PLACED Academy 2023-24

SDS Summer School for Liverpool City Region

Findings report
August 2023
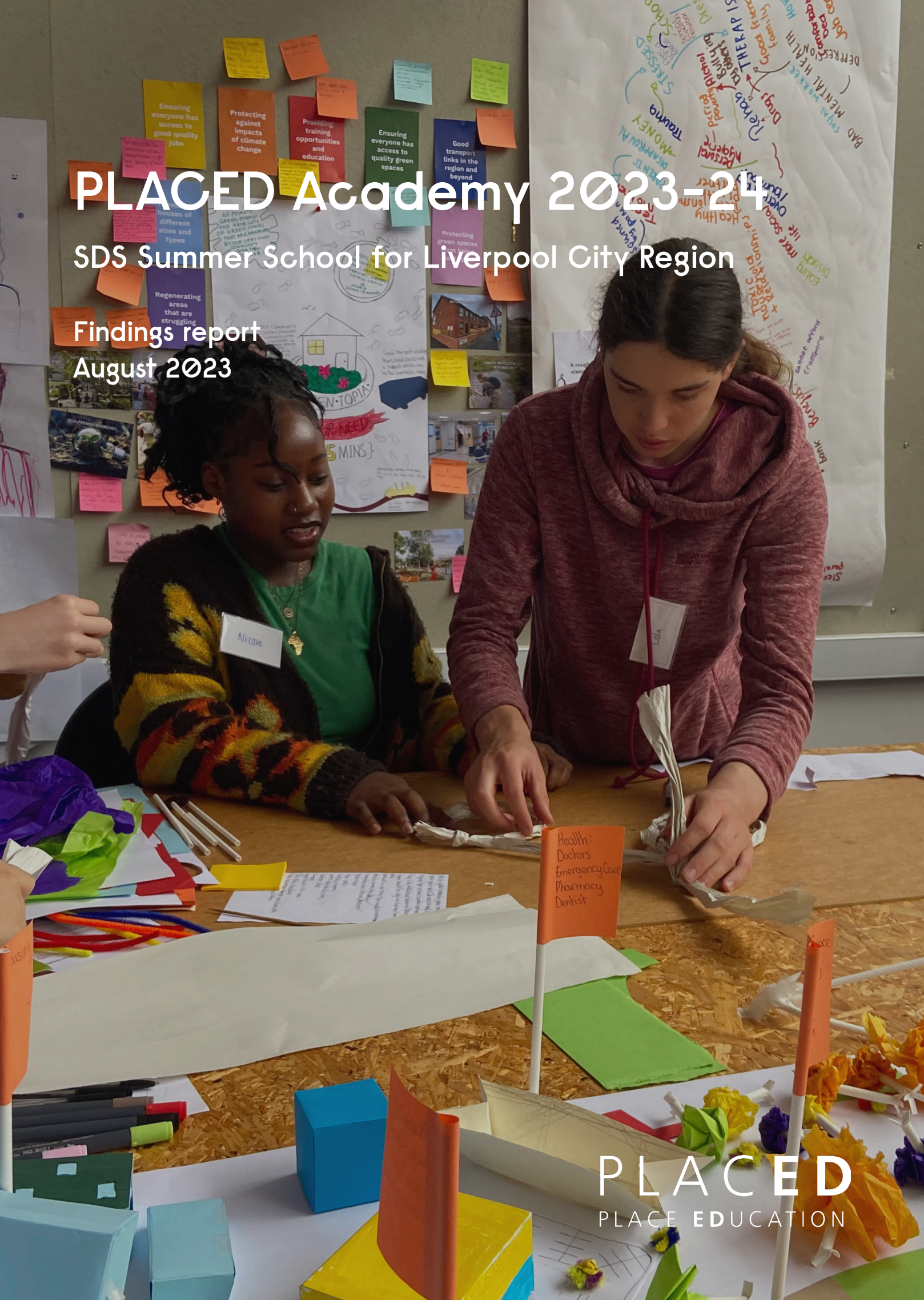
PLAC**ED**
PLACE **ED**UCATION

Introduction

The PLACED Academy is a free, award-winning ten-month education programme about the built environment for young people age 14-18, empowering young people to shape the places we live, work, and spend time.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is a PLACED Academy 2023 Partner. As part of this agreement, PLACED conducted a four-day Summer School centred around the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), to engage young people around the Combined Authority's development principles and to understand their priorities for the future of their neighbourhoods. This document will present findings from the PLACED Academy 2023 Summer School to inform the City region's SDS from young people's perspective.

