Mind the Skills Gap

The skills we need for sustainable communities
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Providing affordable, carbon-efficient homes in safe, prosperous communities is a national priority. It means improving older properties and, crucially, building new homes in well-connected places with a range of facilities such as schools, health centres, shops and parks.

The creation and maintenance of such places – what we call ‘sustainable communities’ – depends on the efforts of a wide range of occupations, including architecture, planning, civil engineering, surveying, housing, community development, neighbourhood management, economic development and, increasingly, environmental management.

However, there is growing evidence that many of these professions face acute recruitment shortages and in several activity areas there is a lack of essential generic skills such as visioning and strategy building, project management, leadership, partnership working and communication.

If we are to tackle these barriers to delivery, we must understand fully their extent and nature. So the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC) commissioned Arup to undertake a comprehensive national study of labour shortages and skills gaps. This report builds on the work of other bodies to provide the first cross-sector assessment of the supply and demand of skills required to deliver sustainable communities.

This is a fast-changing sector, so this report is not intended to be the final word. The housing sector, for example, is particularly sensitive to changes in demand and it will be hugely influenced by the direction of future housing policy and the potentially significant increase in the supply of social housing. As a result, ASC has already asked Arup to rerun the forecasting model when the Comprehensive Spending Review has been announced later this year and to take the implications of other policies into consideration.

ASC was established to lead and co-ordinate a new approach which is designed to address the demands of community-building. As the Government’s national body for the skills and knowledge required to make and maintain better places, we will be working with our partners to consider the implications of this report and to ensure that there are recruitment and training programmes in place to provide enough people with the right skills in the right areas to create and maintain sustainable communities across England.

This means working together to enthuse young people about the sustainable communities agenda and to provide entry routes that widen participation. We need to change the education, training and continuing development of professionals and community leaders, giving them broader skills and a new approach to meeting the needs of local residents. We must develop more people with place-making skills that transcend narrow disciplines and we must encourage team-working aimed at achieving the best results for communities.

Our ultimate challenge is to create places that are carbon-efficient, socially cohesive, prosperous and well-connected. I hope that the findings of this report will help all those involved in meeting this challenge to anticipate labour market conditions, plan for the future and be better equipped to deal with complexity and change. I hope that it will stimulate dialogue across this wide-ranging sector and lead to practical solutions that will support the delivery of the ambitious but vital challenge of creating sustainable communities across the country.

Professor Peter Roberts OBE Chair
The Academy for Sustainable Communities
Executive Summary

Mind the Skills Gap

1. This report, ‘Mind the Skills Gap’ assesses the gaps in the supply and demand of skills required to deliver sustainable communities. The study commissioned by the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC) and undertaken by Arup, builds on earlier work by Ernst and Young and York Consulting.

2. Arup’s work has involved:

- an online survey of 146 organisations involved in the delivery of sustainable communities to identify organisational perceptions of current skill gaps and future requirements;

- an online survey of 763 individuals within organisations to establish perceptions of personal skills and future requirements;

- case study audits of specific sustainable community organisations and projects to establish their workloads, skills gaps and issues; and

- a modelling exercise to provide forecasts of the scale of gaps in labour supply.

3. Sustainable communities balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of places to meet residents’ needs today and in the future. Sustainable communities are diverse, reflecting local circumstances, but share common characteristics and offer people:

- a decent home that they can afford;

- a community in which they want to live and work;

- the chance to develop their skills and interests;

- access to jobs and excellent services; and

- the chance to get engaged in their community and to make a difference.

4. Adopting this all-encompassing approach requires a change in working methods amongst the various individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of sustainable communities.

5. The study concludes that there aren’t enough people with the right skills in the right places to deliver the Government’s ambitious agenda for creating sustainable communities across England. There is a need for an integrated strategy to support skills development and address labour shortages in key occupations and for a partnership approach across the sector.

6. This research has reviewed all previous relevant material and developed new information on the sector. However, it does not take account of the recent Housing Green Paper, the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) or the impact of post 2012 Olympics on the sustainable communities agenda. A second stage is being commissioned which will investigate their impact.
Over-arching findings

- Organisations need technically qualified staff with a range of generic skills in order to deliver sustainable communities. Generic skills include project management, communication and leadership. For a full list and definitions please see Appendix K. Research undertaken for this study, along with existing information, shows that although there are significant numbers of highly-qualified, highly-committed individuals working in all areas of delivery there are also labour shortages across the sector, concerns about some technical skills, and recognition that generic skills are lacking in many areas.

- Since the Egan Review there has been notable progress made towards improving skills by the ASC, the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE’s), Sector Skills Councils and professional institutes.

- Delivering sustainable communities requires balance and compromise to create aspirational yet deliverable projects. The best projects result from full engagement of all professionals, working together to develop solutions and sometimes compromising on their individual objectives.

- The research shows that skilled people are central to the delivery of sustainable communities, but that other factors play a part, including pressures on resources, risk management, and organisational culture; particularly one that embraces opportunity and mutual understanding, as well as cross-disciplinary working.

- A number of factors point to the frequent and increasing use of consultants to undertake core or supplementary public sector functions. This throws up a number of issues to be addressed, including ensuring that public sector workers have the skills to efficiently manage consultants.

- In terms of the housing profession, evidence from a wide range of sources is ambiguous. There is a need for a clear set of data for the housing sector so that baselines can be determined and used across the industry.

Sustainable communities balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of places to meet residents’ needs today and in the future.
The sustainable communities workforce

7. The core sustainable communities workforce comprises a broad mix of built environment, public service and socially focused professionals working across public, private and voluntary sectors. It also includes those encompassed within traditional professional or technical groupings, as well as newer groups such as regeneration professionals or community workers with broad generalist and facilitation skills.

8. There has been significant growth in the total sustainable communities workforce in recent years, but experience and forecasts suggest a shortfall in supply in suitably qualified professionals.

9. The scope of the sustainable communities programme is considerable and the sustainable communities workforce is a large group. Its size depends on how widely the definition of the workforce is drawn, but estimates range from 750,000 to 1.3 million individuals.

Very often individuals and organisations do not know what skills they need.

Individuals’ perception of their personal skills gaps relative to organisational perceptions of their employees’ skills gaps – based on Arup’s survey

Source: Arup’s online survey

Skills gaps by sector and organisation

10. Information about skills gaps on an organisational basis comes primarily from the survey of organisations as well as existing information collected by York Consulting and lessons learned from the organisational case studies.

• The private sector tends to be staffed with a younger workforce, and faces fewer barriers to recruiting good staff.

• Competition for good professionals can be strong and is thought by much of the sustainable communities sector to be increasing – and private sector firms seem better able to attract scarce candidates.

• Organisations expect to have particular difficulty recruiting in the landscape architects, urban designers and architects sector (with difficulties focusing on landscape architects and urban designers) and the planners sector in the future, a problem felt most acutely in the public sector.

• Government spending and employment policy affect how the public sector is able to organise their recruitment, and the result is that staff levels in many public sector bodies are lower than they would ideally like.

11. The combination of these factors contributes to the frequent and increasing use of consultants by the public sector. This raises important questions for the public sector about cultivating skills and adequate knowledge retention. This suggests the increasing importance of focusing on generic skill development, particularly in the public sector.

For a full definition of generic skills please see appendix K.

Sustainable communities balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of places to meet residents’ needs.
12. The Egan Review noted the lack of reliable information relating to skills issues on a regional basis. Part of the remit of this study was to investigate the extent to which there is a variation in skills levels or skills needs by region. The forecasting model developed for this study predicts labour shortages by profession and by region.

13. The sustainable communities workforce as a whole is distributed across the country in roughly the same proportion as the workforce at large. However, within this, there are clear ‘clusters’ of types of professional, for example architects and surveyors in the greater South East and community and neighbourhood workers in the northern regions, which may reflect different policy priorities by region as well as individual lifestyle choices, differential wage rates and other issues.

14. Within the predicted labour shortages amongst the professionals that make up the sustainable communities sector the forecast model projects that, whilst some regions will experience labour shortages, others may have a surplus of professionals overall. There is a clear North-South divide in the modelled shortages across the country with the northern and midland regions experiencing a far greater supply of labour than demand by 2012 and the southern and eastern regions forecast to experience a higher demand than supply. This reflects the fact that the demand forecast model is driven by patterns of public expenditure. Demand from high profile projects in the London and the South East may ‘suck in’ professionals from other regions.

15. Organisational and geographical mobility is higher in and around the southern regions, with the majority of people saying they would be prepared to work in the South West, London or the South East, and commute longer distances.

### Arup’s forecast of skills gaps in the sustainable communities workforce by region in 2012 (shortage shown as % of supply)

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Source: Arup’s forecasting model

Skills issues by occupation

16. The forecast model for this study predicts the scale of labour shortages to 2012 across England, by region and profession. It does not take into account recent developments such as the Housing Green Paper (2007) or the Olympics. The model is structured around a supply forecast and a demand forecast from 2006 onwards. Data are presented as observed trends in the baseline (2002-2005) and then forecasts forward from 2006 to 2012 in terms of supply and demand. These forecasts are based on assumptions drawn from LFS trends, Arup’s online surveys, and details of public expenditure plans.

**Forecast of labour shortages in the workforce in England by profession in 2012 (shortage shown as % of supply)**

Source: Arup’s forecasting model

**Key:**
- **LAR:** Landscape architects, urban designers and architects
- **DEV:** Developers
- **ENG:** Engineers
- **ENV:** Environmental specialists
- **HOU/WEL:** Housing and Welfare Officers
- **NEI:** Neighbourhood and community development specialists
- **PLN:** Planners (including development control and forward planners)
- **REG:** Regeneration and economic development specialists
- **SUS:** Sustainable development specialists
- **SRV:** Surveyors
- **TRA:** Transport planners
17. **Landscape architects, urban designers and architects** are concerned with the design of buildings, the public realm and settlements. There are close relationships between these professions, not only in their approach but also in the flow of individuals between professions, particularly from architecture and landscape architecture into urban design. Their involvement in the quality and nature of the built environment is crucial to place-making, an essential element of the delivery of sustainable communities.

- Labour shortages in landscape architecture, urban design and architecture are forecast to increase significantly to 91% by 2012. This is a reflection of the growing demand for design skills and the lack of increase in supply.
- There is little evidence of a significant shortage of architects. This remains a popular career choice with a steady level of university applications and high retention within the field. Landscape architects, on the other hand, are in short supply. The increasing recognition of the role of an attractive public realm in delivering social, economic and environmental benefits has led to an upswing in demand not matched by supply. In the case of urban designers there is evidence of a labour shortage. Although influenced by organisational background, this profession was identified by over 35% of online individual survey respondents as an area of labour shortages.
- Survey material suggests confidence amongst this sector in the level of technical skills. Only architects show some concern over their knowledge of relevant procedures and specialist skills required to undertake the job.
- Urban designers and landscape architects, in common with the rest of the sector, identify gaps in financial and project management skills. There is a sense that design professionals could benefit from close working with other sustainable communities specialists, partly in order to help future-proof designs.

18. **Developers and surveyors** play a key role in the development of the built environment. Surveying is quite wide ranging, from building surveying to evaluation of the financial feasibility and value of development. Developers, often from a surveying background, oversee the physical development of sites.

- There are limited labour shortages reported at present, but future trends in supply and demand suggest increasing areas of shortage. The labour shortage is forecast to be 6% for surveyors and 17% for developers by 2012. This reflects the growing demand for the skills of these professionals as many large projects move into the delivery phase and major new drives for housing delivery are planned for the future.
- More than 35% of surveyor respondents in these professions are concerned about their specialist skills, 50% of respondents are concerned about their knowledge of specialist procedures and over 70% identify specialist skills as requiring improvement. This partly reflects the rigorous technical background and recognition of the value of technical skills of many in this field.
- In relation to generic skills, surveyors who responded to the Arup survey identify project management and communication as priorities whilst developers identify a wider range of generic skills, reflecting the more cross-cutting nature of the role of the developer. Surveyors have limited engagement in the sustainable communities agenda, sometimes hindering delivery because their skills are essential in many areas.
19. **Engineers** contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities in the practical solutions they develop to provide fit-for-purpose sites, buildings and infrastructure. This involves a number of different types of engineers, including civil, structural, building services, transport, mechanical, electrical and geotechnical.

- The shortage in skilled engineers is predicted to widen to 17% by 2012. This is driven by significant increases in the level of demand, causing gaps to widen despite improvements in the supply of engineers.

- Although individual engineers are concerned about maintaining their technical skills, organisations are reasonably confident of the ability of staff to meet requirements of the job.

- Engineers responding to the Arup survey identify project, process and financial management as gaps in their generic skills. Leadership is also identified as an area of weakness and there is a sense that engineers sometimes have limited engagement with the sustainable communities agenda.

20. **The environmental sector** includes environmental and sustainable development specialists and covers a broad range of disciplines and individuals who are likely to be involved with the delivery of sustainable communities. Jobs range from promotion of biodiversity to green spaces management to strategy development and impact assessment. Professionals are involved at every stage – design, production, maintenance and management of communities. Sustainable development has emerged in recent years as a profession in its own right.

- Environmental specialists refer to those in traditionally defined environmental professions. These professions span a range of different areas - biodiversity, green spaces, waste management, etc - and are involved in every stage of delivery from design, planning (including impact assessments), development and management.

- Sustainable development specialists are part of an emerging profession who look at the wider issues of sustainability. They consider environmental issues alongside economic and social factors. The focus of many of these professionals is about developing methods and strategies to address environmental issues whilst balancing impact on economic growth and social inclusion.

- Labour shortages in environmental specialists will worsen temporarily and then start to improve to the point where, by 2012, the forecast is an 8% surplus. A shortage of sustainable development experts is likely to steadily increase to more than 70% in the period up to 2012.

- Individuals report concern about the depth and breadth of their technical skills, given the wide subject matter involved.

- Arup’s survey identified perceived gaps in project management, stakeholder management, leadership, conflict resolution, inclusive visioning and breakthrough thinking. There is a need for those in this sector to be embedded in delivery teams, ensuring sustainable development issues are not seen as constraints but opportunities.

21. **Housing and welfare officers** and neighbourhood/community development officers are principally concerned with the social aspects of planning and maintaining sustainable communities and are predominantly employed in the public sector. Housing and welfare officers are concerned with the management and maintenance of properties in accordance with sustainability principles whilst neighbourhood/community development officers are concerned with local regeneration projects, often working to build community capacity.

- The report highlights the particular difficulties in estimating the numbers employed in the housing sector and acknowledges that the sector is currently subject to particularly rapid policy change which will impact on future demand. The housing sector is not just made up of housing officers but contains professionals covered elsewhere in the study, such as planners, surveyors and developers.
Evidence is mixed on the supply of housing and welfare officers. Arup’s results show that there is a requirement for 47% growth in the supply of housing and welfare officers to meet demand; forecasts however suggest that supply will exceed demand by 25% to 2012. The surplus in the model is partly dependent on evidence from trends to date but the model needs to be rerun to reflect CSR07 and the new directions in housing policy announced over the past few months.

Evidence from the online survey indicates real difficulties amongst housing professionals in recruiting a range of occupations into the sector and a more general shortage of housing officers at senior management level particularly in London and the South East.

There is a need to establish a clear set of data for the housing sector so that baselines can be set and used across the industry.

There is a forecast surplus of more than 20% for neighbourhood/community development officers by 2012.

More than 55% of housing and more than 60% of community development officers felt that their specialist technical skills did not meet the requirements of the job. Organisations have less concern, suggesting a problem of confidence in a fast changing policy and technical environment rather than serious skills shortages. Arup’s survey identified a number of generic skills gaps amongst housing and community development professionals including communication, breakthrough thinking, inclusive visioning, financial management and stakeholder management, leadership, project management and making it happen. There are increasing demands on housing professionals in particular to lead cross-sector working at a local level.

22. **The planning system and planners** have received increasing attention in recent years with the acknowledgement of the importance of planning in delivery of policy objectives ranging from housing to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The lack of resources faced by the sector, alongside the diminution of professional status, need for culture change and sometimes individual and organisation demoralisation, has also been widely recognised.

With expected increases in public sector investment, the labour shortage in the planning profession is forecast to increase over the long-term to 46% by 2012. This is despite recent improvements in the supply of new planners entering the workforce.

Planners are identified by approximately 10% of organisations surveyed as requiring improvement in their technical skills, a relatively high proportion compared to other professions. There are particular gaps in development control.

Amongst generic skills, financial management skills were most frequently identified as significantly lacking by individuals.

23. **Effective regeneration and economic development** requires improvements to the physical landscape as well as the creation of new social and economic opportunities. As such, those who work in regeneration are employed in a range of different occupations playing often very different roles. The common feature is their focus on improving the performance of their local community and their perception of themselves as regeneration professionals over and above other categorisations such as town planners.

Arup’s model forecasts significant increases in demand so that labour shortages will be more than 70% in 2012.
• Regeneration and economic development officers do not have the option of such rigorous technical training as some of the other professions, unless they enter regeneration through these occupations or undertake specialist postgraduate training. This may contribute to the lack of confidence that the study found, as well as a lack of skills in some areas.

• Arup’s survey identified a wide range of generic skills that are required by regeneration and economic development professionals, including project management, partnership working, making things happen, leadership, community engagement, negotiation and conflict resolution.

• The study shows that regeneration officers are often expected to drive forward cross sector working, demanding technical knowledge and comprehensive generic skills.

24. **Transport planners** are concerned with the provision and management of a sustainable transport infrastructure, at a national, regional and local level. There is also a very wide range of specialists, from highway designers through to regional land use and transport modelling.

• Forecasts of future labour shortages suggest an increasing shortage of transport planners available. The labour shortage is forecast to increase to more than 10% by 2012. More than 10% of organisational respondents to the survey anticipated shortages in this area.

• Amongst sustainable communities professionals, transport planners and organisations are relatively confident of the level of technical skills.

• Transport planners are also relatively confident about the level of their generic skills. In common with those across the sector, financial, project and change management are most likely to be identified as areas requiring improvement. There is some evidence that transport planners are not always as engaged in the sustainable communities agenda as they could be.

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**Sustainable communities workforce**

Those who are most engaged and identify with the sustainable communities agenda tend to be those involved in front line delivery: forward planners (as opposed to development control planners); area regeneration staff; housing and welfare officers; and neighbourhood/community development workers.

There are some professionals whose skills are essential but who are not fully engaged, such as surveyors. This is not really about a lack of such professionals but is more about a failure to draw in and use their knowledge – and sometimes challenge their preconceptions. This relates to a wider issue that very often individuals and organisations do not know what skills and knowledge they need or what they should develop.

Despite sign-up to headline objectives, individuals tend to be very focused on their own area of working and are not always aware of the objectives and activities of others. This hinders a strategic view – and effective compromise – and prevents input which could add value across the sector.
**Recommendations**

As a consequence of undertaking this study a number of recommendations for addressing the labour shortages and skills gaps that threaten the delivery of sustainable communities in the future have been made.

**Promote a national drive to address skills gaps:**
It is evident that labour shortages, generic skills gaps and concerns over specialist and technical knowledge are experienced across the regions and occupations. There needs to be a nationally co-ordinated approach to developing skills and knowledge, in which all partners and stakeholders are engaged. ASC needs to continue this role as the national centre for delivering skills for sustainable communities, working with partners across the sector to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to tackling shortages and gaps.

