

# LEARNING FROM LILLE AND ROUBAIX

'Sub-regional planning and the coordination of transport and development'



TEN



This report draws heavily on work that URBED has undertaken for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation through the *Making Connections* project, and the invaluable help of Clare Colomb who undertook the basic research.

*Photographs: URBED*  
*Report written by Nicholas Falk*

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## PARTICIPANTS

### TEN

TEN is a small group of senior local authority officers who meet on a regular basis to share ideas and to exchange knowledge on achieving urban renaissance. What links them are common concerns and a desire to gain space for blue sky thinking. In overall terms they wish to explore how to use the powers available to them to effect change; discover techniques for facilitating change; and develop their role as urban impresarios.

In 2005 TEN organised a study tour in the Netherlands looking at sustainable urban growth. Following this, in 2006, a study tour of Lille and Roubaix was organised to look at sub-regional planning and the coordination of transport and development.

### TEN Study Tour to Lille and Roubaix, 9th June 2006

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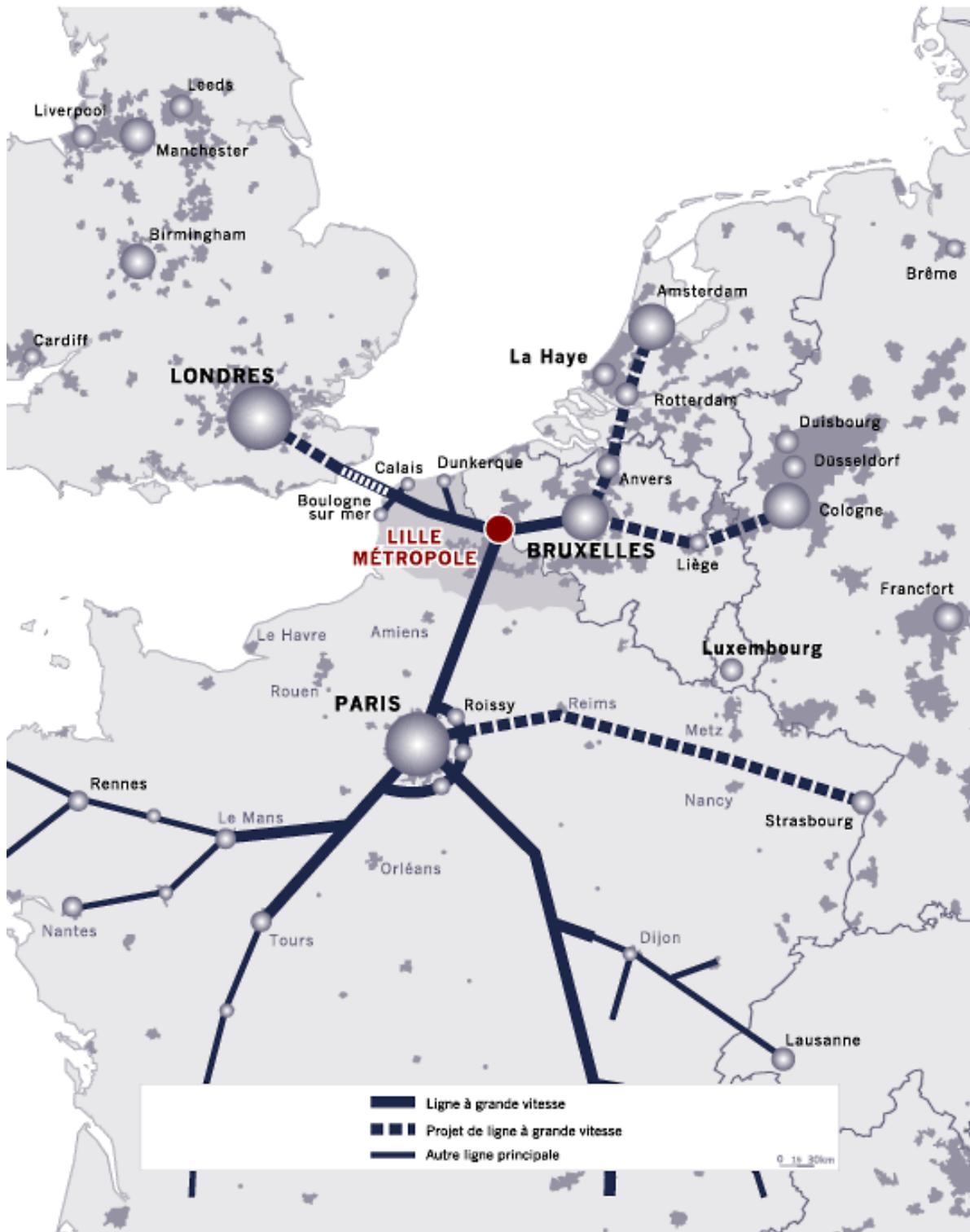
**Emel Teymur**

