

# Just Neighbourhoods?

## Policy Symposium

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**





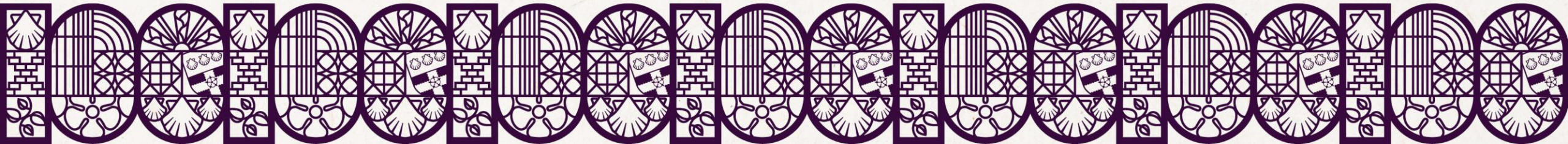
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The assembly point is at the front of the building.



Please keep mobile phones on silent.



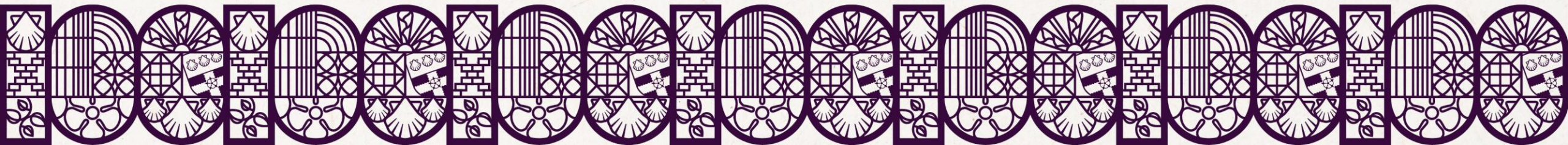


# Welcome and Purpose of the Day

- Anvar Sarygulov – Nuffield Foundation
- Prof Gavin Parker – University of Reading



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# Programme for the Day

**11.00 – 11.10** [HBS G15] **Welcome**

**11.10 – 11.50** [HBS G15] **Introduction to the JN research**

**11.50 – 12.10** [G15] **Roundtable I: Q&A to JN team**

**12.10 – 13.00** [G15] **Roundtable II: Planning, Place and Social Justice**

**13.00 – 14.00** [ICMA Foyer] **Lunch + Gallery view**

**14.00 – 15.00** [HBS x3] **Breakout session: 'planning and social justice'**

**15.00 – 15.20** [HBS G15] **Break**

**15.20 – 15.45** [HBS G15] **Group Feedback + Concluding comments**



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# Place / Neighbourhood Planning Research

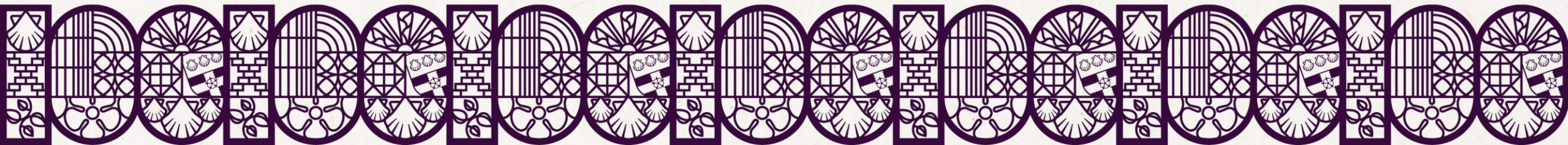
- Past research on NP /CLP
- Background in 2022-23...
- Current background
  - Pride in Place (and Neigh Boards)
  - ICON work
  - Planning reform (again)
  - Demise of NDP support
  - Rise of populism and intolerance
  - Lack of trust...



**100 YEARS**  **1926 2026**  
UNIVERSITY OF READING



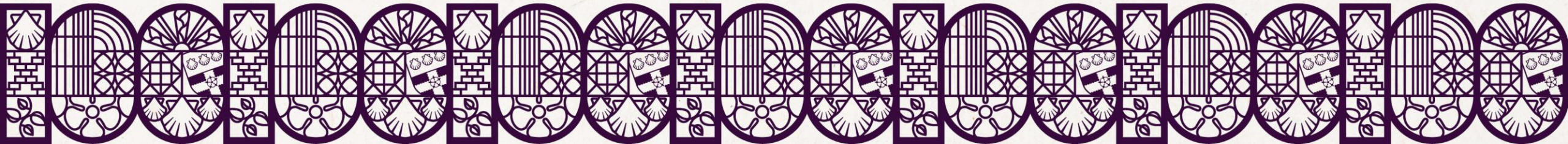
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# The Just Neighbourhoods? Research