**Recognise generic skills are key:** Individuals and organisations across the full range of professions and in all the regions recognise the critical importance of generic skills. In response to the research’s findings, we recommend that:

- a) National programmes must be developed and delivered on a cross-profession basis in order to address common gaps and encourage and reinforce cross-sector working;

- b) Short courses and dissemination of best practice are clearly recognised as preferred approaches for busy practitioners;

**Work to address labour shortages, recruitment and retention:** Delivering sustainable communities in the future requires more skilled professionals. Continued effort is needed in attracting new recruits and retaining them by providing attractive ongoing opportunities, including continuous professional development. ASC should continue to promote sustainable communities professions, by raising the profile of occupations and by providing enhanced entry routes for all ages. ASC will work with other relevant bodies, including Sector Skills Councils, professional institutes and the local government sector, to add value to each other’s work.

**Identify, recognise and promote technical skills:**
Specialist skills and knowledge are required across the sector. Skills need updating, improving and adapting in response to changing market conditions and policy changes, including climate change. Partners and stakeholders must support the development of technical skills amongst the newer professions and reinvigorate those of more established professions. At the national level, ASC should encourage professional bodies and other partners to ensure that technical and specialist skills shortages are addressed. ASC’s work to provide practical guidance for technical areas, such as climate change, will be co-ordinated with other relevant bodies and departments and promoted across the range of professions.

**Promote best practice:** Research and best practice needs to be captured, collated and translated into practical guidance and examples that reflect the needs of delivery organisations. At the national level, ASC should continue to disseminate research findings and best practice in an accessible and practical format that leads to action and improvement.

**Develop and embed a common understanding of sustainable communities:** There needs to be a common and shared understanding across the professions of what delivering sustainable communities actually means in practice. As the national body for promoting sustainable communities skills, ASC should work with key partners and stakeholders to develop a common language. This will include the development of benchmarking and diagnostic tools that highlight knowledge gaps and sign post users to areas of support. This work will also contribute to a more consistent level of engagement by occupational groups.

**Undertake further research:** This report does not take into account the outcomes of CSR07, the Housing Green Paper and the post-2012 impact of the Olympics. New directions in housing policy announced over the past few months will change, and arguably exacerbate, forecasts for the sector. Further research is needed on this sector, including the agreement of a shared definition for the housing sector. ASC will work with key partners, including Asset Skills and CIH, to commission further research work in this area.
Main Findings

- Sustainable communities balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of places to meet residents’ needs today and in the future.

- The formation of the ASC marks a major recognition of the role and increasing demands across a wide range of individuals and organisations working in the sector.

- To support the work of the ASC, the report identifies the gaps in skills that need to be addressed for the successful delivery of the sustainable communities agenda.

Generic Skills

(A fuller definition of these skills is given in Appendix K)

- Project management
- Leadership
- Breakthrough thinking/brokerage
- Inclusive visioning
- Team working/leadership
- Making it happen, given constraints
- Process/change management
- Financial management/appraisal
- Stakeholder management
- Analysis, decision making, learning from mistakes, evaluation
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Customer awareness

1.1 Introduction

This report, entitled ‘Mind the Skills Gap’, assesses the gap in the supply and demand of skills required to deliver the sustainable communities agenda. The study on which this report is based was commissioned by the Academy for Sustainable Communities. It builds on earlier work by Ernst and Young1 and York Consulting.2

The context for this report is recognition of the challenges faced in delivering genuinely sustainable communities, particularly the challenges of multi-disciplinary delivery and the need to work with stakeholders and existing communities. The formation of the ASC marks a major recognition of the role and increasing demands across a wide range of individuals and organisations working in the sector.

The Egan Review published in 20043 identified gaps in both traditional technical skills and generic skills and followed publication of the Sustainable Communities Plan in 2003.

1.2 Sustainable Communities Plan policy objectives

The former Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, launched Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future in 2003. Known as the ‘Sustainable Communities Plan’, it sets out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It aims to tackle housing supply issues in the South East, low demand in other parts of the country, and the quality of our public spaces.

The plan includes not just a significant increase in resources and major reforms of housing and planning, but a new approach to how we build and what is built.

The programme of action aims to focus the attention and co-ordinate the efforts of all levels of Government and stakeholders in bringing about development that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations as well as succeeding now.

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1 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Evidence Base Review of Skills for Sustainable Communities Ernst and Young March 2004
2 Academy for Sustainable Communities Gap Analysis for Sustainable Communities Professionals by York Consulting 2007
3 The Egan Review: Skills for Sustainable Communities ODPM 2004
In 2005 the Government published a five-year plan – Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity.

Through this plan the Government also reaffirmed that creating sustainable communities is about more than just housing. Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity sets out action to revitalise neighbourhoods, strengthen local leadership, and increase regional prosperity to create places in which people want to live and work. In particular, in the preface to the plan, the former Deputy Prime Minister stated:

“Sustainable communities are welcoming, prosperous places to live. They have the jobs, homes, schools, healthcare, transport and other services people need. A sustainable community meets the needs of all its citizens so that the most disadvantaged aren’t left behind. Our aim is to create communities that will stand the test of time; and places where people want to live.”

The five-year plan outlines ambitious plans to help people shape their communities to provide safe, clean and green environments and offer security, opportunity and choice for all, building on two key principles: putting people in control and giving them the tools to shape their future; and, acting at the right level, with good governance and strong leadership, to get services right. The aim is to create sustainable communities – places that offer people:

- a decent home that they can afford;
- a community in which they want to live and work;
- the chance to develop their skills and interests;
- access to jobs and excellent services; and
- the chance to get engaged in their community and to make a difference.

Sustainable communities – the definition today

The concept of sustainable communities has evolved since 2002. Consensus has emerged around the optimum characteristics of a sustainable community – and what conditions are required to underpin one.

Sustainable communities balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of places to meet residents’ needs today and in the future. These are diverse and reflect local circumstances. Eight common characteristics are highlighted in the diagram below.
1.3 The importance of skills
The adoption of a sustainable communities approach requires a change in the way that the various individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of sustainable communities approach their work. This is challenging for a number of reasons:

- the wide range of occupations and professionals involved;
- the need for meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders;
- the challenges of planning to meet the needs of current and future generations; and
- the complexities of delivery on the ground.

The Egan Review identifies the occupations and vocations of individuals involved in the delivery of sustainable communities. The Egan list and those professionals included in this analysis follow.

- **Implementers and decision makers**: Local Authority (LA) elected members, LA chief executives and staff, members of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Regional Assembly members and staff, chief executives of regional organisations, infrastructure providers and maintenance managers, regeneration leaders, chief executives and staff from relevant national agencies, MPs and civil servants with relevant policy responsibilities.

- **Built environment occupations**: planners, urban designers, area master planners, architects, engineers, surveyors, construction industry managers and educators of built environment professionals.

- **Environmental occupations**: environmental officers, environmental advisors and environmental managers.

- **Social occupations**: managers of housing and social services.

- **Economic occupations**: developers, investors in property and economic development agency managers and officers.

- **Community occupations**: professional community and voluntary workers, community/neighbourhood wardens and community support wardens.

- **Cross-cutting occupations**: neighbourhood renewal and regeneration practitioners.
Typical skills that are required across these occupations can be summarised as follows.

- **Partnership working and leadership skills**: identifying potential partners; partnership development; interpersonal skills; communication; partnership management; conflict resolution; and delivering through partners.

- **Programme design and delivery**: visioning, strategic planning and management; identifying, selecting and establishing plausible intervention; influencing mainstream service delivery; managing the delivery chain; problem solving; and managing, monitoring and evaluating interventions.

- **Learning from what works**: understanding evidence-based practice; identifying sources of evidence; identifying information and learning needs; applying what works; using what works to reshape mainstream service provision; and tailoring what works to local circumstances.

These skill requirements are complex because they require a mix of the generic skills identified by Egan with a set of occupations and professions that also necessarily embody and encompass deep technical skills. Whilst there is not necessarily an absolute conflict between these generic and technical skill dimensions, there are clearly significant challenges for individuals in ensuring that both dimensions are sufficiently understood and for organisations in ensuring an appropriate mix of technical and generic skills. Deeper technical skills are especially associated with some of the more traditional professions which run significant risks of becoming confined within their narrow professional boundaries.

**1.4 About ASC**

ASC’s role is about making better places and creating sustainable communities. This will not happen without suitably skilled and knowledgeable people across the public, private and third sectors (voluntary, charity, and not-for-profit organisations). ASC’s function is to build capacity and capability in these sectors through ensuring that there are enough people with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours, including access to practical information and support, to create and maintain sustainable communities.

As the Government’s national centre for sustainable communities, ASC is the only organisation with the mandate and ability to work across the public, private and third sectors and key professional groups. This unique role is vital to ensure a collaborative approach to the very complex challenges of regeneration and new developments across the country.

ASC works at the strategic level, whilst focusing on enabling practical, relevant and tangible change to take place. ASC’s approach is one of a working partnership with a range of individuals and organisations, helping to identify priorities, best practice and deliver better results where they matter most.

ASC’s remit is to:

- increase capacity and capability in the sector by strengthening the effectiveness of existing practitioners, by attracting and retaining future generations of professionals and by widening access to sustainable communities careers for a much more diverse workforce;
- improve professional practice through developing and promoting learning and skills programmes, cross-sector learning and continuous professional development (CPD);
- deliver better outcomes through sharing and adding to the wealth of research and best practice that exists in the UK and internationally;
- raise awareness by influencing other bodies’ activities and policy so that they reflect the multi-faceted nature of sustainable communities; and
- set the standard for best practice in place-making through validation and ‘kite-marking’ services and products.

ASC aims to deliver better outcomes through sharing and adding to the wealth of research and best practice that exists in the UK and internationally; raising awareness, influencing other bodies’ activities and policy so that they reflect the multi-faceted nature of sustainable communities; and setting the standard for best practice in place making through validation and ‘kite-marking’ services and products.
1.5 Previous studies
Investigating skills gaps in sustainable communities has in the past been hampered by a lack of adequate data. The 2004 Ernst and Young Evidence Base Review of Skills for Sustainable Communities, commissioned by ODPM, found no data available that could be used to help estimate the additional level of activity the existing workforce could absorb. Nor could any data be found to predict the incremental demand for vocational and non-vocational trained people that would be created by the delivery of the sustainable communities agenda. Overall they found an absence of demand data for the core occupations and more work was required in relation to the Sustainable Communities Plan.

Ernst and Young were able to identify that there were about 1.3 million individuals within the identified skill groups relevant to sustainable communities, including about 350,000 who were members of professional bodies, trade associations and societies aligned with the agenda. They also found quantitative and qualitative evidence to suggest that supply shortages were emerging in relation to civil and structural engineers, town planners, transport planners and engineers and conservation officers. They recommended a range of further work in relation to both demand and supply.

The more recent York Consulting Gap Analysis for Sustainable Communities Professionals study found that the extent to which the available labour market data and information had moved on since 2004 was surprisingly minimal, despite enthusiasm for such data from many organisations. They recommended the avoidance of too heavy reliance on quantitative data because of the size and scope of the sector. They recommended that any quantitative work, particularly on generic skills, should be balanced with qualitative analysis and that research should consider regional differences.

1.6 A review of the skills we need for sustainable communities
In view of previous findings this study has adopted a more original approach to the identification of skills gaps. From the outset the main challenge of the study has been to produce a robust dataset that can be used as a basis for sensible, representative analysis, building on previous work. Accordingly Arup’s basic approach has involved:

- A survey of organisations involved in the delivery of sustainable communities to identify organisational perceptions of current skills gaps and future requirements;
- A survey of individuals within organisations to establish perceptions of personal skills and future requirements;
- Case study audits of specific sustainable community organisations and projects; and
- A modelling exercise to provide forecasts of the scale of technical labour shortages.

The first of these two requirements was achieved by using online surveys – a method which enabled relatively large scale surveys at relatively low cost. Following a piloting exercise, details of the online surveys were sent to a very wide range of organisations with a request to volunteer to take part in the organisational survey and to invite their employees and associates to take part in the individual survey. These two surveys ran for two months. In total Arup was able to achieve 763 individual responses and 146 responses to the organisational survey.
Case studies focused on 20 specific organisations, across the nine English regions. They focused on gaining an understanding of existing technical and generic skills and current and future gaps. They typically involved a series of interviews with key individuals, together with reviews of the background information and data that the organisation was able to supply. Specific investigations were tailored to the circumstances of individual cases. To provide a context for the studies a profile of the sustainable communities agenda was produced for each region.

A spreadsheet model of the supply and demand of professionals has been developed to model the quantum of possible future shortages to 2012. This exercise, of course, carries a health warning in that actual demand and supply will be subject to a wide range of factors including the state of housing and property markets as well as professional and regional mobility. It also assumes that the sustainable communities agenda as currently envisaged will continue.

The study also utilised evidence provided by earlier exercises commissioned by ASC and wider literature on the issue.

1.7 Acknowledgements

Arup would like to thank all of those people that took part in the study and for the valuable comments on interim results provided by the ASC staff.

The interpretations and conclusions have been drawn by Arup from these findings. The recommendations have been drawn up by ASC.

ASC aims to deliver better outcomes through sharing and adding to the wealth of research and best practice that exists in the UK and internationally.
2 Overview of the Sustainable Communities Workforce

2.1 Introduction
The core sustainable communities workforce comprises a broad mix of social science, public service and built environment professionals working across public, private and voluntary sectors. It includes those encompassed within traditional professional or technical groups as well as newer groups such as regeneration professionals or community workers with broader generalist and facilitation skills.

2.2 The sustainable communities workforce
In 2005, Labour Force Survey (LFS) data suggests the sustainable communities workforce consists of about 750,000 employees, approximately 3% of the total workforce in England 4. This is a significant element of the workforce when compared to other professional groups. In reaching this figure Arup has used a tighter definition of sustainable communities workforce than that used by Ernst and Young in the 2004 Evidence Base Review, who identified around 1.3 million professionals using a wider set of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes to define the workforce. As such, this is a mid-range estimate.

As defined in this analysis, engineers make up the biggest group in the workforce, followed by housing and welfare officers and community development specialists.

Main Findings

- There has been significant growth in the total sustainable communities workforce in recent years but experience and forecasts suggest a shortfall in supply in suitably qualified professionals.
- Generic skills are viewed as becoming increasingly important in delivery and facilitated by ASC and the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCEs) there has been recent progress towards addressing skills gaps. Key areas that continue to face gaps include project and financial management.
- Technical labour shortages are now perceived as more significant than generic skills gaps as sustainable communities move towards a delivery phase. The gap seems to be of experienced professionals able to address market conditions, funding and other constraints.

Key recommendation: There needs to be continued efforts to meet the demand for technical skills and knowledge across the sustainable communities sector as well as improve the generic skills of those already working within it.

The overall sustainable communities labour shortages will worsen and then remain static up to 2012.

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4 Includes those architects, landscape architects, urban designers, surveyors, developers, regeneration/economic development officers, community development officers, engineers, environmental specialists, planners, transport planners and housing and welfare officers involved in delivery of sustainable communities. This is based on LFS data from 2005. In some cases we have made an estimate of the proportion of individuals within a professional group who are engaged in delivery of sustainable communities. In other cases, there is no matching LFS category for the profession in question, and estimates derive from survey returns and data collated by York Consulting.
This growth has included a significant increase in the number of housing and welfare and community development officers, although some of the other newer professional groups have also shown a rapid growth in numbers such as environmental specialists, sustainable development officers and regeneration and economic development professionals.

Based on trends evident from the LFS, there has been significant growth in the total workforce in recent years. The workforce has increased by approximately 130,000 professionals over the last four years and the sector represents an increasing proportion of the workforce.

### Percentage of professional groups making up sustainable communities workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Percentage of sustainable communities workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and welfare officers</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood/community development workers</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town planners</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development professionals</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyors</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport planners</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LFS 2005

### Sustainable communities professionals relative to the English workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable communities workforce</td>
<td>613,081</td>
<td>624,311</td>
<td>665,985</td>
<td>695,345</td>
<td>745,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable communities workforce (% of total)</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total English workforce</td>
<td>23,111,486</td>
<td>23,198,770</td>
<td>23,381,788</td>
<td>23,462,957</td>
<td>23,613,495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LFS 2001-2005
2.3 Drivers of change

It is widely acknowledged that the growth has been driven by a number of factors including economic success and a rapid increase in demand and requirements for new housing, particularly relative to the recessionary and depressed market conditions of the 1990s. Alongside this growth the desire to achieve increasing levels of sustainability, changes in the way that people live and work, and the need to avoid the failures of mass housing provision in the past have created conditions that are more challenging. The requirements for integrated and comprehensive approaches have limited the role of purely market solutions and placed increased responsibility on the public sector to facilitate effective delivery.

Demand for professionals has thus been driven by specific needs and sustainable public policy objectives and associated budgets for the implementation of these policies as well as market demand. Although the relationship between expenditure levels and job posts is not straightforward, and subject to change in the future with the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review, key budgets provide a useful indicator of the nature of the trajectory of demand.

Public spending across departments has risen by 7% since 2001. Spending by Communities and Local Government has increased more rapidly in their communities budget stream, rising by 23%, and declining, by 8%, in the local government budget.

There is additional spending on specific projects set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan. Funding has risen from £5,451m in 2002/03 to £7,741m in 2005/06. Broad categorisation of these projects by type of project suggests that, unsurprisingly, most of the increase has been focused in areas likely to accommodate the highest levels of growth – the ‘growth areas’.

Sustainable Communities Plan spending by type of project

Source: Office of National Statistics

In All figures quoted are compound annual growth rates based on Office of National Statistics (ONS) annual out-turn figures
* Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, ODPM, 2003
2.4 Labour market issues
Evidence set out by Ernst and Young and York Consulting, as well as from Arup’s surveys and case studies, suggest current skills gaps in a number of professions, in particular planners, transport planners, regeneration specialists and urban designers/landscape architects.

2.5 Forecast gaps in labour supply
Using the model developed as part of this study, trends in overall supply and approximation of demand based on expenditure figures have been used to forecast the trajectory of labour shortages in the sustainable communities field. These suggest a worsening labour shortage between demand for professionals and jobs and supply in all of the professions, with the exception of environmental, housing and welfare, and neighbourhood development specialists.

2.5.1 Modelling gaps in labour supply
The demand side of the model is driven by patterns in public spending and, in particular, the spending commitments related to sustainable communities. This reflects the assumption that public spending will be what drives and finances activity in sustainable communities, and reflects the emphasis of this study in understanding whether there are sufficient skills to deliver on the government’s sustainable communities programme.

Much of sustainable communities employment and expenditure is directly within the public sector, for example, in local authorities and government agencies. Similarly, much private sector work on sustainable communities is indirectly driven by levels of public expenditure because this helps to determine budgets for consultancy. Even where there is no obvious direct link to public expenditure, such as for housing developers, changes in the scale and direction of government priority, activity and spending can still act as a proxy for the scale of change in the sector.

The supply side of the model is trend-based, reflecting recent changes in the size of the workforce (defined by the LFS data with additional assumptions based on the online surveys).

The model is static rather than dynamic – that is to say, it doesn’t take account of iterative processes such as potential balancing of labour shortages due to regional or occupational mobility. It is necessarily based on a range of assumptions which have been informed by a variety of evidence sources during the course of this study. It should be taken as indicative of the speed and direction of change in labour shortages, as opposed to a definitive measure of future shortages.

A sensitivity test was undertaken to include rates of growth in graduate entrants to the profession, based on data from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and these results have been noted where relevant in the chapters dealing with employment by profession.
2.5.2 Forecast gaps in labour supply to 2012
The overall labour shortages will worsen and then remain static up to 2012. The overall labour shortages, albeit significant in terms of total numbers, mask some quite dramatic shortages in some professions. This is because there are relatively small numbers of professionals in some of these groups.

The greatest increases in labour shortages will be amongst landscape architects, urban designers, architects, sustainable development specialists, regeneration professionals and planners, reflecting the increased role of master planners and the emphasis on sustainable development in policy and practice. Labour shortages by profession are explored in more detail below and in subsequent chapters by occupation and region.

