

Changing the World One Person at a Time ^{1, 2}

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ABSTRACT

After a year's research across the width and breadth of the United Kingdom, a report was issued by the author to the Secretary of State for Housing to identify the ongoing problem for homelessness in the cities of the UK. On the back of this research across all four countries, a solution was developed to be implemented into the Mayoral cities so that local authorities had the opportunity to improve the lives of thousands of individuals currently in temporary accommodation or living rough.

The presentation looks at the areas and methods of research and the interactions with the various bodies of stakeholders, both affected and affecting the current state of affairs and how the solution was developed by looking at the people that can and do make a difference for a better future for so many worse off than others.

Mark will take you on the whole journey, from initiating the idea, through to the roll out of the plan, its acceptance into government and then the extended impact it had as the report reached all points of the globe as further requests for support and assistance came in.

The delegates will be engaged from the first minute to the last on how the change process was applied to stimulate the change, how the various bodies chose their own forms of communication and how they shared the news internally and externally with their own community stakeholders to ensure they made a real difference.

OVERVIEW TO HOMELESSNESS

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) a homeless household is defined as those households without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters.

Further to this, in a survey taken in December 2016 by the UK charity Shelter, there was an

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estimated 250,000 people living in the conditions that were defined by UN DESA. The most severe of those calculated in the survey are registered as homeless (roofless), this category includes those people living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of acceptable living quarters.

The key to understanding the problem is the initial acceptance that it is created through a complex myriad of issues that cannot be simply addressed by changing one thing, but instead is a behavioural change throughout society into how homelessness is perceived by many and the fundamentals causes behind it. Homelessness, however, does have some major reasons or causes that must be addressed if this endemic plight within the UK is to be addressed correctly.

The major reasons identified through numerous surveys and reports are:

- Domestic violence
- Forced evictions
- Foreclosures on landlords leading to eviction of their tenants
- Gentrification, the process where a neighborhood becomes popular with wealthier people pricing out the poorer residents
- Lack of accessible healthcare
- Lack of affordable housing
- Living with a disability, especially where disability services are non-existent or poorly performing
- Living with a mental disorder, where mental health services are unavailable or difficult to access
- Migration, either domestic or foreign to the country, where the number of migrants outstrips the supply of affordable housing
- Mortgage foreclosures where mortgage holders see the best solution to a loan default is to take and sell the house to pay off the debt
- Poverty, caused by factors including unemployment and underemployment
- Prison release and re-entry into society
- Relationship breakdown, particularly in relation to young people and their parents
- Short-term contracts in the workplace with low salaries for young people, often leading to an instability of mental and financial wellbeing, which results in problems in getting an apartment or paying rents on a regular basis
- Social exclusion because of sexual orientation (LGBT etc.) and gender identity
- Substance abuse or addiction, such as alcoholism or drug addiction

Currently, the UK provides a variety of services to assist homeless people. They often provide food, shelter and clothing and are run by community organisations, charities, churches, or government departments. Whilst some homeless people are known to have developed a community within themselves, offering various types of support, this does not solve the problem and can in actual fact exasperate the problem by creating a fictitious lifestyle that dramatically differs from the reality of 'street-life'.

In addition, the country lacks any idea or respective approach of how to support these people creating an environment where they learn to help themselves, but without any stability to aid recovery or to build a self-determined quality of life again.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOLUTION MODEL

The solution to this problem is by bringing together the community in a way that supports its own environment and where it has a say both strategically and tactically in its own future. This solution is in no way a replacement for the charities and the support communities that exist currently, but what this offers is a greater structure for the community to grow once more and for the people to be directly involved and becoming responsible in the shaping of their city, town or village so that it meets the ethos of the Smart Community Model, which believes in a community FOR ALL.

It has been through the study of behaviours and by listening to the City, District and County Councils that I believe the Smart Community Model can help secure a future for the towns and cities of the UK. With a secure community, the addition of the COSI approach, (which will be described in greater detail later within this paper) the management of the homelessness problem can be addressed and then remedied over the coming years.

The Smart Community Model was developed by Professor Mark Reeson in 2017 whilst he was working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia creating a new approach to project management for the Eastern Province Municipality. Within the main body of the document, this model will be described within greater detail but as an overview, the original Smart Model was designed to help with improved structure and efficiency and then the community model was added to give greater meaning within the change programme for the region. This urban planning was then enhanced through a process called Smart Vision, which when added to the remaining parts of the Smart Model to create a fully rounded tool. Once the model was decided to become part of the homelessness solution, a further element, called the COSI situational management approach was added to give greater direction through a four-step methodology to change the lives of the homeless and those impacted by it. During the research stage of this paper,

I was approached by several people all offering advice and support to how the problem could be resolved and each of these are blended into the Smart Model already adding greater value and gravitas. The Smart Model itself has been tested in Frankfurt, Germany and in Dammam, Saudi Arabia for the purposes of business and project management with strong, positive feedback from both regions. In an ever-changing environment the UK finds itself with regards to homelessness, the Smart Community Model supported by the COSI situational management approach offers help, support and a realistic solution for the future for Great Britain and Northern Ireland FOR ALL.

SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT

Prior to developing the solution, the key problem that I had was to understand the real issues faced by the authorities within their towns and cities. To address this, I requested assistance to as many organisations to gain as much information across as wide a cross section of the UK as possible. The feedback and therefore the solution, is based around the Strategic Management Plans that were returned to me from those authorities that responded.

In total, there were fifty responses and the breakdown of these across the UK was as follows:

- England 25

- Scotland 12
- Wales 7
- Northern Ireland 6

After reviewing the strategic plans from all the authorities, there was a common theme around the lack of affordable housing options for many larger households. The larger the city, the greater the issue becomes with many councils only able to offer a limited number of four plus bedroom houses. This, even when possible, is then exacerbated by the cap on housing benefits.

There also seems to be an increase in difficulties experienced by people aged under 35 in securing affordable accommodation, particularly if they are in a low-income job or unemployed. Whilst there remains a relatively good supply of accommodation of this type, it is often not affordable for this social group. People who are subject to benefit restrictions face additional difficulties.