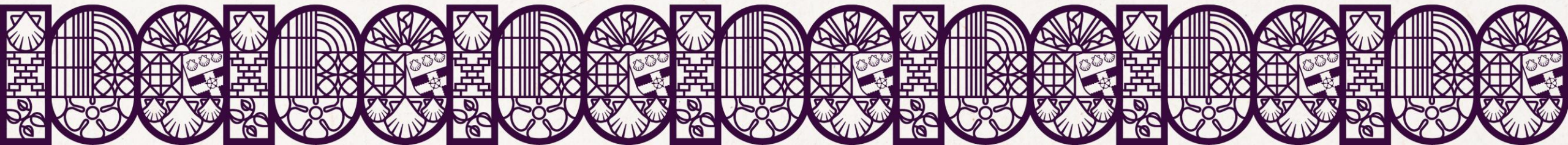
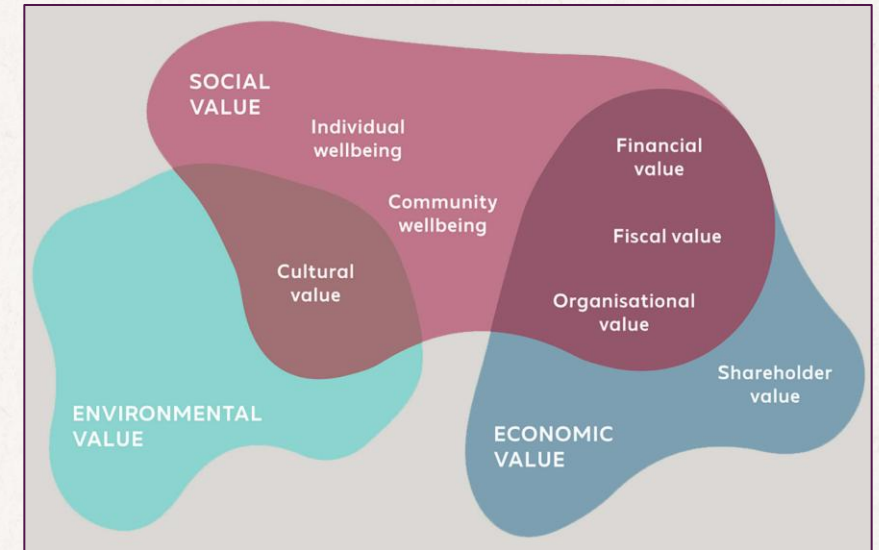
- Aims
  - Approach / Research design
  - Research questions
- 
- **Website:** <https://research.reading.ac.uk/justcnp/>  
(nb. Today's slidedeck will be uploaded)





## The JN Research

***"if justice becomes the yardstick for measuring public policy effectiveness, then policymakers must ask to what end efficiency applies and who benefits from economic growth"*** (Fainstein, 2019, p.130)



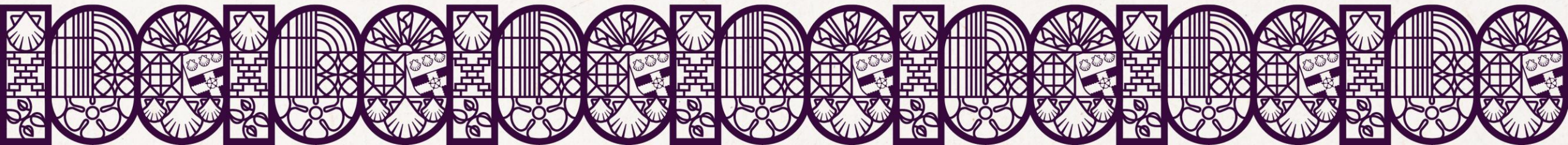


## The JN Research

- **Aims (general)**: to understand how 'community-led' planning can effectively address issues of justice and power. We highlight the necessity of co-produced solutions that consider local conditions and power dynamics to foster meaningful change.
- Context of under-represented / 'left behind' / deprived neighbourhoods...
- **Four work packages** (Theory, Literature, Plan Content, Case studies, and Dissemination/Outputs)



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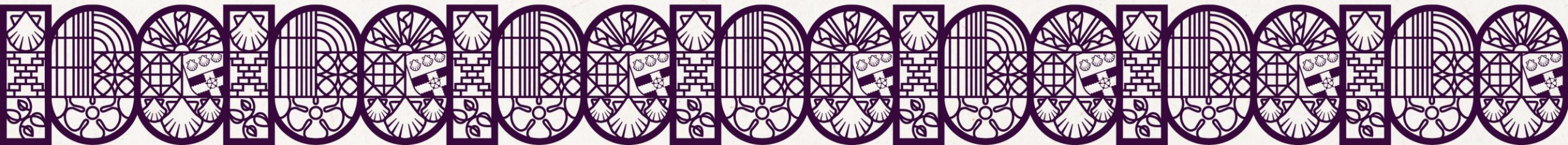
## The JN Research

**'CLP'** – our scope explores the 'actually existing' invited spaces where some degree of co-production is implied or offered...

***"undertaken by individuals, groups or organisations within defined geographical neighbourhoods in order to achieve social, economic or environmental objectives defined by participants with minimal external control"*** (Crisp et al. 2016, p.4)



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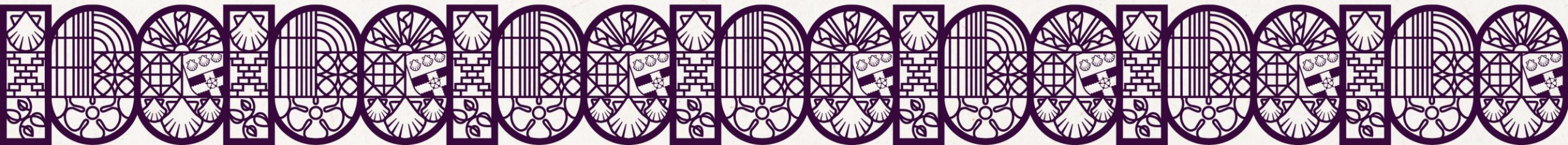
# The JN Research

