



## Third Life Economics – 2011 Portfolio

2011 was the first full calendar year of the coalition government. It has been dominated, in terms of local economic development, by government attempts to put their ‘big themes’ (localism, ‘big society’, rebalancing, ‘open for business’, ‘greenest government ever’ etc.) into practice; and by sub-national organisations, led by local authorities (LAs) and LEPs’ attempts to make sense of this. Government’s biggest theme – deficit reduction – has cast a massive shadow over both national and local efforts

I have tried to make a positive and constructive contribution to this process, and also to provide a commentary on it. Commissions have been more varied than hitherto, and have been major learning opportunities for both valued clients and for myself. Key thematic pieces of work with wider applicability include:-

**Cornwall influencing the national policy landscape for local economic growth and development:** I am delighted to work with Cornwall Council for a third successive year. My work assisting to elaborate Cornwall’s response to the CLG Select Committee inquiry on Regeneration and 2011 Budget explored propositions for coherent non-metropolitan economic geographies (like Cornwall) to take on enhanced economic roles and responsibilities. Akin to ‘new city deals’ finally announced by government in late 2011, local economic leadership teams await serious government intent to negotiate similar ‘deals’ with areas outside the Core City regions.

**New approaches to local growth strategy formulation and delivery:** I continued to work with LEPs on strategic prioritisation and business plans, local authorities on economic development structures and processes, and have assisted development of local proposals for Regional Growth Fund, Growing Places Fund, EU programmes and innovative public/private financial policies and instruments (e.g. CIL, TIF, Asset-backed propositions, Business Rates retention, BIDs etc).

**Industrial strategies for local economies:** Building on the Visiting Fellow relationship with IfM, my 2011 portfolio included three interventions to progress local industrial strategy thinking and practice:-

- A sector study for Opportunity Peterborough established the case and potential for an industrial-led development strategy of national significance. A clustering and aggregation of synergies of Industrial, Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS), and Food and Drink assets on a Greater Peterborough economic geography is a far stronger proposition than an advanced manufacturing sector development approach based solely on the city’s administrative geography.
- A roundtable structured deliberation at IfM with about 30 LEP and LA role players ‘proved’ the demand for a Forum/Special Interest Group to exchange experience and stimulate learning on local industrial policy and intervention strategies.
- I have also established a relationship with CEME – the training and innovation campus in East London working on the local and sub-regional positioning of this significant asset and its resources in the light of Olympic Legacy, Tech City, Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, and Sustainable Industries Park developments



**Art and Culture-led place-shaping and economic development:** As strategic advisor to the UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA), I have advised this national arts charity and Arts Council (ACE) 2012-15 National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) with institutional strengthening (both Board and Executive), sector development, business strategy, and business planning. Carnival Arts contributes to a number of government's wider economic and social themes, whilst also potentially producing 'great art' – but has been traditionally undervalued, and somewhat peripheral to 'place-making', branding, destination management, economic and social development. Carnival Arts provides a wonderful 'case study' of the importance of art and culture-led development which has much wider relevance for cities and communities. Latterly, I have broadened art and culture involvement, taking a role as trustee of Plymouth Arts Centre, assisting that city with its flagship artistic ambitions, and enhancing Plymouth's profile and 'offer'.

**Rural growth in the new economic development landscape:** Beyond the enduring work with Cornwall, I worked nearer home in 2011 with a significant exercise to explore how the Welland Partnership (of five rural council areas – East Northamptonshire, Harborough, Melton, Rutland and South Kesteven on the edge of four different LEPs) should position their areas to make the most of future growth opportunities and challenges. Whilst most of this will be through their respective LEPs, there is a case for collaboration and sharing experience. Their rural agendas have been further progressed with 3LE working with some of the individual authorities on issues such as market town and business park developments, and providing a call-off advisory and support service on specific rural and organisation development issues.

**Working with partners:** I am delighted to collaborate with individuals and organisations on stimulating pieces of work. Recent associations include:-

- Continuing Visiting Fellow status with Ashridge Business School and with the Institute for Manufacturing, Cambridge. The 2011 industrial development portfolio is mentioned above. With Ashridge, a noteworthy 2011 exercise was the facilitation of 22 Local Authority Chief Executives from Fujian Province, China during their recent study tour of the UK
- Providing advice and support to a large corporate on major strategic partnering opportunities and procurement exercises at large local authorities - tailoring their offer to the particular economic social and environmental opportunities and challenges of the area in question.
- Collaborating with economic 'boutique' consultancies as an Associate on a number of exercises and commissions.
- A founder associate of 'The Open Channel' – an interesting network established by Janet Dean and Steve Loraine who provide highly responsive assistance to local leadership teams based on appreciative inquiry, mentoring and coaching support both face-to-face and online.

**Commentary, conferences and events...and a postscript to 2011:** I continue as an Advisor to the Guardian Local Government Professional Network and writes regularly for them, Planning/Regeneration and Renewal and more occasionally for Local Government Chronicle and other journals. Many of the pieces have been posted in the articles section of this website. I am a regular speaker and facilitator at conferences and events – most recently, for instance, at the Westminster Social Policy Forum on local government finance reform and local economic growth. I tweet on [@DavidJMarlow](#), and post both as Regeneration and Renewal's Economic Development blogger, and on my own blog at <http://davidjmarlow.wordpress.com/>