The days took place at The University of Liverpool from 24th-27th July 2023. The workshop involved a diverse range of young people, including those from under-represented groups in the Liverpool area and across the Northwest. The session provided a creative opportunity for young people to input into a live project through hands-on creative activities and introduced young people to important concepts and professions in the built environment. It helped them develop their design, problem-solving, teamwork and presenting skills.

In total, 39 young people attended the programme across the four days.

Gender breakdown:

Gender	Count
Female	27
Male	12

Ethnic breakdown:

Ethnic background	Count
White British	19
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	4
Any other mixed/multiple ethnic backgrounds	2
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2
Black or Black British – African	2
Other ethnic group – Arab	2
Any other Asian background	1
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1
Any other white background	1
Black or Black British – Asian	1
Mixed - White and Black African	1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1

Additional needs/disabilities:

• 8 young people with additional needs attended

Year group/age:

Year group / age	Count
Year 9 (aged 13-14 years)	12
Year 10 (aged 14-15 years)	9
Year 11 (aged 15-16 years)	5
Year 12 (aged 16-17 years)	13

Spatial distribution:

Location	Count
Liverpool City Region	25
Greater Manchester	9
Lancashire	3
Cheshire	2

Main aims of the workshop

Through this programme, we explored the following:

• Whether the young people agree with the City Region's approach to responding to the challenges and opportunities within Liverpool City Region.

• Which key principles are the young people's most important priorities.

• How they imagine the Spatial Strategy would shape a place if it were to reflect their most prioritised principles.

The programme was structured around four scenarios (a new town centre, a technology-based place, a new city centre, and a struggling neighbourhood) to gauge the level of importance the young people gave to the 11 key principles set out in the SDS. The key principles are as follows:

• Regenerating areas that are struggling

• Ensuring everyone has access to good quality jobs

• Protecting against impacts of climate change

• Providing houses of different sizes and types

• Good transport links in the region and beyond

• Ensuring everyone has access to quality green spaces

• Providing training opportunities and education

• Protecting green spaces from being built on

• Prioritising larger city centres

• Investing in different town centres across the City Region

•Ensuring there is good digital connectivity.

For the different scenarios, we used the same characteristics as places within the Metropolitan Boroughs of Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral and Halton, so that we could apply the young people's priorities directly into the ongoing development of the SDS.

The Spatial Strategy for Liverpool City Region aims to align with the Combined Authority's vision for a globally competitive, environmentally responsible, and socially inclusive City Region. The strategy balances future growth with wider economic, social, and environmental objectives. The strategy focuses on growing existing urban areas and those with specific needs and opportunities. Key principles include meeting development needs objectively, achieving inclusive growth, improving health outcomes, tackling climate change, delivering an ambitious regeneration strategy, and building on existing social and physical infrastructure. The strategy aims to deliver a net zero-carbon future by 2040.

The present report summarises our findings in answer to these questions.

Overview of the workshop

Day One

• **Presentation:** We began with an introduction to the Academy programme and the Spatial Development Strategy in Liverpool City Region through a presentation with Victoria Hughes from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, informing the young people that their opinions in the programme will form part of the strategy for the city region

• **Priorities:** In groups, they were asked to rank the 11 principles in the SDS; 1 being the most important in their view and 11 being the least. We asked young people to think about why they were prioritising some over others and what effects each decision will have on people's lives.

• **Collage:** Creating collages of the top 3-4 principles for their group, thinking about what is needed in their ideal place to live/work/play and introducing the importance of illustrating thoughts quickly and simply.

• **Building/Negotiation Game:** This game's aim is to consolidate the idea of the different regions within City region and the challenges they face throughout the SDS. The cohort was split into groups, each given a local authority and assigned to develop key landmark buildings in the city region. Tasked with working to produce high quality buildings, against time and finishing with a surplus of £150. Throughout the activity, challenges were imposed on different authorities, challenging the young people to think about whether to focus on individual priorities or make compromises with their building. Some of these included planning permission problems, materials doubling in price, buildings being burnt down and pauses in delivery. In the end, we looked each group's buildings together and declared a winner.