Arup’s forecast gaps in labour supply in 2012 by sector

Source: Arup’s forecasting model


2.6 Technical skills
The online survey results suggest that although technical skills are generally seen as fit-for-purpose, there is some concern amongst sustainable communities professionals about their own level of technical skills, particularly in terms of specialist skills. Organisations surveyed, on the other hand, were less concerned about the technical skills of their staff. This suggests a lack of confidence amongst some individuals regarding technical skills but also reflects the rigorous technical background of many professions which encourage the recognition of the importance of technical skills.

Concern over technical skills gaps probably reflects the rapid growth in the number of community and regeneration professionals, who often have less formal training and less confidence as a result. Additionally, as sustainable communities move towards a delivery phase, the emphasis seems to be on experienced professionals with deeper technical skills able to address market conditions, funding and other constraints like engineering, infrastructure and transport, that will enable plans to be realised.
Individual perceptions of technical skills relative to job requirements

![Graph showing individual perceptions of technical skills relative to job requirements.]

Source: Arup’s online survey

Organisational views of technical skills requiring improvement

![Graph showing organisational views of technical skills requiring improvement.]

Source: Arup’s online survey

**Key:**
- URB: Urban designer/master planner
- TRA: Transport planners
- SUS: Sustainable development specialists
- SRV: Surveyors
- REG: Regeneration and economic development specialists
- POL: Police
- PLN: Planners (including development control and forward planners)
- NEI: Neighbourhood and community development specialists
- LSC: Landscape architect
- HOU/WEL: Housing and Welfare Officers
- EXC: Senior executive (regional/local body)
- ENV: Environmental specialists
- ENG: Engineers
- DEV: Developers
- CIV: Civil servant (central government/government agency)
- LAR: Landscape architects, urban designers and architects
- ACA: Academic/researcher
Examples of areas identified for development include:

- **Subject areas:** green infrastructure, funding sources and bidding arrangements, new Local Development Framework System and Planning Policy Statements, green space management and habitat creation;

- **Procedures:** development appraisals, sustainability appraisals, assessment of carbon proportionality in new developments; and

- **Specialist skills:** Geographical information systems, e-communication, drawing by hand, modelling and IT design.

Although it is difficult to determine trends in technical skills with any great accuracy, the perception amongst organisations responding to the survey is that the quality of technical skills of staff has not changed significantly within recent years.

It should be noted that, although it was recognised by organisations responding to the survey that the increasing use of consultancy enables efficient use of resources and access to a range of high quality expertise, there was some concern expressed during case study research, of potential de-skilling, or at least of declining familiarity with technical issues and procedures and, ultimately, loss of ownership amongst project staff. Inevitably this trade-off influences the speed and quality of delivery in a case dependent way and places additional emphasis on project and resource management skills because a wider range of organisations and individuals are involved.

### 2.7 Overview of generic skills gaps

Although generic skills requirements, definitions and perceptions vary across organisations and between individuals, the survey research suggests individuals and organisations, in particular, recognise the importance of generic skills and, although there is general satisfaction with the level of generic skills, there is also room for improvement.

“I found it difficult to rank these skills as all are required in the work that we do. In some ways these generic skills are more important than the professional skills in my area of regeneration, as the technical skills can more easily be bought/learnt.”

As implied above, the levels of project management and financial management are increasingly becoming the ones of greatest concern. All those interviewed in the case study research described the primary importance of project management skills, particularly in view of the increasing tendency to buy in expertise through contracting consultancies. This was true of both large-scale delivery agencies and smaller scale projects which focused on the liveability elements of the sustainable communities agenda such as development of community strategies.

**Individual perception of skills gaps relative to organisational perceptions of skills gaps**

![Graph showing individual perception of skills gaps relative to organisational perceptions of skills gaps](Source: Arup's online survey)
In the survey of the sector, 40% of respondents identified financial management to be requiring improvements to meet the demands of their job. Almost 50% of organisations identified project management as important, while over 30% of organisational respondents identified this as lacking amongst their staff.

Apart from project management issues, individuals responding to the survey were more concerned with breakthrough thinking and conflict management, compared to organisations which are more focused on gaps in leadership, communication and team or cross-occupational working. There is a lack of consistency between perceptions of generic skills between organisations and individuals which may hinder long-term delivery of the skills required. Responses to the survey set out below reflect the differing views of individuals and organisations.

### Generic skills gaps identified by Arup survey of individuals and organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Area of concern</th>
<th>Selected quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project/process</td>
<td>Developing project management skills and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management</td>
<td>Formal training in project management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Management and leadership skills especially cross-service management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Economic development at local level, financial modelling of alternative approaches to traditional funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management</td>
<td>I would benefit from training and guidance on funding sources and bidding for different elements of funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing budgets, local government financing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breakthrough</td>
<td>Creative thinking to design policies and their implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Conflict and change management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management</td>
<td>Facilitation and mediation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Organisation** |                       |                                                                                                                                            |
|                  | Project management     | Ability to make a project plan, analyse its impact and need for resources – including relating to other stakeholders and then do it.       |
|                  |                       | One of the key skill shortages is effective business planning for growth, regeneration etc. We have developed a business plan, but it is dependent on partner organisations and agencies (including government) working with us and contributing, but their capacity to do so is limited. The requirements go beyond simple project management into complex cross-disciplinary and cross-government funding programme management. |
|                  | Leadership             | Leadership is everything – recognising its shoots and supporting its development is paramount to success. There is huge under-capitalised talent and will to succeed in the sustainable communities arena in all sectors – powerful leadership will realise it. |
|                  | Communication          | There is clearly a shortage of community engagement skills in both local authorities and other delivery organisations. Due to the shortage of skilled people, and to financial constraints, etc it is not possible for all organisations to employ community engagement specialists. It is especially hard to find people with both planning skills and community engagement skills. |
|                  | Making it happen        | Someone has to be the project champion and hold/refresh the vision so all participants in the process remained focused on the priorities.   |
|                  | Team working           | Brokerage/partnership working is becoming more critical with the current agenda of capacity builders and working with consortia.             |
Skills Gaps by Sector and Organisation

Main Findings

- The private sector is staffed with a younger workforce and faces fewer barriers to recruiting good staff.

- Competition for good professionals can be strong and is thought by much of the sustainable communities sector to be increasing – private sector firms seem better able to attract scarce candidates.

- Organisations expect to have difficulty recruiting architects and planners in the future, a problem felt most acutely in the public sector.

- Government spending and employment policy issues influence how the public sector is able to organise their recruitment, and the result of this is that staff levels in many public sector bodies are lower than they would ideally like.

- The combination of these factors contributes to the frequent and increasing use of consultants by the public sector. This raises important questions for the public sector about cultivating skills in managing consultants, and in methods of ensuring adequate knowledge retention. This suggests the increasing importance of focusing on generic skill development, particularly in the public sector.

Key recommendation: There is a need to understand and facilitate the increasing use of consultants by the public sector and to ensure that those in the public sector have the right skills to manage these professionals as well as retain an appropriate level of knowledge and skill within the organisation.

3.1 Introduction

Information about skills gaps on an organisational basis comes primarily from Arup’s survey of organisations, existing information collected by York Consulting and lessons learned from Arup’s organisational case studies.

Overall, 146 people responded to Arup’s survey of organisations, which was targeted at chief executives or directors of corporate services. Between them, these respondents say they employ more than 20,000 people. Respondents to the survey of organisations tended more towards the public sector (45% of responses) with 31% from the private sector and 24% from the third sector (voluntary, charity, and not-for-profit organisations). Nevertheless, the private sector respondents employed more people in the sustainable communities sector, accounting for 65% of all workers.

Respondents to Arup’s survey of organisations by sector

Source: Arup’s online survey
When their responses are broken down by type of organisation there are occasionally only a small number of respondents in a particular category. Results presented by type of organisation are, therefore, interesting and informative but cannot be read as statistically significant.

The workforce composition of our respondents from the private sector is dominated by engineers and surveyors, whilst the workforce of our public sector respondents is dominated by planners, regeneration and economic development specialists and housing and welfare specialists.

3.2 Labour shortages by sector

The majority of organisational respondents (62%) to our survey felt that they required more staff to fulfil the remit of their organisation but were unable to do so due to lack of resources and a limited supply of good candidates in some areas. Public and third sector firms overwhelmingly find this is because of a lack of financial resources to expand. Private sector firms cite a more balanced range of reasons, including a shortage of good candidates and are far more likely than public sector respondents to say they are not experiencing labour shortages (36% compared with 18%).

York Consulting draws attention to a number of studies which underline the difficulties some public sector organisations have in recruiting – a London councils study from 2005 suggests that recruitment problems are increasing, with 93% reporting some difficulty in recruitment, particularly for planning positions. During Arup’s case study work, the most widely reported problem was a lack of local authority planners. York Consulting also reports on work undertaken in the East of England which highlights difficulties in recruiting to public sector planning authorities at senior and junior levels.

There is considerable variety in recruitment difficulties between organisations. Central government departments, house builders and research institutes appear to suffer least from labour shortages. Many of the smaller public sector organisations face financial difficulties whilst both public and private sector organisations claim lack of good candidates. Some organisations, particularly Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and local authorities, face difficulties due to the nature of their organisations and locations. Information collected through the case studies suggest that regeneration-focused organisations have less trouble recruiting as the work is seen by professionals as ‘topical’, ‘green’ and ‘sexy’ compared with the more traditional professions.
Difficulties in recruitment by organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Why do they find it hard to recruit?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Associations (HAs)/Registered Social Landlords (RSL)</td>
<td>Lack of resources but also shortage of good candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property developer</td>
<td>Significant shortage of good candidates but also perceived as unattractive organisations to work for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary, Local Service Providers (LSPs), Regional Development Centre of Excellence (RCEs), think tanks, professional body</td>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority/Regional Development Agency (RDA)</td>
<td>Lack of resources and good candidates (particularly RDAs) but also unattractive organisations and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Assemblies/other government agency/non-departmental public body</td>
<td>Unattractive locations, alongside lack of resources and candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitary Development Corporation/Urban Regeneration Corporation</td>
<td>Lack of resources and candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy/private practice</td>
<td>Lack of good candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housebuilders, central government departments</td>
<td>Happy with number of staff although would benefit from additional resources and good candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Trends in recruitment

Respondents to the survey from organisations state that recruitment is becoming increasingly difficult, suggesting that labour shortages are widening. Comments suggest that there are particular difficulties in recruiting experienced staff and professionals in planning and surveying. Case study evidence suggests that recruitment difficulties have been improved by developing the image of organisations, suggesting that candidates have the luxury of choice in job selection and that the image and reputation of an organisation is important in this choice.

The public and third sector respondents were much more likely to find recruitment had become more difficult in the last two years than private sector organisations, although very few respondents thought it had become easier. This suggests that, with a limited pool of labour, the private sector will be better able to attract the best candidates.

Organisations that appear to have increased difficulties in recruitment include research institutes, RDAs, local authorities, housing agencies and housebuilders. This does not mean that other organisations do not have labour shortages but that those identified are suffering from widening labour shortages.
Data on the number of students graduating from Higher Education\(^7\) has shown that student numbers in subjects related to sustainable communities professions are generally increasing, albeit relatively slowly. The number of graduates from subjects related to social and community policy and neighbourhood development is growing quickly, at a rate of almost 8% annually, whilst the number of graduates from planning courses is growing but more slowly at a rate of about 1.3% annually. There has been a decrease in graduates from courses related to development and surveying, reflected in a comment from a respondent who heads a firm of developers that “graduate supply is apparently low”.

It should be noted that trends in student numbers are only one reflection of trends in supply. Postgraduate, short courses and informal training provide routes into the profession. There is evidence of increasing numbers of postgraduates in some areas — such as planning — and some employers still express a preference for those with general degrees.

### Average annual growth in graduates from selected courses related to sustainable communities professions (1996/7 – 2005/6)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAR</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEV</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>ENV</td>
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<td>NEI</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLN</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRV</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HESA\(^7\) Arup\(^8\) Please refer to the glossary for abbreviation meanings.

\(^7\) Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) ‘Subject of study’ data

\(^8\) Arup’s online survey
The professions in which organisations expect to experience a shortage of good candidates in the future are primarily ‘landscape architects, urban designers, architects’ and planners. The public sector expects to feel this much more keenly than the private sector – in fact, there is no category of professional in which the private sector is less confident than the public sector in its ability to recruit. The third sector, in particular, expects to experience difficulty in recruiting good candidates in housing and welfare professions. These fears on the part of organisations reflect broad findings from Arup’s labour shortage model, which forecasts that by 2012 there could be a severe shortage in the grouping of ‘landscape architects’ (a category which includes urban designers, master planners, landscape architects and architects), planners, regeneration professionals and sustainable development professionals.

**Anticipated future labour shortages by sector**

![Graph showing anticipated future labour shortages by sector]

Please refer to the glossary for abbreviation meanings.

### 3.4 Location

Some organisations report difficulty attracting good staff as a result of their location. Local authorities are particularly susceptible to being tied to a particular location, some of which are not attractive to high quality staff.

More than a quarter of local authority respondents to our survey of organisations report difficulties with an unattractive location.

**Difficulty in recruiting staff due to attractiveness of location, by sector**

![Graph showing difficulty in recruiting staff due to attractiveness of location, by sector]

Locations where there have been new special purpose vehicles or legacy organisations set up have reported, through Arup’s case studies, that there are issues of ‘poaching’ staff from other local organisations – particularly local authorities and particularly planners. Nevertheless, a number of them were quick to point out that they recognise the danger of this and that they are actively trying to help to reduce the shortage of planners and other sustainable communities staff by recruiting nationwide. A number of organisations are also recruiting graduates from a range of disciplines and sponsoring them through a planning masters course.
3.5 Organisation size and remit
As with location, the public sector has reported greater difficulties in recruitment due to the attractiveness of the organisation and its remit, than the private sector. The third sector has the least problem with attracting staff due to the nature of the organisation, reflecting the strong personal commitment of many who work in this sector.

**Difficulty in recruiting staff due to attractiveness of location, by sector**

![Bar chart showing difficulty in recruiting staff due to attractiveness of location by sector.]

Source: Arup’s online survey

3.6 Seniority
Based on the results of both surveys the age profile of staff in the public sector is markedly older than the private sector. Respondents to the online survey of individuals show that there is a higher proportion of people in the 21-35 age bracket in the private sector (41%) than the public sector (31%) and a lower proportion of people in the 51-65 age bracket (23% compared with 26%). Respondents from the third sector came mostly from the middle of the age range.

**Age profile by sector (respondents to Arup’s survey of individuals)**

![Bar chart showing age profile by sector.]

Source: Arup’s online survey
Some organisations have trouble with staff retention and this can be linked particularly to the age and seniority of staff. Information collected through our case studies suggest that older, more senior staff (particularly in organisations which are ‘project focused’ such as regeneration agencies) are more likely to want to see a project through to the end, whereas staff at a more junior level are more likely to move on quickly. This was particularly highlighted by regeneration agencies, who said that junior staff with a year or two of regeneration experience found themselves extremely marketable, and were quick to take advantage of this and move on.

There is a wide awareness of a shortage of professionals in the middle career range – a number of respondents to our surveys highlighted the difficulties of recruiting planners and developers in their 30s and 40s or “in the £30k to £50k bracket”. It has been widely acknowledged that the early 1990s recession was a period of low recruitment onto planning, developing and related university and training courses, with employers unable to provide sponsorship or support for professional training.

3.7 The role of consultants
A combination of factors such as limited budgets, higher staff turnovers and difficulties in recruiting the desired staff profile tends to encourage the increasing use of consultants to carry out core functions or to assist in preparation of the evidence base required for policy making. This is a message that comes through strongly from both the online survey of organisations and case study audits. A number of comments were received in the survey of organisations to this effect; in local authorities “much of the sustainable communities work is carried out by specialist consultants”, and a Unitary Development Corporation (UDC) said that they “utilise consultants to a great extent”.

It could be argued that, at the scale of the sustainable communities sector, it does not matter who employs the professionals so long as they are available and can deliver the outputs required. This may be the case but if a substantial proportion of public sector work is to be carried out by consultants, it must be recognised that this has implications for the required skill set of the public sector; for example, training by managing consultants in order to ensure maximum value for money is obtained.

Increased use of consultants will also present knowledge retention issues for public sector organisations – outsourcing work sometimes makes it more difficult for an organisation to create a team which, collectively, has a bank of knowledge of the issues and problems relative to its function.

3.8 Technical and generic skills gaps
Generally speaking, organisations do not identify significant technical skills gaps. Information gathered during Arup’s case studies suggest that those public sector organisations which sometimes have less experienced staff, in particular those smaller organisations involved in regeneration and liveability, manage gaps by buying in expertise from consultants or use the knowledge and skills of steering boards or advisory groups.

Project management was the most important of the generic skills to both the public and private sectors (third sector respondents put most emphasis on teamwork). Public sector respondents value the ability to make things happen in practice far more highly than respondents from any other sector. Leadership is also particularly important to the public sector. All of these survey findings were borne out by the case studies, with many interviewees from the public sector linking their greater use of consultants with increased need for generic skills such as project management.

“As a small team, we have to be multi-skilled. Project management and innovative thinking is essential to the work. However, strong leadership is required to keep staff loyal to an organisation that never has enough money to give more than a few months contracts at a time.”

“The combination of a high level of generic skills, combined with specialist skills is very important, and the demands on the voluntary and community sector/public sector to be better equipped at the more generic skills, is growing.”
Despite this recognised importance, 32% of respondents to the survey of organisations said that they felt that project management skills were lacking in their organisation. This lack of project management skills was felt more keenly in the public sector (42% of respondents) than the private or third sectors (20% and 29% respectively).

Skills levels appear to be improving, but slowly. Almost half of individual respondents (47%) felt that the level of skill in their organisations had remained unchanged in the last two years. Of those who felt there had been a change in skills levels, most thought that the improvement was for the better rather than worse. The public sector respondents were the most likely to say that skills had improved, with 44% of respondents saying that either technical, generic or both skills sets had got better amongst their staff.

3.9 Measures to improve delivery
Respondents to the survey of organisations pointed out that, as well as labour shortages and skills gaps, a number of other factors influence their ability to deliver on sustainable communities priorities. Other than the obvious response of increased financial resources and issues related to skills and labour shortages, factors which were flagged up include better partnership working with other organisations, and a change in organisational remit.

One of our case study interviewees summed up the importance and challenges of cross-organisational working, saying:

“Nothing like this has been achieved before. It is a unique partnership because of the different skills that were needed, but it is working incredibly well.”

When asked which measures would most help to address technical skills shortages (given to mean both labour shortages and paucity of skills in staff) the most frequently given first choice response was ‘course availability and content’, followed by ‘higher salaries’.

Asked to identify ways in which generic skills might best be improved, organisations called for ‘short courses for professionals’, and ‘learning from best practice’.

Source: Arup’s online survey. Please refer to the glossary for full definitions.

Generic skills priorities (ranked top 3), by sector

Source: Arup’s online survey. Please refer to the glossary for full definitions.
Main Findings

- The sustainable communities workforce as a whole is distributed across the country in roughly the same proportion as the workforce at large. However, within this, there are clear ‘clusters’ of types of professional, for example, architects and surveyors in the greater South East and community and neighbourhood workers in the northern regions.

- Arup’s model forecasts a national shortage of professionals in most occupations with a surplus in the northern regions and a projected shortage in London and the greater South East.

- Organisational and geographical mobility is higher in and around the southern regions, with the majority of people saying they would be prepared to work in the South West, London or the South East, and commute longer distances.

Key recommendation: Although a national effort is required to address labour shortages, there is a need for a more nuanced approach to tackling labour market issues at a local level. This may mean promoting geographical or occupational mobility, upskilling current workers or promoting innovative means of sharing staff, skills and knowledge.

