

Creative Community Planning Conference – Pilsen, 5th-7th November 2009

Summary of Gamesmaster Workshop

This document provides a short summary of the Gamesmaster Workshop session held as part of the wider Creative Community Planning Conference held in Pilsen, Czech Republic between 5th and 7th November 2009. The primary focus of the workshop was to seek to overcome some of the challenges cities were having in further developing and realising ideas after the playing of the Future City Game. The workshop was delivered by Neil McInroy from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and consisted of 2 key elements:

Element 1 – critiquing the voting criteria

Element 1 sought to critique the voting criteria used to judge presentations and ideas. The workshop was particularly focused upon identifying which voting criteria it was easiest and hardest to use in voting for the winning idea and additionally which criteria it was hardest and easiest to see in the presentation of ideas. The Gamesmasters were split into 4 groups to discuss the easiness and difficulty associated with each criteria and then were asked individually to detail on the flip chart which they felt were the easiest criteria to see in the idea and which were the most difficult. Green stickers were used to demonstrate the easiest and red stickers for the most difficult. The voting criteria are as follows:

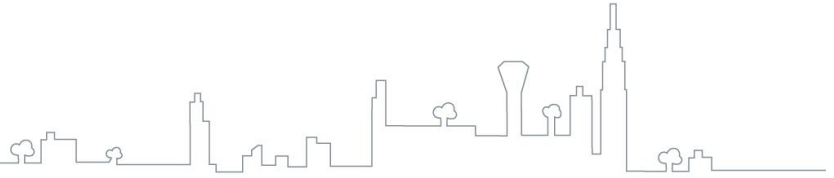
- Meets local challenges;
- Meets global challenges;
- Fun;
- Sustainable;
- Innovative and futuristic;
- Enables community development;
- Feasible and achievable.

The overwhelming criteria within which it was felt it was easiest to see in the idea was **FUN**. This is after all one of the core objectives of the Future City Game. **Gamesmasters did however view the word 'fun' as one which was difficult to translate and thus meant different things in different languages.**

The overwhelming criteria within which it was felt it was most difficult to see in the idea was **SUSTAINABLE**. This was largely reflective in the fact that the players of the Future City Game only had 2 days in which to formulate, develop and research their ideas. The whole emphasis of the game is upon creating an idea and then presenting it. Sustainability is therefore not necessarily a key consideration in the playing of the game and in the presentation of the idea. In effect the Future City Game is not long enough to allow sustainability to be considered in the ideas.

There was a fairly even spread amongst the other criteria in relation to how easy or difficult it was to see it in the idea. Discussion in the workshop did however highlight some critique of each of the criteria:

- **Meets local challenges** – it was positive to see that more people viewed 'meets local challenges' as a criteria within which it was easy to see in an idea. Gamesmasters did however view this as one of the criteria to which there was a time element thus making it easier to see the idea;
- **Innovative and Futuristic** – very few Gamesmasters viewed innovative and futuristic as a criteria within which it was easy or difficult to see an idea. Again there were definitional aspects to this. An innovative



idea could indeed be a very simple idea and hence the term 'innovative' does not necessarily twin with simplicity. It is also difficult to define futuristic, given that some ideas created in the game might be cosmic as opposed to futuristic;

- **Meets global challenges** – Gamesmasters largely viewed meeting global challenges as one of the more difficult criteria to see within an idea. There was a feeling that reference to global challenges identified in step 1 of the Game largely fall away as the game progresses. Players largely move away from the global challenges in the idea.

Discussion moved onto:

- Possible weighting of criteria
- the challenge of moving from idea to implementation and reality.
- Perhaps introduce an eighth criteria around ownership of the idea

Element 2 – overcoming barriers to implementing ideas

Element 2 of the Gamesmaster workshop sought to deal with the common challenge of what happens to ideas once the Future City Game is completed. Again the Gamesmasters were split up into four groups and were asked to discuss how they would overcome 4 key barriers to making ideas reality. The four barriers were as follows:

1. Barrier 1 – failure to connect with city powers;
2. Barrier 2 – advertising/marketing/disseminating the ideas after the game;
3. Barrier 3 – ideas are not thought through enough;
4. Barrier 4 – city authorities are not thinking about the future enough.

The following section details the ideas the Gamesmasters came up with to overcome each barrier. The idea presented in red is the one which the Gamesmaster groups felt was the most important for each barrier.

Barrier 1 – failure to connect with city powers

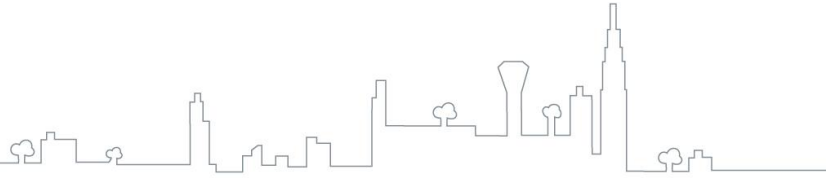
The ideas were as follows:

- Involving local authorities directly in the Game as experts, advocates and champions; this involvement should be right from the start to ensure buy-in.
- Involving the media in promoting the Game;
- Use celebrities to endorse the Future City Game and highlight activity;
- Be more explicit about the expectations on players;
- **Undertake power-mapping of the area to see who the key stakeholders are for both engaging with the Game and taking forward ideas.**

Barrier 2 – advertising/marketing/disseminating the idea after the game

The ideas are as follows:

- Setting up social network groups for each playing of the Game;
- Holding exhibitions at events, wrapping the game up in educational activities;
- **Simulating the winning idea; share the simulation with the public**
- Have a dedicated media partner from the start of the process;
- Choose a player/stakeholder responsible for realising the winning idea and to take it forward.



Barrier 3 – ideas are not thought through enough

The ideas are as follows:

- **Have more rigorous testing of the ideas during the Game playing; and also sub-criteria such as: where to find funding?**
- Invite specialist consultants to advise on the ideas after the Game;
- Understand more effectively who the right participants for the topic are before the game;
- Build rigour into the idea by having champions for it;
- Think clearly about resources and timescales need for implementation;
- **Use different word than idea; innovative solution;**

Barrier 4 – city authorities are not thinking about the future enough

The ideas are as follows:

- Promote the values of the Future City Game more effectively;
- **Present success stories from other places (to rise the spirit of competition);**
- Synchronise the Game playing with the city cycle (in terms of strategic planning);
- Be prepared to use Future City Game as the very first step in visioning for the future.