"I am more confident in meeting new people and making new friends." ~ Participant

Day Two

• **Communities:** We began the second day thinking about the different people who populate different communities; of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Groups were given key 'characters' to which they had to identify their wants and needs and what they would need for the best quality of life, such as youth clubs, GPs, educational facilities, café's, places to meet up, safe spaces and so on.

• **Design Activity:** Each group was then given a scenario, outlining specific qualities, opportunities and content each site had to meet. The prompts included; struggling neighbourhoods; a new city centre; a new town centre; and a technology park. As a team, they had to create an imaginary new area that met the brief, thinking about the characters that may live/access this area, who might visit and why? What kind of services they would need to provide, what opportunities does their area offer?

• **Branding:** Once they had shaped their ideas, the young people had to create a name for their place and a tagline to advertise it. We asked them to create posters outlining what the aim for their neighbourhood was and why would people want to live there?

• **Peer Review:** The groups presented their posters and initial ideas to another group. Each group had to ask questions, provide feedback and constructive criticisms about the presentation.

"It was a really amazing experience that helped me understand the different roles and opportunities in the world of architecture. " ~ Participant

"A unique and exciting experience that allowed me to engage with real life projects in the built environment." ~ Participant

Day Three

• **Precedents:** At the beginning of day three, we Introduced the precedents for each of City region's priorities, these included climate change adaptations/ mitigation, health and wellbeing, inclusive economy, high-quality buildings/ places, social value, and good transport links. They were tasked to choose their top priorities, match them with images and add them to their larger vision boards of their designs for their imaginary places.

• **Designing masterplans:** Each group had to think about how their new place could give back to the community, thinking about safety, jobs, young people, older people, the environment, and health. We then asked groups to devise what their masterplan might look like on paper and what areas they need to build. The groups peer-reviewed their initial plans with the paired group who had the same brief as them. Taking in turns to review each other's plan and consider what is strong and what is missing about their masterplan idea.

• **Modelling:** To finish the day, we challenged the groups to begin modelling their masterplans. We asked them to reflect on their ideas so far, choosing one building that is the most important for the success of their new place. Working to link it back to the priorities we ranked earlier in the week and thinking about how they impact people and how they will incorporate this into their design.

"The team were supportive, especially when they were coming around to each group and suggesting new ideas to think about. "
~ Participant

Day Four

• **Continuing modelling:** The final day consisted of groups finishing up modelling their masterplans, as designed over the last few days, thinking about the development, opportunities, challenges, rules and visions of their plan

• **Presentations:** Groups prepared their final presentation notes, thinking about how they would communicate their ideas, intended uses, audience, and benefits to the rest of the cohort, presenting their newest masterplan that they've developed over four days. Each group had a test run with another group to gain feedback and work out any issues Each group presented their final masterplans and models to the entire cohort, staff, ambassadors, and volunteers. Their presentations included their precedents, priorities, key 'characters and communities.

• **Key messages:** They were asked to write a final list of their key messages to City region after the four days, thinking about what they've said before and incorporated into their designs. We also had each person to vote for their one priority of the 11 that they think is the most important to them.

• **Vote:** We asked each group to vote for their favourite masterplan that wasn't their own, before parents/guardians arrived to see all the amazing work from the week while we handed our certificates to participants.

Young People's Proposals

Greentopia, a struggling neighbourhood

The first group's brief was a struggling neighbourhood, so they created a new neighbourhood named Greentopia, linking to their first key priority – **ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces.** They encouraged this by having lots of farmlands, which have locally grown and sold produce, creating an eco-friendly and sustainable neighbourhood. Greentopia also has lots of green space available for leisure uses, including new gardens and leisure facilities nearby. Their second most important priority was **ensuring everyone has access to good quality jobs**, they did this by adapting the 15-minute city concept, allowing everybody access to everything they could need within 15 minutes. Greentopia has all the essentials, such as shops, educational facilities, a homeless centre, accessible roads, cycle lanes and good-quality pavements for pedestrians. It has no deprivation as everyone has equal access to all, especially focusing on good communications and connectivity in the neighbourhood.

