

From up here I can see everything that makes a town. Roads, houses, shops.

The hospital that I was born in, my old school. And then further out there's the countryside; fields, farms cradling the urban sprawl like a tight green cocoon.

Since like, forever, the countryside has provided for the town; food, resources, people.

But for the first time in human history, there are more people are living in towns and cities than in the countryside.

So more than ever, towns and cities need to be clean, sustainable, self-sufficient...

So I ask myself, my wee house in a small town in Scotland, can it solve more problems than it makes?

Alex, pal, New York here.

Now we ain't perfect, we got our problems. I mean, we're New York, right?

You don't build a city like this without breakin' a few environmental eggs.

Pollution got pretty bad. Air so thick you could of taken a bite. Makin' people sick, dyin'. It's no joke.

But this is New York. You got a problem then you get up off your ass and you fix it!

Take skyscrapers. They ain't the greenest buildings ever invented. Lights and air con runnin' 24/7, all that glass. They're an energy savers worst nightmare, and we got nearly 300 of them.

But what are you gonna do? You don't even got a New York without skyscrapers.

So, we made it that all new skyscrapers meet strict rules about energy efficiency. And the ones we already got, they gotta get with the programme too. All over the city tall buildings are being refitted so they don't waste as much.

Even this one.

It's a Big Apple kinda solution to a Big Apple kinda problem.

The way I see it, there's over 8 million of us. That's more than the whole of Scotland by the way. So if we do our bit, it makes a difference.

Your environment affects your wellbeing.

I'm all for mindfulness, man. If we make New York a good place to live, we feel better about ourselves. That's something we've definitely gotten better at.

The people here ain't slow to tell you what they think and that's no bad thing, because you gotta give people a voice and involve them in decision-making.

It's our city, right? It's gotta work for everyone.

We need good schools, jobs for everybody, public transport, bike lanes, and all that stuff.

We gotta give people chances and protect the vulnerable. Use technology to make lives better.

When it comes down to it, even a spot as big as New York is just a load of communities, stuck together.

So Alex, I hope you see, every place has its own identity. I ain't saying copy us, what I am sayin' is you do you. Look for ways to tidy your own backyard.

So what do ya say?

Aye, sounds fair enough.