

The Future is Local / Global benchmarks



Introduction to this study

Contemporary local government faces unprecedented systemic challenges that require new, adaptive capabilities to navigate complex and evolving environments. Few municipalities have been designed or equipped to deal effectively with this array of colliding drivers of change, which some have dubbed a ‘*polycrisis*’.

These challenges include those identified in the *Future is Local* Phase One report, as well as others identified by this work: the climate and biodiversity crisis amidst broader environmental degradation, demographic transitions including ageing populations and urbanisation, radical technological disruption, rising inequality, public health crises, housing and infrastructure resilience, local economic pressures amidst fiscal constraints, global geopolitical upheaval, demands for participatory governance and collaborative approaches across jurisdictional boundaries, as well as transformed citizen expectations that suggest new forms of social contract.

In response, some municipalities are developing dynamic capabilities to better face these challenges, or even work with them—this report outlines case studies that describe some of these innovative approaches, with each used as a strategic prompt for Victorian municipalities.

By *dynamic capabilities*, we are referring to recent work by University College

London and University of Melbourne on a **Public Sector Capabilities Index** (PSCI) project, which guided some of the thinking in this report. The project engaged over 200 government officials in 45 cities across more than 20 countries, supported by urban experts and stakeholders, to better understand how these dynamic capabilities is understood and developed by city governments specifically (MAV, City of Melbourne, and Victorian Government were among the interviewees).

The project’s working definition is:

Dynamic capabilities enable the city government to adapt and transform how it operates so it can take advantage of new opportunities and solve both everyday problems and emerging challenges.

That research suggests five pillars, which have inspired the collation of the cases studies that follow in this work for MAV, and the way that strategic prompts are devised and framed. They include capabilities like *strategic awareness, adjusting priorities, building coalitions, learning and experimentation, and reconfiguring for delivery* (Fig. 1).

These pillars provide the theoretical foundation for understanding how local governments can develop the organisational capacity necessary for transfor-

mative change in response to these multifaceted forces of change. The research emphasises that dynamic capabilities are necessarily contingent on differing organisational contexts, orientations and environments, highlighting the importance of contextual adaptation rather than prescriptive replication. As such, the global benchmarks in this report are chosen to provide stimulus for discussion, critique, adaptation and translation, rather than implying they might be simply ‘*copy-pasted*’ into Victoria. Facing the need for transformative change, the worst thing one could do is answer the wrong questions well.

So, these cases are to be used as prompts to help frame key strategic questions for Victorian municipalities, rather than give simple answers. Each of the cases is mapped loosely against the key dynamic capabilities, though it is worth stressing that PSCI is a quite separate project to MAV’s *The Future is Local*. This early and high-level mapping could be the start of a potentially useful development of this thinking. In reality, almost all of these dynamic capabilities

will be in play in each of the follow case studies, at least to some degree, given their innovative nature. We have chosen to highlight particular capabilities for each benchmark.

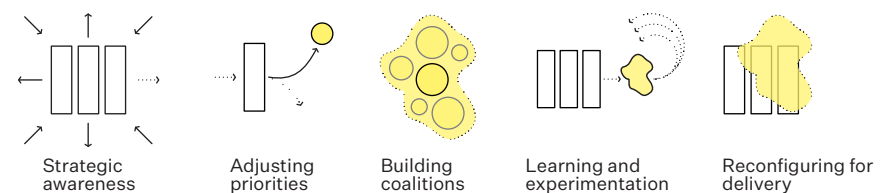
This case study report has been developed specifically to support the Municipal Association of Victoria’s *Future is Local* taskforce by providing tangible examples of transformative local government practices from Australia and internationally.

The selection of 12 diverse case studies was guided by four key objectives:

- inspiring strategic thinking
- identifying innovative responses to change forces
- prioritising critical focus areas, and
- supporting informed co-creation amongst taskforce members.

Case studies are supported by links for further reading or watching, further reinforcing that none of them is a ‘silver bullet’ answer, but rather they are to be explored, critiqued, discussed and translated by MAV.