This situation then creates a different problem as this leads to younger people within this social group having to live with family or friends for longer which creates an endless growing housing need in the city, as well as an affordable housing offer for young people and young workers.

The UK has a growing population, which is consistently placing an increasing pressure on its existing housing stock. In some areas of the UK, there are more than three times the rate of priority homeless households than the national average and double the rate of core city neighbours. These continuously growing rates can also be a direct consequence of the current 'broken' housing system.

Currently, the statutory homeless system seems to offer a methodology to offer permanent accommodation, however this contrasts dramatically with the difficulties that people experience in finding suitable and affordable accommodation. Increasingly, people are presenting as statutory homeless because an assured short hold tenancy has ended and then there is no further accommodation for the social groups to enter.

A further major contributor to homelessness is domestic abuse and parental exclusion. One aspect of domestic abuse is that this can lead to homeless applications being submitted from outside of one city into another to secure the safety of those individuals involved. This can heap greater pressures on to neighbouring towns and cities which are seen as unexpected and therefore need further support with emergency housing and budgeting.

Deprivation and its associated poverty are key barriers for accessing suitable housing and maintaining stable and financially sustainable tenancies. Access to employment is a key mechanism for preventing potential future homelessness. Some of the major cities in the UK have some of the lowest average household incomes.

Once this is combined with a region of relatively high rates of unemployment, this becomes the driver towards housing exclusion. A further source leading towards homelessness is a household's poor financial management and a failure to maximize household income also limit people's ability to access and sustain their housing commitment.

Homelessness is an adverse childhood experience that can have a long-term negative impact on

their development.

Some cities have an extremely high level of families who are homeless and/or in temporary accommodation. This inability to secure a permanent residence for the family but specifically for children affects their ability to carry out social bonding. This leads generally to lower levels of school performance as well as being linked to disadvantage in future generations. In a recent survey in Birmingham, more than three quarters of applicants accepted as homeless and in priority need have children, either with a lone parent, or as dependents of a couple.

The Smart Community Model and the COSI approach to recovery has been made specifically people focused, with an emphasis on securing safe accommodation but within a sustainable environment to prevent future homelessness by addressing the underlying cause of peoples' experience. This method therefore recognizes that the impact that the trauma of homelessness can have on both adult and children's physical and mental health and wellbeing. The Smart Communities Model is based around six key themes and by embodying them into any society, this allows the security for those that live within the area and a long-term sustainable solution to the problems that exist, creating a balanced harmony between external investment and internal drive for improvement.

It is the four central elements of the model that then enables the final two of security and sustainability.

Before the model is fully explained, let us start with a fundamental fact. Anything Smart starts and finishes with its people and so the incessant drive towards automation and high technical solutions is not proving to resolve these fundamental issues that people within a poor community suffer from. The perfect example of this has been seen in India, where it has been driving forward the Smart technology solutions in its passion to make India's major cities all 'Smart Cities'. As this drive progresses, there has been no decline, if anything an increase in the number of people begging and sleeping on the streets or in unacceptable accommodation leading those watching from afar to ask is a 'Smart City' really all that Smart when it can't resolve the most basic physiological needs of every person?

Once it has been decided a Smart City starts and ends with a Smart Community, it is essential those in charge learn to become Community SMART and to invest in their people.

In a world where technology is all around us and we continue to be challenged to save more time and money through the immediacy of automation, there is a huge danger of forgetting a key factor behind any change, it involves people.

Having worked with many 'Smart Specialists' and invested my time to contrast the approaches being taken through some of the latest Smart Cities, it is becoming more apparent that the 'Internet of Things' which has gradually become the 'Internet of Everything' has the potential to make a Smart City, a faceless city, leading to a faceless community.

A city and its identity are not based on what it simply looks like and what it does, but mostly on its cultural and social values. Therefore, a truly Smart City must start and end, with its own Smart Community. However, before we all start to consider throwing out all technology, it is important

to recognise that the community that we have will need to be supported and at certain times, directed by certain technologies.

The key word to all this success is balance, so that the technology that we use adds real value to “The City and its Community” in a way that it is FOR ALL and that it does not create a new version of a class society leaving behind members of our valued and unique society that has been built up of centuries.

So, what exactly is a Smart Community and what does it mean to become Community SMART? Starting quite simply, people are impacted by their living or working environment, whether a city, an organisation, or region. The impact can be evaluated using six key factors, each one as equally important individually, but when combined, creating a powerful sense of well-being and integrated inclusion FOR ALL. The six factors that must be identified and then evaluated in each city or community are as follows:

- Health
- Efficiency
- Livability
- Prosperity
- Safety
- Sustainability

These six factors are generally referenced by organisations or authorized bodies as Social Responsibilities, whether these are personal or corporate. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is that undertaken by a business approach so that it contributes to a sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all internal and external stakeholders from its plans and its actions. However, CSR is a concept with many definitions and practices all wrapped up inside. One of these key practices, is that of Social Responsibility, which is an idea that businesses, governments or people of authority should balance the profit-making activities with sociological beneficial activities which involve developing businesses and organisational bodies with a positive relationship to the society in which they operate.

One of the biggest drivers towards CSR and to making a difference to the world and to our communities was the release in January 2016 of the United Nations Development Goals when they issued seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the plan in place, the intention of the UN is that over the coming fifteen years, these new goals will be applied universally to all, with countries mobilizing efforts to end all forms of poverty, to fight inequality and to also tackle climate change ensuring that no single body of people are left behind. It was whilst reviewing the SDGs in the Autumn of 2017, that it became apparent that the UN strategy is in many ways aligned with the SMART Sustainability Modelling programme which has identified a FOR ALL strategy.

This alignment led the team to then identify how the Smart City approach can also be integrated, so the City SMART initiative that was started by M R Project Solutions Ltd from the UK was implemented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is through the correct blending of these models and tools that the major issue of this paper can then be resolved.

The goals of the concept are that each community is unique and so that it calls FOR ALL communities, whether their members are rich, poor, or somewhere in between, to promote prosperity whilst also protecting and investing in their own surroundings. With the recognition that ending poverty cannot be achieved without a strategy to build economic growth within their own community this would also lead to further social needs being addressed that are specific to the community at large. Much as the SDGs cannot be made legally binding, the communities and the authorities within them are expected to take ownership of their own areas of responsibility and to then, once a platform of success has been established, create a network to combine regional (local communities and councils) and then national frameworks of values and commitments (national government).

