

Using Scenario-Based Learning in Foundation Year Teaching

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This example of practice article makes the case for scenario-based learning (SBL) as a valuable method in foundation year teaching. Using two detailed social science case studies, it shows how SBL can enhance engagement, bring unique benefits to a wide range of students, and meet the needs of foundation year practitioners and institutions now and in the future. It considers the practicalities of introducing SBL and provides examples and practical tips for implementing the approach.

Introduction

This example of practice article considers the potential of scenario-based learning (SBL) for foundation year teaching. In the article, I describe two examples of SBL that I have used in foundation year teaching: a short, self-contained outreach taster activity ('Hollybush'), and an extended, large-scale, multi-disciplinary scenario developed for a foundation year introductory social sciences module ('Greenshank'). Drawing on previous research (including my own) on SBL and its background, and on the scholarship and my own experience of foundation year teaching, I go on to outline some of the ways in which SBL can add particular value to foundation year teaching, for students, for practitioners, and for institutions.

Background – problem-based, case-based, and scenario-based learning

Problem-based, or case-based, learning has been long established in disciplines such as law, engineering and medicine. It generally involves students working in groups on a case drawn from real life, or a custom-designed problem, to develop skills and knowledge in something approaching a real-world context. As such, it has always been seen as well-suited to those more vocationally-orientated disciplines, but its potential as a teaching method in other subject areas has arguably been overlooked.

In 2005 I was appointed as Project Manager for a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded project at the University of Huddersfield (Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning Phase 5), developing case-based learning (CBL) for Politics. This entailed researching the existing use of CBL, visiting a range of local authorities and voluntary groups

collecting 'cases' to develop into teaching resources for Huddersfield's courses aimed at local governance organisations, and writing these up as teaching packs – eight in total – including scenarios and guidance for tutors. In addition the project produced a report and an 'interactive template' for others to develop their own scenarios from case studies. This was very basic by today's standards and it was distributed on CD-ROM.

Following the Huddersfield project, a colleague and I published papers covering the then extant literature on CBL, contextualising CBL within pedagogical theory, outlining a range of benefits, and noting requirements and caveats for its use in social science teaching (Hale 2006); and reflecting on our experiences of implementing CBL on work-based courses at Huddersfield (Craig & Hale 2008). These articles are still available, and recommended as background reading for anyone interested in introducing SBL. Here, I focus on its particular potential to enhance foundation year teaching and learning.

A note on terminology: from here on, in relation to the teaching resources and activities described in this article, I will use the term 'scenario-based learning' (SBL) in preference to the more usual 'problem-based' or 'case-based' learning. This may be a pedantic point, but the scenarios outlined here are not drawn from discrete real life 'cases' (although they certainly draw on a range of real life examples and experiences); nor do they present a 'problem' for students to 'solve' in the way that an engineering problem or a medical case might. One thing that the two scenarios considered here have in common in fact is that there is no 'right' (or perhaps more importantly, no 'wrong') answer, and deliberately so – and this is where social science scenarios can perhaps diverge most obviously from their more vocational counterparts.

After leaving Huddersfield on completion of the project, I embarked on what would become a twenty-year career working with mature students, firstly on work-based foundation degrees at Birkbeck, University of London, and then on foundation years at the University of Sheffield. Over this time I have developed and used SBL for a range of purposes and contexts, as well as introducing it to colleagues and supporting them to develop resources for other subject areas. This experience has led me to the conclusion that SBL is not only a very useful approach across a range of subjects, but that it provides a particularly fruitful approach for foundation year teaching, especially for mature students.

The initial project set some store by collecting and using real life 'stories' as the basis of scenarios, at least in part because it was felt this would provide greater verisimilitude, credibility and relevance. This created a number of issues however, including the time and resources needed to collect the stories, and in many cases their ultimate lack of suitability to be turned into scenarios – at least, the scenarios that were needed for particular teaching purposes. It also

meant that work needed to be done to anonymise both people and institutions. The scenarios described here draw on my knowledge and experience of local government and the voluntary sector, but were created and tailored for the needs of teaching, with no claim to be based on specific real life cases – although they do, of course, seek accurately to represent real processes and structures. Both are built around the theme of regeneration, which enables the inclusion of a variety of viewpoints (both subject and ideological) and both, crucially, feature ‘public’ consultation exercises as a way of drawing in all participants.

Two contrasting scenarios and how I used them

The two contrasting examples of SBL detailed below go some way to illustrating the considerable range and variety that the approach encompasses.

The first, Hollybush, is a brief, self-contained scenario that I developed for use in outreach taster sessions. This was designed for a single, one hour-long session with participants having no prior subject knowledge or experience of HE, and aimed to give them a taste of studying politics (and to an extent, social science more generally). It could also be used as an icebreaker activity and/or an introduction to the key themes it covers.

The second example, Greenshank, is a large-scale scenario developed for a group of around fifty foundation year students on an interdisciplinary social sciences module taken by students on a wide range of different social science degree tracks. The aim here was to create something that was – and, importantly, would be seen as – relevant and engaging for students on all these diverse degree programmes, and through this, to explore a range of issues at the heart of the course and core to all social sciences. It also met an institutional requirement to introduce an element of work-related learning. This ran over the final four weeks of a twelve-week module, with students expected to undertake research, discussion and preparatory work outside class and participate in structured discussions and activities within each of the final three weekly sessions.

