Sustainable Cities Initiative
Strategic Planning Day

Report and Documentation

University of Leeds, September 23 2014
Overview and Aims

The principle drivers of the SCI recognised the need to involve a wider group of interested stakeholders from the University in creating a vision and strategy for the Initiative. In order to help this occur, they decided to organise a planning event. Alan Heckman was brought in as a professional group facilitator. Most attendees were there for the entire event, but a few were not able to stay for the whole day because they were required elsewhere.

Attendees were:

Julia Steinberger  
Erik Thomasson  
James Tate  
Greg Marsden  
Natasha Merat  
Ayona Datta  
Sara Gonzalez  
Alice Owen  
Faye McAnulla  

Gordon Mitchell  
Mark Davis  
David Bell  
Paul Upham  
Alex Schafran  
Zia Wadud  
Andrew Dougill  
Simon Shepard  
Paul Chatterton

The aims of the event were:

- Create a general understanding of the history and background of the initiative
- Build a shared vision of where SCI should be headed over the next two years
- Agree high-level strategic directions to help the group travel toward the vision
- Begin planning for the practical implementation of the strategy, at the level of proposing projects, programmes or events
- Develop a general feeling of ownership of the vision and excitement about being involved among those present.

What did we do?

The group heard an opening and introduction to the day, and had an opportunity to briefly introduce themselves and outline their background and interest in the initiative. Andy Dougill and Paul Chatterton provided information about how the Initiative had come about, how it was placed in the wider university, and what had happened so far.

The group worked together to define a two-year vision for the SCI. Discussion was robust, and although not everyone’s individually preferred elements were included, the group reached a strong consensus on six key elements of the vision.

After lunch, the group shared knowledge and ideas about:

- What is already happening in their work relevant to the SCI
- What opportunities SCI might be able to take advantage of
- What benefits they hoped would come out of the creation of the SCI
- What potential downsides they thought should be considered
- What strengths they thought they could bring to the creation of SCI
- What outside support they thought would be needed.

The group then worked to choose three major strategic directions for SCI to adopt, and outlined the very first projects and actions that would need to be taken. The core organisers were tasked with taking these actions forward and continuing the development of SCI.

Documented products

The documented products included here are:

- The six elements of the two-year vision for SCI, with their associated ideas underneath
- The Current Reality exercise products
- The three major strategic directions chosen by the group, with their associated action ideas
- The initial list of actions or projects that the group agreed to take forward in the first six months
**Vision: What do we want to see in place in two years’ time as a result of our actions?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong and substantial partnerships and collaborations</th>
<th>New space for learning and participation</th>
<th>Established, energised and excited collaborative group is building capacity and networking</th>
<th>Our brand (known for high-quality applied research and practice)</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary research projects exploring big questions</th>
<th>A commitment and drive to transformative change toward sustainable cities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-Production Embedded in research designs</td>
<td>Broad-based innovative Public Education programme</td>
<td>Transferable capacity/package of decision makers</td>
<td>Clear and effective Branding and Profile for our Organisation</td>
<td>High profile externally funded Projects</td>
<td>Clear, Open, Big, Meaningful (research) questions</td>
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<td>Partnership with people of Leeds</td>
<td>A participatory space</td>
<td>PHD (postdoc) network (research group)</td>
<td>New Recruits wanting to come and work here</td>
<td>Support for I.-D. large scale grants</td>
<td>Changing the conversation</td>
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<td>Established Collaborations with Leeds CC, CR, National Partnerships on Sust. Cities</td>
<td>Interfaculty MSc LUBS/Environment w/applied cities topics</td>
<td>A map of SCI expertise</td>
<td>Internally and externally communicated and ‘advertised’</td>
<td>Significant projects and research - Both Leeds and national-international</td>
<td>A Clear shared vision and long-term commitments</td>
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<td>Strong internal and external partners</td>
<td>Plans for virtual hub for scenarios</td>
<td>Well- Earned New reputation</td>
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<td>Build Power</td>
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<td>New partnerships academic and industrial</td>
<td>Major collaborative City-centre site</td>
<td>Leeds City recognised as innovative, not others</td>
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<td>Ground-breaking fearless experimentation</td>
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<td>Enhanced I-D modelling capabilities</td>
<td>Better Public Participation</td>
<td>Recognised Research Centre (Inter)nationally</td>
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<td>Encouraged others to Tackle other Challenges</td>
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<td>Joint Research, Practice Planning processes</td>
<td>Space in the city for people to talk and do stuff</td>
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<td>Catalyst for Change decision-makers and residents</td>
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<td>SCI meetings with very different-new people</td>
<td>Coherence in Teaching on Cities</td>
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<td>Fundamentally new way of working</td>
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<td>Do something people (Not Just Us) will find useful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating step-change in uptake of new tech that works</td>
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<td>UoL and LBU new era of collaboration</td>
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<td>Post-Growth cities: “pros”</td>
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<td>Shared projects with Leeds city-region</td>
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<td>No meat (less?) No Cars (less?)</td>
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<td>City research strategy</td>
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Current Reality

Individuals volunteered their own understanding and ideas in answer to six questions about the group and the environment within which it will operate. They were invited to mark or highlight the ideas of others with which they particularly agreed, shown here with tick marks.