However, without an approach to measure this progress, the idea of the SDGs or a Community SMART programme would be idyllic but essentially toothless, which is why the team created and continue today to develop further the SMART Metrics, which become specific for each and every community that undertakes the programme.

With this concept now firmly established, how does the Community SMART programme begin and how do you start to develop a new approach with a benefit FOR ALL to make a change for the better in the future?

To be able to break down the issue and then address the way the model and the tools can support them, we need to take a closer look at the six factors.

Safety – Creating a Safe Community

A safe community is a “Happy Community”. That sounds simple but is true.

However, creating an environment where people can flourish needs time and commitment BY ALL. Firstly, there is a need to identify threats before they can happen and to proactively promote and implement the aversion of danger. One of the best ways for the community to act SMART is through the sharing of information, which requires an open and liberal information flow, without any restrictions and across the different jurisdictions, collating findings with regard to research, development, science and technology, leading to an improvement of the authorities and the communities’ situational awareness. With this simple step this can initiate the aim to safeguard lives and to protect the property across the whole community and FOR ALL. The key aspect of having a safe community, is an increased situational awareness.

Communities need to be able to improve the perception of the environmental elements and the events occurring within that environment with respect to the time or the space in which they are in. Being able to ascertain a comprehension of the meaning of this information and then project this status when one or more of the variables change such a time or an event, is key to the safety of the people within the community. Situational awareness is a result of four key elements being brought together and then assessed, simultaneously to draw a picture of perception in the mind of the viewer. These four elements are:

- Situational Understanding – Applying analysis and judgement to the current situation
- Situational Assessment – Achieving, acquiring and/or maintaining your current awareness

- Mental Models – A set of well defined, highly organised yet dynamic knowledge structures developed over time with personal experience
- Sense Making – A motivated and continuous effort to understand the connections between people's behaviours, certain locations or places, and any relevant events or occurrences

Looking at the subject of the homelessness and the impact that safety has on the individuals affected, shows how there is a clear differential in social attitudes and behaviour towards homeless people and those more fortunate. The national average of people in the UK that have received any form of intimidating behaviour is 3.6%, compared to 79% when homeless.

The number of attacks on the homeless and crimes against the homeless were addressed in a survey held by Shelter Scotland and Crisis. Within the survey, the findings were as follow:

- 59% had received verbal abuse
- 55% were deliberately kicked, hit, or received other forms of physical violence
- 54% had property stolen from them
- 48% received intimidating or direct threatening behaviour
- 34% had items thrown at them on the street
- 23% had their property vandalized
- 9% were urinated on
- 7% were sexually assaulted

Separate from such crimes are the other simple factors such as trying to stay warm, whereby those homeless set fires to keep warm in the cold night increasing the danger of breakout of uncontrolled fires damaging both those involved and the property nearby. Every incident then puts a further strain on the already hard-pressed emergency services.

One final statistic that seems alarming from the survey, was that 53% of crimes reported by the homeless were never followed up by the Police as they felt they did not have the resources available and as the victim had no address, found this hard to progress.

The whole ethos of the Smart Community Model is to protect those that are the weakest in society, not simply because it is the right thing to do, but that safety falls under one of the six elements which is FOR ALL. By looking at the issue at a strategic level to identify the causes and reasons behind the rising numbers of homeless people this would lead to a safer environment FOR ALL.

One of the biggest issues that exists currently within the authorities is a lack of long-term sustainable solution development as this involves both financial and resource investment. There are many times during the year, such as Christmas and the New Year, where charity and those less fortunate get considered but for most of the time, this becomes someone else's problem. For the Smart Community Model to be successful, the community with the authorities must invest time and effort into identifying the problems and then designing the solutions.

The great success of the model up to this point has been that it creates structure, but it does not tell anyone what to do or how to do it. By offering this facility, the city authorities are not constrained by one option or a set of rules but are instead challenged to be as innovative with their

solution so that it can demonstrate real value for the time, effort and finances invested. In approaching the solution development with sustainable viewpoint, this avoids the partial fixes which lead to a big push for a limited time but instead leads to long-term self-funded solutions over time.

Efficiency – Planning the Improvements

The aim to efficiency planning for a community is to “Maximize the Efficiency of Events” such as housing development and redevelopment. To achieve this, the parties delivering these events need to define a process of communication between the developments through open and transparent platforms. By informing the community of such developments, allows them to make decisions which can help them to plan how to avoid the congested or under construction areas. In addition, this would allow local utilities to optimise opportunities to inspect any underground assets whilst they are exposed limiting the groundbreaking disruptions to a minimum.

Well run communities have authorities or government departments information hubs which can collect, collate and distribute insightful information to the necessary bodies so that a rapid response to a situation can be carried out or observed. By having this centralised location of data and information generation, it makes it clearer FOR ALL how certain actions could then impact all the community. To assist further with this, if the information passed meets regulatory constraints or acceptability, this can then be used through public and private partnerships to allow the community to flourish.

Furthermore, this can help organisations within the community to address issues, provide a higher quality service and ensure that the community’s essential services remain well run despite the changes or any potential adversity within the region. Efficiency, however, relies on greater connectivity, supporting the argument earlier that “Technology can and does have a key part to play to support the people within your community”. As a community then starts to develop and grow, this develops an increased probability on mobility and a greater need by those moving for an accessibility to information.

Herein, lays a major possible risk to your community. With the continued growth of your community through its greater efficiency, comes a greater investment requirement for informational needs and for different modes of delivery to improve both social and economic mobility. After all, as the community grows and looks to create greater revenue and investment for its area, it is imperative that the infrastructure of communication and accommodation meets this demand. Having a successful and affluent community, brings with it environmental, economic and public health challenges but finding the right balance with this against the enhancement of the area to create one rich in innovation and intelligence creates community wide integrated systems and the first signs of becoming Community SMART.

As everyone knows, planning and planning correctly, is the cornerstone to any successful solution. So how can planning really help with the alleviation of homelessness?