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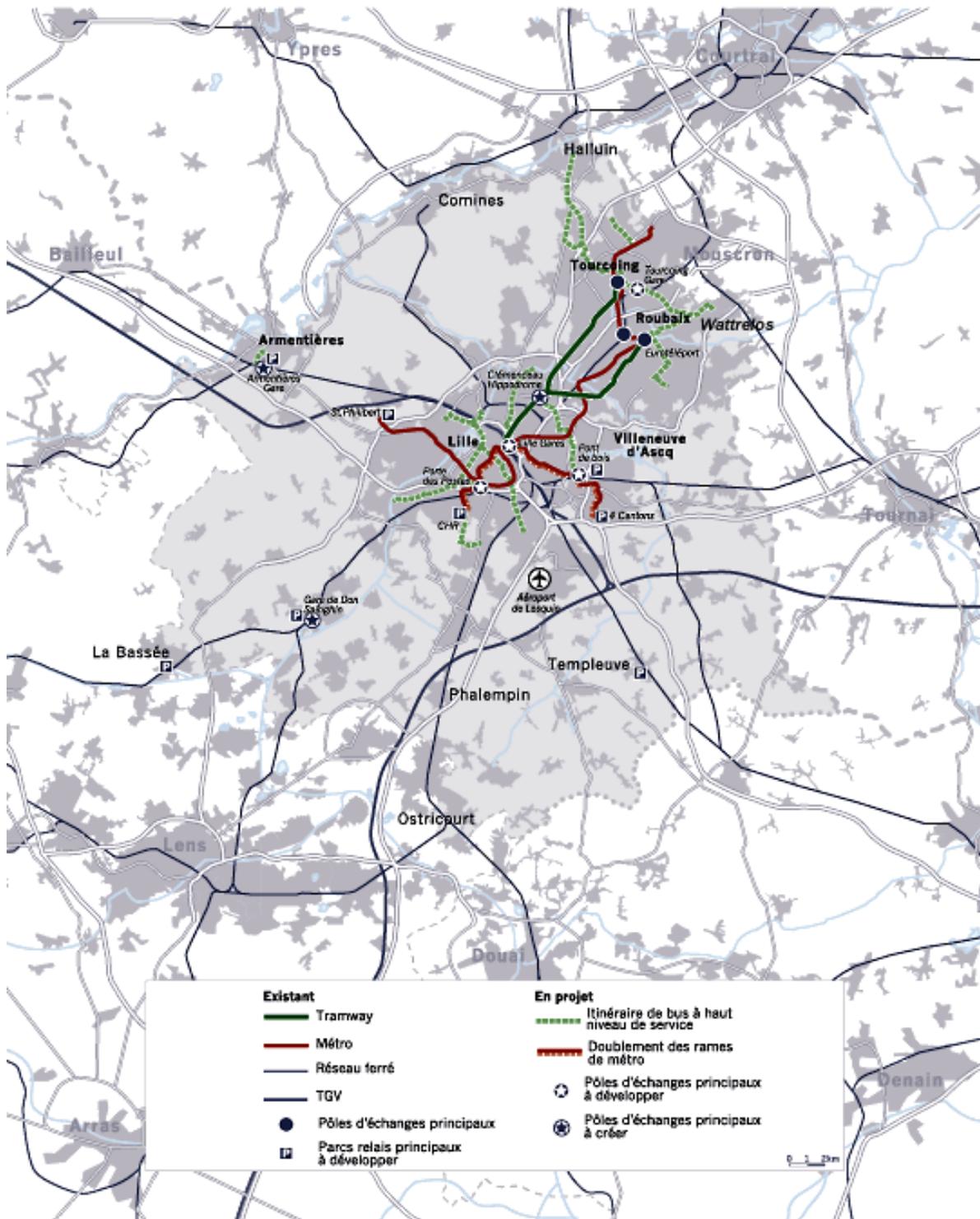
Director, Sustainable Communities  
Directorate  
Department of Communities and Local  
Government

**LILLE METROPOLE AU COEUR  
DU RESEAU TGV NORD-EUROPEEN**



Agence de Développement et d'Urbanisme de Lille Métropole (2003), Schéma Directeur de Développement et d'Urbanisme de Lille Métropole, approved on 6 december 2002, Lille : ADULM.