4.1 Introduction

One of the points made by the Egan Review was the lack of reliable information relating to skills issues on a regional basis. Part of the remit of this study was to investigate the extent to which there is a variation in skills levels or skills needs by region.

The sustainable communities workforce is spread across the regions in a reasonably similar pattern to the rest of the workforce, although there are a high proportion of workers in London. The 2005 LFS data shows that 16.3% of the population of the sustainable communities workforce work in London, as compared with 14.5% of the wider workforce. This is likely to be due, in part, to the larger number of high profile projects available in the south of England, as well as the predominance of head office functions.

When the sustainable communities workforce is broken down, however, clear regional distributions of some professionals can be observed – for example, almost 30% of architects work in London, about 21% of developers and 19% of surveyors. By contrast, neighbourhood/community workers are more prevalent in the northern regions – more than 33% work in the three northern regions (the equivalent figure for the sustainable communities population and the labour force as a whole is about 28%). RIBA and RICS data collected by York Consulting broadly supports this observation.

Notwithstanding this, research undertaken by London councils in 2005 indicates that, within London, recruitment difficulties have been increasing in some of the sustainable communities professions and, therefore, it may be that the private sector, the higher profile national agencies or special purpose vehicles are most easily able to attract staff (see Chapter 3).
4.2 Forecast gaps in labour supply

Across England, it is predicted that the total labour shortage could be in the order of almost 41,000 people. Despite this, the forecast model projects that, whilst some regions will experience labour shortages others may have a surplus of professionals overall.

Forecast gaps in labour supply by region in 2012 (shortage as % supply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>YH</th>
<th>EM</th>
<th>WM</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>LO</th>
<th>SW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-29%</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arup’s forecasting model. Please refer to the glossary for abbreviation meanings.

There is a clear north-south divide in the modelled distribution of shortages across the country. The three northern regions and the two midlands regions are all forecast to have far greater supply of labour across the professions than demand by 2012. The southern regions and the East are forecast to experience a higher demand than supply. This reflects the fact that the demand forecast model is driven by patterns in public expenditure. In the southern regions, sustainable communities sectors, which are driven by trends in public spending, will have to compete more fiercely with other professions in the private sector for highly skilled individuals.

In practice, however, we might expect that higher demand in those southern regions may draw down on labour surpluses experienced elsewhere, leading to a balancing out effect. This is backed up by information collected by York Consulting, which suggests that London and the South East will ‘suck in’ professionals from other regions to work on current or future high profile projects. This is further corroborated by responses from the survey of organisations where firms with offices in London and the South East felt less likely to suffer a future shortfall in staff in ‘problem recruitment occupations’, such as planners.

Regional analysis of the organisational survey suggests remarkably little variation between regions. This may be related to the diversity of organisations working within each region. Those working in regeneration bodies in larger cities may identify more with the experiences of other organisations across the country working in urban contexts rather than local projects in smaller towns and more rural settings. Similarly, those working in more remote locations nationwide may experience the same issues and challenges.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Overall labour shortage</th>
<th>Worst shortages (as % of supply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>Surplus of 4%</td>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Surplus of 12%</td>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; the Humber</td>
<td>Surplus of 12%</td>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regeneration/economic development professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable development specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>Surplus of 13%</td>
<td>Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>Surplus of 0.4%</td>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>Shortage of 9%</td>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>Shortage of 29%</td>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regeneration/economic development professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Shortage of 7%</td>
<td>Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regeneration/economic development professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable development specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>Shortage of 25%</td>
<td>Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Technical skills
Nationally, almost 50% of individual survey respondents identified their specialist technical skills as requiring improvement, just over 30% felt their knowledge of relevant procedures and processes could be improved and 15% responded that their general knowledge of the subject could be improved. Regionally, respondents in the East highlighted an above average gap in specialist technical skills, respondents in the midlands regions highlighted gaps in procedures and processes and respondents from Yorkshire and the Humber were more likely to highlight above average general knowledge gaps. Of course these are self-assessments of skills levels, and reflect only an individual’s perception of themselves rather than an objective evaluation.

4.4 Generic skills
Arup has collected little evidence to suggest that there is any large variation in the level of generic skills observed or required on a regional basis. There are some small fluctuations in the level of generic skills gaps identified by individuals in our survey - financial skills gaps were highlighted in the East of England, brokerage gaps were identified in the East Midlands and gaps in change management, conflict resolution and brokerage were highlighted in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber.

A slightly above average proportion of organisations in Yorkshire and Humber and the North West thought that generic skills had worsened, whereas in the East, organisations were more likely to think that both technical and generic skills had improved.

4.5 Labour market mobility
Mobility within the labour market will have an impact on future patterns of skills distribution and may act as an offsetting factor to potential skills surpluses and shortages identified by the forecast model. We have already highlighted conclusions drawn by the previous study that London and the South East had the potential to draw in professionals from other regions in case of shortage. Our individual survey results regarding mobility bear this out.

Patterns of geographical mobility broadly reflect national domestic migration trends – there is a net movement of residents out of London to the greater South East and, from those regions to the South West and two midlands regions. Residents of the three northern regions have a lower tendency to move around the country and net migration patterns tend towards movements between those three regions.

Nationally, the highest proportion of respondents (33%) would be prepared to move to the South West for a good job, followed by London (31%) and the South East (29%). Respondents from most regions have a high proportion of professionals who would be willing to move to the South West. The least popular region to move to for a good job is the East of England (22%) with those from the North West and South West least likely to want to move there. Other relatively unpopular regions are the East and West Midlands and the North East (all 24%).

Professionals from the South West are the least willing to move out of their region for work, with 44% saying they would not move for any job compared with 35% on average. Londoners are most willing to relocate for a good job (just 24% say they would not move for any job), but they are relatively choosy about their destination – they are less likely than average to move to any other region except the South East and South West.

Generally speaking, people in London and the South are willing to commute long distances for a good job, whereas people from the northern and midland regions are far more likely to say they would travel no more than an hour. This probably reflects the relative size of functional urban regions in the north and south of the country, and the high incidence of commuting into London from the southern regions as well as the time it takes to commute across the city.

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For a fuller examination of national domestic migration trends, see ‘Regional Futures: England’s Regions in 2030’, 2005, Arup/Oxford Economic Forecasting
5 Skills Gaps by Occupation: Town Planners

Main Findings

- There is a current shortage of town planners, particularly those with development control expertise and those at middle management level.

- When spending-based demand trajectories are compared to supply trends, the quantitative and qualitative labour shortage in the planning profession is forecast to worsen over the long-term to over 45% by 2012.

- Planners are identified by approximately 10% of organisations surveyed as requiring improvement in their technical skills; a relatively high proportion compared to other professions. Up to 30% identify knowledge of relevant procedures and up to 50% identify specialist areas, such as development and appraisal and urban design as requiring improvement.

- Financial management skills were identified as skills that were significantly lacking. Other areas of weakness include analysis, decision-making, evaluation and inclusive visioning as well as staff appraisal and change management.

Key recommendation: There needs to be continued efforts to increase the supply of planners, to enable continuous improvements and updates of technical knowledge, and to promote leadership and communication skills across the profession.

5.1 Overview

The planning system and planners have received increasing attention in recent years, with the acknowledgement of the importance of planning in the delivery of policy objectives, ranging from housing to mitigating and adapting to climate change. As several recent reports have suggested the lack of resources faced by the sector – alongside the diminution of professional status, need for culture change and sometimes individual and organisation demoralisation – is widely recognised.

As a result, there have been concerted efforts to reform the planning system and achieve culture change as well as to increase resources to enable planners to perform better and meet current challenges. Initiated by the Government, student bursaries and more places in planning schools have boosted supply to some extent, as have new organisations such as the Planning Advisory Service alongside Best Value performance regimes. The RTPI, the professional institute for planners, has also made progress in modernising planners’ education with the introduction of one-year masters courses, particularly as the emphasis has shifted towards postgraduate training which is the clear preference for training of our case study organisations. However, evidence suggests that the number of people working in planning without RTPI membership has been increasing, partly because of a decline in accredited planning courses in the early 2000s.

5.2 Labour market issues

In 2004, approximately 14,000 individuals were active members of RTPI, and recent evidence from surveys suggests that there are now over 17,000 planners within local government planning departments. York Consulting estimated from Construction Industry Council and ODPM skills surveys that approximately 7,000 are estimated to work in the private sector and 7,500 are estimated to work in the public sector in the UK.

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10 DCLG Evaluation of Planning Delivery Grant, Addison and Associates with Arup 2006
11 DCLG Planning Fees Consultation 2007 based on surveys by Arup
If the emerging figures on the numbers of planners in the public sector are accurate, and the proportions of public and private sector planners are approximately the same as that identified by York Consulting, there could also be over 16,000 working in planning roles within the private sector, equating to a total of more than 30,000 persons working in planning.

Current estimates from LFS data suggest that approximately 12,000 individuals worked in the planning profession. However, when compared with the figures suggested above, this figure appears too low and suggests that additional planners may be contained in the LFS category of architectural technologists and town planning technicians.

Evidence from a number of sources suggests that the current supply of planning professionals do not meet demand. There are significant recruitment and retention difficulties across the sector. This is true of both public and private sector organisations. For example, the Local Government and Workforce Strategy Survey 2006 showed that over half the local authorities surveyed said they faced recruitment difficulties for managing and professional posts in planning, and 26% of those surveyed offered market supplements. Local Government Association research in 2004 suggests that, as a result, turnover is relatively high and there are a considerable number of vacant posts. Labour shortages are reflected in results of the online survey. 30% of respondents, from both private and public sector organisations, thought their organisations should employ more planners.

There are also indications that there is a shortage at middle management level due to a dip in the numbers entering the profession in the early 1990s. The 2001 RTPI membership showed a much smaller percentage of professionals in the 21-30 age bracket, a dip which would now exist in the mid-30s age range assuming no mid-career entrants. This is certainly the case in London, as reported by London councils in 2005 and is reflected in responses to the organisational survey.

“There is a shortage in the mid-30s age bracket presumably down to the early ‘90s recession with fewer graduates and graduate training.”

These labour shortages appear to be particularly acute in the area of development control. This was noted as a particular area of recruitment difficulty in the returns to the Local Government and Workforce Strategy Survey 2006 and is reflected in responses to the online survey, typical of which is:

“Development control expertise (for strategic planning proposals and LDF conformity) is a particular problem.”

However, there is also increasing qualitative evidence of shortage of forward planners. This reflects the low levels of forward planning taking place from the late 1990s until the introduction of the new system of Local Development Framework in 2004/5. Indeed, many of the labour shortages in forward planning are reflected in comments relating to getting a better understanding of LDFs and the national policy framework.
5.3 Forecast gaps in labour market

When spending-based demand trajectories are compared to supply trends, the labour shortage in the planning profession is forecast to increase to 46% over the long-term to 2012.

Forecast gap in supply of planners 2005 - 2012

Despite efforts to enhance supply there is limited evidence of a marked increase as yet in the supply of planners. LFS data shows an increase year by year from 2001 to 2004 but a fall in 2005 resulted in no appreciable growth in numbers over the period. Recent surveys conducted for Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as part of work on planning costs and fees suggests that, as at September 2006, planning authorities have on average 29 posts in development control, of which an average four were vacant. Non-development control staff working on forward planning comprised an average 20 staff, of which two were vacant. Analysis of the vacancies suggests that the majority of vacancies are for experienced professional case officers.

In addition to vacancies, planning authorities are also using temporary staff; indeed the DCLG survey suggests that 8% of development control staff are temporary and that these temporary staff are strongly concentrated in the South East and London.

With an overall shortage of planners, particularly experienced planners and those with specialist skills, training and initiatives such as ‘grow your own staff’ schemes have taken on increasing significance. The majority of planning authorities now have a dedicated training budget (87%) a higher proportion than in the past – in 2004/5 the figure was 78%.

The 2004 Evidence Base Review notes a long-term decline in the rate of increase in RTPI membership, and student numbers remained lower in 2003 than they were in the early 1990s. Recent HESA data reflects a modest upsurge in the numbers involved in planning courses. However, there is only a small reduction in the predicted shortage once a sensitivity test is run allowing for growth in student numbers.

Given that the current situation in public planning arises from under-resourcing, establishing an appropriate and long-term resource position is vital to achieving a sustainable service with career structures that will deliver a supply of experienced planners in the long-term.

Although absolute employment numbers collected must be treated with care, survey results show a relatively modest increase in the numbers of planners recruited in recent years. Estimates of future recruitment requirements are also relatively modest. Nonetheless, this occupation was identified above any other as an area of anticipated shortage.

Source: Arup’s forecasting model

DCLG Fees Consultation 2007
5.4 Technical skills gaps

Planners are identified by approximately 10% of organisations surveyed as requiring improvement in their technical skills, a relatively high proportion compared to other professions. Of those individuals surveyed, up to 30% identify knowledge of relevant procedures and up to 50% identify specialist areas as requiring improvement. Specialist areas include development appraisal skills (necessary to inform negotiations on affordable housing and S106 agreements, etc), climate change mitigation and adaptation and the use of evidence-based approaches to forward planning.

As implied above, many of the technical skills gaps are also closely related to generic skills gaps, for example, in relation to negotiation with developers and stakeholder engagement. Also, planners would feel more confident in negotiations if their underlying technical skills were better. Many planners in the individual survey suggested that generic skills were often gained through experience and that further training in technical skills is required.

5.5 Generic skills gaps

Financial management skills were identified in the online survey and in the RTPI survey – conducted in the wake of Egan – by planners as an area where skills were significantly lacking. Other areas of weakness include analysis, decision-making, evaluation and inclusive visioning as well as staff appraisal and change management. Both surveys identified commitment amongst planners to developing their project and financial management skills.

The significance of these gaps is difficult to determine, although it should be noted that when individuals were asked which professions with generic skills should be employed more in their organisation, planners were ranked third. This suggests that not only are generic skills essential but current gaps may be hindering delivery.

Nonetheless, individuals working within the profession may not always have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. In the Audit Commission’s report on planning, stakeholders questioned ‘the ability of planners to communicate, negotiate and lead’ and also stated that there was difficulty in resolving conflicting issues and balancing trade-offs.
Main Findings

- There is a modest shortage of transport planners.
- Forecasts of future labour shortages, relative to the current position, suggest an increasing shortage of transport planners available. The labour shortage is estimated to increase by over 10% by 2012. Over 10% of organisational respondents anticipated shortages in this area.
- Amongst sustainable communities professionals, transport planners and organisations are relatively confident of the level of technical skills in this area.
- Transport planners are also relatively confident about the level of their generic skills. In common with those across the sector, financial, project and change management are identified as areas requiring improvement and are the areas identified as priorities for improvement.

Key recommendation: As well as boosting the supply of transport planners, there is a need to strengthen engagement of transport planners in the sustainable communities agenda to ensure their skills are properly utilised in delivery.

6.1 Overview
Transport planners perform a different role than town planners, although the remit of the two sometimes overlap. Transport planners are concerned with the provision and management of a sustainable transport infrastructure, at a national, regional and local level. There is also a very wide range of specialists including highway designers through to regional land use and transport modellers.

6.2 Labour market issues
There is no easily-identifiable transport planning category in the LFS. Therefore, it is estimated that there are approximately 5,000 transport planners in the workforce on the basis of LFS and survey data in 2005. Information on labour shortages is limited, although a 2002 Local Transport Survey noted a shortfall of 24% of transport planners in local authorities. Although influenced by organisational background, over 15% of respondents identified that more transport planners are required in their organisations.

6.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply
Forecasts of future labour shortages, relative to the current position, suggest an increasing shortage of transport planners. The labour shortage is estimated to increase to over 10% by 2012. Over 10% of organisational respondents anticipated shortages in this area.

Forecast gap in supply of planners 2005 - 2012

![Graph showing forecast gap in supply of planners 2005 - 2012]

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
This is unsurprising in view of the modest increases in the supply of transport planners in recent years – the profession is estimated to have grown annually by 5% in recent years. The increased demand for skills is a result of growth area policies, increasing demands and complexities of Transport Impact Assessments, and increased interest in the role of transport infrastructure from a sustainability perspective.

### 6.4 Technical skills gaps

Amongst sustainable communities professionals, transport planners and organisations are relatively confident of the level of technical skills in this area.

### 6.5 Generic skills gaps

Transport planners are also relatively confident about the level of their generic skills. In common with those across the sector, financial, project and change management are identified as areas requiring improvement and are the areas identified as priorities for improvement.

Although difficult to confirm, there is some evidence that transport planners are not always fully engaged with the sustainable communities agenda. Over 30% of survey respondents stated that their involvement in the delivery of sustainable communities was zero. This implies a rather focused approach to work and transport planners can have difficulties in taking the strategic view. This is partly the result of the nature of some transport work, much of which is detailed transport modelling.

In common with those across the sector, financial, project and change management are identified as areas requiring improvement and are the areas identified as priorities for improvement.
## Skills Gaps by Occupation: Surveyors and Developers

### Main Findings

1. There are limited labour shortages at present but future trends in supply and demand will see increasing areas of shortage. There is a forecast 6% shortage in the supply of surveyors and a 17% shortage in the supply of developers by 2012. This reflects the growing demand for the skills of these professionals as many large projects move into the delivery phase and major new drives for housing delivery are planned for the future.

2. Over 35% of surveyor respondents are concerned about their specialist skills. 50% of respondents are concerned about their knowledge of specialist procedures and over 70% identify specialist skills as requiring improvement. Developers are less concerned about their technical skills.

3. In relation to generic skills, surveyors identify project management and communication as priorities whilst developers identify a wide range of generic skills.

### Key recommendation:

There is a need to strengthen engagement with the delivery of the sustainable communities agenda amongst surveyors and, to a lesser degree, developers.

### 7.1 Overview

Surveyors play a key role in the development of the built environment. This specialism is quite wide-ranging, from building through to financial feasibility and the value of development. The standard of skills and roles performed are tightly managed through the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) which prescribes a range of standard services, alongside more generic consultancy work. In many cases, this leads to high professionalism and skill, particularly in the more technical aspects of their roles.

There is some debate about the degree of involvement of surveyors in the delivery of sustainable communities. In some ways this is a little academic; the work of all surveyors influences the nature of the local area to some degree. However, it is fair to say that some are more involved than others. The strength of their professional body and the use of agreed terminology also makes them reluctant to re-badge their work as being for ‘sustainable communities’.

Research by RICS/Communities Scotland also suggests that few surveyors regard themselves as being involved in ‘regeneration’ as a mainstream activity although a significant number come into contact with the regeneration sector through involvement with clients or projects throughout their careers. This involvement is likely to grow with the increasing development of brownfield and regeneration sites via the policy framework, and the move towards the delivery phase of the Sustainable Communities Plan.

RICS in England identified those in the Planning and Development Group faculty as most likely to be involved. Specialisms include assessment of land, property use requirements, planning and development policy and control, development and regeneration appraisal and related planning and implementation processes, compulsory purchase and related compensation, and marine and inland water resource management.

Research in England and Scotland suggests ambiguity amongst surveyors of the significance of the sustainable communities agenda to their work and a reluctance to take on any leadership roles in the sustainable communities area. This distance between surveyors and other sustainable communities professions reflects their traditions and is perhaps a shame. The knowledge that surveyors can bring is clearly valued and desired by those in the sector, reflected in the continued requests for further understanding of development appraisal methods. Moreover, surveyors and developers are essential in making projects happen and, without greater clarity of objectives, action plans and opportunities for these professionals to contribute to delivery will be constrained.
The role of developers is closely related to that of surveyors, and many developers come from a surveying background. Developers oversee the development of specific sites and may be involved in one or all aspects of land purchase, securing planning permission, construction and management/investment. Perhaps due to a greater involvement in delivery, our survey suggests there is greater association with the sustainable communities agenda amongst developers.