Rosewood, a new town centre

Group two focused on a new town centre they named Rosewood. Their priorities were to **ensure everybody has access to good quality green spaces** and **protect against the impacts of climate change.** Rosewood has plenty of green space, with a new park with lots of different flowers and biodiversity. This greenspace allows families to enjoy leisure facilities, playgrounds, football, bowling and yoga. With families being a focus, the housing in Rosewood is sufficient for family use. It also has lots of renewable energy mechanisms such as solar and wind power as it has a beach as its focal point and the climate is good. The beach has different activities such as surfing and is the main tourism income for the town, especially with a nearby hotel. Their tourism is sustainable, allowing for use all year round for the community and tourists.

Dome City, a new city centre

Dome City's main priorities were **investing in different town centres across the city region and ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces**. It's a major regeneration scheme through increased green space with improved housing, facilities, public transport, and accessibility. Dome City is built on a brownfield with high-quality modern architecture being used for different types of housing with recycled materials. Each roof is deemed a green roof – being home to different habitats and biodiversity. Dome City discourages car usage, instead, it focuses on using public transport through rented bikes, larger pavements, and cycling routes. The accommodation sits on the outside of the city but will remain affordable. Dome city tackles climate change by using solar panels and wind turbines and by trying to keep food and shops local. Dome City is perfect for students, families and people with disabilities and offers a range of educational facilities, jobs, and leisure for all. As their motto states, "One dome, one city". Note: the dome is conceptual, rather than literal.

Rycombe, a struggling neighbourhood

Rycombe's name is very important to the community, with its origin being centred around the river, community, and connectivity. Rycombe is focused on **protecting against the impacts of climate change** by having floodplains around the river on the golf clubs and parks where land is permeable, to stop the neighbourhood being devastated by floods and to reduce the need for hard engineering which could spoil the beauty of the neighbourhood. It also favours the use of solar panels, e-bikes, bus use and pedestrianisation to be more eco-conscious. The second priority is to **provide training opportunities and education** through a variety of education and jobs, for example, linking the schools to the local forest to ensure its maintenance. There will also be adult and evening classes, as well as childcare provisions which are better suited to the family routine. Rycombe is a communal safe space, with residential close to the centre, increased CCTV and street lighting, it is family focused and includes a public baby change space as well as other local resources such as a homelessness/ rehab centre, public library, allotments, and foodbank. Local shops and chains will provide jobs for the community, with 60% of shops being local business owners.

Aurora, a technology based place

Aurora is built on the concept of **protecting against the impacts of climate change and ensuring there is good digital connectivity.** It's an industrial city, focusing mainly on technology, with drones delivering packages across the city, it promises to be zero carbon and introduce solar panels and better public transport options such as trains. It has a university centre for ages 11-30 years old, with other options for those over the age of 30, and it houses a food court. The city also has three hotels with sleeping pods in, as well as three pharmacies to promote wellbeing.

