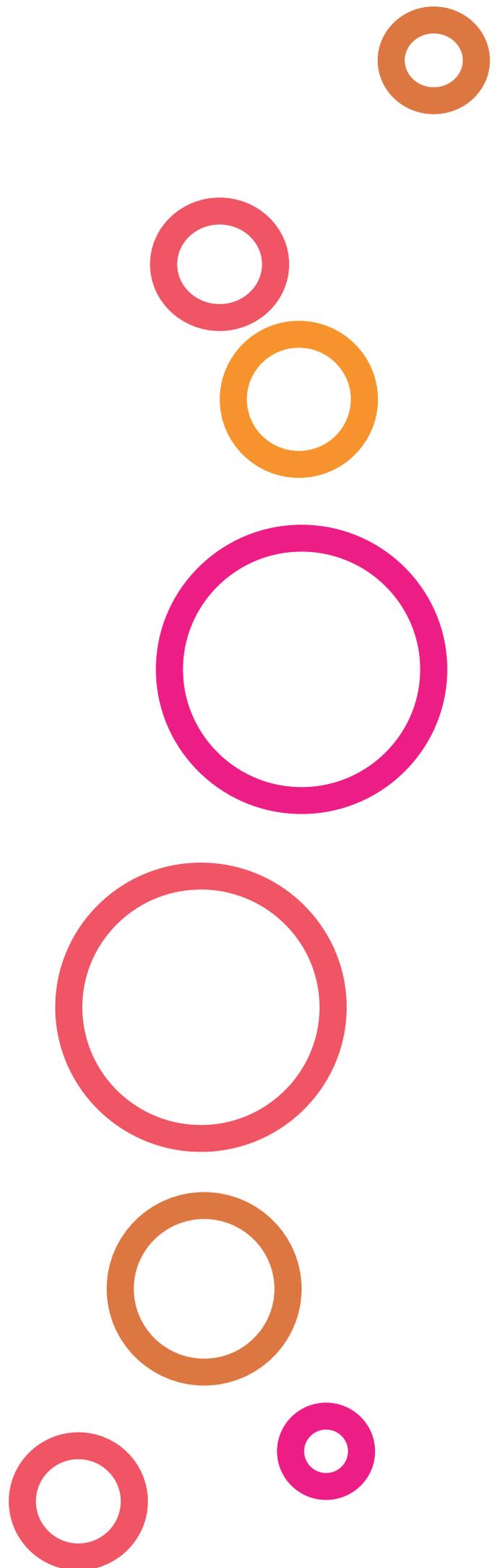




# A Shared Recovery

In association with



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**“ There is a risk that communities shrink their horizons and for understandable reasons become less connected and more isolated. We need to guard against this. ”**

Ann Limb, Chair UK Innovation Corridor

# FOREWORD



## Ann Limb

Chair  
UK Innovation Corridor

The spread of COVID-19 has dramatically changed how communities live, move and behave. From breaking old certainties, to the acceleration of new trends, there is now a pressing need for action.

The UK Innovation Corridor organised a webinar to discuss the idea of a shared recovery plan. It heard that it should embrace the principles of '15-minute communities', create the right homes in the right places, re-imagine town centres and high streets, put inclusivity at the heart of the health and wellbeing agenda, and actively explore new forms of mobility.

Three priorities emerged for the next steps:

- Place making for investment - having the right mix of housing, social and physical infrastructure to make investment inevitable not accidental
- Digital ratchet - recognise that things won't go back to a 'pre-covid normal' plan to avoid digital exclusion, particularly in disadvantaged communities
- Green recovery - don't push decarbonisation down the agenda, do it now - start today

We also learned that there is a need to 'decouple' retail from high streets and town centres – they are community and business spaces and many other things too. Places shouldn't get distracted by concepts such as the '15 minute' city – they should try to understand the principles of the 15 minute city and see how they might apply to their localities. Local government should play a stronger role as 'facilitator' of change, and local authorities need to 'step up' to the challenge, but business needs to change too. Councils need to be available and to listen.

There is a risk that communities shrink their horizons and for understandable reasons become less connected and more isolated. We need to guard against this.

# A SHARED RECOVERY

A focus on stronger communities needs to be at the heart of the recovery in our towns and cities

In October Arcadis released their latest report “Our Shared Recovery – Solutions for Stronger Communities”, setting out their plan for a shared post-COVID recovery, which strengthens communities across our towns and cities.

Over the course of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on every aspect of our lives. It has broken old certainties and rapidly accelerated the adoption of new trends, forcing us to quickly adapt to new ways of living, travelling and behaving. With the light at the end of the tunnel finally visible as the vaccine roll-out begins, there is now a pressing need for action to rebuild our economy and tackle wider challenges. Right now, we have a unique opportunity to radically re-think how we view our communities and live our lives.