**LES PROJETS DE TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN EN SITE PROPRE  
DU PLAN DE DEPLACEMENTS URBAINS  
(horizon 2006)**



Agence de Développement et d'Urbanisme de Lille Métropole (2003), Schéma Directeur de Développement et d'Urbanisme de Lille Métropole, approved on 6 december 2002, Lille : ADULM.

## *Learning from Lille and Roubaix*

The TEN Group visit to Lille and Roubaix followed up a highly successful visit to Dutch towns in 2005. It involved several of the same group with some new and welcome participants, and included not only directors of regeneration in London, but also the Head of Development and Design at Milton Keynes, and the Director of Sustainable Communities at the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Under the expert guidance of Claire Colomb, who is a member of the Advisory Group on 'Competitiveness and Strategic European Positioning of the Lille Metropolitan Region', and lectures at the Bartlett School of Planning, the group sought to find out about the way transport and development was integrated, the success in regenerating run-down working class neighbourhoods, and the role of cultural development. The tour followed up research that URBED has been doing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation under the title *Making Connections: the transformation of people and places*, and used Claire's report as a briefing paper.

### **Structure of the tour**

The one-day tour started by going via Eurostar to Lille, and included a visit to the Euralille station and complex; a walk through the renovated and recently pedestrianised Old Town; an informal presentation over lunch in a courtyard restaurant; a trip by tram out to Roubaix; a walking tour of Roubaix led by a local guide to see the new squares and colourful houses; a visit to the unique Piscine museum; and a return to Lille by the driverless metro, the first in the world.

The group shared their impressions on the return journey to London, and at a subsequent meeting to consider a draft of this report. The captions to images are drawn from participants' comments.



'Good pre-trip info. Claire very good – good to have someone so knowledgeable and who is able to speak quickly in short bursts, and able to deal with interruptions and added questions'



'Lille - rebranding of the town completely following Eurostar'



'The Euralille International Station feels very cut off from the main (Flanders) station'

## Context

Lille's position as a major French industrial town on the Belgian border, with over 80 different communes, has in the past held it back. The city suffered from a poor image. When the textile industry collapsed in both Roubaix and Tourcoing, it resulted in high levels of unemployment, particularly among the many immigrants who had been attracted in to work in the mills. Roubaix was described as being like a 'ghost town' with an excessive amount of vacant property. The regeneration of the Lille conurbation over the last twenty years has therefore served as an important model for what can be achieved, and has greatly influenced French urban policy. Many of the approaches now being applied in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, such as Local Area Agreements, were pioneered in Lille. The city now uses the term 'renewal' to refer to a process that goes beyond physical regeneration to include equality and quality of life.

## The keys to successful renewal

The group were impressed by a number of factors, including:

1. the **integrated public transport system**, which links Lille and Roubaix rapidly with Paris and other Continental cities. It also knits together a large number of neighbourhoods, in a city with a population that equals Leeds and Bradford combined. The system generated confidence in the city's future, and helped in attracting inward investment
2. **extensive public spaces**, with high quality materials, well renovated historic buildings, lively streets and squares, and good lighting, have concentrated shopping and leisure spending in the centres. They also provide common ground where all races and ages can mix. The group was impressed by the lack of any obvious policing or cleaning, with no visible signs of authority or CCTV. Some were disappointed by the stark finishes of the Euralille station, and unfinished state of the public spaces outside the station. The



*'Very good public realm – especially as not many people around Roubaix'*



*'Old town very well renewed; streetscape design well implemented' (Lille)*



*'Transport investment in itself does not deliver regeneration - a powerful vision is needed'*



*'Change of mindset was key – from end of the line to the centre of the (multi-cultural) area'*



*'Use of arts/culture as a focus for regeneration – Roubaix'  
'Big ideas generate big results'*



*'Roubaix looks surprisingly prosperous given the history'*

quality of life, as well as relatively low prices, have attracted people to live in the city who would previously have left for the suburbs or other cities, including people working in Paris.