Tech Topia, a technology-based place

Tech Topia is committed to **ensuring there is good digital connectivity and providing training opportunities and education.** They do this by focusing on facilities on industrial sites (such as Google, eBay and Amazon) to offer jobs and work experience for anyone aged 17 and over. The tech giants must also donate old technology or recycle it to be more environmentally sensitive or use their technology to create renewable energy. Tech Topia has solar panels and builds using white surfaces to reflect heat, and each home has access to free Wi-Fi. Travel around Tech Topia will be promoted by electric scooters, e-bikes, and electromagnetic trains, where you can visit the greenspaces on offer or visit leisure facilities such as the basketball court.
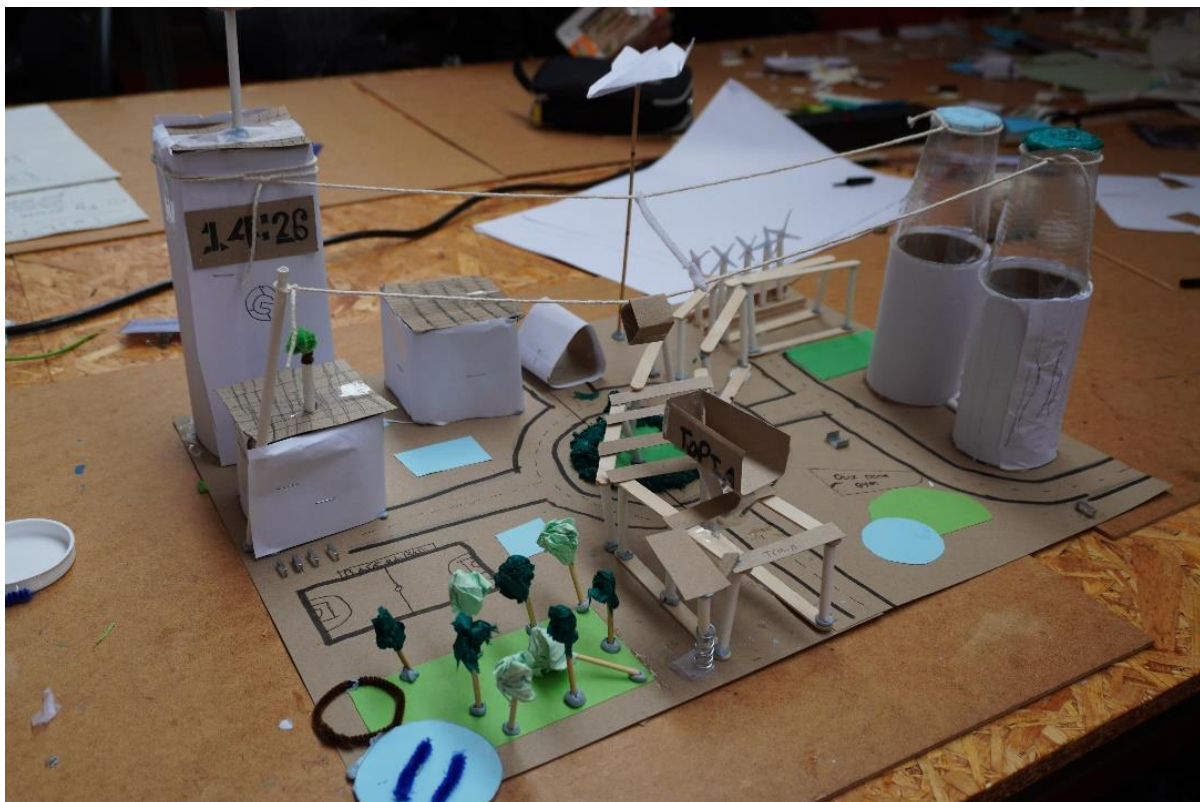
Hilltop, a new town centre