Fig. 1 **Dynamic capabilities** (UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose)



Approach to selection and analysis

The case studies chosen represent a comprehensive spectrum of municipal innovation across multiple dimensions.

Geographic diversity was prioritised, incorporating examples from **Australian and New Zealand councils** (Cairns Regional Council; Auckland Council) alongside international exemplars from **Europe** (Bristol One City, City of Copenhagen, City of Gothenburg, Barcelona City Council, London Office of Technology and Innovation, UK Local Councils Shared Services Model, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, London public housing initiatives, Paris' 15-minute city model) and **Latin America** (Bogotá Care Blocks). This global perspective ensures that MAV and Victorian councils can learn from varied governance contexts whilst maintaining relevance to local conditions.

Thematic diversity formed the second selection criterion, addressing the six key forces of change confronting the Victorian local government sector as defined in phase one of the *Future is Local* program. So, the chosen cases span **Financial sustainability** (UK local councils' Shared Services model, Auckland Council's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy), **New extremes of climate volatility** (Cairns Smart Green Economy, Copenhagen's 'cloudburst' management plan), **Demographic shifts, peaks and cliffs** (Age-Friendly Gothenburg, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal), **Digital land-**

scapes proliferate (London Office of Technology and Innovation, Barcelona Smart City Strategy), **Social instability and fragmentation** (Bristol One City Plan, Bogotá Care Blocks), and **Infrastructure resilience and risk** (London public housing initiatives, Paris' 15-minute city model).

As cities are facing systemic challenges, which do not fit neatly into existing government silos, many of these examples cut across multiple forces of change, taking an integrated approach. Some are recent examples and others with a longer history but remain relevant to Victorian jurisdictions either due to their long-term planning or innovative nature.

Central to this report's methodology is the provision of structured analytical prompts designed to facilitate deep reflection and strategic dialogue amongst taskforce participants. Each case study is accompanied by targeted strategic questions for Victorian municipalities, intended to provoke reflection upon the “*who, what, and how*” dimensions of transformative local government practice, and on occasion, the “*why*”.

These inquiries can appear to be simple, direct, and open-ended at first glance, but they specifically explore more complex questions of capacity requirements, innovation mechanisms, jurisdictional arrangements, visioning processes, leadership models, as well as the

fundamental positioning, vision and philosophy of municipalities. In other words, what are they for, what do they do, and how do they do it? The emphasis is less on *whether* transformation to, say, 15-minute cities, public housing, or digital service integration is required: rather, how do we achieve it *in Victoria*? And what is the role of *municipalities* within that transition?

Importantly, the analytical framework recognises that these case studies represent processes rather than prescriptive outcomes. The emphasis lies not on replicating specific initiatives, but on understanding the underlying conditions, capabilities, and collaborative arrangements that enabled transformation.

These aspects are best unpacked through further research and discussion, and each example points to reading and viewing for more in-depth investigation. Some of the references offered are critical of the benchmark, indicating the need to take holistic and enquiring approaches to case studies. When viewing examples from afar, and using a mixture of documentary evidence and local insights, it is necessary to dig deeper, beyond the surface presentation. This should not invalidate a case, but indicates that further research should be undertaken, over time, to reveal deeper insights about the benchmark.

This process-oriented approach encourages participants to consider how

Victorian local governments might develop similar capacities for innovation, partnership, organisational redesign, short-term experimentation and long-term strategic visioning.

The selection prioritises examples of structural rather than superficial changes, emphasising models that challenge traditional municipal boundaries alongside applicability to a diversity of council types. Simplistic metrics are avoided as aspects like ‘cost’, for example, are so highly context-specific as to be near-useless. Political, cultural, economic, and constitutional context is radically different in, say, Sweden, Colombia and Australia. Yet the cases suggest principles and practises that could be adaptable to Victorian contexts, from metropolitan councils learning from Barcelona's smart city integration to rural councils applying Borderlands' collaborative growth models.

