Governance of Cities for Sustainable Urban Development

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MISTRA Urban Futures - international centre for promoting sustainable urban futures, headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden, working with international partners to transform urban development pathways
Governance of Cities for Sustainable Urban Development (SUD)

Purpose
How have cities pursued SUD?

Time Period
Around 1990 to present day

Approach
Literature review
30 Case study interviews in 5 cities – Mixed sectors (2 phases)
Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Leicester and Newcastle
Interviewee feedback to test findings
Governance networks operate at different spatial levels

- **Global** e.g. ICLEI LGs for Sustainability
- **Regional** (EU) Energy Cities, European Covenant of Mayors
- **National** e.g. Core Cities
- **City-Region** e.g. Leeds City Region Green Economy Panel
- **Local Authority** e.g. Birmingham Green Commission; Bristol Green Capital Partnership
- **Community** e.g. Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network
The big picture: Local Governance 1990-2014

1990 – 2000: Period of relative local experimentation

2000 – 2010: Towards conformity to the Centre’s preferred framework; regions and beginning of functional economy

Post 2010 – ‘Top-down’ model goes, new ‘localism’ model and more diverse approaches

From Hildreth (2013) MISTRA paper
Different models of government e.g. accountability

‘Conditional self-government’

State

Strong accountability to the State

Local Authority

Weaker accountability citizens and community

Community

‘Representative self-government’

Weak accountability to the State

Stronger accountability to the community

‘Community self-government’

State retains accountability

or

Devolves to local ownership
Key themes (1)

Embedded knowledge and expertise
- Early pioneers still leading cities (except Leeds came in later)
- Knowledge embedded in the city
- Widening institutional capacity

Importance of leadership
- Effective leadership really important
- Long-term capacity and purpose
- Different models in different cities
Key themes (2)

Localism, austerity

- Tension ‘competitive’ and ‘sustainable’ agendas
- Distinction role of ‘city’ and ‘city-region’
- Currently austerity, diversity

Role of government

- Top down direction produces uniformity
- Local responds to national signals
- But does government understand ‘places’?
- ‘Hollowing out’ and weak strategic framework
Engaging the private sector

- Growing private sector role
- Implementation - e.g. Leicester District Energy
- Engagement in Local Economic Partnerships (e.g. Leeds City Region)

Motivation

- Initially, because it is important
- To focus internally and externally e.g. Leeds “a world leading, dynamic and sustainable city”; Bristol European Green City 2015
Bristol

**Governance Framework**
City – Mayor – External partnership with open membership

**Key institution**
Mayor - Bristol Green Capital

**Distinctiveness**
European Green Capital 2015
Wide engagement and culture of city

**Key Challenge(s)**
Maintaining momentum beyond 2015
Working across sub-region
Coping with austerity

**Key Achievement(s)**
Strong all-rounder: transport, health, waster, water, energy
Home for key agencies: e.g. WHO, SUSTRANs
Birmingham

Governance Framework
City – Leader/Cabinet– Semi-independent Commission

Key institution
Birmingham Green Commission

Distinctiveness
Focus on strategy to delivery
“To become one of the world’s leading green cities”

Key Challenge
Shift from strategy to delivery
Implement Birmingham Mobility Action Plan
Coping with austerity

Key Achievement
Birmingham Energy Savers, cycling (North Birmingham), Combined Heat and Power schemes (CHP)
Leeds

Governance Framework
City Region – private sector led Panel – part of City Region structure

Key institution
Green Economy Panel

Distinctiveness
Proactive evolution of City Region
Strong private sector engagement

Key Challenge(s)
Green infrastructure across City Region
Accelerating low carbon renewables and energy investment

Key Achievement(s)
Momentum on SUD across city region
Revolving investment fund, transportation investment, green infrastructure, connecting green growth and jobs
Leicester

**Governance Framework**
City – Mayor – Mayoral led city partnership

**Key institution**
City Partnership (Expert Panel on Environment)

**Distinctiveness**
Joined-up approach
Embedded skills and expertise

**Key Challenge(s)**
Expanding CHP schemes
Addressing transport congestion
Wider engagement and communications
Coping with austerity

**Key Achievement(s)**
Long record of achievement since early 1990s
CHP schemes with private sector
Energy efficiency
Transport schemes (e.g. cycling)

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**A low carbon city**

Climate Change – Leicester’s Programme of Action
Update – September 2013

City Mayor
Policy recommendations

- Cities have an important role in SUD
- Investment of ‘place qualities’ important
  - Embedded knowledge, strong institutions, effective leadership, trusting network relationships
- Case for a multi-level approach
  - Whitehall to enable strategic context and legislative framework
- Widening institutional gap
- SUD and competitiveness agenda
  - City and City-Region
- Weakness of policy learning
- Entrepreneurial skills in local government

See: http://ontheplatform.org.uk/article/comparative-urban-futures-spatial-networks-sustainable-urban-development