## Research Questions (short version)

- **Understanding:** *What do communities understand as (in)justice? (procedurally / outcome / in terms of empowerment)*
- **Process:** *How are priorities established (by communities) and how do they relate to questions of injustice or fairness?*
- **Outcome:** *How do forms of community-led planning address issues of hyper-local injustice?*



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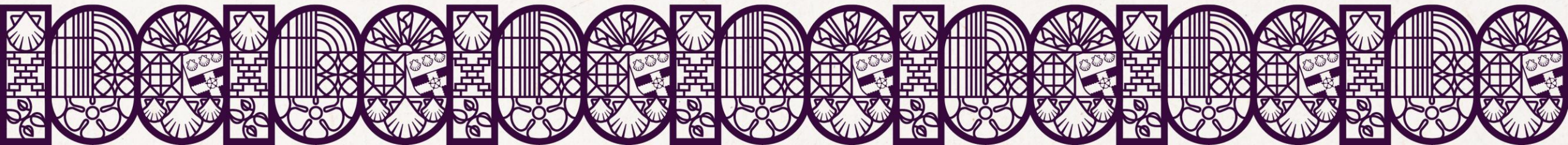


# The JN Research

## Theoretical frame

- Social / spatial / environmental justice – complex
  - Sen (2009); Lake (2016); Lonergan (1972)
  - 'Justice as lived experience'
  - 'Decisions: 'Authentic to place'
  - Procedural / Outcome justice crossover
  - Representational justice inflexion
  - Power and the text...
- 
- Q. How does (community/neighbourhood) planning perform?

***'Thinking spatially about justice not only enriches our theoretical understanding, it can uncover significant new insights that extend our practical knowledge into more effective actions to achieve greater justice and democracy' (Soja, 2009, p.1)***



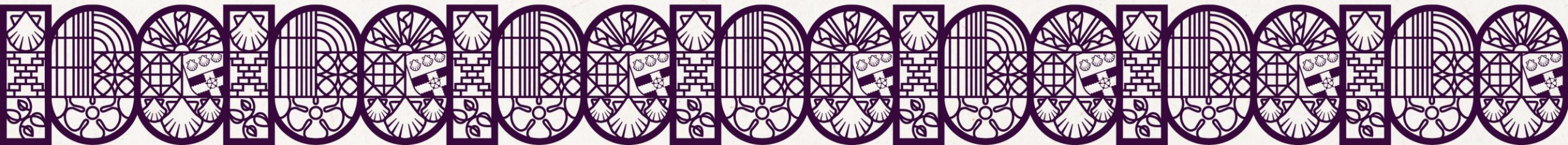


# The JN Research

Moral / ethical perspective – how to characterise the approach to neighbourhood scale planning?



Approach	Focus	Key Consideration
<b>Teleological</b>	Outcomes/Consequences	"What will produce the best result?" (Utilitarianist)
<b>Deontological</b>	Duties/Rules/Intentions	"What is my duty/the rule?" (Kantian)
<b>Virtue</b>	Character/Habits	"What would a good person do?" (Aristotelian)
<b>Rights</b>	Individual Rights	"Does this respect human dignity?" (Lockean)
<b>Justice</b>	Fairness/Equality	"Is this fair to all parties?" (Rawlsian)
<b>Ethics of Responsibility</b>	Situational judgment	responds to specific context (Weberian)





## The JN Research

Q. How do we ensure that appropriate blend or integration is applied? (cf. Lonergan, 1972).

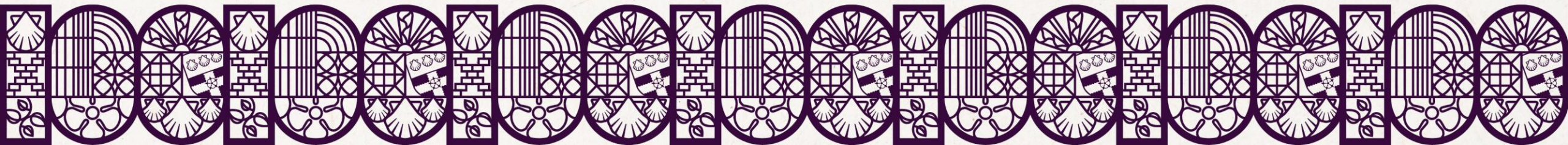
How and on what basis do we organise planning *process* ethically? How can our approach to place be authentic?



Lonergan:

- 1. Be Attentive:** Focus on data, experience, and reality.
- 2. Be Intelligent:** Seek to understand, inquire, and grasp insights.
- 3. Be Reasonable:** Evaluate, judge, and determine what is true and good.
- 4. Be Responsible:** Act on that judgment, deciding to do what is right.

