Panacea Green Infrastructure? Multidimensional Contributions to Competitive and Livable Metropolitan Regions in Europe International Conference, February 16th/17th, 2017, Essen, Germany

Session 4: Governance Dimensions of Green Infrastructure

Changing the Nature of GI City Governance in Birmingham: A Policy and Practice Evaluation

Alice Franchina, University of Palermo
Claudia Carter, Birmingham City University
Alister Scott, Northumbria University
• To explore GI governance at the city scale

• To assess the effectiveness of GI policies

• To understand the role of an ecosystem services approach in spatial planning
• Turning GI policy into actual GI practice
• Tackling the dominance of economic growth narrative
• Facing a constantly changing policy / administrative context
Why Birmingham?

• **Political will**
  Birmingham declared in 2013 its ambition to be a leading Green City in Europe

• **Policy evidence**
  Birmingham was one of the first city in the UK and Europe-wide to map and assess its Ecosystem Services (ES) at the urban level

• **Cultural and scientific milieu**
  Birmingham City Council in collaboration with citizen organisations and businesses have a long tradition in environmental management and the Universities are very engaged in research on urban environment
Methodology

**DESK STUDY**

11 INTERVIEWS

**POLICY ANALYSIS**
- Kerslake Report
- Birmingham Development Plan
- Green Living Spaces Plan
- GBSLEP Spatial Economic Plan
- WMCA Vision Statement

**RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS**
- Birmingham City Council (4)
- NGOs (3)
- Independent Research centres (2)
- GBSLEP (1)
- National Health Service (1)

EVALUATION OF GI GOVERNANCE AT CITY LEVEL IN BIRMINGHAM
CASE PRESENTATION

Disintegrated governance

Birmingham City (administrative boundary)
Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
Birmingham and the Black Country Local Nature Partnership
West Midlands Combined Authority
Green Commission and Green Vision

BIRMINGHAM’S GREEN VISION

Planning Framework and Policy
Ensuring future development encapsulates a leading green city

Birmingham Development Plan
Statutory planning framework to guide decisions on development and regeneration in Birmingham until 2031

Your Green City SPD
Provides detailed guidance for future development and investment in Birmingham, with particular emphasis on safeguarding our resources for future generations

Green Living Spaces Plan
Produced to help preserve and enhance the green spaces and networks across the city

Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan
Ensures the city is prepared for future climate impacts and extreme weather events

Birmingham’s Green Vision

Birmingham Carbon Roadmap
- FUEL: Electricity, Fuel, Gas
- END USE: Domestic, Industry and Commercial Transport

PRIORITY ACTIONS:
- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable transport
- Heating
- Decarbonised local energy

Birmingham Energy Savers
- Retrofit & energy efficiency BES +

Birmingham Energy Systems
- Energy Technologies Institute Smart Commission Collaboration

Energy Plan
- District heating networks
- Decentralised energy
- Resources for energy

Collective Energy Offer
- Reduce customer energy bills

Birmingham Mobility Action Plan
- Sustainable travel choices
- Electrification of vehicles and biogas/biofuels

Technical Paper 1:
Report on Birmingham’s carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions reduction target baseline

Technical Paper 2:
Report on national contribution to local CO₂ reduction

DECC Birmingham Carbon Plan Analysis

Green Economy
Skills, jobs and innovation for green growth

Economic and Employment Strategy for the Green Economy
Strategic approach to maximising opportunities from the green economy

Green Fund
Strategic approach to targeting European, research & innovation funding with public and private partners

Mini-Stern
Strategic green economy assessment

Green Bridge
SME supply chain and identifying green innovation and market opportunities

