USING URBAN FORESIGHT TECHNIQUES IN CITY VISIONING: LESSONS FROM THE READING 2050 VISION

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FORMAT

- Introduction and why did we do it?
- How did we do it?
- What does the vision look like?
- A future urban room
- Conclusions
WHY DO WE NEED VISIONS?

- Sense of purpose
- Vitality and belief systems
- What sort of future do we want
- Promote discussion and debate
- Mobilise resources around desired future
“City foresight is the science of thinking about the future of cities. It draws on diverse methods to give decision-makers comprehensive evidence about anticipated and possible future change...”
(Source: p7, GoS(2016): City Foresight)

Two current challenges in long-term thinking about UK city futures

**CHALLENGE 1**
Future beyond 25 years rarely considered for city planning

**CHALLENGE 2**
Non-probable, non-business-as-usual infrequently considered in city futures
UK Government GOS Future of Cities Foresight Programme (2013-2016)

- Devolution Agenda/Societal Challenges
- Foresight Working Papers
- Other future city/region initiatives
  - Northern Powerhouse
  - Catapult – Future Cities
  - ESRC Urban Transformations
  - Etc………

UK National Foresight

London: UCL city leadership

Foresight City Network

- Newcastle
- Manchester
- Cardiff
- Liverpool

City Pilots

- Rochdale
- Bristol
- Milton Keynes

City Vision Community

- Belfast
- Birmingham
- Cambridge
- Derby
- Derry/Londonderry
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Leeds
- Leicester
- London
- Nottingham
- Oxford
- Reading
- Sheffield

Slide: Courtesy of Paul Cowie, University of Newcastle
“Open Innovation 2.0 (OI2) is a new paradigm based on a Quadruple Helix Model where government, industry, academia and civil participants work together to co-create the future and drive structural changes far beyond the scope of what any one organization or person could do alone. This model encompasses also user-oriented innovation models to take full advantage of ideas' cross-fertilisation leading to experimentation and prototyping in real world setting.” (EU, 2018)

ROLE OF THE ‘CIVIC’ UNIVERSITY?

- Anchor institutions
- Place leadership role
- City visions (co-production and wider co-creation)
- Economic weight and influence: trusted institutions?
SMART AND SUSTAINABLE READING 2050

• Started in 2013
• Builds on previous work (Reading 2020 and 2030 visions)
• Environment, economy and lifestyle
  • How could Reading be smart and sustainable?
  • What would low carbon living look like?
• Physical infrastructure, growth and development
  • What will be the key urban growth areas?
  • What are Reading’s key infrastructure requirements?
• Partners: Barton Willmore, University of Reading, Reading UK
• BIS Future Cities Foresight Programme (2065 City Visions)
• Geographic focus & varying definitions
• Reading/Wokingham Urban Area (plus Arborfield, Woodley, Theale, Crowthorne, & Earley)
• Population: 318,014 (2011)
SMART & SUSTAINABLE THINKING?

A ‘smart & sustainable’ city is a city that leverages the benefits of ICT infrastructure to:

- Improve the quality of life of its citizens
- Ensure tangible economic growth for its citizens
- Improve the well-being of its citizens
- Establish an environmentally responsible and sustainable approach to development
- Streamline and improve the physical infrastructure
- Reinforce resilience to natural and man-made disasters
- Underpin effective and well-balanced regulatory, compliance and governance mechanisms

Source: ITU, 2014
HOW DID WE DEVELOP THE VISION?
'Generating a desirable future, and then looking backwards from that future to the present in order to strategise and to plan how it could be achieved' (Vergragt & Quist, 2011)
‘…DRIVEN BY THOSE WHO LIVE, WORK AND SHAPE OUR CITY…’

Since then we have engaged with a broad spectrum of people and businesses, to develop and test ideas, consulting over 21,000 members of the local community, some 350 local business representatives and hosting 15 events to discuss and shape the opportunities for Reading.
A PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Step into Reading 2050

➤ A campaign to engage the public in the 2050 project was launched as part of Reading’s Year of Culture. A Reading Bus based exhibition and supporting campaign engaged over 21000 in total including over 2000 people face to face.

➤ Find out more

Engaging young people in Reading 2050 through Reading Year of Culture
WHAT DOES THE VISION LOOK LIKE?
A Green Tech City

Enhance our strengths in science, technology and the creative industries to provide a thriving collaborative economy and employment opportunities for all, as part of a smart & sustainable city.
A City of Culture & Diversity

A city that delivers heritage, arts and cultural opportunities which are accessible to people of all ages/backgrounds and supports the evolution of stronger communities with a clear sense of place, city-wide.
A City of Rivers and Parks

A city that capitalises upon our corridors of green and blue to provide vital open space, connectivity and places to rest and play.
URBAN ROOM: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF A PLACE

Every town and city should have an "URBAN ROOM"

- AN EXHIBITION SPACE
- A LEARNING SPACE
- A COMMUNITY SPACE

EXPLORING OUR PAST ...

... AND PLANNING THE FUTURE!!

Farrell Report 2013
URBAN ROOM

Broadway Malyan
3D model of Reading town centre

Canvas for discussion about future development for students and community
QUADRUPLE HELIX: READING 2050

- University of Reading: anchor institution
- School of the Built Environment
- Altruism v grant funding?
- Tensions?

- Barton Willmore – design / workshops
- Existing knowledge and capacity
- Strong built environment focus
- Thinking longer-term?

- Key brokering role of Reading UK CIC
- Inward investment/economic growth
- Reading BC’s role: other LAs?
- Local plan and corporate plan

- Role of community groups/general public
- Councillors’ workshop
- ‘Step into Reading’
CONCLUSIONS

• Role of urban foresight
• Visions reflect power relations
• Extent of citizen engagement with vision
• Complements existing plans and strategies
• Important role of local authority
• Futures Commission and urban room
• Continuing process…
THANK YOU!

www.reading2050.co.uk