Arcadis engaged with over 1,700 individuals and organisations, to understand how their priorities have changed since the pandemic began.

Their findings demonstrated a consensus between the public and local leaders on the need for a recovery that is not just green and inclusive, but one that is deliverable and affordable today. Public polling carried out in support of the report also showed a clear preference for a focus on priorities that will improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of communities. The top three priorities for the recovery were identified as:

- improving public health provision
- saving the high street
- tackling climate change

## South Cambridgeshire

South Cambridgeshire is an area of considerable contrasts as it's the location for major global businesses such as the Wellcome Trust's Sanger Centre and large numbers of very small and micro scale business – some hi-tech spinouts and startups but the majority provide the range of goods and services needed in most areas.

The district also a wide range of towns and villages, ranging from Northstowe - effectively a new town of over 10,000 new homes when fully built - to small, rural villages with histories dating back centuries.

One of the major 'pandemic' issues for the district is 'community resilience'. In the district the voluntary sector is enormously important, partly because the population is largely located in small villages and the village hall is very much at the heart of the community. The effect of lockdown, as in so many other things, has hit the finances of the many groups very hard. This has affected how people maintain contact with each other: a big issue at any time. The council has launched a small grants programme to help groups with running costs and a business development fund to help businesses survive and grow through the pandemic.



## Haringey

The council has prioritised engagement with people as its main priority in dealing with the pandemic in one of London's most diverse boroughs for its population but also in terms of its localities: Tottenham High Road, Wood Green, being the largest, but also Muswell Hill and Crouch End in the west of the borough which, despite their relative affluence, their high streets are more affected because of their greater reliance on the hospitality sector.



The council has developed a vision of a 'good economy' which has real relevance and impact on the borough's high streets. The borough recovery plan has four priority themes:

Supporting business - paying close attention to the smaller companies in the supply chain

High streets - providing short term support but also taking a longer term view on the balance of retail space and other uses including residential and open space

Residents into work: to ensure young people have opportunities to get experience of work but that the older workers have opportunities to retrain

Community wealth building - ensuring as much as possible of the council's spend goes to the local economy. This has risen from approximately 23% per year to 30%.

Overall the council's approach is to work with others to achieve its aims and is therefore involved in a number of partnerships with Central London Forward, GLA - good growth fund; and with Enfield, Waltham Forest, Hackney and Broxbourne on growing the business base and economy of the Upper Lee area as the Productive Valley.

To help local authorities better understand how the private sector can help achieve this, Arcadis have developed a range of short and medium-term opportunities and recommendations for a shared recovery that strengthens communities. These five 'levers' for a shared recovery include:

- 1 Embracing the principles of 15-minute communities
- 2 Creating the right homes in the right places
- 3 Re-imagining town centres and high streets
- 4 Putting digital inclusivity at the heart of the health and wellbeing agenda
- 5 Actively exploring new forms of mobility

Arcadis believes that, if applied across our towns and cities, all of the levers identified will embed sustainable long-lasting change for the people that live within them.

Arcadis believe that if applied across our towns and cities, all of the levers identified will embed sustainable long-lasting change for the people who live within them. Whether it's embracing walking and cycling solutions, to supporting the concept of '15-minute communities' or building back better by harnessing analytics and digital decision making.

As one local government official said: "We are now at the nexus of a once-in-a-generation series of events". The COVID-19 pandemic has caused no shortage of suffering and damage to communities, but there is now a unique opportunity for lasting positive change. However, it's only through close cooperation and collaboration from the public sector, private sector and communities themselves – that an inclusive, green, healthy and deliverable recovery can be achieved.

## East of England

The East of England is also a diverse area with relatively low population density including coastal towns, some with communities suffering from extreme deprivation to very rural areas with small villages through to cities such as Norwich and Cambridge with high levels of inequality.



Through a series of workshops, the region has identified three themes in its covid recovery plan:

- **Economy and infrastructure** - with a strong focus on digital infrastructure to ensure that all places, large and small have good broadband connections
- **New ways of working** - recognising that many of the changes to social behaviours and specifically work will be changed for the long term. therefore a more blended approach which facilitates people working together and social interaction will be needed for mental health but also sound business reasons
- **Community wealth building** - building on the Preston model and applying to Stevenage and North Herts

# SPEAKERS

This report was generated following a UK Innovation Corridor webinar with a selection of speakers from the Corridor, and a presentation from Arcadis.



## **Cllr Gideon Bull,**

Cabinet Member for Local Investment and Economic Growth, Haringey Council



## **Linda Haysey,**

Chair, East of England LGA and Leader, East Hertfordshire District Council



## **Peter Hogg,**

UK Cities Director, Arcadis



## **Cllr Aiden Ven de Weyer**

Deputy Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, with responsibility for strategic planning and transport.