The first place to start with this solution, is to review the current number of houses, both public and private, that remain unoccupied. Having identified those properties that are available, the next step would be to create a house sharing scheme with either a minimal rent payment or

temporarily no payment so that those affected can be housed correctly. The decision around the amount needed to be paid could be carried out by a means-testing process, or if it is decided that there is no payment for the first few months, that those housed in the accommodation could be given the opportunity to do local work which pays for their housing, giving the occupants the respect of earning their way whilst this approach also means that they are contributing and giving back to their own community.

The additional help that comes from such an approach is that once the individuals have been housed within the house sharing scheme, they would have a permanent address that would allow them to apply for work and to get them back on track so much swifter. As the people occupying the properties would be registered tenants, they would have to uphold certain standards to a signed contract as this would encourage them to keep their homes up to a standard and would discourage antisocial behaviour and drug use, which would be periodically checked by a landlord.

What this cohabitation approach also does, is that if many homeless people live together with a pet, whether it is as most common a dog or cat, meaning that they could keep their pets, removing a currently existing problem whereby many shelters will not take animals which turns the homeless people away from staying as they do not want to be separated.

As the individuals would now be at a fixed address, the local authorities would be able to help with permanent housing solutions and employment opportunities meaning that those that have felt they have been forgotten can feel part of their community once again.

One issue that would have to be handled by the local authorities would be for those individuals leaving home for their own protection, that their anonymity is protected and then when they are housed within a share property, that they may have to be placed in an all-female or all-male accommodation and so this facility and service would have to be available when needed.

Housing the individuals, however, is only half of the solution as once they are under a roof, they still require a purpose. What the Smart Community Model plan offers is the opportunity to create and then introduce a Homeless Rehabilitation Plan. (HRP) What this will allow is for the integration element of the COSI management approach to bring the individuals back into society rather than still feeling isolated on the outskirts of the community, just simply housed and then left alone to fend for themselves.

Once some of the individuals have become success stories for themselves, they can be Programme Champions supporting others already in the programme and making the rehabilitation a self-sustaining systematic process run by those that have lived through the issues. This would remove the pressures off local Government releasing them to other tasks within their roles and simply monitoring and controlling the programme from a distance.

By planning the approach in this manner, this no longer becomes a seasonal or sporadic method to managing the homelessness issue but instead creates a permanent solution that works 365 days a year and 24 hours a day for the benefit of those exposed to these issues, until it is eradicated for good.

In closing this section of the paper, it is important to remember that all good planning is based

around a solid governance and involves reviews, not only on the performance of the programme but also the processes and procedures that make the programme work. By introducing periodic checkpoints throughout the programme, this will allow the Smart Model's efficiency to ensure that the delivery is carried out in the most time efficient and cost-effective manner with minimal waste.

Livability – Your Quality of Life Matters

“Communities Thrive when they are proactive”.

Having this foresight and positive attitude means that the feeling within is one which is looking to stay ahead of any problems and that when they seek to resolve a problem, they look at long term, sustainable solutions and not the simplest or quickest fixes. With this approach and with a strong view towards longevity, the area thrives through the avoidance or the restrictions that can come through infrastructure fatigue. Changes are made when they are needed to be made and are always made after a thorough evaluation and a clear understanding of the added value this change will bring to the community. For example, if the age of the population in the community rises and the demand for more homes with assistance is identified, then the changes to the community's priorities need to be addressed. Equally, if the average age of the population starts to move towards the millennials, then a change in entertainment or virtual cloud-based needs may be required.

The attitude is a strong positive one which says yes to change, but only when it is the right change and at the right time for the community. This strength comes from the longevity view that it takes and through its approach to creating the previously mentioned sustainable solutions.

A community's livability is about so much more than the way it looks. Livable communities must wrestle with the multiple priorities placed upon them, to reduce congestion, to safely manage water and waste and to continue to create the right infrastructure for a continuous and sustained success. The community's ability to proactively assess where the relevant infrastructure repairs are necessary and how to balance these against other opportunities to improve the living conditions FOR ALL, where no one is constrained or unfairly treated because of their race, religion, colour or creed is a battle that is fought on a daily basis to create such a harmonious environment.

“The community and the people within it are always viewing long term solutions and not the short-term gains” and this strategy creates a Smart Community which is stable and where everyone associated with it, feels valued.

By having the community support, it helps with the approach to change identifying the best way of problem solving with structure by integrating local experience with external expertise to assist in managing the requirements and the needs of infrastructure for the community at large. This vibrant and transparent environment opens information to more people helping to expose or reveal critical issues and promote livability in a timelier and cost-effective manner.

So, with all this in mind, how would you promote and support the homelessness issue?

Let us start with something very basic so that there is a clearer understand of the term ‘Livability’. Livability is the term that determines the quality of life that individuals and communities can expect within their own area, both through their own efforts and the efforts of those in authority. Quality of life investigates the well-being of the community and how they are affected by the ongoing development, or the lack of development within an area. This looks at the impacts around education, recreation, ecology, politics, economics and culture. Developing, designing, or creating and maintaining a strong culture within a community should be the focus of everyone.

The secret to having a community having input into their own well-being rather than having it decided for them is that their voice takes on greater meaning. Of course the idealistic approach is to have everything that you wish for in a happy life, but the realization of what is available and what it takes to have that within a community, gives those affected the ability to understand decisions that are made through transparency of decision making.

The type of environment people wishes to live and shop in has changed over the past ten years and is changing more rapidly than ever before. There is a huge demand on the businesses and authorities to provide instant satisfaction. The public communities’ ideas and beliefs have changed and so any solutions that are identified must show creativity and innovation with a sense of recreation built into it. Communities are becoming more inquisitive about how things are done; we now live in a world where online and instant learning has become the norm.

The problem with a simple all tech solutions to community life is that there are many gender and generational issues that have to be addressed to make sure that if an automated solution is designed with the younger generations in mind, that it does not leave the older generations or those less tech savvy behind.

There have been multiple papers and reports written throughout the years, of which one of the most famous was David Morris’ sociologist research that stated the way we live and how we live defines a base of literacy which was directly linked to a person’s or a community’s life expectancy. The Economist Intelligence Unit produced a “Where to be born index” and supported this with a number of Quality of Life reports, however each told you what or where life is better, but none seem to have previously addressed the question of how.