3. the stress on **improving the image of the city** to both the outside world and also its inhabitants through cultural programmes, such as the European City of Culture programme, have helped create new creative industries and provided some local jobs. But most importantly, they have raised the population's self-esteem. Hence when riots took place they were after other cities in France, and on a much smaller scale.

4. the way in which **different authorities have collaborated over time** to strengthen the city region, is largely credited to political leadership, but also to financial mechanisms which support collaboration rather than competition. Thus grants were used to attract McArthur Glen to open a factory outlet centre in Roubaix, in what was a failed town centre, and this draws in a million visitors a year, 200,000 of whom go on to visit other shops and restaurants. Tax incentives in Enterprise Zones have encouraged firms to employ local people.

5. the project for creating **new cultural attractions**, such as La Piscine, are part of a wider programme to upgrade the environment, and revitalise the centres, attracting activity back, first into the main streets, and then into the surrounding neighbourhoods, for example by promoting a cluster of design based firms.

### **The process of renewal**

Claire Colomb's research shows that the story of Lille's regeneration is essentially a tribute to the successful effects of devolving power from the centre to local authorities, along with mechanisms for securing collaboration between all the actors:

- In 1968 power was decentralised to tackle the contrast between 'Paris and the deserts' as it was known at the time

- Metropolitan authorities were introduced comprising the 88 communes, with an Assembly nominated by the local Councils, rather like the South East England Regional Assembly, but with the difference that the metropolitan authority shares the local income tax and council tax with the municipalities
- The Lille Metropolitan authority is responsible, through a system of 'shared competences' for transport, sport, waste management, and recently economic development and housing. It can buy land and raise funds for capital investment
- In 1985 the elected Mayors of the four leading cities (Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing, and the new town of Villeneuve d'Ascq) signed up to an 'alliance' to overcome what was seen as the 'dominance of the small towns'
- Flagship projects were promoted including 'poles for private investment' around themes such as 'modern textiles', and bio-medical research around the hospital, with the idea of building on existing strengths
- Funding was packaged using mechanisms such as a 'Societe Mixte' (or public/private partnership) for major development projects such as Euralille, and tax incentives for smaller schemes.

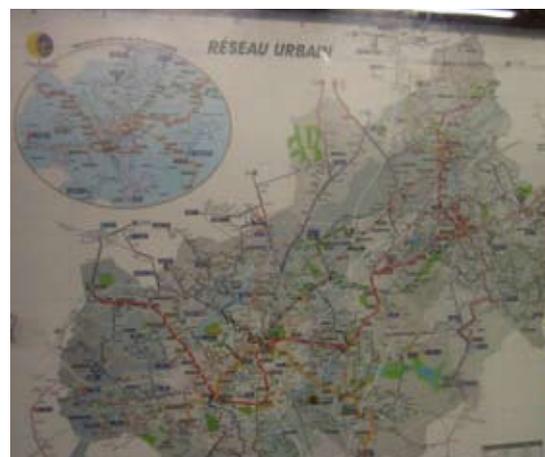
The strategy was to upgrade the main centres, and the transport system, before improving the suburbs. Though Lille failed to win the Olympics, the partnership was successful in making the city as a whole European Capital of Culture. Twelve old mills were renovated as centres for cultural industries at the heart of deprived neighbourhoods. In Roubaix immigrants started on the housing ladder renting space in old courtyards, and have been encouraged to reinvest in doing up old houses. Some of the areas are now starting to be gentrified. The population has started to grow, and 2,000 new units a year are now needed to keep pace with demand.



*'Euralille – great buildings, but not glued together by good urban form – no enjoyable spaces, but not lost as space to change'*



*'Success mostly due to vision/leadership and readiness to invest; and continuing pride/enthusiasm of those who are involved with new/renewed vision'*



*'Importance of creating political cooperation in city regions covering a multi-structure area'*



*'Loved the pool – nice to see a museum where the exhibits provide a setting for the architecture'*



*'Bringing tourist/outlet shopping into city centre'*



*'Consistently high quality of finishes across large areas are impressive; transport ditto. But I was most impressed by piscine: the reused, positive impact on the immediate area, and its continuing optimistic future'*

A lot of the success is put down to the role of the Mayor of Lille, Pierre Mauroy, who is an important figure on the national stage as well, in attracting investment and getting different agencies to work together. With a coherent vision for the city as a whole, it was possible to trade off the development of Euralille as a major new office centre as a price for investing in Roubaix, including first modernising the tram in 1995, and then extending out the Metro in 1999.