Outreach activity – ‘Democracy and decisions: spending on the Hollybush estate’

This activity aims to introduce mature participants to, among other things, arguments in political theory (is democracy always the best system?), political decision making, lobbying and propaganda. As an outreach taster session, above all it seeks to engage students in an academic activity and show that this can be enjoyable, and that the subject area is relevant to their lives and prior experience. At the outreach stage, learning and skills development are not a priority, but as part of a realistic academic learning experience, they are of course present. Skills developed include groupwork, construction and presentation of a persuasive argument, and

presentation/public speaking, alongside critical understanding of lobbying, persuasion, and democratic decision making processes.

The Hollybush scenario (Appendix 1) reflects real issues and processes, but in a condensed and simplified, and therefore somewhat artificial, way. This does not seem to have a negative impact on engagement however. It presents a number of options for a disused building and plot of land, only one of which will be implemented.

Participants are firstly allocated to groups lobbying for one of the proposed uses. When setting this up I usually allocate randomly – either alphabetically or by where people are already sitting – to save time, although there may be settings where it would be worth trying to make the groups balanced in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, subject interest and so on. The important thing here is that people are allocated to groups; they do not get to choose. This means that they put themselves in someone else's shoes and develop skills in advocating for a cause they do not have much prior knowledge of, noting that none of the options are likely to evoke strong objections. The ideal group size for this is four to six; if there are fewer participants, some of the proposals can be dropped. The ideal overall number of activity participants is around twenty. More would work, but a longer session would be required to allow them all to present.

The groups are given a short period to develop an advocacy campaign for their allotted proposal, and to create a single flip chart poster to present to the 'public meeting'. I do not intervene in how the groups organise internally – or indeed how they network. An unplanned outcome on a couple of occasions has been for a group to reach out and form alliances with other groups to present joint projects (for example, bringing children and older people together), or to offer inducements to another group to support their project. These provide excellent material for the plenary discussion!

The presentation stage is very informal, with groups presenting from their tables, and often with me holding up the flip chart poster. Each group is allowed to decide who presents on their behalf – sometimes this is one person, sometimes everyone. In the unlikely event that no one is willing to speak, the poster can speak for itself (and could indeed be designed for that, although I have never had a group where no one was prepared to speak). The five minutes for each presentation is very strictly enforced.

A longer version of this scenario, where the emphasis was on teaching about democracy, would then consider a range of options for making the decision (consensus, show of hands, secret ballot – and if so, using what voting system). In this shorter and simplified version we move straight to a secret ballot, with participants voting for a single choice. I have ballot papers and a

ballot box prepared in advance for this, in the guise of ‘the Council’, so these cannot be changed regardless of any alliances; electronic voting could also be used but the low tech approach was chosen for reliability, as these sessions took place off university premises. It might be expected that everyone would vote for their own group’s project, but this does not tend to happen in practice. Participants do seem to be able to detach themselves from their own project (unless they have successfully convinced themselves of its superiority), maybe come out of character, and vote as residents of the estate. Groups can, and have, however, advocated tactical voting on occasion.

The final part of the session, after the result is announced, is an informal discussion, both of the outcome and the issues raised and – perhaps more significantly in this context – the experience of participating in the session.

Extended interdisciplinary scenario – ‘Regenerating the Greenshank estate’

This scenario was designed for a large group on a long-running interdisciplinary introductory social sciences module, which aimed to introduce students on a broad range of social science degree tracks to key concepts, arguments and methods in the social sciences. The module, taught over one twelve-week semester, had changed incrementally over the years, and was broadly themed around social class, education, and place, as a way of tapping into themes that were familiar and relevant to most of the students and using these as a lens to introduce theoretical perspectives and qualitative and quantitative methods. Since 2020-21 the module had been delivered in a weekly two-hour session to groups of 15-20 students; however in 2024-25 we reverted to a three-hour session as a trade-off for moving to a single large group – which turned out to be over fifty in the end; as part of the ‘deal’, I also secured a large workroom with round tables sitting eight students each. This was vital to the success of a number of activities, including SBL.

Nonetheless, introducing SBL had not been part of the plan at the beginning of the year. A few years previously, I had introduced material on gentrification – the process by which more affluent people move into a previously run-down area and the consequent changes to the area, including to local businesses and facilities, and the marginalisation and eventual expulsion of the previous, poorer residents. I had been quite surprised by how popular this topic was (colleagues complained about how many presentations they were required to mark on the subject!) and how it, more than any other, captured the interest of students across subject areas. Part way through the semester it occurred to me that this, along with the large group, workroom-based, format, could provide very fruitful territory for SBL.

The Greenshank regeneration¹ scenario has its roots in the same basic premiss as the first scenario: the local authority plans to invest in an area; how will this change the area and who will benefit? It addresses the same questions of how decisions are made and how decision-makers are influenced, but additionally develops consideration of conflicting interests and the impacts of decisions on individuals and communities. Whereas the first scenario was vastly over-simplified, I aimed to make this one as realistic as possible, drawing on my experience of involvement in local government and regeneration partnerships, my interest in housing and gentrification, and latterly, my experience of seeing the small town where I had lived since the 1980s finally succumbing to gentrification after decades of failed attempts at regeneration.