Hilltop is an exciting new town centre, boasting a new cinema, leisure facilities, sports, roller rink, ice skating and improved transport systems as part of **investing in different town centres across the city region.** Hilltop has beautiful hills, historic buildings, heritage, and sunset views over greenspaces which **ensures everyone has access to good quality greenspaces across the town.** It also has a university with accommodation, which also brings tourists in to view the heritage of Hilltop. It has lots of opportunities and has recently upgraded its cycling provisions to become more sustainable, as well as installing wind turbines.
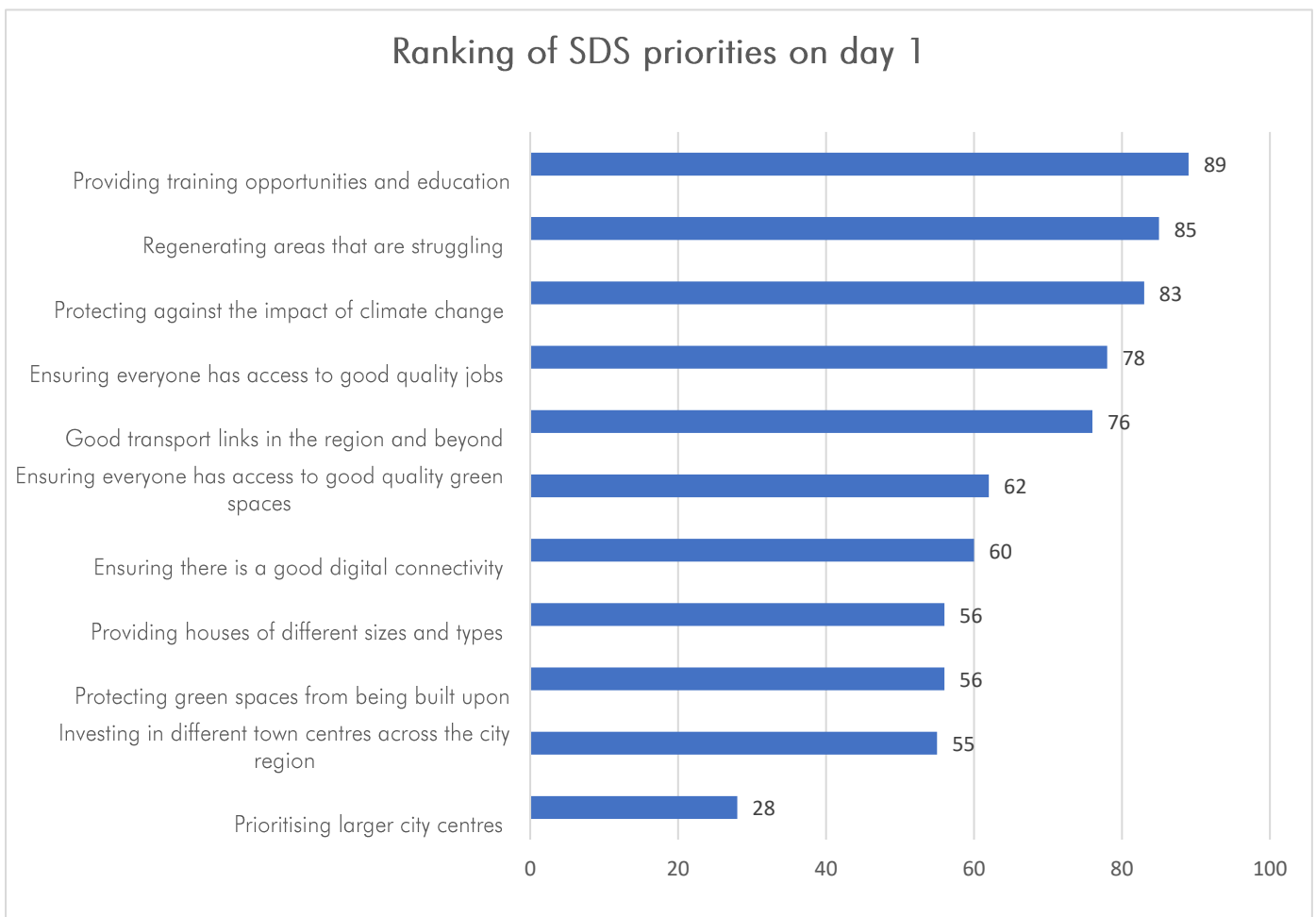
Park City, a new city centre

Park City offers plenty of greenspace, with wildflowers, biodiversity, and homes for the bees. It also favours public transport and cycling as opposed to cars to increase its sustainability. **They prioritise ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces.** Park City's motto is "live your life in a clean city", with less pollution, more green energy such as wind, more greenery, and a variety of resources for use. It offers more house choices, safer neighbourhoods, and free transport, with cafes, activities, and provisions for mental health wellness. **They also try to ensure there are good transport links in the region and beyond,** being able to travel around on the free transport which is accessible for all, to view the many monuments and libraries nearby, or to get to work. As a car-free city, it's vital they have a good, reliable transport network in place, with better cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Priorities

On Day 1, we asked each group to rank the 11 SDS priorities in order of importance to them, 1 determining the most important, and 11 the least important. The findings are below. Each statement was weighted and allocated points e.g., if it was ranked 1st, it was given 11 points.

Priority (Votes on day 1)	Score	Rank
Providing training opportunities and education	89	1
Regenerating areas that are struggling	85	2
Protecting against the impact of climate change	83	3
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality jobs	78	4
Good transport links in the region and beyond	76	5
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces	62	6
Ensuring there is a good digital connectivity	60	7
Protecting green spaces from being built upon	56	8
Providing houses of different sizes and types	56	8
Investing in different town centres across the city region	55	10
Prioritising larger city centres	28	11

Ranking of SDS priorities on day 1

| Priority	Score
Providing training opportunities and education	89
Regenerating areas that are struggling	85
Protecting against the impact of climate change	83
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality jobs	78
Good transport links in the region and beyond	76
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces	62
Ensuring there is a good digital connectivity	60
Providing houses of different sizes and types	56
Protecting green spaces from being built upon	56
Investing in different town centres across the city region	55
Prioritising larger city centres	28

The main priority according to the students was **'providing training opportunities and education'**, followed by **'regenerating areas that are struggling'** and **'protecting against the impact of climate change'**. The least important priority was **'prioritising larger city centres'**.