### **Outcomes**

Lille has transformed its position and image. The resulting success in retaining traditional industries, for example mail order, and attracting new offices has boosted the local economy, and created new jobs. The growth of financial services and of the university may in part be due to the new popularity of the city as a place to live. However, this has not made a great deal of difference to the high levels of unemployment in some areas and groups. Also many suburban residents still commute by car creating high congestion at rush hours.

Despite the successes, and the city clearly feels very much brighter and better than it did ten or twenty years ago, there are ongoing issues of worklessness, and institutional racism, which the local authorities are trying to address. Roubaix is playing a leading role in redefining relationships between races, and some of the arts projects and the public spaces provide the necessary common ground. Programmes for engaging young people in sports, and productive hobbies such as photography seem to work. Measures to develop vocational training have been less successful.

# *Lessons for English Cities*

Drawing lessons from other places is intrinsically hard. There are no agreed criteria for success. It is easy to judge things superficially, and fail to understand the context or reasons why a project has succeeded (or failed). Views on what looks good can differ hugely. Transferring and applying knowledge to a different situation is difficult, with language and cultural barriers, as well as the 'Not Invented Here' syndrome; thus it turns out that there is no real French equivalent to the English concept of 'local community', and they are surprised by our enthusiasm for relying on voluntary and community organisations rather than elected local authorities (of which they have 36,000!) Statistical comparisons are notoriously misleading, for example in the way people are classified as unemployed. Policies may not work out as intended, and events can catch one by surprise, as the riots in many of the French suburbs illustrate.

It is important therefore not only to 'look and learn', but also to reflect on the changes that have taken place over time, within a holistic framework. Though Lille and Roubaix are very different from most of London (and indeed are far closer to provincial cities like Leeds and Bradford), TEN found that there was much to learn and apply for London and the South East, as members' comments and the images show. In particular France has been following a trajectory of institutional change which has made the most of membership of the European Union. Many of the ideas currently under development in the UK, such as Local Area Agreements, have French counterparts. Others, like the use of Societes Mixtes for major developments like Euralille, make interesting comparisons with the British approach to public-private partnerships.

Though this report is targeted at growth areas for housing, where space is at a premium, it is relevant to the wider policy issues for governance in the UK, including devolving power (the Local Government White Paper), restructuring local government finance (the Lyons inquiry), making sub-regional spatial planning work better, particularly in terms of linking transport and development, and changing images.

## **1. Devolving power**

The French attempt to redress the imbalance between 'Paris and the désert français' has worked. French provincial cities have out-performed Paris on indicators such as growth in GDP per capita and population, as research at SURF has shown. Over many years France as a whole has outperformed the UK in terms of economic growth, environmental sustainability, and many feel social well-being, with lower income disparities both between and within regions. A higher economic growth rate up until recently has been matched by much higher levels of investment in public infrastructure, such as the High Speed Rail network and city rapid transit systems.

Most importantly, the old industrial region of the North East has found a new lease of life, and Lille has acted as the dynamo for growth. In achieving this the value of several factors is suggested:

- Seeing cities as economic as well as social and physical entities in which business and citizens work together for the common good (reflected in the importance of the Chamber of Commerce, whose building is as large as the City Hall)
- Using the 'contract' system to support strategic planning and joint investments between central and the different tiers of local government
- Using a metropolitan government structure to encourage collaboration between neighbouring authorities within a city region

- Attracting first-rate politicians, who can hold positions at several levels of government, and who can broker 'win win' or quality deals, and thus provide long-term leadership (Pierre Mauroy would say that he was Mayor of Lille first, and only secondarily former Prime Minister of France!)
- Providing a stable institutional structure so that there is less uncertainty, and greater capacity for joined-up working – persistence is the key to regeneration success (and strong mayors are linked to economic performance)
- Recognising inter-dependence and avoiding fruitless competition between adjoining places by overcoming historic rivalries (which requires exceptional local leadership to establish common interests)