With the basic premiss in place, and numerous real examples in mind, I created the new, more complex, scenario in about a week. This began with the central issue – should the council sell a publicly-owned parade of shops and flats to an urban development company? – and a cast of characters designed to represent a range of interests and perspectives, including elected members and employees of the council, representatives of the commercial regeneration company, community groups, campaigners, journalists, current and aspirant business owners (large and small), the police, and individual residents of different areas. The basic storyline can be found in the scenario provided to students (Appendix 2). Students could choose their own roles, meaning they could select a character who aligned with their subject interests and with whom they sympathised, bringing greater authenticity. An important feature is that there are no predetermined ‘baddies’; all the people involved could act in good faith but their needs and legitimate desires would still inevitably come into conflict. When some students choose to take their characters in a less ethical direction, well ... it gets more interesting still.

Students were provided with the scenario (Appendix 2), a list of roles with a thumbnail sketch of each (Appendix 3), and a sign-up sheet with suggested matching of degree tracks to roles (Appendix 4) a week in advance of the first of three weekly class sessions. This was complemented by a verbal introduction in class, and reminders on the VLE. A majority of students did select a role in advance; I followed up suggesting roles to other students, and those who did not take any named role were allocated roles as residents of different areas.

Other than the two roles (council and regeneration company representatives) who give a presentation at the start, no roleholder is committed to speaking publicly or even being actively involved in campaigning or decision-making. This was deliberate: not only does it make a virtue

¹ Regeneration is closely linked to gentrification; however, while gentrification as originally identified (Glass, 1964) is a spontaneous, organic process, regeneration is essentially an attempt to engineer similar outcomes via strategic state funding. In everyday usage, there is little distinction between the terms, and gentrification itself is often seen as a desirable result of regeneration spending.

of necessity – some students won't or can't participate in these activities – but it also adds realism, in that in any public consultation or local issue there will be many (in reality, the vast majority) who do not get involved. This was how I presented it to the students: even if they did nothing they would still be playing their part. This did not, of course, exempt them from broader discussions about, and learning arising from, the scenario. However, there was also a more positive intent. By taking off the perceived pressure to participate in certain prescribed ways, the way was opened up for students to play to their strengths and contribute in other ways, for example through written communication (participants could write letters, blog posts or newspaper articles, or produce campaigning leaflets, for example, which were shared via the VLE), one-to-one exchanges, and working in the background on campaigns, for example using digital skills. Anecdotally, my experience suggests that this actually led to more students participating than in situations where participation is 'compulsory', because it meant that they could tailor or reduce their participation, or start participating at a later point once they felt more comfortable, rather than dropping out completely. This is a strong example of how SBL can reach a wide range of learning styles and preferences, and is why it is particularly useful for cohorts with diverse skills, ages, experiences, identities and neurotypes – such as foundation year cohorts.

Once students had their roles they were encouraged to research and think about how they would act in that position, and to discuss the scenario in general terms in the first classroom session, relating it to material previously covered on the module. Rather than put them into groups, students were encouraged to make contact with potential allies or people who could help them, allowing the groups to form organically. The second classroom session was set up to strongly encourage this. Because of the timing, this session was framed as the town's Christmas Market (it could equally have been the Summer Fayre). Groups could book 'stalls' in advance, or simply circulate on the day. Many students brought printed campaign material and some organised a petition. To make the session fun and encourage engagement, I played cheesy seasonal music and provided festive snacks and tinsel. This helped break the ice and background music (as anyone who has sat in a silent pub knows) makes it easier to start a conversation. To share in the spirit of the scenario, I dressed up as the Mayor (a role that also enabled me to wield arbitrary power) and circulated, in character, asking questions and making introductions.

The scenario culminates in the final session with the 'public meeting' (Appendix 5). Any students or groups who wanted to present at the meeting were given the opportunity, and were able to use slides etc. if they wished. All participants were also able to ask questions, in character, at the meeting, and the holders of each different role were invited, but not pressured, to contribute.

Enabling people to inhabit a role, essentially playing a character they can dissociate themselves from, can also give some people more confidence to speak than if they were put on the spot as themselves, and the fact that everyone is playing a role can mitigate the impact of imposter syndrome by dint of everyone effectively being an imposter. In this case, the vote was conducted electronically and the result announced. Once the meeting was wound up, the class took a break, after which we returned as tutor and students to discuss the whole scenario, the issues it raised, and the experience of participating.

Why use scenario-based teaching on a foundation year?

SBL brings many benefits (see Hale 2006, Craig & Hale 2008) and many of these apply all the more strongly to foundation years.

Benefits for mature students

Many foundation year students are also mature students, returning to education after, in many cases, years in employment or involvement in community groups. While much of the literature on CBL notes that it can seem strange and unfamiliar to conventional students in their later years of study – it isn't a lecture or a seminar! – for mature students the reverse is true. The lecture and seminar, and often indeed the whole milieu of the university, is strange and even alienating for students from working class or minoritised backgrounds (Hale 2020), while the work- or community-based scenario in contrast may feel far more familiar. In enabling these students to utilise their existing skills and experience, it valorises their different contributions and perspectives. The differentiation from traditional teaching also helps to engage the many foundation year students of all ages whose previous experience of conventional education has been negative.

Interdisciplinary teaching

There are also a number of positives for foundation year practitioners. Many foundation years, or modules within them, seek to prepare students for a range of different subject tracks within a broad disciplinary area – in the case of my examples, the social sciences. Designing teaching that is seen as relevant to everyone in a class made up of students committed to and interested in a large number of different subjects is a significant challenge, which carefully designed SBL can go a long way to meet. It gives students of different subjects a 'hook' to draw them in, linking not only to their subject interests but often also to future career plans. Furthermore, through working together on the scenario they begin to see how different subjects (for example, in the Greenshank scenario, Politics and Journalism, or Urban Studies and Business Management) interact and their practitioners work together in the real world, hopefully making them more receptive to interdisciplinarity across the board.