On the final day, we asked each person to individually vote for their one main priority, to see if their views had changed. The results were as follows:

What is your top priority? (Day 4)	Votes
Providing training opportunities and education	12
Protecting against impacts of climate change	9
Regenerating areas that are struggling	6
Good transport links in the region and beyond	2
Investing in different town centers across the city region	2
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality jobs	1
Ensuring there is a good digital connectivity	1
Protecting green spaces from being built upon	0
Ensuring everyone has access to good quality green spaces	0
Providing houses of different sizes and types	0
Prioritising larger city centres	0

Main SDS priority day 4
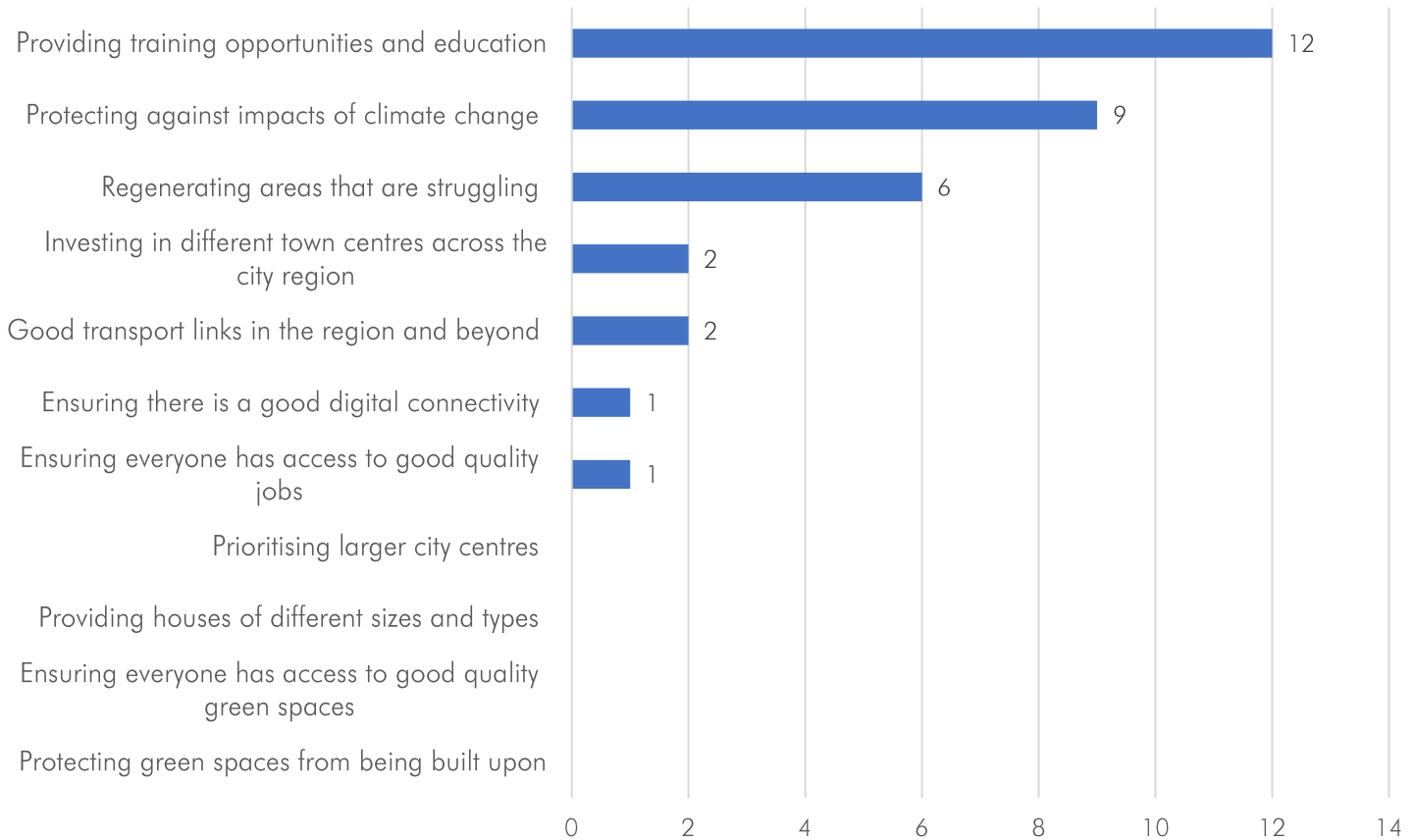
Interestingly, the main priorities identified on Day 4 were the same as the ones ranked most important on Day 1.

