



Third Life Economics – 2013 Portfolio

The landscape for work on economic growth changed radically in late 2012, with the publication of Heseltine's 'No stone unturned...' report on devolution of local economic investment instruments to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); and, to a lesser extent, with government's announcement of a competition for 20 'wave two' city deals.

My 2013 portfolio was largely shaped by trends arising from these announcements. **Please get in touch if you want further details on any of the work described below.**

On LEPs:-

- The CURDS **LEP Capacity Audit and Institutional Needs Assessment** was the first comprehensive review of the emerging character of LEPs as institutions and leaders of local economic development. I was delighted to be a major team member (interviewing 20 of the 39 LEPs in early 2013). Our [final report](#) has been influential and widely presented - including, for instance, in this [Smith Institute publication](#). It arguably still provides a credible baseline against which LEPs' development as institutions is debated.
- For individual LEPs, the CURDS relationship was sustained with 'smart specialisation' and business growth analyses and facilitation for **North Eastern LEP** and the **Heart of the South West LEP**. Separately, it was extremely interesting to explore with **SEMLEP**, how a genuine functional economic area-based LEP can be successful when it overlaps with three administrative county- council based LEPs surrounding it. Finally, despite my long-standing scepticism of the fund, I supported a Regional Growth Fund programme bid for Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough (**GCGP**) **LEP**.
- More generally, I wrote and presented extensively on LEPs and related issues at issues like the **LGA Annual Conference**, for the **District Councils Network**, blogging in the **Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Newsletter**, and several commercial events.

On city deals:-

- My major commission during 2013 involved the formulation, negotiation and eventually (January 2014) successful agreement of the **Plymouth and Peninsula City Deal** - probably one of the more interesting and innovative of the wave two deals. This involved intensive analysis and facilitation locally; working across two LEPs - Heart of the South West and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly - and challenging negotiations with government - from Cabinet Office to MoD.
- I made considerable efforts to persuade the wave two applicants to collaborate in their offers and asks of government - notably with the **Growth Cities Network** (including Norwich, Ipswich, Southend, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading, Southampton and Portsmouth, Brighton). Although unsuccessful at that stage, I continued to provide a number of the cities with support and advice; and the concept of bottom-up collaboration being used to shape negotiating positions with government now has much wider currency and purchase.

On smart specialisation (S3) and knowledge-led growth:-

- The LEP work with CURDS led to my being invited to contribute to a CURDS commission with **BIS** on **Smart Specialisation (S3)**. S3 is a research and innovation approach to determining intervention priorities for economic growth - and an ex-ante conditionality of the EU structural and investment fund programmes (EUSIF2014-20). We produced recommendations on the preconditions for EUSIF2014-20 programmes devolved to LEPs to be delivered effectively in S3 terms. Amongst them, Government agreed the proposals to establish a Smart Specialisation Advisory Hub (S3AH) - in their response to the Sir Andrew Witty review in March 2014 (see more next year!).
- As mentioned above, these S3 perspectives were then pursued with individual LEPs (**NELEP** and **HotSWLEP**), and were also presented widely to LEP, LA, HEI and other stakeholders.
- It's not all about S3, though. I was delighted to continue my association with **CEME** in progressing our shared ambitions of an Industrial Strategy for Outer East London.



- And on the health economy, it was great to be in at the start of the **Eastern Academic health Sciences Network** (EAHSN) and explore with them how they could engage with five local LEPs and their respective LAs to use the NHS as a driver of health economy growth and better health and care social outcomes.

On place-based development:-

- Much of the 'heavy-lifting' work of economic development is done below LEP (or indeed County Council) levels. It was exciting, therefore, to get involved in real places with commissions like the **Plymouth** economic development strategy refresh; an 'open for business' prospectus for **Harborough**; the **Watford** investment strategy due diligence; and completing the **Norbiton** neighbourhood community budget pilot. All of these, in their own way, keep your 'hands-on' experience current - whilst also raising wider strategic and policy issues and learning (for me).

And with the private and third sectors:- It was good to work again on an Ashridge senior local government leadership development programme; with Penna as a technical assessor; and with a couple of major private sector businesses on investment appraisal and negotiating with the public sector.

Commentary, conferences and events: I am particularly proud to work as:-

- A Visiting Professor of Practice at CURDS, Newcastle University
- A Research Associate at Ashridge Business School
- An Advisor to the Guardian Local Government Professional Network
- The author of the [Economic Development blog](#) for Planning/Regeneration and Renewal
- An associate of the Local Government Information Unit - producing briefings during 2013 on:-
 - an overall agenda for local authority economic development policies and practice
 - Census 2011 publications
 - Whole place community budgets
 - Neighbourhood budgets and neighbourhood planning
 - Academic Health Science Networks
 - ESUIF 2014-20 programmes

I am a regular speaker and facilitator at conferences and events

I tweet on [@DavidJMarlow](#), and post on my own blog at <http://davidjmarlow.wordpress.com/>