Employability skills

With more explicit attention being given to ‘soft’ and transferable employment-related skills in recent years, and even institutional requirements to introduce an element of work-related learning, SBL provides a real opportunity to integrate this with subject knowledge, critical thinking and academic learning, genuinely adding value rather than displacing other aspects of learning. In a scenario such as Greenshank, students are in many cases putting themselves into explicitly work-based roles as well as developing employer-valued skills such as groupwork, problem solving, persuasion, presentation and report-writing.

Groupwork made more accessible

Groupwork is often unpopular with students, or approached with suspicion. Some reasons for this include shyness or social anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of others free-riding on their efforts. There can also be an element of resentment at being sorted into arbitrary groups and given what looks like an arbitrary task. In the course of a group work activity, group dynamics can emerge which make it uncomfortable for some participants, who may then effectively withdraw. All of these are potentially issues for the Hollybush scenario, but are mitigated by the fact that it is very short, and the stakes are very low (there is no assessment, and group members might never meet again after the session). There are also high levels of good will as everyone has made a conscious decision to be there and participate.

In the Greenshank scenario many of these barriers are overcome by enabling students to form their own groups (developing networking skills in the process) and making a point of not forcing anyone to join a formal group, which as noted above arguably leads to higher participation rates compared to ‘compulsory’ groupwork. Even if some students do not engage in group work as usually understood, they still participate in the wider (whole class) group activity, and can reflect on their role in this and their choice not to join a smaller group. Where tricky group dynamics do develop, these can be recognised and integrated to add realism to the scenario – students are free to form, join and leave groups throughout.

Learning in the age of AI

Finally – and I say this tentatively, as things are changing fast – there are at least two ways in which SBL can help us meet the challenges of teaching and learning in the age of AI (a third possible way centres on assessment, which I do not consider in this article). Firstly, and most basically, the Greenshank scenario provided an effective way of introducing the hands-on use of generative AI, and critical interrogation of its outputs (another skillset widely held to be valuable). For example, students used AI-generated images in their persuasive materials, including ‘artist’s impressions’ of proposed developments, and used gen AI to tailor their writing

for particular audiences. This highlighted potential legitimate uses of gen AI, but also its shortcomings and its potential to be used for persuasive or even deceptive purposes.

The second point here relates to the future of learning itself in the context of ubiquitous AI. Jim Dickinson (2025) argues in a persuasive post for WONKHE (published just after I had started working on this piece) that in that future we will need a ‘pedagogy that prioritises encounter over transmission’. When ‘knowledge’ can be outsourced to a data centre, learning has to become more focussed on critical inquiry, which includes acknowledging uncertainty, and not just getting the ‘right’ answer but showing and acknowledging the process by which it is reached. Dickinson argues that the skills employers ask for never were really about outputs (presentations and reports etc.) but were ‘always really about the capacity to be present with other humans. To listen, to learn, to adapt – to work with people who are different from you, and to contribute to collective endeavours rather than produce outputs in isolation.’ The ability of AI to generate those outputs as well as (and more cheaply than) humans can has belatedly led to the recognition that they were all along a proxy for these uniquely human skills, and that university teaching must now explicitly recognise this, including by ‘designing curricula around problems that don’t have predetermined answers – not case studies where students are expected to reach the “right” conclusion, but genuine dilemmas where reasonable people disagree’ (Dickinson 2025). That is SBL in a nutshell.

Concluding points

Firstly, a few caveats. This article is primarily an account of my experience of using SBL on a foundation year, and, drawing on wider literature, pedagogical theory, and foundation year knowledge, an argument for its usefulness in foundation year teaching in particular. This draws on anecdotal evidence and well over a decade of experience of both SBL and foundation year teaching; it is not intended as a systematic evaluation of a specific intervention. I have not been able to cite student feedback or use student comments, or describe specific classroom events, because I did not apply for the necessary prior ethical approval.

I do not make any great claims for the role of SBL in transferring basic factual knowledge. In conventional learning terms, what it does provide is the opportunity to see and even experience things from different perspectives, and to raise questions that might not otherwise have been considered, contributing to the critical interrogation of ideas and claims. Looking forward to future pedagogical needs, SBL provides in Jim Dickinson’s (2025) words, the necessary ‘communities of inquiry ... spaces where people think together, are accountable to each other, and learn to be wrong in public’, in which people have the opportunity to interact, disagree and change their minds.

This article does not attempt to cover the potential role of SBL in assessment. The Greenshank scenario was not directly assessed in any way, and if it had been this would have significantly changed the dynamic and almost certainly compromised many of the benefits. It did however very likely contribute to performance in the existing module assessment by bringing issues to life and deepening understanding, fostering critical thinking and developing confidence. There is a literature on assessing via CBL (see Hale 2006), which is widespread in areas such as medicine; however, it was not the purpose of the kind of SBL described here. There is certainly scope, however, to explore how assessment might be introduced whilst retaining as many of the benefits as possible, because there is arguably great potential for integrating innovative forms of assessment that are less vulnerable to AI than standard written coursework, but less pressured and monolithic than exams.