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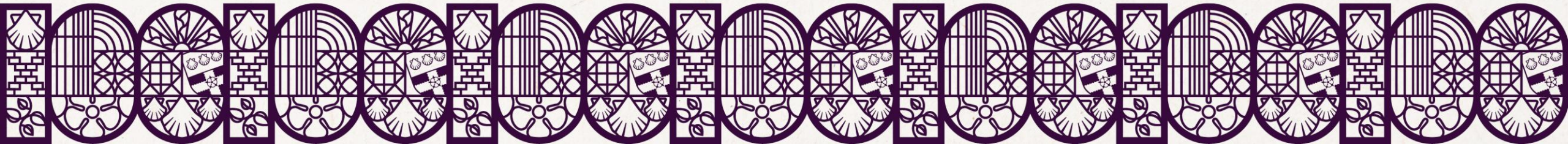
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## Literature review

- 500 items from 2010–2024 literature
- Distilled to 9 themes...

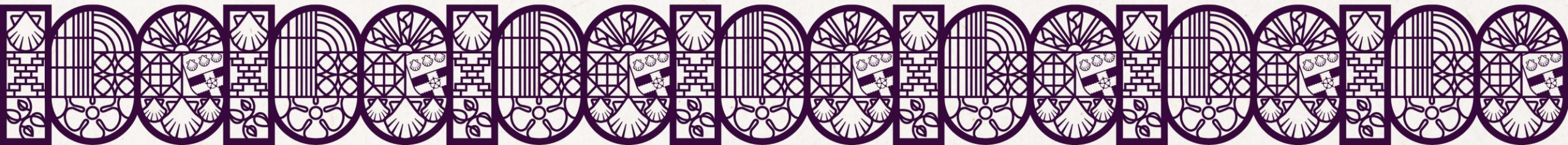


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Literature Theme (x9)	Key terms
<b>1. Leadership, motivation and actors</b>	Leadership from within places; History (legacy) and context/setting; Motivation; skills (navigation of situation); capacities; information; facilitation; knowledge and ability; endogenous leadership; certainty/trust; place attachment; change agents.
<b>2. Resources / capacity / knowledge / time / support</b>	Capacity(uneven); communication(skills); facilitation; institutional design; technology; Partnerships; time inputs (and calibration to group/interest); Support; constraints; relationships; targeted/ /specific resources; social capital; assembly of resources needed.
<b>3. Co-production</b>	Scope/control; trust; motives; private sector; joint visioning; outcome focus; conflict management; inclusion
<b>4. Tools, f/works, technologies</b>	Mobilisation(social); support; flexibility; degrees of control; fit to purpose / gap identification; non-profit/intermediary-actors; community enterprise; context/setting (impact of); visualisation/photos; role of arts; visioning; backcasting; participatory budgeting; gentrification (danger of); Outcome orientation; intermediaries (e.g. tech); data tools; limits of tech; ongoing engagement (open); living labs.
<b>5. Just Planning / Justice</b>	Justice as central tenet/value; accountability; control; representativeness; power relations; communication (weakness); knowledge development as empowerment; social innovation; rules to support inclusion; right to the city (and see WP1a – Theoretical frame)
<b>6. Priorities and scope (inc. participant types)</b>	Funding parameters; groups differential knowledge/understanding (and priorities); use of tech and minorities; facilitation; legal constraints; youth; social barriers
<b>7. Politics</b>	Co-option; intra-community division; state roles; paternalism; identities; priorities
<b>8. Power</b>	Motives of instigators; knowledge claims and validation; Definition and imperfect representation; Contexts/settings; engagement between stakeholders; Format of participation; dangers of post-politicisation (and see WP1a – Theoretical frame)
<b>9. Community assets and participation</b>	Scope of participation; imperfection; assets as focal points; Social infrastructure; property-led regeneration; rights; public institutions



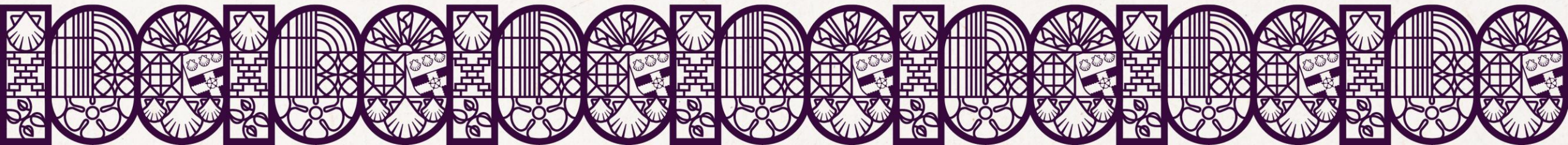


# The JN Research

## Content review

- 107 Plans examined
- Few explicit about justice, deprivation, equity, Inclusion [JEDI]
- Mirrors US findings somewhat...
- But related factors – albeit uncoordinated and lacking linkage
- Raises question of: **'inscriptive justice'** – a precursor to following questions of following justice upwards / outwards – **hierarchy / scale**

***'...most plans do not talk about equity, nor do they include many goals and recommendations that would advance equity. More recent plans, plans in communities with more planning capacity, plans in coastal communities, and plans with strong public participation processes have stronger equity orientations'** (Loh and Kim, 2021, p.181)*





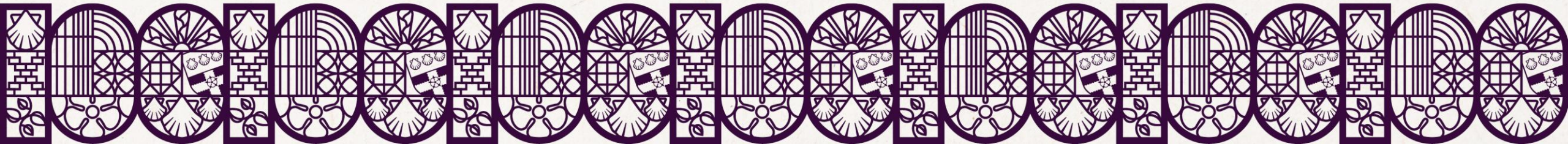
# The JN Research

## Case studies

- X10 across UK
- Outlines on the webpage (see WP4)
- Each has its own c7000 word write up... (book is planned!)
- Selected as areas who were ranked top quintile of acknowledged deprivation index
- Some local community 'place' activity
- Some had completed a Neighbourhood Plan, Place Plan etc.