In 2016, a project was initiated by the Eastern Province Saudi Arabian Municipality to improve the way that projects could be delivered more efficiently through a PMO standardised delivery mechanism. The scope of this work soon expanded and with the introduction of the first Smart Model, a challenge was set by the Municipality to address three key aspects for the area:

- Greater accessibility of information to the community
- Improved mobility both in and out of the major cities within the region
- Sustained expansion or reduction in a controlled manner

The approach that was designed by Professor Mark Reeson within the project, was the Smart Model and this was then further supported by the introduction towards the end of the project, of an urban design model called the Smart Vision.

As a general overview of the approach and model, the intention was to introduce a process driven approach that led to a centralised master plan that would then assist with the decision making and the implementation of the work required, with the necessary prioritization towards new housing.

However, rather than focusing on what had previously been done to review and develop housing plans, the new model set about asking what the community needs would be and how they could be introduced before the planning of new commercial or domestic properties was approved.

By developing an area or declining a service from a region, simple questions on what the impacts are on the decision were made against:

- Hospitals and medical services
- Schooling and education establishments
- Transport impacts and system requirements
- How the additional or removal of services would impact cross-generationally?
- Added or removed value to the community identity?
- Places of worships across the diversity of the population
- Recreation and leisure facilities

By establishing this structured approach, this leads to a community input on their own community around the constraints of the space, budget and time. This helps to secure the right kind of commercial and retail properties in a balance with the domestic requirements of the diverse population. By setting this procedure behind housing and retail decision making, this made a major impact on the populous returning and the community ethos, not just for some but a quality of life FOR ALL.

Health – Bringing Renewed Life into the Community

Community health touches on many different services, departments and non-profit organisations, by interacting for the benefit of the community. Each of these departments must “Learn to work together with the Community’s Support to generate justified decisions during planning and at times of emergency or crisis”.

Whether they are responding to an outbreak of a disease or safeguarding against the threat of a future one, this approach and their ability to collaborate is essential to any success to repel the risk to the health of the community. “By being able to work together to predict future illnesses before the community becomes sick, by finding transmission patterns by visualizing real-time and historical threat data, these departments remain on the front-line to keep the community healthy, happy and enables a future of safe and stable growth”.

By developing these shared insights across and central platform, this ensures that multiple audiences can stay readily informed and instantly prepared to fulfil their routine and emergency roles as needed. The community authorities can then reinforce this approach by establishing protocols at certain key moments or events so that should certain conditions occur, or situations arise, there is clear direction by those that are viewed to give the community guidance.

This builds confidence not only in the government authority but in the community as well,

knowing that if the worst does happen, someone is there to provide help, support and guidance.

Having such a formal approach leads to the government body within the community being able to trust its emergency planning techniques, testing them regularly and visibly to the community public, demonstrating proficiency and competence.

So, what health support can be used to help with the community to negate homelessness?

A community that comes together to protect its own, is naturally stronger. No community or city can ever be truly ‘Smart’ whilst its own people fail to have secure housing or must sleep rough at night.

As we addressed within the ‘Safety’ aspect of the document, a lot of physical and mental abuse takes place, but none more than by the homeless individuals themselves.

This aspect of homelessness is regularly overlooked. In a survey by the Health Audit in 2014, 80% of homeless people were reported to have mental health issues, with 45% of these diagnosed with a formal mental condition. The top three of these diagnoses were depression, schizophrenia and bipolar. Within the same survey, the source of many of the health problems was substance abuse, recording 62.5% of those questioned.

With the provision of a pop-up or mobile/virtual health support service, this would allow the services to treat the problem at its source. This temporary service would also be able to share the message to the community, but especially to those most vulnerable that they do matter and that society and those inside the services do still care.

Living on the streets means that living and working styles and conditions are much more fluid and change more rapidly, this environment of constant change must be managed more prescriptively.

Prosperity – Investing in the Community

“Communities prosper when they work together, supporting each other to identify market trends that can attract investments”. Whether they are appealing to potential residents or businesses, economic development planners help communities grow, by emphasizing the importance of the right investment in the right location to maximize its worth.

In competitive environments where neighboring communities or cities vie for capital improvement funding, tourism and much needed revenue, the economic planners must demonstrate the potential for a clear and substantial value of a new development site and commercial property. To be truly successful, they must demonstrate to the community, government bodies and local commerce enough relevant and accurate data to entice its citizens through insight into the changes that such an investment can make to their lifestyle and demographic characteristics.

To better prepare a community for prosperity, identifying and connecting the right investors and entrepreneurs to the right information so that they have time to recognise and implement such

investment opportunities. By having the right people understanding the changes to the needs and demands of the community, this can encourage those willing to invest by offering this information to obtain greater visibility of the opportunity being offered. This will then avoid chance, or blind investment into the community based on hope rather than fact leading to regular foreclosures and reduction in the attraction of the community's home.

This regular turnover of business can create disharmony and start to affect house prices and the popularity for mobility into the area, instead in some cases, causing a prolonged exodus. "Community prosperity means FOR ALL and not just for the few, creating an environment of growth that does not discriminate against individuals, therefore reducing or in some cases eliminating poverty within the community".

This however can only be achieved with stable Financial Sustainability Planning.

The planning needs to be viewed both on a long-term and a short-term basis. The community needs to know their finances for six months to a year, but then to challenge itself to plan where it would also like to be in five years. Financial sustainability planning is only one part of the plan, allowing the community to concentrate on their real purpose and to focus on its achievements. The community should never lose focus on why it is there and what it stands for, it should never lose its traditions or its identity.

So, how does a community encourage investment to help reduce homelessness?

It is said that all investment is good investment, but this is not always true.