7.2 Labour market issues
LFS data shows a total of approximately 89,000 surveyors in 2005. This is roughly equivalent to RICS membership levels of approximately 94,000 individuals. RICS data suggested, at the time of the 2004 Evidence Base Review, a 16:84 split between public and private sector employment. In February 2007, there were 16,533 members of the Planning and Development group faculty. This figure is thought to include the majority of those surveyors working directly in the delivery of sustainable communities.

There is also a significant number of developers identified in the LFS material. In 2005, 86,000 individuals were involved in property, housing and land management. If proportions of those involved in the delivery of sustainable communities mirrors that of surveyors, approximately 20% – 17,000 individuals – may be involved in delivery as developers.13

Arup is not sure how useful this approach is, and uses total figures in the modelling exercise. Although just over 30% of developers and 55% of surveyors spent less than half of their time on what they defined as work linked to sustainable communities, very few spent no time on work in this area.

There is limited evidence of labour shortages in this area. Few individuals surveyed online identified the need for more surveyors or developers over and above current levels. Nonetheless, there is evidence of some labour shortages in the public sector. The Employers’ Organisation Recruitment and Retention Survey 2006 suggested difficulties amongst a third of local authorities in recruiting suitable and sufficient building surveyors. 17% were experiencing difficulties in retaining such staff.

It should be noted that both developers and surveyors are keen to improve their skills.

13 Total numbers have been included in the calculation of total sustainable communities workforce numbers due to the widespread involvement, albeit sometimes oblique, in delivery.
7.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply

The model suggests that although there are limited labour shortages at present, future trends in supply and demand will see increasing areas of shortage. The labour shortage of surveyors is forecast to increase to 6% and in developers to 17% by 2012. This reflects the growing demand for the skills of these professionals, as many large projects move into the delivery phase and major new drives for housing delivery are planned for the future.

Organisational respondents to the survey predicted an increase in developers employed over the next five years (over 200%). Predicted increase in the numbers of surveyors employed was much less significant. In contrast, the supply of surveyors and developers has shown limited growth of approximately 3% year-on-year from 2001.

Adjusting for increases in the supply of student numbers slightly exacerbates the labour shortage, as student numbers graduating from courses related to surveying and developing have fallen by around 3% annually over the last ten years. Whether this is an accurate reflection of trends in supply is questionable. Graduates with more general degrees are often taken on and are sometimes preferred. All have to undergo rigorous training however, and the key issue is the inelasticity of the supply of surveyors, in particular, combined with significant increases in demand.

These labour shortages are likely to pose particularly significant problems for the public sector which, even now with few shortages in supply, can suffer recruitment problems.

Forecast gaps in supply of surveyors and developers 2005 - 2012

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Source: Arup’s forecasting model
7.4 Technical skills gaps
Developers and surveyors are concerned about the level of their technical skills compared to other professions in the sustainable communities sector. This is particularly true of surveyors. Over 35% of surveyor respondents are concerned about their specialist skills relative to just over 10% of developers. 50% of surveyors are concerned about their knowledge of specialist procedures relative to just over 40% of surveyors, and over 70% of surveyors identify specialist skills requiring improvement relative to over 60% of developers.

Nonetheless, the Construction Industry Council’s Built Environment Skills Survey 2004 suggests that just under one-third of surveying practices who responded, experienced significant problems with the skills of their professionally qualified staff.

7.5 Generic skills gaps
The criteria for attaining membership of RICS includes a number of generic skills such as communication, negotiation, leadership, team working, business planning and conflict avoidance, suggesting that most members have a reasonable level of competence in these areas.

Nonetheless, the Construction Industry Council’s Skills Survey identified a series of issues relating to the staff of respondent surveying firms. There were significant gaps in communications skills (23%) and customer/client handling skills (19%). Surveyors who responded to the online survey identified similar areas of skills gaps. As well as the standard concerns about process and change management, individuals were concerned about their skills in dealing with conflict resolution, inclusive visioning and stakeholder management.

Developers who responded to the online survey were far more confident about their generic skills, perhaps due to the more wide-ranging nature of their role.

Whether these gaps will be addressed in the future is difficult to assess. It should be noted that both developers and surveyors are keen to improve their skills. Surveyors identify project management and communication as priorities, while developers identify a wide range of generic skills.
Skills Gaps by Occupation: Landscape Architects, Urban Designers and Architects

8

Main Findings

- From the current position of labour shortages in landscape architecture and urban design in particular, shortages are forecast to increase significantly up to 2012. This is a reflection of the growing demand for design skills and the predicted lack of increase in supply.

- Survey material suggests confidence amongst this sector in the level of technical skills. Only architects show some concern over their knowledge of relevant procedures and specialist skills required to undertake the job.

- Urban designers and landscape architects, in common with the rest of the sector, identify gaps in financial and project management.

- There is some anecdotal evidence from the survey that cross-sector working can be challenging in the area of design, partly due to a lack of understanding of the roles of different professionals as well as general difficulties in interpreting plans.

Key recommendation: There is a need to increase the supply of urban designers and landscape architects (partly by encouraging and enabling occupational mobility) as well as to improve cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary working in the area of urban design.

8.1 Overview

In this section we consider labour shortages amongst landscape architects, urban designers and architects. These professions are concerned with the design of buildings, the public realm and settlements. There are closer relationships between these professions, not only in their approach but also in the flow of individuals between professions, particularly from architecture and landscape architecture into urban design.

Their involvement in the quality and nature of the built environment is crucial to place making – an essential element of delivery of sustainable communities. As the importance of design has become increasingly recognised and promoted through agencies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), development of the planning process through the emergence of design coding and master planning, the role of these professionals and the need for appropriate resources and skills has become ever more important.

At the same time, the skills needed are changing. Master planning, for example, requires an increasingly integrated approach and detailed working with other experts. The requirement to communicate plans with the public – and listen effectively to their response – is also now considered imperative.

Reaching out and working with others leads to demands on partners as well as on core professionals. Some of the skills gaps mean partners sometimes misunderstand designers’ plans, reducing their ability to influence the end result.

Urban designers and landscape architects, in common with the rest of the sector, identify gaps in financial and project management competencies.
8.2 Labour market issues

LFS data indicates a total of approximately 53,000 individuals working across the architectural professions in 2005. In 2006, the Royal Institute of British Architects’ (RIBA) membership was approximately 32,000 (83% UK-based) suggesting that over half are employed as architects. An Architects’ Employment and Earning Survey conducted in 2003 by Mirza and Nacey suggests that the majority of these work in private practice (86%) with the remainder employed as private, in-house architects, in local authorities or central government. The number of public sector architects has declined significantly from 1980, from 43% of the total to 9% in 2003.

The 2007 Landscape Institute (LI) membership of approximately 5,000 reflects the smaller, albeit growing, numbers of landscape architects. There is currently a 60:40 split in the profession between those working in the private and public sector. The British Institute of Architectural Technologists (BIAT) data quoted in the 2004 Evidence Base Review suggests approximately 6,000 members. These include many of the architectural technicians and technologists in this sector.

Of the additional workers in this sector identified through the LFS, a number are likely to be urban designers. It is difficult to estimate the exact numbers, exacerbated by the cross-over between the professions but data on main services by firm in the 2002 Construction Industry Council survey quoted in the 2004 Evidence Base Review suggests a ratio of approximately 5.4 architects for every 1 urban designer, resulting in a workforce of at least 6,000.

There is little evidence of a significant shortage of architects. This remains a popular career choice with a steady level of university applications and high retention within the field.

Landscape architects, on the other hand, are in short supply. The increasing recognition of the role of an attractive public realm in delivering social, economic and environmental benefits has led to an upswing in demand not matched by supply. Difficulties are exacerbated by poor recruitment practices, not made easier by lack of capacity.

In the case of urban designers there is evidence of a labour shortage. Although influenced by organisational background, this profession was identified by over 35% of online individual survey respondents as an area of labour shortages.

Anecdotal evidence suggests this is particularly true in local authorities. Not all employ urban designers but often require urban design expertise in determining planning applications. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) Survey of Urban Design Skills in 2000 quoted in the 2004 Evidence Base Review suggests that development control staff are called upon to make judgements in this area.
8.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply

From the current position of labour shortages in landscape architecture and urban design in particular, labour shortages are forecast to increase significantly to over 90% by 2012. This is a reflection of the growing demand for design skills and the lack of increase in supply. There has been only a 1.4% annual increase in the supply of design professionals since 2001 and a 1% annual increase in the number of students.

These gaps are likely to be most acute in the areas of landscape architecture and urban design. Material from the LI set out by York Consulting suggests a more healthy increase in supply, with membership increasing from 6% between 2006 and 2007 and an increase in student numbers. However, progress to chartership remains slow and it is not clear how many students enter the sector post graduation. Increasing demand and lack of supply is reflected in increases in salaries.

There is also some evidence of increases in demand for urban design skills. Organisational respondents to the online survey recorded notable increases in the recruitment of urban designers over the past two years, planned increases in recruitment over the next five years and anticipated shortages in five year’s time.

There is some evidence that demand for urban designers and master planners will be met by professionals in other sustainable communities professions. Of those individuals surveyed online up to 20% stated they would consider a move to this field. This is primarily driven by interest from architects and landscape architects, reflecting one of the main professional routes into urban design.

8.4 Technical skills gaps

Survey material suggests confidence amongst this sector in the level of technical skills. Only architects show some concern over their knowledge of relevant procedures and specialist skills required to undertake the job. This probably reflects the technical nature of their work and the need to keep up-to-date with design packages, innovative design, engineering techniques and latest design trends.

Although rightly confident about technical skills, the dominance of architects amongst urban design professionals does create a very detailed design approach which is not always appropriate. The challenge for this profession in developing a truly integrated approach is to acknowledge and build upon the expertise of a wide range of other specialists.
8.5 Generic skills gaps

There are also gaps in terms of generic skills. Urban designers and landscape architects, in common with the rest of the sector, identify gaps in financial and project management competencies. Architects are concerned about these skills but also about areas relating to working with others, such as inclusive visioning, resolving conflict and stakeholder management.

This probably reflects that, as a profession, urban designers and landscape architects are used to working with a wide range of stakeholders and have developed a range of skills to respond to the more inclusive approach at the heart of the sustainable communities agenda. Architects are aware of the need to engage more but are less confident, reflecting the more oblique nature of their engagement and entrenched patterns of working. This profession had the lowest rate of engagement in the delivery of sustainable communities amongst all online survey respondents.

Some respondents noted gaps in skills in relation to the sustainable communities agenda. Most significant was a concern that this group of professionals is not necessarily providing for the needs of future generations. This probably arises from the practice of following the immediate client brief rather than developing an understanding of how buildings and places may develop and evolve in the future. This is, of course, partly a problem of the way in which this group is included in the creation of places and a lack of long-term thinking. It also arises from a tendency to see designs in the form of a finished product.

There is limited evidence of demand for, or development of, generic skills training provision amongst architects (determined through RIBA CPD regional surveys as set out by York Consulting) and there is no readily-available material on the other professions.

However, Arup’s survey shows recognition of the value of generic skills and commitment to personal skills development amongst landscape architects, urban designers and architects. This may be because individuals see training through informal measures and efforts to gain more exposure and experience as the best approach to developing skills. There was also an emerging willingness to drawing on wider advice, particularly on social and economic issues.
Skills Gaps by Occupation: Engineers

Main Findings

- The shortage of skilled engineers is predicted to widen to 17% by 2012. This is driven by significant increases in the level of demand, causing gaps to widen despite improvements in the supply of engineers.

- Although engineers are concerned about maintaining their technical skills, organisations are reasonably confident of the ability of staff to meet the requirements of their jobs.

- Engineers identify project, process and financial management as gaps in their generic skills. Leadership is also identified as an area of weakness, particularly in terms of the delivery of sustainable communities where engagement with the wider place making agenda can be limited.

Key recommendation: Efforts to promote a career in engineering should be continued alongside efforts to encourage wider engagement in the sustainable communities agenda. This would help to ensure that technical expertise informs every stage of delivery as well as help to bridge the gap between project management professionals and other specialists.

9.1 Background and context

In its broadest sense, engineering is about the practical application of scientific principles. Engineers contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities in the practical solutions they develop to provide fit-for-purpose sites, buildings and infrastructure. This involves a number of different types of engineers, including civil, structural, building services, transport, mechanical, electrical and geotechnical. Civil, structural and building services engineers are the focus of this section, in line with previous studies.

9.2 Labour market issues

LFS data indicates 192,000 engineers working in the delivery of sustainable communities. York Consulting reported that at the end of 2005, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) had a membership of 77,350 and the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineering (CIBSE) has a membership of 14,000.

The Local Government Pay and Workforce Survey in 2006 indicated few difficulties in recruiting and retaining civil engineers. Just over one fifth of local authorities expressed difficulties with recruitment and 11% with retention. Although there is limited evidence of significant labour shortages across the sector, anecdotal evidence suggests difficulties in recruiting civil and structural engineers in areas of significant buoyancy in the property market, particularly in London. Due to the technical requirements, transfers between specialisms within engineering are not always possible, creating some inflexibility in responding to the market. Some of the labour shortages are being filled by those who qualified overseas – engineering skills are particularly transferable.

9.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply

The shortage in skilled engineers is predicted to widen by 2012 to approximately 17%. This is driven by significant increases in the level of demand, causing gaps to widen despite improvements in the supply of engineers.

Despite long-running concerns over the supply of engineers, recent evidence points to gradual increases, particularly in the building services specialism. LFS data suggests an annual rise of 3.5% since 2001. Increases in supply are also reflected in the stable number of science A-Level candidates, increasing undergraduate numbers (although not all enter the profession) and a rise in membership of professional organisations. This reversal of previous trends along with the demographic profile of the profession – in 2004 the median age of registered engineers was over 55 – suggests a particularly limited supply in middle management levels.

* Includes civil engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, planning and quality control officers.
Demand for engineers is likely to continue to grow in the near to mid-term. Demand has increased in recent years due to a buoyant property market and significant public sector capital projects. Although continuing market conditions are not guaranteed, there are sufficient major projects planned or part-completed, such as London 2012, to suggest an upward trend. Qualified workers from overseas may be used to partly fill this deficit – and there may be some outsourcing of standardised technical procedures.

9.4 Technical skills gaps
Although engineers are concerned about maintaining their technical skills, organisations are reasonably confident of the ability of staff to meet the requirements of their jobs.

9.5 Generic skills gaps
In the online survey engineers identify project, process and financial management as gaps in their generic skills. This reflects less a weakness in the skills base but more the central importance and traditional strength of the engineering profession in this area. Indeed, project management is increasingly emerging as a separate sub-occupation within engineering, driven by the increasing outsourcing of project management of major projects. Although embedded in undergraduate training, these skills can be difficult to maintain.

Leadership was also identified in the online survey and by the ICE as an area of weakness. Engineers prefer to act as observers rather than drive forward projects. Individuals, organisations and professional institutions are increasingly aware of the importance of generic skills, and project management and leadership are identified as priorities for personal development.

The level of engagement with the sustainable communities agenda is critical. In general, engineers are very focused on the final stages of delivery and often work in quite constrained contexts, solving problems at very localised levels. A limited number of professionals relate to the sustainable communities agenda. Solutions can be hugely innovative and exciting, in the fields of sustainable building design or sustainable manufacturing techniques for example, but due to the constrained contexts of working, engineers are often pessimistic about achieving a step-change on a broader scale. This relates to the reluctance in the profession to take the lead.

There is a need to ensure that the potential of new techniques is fully incorporated into project design, to enable aspirational yet deliverable projects. This requires much greater understanding on the part of engineers of sustainable communities objectives and processes and the role of other professions. Such an understanding is also critical to the emergence of engineers as project managers of major projects. Delivery of sustainable communities will depend on embedding principles and understanding place making processes, in the approach to project management and amongst project management professionals.
Skills Gaps by Occupation: Regeneration and Economic Development Professionals

Main Findings

• There is mixed evidence of current labour shortages amongst regeneration and economic development professionals. Arup’s model suggests that people shortages have the potential to increase from current levels to over 70% by 2012.

• There is a lack of confidence in technical skills amongst parts of this profession. This is partly because regeneration and economic development officers do not have the option of such rigorous technical training as some of the other professions unless they enter regeneration via other occupations, such as planners, or undertake specialist postgraduate training.

• A wide range of generic skills are required, including project management, partnership working, making things happen, leadership, community engagement, negotiation and conflict resolution. The levels of these skills vary depending on the level of seniority.

Key recommendation: The supply of regeneration professionals should be increased by encouraging new recruits and enabling transfers from other sustainable communities professions. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure professionals have an appropriate range of, or access to, knowledge and specialist skills (and confidence in these) as well as a range of generic skills.

10.1 Background and context

Effective regeneration requires improvements to the physical landscape as well as the creation of new social and economic opportunities. As such, those who work in regeneration are employed in a range of different occupations playing often very different roles. The common feature is their focus on improving the performance of their local community and their perception of themselves as regeneration professionals over and above other categorisations such as town planners.

“I primarily work to invigorate new investment and renewal of areas through planning, economic development and commercial market engagement.”

“I advise and support community organisations to breathe new life into redundant or underused land and buildings which are usually located in low demand neighbourhoods.”

“My role is to regenerate people, places and possibilities!”

“My role is to promote art and culture, placing it at the centre of the regeneration of a small community.”

Regeneration in the past has been more focused on the physical and economic aspects of regeneration. As a result, there is much overlap between those defined as regeneration officers and economic development officers. The former tend to work in physical regeneration whilst the latter focus on areas such as worklessness and business support, but roles are increasingly interchangeable. Thus economic development officers are also included in this section.

15 This figure is not much more than the 15,000 individuals identified as working in regeneration in the North West. This disparity is because the North West figures include all who are employed in regeneration whilst the LFS estimates include regeneration/economic officers not categorised as anything else.
10.2 Labour market issues

Once all other professions are stripped out of the data, regeneration and economic development officers are estimated to number approximately 21,000 from LFS data. As reported by York Consulting, the Institution of Economic Development (IED) has over 1,000 members which they consider to be only a very small proportion of the total working in this area.

There is evidence of some labour shortages in this area. Although the Employers Organisation Recruitment and Retention Survey 2006 identified only 0.6% of local authorities having difficulties securing staff, over 30% of those surveyed online stated that their organisation needed to recruit more regeneration experts. Research in the North West by RENEW Northwest set out by York Consulting identified a level of regeneration vacancies equivalent to 14% of the paid workforce. Nearly two-thirds of organisations reported a vacancy. With reference to physical regeneration, there are particular shortages of individuals with private and public sector experience and at senior level. This relates to the lack of understanding of development finance, disengagement of surveyors and the challenges in putting together a realistic delivery package.

Shortages in economic development were less severe, with only 1.2% of local authorities encountering recruitment difficulties in surveys by the Employers Organisation.

10.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply

Arup’s model suggests that labour shortages are forecast to increase to over 70% from current levels in the period up to 2012. Although supply is forecast to increase, and has been growing by 5% annually since 2001, this is unlikely to meet demand. Interest in the regeneration field is considerable and is reflected in the growth of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, applications for English Partnerships apprenticeships and respondents to the online survey where willingness to consider a career in regeneration was expressed by individuals from almost all professions. If flexible training and clear career paths could be provided, this interest may help address demand.

There is evidence of less interest in economic development as a career – perhaps relating to the relatively low profile of this profession. The workforce is older and fewer are entering this profession from planning, a traditional source of supply. This may create shortages in more traditional areas of economic development – other shortages may be filled by regeneration professionals.

