

A nighttime photograph of Sheffield, UK, showing a dense urban landscape with illuminated buildings and streets. A large crane is visible on the left side of the frame. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds. The foreground shows dark silhouettes of trees and a road with light trails from traffic.

SHEFFIELD URBAN THINK TANK

A NEW COLLABORATIVE VENTURE
INVOLVING THE CITY COUNCIL,
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY,
CITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND
TWO UNIVERSITIES.

The Sheffield Urban Think Tank is an important new initiative that brings together the City Council, Creative Sheffield, Integreat Yorkshire (Yorkshire Forward's Regional Centre for Place Making skills), Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield. The premise of the Think Tank is that the future development of our cities needs to be knowledge based. The Think Tank will draw on the widely acclaimed and popular urban environment designed and built in Sheffield over the last decade and the innovative teaching and world-leading research into urban issues that is being conducted in the Sheffield Universities. It will give the public, private and voluntary sectors a single point of contact to draw on these rich resources. It will also draw on the energy, intellect and commitment of students, making their work more available and transferable.

The aim is to make Sheffield and the region an exemplary model in using learning, research, informed ideas and practical experience to direct the future planning and thinking about cities and how to create great places.

The Sheffield Urban Think Tank follows the Copenhagen model, in which close ties between academia, the private sector and the City have contributed to the delivery of some of the best urban places and planning in Europe. While links between the two Universities and the City & Region are already in place through numerous joint projects, the Think Tank will formalise a set of relationships as well as creating a single point of contact.

The Sheffield Urban Think Tank signals the City's ambition to be a leader in strategic thinking about urban development. In the first instance the Think Tank will play a consolidation role through bringing together the existing strands of work in the field, and making them visible. It will then move on to develop initiatives and new projects on the urban dynamic out of this already strong base. Integreat Yorkshire has agreed in principle to fund a post for three years to achieve this coordination role.

Activities in the Think Tank will include:

- Round-table discussions about future urban thinking
- Commissioned research into future strategy
- Student-led live projects in specific communities
- Integrated and consistent data-collection on urban projects and issues
- Promoting neighbourhood research aimed at supporting and informing community engagement in the city
- Evidence-based analysis drawing from the experiences of Sheffield residents
- A regular series of events which bring together academics, students, practitioners, employers and the public sector
- Consultancy and advice on one-off projects
- Publicly accessible web resources

The Sheffield Urban Think Tank is launched at First Congress of the Academy of Urbanism, held in Sheffield from 14th to 16th May 2008. It is part of the Academy's UniverCity initiative which aims to formalise collaboration and knowledge transfer between practitioners, citizens and academia. Sheffield will be a Founder UniverCity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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