UN Envoy, Philip Alston assessed the UK Government and after the years of investment, where the issues still exist. His key findings were:

- Austerity - Alston was critical of the "mentality" behind cuts and reforms introduced in the past few years that have brought misery and torn at the social fabric. "British compassion for those who are suffering has been replaced by a punitive, mean-spirited and callous approach ..."
- Universal credit - The government's ambitious programme to simplify the benefits system was a good idea in principle but was "fast falling into universal discredit" and should be overhauled. It was gratuitously punitive in its effects. Draconian sanctions and long payment delays drove claimants into hardship, depression and despair.
- Brexit - The most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society will take the biggest hit from Brexit, Alston said. People felt their homes, jobs and communities were at risk. "Ironically, it was these very fears and insecurity that contributed significantly to the Brexit vote."
- Who suffers? - "Changes to taxes and benefits have taken the highest toll on those least able to bear it," said Alston, with the costs of austerity falling disproportionately on the poor, women, ethnic minorities, children, single parents, asylum seekers and people with disabilities.

- Holes in the Social Safety Net - Massive cuts to council funding, alongside big rises in demand for social care, had reduced many local authorities to providing basic services only and had heralded the closure of libraries, parks and youth clubs. This was “damaging the fabric” of British society and eroding its sense of community.
- Poverty - Alston said the UK government had told him the social support system was working and there was no extreme poverty in the UK. But the individual testimonies he received during his visit told a different story. “There is a striking and almost complete disconnect between what I heard from the government and what I consistently heard from many people directly, across the country.”
- A Digital Welfare State - The government’s embrace of digital technology and automation was especially visible in universal credit, where the digital by default approach excluded people with no internet access or skills. “We are witnessing the gradual disappearance of the post-war British welfare state behind a webpage and an algorithm,” Alston said.

With this all considered, it is important to recognise that it is only when it is targeted investment that real value is gained.

What is regularly forgotten is that it is not simply financial investment, but the capacity and effort investment where the community has the potential to support itself through to develop growth and to minimise waste. Through a thorough education programme of all the people in the community, it will start to understand and appreciate what it already has before it continues to ask for more.

The exercise of the inventory of the social, financial and welfare assets within the community, whether public or private, would also assist the authorities with a clearer picture of its holdings before requesting or implementing unnecessary investment. As the Smart ethos is also designed around the ‘FOR ALL’ approach, having the community and the authorities working collaboratively to reduce the housing problems should encourage greater involvement as everyone within the community gains from even the smallest investment.

Whether the investment is through reuse or renovation of buildings, or new builds and new developments, the community knows what and more importantly, why changes are being made to their landscape within the constraints of budget and time.

This open transparency would motivate the community into wanting to improve their own as well as the remainder of the region’s quality of life.

Sustainability – Building a Community for Future Generations

To maximize sustainability, communities must connect with their government bodies to work together to fight deforestation, uphold the community values and health, and to preserve the living standards FOR ALL.

When it comes to urban planning and design, they should use technology to balance competing interests, to fuse data from numerous sources and to communicate their intentions for the community across multiple audiences. However, one thing is as true today as it always has been, “If you want to pass a message to others, understand your audience”. Too much technology can be equally as bad as not enough, so know who you are sending what message to with what media.

Those sharing the messages should be able to acknowledge their own personal style of communication and then understand how that impacts the recipients (benefits/risks, why that kind of change is necessary now, what are the consequences in the future if the change will not be implemented etc.). “Only when the sender can actively listen through effective feedback can they then adapt the style or media of the communication so that it becomes appropriate to the situation and to the needs of their audience”. By incorporating a strong geo-design into any planning, communities become better positioned to provide their citizens a more sustainable future without compromising the usage or the quality of its land, water or air.

With the use of the Smart Modelling Concept, communities can benchmark their achievements and then measure progress as they implement change. It can clearly assist each community with the recognition of its successes and identify where further improvements need to be made.

By utilising the Smart Metrics approach to change they can measure and then mature their approach in the six separate areas of community sustainability focusing on what matters to the community, when it matters.

The six areas of measurement are:

- Organisation Sustainability
- Development Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability
- Governance Sustainability
- Logistical Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability

Through the metrics matrix of 242 assessment points, each community can grow and shape itself into the community it wants to be.

So where would a community start and how simple is the model to integrate into their lives?

After a community has obtained the model and its relevant supporting documentation, the community must establish where it currently is and create firstly its baseline, before setting its goals for achievement. As the community drafts its original Strategic Smart Change Plan, it will begin to identify the approach it wants to take and how it chooses to optimise efficiency and to minimise its waste. No-one comes in and tells the community what it should be doing and there are no methodologies, just a simple framework, governed by them, implemented by them, delivering their needs.

“The secret behind a community, lays within the community and its people”.

By bringing people together the community and by understanding what they want for their city, town, village, or business this increases buy-in and the potential for further investment for the future generations.

However, nothing happens for free, so how can the programme itself become self-sustaining?

To deliver Year 2, the local authority will identify areas of income, enough that these efficiencies of improvement to make up 25% of the approved first year budget. With these efficiencies in place, this means that the national government contribution would reduce to 75% of Year 1. This iterative process will continue year on year with the national contribution reducing by 25% per year until the local authority programme has become self-sufficient. There are two caveats to this Smart Solution Model being successful. Firstly, the funding allocated for the programme must be ring-fenced and all efficiencies identified by the local authority, remain local. By having this fixed budget approach, the national government will know its time limited financial commitment and the local authorities will be empowered to make real life changing decisions on the ground without fear of funding withdrawal or reduction because of their identified savings.

In this way, the local authorities can offer greater scrutiny to all its assets and find a more efficient manner of doing business in the future.

IMPLEMENTING THE COSI APPROACH

The COSI approach was identified specifically to assist with the homelessness issue.

This simple four-step process gains a clearer understanding of the situational requirements which can lead to more meaningful results. Let us look at each step of the COSI approach in greater detail.

C – Challenge – The largest misconception of the homeless is that they are branded all the same and that they have brought this problem upon themselves. This could not be further from the truth and so this must be challenged at all levels of the community to remove this crude mistruth. The typical campaign and advertising will and has only had limited impact and so it is essential that the local authorities find a way of engaging on a one-to-one basis with this social group to gain a clearer understanding of who they are, what their personal history is and what skills or services they can feed back into the community. By giving this time and attention, the authorities will obtain a clearer picture to enhance their strategy and the individuals themselves will once again, begin to feel valued.