*'PFI model which delivered public agenda better than often in UK – we should transfer a more public-led development model'*



*'La Piscine, Roubaix - a cultural complex previously a swimming pool. 'Listen to a curator with an idea! Would be completely ignored in England'*

## **2. Making sub-regional planning and management work**

The French planning system has progressively devolved powers from central to local government in ways that have produced added value from public investment, as a comparison between the impact of Euralille and the current position at Stratford City would reveal. Transferable lessons include:

- Not accepting trends, but rather building on traditional strengths and new opportunities e.g. turning old textile companies into mail order European leaders
- Putting the health of the city as a whole above local interests, and strengthening the centres before tackling the suburbs
- Developing strategies for the growth of the city region that link investment in transport infrastructure with new development and business growth in a polycentric model (as opposed to thinking, crudely, that everything should revolve around the centre of London)
- Using the structure of public-private partnerships (Societe Mixte) in which local government has a majority control to ensure that development reinforces existing city strengths, and that developers do not walk away from agreed plans
- Providing sustained political leadership at the city region level not only to devise catalytic regeneration projects, like Euralille, but also to follow them through in order to reap the benefits (unlike the current situation in Stratford)
- Using 'grands projets' or flagship projects to change attitudes, within a shared vision for the city region, but ensuring these are backed up by social and cultural measures (e.g. Lille as European Capital of Culture)
- Adopting a consensual approach to city development rather than an autocratic approach that both respects local differences, and does not try and ride roughshod over local plans and policies e.g. for protecting employment land

### 3. Restructuring local government finance

One TEN member commented ‘...if we had combined different grant regimes that supported short-term projects into a few major infrastructure schemes we would have made much greater progress.’

The renaissance of French provincial cities like Lille could not have been achieved without financial mechanisms that encourage and reinforce local economic development:

- Being able to raise funds for significant investment projects helps attract and retain capable people in local government
- Sharing out the taxes at a city region level promotes a sense of common purpose and helps reduce spatial disparities
- Tapping funds from local businesses for infrastructure projects e.g. the payroll tax, ensures that government and business are closely allied
- Using fiscal incentives and the provision of sites in situations where the market is weak to help even out regional disparities; but ensuring that they bring real social benefits and are closely monitored

### 4. Changing images

The most fundamental changes have taken place in attitudes to living and investing in old industrial towns and cities, and in trying to develop ‘mutual respect’ in what is now a multicultural society. While France has some weak spots, it does not have such large areas that were dominated by industry, as in England. However, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the Lille conurbation for how to reposition or remarket areas that have lost their original role:

- Looking at regeneration like the ‘art of war’, and using a commando strategy to establish beachheads, as in Roubaix’s centre, builds confidence
- Seeing a city as serving a number of markets, like a business, and as having an image that can be transformed over time can

change attitudes to living and investing in the city

- Investing in infrastructure, while key, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success
- Redesigning the public realm can provide tangible proof of change, but does not guarantee that public places will be safe and occupied
- Using events, such as the Olympic Games bid and Cultural Capital of Europe, as a means of generating concerted improvements, enables a critical mass to be achieved
- Devising imaginative adaptive reuse and cultural projects, often locally initiated, can catalyse civic pride, and provide common ground where people from different backgrounds can come together



*‘Lack of cleaning and policing very interesting’ (Roubaix)*



*‘Transport investment is a key aspect of regeneration’*

## 5. Upgrading skills

The most difficult challenge for UK cities is not just transforming their physical structure, for example to reduce car dependence and save energy, but also equipping residents with the skills required for operating in a highly competitive global economy. So long as half the residents leave school without marketable qualifications, as in parts of East London, and employers only want people with experience, it will be impossible to raise productivity sufficiently to afford a better quality public infrastructure. France, and Lille in particular, has shown some ways forward in terms of:

- Developing the visioning, negotiating and networking skills needed to manage multi-agency schemes, for example by visiting other cities to learn from them
- Taking a sufficiently long-term approach – regeneration takes a generation – but providing some immediate benefits that help change attitudes e.g. Roubaix Cité de Couleurs
- Systematically tying up investments into the city with employment opportunities for local unemployed people, through employment clauses or negotiations with investors

