

# SMART GROWTH

## A sustainable strategy for urban development and regeneration

Charlene Clear and James Fisher, BRE  
Gail Mayhew, Working Capital



Knockroon, Scotland: a Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative  
(Courtesy of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community)

In today's society, the built environment is shaped by a complex amalgam of policy, property-industry conventions and local opinion, and as such the current development of our urban realm is under extreme pressure. The government's recent Localism Bill (and subsequent Localism Act)<sup>[1, 2]</sup> aims to address some of the issues and revive some of the sustainable development practices of old. However, it is not a panacea for ensuring quality and sustainable urban environments. A broader, more context-specific range of considerations needs to be taken into account.

This Information Paper presents the argument for a 'smarter' approach to policy making and development. It recognises the need for sustainable physical, social and economic growth and introduces the 'Smart Growth' framework through which this can be achieved. This framework promotes compact, permeable, vibrant developments that are served by sustainable transport

and offer a range of experiences and opportunities for all. It draws upon existing examples – local, regional and nationwide – that have embedded smart principles into their development regimes and suggests mechanisms to help drive a smarter agenda further. In summary, it can be seen that Smart Growth offers a new overarching strategy that sets a context for development decision making that is productively informed by local considerations, but also embraces the pressing need to encourage growth and competitiveness. The publication is aimed at planners, developers, architects and urban designers, and other third-sector parties interested in the creation of our urban development. It offers readers a better understanding of the full suite of Smart Growth issues and proposes examples of how the principles can be implemented across varying political scales and design phases.