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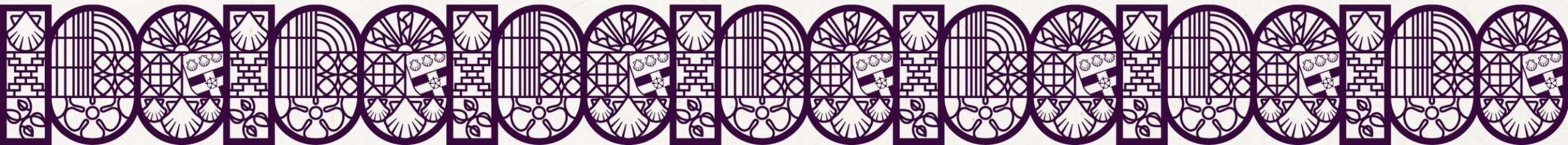




# The JN Research

## Case studies

- Doncaster:
  - Stainforth
  - Conisbrough & Denaby Main
- Middlesbrough:
  - Gresham/Newport
  - North Ormesby
- Benarty, Fife
- Barmulloch & Robroyston, Glasgow
- Colwyn Bay, Conwy
- Rhyl, Denbighshire
- West Armagh
- Colin, Belfast



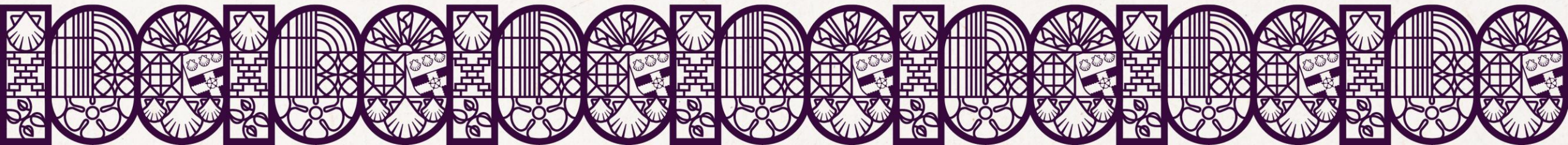


# The JN Research – Some case study theme quotes I

## Plan value

*“so I do see the value in them [place plans] and I think that anyone that's leading that type of process you know will have to really drill down into those communities...and all those kind of socio-economic issues that we know existing in these communities...there's very good capacity in communities. Particularly XXX, I mean very, expert people there and people who have lived and worked in that area, you know, their whole lives, who know the area really well and know how to how to articulate the issues and get, you know, get things on the agenda”. (Interview C7)*

*“They might not understand the terms that you're using and the language you use within your documentation, but if you actually took the time to explain what it actually meant and used just plain English, they would give you exactly what you needed to make a plan that would really change their lives” (Interview NO9).*





# The JN Research – Some case study theme quotes 2

## Support

*“If it hadn’t been for them [support organisation], we’d still be writing it [the LPP]” (Interview F5).*

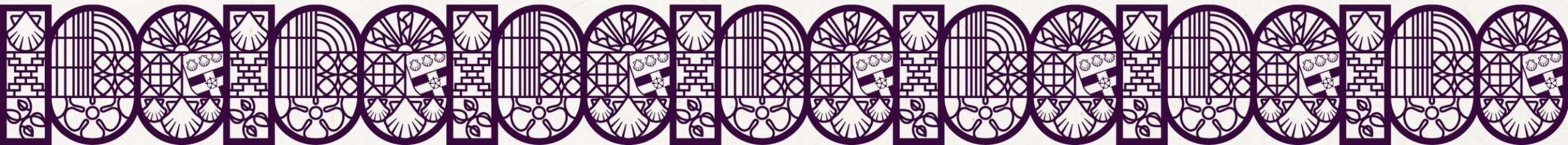
*“The LA are a guest in these communities – they need to wipe their feet and wash their pots” (Interview NO4).*



## Resources / Investment

*“residents need to feel more listened to...[XXX] have spent millions of pounds... it’s never on something that has been a real community need. It’s been more about what the [local council] think the community need” (Interview R1)*

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## The JN Research – Some case study theme quotes 3

### Power

*“People get sent in to represent decision makers, rather than the decision makers themselves attending. One of our questions is how do you keep those people of power involved? Leaders are leading significant change, but don’t want to talk about how the systems need to change... How do we get people in power to listen?” (Interview NO6).*

*“They’ve shaped [it] before they have actually even written... a consultant will come in and the Council will have it’s plan in its head as to how they want this to look” (Interview A1)*



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# The JN Research – Some case study them quotes 4