Sessions – of both scenarios – often took on a life of their own and went off in unexpected directions. This is part of the joy of teaching in this way, but it does mean that the tutor needs to be confident in the background material and subject knowledge, as well as willing to enter into the (sometimes silly) spirit of the scenario and follow ideas to see where they lead, but also alert and ready to step in if things take a potentially harmful turn.

One other thing to reiterate is how important it is to have the right kind of teaching space, particularly for any scenario that requires participants to work in groups or to circulate and talk to each other. A workroom layout (as opposed to lecture or seminar) of a suitable size for the group, with room to discuss things without disturbing other groups and to move between groups is pretty much essential. It is possible to envisage a different kind of scenario in which interaction takes place entirely online, but the ones described above have in-person interaction – something that arguably needs encouragement – at their heart.

Nonetheless, none of these caveats should discourage foundation year practitioners from developing and using SBL in their teaching; with them taken into account, SBL provides immensely rich potential for engaging students with subject material, with ideas, and most importantly and uniquely, with each other. Its particular value for foundation year teaching includes its potential to reach mature and other ‘non-traditional’ students, particularly those who have previously struggled in education, and to build on and valorise their life experience and skills. It also caters to the frequent need, on foundation years, to appeal to a wide range of subject interests within a single course or module – and more than this, to demonstrate how these interact in the real world, fostering an appreciation of interdisciplinarity.

From a conventional foundation year perspective, SBL develops the groupwork and communication skills that students will need on the subsequent years of their degree, and

perhaps above all, confidence, as students are given a low-stakes (i.e. not putting their real selves or identities on the line) opportunity to participate at their own pace in an enjoyable, interesting and ultimately light-hearted activity, with the time and space to develop ideas and relationships. These are also the employer-valued skills that universities now explicitly prioritise more than ever – to the extent that some require an element of work-related learning, which SBL is exceptionally well-placed to provide.

Not only does SBL help to meet the current needs of foundation year students and practitioners, it also leads the way in anticipating the focus and priorities of higher education amid the AI revolution, with its emphasis on inquiry-led learning and human interaction.

Above all, though, SBL can provide a way of working with your students *now* which is refreshing, inclusive, fulfilling, challenging, effective and enjoyable – so why not give it a try?

About the author

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Appendix 1 – Outreach activity student pack

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOLLYBUSH ESTATE

The Hollybush estate comprises a mixture of houses and flats and has a diverse population.

Including:

- people over the age of sixty five
- families with school age children
- families with pre-school children
- young people between the age of thirteen and nineteen
- unemployed men of working age
- people whose first language is not English
- people with disabilities

The council has just moved out of its office on the estate, because it is centralising its operations. The site, which could include a small building, is now available for community use, and the council has set aside a sum of money to develop it. The council has put forward a number of plans, but wants local people to have a say in which one is adopted.

THE PROPOSALS

Day centre for elderly people

Somewhere for retired people to meet, with activities and meals available

Youth centre and park

Skate facilities, basketball etc plus meeting place

Pre-school centre and children's playground

Parent and toddler groups, nursery, playground for young children

Inclusive garden for people with disabilities

Wheelchair accessible garden with scented flowers and tactile plants, and quiet spaces.

Drop-in centre

Where people can get help with English, improving their skills and applying for jobs

THE TASK

The council are very clear that they will implement one of their proposals and one only, in its entirety – but they want local people to tell them which one is most popular. If local people

can't make that choice, then the money will be spent on other estates, leaving a derelict site at Hollybush.

Different people living on the estate obviously have different views about the best use of the land, the building and the money. Groups have grown up supporting each scheme. Today there is a public meeting on the estate to decide which proposal to support.

You belong to one of the groups supporting one of the schemes. Your group is having a meeting to decide how best to present its case at the public meeting later.

You need to produce a presentation that will convince other people – including the supporters of the other proposals – that your scheme is the one they should support.

HOW THE EXERCISE WILL WORK

Stage 1: Lobby groups

You will be allocated to a group supporting one of the schemes, and each group will prepare a presentation for the 'public meeting'.

There will not be much time at the meeting so your presentation must not be more than five minutes long.

Stage 2: 'Public Meeting': Presentations

Now you all come together as members of the local community to hear the case for each of the schemes.

Stage 3: 'Public meeting': Deciding

Now you must decide – as a member of the Hollybush Estate community, and not just as a supporter of your particular scheme – which scheme to support. Who made the most convincing case? What are the most important factors to take into account?

How will you decide? Will it be best to just discuss it until everybody agrees, have a show of hands, or a secret ballot? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods of making a group decision?

Stage 4: Discussion of the exercise

Now we will ask what this exercise has taught us about democracy as a way of taking decisions.

Appendix 2 – Regeneration scenario student pack

Background information

The town of Seachester

- Seachester is a coastal town (population 27,000) which has over the past fifty years seen a decline in its traditional industries of fishing and boatbuilding, and the closure of the docks and a number of local factories that were dependent on them. Most of Seachester falls within the top 30% most deprived areas under IMD, with parts of the Greenshank estate ranked at 607/32,844.
- To the west of Seachester is the town of Rivermouth (population 32,000). Rivermouth is a more prosperous town, with good transport links to London. Property prices in Rivermouth are high, and the town has expanded to the east with people starting to move into Seachester.
- There is no railway station in Seachester – passenger services were discontinued in 1968, and freight ceased in 1986 following the closure of the docks. Rivermouth Station is on the direct line to London, and has extensive car parking.