Key messages to LCRCA

One of the final tasks we asked of the young people was to compile a list of key messages that they wanted to share with LCRCA. This reflects what they want to see happen in the city region in response to the following 11 SDS principles.

• Investing in different town centres rather than a larger city centre core

• Compact environments that promote better walking and cycling

• Good quality green space

• Residential close to city centre

• Training, employment and education close by – tech and industrial sites

• Protecting against impacts of climate change

• Retention and promotion of community facilities

• Importance of tourism for the region

• Good transport links between region and beyond

• Regeneration where needed

This was done in groups. See the findings below.

Greentopia

- More eco-friendly
- Fighting and preventing climate change
- Accessibility
- Community involvement
- More affordable
- More educational and career opportunities
- More green spaces
- Invest in the local economy

Rosewood

- Paying less attention to city centres and more to areas that are struggling
- Reducing energy consumption
- More renewable energy
- Promote public transport to lower CO2 emissions

Dome City

- Education and jobs: equal opportunities; education that anyone can access; specialised jobs; money reinvested to expand the area; youth centres to allow knowledge to pass between generations; reducing unemployment by building workplaces and homes which means more people to access work in the city
- Ensuring everyone has quality access to green spaces: access to parks and gardens; free allotments for flat residents; clean and well-maintained peaceful areas which is good for mental health and physical health; more sports such as basketball hoops
- Regenerating struggling areas: helping more people with less money to get proper resources; spread the wealthy and poor neighbourhoods out so the house prices can be better priced; level the playing field by investing money where it is needed more; spread money out to be fairer
- Sustainability: insulated buildings so they stay warm in the winter and cooler in the summer and therefore no need for air conditioning; accessible and cheap public transport; safe cycle lanes on every road; more rental bikes

Rycombe

- A variety of housing which promotes community and accessibility, connecting people, less discrimination, unites all age groups and people in different incomes
- Education for all ages across all sectors (primary/ secondary/ college/ university), more opportunities for work, experiences, workshops, building the economy up, more focus on creative subjects/ independent thinking and less one-size-fits-all education
- More accessible transport promoting walking by having all facilities close by and encourage people to take the bus
  Eco-consciousness, renewable and clean energy, working with the natural environment, building around existing green areas free allotments for flat residents, clean and well-maintained peaceful areas which is good for mental health and physical
- Working with the natural environment, building around existing green areas.

Aurora

- Regenerating struggling areas: investing in run down places and spreading wealth; use existing infrastructure when regenerating areas
- Protecting against impacts of climate change: move more towards green energy; use more electric cars
- Everyone has access to good quality jobs: offer more jobs for

18 and under so people can build their CVs; offer high paying jobs in the local area that require degrees.
- Ensuring everyone has access to green space: more open grassy areas instead of them being locked off; fixing overgrown areas that have been forgotten about; using unused spaces for green space

Tech Topia

- Provide more industry jobs in the city
- Focus on environmental and sustainable with more renewable energy especially solar/tidal on the Mersey
- Good transport links
- Free Wi-FI
- Training opportunities and education
- Access to green spaces
- Create a city for people who will work in the sector but also promote tech advancements

Hilltop

- Opportunities and education: maintaining historic buildings and museums: opening more local libraries and schools; more conversations about education/ employment opportunities
- Green space: more parks, gardens, local and safe spaces, sensory gardens, wildflower fields
- Zoning and bringing smaller communities closer: building new homes in closer proximity; local events; provide local activities such as football; cycle lanes; bowling e.g within a walkable distance

- Transport: bus stops within 5 minutes of local communities; train stations with connections to major cities with frequent trains; cycle lanes which are safer and wider.

Park City

- Green space and green power
- Renew old roads
- Support community groups with funding
- Trams
- Spread out tourist attractions
- Fix abandoned buildings
- More/ bigger bins
- More activities e.g., shops/leisure

"Thank you for giving me this opportunity."
~ Participant

"It has been a great week, thank you."
~ Participant

"This has been boss."
~ Participant