Arup’s model suggests that labour shortages are forecast to increase to over 70% from current levels in the period up to 2012.
Demand is being driven by growth across the sector. This is about major programmes in growth and regeneration but is also about the continued recognition and role of local, community-based projects. Demand will also be exacerbated as regeneration officers, and economic development officers to a certain degree, begin to play more of a co-ordination role; building recognition of the importance of social and cultural issues alongside the physical and the move towards more joined-up government reflected in the emergence of Local Area Agreements, Community Strategies and so forth. Potential strengthening of structures to enhance the delivery of economic development initiatives at sub-regional level, as well as the possible emergence of city regions as powerful political and delivery agencies, would also boost demand for economic development skills.

10.4 Technical skills gaps
Regeneration and economic development officers do not have the option of such rigorous vocational training as some of the other professions, unless they enter regeneration via these occupations or undertake specialist postgraduate training. This is partly reflected in the lack of confidence amongst this profession in their technical skills. An Institute of Economic Development (IED) survey in 2006 showed that 76% of respondents working in economic development felt they would benefit from further training in, amongst other skills, evaluation techniques and strategy development. There is a real desire, expressed through the online survey by economic development and regeneration professionals, to undertake further training, often by a masters course. Knowledge gaps identified ranged from EU procurement regulations to civic design to green infrastructure to financial appraisals. A number of organisations also agreed that an improvement in skills in their staff was required.

Forecast gaps in supply of regeneration and economic development professionals 2005 - 2012

Generic skills of regeneration and economic development professionals are viewed as important but currently inadequate to meet the demands of delivery.
10.5 Generic skills gaps

In general, the generic skills of regeneration and economic development professionals are viewed as important but currently inadequate to meet the demands of delivery. Responses to the online survey suggest that a wide range of generic skills are required, including project management, partnership working, making things happen, leadership, community engagement, negotiation and conflict resolution, and vary depending on the level of seniority. As reported by York Consulting, in research by CLES Consulting in East Lancashire on the skills of regeneration staff, senior staff saw partnership working as most important, whilst project staff identified community engagement.

This research supports findings from the online survey which shows that gaps in the skills of regeneration and economic development professionals are particularly severe in the areas of project management, community engagement and conflict resolution. In addition, research by IED in 2006 found concern amongst economic development experts on their ability to work with communities, partnership working and engagement. Anecdotal evidence on the high level of demand for courses providing training on generic skills supports this evidence of current skills gaps.

The Chief Economic Development Officers’ Society (CEDOS) suggests a deficiency in project management skills amongst economic development officers. There is a lack of project managers with suitable understanding of the technical details. The importance of technical skills alongside generic skills is supported by the findings of Impact Research for RENEW Northwest which highlighted that due to the wide range of organisations involved, common skills across the sector alongside departmental-specific technical skills were important.

Moreover, in view of the cross-cutting work of many regeneration and economic development professionals, there is also a need for greater understanding of the different professions and organisations across the sector. Multi-disciplinary and cross-departmental working can be poor.

“I think there is too much emphasis on management and procedures, and too little encouragement of risk taking by those at the coal face. Despite all, cross-sectoral working is still poor. Passion, creativity and the ability to make things happen counts.”
**Skills Gaps by Occupation:**

**Environmental and Sustainable Development Specialists**

### Main Findings

- Labour shortages in environmental officers will increase temporarily and then start to close over the short to medium term. A shortage of sustainable development experts is likely to steadily increase in the period up to 2012.

- Individuals are concerned about the depth and breadth of their technical skills, given the wide subject matter involved.

- There are perceived gaps in project management, stakeholder management, leadership, conflict resolution, inclusive visioning and breakthrough thinking.

**Key recommendation:** There is a need to increase the supply of sustainable development experts and to ensure that environmental and sustainable development experts are fully integrated into delivery teams so that environmental and sustainable development issues become opportunities rather than constraints.

### 11.1 Background and context

The environmental sector covers a broad range of disciplines and individuals who are likely to be involved with the delivery of sustainable communities. Jobs range from promotion of biodiversity to green spaces management to strategy development and impact assessment. Professionals are involved at every stage: design, production, maintenance and management of communities.

Sustainable development as a profession in its own right has emerged in recent years. Definitions vary. Some who define their profession in this way are concerned with balancing economic, social and environmental factors in the creation of new settlements. Others are far more focused on promoting the environmental aspects of sustainability, hence inclusion in this section.

“My job is about negotiating solutions that reduce transport need, achieve high energy efficiency, which are equitably accessible, physically and economically, and provide high quality environments with a sense of place.”

“It’s about working with clients and investors on the sustainability of individual buildings, including the role they play, and how they combine, to support the creation of sustainable communities.”

### 11.2 Labour market issues

Data on the size of the workforce involved in the environmental aspects of delivery of sustainable communities is limited. The 2004 Evidence Base Review identified approximately 260,000 employees in the environmental sector using a very broad definition which included bio scientists and forestry workers. We have used LFS and survey data to estimate the numbers of environmental specialists and sustainable development professionals directly involved in delivery of sustainable communities. Latest figures available suggest 18,000 environmental and 5,000 sustainable development specialists.

There are some signs of shortages of environmental specialists and sustainable development specialists, although information is patchy. Research by Oxford Brookes in 2003 showed that 85% of local authorities could draw on inhouse conservation expertise and that there was an average of 1.7 full-time specialists per authority. Yet results, although tentative, from our online survey suggest that this expertise is either not sufficient or is not appropriate to help in the delivery of sustainable communities. Additional environmental and sustainable development experts were identified by a significant number – and range – of individuals required by their organisation to deliver sustainable communities.
11.3 Forecast gaps in labour supply

Arup’s model suggests that labour shortages in environmental officers will increase temporarily and then start to close over the short to medium term, showing an eventual surplus of 8% by 2012. The shortage of sustainable development experts is likely to steadily increase to over 70% by 2012. There have been moderate increases in supply in recent years – 8% annually in the environmental specialist workforce and 5% annually in the sustainable development profession.

The notable growth in the number of environmental specialists partly explains the less severe trends in the shortage over the mid-term. This reflects the establishment of the environmental sector in relation to delivery of sustainable communities. The requirement of environmental expertise in developing scheme proposals (reflected in the major role of the Environmental Impact Assessment) is one example of the increasingly core role of these professionals. The development of training, courses and chartership alongside the growth of the sector has resulted in more entering the profession, reflected in an annual increase of 2% in student numbers over the last ten years. Steady demand for services is likely to continue, the rate of growth of which is likely to be diminished by the increasing role of sustainable development experts who will fulfil some of the current functions of environmental experts.

Forecast gaps in supply of environmental experts and sustainable development specialists 2005 - 2012

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
Sustainable development as a profession is younger and less established and is, in many ways, a further development of the trends which led to the growth in the environmental sector. Most who work in this sector have come via other professional routes such as planning, engineering and environmental occupations. As a result, there is no reliable trend data on student numbers.

Demand for these professionals is likely to increase considerably as pressures to deliver growth and regeneration continue and the sustainable communities approach is embedded further.

Likely increases in demand are reflected in responses to the survey. Organisations noted an average level of recruitment of environmental and sustainable experts relative to other professions in the recent past. Over the next five years, however, large increases in the numbers recruited are predicted. Sustainable development professionals are identified above all other professions as an area of recruitment.

Responses also hint that these shortages will partly be addressed. Despite demand, these areas are not anticipated to experience severe shortages. This is probably because demand for sustainable communities professionals will result in those in the environmental sector moving into this area – the divide between the two is somewhat artificial anyway. Those from other professionals are also likely to transfer, which may have implications for areas with severe shortages such as planning.

This profession faces the challenge of turning constraints into opportunities and will need significant generic and technical skills to do so.
11.4 Technical skills gaps
The survey suggests that individuals, in common with the rest of the sector, are concerned about their technical skills. Sustainable development professionals are noteworthy for their confidence in their knowledge of the subject area and yet express concern to improve their knowledge of relevant procedures and specialist processes.

11.5 Generic skills gaps
Traditionally, in their role as vanguard for a more environmentally responsible and sustainable approach, environmental specialists and sustainable development professionals have often acted slightly apart from some of the mainstream delivery processes. As they are increasingly embedded into these processes, demand for generic skills amongst new and existing professions, particularly those connected with working with and through others, are increasing.

Organisations noted an average level of recruitment of environmental and sustainable experts relative to other professions in the recent past.

Along with project management skills, environmental specialists perceive gaps in stakeholder management, leadership, conflict resolution, inclusive visioning and breakthrough thinking. Sustainable development experts identify gaps in conflict resolution along with project management. Peer review supports these findings. Over 20% of respondents thought their organisation required more environmental specialists and more sustainable development experts with generic skills.

Working out deliverable yet sustainable large scale schemes, as well as addressing the problems of established communities, is hugely challenging and will require inputs from all professionals, resolved by the sustainable development expert. This profession faces the challenge of turning constraints into opportunities and will need significant generic and technical skills to do so.
Skills Gaps by Occupation:
Housing and Welfare Professionals and Community
and Neighbourhood Development Professionals

Main Findings

• Evidence is mixed on the supply difficulties in the housing and welfare sector. Arup’s results show that there is a requirement for 47% growth in the supply of housing and welfare officers to meet demand. Forecasts however suggest that supply will exceed demand by 25% to 2012. The surplus in the model is partly dependent on evidence from trends to date. The model will be rerun to reflect the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and the new directions in housing policy announced over the past few months, which may change forecasts for the sector. Shortages in labour supply in housing and welfare will be particularly influenced by future policy direction.

• Evidence from a wide range of sources is also ambiguous. Due to the lack of quantitative information on the supply and demand of housing and welfare officers it is impossible to identify whether the surplus forecast is being driven by increases in welfare officers or housing officers. Growth in the supply of housing officers is likely to be more muted as the growth across the sector currently defined reflects the considerable increases in spending in key public services such as health and the consequent increases of supply in these professions.

• Amongst housing professionals there appear to be labour shortages in housing managers/officers particularly in London and the South East, senior managers and in specialist areas of skills, reflecting the increasing complexity of housing policy and interventions.

• In the housing sector there appear to be significant shortages in some generic skills and in those with wider experience, for example, in business skills, surveying and regeneration professionals.

• There are no significant shortages in community neighbourhood development officers. The issue in this area is a lack of resources rather a lack of committed staff.

• Over 55% of housing and welfare officers and over 60% of community and neighbourhood development officers felt their technical skills did not meet the requirements of the job, partly reflecting the complexities of policy and the increasing use of IT as well as lack of confidence amongst some professionals.

• There are a number of generic skills gaps amongst housing and welfare officers and community development workers including communication, breakthrough thinking, inclusive visioning, financial management and stakeholder

Key recommendation: There is a pressing need to establish a clear set of data for the housing sector so that baselines can be determined and used across the industry. This will enable better monitoring of future supply and demand. Efforts should be made to enhance the technical skills of housing and community development professionals as well as promote leadership, communications and business management skills.

Delivery of high quality housing is a multi-faceted programme and draws on the skills of a wide range of professionals. Different areas of working include management and maintenance of existing properties, development of new homes and strategy and policymaking. Professionals are employed in both the public and private sector. This is an area of particularly rapid policy change.

Due to the focus on occupations adopted in this study, this chapter largely deals with those professionals dealing with the management and maintenance of housing, although it does touch on the requirements in the public sector for skills to deliver new build projects and develop effective strategies. There is a clear overlap in this area of working with the skills gaps in other professions such as developers (including housebuilders), surveyors and planners.

Housing and welfare officers or managers are concerned with the management and maintenance of
rented properties. These are managed in accordance with local strategies which seek to provide adequate levels of housing in a way which is socially inclusive as well as supportive of local economic conditions and environmental concerns. Individuals are employed by local authorities and increasingly by private-public partnerships in the form of housing associations as well as Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).

“We work with a wide range of partners in order to make our homes and estates a pleasant environment that people will want to live, work and grow up in.”

Neighbourhood and community development workers tend to work on small scale projects either with a focus on particular groups within society or a local area. Projects are often directed towards capacity building, enabling local people to determine the direction and rate of change. As a result, these professionals often work closely with voluntary workers. Joining up policies at local level, through Local Strategic Partnerships, for example, is also sometimes considered the role of these professionals.

12.1 Labour market issues

LLFS data suggests a total of approximately 131,000 housing and welfare officers in England in 2005. The Asset Skills report in 2006 indicated a total of 306,500 people employed in the Property Services and Housing sector in 2004, a figure based on LFS and English Local Labour Force Survey. This figure is significantly higher because of broader definitions used. The latter definition incorporates property, housing and land managers (used in this report as a proxy to estimate the number of developers in England) as well as planners, architects, surveyors and estate agents. These professions are treated separately in this report.

Estimating the definite number of housing and welfare officers is difficult. From the LFS Data it is impossible to identify what proportion of the 131,000 identified as housing and welfare officers, relates to housing. On top of this the 131,000 figure does not include those defining themselves as housing/homeless officers. Membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) as reported by York Consulting in 2007 was 20,000. However membership of the CIH is not likely to cover all those working in the area. Other studies have included a wider range of professions in their definition of the housing sector; (for example property professionals).

Within this report, these professions have been included in separate sectors. As such it has been difficult to establish a base line other than the LFS data to use in this report and there is a clear need to develop a consistent set of data.

118,000 neighbourhood and community development officers are identified in 2005 from LFS data. These figures also include social services managers, day care managers and some health workers. Although all of these are involved in the day-to-day delivery of successfully functioning communities, the numbers of community development officers directly involved in the place making agenda is likely to be much smaller.

Information on current labour shortages is patchy. The 2006 Recruitment and Retention Survey found that a relatively small proportion of local authorities had problems recruiting (27%) and retaining housing management staff (21%). Although influenced by organisational background, individual respondents to the online survey did not identify significant requirements for more housing and welfare officers within their organisations, although some shortages of community development officers were noted.

CIH is however aware of shortages and there is considerable demand for housing graduates. Human resource directors in the housing association sector identified recruitment difficulties as their biggest challenge in a study undertaken by the Housing Corporation in 2004.

The Asset Skills Report 2006 identifies particular shortages in the area of housing managers and housing development staff. There appear to be difficulties in recruiting housing managers at senior level, particularly in the South, South East and London. Arup’s model corroborates these regional variations and the Employers Organisation Recruitment and Retention Survey 2006 also indicated more difficulties in recruiting and retaining senior managers amongst local authorities. The increasingly specialised nature of housing work is creating additional difficulties. These are reflected in the tendency amongst housing organisations to train their own staff.
The Asset Skills Report 2006 also identifies difficulties in recruiting housing development staff, particularly those with project management and surveying skills. This relates to the shortages associated with surveyors who work in the public sector previously identified. There also appear to be difficulties in recruiting individuals to strategic roles, translating policy to delivery. Again, this is linked to shortages in other professions, such as forward planning officers specialising in housing.

The degree of shortage of community development officers is difficult to determine. Organisations that employ community development workers often operate on limited funds, seeking to make the most of resources and are often part run by volunteers. Although there may be few vacancies and high retention rates, in view of the considerable demand for services these professionals are no doubt over employed. The shortage in this sector is of resources, not supply of committed staff.

Demand for staff in the housing and welfare sectors will be hugely influenced by the future of housing policy direction and the significant increase in housing planned. Any policy commitment to significantly boost supply of housing would see an increase in demand for housing professionals to manage properties as well as those able to deliver social housing developments and increase the supply of affordable housing. This report does not take into account CSR07, the Housing Green paper (2007) and the post 2012 impact of the Olympics. New directions in housing policy announced over the past few months will change forecasts for the sector.

12.2 Forecast gaps in labour supply

The model predicts a surplus of professionals in both areas of over 20% in 2012. In housing and welfare this forecast is based on a 45% increase in LFS data between 2001 and 2005. According to the LFS, the number of housing and welfare officers has increased by 10% annually and the number of social services workers, a proxy for community development, has increased annually by 9%. For this research it has not been possible to disaggregate the Housing and Welfare LFS category and identify the housing elements within it. Therefore it is possible that the rapid growth in numbers of people working in this category has been as a result of a growth in welfare officers rather than housing officers. Growth in supply of housing and community development officers is likely to be more muted than the forecast made by the model as this growth partly reflects the considerable increase in spending in key public services such as health. For example, CIH membership increased by 3% between 2004 and 2005.

These forecasts suggest that although demand is likely to increase to 2012 this is likely to be more than met by supply. Whilst it is difficult to draw sound conclusions from the data in relation to housing (given the issues with the LFS categorisation), survey data supports these findings. Organisations who responded to the survey have recruited a modest number of both housing and community development staff over the last two years and intend to do the same over the next five years. Despite increasing demand, limited shortages in staff are anticipated.

**Forecast gaps in supply of housing and welfare officers and neighbourhood and community development workers 2005 - 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tr>
<td>HOU/WEL</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>NEI</td>
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Source: Arup’s forecasting model
The forecast model does show significant regional variations which reflect the findings of Asset Skills and CIH. There is a predicted shortage in supply of housing and community officers in London and the South. This reflects current recruitment patterns, suggesting regional differentials will continue.

Growth in supply and demand is reflected by the results of forecasts reported in the Asset Skills Report 2006, based on the Warwick Institute for Employment Research Working Futures II Projections to 2014. These estimated growth in employment across the Asset Skills sector (including property and housing services and industrial cleaning activities) of up to 30% from 2004 to 2014. Growth is forecast to be driven by increases in employment in property services professions which are predicted to increase, in the more pessimistic scenarios, by an average annual growth rate of 2.5 – 3%. Although this reflects growth in supply and demand across a number of disciplines including planning, surveying, architecture and so on, increases in total employment of housing and welfare officers at an average annual rate of change of 6% is also predicted.

It is difficult to tease out from this data the implications for labour shortages. Previous trends in employment imply that individuals have been found to fill many of the newly created posts. Nonetheless, in view of current recruitment patterns, it is likely that specific labour shortages will continue.

12.3 Technical skills gaps
Relatively high proportions of housing and welfare officers and community development workers who responded to Arup’s survey were concerned about their technical skills. Over 55% of housing and over 60% of community development officers felt that their specialist housing skills did not meet the requirements of the job. Organisations, on the other hand, were not overly concerned about the level of technical skills of staff in this area.

This partly reflects the complexities of housing policy and delivery (an area of much change and increasing specialisation in recent years) and increasing use of IT. The lack of training – and desire for more training opportunities – has been recognised in the area of housing and CIH has developed training provision. The Asset Skills Report also points to the development by housing organisations of graduate programmes and studentships.

Comments received from those in the neighbourhood and community development profession suggest that lack of funding creates significant barriers to training.

12.4 Generic skills gaps
There is evidence of a small number of generic skills gaps amongst housing professionals. CIH has identified communication as being paramount. Those individuals surveyed online also perceived breakthrough thinking, inclusive visioning, financial management and stakeholder management as areas of weaknesses. These, along with leadership, project management and making it happen, are identified as personal priorities for skills improvements.

Demand for business management skills has partly been driven by the increasing role of housing associations which embody a more business focused approach than previous arrangements.

Housing and welfare officers are increasingly being required to work with a number of other occupations, sometimes leading and co-ordinating regeneration efforts in their area. This provides added impetus for cross-sector working as well as the need for leadership, partnership working and so on. CIH has identified that although individuals are confident in partnership working, there can be a lack of understanding of the role of other professions. The survey also suggests that others’ understanding of the work of housing and welfare officers is relatively poor.

Community development officers also have some concerns about their generic skills, namely financial management, inclusive visioning and breakthrough thinking.

Comments received in the survey tentatively suggest that there are some skills issues relating to volunteers which the sector does not have the resources to address.
13 Conclusions and Recommendations

13.1 Overall conclusions
Organisations need well-qualified staff with a range of generic skills in order to deliver sustainable communities. Our research shows that there are people shortages across the sector; that there are concerns over some technical skills and that generic skills remain important, and lacking, in many areas. Although the sector contains many committed and skilled individuals, these shortages and weaknesses threaten delivery in the short to medium term.