The Greenshank Estate

- The Greenshank Estate is a large estate of council housing on the western outskirts of Seachester.
- The estate was built in two phases, in the 1930s and 1960s. The 1930s housing on the west side of the estate, consisting of short terraces and semi-detached houses in crescents with large gardens front and back, and green spaces, is well built, solid, well designed, spacious and highly desirable. 87% has been sold under Right to Buy with the remaining tenants being a mix of elderly people and young families. The total number of dwellings on the west side is 108.

The 1960s housing on the east side of the estate is less well built and poorly maintained. It consists of four tower blocks each containing 48 flats, and terraces of flat-roofed houses, flats and maisonettes. The total number of dwellings on the east side is 280, of

which 55% are still in council ownership, including most of the tower block flats.

- The estate is poorly served by public transport, following reductions in bus services since the 1990s. On the west side of the estate, over 90% of households own a car; on the east side the figure is 40%, with many cars used to commute to work leaving other household members without transport.
- There is an estate pub, The Greenshank (currently closed) and a parade of seven shops, currently comprising:
 - Newsagents/corner shop (Greenshank News)
 - Off licence and vape shop (Bob's Booze 'n' Vapes)
 - Launderette (SUDZO)
 - Bookmakers (WinBet)
 - Fish and chip shop (The Seagull)
 - Convenience store (Savermart) - occupies two units
 - The Greenshank public house - currently closed and being used as an informal community hub with cafe, under-fives group, youth club and food bank
- There are 28 flats above the shops, which are currently in a poor state of repair. Seachester Council have 'decanted' tenants to vacant properties in the east side of the estate pending their refurbishment.
- Greenshank Parade is located in the centre of the estate, between the west and east sides, but is geographically nearer to the western boundary.

Regeneration Plans

- Seachester Council, who currently own the freehold of all the shops, the flats above, and the pub, have entered into an agreement with urban regeneration company POW! to refurbish this part of the estate.
- **STOP PRESS:** News has just emerged from a meeting of the Council's Finance Committee that the Council are now working on a proposal to SELL Greenshank Parade to POW! Details (in particular the proposed price) have not been released because they are 'commercially sensitive' but this would involve the Council selling the freehold of all the shops, all the flats and the pub to the urban regeneration company, who would then be

able to select new tenants and set rent levels. This could (depending on the agreed price) produce a useful short term cash injection to the Council, and would mean they were no longer responsible for maintaining the buildings, but they would also lose almost all control over the area.

- The leases on the shops in the parade will shortly be up for renewal. This could provide an opportunity to change the use of some of the units, and refurbish all of them, with new leases potentially being at a significantly higher rent.

There have been expressions of interest from the following local businesses / start-ups:

- Katy's Coffee: ethically sourced, locally roasted coffee
 - The Sourdough Start-Up: artisan bakery
 - Yoga centre
 - Pulsation Wholefood Co-op
 - Craft chocolatiers
 - Bookshop
 - Korean barbecue / Japanese restaurant / East Asian fusion food
- In addition, local craft brewery, Sandhopper, have expressed an interest in taking over the Greenshank, refurbishing it and opening it as a brewpub / brewery tap, as part of their aggressive expansion strategy across the region.

The Meeting to be held on [date of Week 12 class]

- Seachester Council and POW! are holding a joint meeting to consult on their plans for regenerating this part of the estate. The meeting will be held in the function room of the Greenshank.
- The meeting will start with presentations from the council officers (outlining why it is necessary) and from POW! (showing their vision for the redevelopment).
- There will then be an open forum for Seachester Council and POW! to get feedback from local residents and businesses.
- The final decision on whether to sell Greenshank Parade to POW! will be taken by Seachester Council in January.

The following people have been invited:

- The Mayor of Seachester (in the Chair)

- Regeneration Officer, Seachester Council
- Regeneration Consultant, POW!

- Representatives / owners of the existing shops in Greenshank Parade
- Organiser(s) of the Greenshank Community Hub and foodbank
- Representative of the Sandhopper Craft Brewery
- Representatives / owners of the new businesses wanting to move into the shops
- Local police
- Local journalists and bloggers
- Environmental / equalities / sustainability campaigner(s)
- Local councillors from different parties
- community workers based at the Greenshank
- tenants of the east side of the Greenshank Estate
- residents of the west side of the Greenshank Estate
- middle class people priced out of Rivermouth and seeking to move to Seachester

Link to sign up sheet with more details (Appendix 4)

Please feel free to add a comment if you have any questions about or suggestions for further details to add to the scenario

Appendix 3 – Regeneration scenario role details

Each box below outlines a role in the scenario and who it has been allocated to.

Once you know what your role is, you should

- Think about how you would feel in that position. What outcome would you want from the consultation meeting?
- If appropriate, do some further research about what your job or position (within the scenario) entails
- Read through the other roles and who holds them. Is there anyone who could help you? Other people you could work together with? People whose support you need? Make contact with them!

Regeneration Officer, Seachester Council

[This website outlines what the role might entail in general](#)

You joined Seachester Council sixteen years ago in a junior role, and have worked your way up to the position of Regeneration Officer. You grew up on the Greenshank Estate before going away to university; you have happy memories of secure housing and a strong community and have been saddened to see how run down and divided it has become.

You are currently leading on the Greenshank project.

