Poundbury, Dorset

Fieldwork

Investigation Title(s):

An investigation into a sustainable town / community.

An investigation into variations in quality of life.

Place studies, e.g. perception of place internally and externally

Location:

Poundbury (Dorchester)

Target Audience:

GCSE/A level NEA

Logistics (access, parking, toilets etc):

Poundbury is very accessible, being a few minutes from the main Dorchester ring road. Coaches can drop off virtually anywhere, but are probably best off waiting in another location, such as Top O'Town car park a few minutes' drive further into Dorchester. Minibuses can park much more easily, and there is no charge.

Toilets can be an issue as there are no public loos in Poundbury. Toilets in Waitrose or the Garden Centre could be used as an emergency, but it is probably best to visit toilets in another location just before arriving to Poundbury, such as Top O'Town car park.
Poundbury has many small cafés that can be used by students if they want lunch and there are a couple of small supermarkets. The best place to arrange as a meeting point would be the Great Field, a large grassy playing field area.

Geographical Concepts Underpinning Investigation):

Poundbury has been built on Duchy of Cornwall owned land on the outskirts of the county town of Dorchester. Prince Charles, the head of the Duchy, has since built his vision of a sustainable community, with many other new developments following several of his ideas and methods in their own designs.
The suburb feels very different to other areas of Dorchester, therefore allowing comparisons of variables such as housing and environmental quality between different areas of the town.

Perceptions of the location may vary between people who live in the suburb and those who live externally. Perceptions may also vary between ages. Is there a noticeable difference in how the location is portrayed in the media compared to reality? Is this a positive or negative difference?

References & Web Sites:

Creating a community - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR4jIA096gA
Poundbury Perspectives - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOxzOQPAbZM
Poundbury Fact Sheet (2015) https://duchyofcornwall.org/assets/images/documents/Poundbury_Factsheet_2013.pdf

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geography southwest

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Data Collection Opportunities:

As with much of human geography the need for equipment is low. Many apps can be used on phones or tablets to aid in data collection data, such as decibel readers like SoundMeter or exploration apps such as Dérive.

Many data collection methods exist for comparing settlements, such as environmental quality assessments, housing quality surveys, retail surveys (such as Clone Town surveys) and questionnaires. Counts and flows of pedestrians and traffic can also be useful.

Various sampling strategies can also be implemented, and these can perhaps be decided upon by students themselves if they have a good grasp on the difference, pros and cons of each type. It is also useful to mention the ideas of bias and subjectivity, as much of the data collection mentioned above relies on the opinions of students and members of the public being surveyed.

Data Presentation, Analysis, Statistical Applications:

Environmental and housing quality surveys can be plotted in a very visual manner on radar/rose graphs allowing easy comparison with other locations. For questionnaires. depending on whether questions are open or closed, a range of presentation methods can be used; including simple pie charts and bar graphs or word clouds for larger word databases.

If longitude and latitude of fieldwork sites is collected, then ArcGIS Online can be used to create geo-located graphs and maps.

If enough data has been collected, then statistical tests such as Spearman's Rank, Chi Squared or Mann-Whitney U can be carried out.

Evaluative Issues:

Many limitations exist in the various data collection methods; including human error, limited sample sizes, bias etc.

Higher ability students could be introduced to the idea of "demand characteristics", when respondents to a questionnaire may give the students the answers they think the students are looking for, not an uncommon occurrence in much geographical fieldwork.