O – Observe – We learn so much by watching. By recognising the behaviours and the traits being conducted by the social group that require support, this promotes good behaviours by the individuals and can equally identify those that are devaluing the support, or far worse, sabotaging the process. This directive/supportive leadership style maintains control of the process but assists those that might struggle at first with this change, to what has become their ‘new norm’. By guiding the individuals through this change on an individual pace basis, the process will achieve its critical mass to alter the perception of those in the social group but also those in the wider community.

S – Solution – Solution development on an individual or a group basis is a real challenge and must be done only when the solution is right for those impacted but also by those within the right environment to understand the right solution. Therefore, the solution model to assist with decision making should be the six-step problem solving process.

The process is a structured, systematic approach to solution development and making improvements. The benefits of the process include:

- To ensure consistency
- To keep the process more scientific and less susceptible to individual biases and perceptions
- To provide a focus for the group and to help set the agenda

Following the method and using its data to make decisions makes it easier for a group to reach consensus and solve problems more effectively. This model will make solving problems easier and ultimately yield a better result. It makes the authority test all ideas and eliminate those which are not correct for a scenario. The model uses a series of logical steps to help identify the most important causes and the best solution, this creates a systematic approach to problem solving. It allows for decision making based on data, rather than hunches and determines root causes of problems, rather than reacting to superficial symptoms. This approach devises permanent solutions, rather than relying on quick fixes.

Although many problem-solving models can be highly sophisticated and technical, this model uses six simple steps, so the strength in its simplicity. The model is comprehensive enough to address all but the most complex of technical problems and so would be highly beneficial for the resolution of people related or business-related problems.

The six steps of the process are as follows:

1. Identify the problem you want to work on
2. Gather relevant data associated with the problem
3. Clarify the problem
4. Generate the multiple possible solutions
5. Select the best option as the workable solution
6. Implement the decision and then monitor the results of the actions

By using this thorough solution modelling method to enhance the decision-making process, everyone can be matched to the correct action plan. By applying the right solutions to the right problems, the issues causing the problems are less likely to reoccur.

I – Integration – Fixing the problem is only half the result that the local authorities will be looking to achieve. Having resolved the problem firsthand, there requires to be an authority led self-supporting network to ensure those from the social group that have been brought through the system, do not fall back into it. This network would become the bridge between their previous life and their new improved lifestyle.

This coordinated approach would use ‘Champions’ stories to promote and sustain the programme

as individuals would be able to work with other community members and the local authorities to grow the scheme giving those in the systematic process greater belief that there is a better life if they work with the system to improve their and the community's quality of life.

COMMUNITY MODELLING MATURITY

Much as no one individual works at a single pace, neither do communities or authorities. By having the Smart Solutions Maturity Model to grow the approach and to measure the metrics against, each local authority can develop their own strategy with long-term objectives and not short-term quick gains at the forefront of their planning.

By using the maturity model as the baseline metric for the development of the approach, this allows the national government to see what progress is being made by comparing local authority's performance. This approach to maturity modelling allows the local authorities to also make a key decision at the earliest stage of the programme, what level do they want to reach and why that is beneficial towards not only the programme but also to their own local authority.

By having this choice, each authority can be involved in the programme but never to the point that it becomes detrimental to the rest of the duties of the authority. Each step of the maturity model is self-explanatory and so following it, measuring against it and then progressing and achieving each grade allows for an internal strategy that can be aligned so they develop their own self-sustaining programme of works and financial management within the full enhancement approach.

Success is measured in many ways. The key measure will be the enhancement of the quality of life achieved by the local authority, with the support of the community committee for the benefit 'FOR ALL'.

The five stages of the maturity model have been designed around the Gartner Model and will help any organisation appreciate their sustainable leaders set strategic goals that are appropriate to the level of maturity they demonstrate.

Organisations often find it exceedingly difficult to define accurately what their passage to sustainable excellence should look like. This passage or route to success, typically involves the development of several operational capabilities, but without a clear defined framework of delivery, operational and business leaders may find it challenging to focus on the right areas at the right time for their business or organisation.

The passage to sustainable excellence is partly defined by the organisation or business' own level of maturity, however using the Smart Maturity Model based around Gartner, then the business leaders have a five stage maturity model against which they can measure their own organisation's maturity to allow them to develop a clear, long-term vision.

Most leading businesses and organisations consistently take their maturity-based approach to design and execute their own strategy. Having the five steps allows the leaders to have a greater understanding of what they can achieve whilst plotting out a future for what, if they continue to mature, they may be able to achieve in the future. These stages will help set a strategic goal that

is appropriate to their own organisation.

Level 1 Reactionary Sustainability - This stage is characterized by separate individual departments, such as housing and welfare, driving sustainable priorities via manual independent processes and disparate, disconnected systems. There is no cross-functional standardization of the sustainability approaches for services offered internally or externally with little to no coordination. For example, the housing department might introduce a new regime within their department about closing all non-essential equipment and power at the end of the night, but not share this within the remainder of the organisation. The advantage of having level one in place is that the organisation or business will be making advances with their sustainable approaches but unfortunately, being so separated and random, this does not typically materialise in long term success itself.

Level 2 Anticipatory Sustainability - With a centralised function for sustainability, there is a clear improvement of efficiency and productivity. Sustainable activity and performance are captured and reported using an organisational-wide system or model, enabling better anticipation of the changes occurring. At this level, there is a new focus on creating a standardised approach to sustainability processes and methods that benefit from the right economies of scale with increased efficiency. The sustainable performance is internally focused on the return of investment to the effort being applied to implement these approaches. This improvement starts to show the improvements for the organisation, this should heighten the interest in sustainability as a subject within the business. However, without having the formal visibility to the world that sustainable actions are making a difference to the business, this remains a limited benefit.

Level 3 Integrated Sustainability - The focus now is on integrating the sustainability function into the whole business. There is increased consideration of how sustainability will affect business processes, customer service, procurement and production. Productivity enhancements and cost reductions are now achieved through connections to partners and third parties through strong project, supply chain and business providers. Now the full business structure is showing great change. Having a full integration and recognition of the sustainable practices both internally and with partners leads to a greater motivation in the business and their partners to ensure that everything that the business does, has a sustainable theme or feel to it.