What are the greatest strengths we can bring to the Sustainable Cities Initiative?
- Freedom/remit to think and act
- Strong and growing relationship with LCC
- Passion and determination
- Amazing brains
- Wealth of contacts, networks
- Commitment to doing things differently
- Theory and modelling skills
- Questions
- Some money
- Some time
- Lots of students (as actors)
- Networks
- Comparative work
- Willingness to work together
- Internationalisation
- Willing to face reality &/or cause trouble
- Experience of strategic initiatives on campus

What are the potential downsides of successfully achieving our vision?
- Other tasks get sidelined
- Alienating possible (powerful) partners
- It might be the wrong vision
- Less money?
- Alienate some who do not fit in
- Even less time than we have now

What are the benefits of achieving our vision?
- Joined-up working, better solutions
- Being able to replicate success, learning and implementation elsewhere
- A better city/world
- Showing the relevance of research
- Recognition/Impact
- Better student recruitment and world class research culture
- We fundamentally change the way in which people participate in and learn about the production of cities
- We build a new power base capable of producing positive change
What are we already doing that could benefit from or contribute to our Sustainable Cities Initiative?

- Global Urban Justice Master programme
- Contested Cities - funding for exchange visit to Latin America until Oct 16
- Climate smart Cities
- 2015 European Society for ecological economics in Leeds, June 30-July 3
- Leeds CLT debate
- KTP with Leeds City Council (EPSRC) ✓
- BSS “Thesis eleven” Sustainable cities network - India, Aus, S.Africa, Phillipines, Singapore (+UK)
- Transport Systems hub ✓
- 2015 Intl Conference: new perspectives on violence supported by feminist & Women’s studies Association
  - Lots of PhDs (3 about to start in SRI)
- Living Lab discussion ✓
- UK chapter System dynamics Soc.
- LILAC cohousing

What outside support will be critical to successfully achieving our vision?

- Leeds City Council ✓ ✓ ✓
- Think tanks (IPPR, c4 Cities, CLES) ✓
- Other Public and private agencies eg infrastructure
- Public civil society ✓
- Broadcast media
- EU partners
- Research councils
- Green stakeholder groups
- VCEG
- Technology?

What opportunities do we know about that SCI might be able to take advantage of?

- Future Cities & Transit systems catapults
- Smart cities call H2020 ✓
- DTC pathway
- TSB/integrated cities call
- WUN GII
- Interreg
- Horizon 2020
- CDKN
- British Council
- CONFAP/NEWTON
- Autonomous vehicle competition
- HEFCE catalyst fund (for space) ✓
- JPI urban?
- Loads of opportunities in Leeds (eg district heating, new homes, smart data, transport infrastructure, parks and greenspace, rivers, health and social care etc etc) =Matched funding ✓ ✓
- ESEE Leeds June 30-July 3
- ESRC urban transformation call
- ESRC sustainable prosperity
Strategic Directions
The group considered possible actions to move toward the vision, and found three broad, thematic Strategic Directions to guide the work of the organisation over the next two years.

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<th>Build partnerships</th>
<th>Discuss and Debate</th>
<th>Build identity</th>
<th>Laying a Foundation for an Impactful, Integrated Initiative</th>
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<tr>
<td>MoU with LCC, More secondments + interesting exchanges, Formal partnering with external orgs, Set up formal process for joint research/learning with LCC, Identify steering group, Launch event for Leeds partners, Scope out collaborators</td>
<td>Leeds City research Sandpit, Sandpits to Identify Big issues and Res questions</td>
<td>Resourced Comms strategy (Web, brand, comms), Finalise Website, Vision, comms material, Hi-Jack University Cities and Sustainable societies theme, Set out group working practices to maximise collaboration</td>
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Get grants, funding and resources
Smart use of Grants/PhDs/Fellows to support initiative, Identify 2-3 priority big Interdisciplinary projects, integrated Transport Call, Collaboration with Arup, LCC, O2, Metro, in Leeds £4m, Large Research Centre grant appl.

Teach and Learn
Teaching led discovery module, Evidence Based professional development programme, invite city partners into existing teaching, use cross-cutting cases in Leeds for teaching, MOOC: seeking social justice

Create PhD Network
Set up proactive PHD network, Fo Env PhD network.

Innovating and Adding Value in Core Activities

Radical Action and Experiment
Write a manifesto, No shopping day

New Space
Set up project team for space, Sign an MOU w/ LCC + LBU City Lab Space, Rent a major space downtown, LCC to assist with acquiring space in city Centre!, Apply for funds to realise core projects (HEFCE City Lab)

Stretching the Boundaries

Laying a Foundation for an Impactful, Integrated Initiative
Next Steps

The group agreed a short list of actions to be taken in the first six months for each Strategic Direction, with the core organisers having responsibility for seeing that they are carried out and engaging key people to create more complete plan.

**Laying a Foundation for an Impactful, Integrated Initiative**

- Design the Sandpit Process
- Get Seedcorn Money from Uni
- Visits to scope collaborators network internal/external
- Build/Launch Website
- Design or clarify the steering group/advisory Board

**Innovating and Adding Value in Core Activities**

- Propose an Interdisciplinary PhD
- Establish/build/Brand PhD network for SCI
- Talk to Discovery Theme people about integrating SCI
- Prioritise Funding opportunities
- Identify Opportunities to Integrate SCI in teaching a learning

**Stretching the Boundaries**

- Meeting to map out assumptions, contacts, landscape, create scoping document for new space
- Plan a process with Partners for radical action and Experimentation
- Make the Sandpit happen
- Plan public meetings on Nature of Change (to be held after 6 month term)