As an employee of the Council, you are aware that in common with many local authorities, Seachester Council is experiencing financial difficulties. The additional rents that would come in from the new businesses, and the higher rents – or more likely, sale value – of the refurbished flats could plug a vital hole in funding repairs to other parts of the estate.

Regeneration Consultant at POW! (an urban regeneration company)

[Here is an example of an urban regeneration company similar to POW!](#)

You might also want to check out the [Wikipedia page of an urban regeneration company similar to POW!](#)

You are an ambitious new member of the POW! team and this is the first project you have led. You are keen to show your new bosses that you have what it takes to bring people together and create great places for people to live, work and shop.

You are also learning, however, that part of your role is to channel as much public money as possible into POW!

Green councillor for Rivermouth East ward
 Founding member and current [Chair](#) of the Pulsation Whole Foods Cooperative

You are the elected member of Seachester Council for Rivermouth East ward, the prosperous (and trendy) area abutting the western side of Greenshank. You are one of only three Green councillors on Seachester Council, all from wards in Rivermouth.

You were one of a small group who co-founded the Pulsation Whole Foods Cooperative back in 2006, and are currently the co-op's Chair. Pulsation has a very successful organic box scheme and much loved shop in Rivermouth, and you are looking to build on this by setting up a second shop on the Greenshank Estate.

Labour Councillor for Greenshank West ward

You are the elected member of Seachester Council for Greenshank West ward, the ward which includes Greenshank Parade and the 1930's built housing on the Greenshank Estate.

Labour Councillor for Greenshank East ward

You are the elected member of Seachester Council for Greenshank East ward. Your ward contains some of the poorest families and most run-down housing on the estate – indeed, in the whole of Seachester.

Proprietor, Greenshank News

You have run this newsagent's shop for fifteen years. It is increasingly difficult to make a profit, as fewer people buy newspapers and more people now do the lottery online. Cigarette sales have fallen dramatically and since Bob's Booze expanded into selling vapes as well this has also eaten into your market.

Proprietor, Bobs Booze 'n' Vapes

Originally a cut-price off-licence which you set up in 2009, since branching out into vapes you have found your business become even more successful. There are people on the estate who hold your shop responsible for problem drinking and litter in the area.

Manager, SUDZO Launderette

You live locally and work as the manager of the SUDZO launderette, an independent business owned by a businessman living in London. This is a busy full time job, as a high proportion of households on the east side of the Greenshank Estate do not have washing machines. Unofficially the launderette also provides a safe and warm space where people can spend an hour chatting whilst waiting for their washing. You're always happy to put the kettle on and make them a cuppa and listen to their worries.

Manager, WinBet bookmakers

You live locally and work as the manager of this branch of a nationwide chain of betting shops. You pride yourself on managing the business and your customers well, including spotting people who might have a gambling problem and pointing them to sources of advice and support. Over the last seven years you have built up strong relationships with your regular customers.

Proprietor, The Seagull fish and chip shop

The Seagull was established in 1967 by your grandfather. Like your parents before you, you grew up in the business. There were times you thought you might want to do something else – and you spent some time travelling in your twenties – but you have come back to what you know. You pride yourself on the quality of your fresh fish and chips made from fresh potatoes in the shop rather than bought in frozen. However, rising fish prices and competition from food delivery apps mean that there are no longer queues out of the door and down the pavement every Friday as there used to be, and you are worried about the future. You have two children who hate the idea of following you into the business.

Franchisee, SaverMart convenience store

You bought into this franchise just last year, and so far things have been going well. There is a strong local customer base of people from the estate and you were confident of clearing your debts in five years as planned.

Business owner, Katy's Coffee

You own a small business with two shops currently in Rivermouth, selling ethically sourced, locally roasted coffee. You can see the potential for expanding into Seachester with a shop on Greenshank Parade as more wealthy people are starting to move into the area.

New business start-up, The Sourdough Start-Up

Driven by your love of baking and the power of good, authentic bread to make people happy, you have a dream of setting up your own business and are looking for premises. As a new start-up you need somewhere where the rent isn't too high, but where there are enough people who will appreciate (and can afford) your product. Someone has suggested that Greenshank Parade might be just the place.

Yoga teacher, looking to set up a Yoga Centre

You have been working as a yoga teacher for over ten years, and are fed up with hiring chilly halls and busy, noisy community centres to hold your popular classes. You want to take your practice to the next level with your own premises, a dedicated and peaceful space where your clients can reap the fullest benefits of your expertise.

Chief Executive, Sandhopper Craft Brewery

Since being established in 2013 the Sandhopper Craft Brewery has grown quickly, from a small brewpub outfit to a large brewery operating out of an industrial unit and selling beer to pubs across the region and supermarkets across the country. This rapid expansion has left the company with a lot of debt at a time when sales of expensive 'craft' beer are falling following an earlier boom. Your solution is to stress a 'return to your roots' as a local business, and to this end you are seeking to buy or lease a number of run down 'locals' including the Greenshank, and rebrand them as Sandhopper brewpubs, with microbrewery facilities which can be hired out (complete with brewer). This would be available to local groups but the main target is corporate events. The pub would be refurbished as a 'community local' serving predominantly Sandhopper products.

Prospective Head Chef, Korean Barbecue at the Greenshank

Sandhopper also want to branch out into food at their new pubs, and currently they are seeing a strong market for Korean barbecue. You are a chef with many years' experience and a love of Korean food and culture. Sandhopper have said that if they are successful in taking over the Greenshank they will set up the requisite equipment for Korean barbecue and employ you as head chef.