CASE PRESENTATION

Green Living Spaces Plan_ES assessment

The Multi-layered Challenge map for Birmingham

ES demand & supply mapping
## Green Living Spaces Plan Seven Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>An Adapted City</strong></td>
<td>Retain City’s top ranking for adoption</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure all future growth is ‘adapted’.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Trees for cooling and thermal insulation.</td>
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<td>• Green roofs, walls and street canyon research.</td>
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<td><strong>The City’s Blue Network</strong></td>
<td>Adopt water sensitive urban design</td>
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<td>• Integrated SuDS, flood and water management solutions.</td>
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<td>• ‘Blueprint’ for enhanced walking and cycling network.</td>
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<td>• Blue Corridor/network policy with Canal River Trust.</td>
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<td><strong>A Healthy City</strong></td>
<td>Adopt Natural Health Improvement Zones (NHIZ)</td>
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<td>• Integrate the delivery of health and green living spaces.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue to extend the Be-active offer.</td>
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<td>• Public health as key partners in planning.</td>
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<td><strong>The City’s Productive Landscapes</strong></td>
<td>Embrace urban forestry and urban food growing</td>
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<td>• Continue to promote allotments.</td>
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<td>• Facilitate community food growing and orchards.</td>
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<td>• Promote the multiple benefits of urban forestry.</td>
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<td><strong>The City’s Greenways</strong></td>
<td>Change gear - to a walking and cycling City</td>
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<td>• Create walkable/cyclable neighbourhoods.</td>
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<td>• Citywide signed routes linked to public transport.</td>
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<td>• Link healthcare activities and prevention programmes.</td>
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<td><strong>The City’s Ecosystems</strong></td>
<td>Birmingham as a biophillic City</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• City to adopt an ecosystem services approach.</td>
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<td>• Partners to lead on District NIA continuation plans.</td>
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<td>• Birmingham to join global Biophillic Cities network.</td>
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<td><strong>The City’s Green Living Spaces</strong></td>
<td>Birmingham an international City of Green Living Spaces</td>
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<td>• Adopt the 7 principles across Planning Framework.</td>
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<td>• Green Infrastructure and Adaption Delivery Group.</td>
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<td>• Work with business partners on green economy.</td>
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Source: Birmingham City Council, 2013: 10.
Policy Analysis

Key Themes / Concepts
- Ecosystem services
- Green Infrastructure
- Natural Capital
- GLSP reference

Interviews

Key Themes
- Deliverability
- Governance
- Partnerships
- Ecosystem services / value of nature
GLSP influence on the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP)

- only partial reference to GLSP specific content
- no references to ecosystem services or natural capital; however, contains dedicated GI policies
- no reference to the GLSP’s 7 principles

on the GBSLEP and WMCA

- no explicit reference to the GLSP or its 7 principles

Natural capital and GI

- no reference to natural capital and GI in the GBSLEP and WMCA planning documents / statements
1. Strategy / Delivery / Governance

**CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:**
- Significant disconnect between aspirations and delivery of GLSP
- Dominance of a silo-based culture within Birmingham City Council
- Work is often led by individuals, not shared/advanced collectively

**INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:**
- Limited attention to some new policy priorities and instruments which might be key in the mainstreaming of GI policy (e.g. Duty to Cooperate in the UK)
- Difficulty/complexity of GI planning with multi-disciplinary and inter-scalar approach
2. Power / Agency

**CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:**
- Power imbalance between some NGOs and private partners
- Participation perceived by some partners as a 'tick-box' exercise

**INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:**
- Conflict / trade-offs between the long-term goals of GI planning and short-term goals of political mandates
- Policies without power: GI / holistic planning being agreed but not implemented
3. Cross-cutting themes for GI and ES

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:
• Lack of statutory requirements for GI at city, LEP and Combined Authority levels

INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:
• Predominance of economic growth narrative leads to considering ‘nature’ and ‘business’ separately (this contrast is evident in the distinction between Local Nature Partnership and Local Enterprise Partnership in the UK)
• Inherent risk of the ES approach of reducing the value of nature solely to its proxy monetary value
How to enhance GI governance at the urban level

• Translate new ways of holistic and more integrated thinking into existing policy priorities at multiple scales set within locally established inclusive and deliberative processes

• Foster communication between different administrative levels and disciplines in order to find appropriate space and place for GI policy in a rapidly changing governance framework

• Understand the multiple values and benefits of nature as an asset to reframe the economic growth narrative and promote a more comprehensive use of the ES paradigm within a wider Ecosystem Approach