

**SAUL - Press Release - 5 July 2006 – For immediate release**  
**London, United Kingdom**

**SAUL Final Conference celebrates spatial planning solutions for New Urban Landscapes**

Over 150 planning professionals, politicians, and other interested parties, met in Amsterdam last week for the final conference of the *Sustainable and Accessible Urban Landscapes* (SAUL) project. This four year transnational programme has seen an international partnership working together to explore spatial planning solutions to the challenges of 'New Urban Landscapes' in major city regions across Europe.

Closing the conference, Clive Fox of Groundwork London, lead partner on the SAUL project, emphasised the importance of New Urban Landscapes to peoples quality of life and the future economy of Europe. He urged planners and politicians to address the issue, with their communities, as a matter of urgency; "One thing is certain. Europe's citizens will be living in an increasingly pressurised environment. In our city regions, these pressures will become acute. That is why the work you are doing on New Urban Landscapes is so important. I am convinced this change can be most effectively led by partnerships of local and regional politicians and professional practitioners, who have discovered together the value of working transnationally across the natural divides of States, cultures and language - however difficult that may seem at times".

Working through partnerships with local communities as well as professionals was at the heart of the SAUL project. During the conference this approach, and the final SAUL 'Messages to Europe', were presented in a three day programme combining an evening reception, site visits and conference day. The reception saw the release of the SAUL film which provided an overview of the practical work that has been undertaken throughout the project. Site visits, too, demonstrated examples of New Urban Landscapes in and around Amsterdam, common to many other parts of Europe, and showcased SAUL action and investment projects from all partner regions. A London delegate commented that "it's been great to get out and explore what the SAUL theory means in practice to real people and everyday citizens".

The Cultuurpark Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, a former gasworks which has recently been transformed into a vibrant cultural district and modern city park, provided an appropriate venue for the final session where speakers asked "What are New Urban Landscapes, and why do they matter?". Two forum sessions in the afternoon produced lively debate around involving citizens in quality of life issues and tackling common challenges of unemployment and inequality. The conference also provided the opportunity to look forward to future transnational co-operation to tackle the Lisbon agenda for Europe's economy and quality of life in city regions.

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## Notes to editors

1. The SAUL term 'New Urban Landscapes' refers to the changing patterns of land use that result from growing forces of economic globalisation and rapid social change – including, for example, the emergence of brownfield land, urban sprawl, new economic, social and transport hubs and the changing nature of surrounding areas of agriculture and forestry that no longer sustain their former economies.
2. The SAUL project was launched in June 2003. From then until June 2006 the six Metropolitan regions in North West Europe have worked together to address four key areas:
  - The vital role of socially inclusive spaces in the sustainable development of metropolitan regions
  - Regional identity
  - Planning through partnerships
  - The transnational value of the 'learning region' approach
3. The SAUL project is funded by INTERREG IIIB North West Europe programme, a European Regional Development initiative that is focused on transnational cooperation to address territorial development issues.
4. The SAUL Final Conference was hosted by the SAUL Partnership with the Mayor of Amsterdam on behalf of SAUL Partner the Municipality of Amsterdam, with the assistance of Staatsbosbeheer, the Dutch government organisation with responsibility for managing the natural heritage.
5. The SAUL partnership is led by Groundwork London, the regional arm of Groundwork UK in the capital.

**For further information, please contact Rhiannon Lewis at  
Groundwork London on +44 (0)20 7922 1230  
[rhiannon.lewis@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:rhiannon.lewis@groundwork.org.uk)**