- Supporting the growth of local companies that take more interest in their localities than multinationals
- Addressing the needs of people who fail to meet basic standards of literacy, often using voluntary organisations to reach minorities
- Offering everyone a role, which may start with using the arts and sports to develop social skills, and mutual respect
- Using housing renewal to attract new residents and thus broaden the skills base e.g. the creative class



*'Link between public transport and regeneration'*





## APPENDICES

A *Lille Fact File - URBAN AUDIT 2004*

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B *Lille: investing in a modern integrated public transport system  
URBED*

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## Appendix A LILLE FACT FILE

# Lille

The city of Lille (Communauté Urbaine de Lille) is located in the département of the Nord, part of the region Nord-Pas-de-Calais, close to the Belgian border. It has a population of 1,091,438.

The economy of Lille was traditionally based on the textile, food and printing industries. The service sector now represents 80% of jobs. The economy is growing in particular in the sectors of biotechnology, mail-order selling, mass distribution, finance, IT and communications. High levels of research and development activities also contribute to the city's economic growth.

The 'Communauté Urbaine de Lille' is composed of 87 municipalities that take joint decisions on issues of urban management such as public transport and other sustainable development initiatives. The mayors of the communes elect a President who heads the public organisation.

The larger urban zone (LUZ) of over 1,1 million inhabitants covers an area of 981 km<sup>2</sup>, and is based on the French concept of 'aire urbaine'.

INDICATORS	CITY		QUINTILES: Comparison with UA cities					LUZ		Ratio City:LUZ	
	YEAR	SCORE	Low		High			YEAR	SCORE		
			5 <sup>TH</sup>	4 <sup>TH</sup>	3 <sup>RD</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>	1 <sup>ST</sup>				CASES
<b>DEMOGRAPHY</b>											
Total resident population	2001	1091438					•	191	2001	1143125	1:1.05
Total annual population change over 5 yrs.											
EU nationals as a percentage of total population	2001	2%					•	166	2001	2%	1:0.96
Non-EU nationals as a percentage of total population	2001	4%			•			166	2001	4%	1:0.93
Average size of households	2001	2.59					•	161	2001	2.62	1:1.01
Percentage of households that are 1-person households	2001	31%		•				160	2001	31%	1:0.97
Percentage of households that are lone-parent households	2001	6%			•			138	2001	6%	1:0.96
<b>SOCIAL ASPECTS</b>											
Average price per m <sup>2</sup> for an apartment	2001	€1300					•	94			
Average price per m <sup>2</sup> for a house	2001	€1200		•				111			
Percentage of households living in owned dwellings	2001	50%					•	152	2001	52%	1:1.04
Percentage of households living in social housing	2001	23%					•	122	2001	22%	1:0.95
Average living area in m <sup>2</sup> per person	2001	36					•	109			
Life expectancy at birth for males and females											
Number of recorded crimes per 1,000 population	2001	103.70					•	154			
<b>ECONOMIC ASPECTS</b>											
Unemployment rate	2001	14%					•	160	2001	14%	1:0.96
Unemployment rate - female	2001	15%					•	160	2001	14%	1:0.96
Employment rate	2001	55%	•					144			
Activity rate	2001	64%		•				160	2001	65%	1:1.01
GDP per head (€)											
Median disposable annual household income(€)	2001	€13183	•					97	2001	€13459	1:1.02
Percentage of households receiving less than half of the national average household income	2001	16%					•	82	2001	15%	1:0.96
<b>CIVIC INVOLVEMENT</b>											
Percentage of registered electorate voting in city elections	2001	53%		•				167			
<b>TRAINING AND EDUCATION</b>											
No. of children aged 0-4 in day care per 1,000 children 0-4											
% of resident population with secondary education	2001	10%	•					138	2001	10%	1:1.01