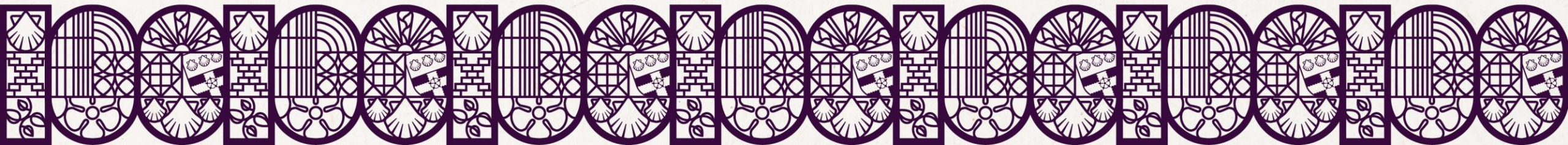
## **Frustration**

*"I think people just get to a point where they've had enough because nobody's listening." (Interview NO9)*

*"it seems to me like they're talking about community plans, people and places, but there's no sense that they actually value what's going on in the communities. Do you know? And that's very disheartening. So it's difficult to go and sit and listen to all this... we're just getting on with it, you know". (Interview C1)*

*"there was promised, when they started building [new homes], a sports centre on the far side of the motorway...it's never appeared. And the land is still there and the Council won't tell the Community Council or anybody what they've got planned for it.. [XXX] – the cry is that we are ignored" (Interview G9)*

*you're like, really, what's that actually going to deliver? I think very much it's strategic driven and it's driven by language that people want to read and it looks all good. I don't think it's going to deliver anything. [XXX] is very good at talking about connected communities. But they're actually not" (Interview A11)*





# The JN Research – Some case study theme quotes 5

## Hyper-local Co-production and agency

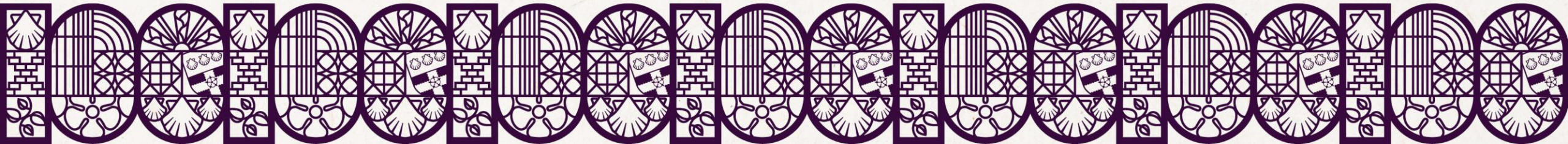
*“the best planning comes from doing it together” (Interview G2)*

*“I think it's like something that was cut and pasted from another plan and just put Armagh on it. 'cause I went through these...they're telling me what they want, what they think, you want to hear, you know? I only went through it. I wasn't too impressed to be honest. The photographs and stuff. When you Scroll down it, they're using photographs from some other place”. (Interview A5).*

*“Having a neighbourhood plan for the area would make a difference if it was community informed... They will keep it and like it, It is the goodwill and that they are part of the planning and want to be a part of it... (Interview GR6)*



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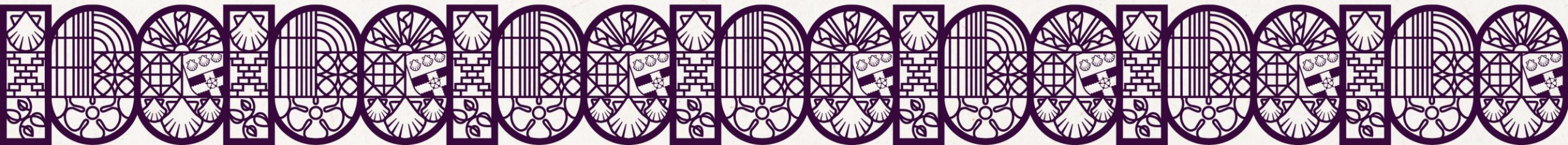
# The JN Research

## Emerging Findings and reflections – in brief

- Support / facilitation highly valued – conditions / conditionality?
- Frustration, 'decisions from above'
- Ownership of problems and solutions need to be 'co-'
- Inscriptive justice – write it down / endorsed as valid
- Follow-up / through...
- Vertical and lateral linkage and transparency
- 'Planning' effort vs Project action
- Underscores need to 'resocialise' planning...intermediaries to facilitate...
- Justice  $\cong$  Social value? (retention and extension)
- Want to explore some of this with you later (and some possible prescription) – **Now to Q&A**



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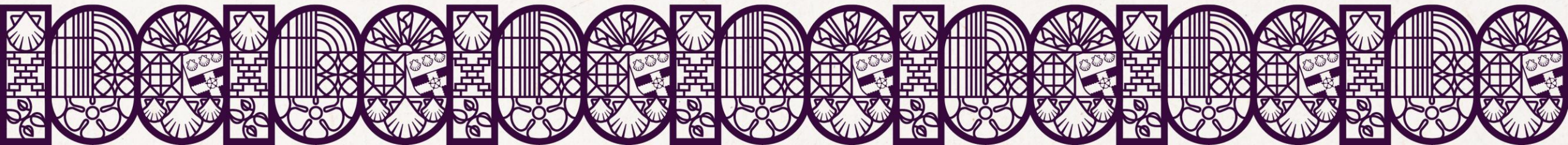


## *The JN Research – some tentative areas for action*

- The BASIS...
- The TOOLS...
- The STATUS...
- HELP...
- The SKILLS...
- The TEXT...
- The STATUS...