However, since the Egan Review, there has been notable progress towards improving generic skills made by the ASC, RCEs and professional institutions. This progress towards improving generic skills has reinforced the need for deeper technical skills.

Our research shows the central role of skilled people in delivery but also points to the pressures such as lack of resources and the challenges in managing risk to empower individuals to bring about change.

Delivery of sustainable communities is about balancing resources and compromising between objectives in order to create aspirational but viable projects. The best projects result from full engagement of all professionals, working together to develop solutions and sometimes compromising their own objectives. This depends less on organisational and individual skills and more on multi-disciplinary working, a can-do culture which embraces opportunity and mutual understanding and respect between professions.

13.2 The sustainable communities workforce
There is, generally speaking, a widespread recognition of the concept of sustainable communities. The scope of the sustainable communities programme is considerable and as a result the sustainable communities workforce is a large group comprising approximately 750,000 individuals.

Within this group there are different levels of identification with the sustainable communities programme. Those who are most engaged tend to be those involved in frontline delivery: forward planners; area regeneration staff; housing and welfare officers; and neighbourhood/community development workers.

13.3 Shortages in labour supply
There are current and predicted shortages in adequately trained staff amongst planners, urban designers, sustainable development specialists and regeneration professionals. The national picture sometimes disguises considerable regional variation in shortages so that a profession such as housing, with a projected national surplus of professionals, is expected to suffer severe shortages in London.

Although significant, these shortages may not be as severe as they initially appear. There is a reasonable level of occupational mobility within the workforce and interest expressed in some of the key areas of shortages, namely regeneration and urban design. Shortages are also being met by the increasing use of consultants. This enables organisations to buy-in a package of expertise in a cost-efficient manner.

There are greater shortages forecast in the London and the South East but some of these are likely to be met by movement across the country. Where competition is fierce the private sector tends to have the edge, resulting in an older workforce in the public sector with particular shortages in junior to middle management. This further encourages the use of consultants.

13.4 Technical skills gaps
The true extent and nature of technical skills is difficult to determine. In general, when organisations are able to employ staff they are happy with their technical abilities. There are a few areas of concern
such as development control expertise amongst planners, development appraisal techniques amongst regeneration professionals and abilities of regeneration staff in general.

Individuals are far more concerned about their technical skills. These concerns often relate to areas of rapid policy change, such as climate change, or knowledge outside traditional boundaries of the discipline. There is also a problem across the sector in reading plans and understanding drawings, essential to cross-sector working.

Those who follow less defined career paths and undertake less structured training provision are most concerned about their technical skills. Neighbourhood/community development workers are one such group. This reflects a lack of confidence as well as the challenges of working on technical issues without formal training.

13.5 Generic skills shortages
There is evidence of a lack of project management skills amongst the sustainable communities workforce. This is becoming increasingly important as the use of private sector consultancies becomes more entrenched in the public sector. Demand for project management skills is difficult to predict or plan for, emerging as and when required. These skills are required hand-in-hand with technical skills to ensure effective delivery.

Organisations are also concerned with the leadership and communication skills of their staff. Because delivery demands trade-offs and compromise between professionals with very different expertise and focus, leadership is essential in determining the right way forward as well as ensuring buy-in and commitment to delivery from the rest of the team. Leadership at a local level will become increasingly important if responsibility for delivery of public services is devolved further.

Individuals are more concerned with their abilities in breakthrough thinking, inclusive visioning and making it happen. The latter is particularly noted by those in the public sector. This partly reflects the organisational challenges in empowering staff to think creatively, take risks and drive forward delivery.

13.6 The role of consultants
A combination of factors such as limited budgets, higher staff turnovers and difficulties in recruiting the desired staff profile tends to encourage the frequent and increased use of consultants to carry out core functions or to assist in preparation of the evidence base required for policy making. This is a message that comes through strongly from both our online survey of organisations and our case study audits.

On one hand it might be argued that, at the scale of the sustainable communities sector, it does not matter who employs the professionals (be it a local authority or consultancy) so long as they are available and can deliver the outputs required. Nevertheless there are implications to consider.

Increased use of consultants will have implications for the required skill set of those who work in sustainable communities in the public sector; for example, training by managing consultants and contractors in order to ensure maximum value for money is obtained. It may also present issues for public sector organisations related to knowledge retention.

Individual organisations may need to consider whether the expense of outsourcing work to consultants is a viable long-term solution – in particular whether the staff cost savings are sufficient to offset the cost of commissioning consultants (the greater the reliance on consultants for core functions, the less likely it is that this will be the case). However, many organisations say that they prefer the flexibility of employing consultants to carry out discrete projects or to help tackle short-term increases in workload, as it enables them to balance the demands of workload against future budget uncertainties.
13.7 Recommendations
As a consequence of undertaking this study a number of recommendations for addressing the labour shortages and skills gaps that threaten the delivery of sustainable communities in the future have been made.

Promote a national drive to address skills gaps: It is evident that labour shortages, generic skills gaps and concerns over specialist and technical knowledge are experienced across the regions and occupations. There needs to be a nationally co-ordinated approach to developing skills and knowledge, in which all partners and stakeholders are engaged. ASC needs to continue this role as the national centre for delivering skills for sustainable communities, working with partners across the sector to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to tackling shortages and gaps.

Recognise generic skills are key: Individuals and organisations across the full range of professions and in all the regions recognise the critical importance of generic skills. In response to the research’s findings, we recommend that:

a) National programmes must be developed and delivered on a cross-profession basis in order to address common gaps and encourage and reinforce cross-sector working;

b) Short courses and dissemination of best practice are clearly recognised as preferred approaches for busy practitioners;

Work to address labour shortages, recruitment and retention: Delivering sustainable communities in the future requires more skilled professionals. Continued effort is needed in attracting new recruits and retaining them by providing attractive ongoing opportunities, including continuous professional development. ASC should continue to promote sustainable communities professions, by raising the profile of occupations and by providing enhanced entry routes for all ages. ASC will work with other relevant bodies, including Sector Skills Councils, professional institutes and the local government sector, to add value to each other’s work.
Identify, recognise and promote technical skills:
Specialist skills and knowledge are required across the sector. Skills need updating, improving and adapting in response to changing market conditions and policy changes, including climate change. Partners and stakeholders must support the development of technical skills amongst the newer professions and reinvigorate those of more established professions. At the national level, ASC should encourage professional bodies and other partners to ensure that technical and specialist skills shortages are addressed. ASC’s work to provide practical guidance for technical areas, such as climate change, will be co-ordinated with other relevant bodies and departments and promoted across the range of professions.

Promote best practice: Research and best practice needs to be captured, collated and translated into practical guidance and examples that reflect the needs of delivery organisations. At the national level, ASC should continue to disseminate research findings and best practice in an accessible and practical format that leads to action and improvement.

Develop and embed a common understanding of sustainable communities: There needs to be a common and shared understanding across the professions of what delivering sustainable communities actually means in practice.

As the national body for promoting sustainable communities skills, ASC should work with key partners and stakeholders to develop a common language. This will include the development of benchmarking and diagnostic tools that highlight knowledge gaps and signpost users to areas of support. This work will also contribute to a more consistent level of engagement by occupational groups.

Undertake further research: This report does not take into account the outcomes of CSR07, the Housing Green Paper and the post-2012 impact of the Olympics. New directions in housing policy announced over the past few months will change, and arguably exacerbate, forecasts for the sector. Further research is needed on this sector, including the agreement of a shared definition for the housing sector. ASC will work with key partners, including Asset Skills and CIH, to commission further research work in this area.
Main Findings

- There is a projected surplus of sustainable communities professionals in the North East in 2012, although this hides severe shortages in some professions, in particular environmental specialists and surveyors. There may be scope for surplus professionals projected in the North West to offset some of the projected vacancies in the North East.

- The workforce in the North East is generally younger than the English average and more likely to be employed by the public sector and in organisations involved in regeneration, low demand or liveability.

- Organisations in the North East are more likely than average to have trouble recruiting candidates due to unattractive locations.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
A1.1 Regional analysis

- The graphics show that the North East region is forecast to have a small surplus of sustainable communities professionals by 2012, although this belies severe shortages in some professions, in particular environmental specialists and surveyors. In the North East the organisations surveyed were slightly more involved in planning and policy projects than the average for England, and more likely to be involved with projects related to low demand and liveability.

- Major constraints to employing more staff in the North East are financial issues and a perceived shortage of good candidates. In addition to this, organisations in the North East are more likely than average to have difficulty attracting good candidates due to their location.

- There is no perceived difference in the quality of individuals recruited in the sector now compared with two years ago.

- Organisations are more likely to anticipate staff shortages in planning, regeneration, urban design and the environment than average, and this is borne out by Arup’s model forecasts which suggest a disproportionate shortage of environmental specialists as well as surveyors.

- Individual respondents in the North East were generally younger than average and predominantly employed in the public sector, particularly in regeneration organisations.

- Although they currently are more likely to work in the public sector, individuals from the North East have an above-average interest in working in consultancy.

- Although there were not very large differentials in perceptions of skills gaps between regions, a slightly above average number of individuals identified change management, conflict resolution and communication as the skills in need of improvement and placed an above average future focus on leadership skills. Financial skills were selected as the top individual priority for improvement.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – although individuals from the North East are less likely than average to consider moving outside of the region or the neighbouring region of Yorkshire and the Humber for a good job.

- There are predicted surpluses of professionals in the North West who may be able to relocate to offset some of the North East’s projected vacancies in environmental and neighbourhood/community specialists.
Appendix B
North West
Regional Profile

B1 Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps in the North West

Main Findings

- The North West is forecast to have a surplus in sustainable communities professionals overall but this disguises greater than average projected shortages of the traditional professions, including developers, planners, architects and urban designers.

- Sustainable communities professionals in the North West are more likely than average to work in the public sector and are older than average.

- Individuals from the North West are slightly more willing on average to consider moving regions for a job although those that would move prefer the other two northern regions, or the South West.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
B1.1 Regional analysis

- The graphics above show that a large surplus of professionals working in the sustainable communities sector in the North West is forecast, although this belies above average shortages of some of the more traditional professionals, including landscape architects, urban designers, architects, developers and planners.

- There is forecast to be a higher than average surplus of housing and neighbourhood/community specialists, environmental specialists and surveyors.

- Organisations in the North West are more likely to work in the planning stage of sustainable communities, on projects relating to growth as well as low demand. They are less likely than average to want to work in consultancy.

- Individuals surveyed from the North West had an older age profile than average, and more likely to be employed in the public sector. We had a higher than average number of regeneration specialists and landscape architects responding in the North West.

- North West organisations are more likely than other regions to identify a lack of good candidates as a barrier to employment. The other factor identified was financial constraints, although this was less the case than on average. Organisations do not generally perceive much difference in the quality of candidates available compared with two years ago.

- There is not a great deal of difference in the perception of skills between regions but organisations in the North West are more likely than average to think that generic skills within their organisation have decreased.

- Organisations in the North West expect to find a shortage of staff in environmental disciplines and regeneration specialists. This is slightly different to the forecast labour shortages – a shortage of regeneration specialists is expected (although it is expected to be proportionately less than average) but a surplus of environmental specialists is predicted.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – individuals from the North West are slightly more likely than average to consider moving outside of the region – preferred regions are Yorkshire and Humber or the North East (which also have overall predicted surpluses in sustainable communities professions).

- There may therefore be potential for surplus professionals from the North West to fill projected shortages of professionals in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East.
Main Findings

- Yorkshire and the Humber (Y&H) is forecast to have a surplus of sustainable communities professionals overall, although particularly large shortages are predicted in the engineering and environmental professions. A large relative oversupply of housing professionals and planners is forecast.

- Individuals in Y&H are more likely to work in the private sector but more likely to aspire to the public sector and stay in their profession longer than average.

- There may be scope for surplus professionals projected in the North West to offset some of the projected vacancies in Y&H.

Source: Arup's forecasting model
C1.1 Regional analysis

- There is an overall projected surplus of sustainable communities professionals in Yorkshire and the Humber by 2012. This disguises a greater than average shortage of a number of professionals, in particular engineers and environmental specialists. These are offset by forecast disproportionate surpluses of housing specialists and (unusually) planners.

- Individuals working in sustainable communities in Y&H are more likely to stay in their profession longer and are slightly more likely to work in the private sector than average (perhaps reflecting the importance of Leeds as a financial and business services centre).

- Organisations in Y&H are more likely than average to be involved in projects related to low demand and associated with delivery, design and construction.

- Individuals in Y&H are more likely than average to be interested in working in the public sector, particularly local authority regeneration departments. Major constraints to employing more staff identified by Y&H organisations are a lack of financial resources and problems with unattractive organisations, and generally organisations do not perceive any difference in the quality of candidates now compared with a couple of years ago.

- A slightly higher than average proportion of respondents thought that generic skills had worsened in the last few years, although overall there is little difference in perceptions of skills gaps between regions.

- Organisations are more likely than average to anticipate staff shortages in environmental and regeneration specialists, landscape architects and transport practitioners. Arup’s model predicts shortages in all of these professions in Y&H, although (with the exception of environmental specialists, which is expected to be particularly acute) these shortages are expected to be less severe than across the country as a whole.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – however individuals from Y&H are less likely than average to be willing to move out of the region for a good job, and are willing to commute less far than average. For those who would be willing to move for a good job, the North East, North West and East Midlands are the preferred destination, although more people would be willing to move abroad than to any other single English region.

- There are predicted surpluses of professionals in the North West who may be able to relocate to offset some of Y&H’s projected vacancies in environmental and neighbourhood/community specialists.
Appendix D
East Midlands Regional Profile

**D1 Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps in the East Midlands**

**Main Findings**

- By 2012 there is forecast to be an overall projected surplus of sustainable communities professionals in the East Midlands (proportionately more than in any other region) although this disguises greater than average shortages of architects and urban designers, engineers and, most severely, planners. There is some potential for this to be offset by surplus professionals in neighbouring regions.

- Individuals in the East Midlands are more likely to work in planning and delivery of sustainable communities (as opposed to liveability issues) and to aspire to work in central government or think tanks.

- Organisations in the East Midlands are less likely than average to point to financial constraints on recruitment and more likely to blame a shortage of good candidates.

**Forecast labour shortages across the region**

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
D1.1 Regional analysis

- By 2012 the East Midlands is forecast to have the greatest proportional skills surplus of any region, although this disguises acute shortages in the more traditional professions of landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, engineering and planning. There is forecast to be an unusually large surplus of developers, surveyors and environmental specialists.

- Individual respondents from the East Midlands are more likely than average to be employed in the public sector, and in the planning and environment professions, and are more likely to aspire to work in central government or in think tanks.

- Organisations in the East Midlands are more likely than average to be involved in the planning and delivery of sustainable communities (perhaps reflecting the high numbers of developers and surveyors in the region) and are more likely to be involved with projects relating to growth or low demand than liveability.

- Organisations in the East Midlands are more likely than average to have trouble finding good candidates for employment but less likely than average to face financial constraints (although these are still a concern to many).

- There is no significant difference between regions regarding the level of skills in organisations, although those in the East Midlands are slightly more likely to think that both technical and generic skills have worsened over the last two years. Individuals are slightly more likely than average to highlight gaps in knowledge related to relevant technical procedures and processes.

- Organisations in the East Midlands are more likely than average to expect future shortages of professionals in the planning, surveying regeneration and environment professions. This contrasts slightly with Arup’s model, which forecasts a future surplus in both the surveying and environmental professions, although a particularly acute shortage of planners is forecast.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – individuals from the East Midlands are more likely than average to move regions for a good job, with the preferred regions being Yorkshire and the Humber or the South West.

- There may therefore, be some scope for surplus professionals in planning and engineering in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber to offset some of the projected shortages in the East Midlands.

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Forecast labour shortages by profession

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**Main Findings**

- There is forecast to be a small surplus of professionals working in the West Midlands in sustainable communities by 2012, albeit with severe relative shortages of environmental specialists, landscape architects, urban designers and architects.

- Individuals in the West Midlands are more likely than average to be involved in the construction and delivery of sustainable communities, or with neighbourhood and community development.

- Individuals are more likely than average to be willing to move for the right job and are less choosy about where they would be prepared to go, with at least a quarter being willing to move to any given English region.

**Forecast labour shortages across the region**

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
E1.1 Regional analysis

- By 2012 the West Midlands is forecast to have a slight surplus of professionals working in sustainable communities overall and, in particular, a surplus of engineers, planners (which is relatively unusual) and housing specialists. Nevertheless, there are forecast shortages of some groups of professionals, most notably environmental specialists and landscape architects, urban designers and architects.

- Individuals working in the West Midlands are likely to be older than average and are more likely to work in the third sector, particularly in neighbourhood and community development. They are more likely to express an interest in working for neighbourhood renewal bodies than average.

- Although there is not a large difference in perceptions of skills levels across different regions, individuals in the West Midlands are more likely than average to perceive gaps in their own knowledge of relevant technical procedures and processes.

- Organisations are slightly more likely than average to be involved in construction and growth area projects, and less likely to be involved in design.

- Organisations in the West Midlands anticipate shortages of planners, surveyors, urban designers and regeneration specialists. Shortages of surveyors, urban designers and regeneration specialists are forecast. However Arup's model suggests an unusually high surplus of planners will be available by 2012.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – individuals from the West Midlands are slightly more likely than average to move regions for a good job, and they are relatively less choosy about their destination region, with more than a quarter of respondents saying they would be prepared to move to any given English region.

- There may, therefore, be some scope for surplus planners in the West Midlands to offset predicted shortages in other regions, and vice versa.

Forecast labour shortages by profession

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<th>Labour shortages decreasing/surplus</th>
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<td>Engineers Housing specialists Planners Overall SC workforce</td>
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<td>Landscape architects, urban designers and architects Developers Environmental specialists Neighbourhood/community specialists Surveyors</td>
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F1 Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps in the East of England

Main Findings

- There is predicted to be a shortage of professionals across the sustainable communities workforce in the East of England by 2012. This is expected to be particularly acute amongst environmental specialists and planners. This could potentially be offset by projected surpluses of those professionals in the South East and West Midlands.

- The East of England workforce is older than average and more likely to work in the public sector, particularly in planning.

- Organisations in the East of England are less likely to face financial constraints on recruitment but more likely to have trouble attracting good candidates as a result of their location or organisation.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
F1.1 Regional analysis

- By 2012 the East of England is forecast to have an overall shortage of sustainable communities professionals, with particularly acute shortages of environmental specialists and planners. There is forecast to be a greater than average surplus of developers and surveyors (whereas shortages of these professions are forecast across the country as a whole).

- Individuals working in the East of England have an older age profile than the England average and are more likely to work in the public sector, particularly in planning.

- Organisations in the East are more likely than average to experience difficulties in attracting good candidates due to unpopular locations or organisations. Conversely, they were less likely to cite financial constraints as a barrier to employing good staff.

- There is little difference between perceptions of technical and generic skills between regions, although a slightly higher proportion of organisations from the East think that both types of skills have improved in the last few years.

- Organisations in the East of England expect to see future shortages in planning, transport planning and urban design, which corresponds with Arup’s model predictions of shortages in all of these disciplines.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – although individuals from the East of England are very slightly less willing than average to move for a good job. Those who would be willing to move prefer London, the South East or Yorkshire and the Humber.

- There may be some potential for shortages in environmental professions to be offset by surpluses predicted, for example, in the South East and similarly with surplus engineers, housing specialists and planners from the West Midlands.
Appendix G
South East Regional Profile

G1 Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps in the South East

Main Findings

- Skills shortages are forecast to be most acute in the sustainable communities workforce of the South East. This will be felt most keenly by landscape architects, urban designers, architects, regeneration specialists, sustainable development specialists and engineers. There may be potential for shortages in engineers to be offset by surpluses in the West Midlands and London.