Chair of the Greenshank Community Trust and organiser of the food bank

When the Greenshank did not reopen as a pub following covid, the newly formed Greenshank Community Trust was allowed by Seachester Council, the freeholder, to take it over on a five

year lease for a nominal rent. The lease will run out next year and the Trust will need to renegotiate or find alternative premises.

Since taking over the Greenshank you have turned what still looks like a run down pub on the outside into a thriving community hub on the inside.

On behalf of the Trust, you run the local foodbank, demand for which has exploded in the last few years.

Children and families organiser for the Greenshank Community Trust

Previously a Sure Start organiser, you are now responsible for running a number of parents' groups, a playgroup and an after school club at the Greenshank, funded via the Greenshank Community Trust. Hundreds of children and their parents use your services.

Youth worker for the Greenshank Community Trust

You are a qualified Youth Worker with many years' experience. Funded by the Greenshank Community Trust and based at the Greenshank, you run after school clubs for teenagers, provide a safe space for young people to meet, and run a local young people's pool league (among many other things).

Seachester Police community liaison officer for the Greenshank Estate

Reporter, *Seachester Herald*

With twenty years' experience as a local journalist, you are the chief (and now the only) reporter for the Greenshank and Rivermouth areas. The *Seachester Herald* has a close relationship with Seachester Council going back many years.

Local blogger

You run the 'Seachester Uncovered' blog, which has a local readership in the thousands, rivalling the traditional local paper as a source of news. You see your role as to uncover local government mismanagement and corruption.

BBC Local Democracy Reporter

You are a [BBC Local Democracy Reporter](#) working for the local BBC radio station, covering local government across Seachester and the surrounding region.

Local sustainability and social justice campaigner

Local residents – if you didn't sign up for a specific role (and I haven't twisted your arm into one) then you'll be a local resident of one of the areas below. That doesn't mean that you can't (or needn't) get involved though. You might end up starting a new campaigning group representing your area, or approaching your local councillor. Please do talk to at least some of your neighbours!

Tenants of the east side of the Greenshank Estate

What are your concerns and interests as someone who lives in the more deprived part of the estate, where poverty and unemployment are high, and the housing stock is in poor condition? You or your neighbours probably use the local shops; your children use the community facilities at the Greenshank. You or your neighbours might use the foodbank; many of you don't have a washing machine at home. What would you want to see come out of the consultation process?

Residents of the west side of the Greenshank Estate

What are your concerns and interests as someone who lives in the wealthier part of the estate, where you probably own your own home, have a car, and may commute to work in London? Rather than using Greenshank Parade, you might drive into Rivermouth to do your shopping. What would you want to see come out of the consultation process?

Middle class people priced out of Rivermouth and seeking to move to Seachester

You've lived in Rivermouth for some time; perhaps you even grew up there. But now you need to find somewhere bigger to live, and prices in Rivermouth are beyond your reach. But you don't want to go too far; you like the atmosphere and culture of Rivermouth. You are thinking of moving to Seachester, and onto the Greenshank Estate. What would you like to see there that might persuade you to move?

Appendix 4 – Regeneration scenario sign-up sheet showing suggested degree tracks for each role

Role	Possible degree track - this is just a suggestion, as this is an opportunity to further link this module to your chosen subject area and draw on (and expand) your existing knowledge and interests
The Mayor of Seachester (in the Chair)	Tutor
Regeneration Officer, Seachester Council will make a presentation	Politics / Urban Studies & Planning
Regeneration Consultant, POW! will make a presentation	Urban Studies & Planning / Landscape Architecture
Elected councillors from various parties	Politics, Law, anything ...
Council Planning and Housing Officers	Politics, Law
Second representative of POW!	Urban Studies & Planning / Landscape Architecture
Representatives / owners of the existing shops in Greenshank Parade	Business Management, any specialist interests
Representatives / owners of the new businesses wanting to move into the shops	Business Management, any specialist interests ... (e.g. Korean ...)
Organiser(s) of the Greenshank Community Hub and foodbank; youth workers etc.	Education, Sociology
Representative of the Sandhopper Craft Brewery	Business Management
Local journalists / bloggers	Journalism
Police	Criminology
Environmental/equalities campaigner(s)	Global Sustainable Development
Residents of west side	ALL
Residents of east side	ALL
Residents of Rivermouth interested in moving to Seachester	ALL

Appendix 5 – ‘Public meeting agenda’



Greenshank Parade **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING** For Residents and Businesses

Come along and have your say!

Tuesday December 17th 2024 at 11:30 am

The Function Room, The Greenshank, Greenshank Parade, Seachester SC4 3BW

Your Council is considering a proposal to transfer ownership of the shops and flats on Greenshank Parade, and the Greenshank public house, to the urban regeneration company POW! as part of our programme of improvement to the Greenshank Estate.

Private sector investment from POW! could see the flats renovated to a high standard, new businesses in the refurbished shops, and a dramatic makeover for the Greenshank as the Sandhopper Craft Brewery's flagship brewpub.

The meeting will open with presentations from [student name], Seachester Council Regeneration Officer, and [student name], urbanist at POW!

There will then be the opportunity to hear from local groups (please notify me if you wish to make a statement) followed by questions from individual residents / business owners.

The meeting will conclude with an indicative vote which the Council will respect in making its decision.

Cllr Sarah Hale, Mayor of Seachester Council