These examples, coupled with structured prompts, enable taskforce members to engage in informed, forward-looking discussions about Victorian local government's future capabilities and arrangements. The inquiry-based approach facilitates examination of current capacity gaps, required innovation systems, optimal jurisdictional configurations, and necessary leadership paradigms for achieving transformational change within Victoria's unique local government landscape.

Summary of systemic approaches

Six key forces of change from Future is Local Phase One

New Extremes of Climate Volatility

Demographic Shifts, Peaks and Cliffs

Social Instability and Fragmentation

Infrastructure Resilience and Risk

Digital Landscapes Proliferate

Financial Sustainability

Reframed drivers of change

Climate and biodiversity action

Demographic change

Public health

Citizen participation

Social equity

Infrastructure resilience

Digital transformation

Local economic development

Financial sustainability

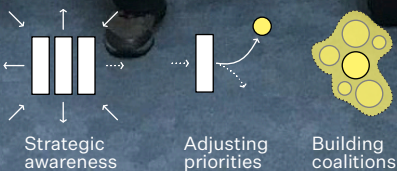
Relevance for Victoria

		Climate and biodiversity action	Demographic change	Public health	Citizen participation	Social equity	Infrastructure resilience	Digital transformation	Local economic development	Financial sustainability	Relevance for Victoria
Age-friendly Gothenburg	SE	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Light	Dark	Citizen-oriented integrated participation and planning for ageing populations
Auckland 30 year infrastructure plan	NZ	Dark	Light	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Long-term, cross-cutting integrated planning with transparency and patient financing
Barcelona Smart City Strategy	ES	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Wide-ranging and bold approach to integrating digital technology into the city infrastructures and spaces
Bogotá Care Blocks	CO	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Light	Dark	Place-based social equity infrastructure and services integrated into neighbourhoods
Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal	UK	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Light	Cross-border inclusive and coordinated strategy for rural resilience and growth
Bristol One-City Plan	UK	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Participative, cross-sector governance aligned for shared city vision
Cairns Smart Green Economy	AU	Dark	Light	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Regional and rural economic transformation through green industrial development
Copenhagen Cloudburst Management Plan	DK	Dark	Light	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Light	Light	Best-practice resilient nature-based infrastructure for climate adaptation, social equity and public health
London Office of Technology and Innovation	UK	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Support services and funding for local governments to collaborate, innovate and integrate technology
London's public housing	UK	Light	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Councils addressing housing crisis via supplying 100% affordable high-quality public housing
Paris' 15-minute City	FR	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	Dark	Light	Radical re-integration of systems at neighbourhood scale for healthy, sustainable and equitable cities
UK councils Shared Services model	UK	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Light	Dark	Model for cost-sharing, collaboration and integration of administrative services across councils

Age-Friendly Gothenburg



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Scandinavia's aging population, alongside increased urbanisation, has prompted the City of Gothenburg to produce an action plan aimed at transforming the city into a well-equipped environment to accommodate this shift in demographic profile. The plan was published in 2021 for an action period of 2021-2024, addressing six focus areas to achieve an Age-friendly Gothenburg; urban environment; mobility; housing; social participation and inclusion; public services and support; and information and communication. Within each focus area, actionable activities address the liveability gaps between older and younger citizens, aiming to ensure equitable city access.

The actionable modifications are derived directly from the contributions of older citizens. Age-friendly Gothenburg elevates senior perspectives, allowing citizens to contribute their experience with ageing in Gothenburg, their requirements and desired changes through an annual survey. The plan's participatory model allows the city council to drive genuine beneficial change while simultaneously connecting citizens to progress. To maximise impact, the targeted focus areas allow for measurable actions with an annual report tracking progress, including survey responses, reflection pieces from government officials and achieved outcomes, showcasing the plan's commitment to transparency and long-term impact.