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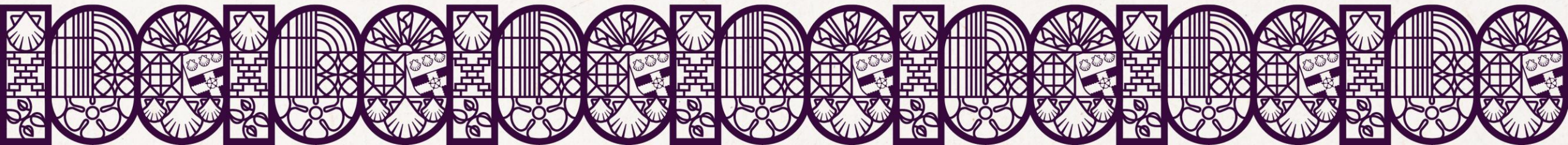


## *The JN Research – some tentative areas for recommendation*

- **BASIS:** Terms of engagement and scope of hyper-local plans – mutually agreed, and co-produced.
- **TOOLS:** Amend or repurpose existing mechanisms – assist with wider agenda setting a hyper-local evidence and prioritisation.
- **STATUS:** Afford hyper-local plans greater status as a repository of aims, issues and priorities.
- **HELP:** Resource intermediaries to support communities in planning.
- **HELP:** Recognise and support community leaders.
- **SKILLS:** Ensure responsible greater reflective practice to assist in co-producing and implementing neighbourhood scale planning.
- **TEXT:** Ensure inscriptive justice – make clear linkages from issues to policy to implementation / action.
- **STATUS:** Create special planning arrangements for more deprived areas – featuring mandated community-led planning in those places.

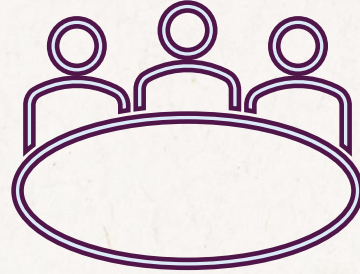


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## Roundtable I (20mins)

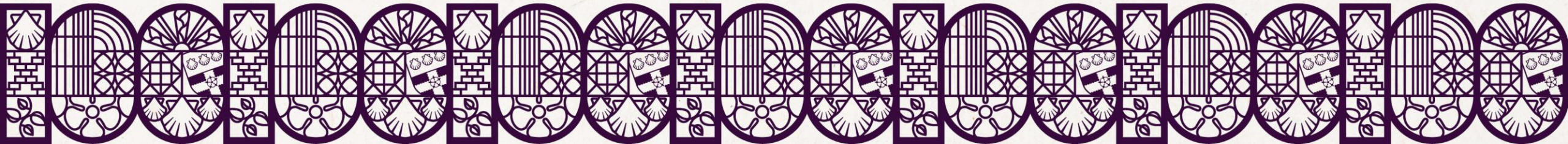


Chair: **Prof Sarah Pearson (SHU / C4)**

With JN research team: **Gavin, Tessa, John, Matt**

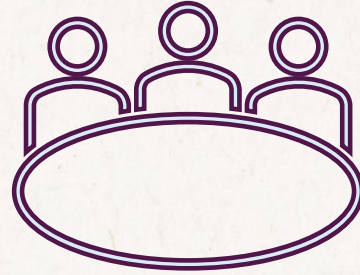
**Questions and Discussion of the emerging  
JN findings**

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## Roundtable II (50mins)

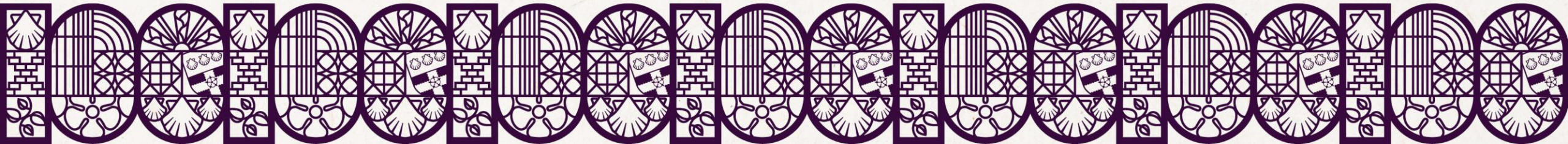


Chair: **Prof Sarah Pearson (SHU/C4)**, with invited panel:

- **James Davies (Planning Aid Wales)**
- **Naomi Luhde-Thompson (RCA)**
- **Ross Mudie (ICON)**
- **Paul Roberts (Community Places NI)**

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Opening gambit: **panel's assessment of where we are with placemaking and planning in deprived areas...**





## Breakout session

**Breakout group 1**  
**HBS G15 RED**

**Breakout group 2**  
**HBS G14 BLUE**

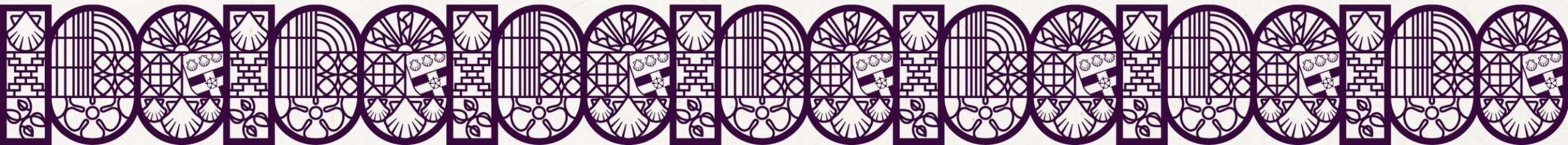
**Breakout group 3**  
**HBS G04 GREEN**

### Discussion points:

i. How can and should planning and related strategies reflect underlying issues facing / communities at scale? What prevents this?

ii. Context of 'Pride in Place' direction – how will this / could this / should hyper-local 'planning' be encouraged? Why / Why not?