- Organisations in the South East are more likely than average to be involved in growth areas and to identify a lack of good candidates as a barrier to recruitment.

- Individuals working in sustainable communities in the South East tend to be older than average and less inclined to move for a good job. Those who would be willing to move prefer London and the South West.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
Labour shortages in the sustainable communities workforce as a whole are forecast to be most acute in the South East, and particularly in landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, regeneration and sustainable development and engineering. Despite this projected overall shortage, there are forecast surplus professionals in environmental and housing specialists. Individuals in the South East tend to be older than average and slightly more likely to be employed in the public sector.

Organisations are more likely than average to be involved in growth areas (unsurprisingly, given that three of the government’s four growth areas fall wholly or partly within the South East).

Organisations in the South East are more likely than average to identify lack of good candidates as a barrier to recruitment, and less likely to cite financial constraints (although this was still raised as an issue by a number of respondents).

Organisations are expecting to see above average shortages in planners, transport planners and environmental specialists. Arup’s model does forecast shortages in planners and transport planners (although they are not the categories facing the greatest shortages), but there is a forecast surplus of environmental specialists.

Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps – although individuals from the South East are less willing than average to move for a good job. Those who would be willing to move prefer London or the South West.

The professions with predicted shortages could be offset by the predicted surplus of professionals in neighbouring regions, for example, the predicted surplus of engineers from the West Midlands and from London.

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### Forecast labour shortages by profession

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<td>Overall SC workforce</td>
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**G1.1 Regional analysis**

- Labour shortages in the sustainable communities workforce as a whole are forecast to be most acute in the South East, and particularly in landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, regeneration and sustainable development and engineering. Despite this projected overall shortage, there are forecast surplus professionals in environmental and housing specialists.
- Individuals in the South East tend to be older than average and slightly more likely to be employed in the public sector.
- Organisations are more likely than average to be involved in growth areas (unsurprisingly, given that three of the government’s four growth areas fall wholly or partly within the South East).
- Organisations in the South East are more likely than average to identify lack of good candidates as a barrier to recruitment, and less likely to cite financial constraints (although this was still raised as an issue by a number of respondents).
Appendix H
London Regional Profile

H1 Labour Shortages and Skills Gaps in London

Main Findings

- London is predicted to have a greater than average shortage of professionals working in sustainable communities by 2012 with by far the greatest predicted shortage of planners. This is likely to be offset at least in part by the relative attractiveness of London as a location drawing in professionals from other regions.

- London organisations overall experience very few barriers to recruitment due to the attractive location of the capital, with the notable exception of local authorities, who have real difficulty in competing with the private sector in attracting good staff in planning and engineering.

- Individuals working in sustainable communities in London are younger than average and are more willing than individuals from any other region to move for a good job – preferred locations are the South East and South West.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
H1.1 Regional analysis

- There is a greater than average forecast shortage of sustainable communities professionals in London by 2012. This overwhelmingly comprises a forecast lack of planners, as well as regeneration and sustainable development specialists, landscape architects, urban designers and architects.

- Individuals in London are more likely than average to work in the private sector and are younger than the national sector average. They are also prepared to commute much further for work, reflecting the large commuter hinterland of London.

- Organisations in London are less likely to cite constraints to recruitment of good staff, due to their relatively attractive location, with the exception of local authorities who face grave difficulties in attracting staff in the face of competition from consultancies and other private sector companies, most particularly in planning and engineering.

- Shortages and surpluses in professions and regions across England may be offset by professional and geographical mobility, which may mean that professionals move sideways across professions, or move to other regions to fill those gaps. In particular the private sector in London usually has relatively little difficulty attracting high calibre staff, although conversely the public sector suffers perhaps more than other places.

- Individuals from London are more willing than any other region to move for a good job. Those who would be willing to move prefer the South East or South West although about 20% of respondents surveyed would be prepared to go to any of the other English regions. They are also most likely to be interested in working abroad.

- There is potential for some of the shortages to be offset by forecast surplus developers and surveyors in the East Midlands, for example, and surplus housing professionals from the South East, particularly given London’s attractiveness as a location.
Main Findings

- The South West is forecast to experience the second greatest skills gap by 2012, with particularly severe shortages of planners, landscape architects, urban designers, architects, surveyors and developers.

- Individuals working in the South West tend to be older than average and less willing to relocate for a good job or commute far for work.

- The South West is the region which most people living elsewhere would be prepared to move to in order to take a good job, suggesting that there is the opportunity for the South West to ‘draw down’ on surplus professionals in other regions to address some of these gaps.

Forecast labour shortages across the region

Source: Arup’s forecasting model
There is a greater than average forecast shortage of professionals in the South West in 2012 (the second most severe of any region). A number of professions are forecast to have faster than average or acute shortages, and the shortage of planners is forecast to be most severe. Other professions facing severe and greater than average shortages in the South West include landscape architects, urban designers, architects, developers and surveyors. Nevertheless a greater than average surplus of environmental specialists and neighbourhood/community specialists is forecast.

Individuals working in sustainable communities in the South West tend to be older than the English average and less likely than average to consider moving profession.

Organisations in the South West are more likely to be involved in the planning, policy and construction elements of sustainable communities and projects involving low demand.

Organisations identify financial constraints as the major barrier to recruitment, although this was still less of a problem for South West-based organisations than average.

South West organisations expect to experience future shortages in most of the professions which are forecast to experience a shortage by 2012 but also in environmental specialists of whom there is actually forecast to be a surplus.

A higher proportion of people in the South West would not move for any job in any other region, highlighting the oft-referred to high quality of life. The South West is also the region that most people would be willing to move to for a good job. This suggests that the region may be able to ‘draw down’ on surplus professionals from other regions to address regional skills gaps. Individuals in the South West were also willing to commute less far than average.

**Forecast labour shortages by profession**

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11.1 Regional analysis

- There is a greater than average forecast shortage of professionals in the South West in 2012 (the second most severe of any region). A number of professions are forecast to have faster than average or acute shortages, and the shortage of planners is forecast to be most severe. Other professions facing severe and greater than average shortages in the South West include landscape architects, urban designers, architects, developers and surveyors.

- Nevertheless a greater than average surplus of environmental specialists and neighbourhood/community specialists is forecast.

- Individuals working in sustainable communities in the South West tend to be older than the English average and less likely than average to consider moving profession.

- Organisations in the South West are more likely to be involved in the planning, policy and construction elements of sustainable communities and projects involving low demand.

- Organisations identify financial constraints as the major barrier to recruitment, although this was still less of a problem for South West-based organisations than average.

- South West organisations expect to experience future shortages in most of the professions which are forecast to experience a shortage by 2012 but also in environmental specialists of whom there is actually forecast to be a surplus.

- A higher proportion of people in the South West would not move for any job in any other region, highlighting the oft-referred to high quality of life. The South West is also the region that most people would be willing to move to for a good job. This suggests that the region may be able to ‘draw down’ on surplus professionals from other regions to address regional skills gaps. Individuals in the South West were also willing to commute less far than average.
This report was undertaken by York Consulting on behalf of the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC).

INTRODUCTION
The project’s central aim was to identify, collate and analyse current data around the skills gaps for the delivery of the sustainable communities agenda. The research was designed to:

- Identify what data already exists, building on previous research to explore the national picture and assess the scope, focus and methodologies used by partner organisations, drawing conclusions on the current picture and projections for the future; and

- Make recommendations on a methodology that can be used across regions and by all relevant partners/stakeholders to ensure ongoing capture of key skills gaps and needs in the field of sustainable communities.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
In addition to the identification of the need for generic skills to deliver the promise of sustainable communities, the Egan Report also highlighted that, in some professions and occupations, there is evidence of a labour shortage. This may be due to either a lack of individuals within certain occupations, or a lack of appropriately skilled people. The report states that there is:

“A need for better information about skills shortages, supply/demand and future trends amongst those in core occupations if we are to develop policies that adequately address these problems”.

One of the building blocks of the Egan Review was the 2004 Evidence Base Review, which sought to provide a picture of the number of people engaged in the core sustainable communities occupations. The review provided an indication of the severe limitations of existing quantitative evidence on the labour market conditions in the professional occupations. This research takes this forward to establish whether this is still the case and specifically where information gaps still exist.
THE PROFESSIONS

Planning
According to a Construction Industry Council Survey, firms whose predominant service is planning represents 6% of the construction professional services sector which approximates 13,500 people. From the data however there appears to be quite substantial recruitment and retention problems in the field of planning, most notably within the public sector. Consultees stressed, in particular, the problems faced by local planning authorities and the general lack of senior and experienced planning professionals. There is anecdotal evidence from planning publications that the private sector is also struggling to recruit the right calibre of planning professional.

The Royal Town Planning Institute has conducted a skills survey of its members to determine their views on generic skills. Planners would like to develop further their project management and presentation skills the most. External assessment suggests the profession should focus on communication, leadership and negotiation.

Surveying
Standard Occupational Classification data highlights that there are approximately 81,500 surveyors operating in England. Consultations suggest that there remains an ambiguity within the surveying profession in England over what exactly the sustainable communities agenda encompasses in the context of the work of surveyors. Through studying the demographic profile of the profession, the forecast increase in the numbers of surveyors entering the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the number of students on RICS-accredited courses, suggests that it is unlikely that there will be a shortfall in the supply of surveyors.

Many of the profession’s mandatory competencies are similar to the Egan list of generic skills. Survey data suggests that surveyors could benefit from training in communication.

Architecture
In July 2006, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) recorded 32,000 members, with 86% of architects working in private practice. There is a relatively steady level of applications for architecture degree courses illustrating its continuing popularity as a career choice. Information on generic skills for architects is very limited, possibly reflecting a lack of focus within the profession about their relevance. There is much more interest in technical skills development within RIBA.

Engineering
In 2004, the median age of registered engineers was over 55. This is an increasing trend, which was caused by a downturn in numbers entering the profession a number of years ago. Of all the vocational qualifications, engineering faces some of the most serious challenges with regard to labour market inflows. It is encouraging, however, that the number of UK students taking engineering and technology courses in higher education has risen by 12% in recent years.

In relation to generic skills, civil engineers are traditionally very good at project management. Conversely leadership is recognised as a weakness among engineers as well as ‘softer’ skills such as communication.
Regeneration

Successive studies have struggled to provide a discrete, adequate definition of the regeneration sector workforce. Therefore, it is not feasible to provide an aggregated, composite and qualitative national picture of the regeneration sector. Research suggests high levels of vacancies in regeneration and problems with retention. In the public sector this may be linked to the attraction of working on high-profile projects.

A piece of work for the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership in 2006 recommends the development of training programmes in key generic skills including leadership.

Economic development

Detailed information about the economic development profession is limited in terms of numbers and age distribution. However, consultations suggest that the profession may face a demographic challenge to its composition in the future. Consultation with the Chief Economic Development Officers’ Society (CEDOS) reveals that there is a difficulty in some member authorities in attracting new recruits. This is because while the role often needs specific skills and experience, it can be difficult to attract candidates to roles that are often not very well paid and involve substantial community engagement.

A survey of economic development officers suggests that they would benefit from further development in the areas of impact evaluation and strategy development.

Housing

There are currently around 20,000 members of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). Figures at the end of 2005 showed a growth of 486 members on the previous year. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the housing manager/officer occupations are in general held by older individuals who have been working in this sector for a number of years, thereby raising the average age of this group.

According to CIH, housing professionals need to have a range of skills to undertake their role effectively (including customer focus, financial management, leadership). The move from local government housing developments to ALMOs is considered to have increased the need for improved leadership and management skills.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

In most regions the regional centre of excellence (RCE) was considered to be the ‘first stop’ for discussions on sustainable communities. In general, it appears that the RCEs had more of a focus on regeneration as a sector rather than the vocational occupations. It is also clear that the RCEs lack a well-quantified evidence base for their activities and that a skills audit will help to fill this gap. The most substantial regional research work into the labour market and generic skills has taken place by RENEW Northwest.

Consultation with regional development agencies (RDAs) and intelligence observatories suggests that there is little focus at a regional level on the sustainable communities professions. The absence of significant interest by RDAs appears to be due to the focus of RDA employment strategies on high value or high productivity sectors and tackling worklessness.

The picture of sustainable communities professionals at the regional level is far from clear. The RCEs are widely regarded as the natural regional leaders in this field. However, their varying sizes, approaches and priorities mean that it is not possible to derive consistent messages from the limited research work already undertaken under their auspices.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES
A single methodology for collating data on labour market and generic skills information is not recommended. Recommendations for future research includes: avoiding reliance on quantitative data because of difficulties in accurately establishing the size and scope of the sector; where possible building on existing research in order to reduce the burden on research participants and build into the methodology the requirement for data to be analysed at a regional level.

CONCLUSION
Collating information about market and generic skills issues for certain sustainable communities professions in order to quantify the size of the sector has its difficulties. This is due to limitations of the datasets, existing research varying in quality and it not being easy to compare across professions, geographies or years. The conclusions from the research are:

- The vocational occupations of surveying, planning, architecture and engineering are relatively easy to characterise within the workforce. This is due to the strength of the relevant professional bodies that oversee them as they deliver useful data, and there is a coordinated approach to skills development and competencies.

- The extent to which these professions are engaged in work relating to sustainable communities is less clear because the nature of work being undertaken is not quantified by the professional bodies.

- The social and economic professions of regeneration, housing and economic development can be considered to be fully integrated into the sustainable communities agenda.

- The challenge is the ability to accurately define and hence map the professions, especially regeneration and economic development.

- RCEs require a clearer evidence base in order to deliver support where it is most required.

- There are a number of methodological issues that need to be considered when determining the skills gap. This includes avoiding a reliance on quantitative data because of the difficulties in accurately establishing the size and scope of the sector.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
The full report can be downloaded from www.ascskills.org.uk
Appendix K
Glossary

K1 Glossary

K1.1 Acronyms used to refer to occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Occupation Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Academic/researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV</td>
<td>Civil servants (Central Government/Government agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEV</td>
<td>Developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>Environmental specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOU/WEL</td>
<td>Housing and welfare specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAR</td>
<td>Landscape architects (including urban designers and architects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEI</td>
<td>Neighbourhood and community development specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLN</td>
<td>Planners (including development control and forward planners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td>Regeneration and economic development specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUS</td>
<td>Sustainable development specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRV</td>
<td>Surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRA</td>
<td>Transport planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB</td>
<td>Urban designers/master planner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

K1.2 Acronyms used to refer to organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Organisation Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOV</td>
<td>Central government department or agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTR</td>
<td>Construction/contractor/utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>Consultant/private practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEV</td>
<td>Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Government Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOU</td>
<td>Housebuilder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Housing association/registered social landlord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-EC</td>
<td>Local authority – Economic development department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-EN</td>
<td>Local authority – Environment department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-HO</td>
<td>Local authority – Housing department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-PL</td>
<td>Local authority – Planning department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-RG</td>
<td>Local authority – Regeneration department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-SS</td>
<td>Local authority – Social services department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA-TR</td>
<td>Local authority – Transport department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRB</td>
<td>Neighbourhood renewal body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDGB</td>
<td>Non-departmental Government body or other Government department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>Professional or representative body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Regional Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
K1.3 Acronyms used to refer to regions

EE   East
EM   East Midlands
LO   London
NE   North East
NW   North West
SE   South East
SW   South West
WM   West Midlands
YH   Yorkshire and the Humber

K1.4 Generic skills abbreviations and definitions

ANALYSIS
Analysis, decision making, learning from mistakes, evaluation: ensuring that decisions are taken in the light of available facts and relevant past experience. Being able to identify trends and make decisions based on them. Analysing data to determine appropriate evidence to support decisions. Encouraging informed risk taking, and not penalising failure where people are genuinely trying to do the right thing. Sharing examples of where projects have not worked out, and learning the lessons so they can be applied positively in new situations. Coaching and mentoring to develop the overall skills of a community, rather than just those of an individual or the immediate team.

BREAKTHROUGH
Breakthrough thinking/brokerage: creative thinking, making lateral connections, effective networking. Bringing together unusual combinations of people, skills and plans to leverage in skills and maximise value. Brokering, facilitating, and managing deals between very different stakeholders in all aspects of sustainable communities.

COMMUNICATION
Communication: being able to communicate in diverse ways to a wide range of professionals, the general public, the media, local schools, politicians and business people. Communicating vision, understanding how to manage information (the right message to the right people using the right media and then doing it again), managing mis-information, rumour and gossip. Being one step ahead.
CONFLICT

Conflict resolution: understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to achieve mutual agreement. Demonstrating the ethics of good practice, including respect for all parties, tolerance of different people and perspectives, confidentiality and the importance of honesty. Listening actively to others, and working to formulate options and solutions.

CUSTOMER

Customer awareness: being able to identify customers (citizens), to respond to their needs, to engage in dialogue with them, and build enduring relationships. Ensuring everyone in the organisation understands their responsibility to meet customers’ needs. Establishing customer priorities and concerns by communicating in an accessible format so that feedback is encouraged and genuine.

FINANCIAL

Financial management/appraisal: ensuring that financial, social and environmental costs are fully understood. Ability to create and manage a business plan and associated contracts. Understanding risk/reward approaches for all stakeholders. Being able to appraise business cases, proposals and contracts in order to make sound financial decisions. Understanding where finance for sustainable communities comes from, how to attract it, and how to construct a business case for the long-term sustainability and prosperity of a community. Appreciation of cost benefit analysis, incorporating valuation of tangible and intangible economic, environmental and social impact.

INCLUSIVE

Inclusive visioning: innovative thinking and approaches to engaging and including the community. Developing a vision from the aspirations and values of those in the community. The ability to articulate a vision and have it accepted by a wide variety of people. Setting out the implications of a vision – and the steps required to deliver it.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership: inspiring others at all levels to contribute. Leading change, communicating vision, coaching and mentoring, developing future leaders, dealing with poor performers and poor performance. Inspiring people to contribute to their communities to sustain them in the future. Enabling inward investment to support sustainable communities, and managing the finances. Making difficult decisions and ensuring they are accepted.

MAKING

Making it happen, given constraints: providing energy and focusing resources to ensure objectives are reached. Understanding and being realistic about constraints, but not accepting artificial barriers. Challenging unrealistic targets or timescales. Developing and implementing alternative solutions. Much of this skill is rooted in project management and partnership working – achieving the sustainable community vision in spite of all the conflicting interests, individual agendas and adversarial behaviour that inevitably surrounds such complex situations.
PM
Project management: defining project objectives and providing the drive and determination to deliver successful, measurable outcomes. Building a project team and getting them to work towards the delivery of a common goal. Using project plans and critical path analysis to assign tasks and timescales, monitor progress and quality of outcomes. Manage budget and client relationships.

PROCESS
Process/change management: making sure that processes are managed and continuously improved. Understanding the processes, and how to improve them. Embracing change enthusiastically and working to drive out unnecessary processes or find process improvements. Understanding and managing the cultural aspects of change.

STAKEHOLDER
Stakeholder management: communicating and building relationships with and between relevant stakeholders, understanding their role and significance. Knowing that stakeholder groups change all the time, so keeping pace with the new ones. Being able to bring key people and groups with you to retain support for the vision and to solve the problems. Understanding how political motives drive people (including non-politicians) at different times and for different reasons.

TEAM
Team working/leadership: a genuine desire for the team, collectively, to win. A ‘can do’ attitude - perceiving problems as challenges and opportunities, not risks and threats. The ability to create a networked environment where advice is sought and readily given, coaching is rewarded, and teams are created with the right skills, as well as the right paper qualifications. Constructive working with others to avoid duplication of effort.