

Revitalising urban centres

An educational resource by:

Royal Geographical Society
with IBG

Soft Regeneration: Using social strategies to improve the life of an urban area. Distinct from 'hard' regeneration, which focuses on the physical redevelopment to revitalise places.

The Prince of Wales Junction

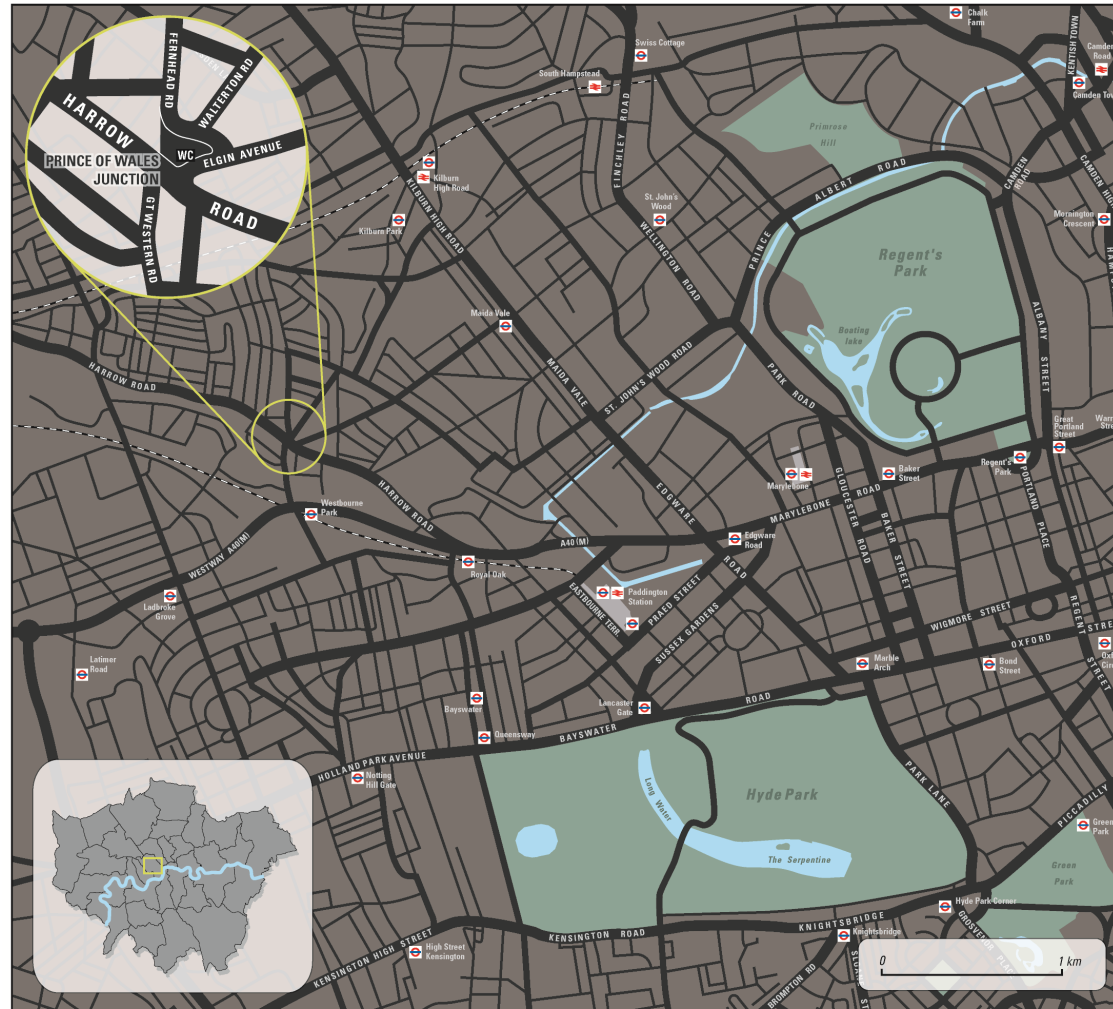
Regan Koch, a geographical researcher, argues that urban public spaces are at their best when they are democratic, inclusive, and meet the needs of a wide range of people. Yet this is not always this case.

The Prince of Wales Junction in West London came to be defined by social problems. Antisocial behavior and fear of crime drove people away.

Void of activity in the daytime, at night it was a well-known spot for street drinking, drug dealing and prostitution.

Initially the local authorities concentrated on policing and surveillance. This decreased levels of criminal activity. However, this did not encourage other people to use site for more positive reasons.

Regenerating the public life of the Junction ended up being much more about finding ways of inviting new uses for the site than about excluding activities that had made it undesirable.



The Prince of Wales Junction in West London was a well known crime black spot. The challenge was transforming the area into social centre for the surrounding neighbourhood.

Timeline

1970s Had two prominent high street chain shops, five large banks, two supermarkets and a cinema

1980s High street began to steadily decline reflecting changing shopping habits

2000s Dominated by low-end stores, fast food outlets and betting agents. 20 per cent of the shop fronts lay vacant

2004 onwards Harrow Road Neighbourhood Partnership worked to regenerate the area

Fact file

Located with the Harrow Road ward (a geographic area of around 11,000 residents), itself located within the affluent borough of Westminster.

The Harrow Road ward is among the top 10 per cent nationally for indices of multiple deprivation, crime and disorder, disability and health concerns, and low income-affected children.

Your task is to...

DEVELOP A REGENERATION PLAN

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The Prince of Wales Junction has undergone its first phase of regeneration. This involved plans to: i) tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; ii) revive the local economy; iii) and improve the local environment. Rather than being known as a busy traffic junction, it is now a vibrant public space. The area is now widely known as Maida Hill Marketplace.

However, the Marketplace is not as busy as it was when it was first introduced in 2009. Soft regeneration requires continued social policies in order to maintain the area's positive atmosphere. **You are asked to devise a second phase of soft regeneration to continue the reinvigoration of the area.** In developing phase 2, refer to phase 1 of the regeneration plan (below left). Select three objectives to focus on and devise a series of policies to achieve them. You may choose the same three objectives listed in phase 1, but your policies (i.e. how you will achieve those objectives) must differ. The aim of this task is to build upon and further the social gains made in phase 1.

Phase 1 regeneration plan

Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour

- install 2 CCTV cameras
- increase police patrol hours by 240 hours a month
- make properties in the area more secure

Revive the local economy

- help retailers improve shopfronts and forecourts
- encourage more street events including a regular street market
- make Harrow Road a shopping destination

Improve the local environment

- provide new paving
- improve street lighting
- provide seating
- redesign the main pedestrian space for an outdoor café, street market, regular events and community projects



Soft regeneration ideas

- Ensuring employment opportunities for residents
- Providing education and life-long learning for all
- Introduce wardens to reduce antisocial behaviour
- Hosting cultural events in public spaces
- Developing facilities to host community activities
- Initiating large-scale youth work programmes
- Providing loans and advice to small local businesses
- Rebranding an area through a media campaign
- Holding decision-making meetings for local residents

This is not an exhaustive list and should be supplemented by your own ideas. There are no set rules about how to regenerate and area, so be creative.

“[Previous regeneration attempts] can be criticised for an over-reliance on refurbishment of the buildings, rather than the development of a strong community.”

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government(2007)