- See name badges for colour group: **R B G**
- Break at 3pm
- Report back KPs at 3.20pm



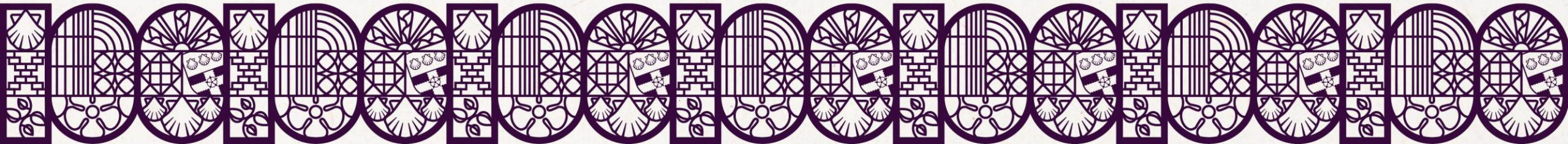


# PiPP (and its governance)

- **Winter 2025 –2026:** Neighbourhood Boards and local authorities will receive information on expected standards and measurements across the three strategic objectives
- **Spring 2026:** MHCLG will issue 2026 to 2027 capacity funding for the day-to-day operations and administration of PiPP
- **Summer 2026:** Neighbourhood Boards to confirm membership lists, and proposals to alter the area boundary, by mid-July 2026
- **Winter 2026 and early 2027:** Neighbourhood Boards to submit Regeneration Plans to the MHCLG for review and approval
- **Spring 2027:** MHCLG to make first payment for delivery of Regeneration Plans, to local authorities, marking the start of the delivery phase



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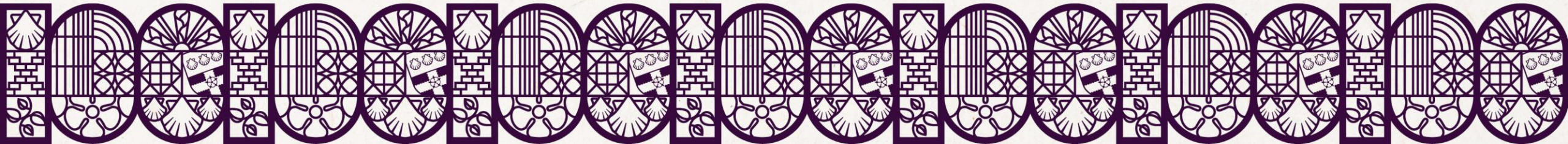
# PiPP – Regeneration 'Plans'



## Appendix 1 What people told us

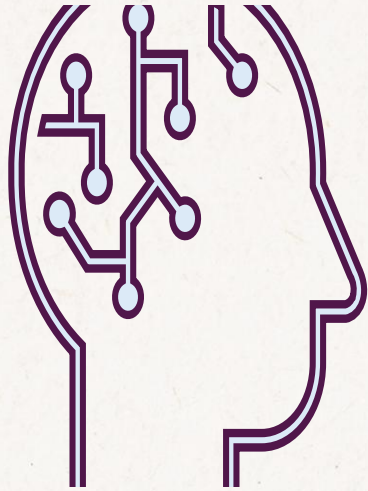
To support the development of our regeneration plan, throughout the summer (June 2025-October 2025) Hastings Neighbourhood Board asked people and businesses across Hastings how they would spend the £20 million in funding.

In total across all our involvement activity 7081 suggestions were made about how the funding should be spent. Responses have been systematically analysed and categorised to inform actionable investment themes, ensuring the regeneration plan reflects local priorities and delivers on the programme's commitment to community-led decision-making.

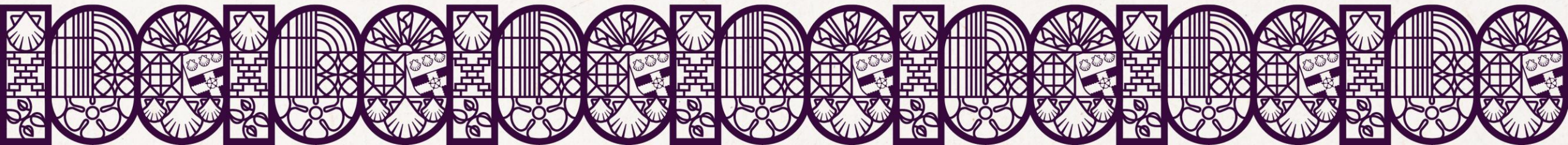




# Feedback & Concluding Remarks



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**Have a safe journey home  
and thanks for your  
participation**



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