INDICATORS	CITY		QUINTILES: Comparison with UA cities					LUZ		Ratio City:LUZ	
	YEAR	SCORE	Low		High		CASES	YEAR	SCORE		
			5 <sup>TH</sup>	4 <sup>TH</sup>	3 <sup>RD</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>					1 <sup>ST</sup>
% of resident population with tertiary education	2001	16%			•			138	2001	16%	1:1.02
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>											
Summer Smog: No. of days ozone (O3) exceeds 120µg/m3	2001	2			•			122			
Number of days PM10 concentrations exceed 50 µg/m3	2001	8			•			100			
Amount of solid waste collected (domestic and commercial) - tonnes per capita per annum											
Percentage of solid waste processed by landfill	1996	0%			•			29			
Green space to which the public has access (m2 per capita)											
Population density (residents per km2)	2001	1787			•			183			
<b>TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL</b>											
Percentage of journeys to work by car	1996	77%					•	14			
Average time of journey to work (mins.)	1996	19			•			13			

## 68 SUB-CITY DISTRICTS

Average Population: 16050.56

Comparison of Sub-City Districts

INDICATORS	YEAR	LOWEST	CITY SCORE	HIGHEST	Ratio Lowest:Highest
<b>DEMOGRAPHY</b>					
Percentage of total population aged 0-4	2001	3%	6%	10%	1:3.03
Average size of households	2001	1.57	2.59	3.38	1:2.16
Percentage of households that are 1-person households	2001	13%	31%	68%	1:5.11
Percentage of households that are lone-parent households	2001	2%	6%	16%	1:8.54
Percentage of households that are lone-pensioner households	2001	3%	11%	17%	1:6.34
<b>SOCIAL ASPECTS</b>					
Proportion of dwellings lacking basic amenities	2001	4%	10%	19%	1:5.16
<b>ECONOMIC ASPECTS</b>					
Unemployment rate	2001	7%	14%	41%	1:5.91
Percentage of unemployed who are under age 25	2001	11%	21%	26%	1:2.4
<b>TRAINING AND EDUCATION</b>					
% of resident population with only primary education	2001	4%	17%	25%	1:5.62
% of resident population with secondary education	2001	6%	10%	14%	1:2.48
% of resident population with tertiary education	2001	5%	16%	41%	1:8.15
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>					
Population density (residents per km2)	2001	268	1787	14829	1:55.29

## *Appendix B* LILLE: INVESTING IN A MODERN INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Size of Town: Large (Population: 180,000)

Type of Town: Industrial

Type of Area: Northern France

Lille, the regional capital of north eastern France, was the centre of the French textile industry. Together with Roubaix and Tourcoing it forms one of the largest conurbations outside Paris, and over 2.5 million people live in the surrounding Nord Departement. It was once seen as just an industrial city in decline, but is now a vibrant and attractive city which has even become a focus for tourism. Excellent public transport has been one of the keys to its recent renaissance.

The Eurostar and TGV systems connect Lille to the rest of Europe by high-speed train. Paris can be reached in an hour and Brussels in 35 minutes. The city's renewal is symbolised by the 70 hectare (175 acre) development of Euralille, a complex of offices (with a World Trade Centre), shops, apartments and a luxury 200-bed hotel, which has been built next to the new international station (Lille Europe). Despite its visionary plan, Euralille has not yet attracted the number of offices expected, although the numbers are rising. However, one element which has been a great success has been the development of a high quality public transport system for the city. A new metro with two lines and 36 stations has trains which run every 72 seconds at peak periods. Modern Italian trams have been introduced on the routes which run along the main roads to Roubaix and Tourcoing. Buses run on colour coded loops that connect up with the other forms of transport to form an integrated network with transferable tickets. Clear signs and maps make it easy to change from one system to another. The metro, trams and buses also serve the international and local railway stations. The huge investment required was funded mainly through a payroll tax on employers. Public transport usage increased by 77%.

A high proportion of the population live close to the city centre, both in new blocks of flats and in refurbished old buildings, and if they have cars these are small. It is the high density of these residential areas that helps to make such an extensive public transport viable, and also explains why so many more people walk or cycle to work than do so in a British city. There is an extensive network of pedestrian streets in the centre of the city, from which cars are excluded most of the time. Several of the main squares have been rebuilt with attractive cobbled surfaces over underground car parks. Elsewhere the streets are generally pedestrian-friendly. Many of the roads have been narrowed as a traffic calming measure and there are crossings at most street corners which are controlled by traffic lights. Large maps are provided in prominent places and there are good signs pointing to the main attractions. The Tourist Information Office provides excellent free leaflets, including four different self-guided walking tours of the centre. Lille is making a real effort to make itself an attractive and highly accessible place for all who live or work there as well as those who visit it.