Level 4 Collaborative Sustainability - By this stage, sustainability is an integrated part of all aspects of the business management vision, with trade-offs balanced between sustainability, profitability and community satisfaction. There is collaboration and visibility with partners, suppliers and customers, as well as strategic partnerships with business providers that go beyond simple transactional and become more transformational services. Business and sustainability capabilities are reliable enough to consider opportunities to start to change the shape of your organisation or market requirements. By level four, the business, its partners and providers are proactively working with each other to create a working practice that brings together the companies in a way that is beneficial for all.

Level 5 Orchestrated Sustainability - Sustainability and the rest of the business and supply chain facilitate processes across an eco-system of partners to capitalize on and creating unique business opportunities. As a result, information flows across the business and supply chain network in real time. This enables broader visibility and timely, fact-based decisions, which

increases market share and growth opportunities.

Optimized sustainability within an organisation now gives it an advantage to search for the sustainable change and to shape the future for not only their company but also the industry in which it finds itself. Having optimized the financial, social and environmental approach with its partners and providers, it can now start to lead the industry with a strong recognition for change at the right time and in the right way.

CONCLUSION

So, after twenty-three pages and over eleven thousand words, there is a clear and compelling argument that we need to do something and that we need to do that something now. The problems that have existed for so long, even with all the help that has been offered and all the funding that has been expended still has not broken the back of the problem. However, there is a fundamental reason why everything that has happened before has never gained true success and has left us in the position that we find ourselves today, a simple missing ingredient to all the well-being and the time and effort that has been shown, coordination.

Today, we have more charities and social welfare groups helping and supporting these challenges, yet we are missing one single aspect, a national body that takes control of the approach that is needed to create one standardised, centralised drive towards a sustainable solution. By designing this approach and having a central point of control, the funding is better controlled, the time and resource allocation becomes more efficient and those that need the help the most, get it when they need it more swiftly.

There has been a drive in the country to remove homelessness and street sleeping for several years now, and it is essential to bring this finally to fruition. By applying the approaches within the paper and with the strong coordinated approach lead from the national government, we can start to plan to bring an end to these problems that have blighted our country for too long.

What has made the country so strong before and will again, is the can-do spirit that we have, if we recognise that it is being genuinely heart felt and led from those in charge. With the correct targeted advertising campaign, aimed at the areas that need it and then managed around those that are in the greatest danger, we can provide a great opportunity for the national government to drive a new brighter future for the next generation of British citizens, not a few, not a specific minority or ethnicity, but a greater Britain, FOR ALL.

The plans and approaches have already been introduced into a school within Nairobi as part of the United Nations Democracy Fund and those that have been offered the help have shown nothing but pure gratitude and a drive to want to help others more. By invigorating those that feel they are part of the problem, they feel they become a part of the solution and have a value that they can give back to society.

However, where so many organisations and businesses have used instability in the economy as an excuse to avoid investment, this is a moment, something that many will probably never see again in their generation, a moment when with the right people, working in the right places and making the right decisions, can drive Great Britain back to the summit that it belongs.

Consider, as one option, that if the homeless can be taken off the streets, placed into graded housing so that they can work through a scheme where they can not only give back to their own community but also offer additional services to the community, then the country will have a new pride that gives and receives, where community life matters and where we learn to care about more than just ourselves once more. A dream, perhaps a utopian idea, or is it? Why should it not be possible to make everyone happy, through involving everyone in the decision making and in shaping their own environment.

It is the PEOPLE that are impacted by their own living environment and so it is those people that should identify and drive the change making them feel individually responsible and committed to their community. Whether the end goal is increased safety, greater efficiency, a higher quality of livability, stronger health, greater prosperity, or a cleaner environment, being truly SMART as a community is about those that live there.

There is a simple message to everyone that wants to make the change and to make a real difference for this and for future generations. The answer is not to live in an endlessly changing, damaging environment, but quite simply we need to ‘Think SMART, Act SMART and Live SMART’.

About the Author



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Dr Mark Reeson is a project management specialist with over thirty years' experience. A Fellow of the Association for Project Management, he has been involved in many project and programme consultative roles. Most recently Mark has been working with the Saudi Arabian Municipality of the Eastern Province to change the way that project management is carried out within the region, using his newly recognised SMART Sustainability Modelling for project and business management.

He was appointed a Professor of Project Management at the University of Business and Technology, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which was a culmination of his work in training and consulting in the region on matters that relate to project management, supply chain management and sustainability modelling. Having previously held the position of a specialist Sustainability Management Global Advisor he has moved forward from that position and now regularly supports businesses and projects alike in streamlining their approaches to change and strategic development providing greater longevity in their business planning.

Having started his career in the Royal Air Force, Mark has continued to develop by working and delivering projects in multiple fields of industry ranging from the nuclear environment, into pharmaceuticals, finance and the international sporting fields.

Mark has developed his role within project management through further experience with the nuclear industry and is now the owner of M R Project Solutions Limited where he has fulfilled the role of Project Management Advisor for the last four years covering every continent. His role is very much client facing and Mark now almost permanently travels the world meeting clients, developing solutions and providing training for their project families either directly through his own organisation or in support of others. Mark's main role is the development and the consultation with many organisations on ensuring they choose the right approach or methodology to deliver their projects and then follows this up with the correct bespoke training programmes for how their company wants to share this learning with their staff members.

Mark has changed the approach to learning by the ongoing development of his original 'Living Learning' programme by introducing a new learning experience for all taking the classroom

format and making it come to life with his popular and original 'Applied Learning' simulation training and coaching technique. He has taken this forward over the past few years to introduce this training style so that project management learning and behaviour has now started to be delivered into the schools and colleges looking to develop the technical, behavioural and contextual skills and attitudes of their students.

As a regular public speaker Mark now shares his experience, knowledge and commitment with those associations wanting to move forward in a more sustainable and successful manner.

Mark's next aim is to develop this further and to spread project management knowledge and competency to many more organisations worldwide, having already started with successful deliveries globally.

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To view other works by Mark Reeson, visit his author showcase in the PM World Library at <https://peworldlibrary.net/authors/mark-reeson/>