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**PRESS RELEASE – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

## **GARDENS KEY TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

Minister for Decentralisation, Greg Clark MP has today unveiled plans set out in the coalition Government's agreement to give councils new powers to stop 'garden grabbing' by taking gardens out of the brownfield category. The TCPA<sup>[1]</sup> has welcomed this simple step that will dramatically transform councils' ability to prevent unwanted development on gardens where local people object and protect the character of their neighbourhoods.

GRaBS Project Manager, Diane Smith said:

*"Today, we are faced with two urgent challenges; a housing shortage and climate change. The TCPA has long campaigned to ensure that we safeguard our existing gardens, and our European GRaBS<sup>[2]</sup> project demonstrates that we must also plan for more green spaces to cope with our changing climate and to contribute to our quality of life."*

*"However, we cannot duck the housing crisis and we must recognize there isn't a one size fits all approach to development and densities. Informed by the principles of sustainable development, our discretionary planning system must enable us to plan appropriately, whether for brown or greenfield sites, to deliver the housing we desperately need. We must ensure there is a range of provision enabling real choice to meet individual needs and preferences over a reasonably lengthy period of time. Good design depends on a variety of densities and building types and creation of local community character capable of satisfying everyone"*

The TCPA is Lead Partner in a European funded “Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns” (GRaBS) project – which sees 14 partners across 8 European Union member states exchanging experience, knowledge and assistance on delivering adaptation through the use of green and blue infrastructure. The project kicked off in September 2008, recognising that adaptation was an integral part of the sustainable development agenda, and its outputs have been central to the TCPA’s understanding of the issues. See [www.grabs-eu.org](http://www.grabs-eu.org) for further information about the project, which has been co-financed by the European Union Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme<sup>[3]</sup>.

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**Notes to Editors**

1. The [Town and Country Planning Association](#) (TCPA) is an independent campaigning charity calling for more integrated planning based on the principles of accessibility, sustainability, diversity, and community cohesion. The TCPA puts social justice and the environment at the heart of the debate about planning policy, housing and energy supply. We inspire government, industry and campaigners to take a fresh perspective on major issues including climate
2. [History of the GRaBS project proposal](#) - Working with the two initial partners in the early part of 2007, the TCPA developed an outline GRaBS project proposal, which was presented to UK local and regional government in order to gauge interest in and relevance of both the project idea and the proposed European wide exchange of experience and knowledge. The TCPA decided to offer to take on the Lead Partner role for the new project and together with the [University of Manchester](#), the [City District Geuzenveld Sloterveer](#) (Amsterdam), the [London Borough of Sutton](#) and [Southampton City Council](#) began the process of extended European partner search. The aim was to find partners with

a range of interests, cultures, experiences and needs, located in a range of climate zones. Towards the end of 2007 the **Province of Genova, Etnambiente**, the **University of Catania** (Italy), the **City of Malmo** (Sweden), the **Municipality of Kalamaria** (Greece), the **Regional Environment Centre for Eastern Europe** (Slovakia), the **Northwest Regional Development Agency** (NWRDA), the **Region of Styria** (Austria) and **CORPI** (Lithuania) joined the project as partners.

3. **INTERREG IVC Programme** – the INTERREG IVC Programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2007-2013. It aims, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe.
4. **GRaBS Briefing Paper 1: Understanding the environmental and social impacts of garden development** can be found here on the TCPA website: [http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/resources/859/GRaBS\\_Briefing\\_Paper\\_1.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/resources/859/GRaBS_Briefing_Paper_1.pdf)