policy that prevents any long terms policies from bedding in.

7.3 The council 'business model'

PROBLEM

How can councils across the UK have aligned outcomes for tackling like challenges?

WHY IT MATTERS

Policies tend to be output focused, with resultant measures that prevent the joined up behaviour necessary for alignment and sustained and far reaching change. Duplication of effort and misaligned focus can mean challenges take longer to tackle

7.4 The council 'business model'

PROBLEM

How can councils deliver differently with less?

WHY IT MATTERS

Cuts in funding and employee numbers (public sector redundancies will hit 710,000 by 2017) means councils having to think differently, more commercially, more entrepreneurially, to deliver existing services and develop new one