Gothenburg, Sweden

Population: 608,462 (metro 1,080,980)

Population density: 1,400 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 Demographic change
- 2 Social equity
- 3 Citizen participation

Further information

- [Age-Friendly Gothenburg](#) (City of Gothenburg)
- [Age-Friendly World: Gothenburg](#) (WHO)
- [Interview with Emma Mattson, Manager for Age-Friendly Gothenburg](#) (WHO YouTube)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

How might the needs of Victoria's ageing population shape its towns and cities?

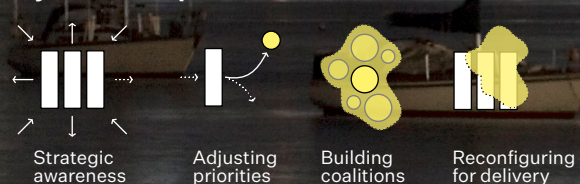
How might demographic change shape municipalities, from fiscal capacity to in-house capabilities?

What capabilities do municipalities need for better participatory planning and engagement? What forms of value might be unlocked?

Auckland's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

The Auckland Council's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy was first adopted in 2015. Auckland's Long-term Plan updated it in 2024, to address challenges of population growth and environmental degradation. It attempts to ensure long-term and robust infrastructure resilience, encompassing transport, water, community, cultural and economic infrastructure, urban regeneration and closed landfills. The strategy's investment structure allows it to maintain momentum and longevity, with a key focus on asset management, investment prioritisation and innovative funding tools.

Auckland's infrastructure serves the most populous city in the country, with highly varied services across natural and built environments. It demands a structural and evolving approach to ensure its flexibility and longevity. Under Auckland's broader long-term urban strategy, the Council is required to update its Infrastructure Strategy every three years and to provide transparent reporting of investment priorities.

The strategy's commitment to both transparency and longevity demonstrates the crucial role local governments play in driving change, engaging citizens, and maintaining accountability, helping to effectively embed infrastructure resilience in the local context. Its adaptive design and innovative funding structure allows the plan to continuously evolve to meet emerging needs, of both people and nature. (At time of writing no formal publicly available evaluation of the strategy has taken place).

Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

Population: 1,530,500 (metro 1,775,900)

Population density: 2,500 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- ① Climate and biodiversity action
- ② Local economic resilience
- ③ Public health

Further information

- [Auckland Council's 30-year infrastructure strategy](#) (Auckland Council)
- [Summary of Auckland Council Long-Term Plan \(2024-2034\)](#) (Auckland Council)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

How can municipalities embed the principles of climate change adaptation, sustainable asset renewal and transparency into Victoria's long-term infrastructure planning?

How can municipalities best engage with, shape, and help deliver Victoria's 30-year infrastructure strategy?

Barcelona Smart City Strategy



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Responding to the transformative potential of digital technologies, Barcelona City Council developed Smart City Barcelona in 2011 to fundamentally reshape its city services, structures, spaces, and infrastructures.

The strategy addresses key areas such as environment, digital technologies, mobility, water, energy, waste management, nature, buildings, public space, open government, and services. Across these, the strategy proposes a systematic approach to integration, adding up to a form of technology sovereignty, integrated into existing funding streams and services, whilst building a tech sector. Some innovations include sensor networks and infrastructure, adaptive street lighting, smart water and irrigation using soil moisture sensors, AI-based noise sensors and bus coordination municipal waste sensors, a Internet-of-Things and fibre network, citizen participation platforms, central urban data platforms, and hosting the Smart City World Congress event. It is linked to related strategic initiatives, such as city-owned energy networks and Barcelona's Superblocks programme.

The strategy is clearly bold, yet criticism has emerged over the gap between ambition, rhetoric, and meaningful on-the-ground change. As is often the case, certain municipal departments have been resistant rather than supportive. Nonetheless, Barcelona has emerged as a clear world-leader in smart city strategy and, to some extent, delivery.

Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain

Population: 1,686,208 (metro 5,474,482)

Population density: 17,000 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 **Climate and biodiversity action**
- 2 **Citizen participation**
- 3 **Local economic development**

Further information

- [Smart City Barcelona](#)
- [Barcelona-Catalonia: Leading the Smart Cities Revolution](#) (Catalonia)
- [Smart Barcelona: the gap between inspiring rhetoric and lacklustre implementation in transformative approach](#) (Planning Practice & Research)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

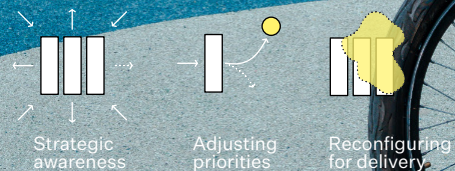
As technology can transform almost every aspect of a town or city, what should Victorian municipalities prioritise? What outcomes are possible?

What technology capabilities and infrastructures should Victorian municipalities and regions design, build, and operate? And what could be outsourced? What are the strategic outcomes of technology sovereignty?

Bogotá Care Blocks



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

The Bogotá Care Blocks system is a city-wide initiative and global model introduced by Bogotá's Mayor Claudia Lopez in 2020. The Care Blocks are aimed at addressing the burden of unpaid care work that disproportionately affects low-income women, with 30% of Bogotá's female population dedicating an average of 10 hours each day to free care labour.

The Care Blocks integrate services from 13 entities into purpose-built local hubs, which integrate public transport whilst ensuring they are positioned within a 15-20-minute walk from caregivers. The Blocks aim to recognise the contribution of caregivers and redistribute the responsibility of care-taking more equitably. The city provides care services via the Blocks, such that caregivers can pursue personal development activities, oriented around learning, self-care, income generation, and civic engagement—learning to code, ride bikes, dance, keep fit, or start a business. Alongside, CARE Buses and CARE Home Delivery are provided for people residing rurally. Since the establishment of the first Care Block in 2020, 12 had been implemented within just two years, aiming to achieve 45 Care Blocks by 2035.

The Bogotá Care Blocks system is the first initiative that aggregates care services into distributed nodes in a city-wide network, freeing up caregivers to pursue their development. The municipality is restructured around carers' needs, with multiple holistic benefits across numerous interconnected systems and communities.

Bogotá, Colombia

Population: 8,034,649 (metro 11,658,211)

Population density: 5,061 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 Social equity
- 2 Local economic development
- 3 Public health

Further information

- [Mayor Claudio Lopez on Bogotá's Care Blocks](#) (United Cities and Local Government, 2025)
- [Diana Rodríguez Franco interview about Bogotá's Care System](#) (Council on Urban Initiatives, 2023)
- [Bogotá's Care Blocks](#) (OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, 2020)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

What diverse forms of value are unlocked by 'upstream' investment in care services and infrastructures?

What capabilities are required to devise and run a program like Care Blocks?

How much would towns and cities save on social and health care costs?

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

Dynamic capabilities at work



Building coalitions



Reconfiguring for delivery

Overview

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (BIGD) is an initiative signed in 2021 between five councils representing Cumberland, Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland, Scottish Borders and Westmorland and Furness with the aim of providing a combined, inclusive investment program to increase productivity, grow the working age population, and deliver a more inclusive economy. The Deal was developed to address the Borderland's high rate of inequality, declining working age population and productivity gap between the UK and Scotland.

BIGD's inclusive and coordinated approach is estimated to benefit 1.1 million residents in the region. The signing of the Deal attracted £452 million of investments to the Borderlands area, indicating the collective potential of regional governments. It was the first cross-border regional growth deal established between England and Scotland and remains the largest geographical regional deal negotiated between the UK and Scottish Governments. BIGD inspires strategic thinking by promoting a structural approach to coordinating financial sustainability. Being led by a coalition of regional leaders, the full potential of each municipality is leveraged to serve a common goal, opposing the fragmented political framework most commonly adopted for innovative policies in municipalities and providing the blueprint for effective partnership to address shared challenges.

Borderlands, England and Scotland

Population: 1,091,000

Population density: 66 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- ① Local economic development
- ② Demographic change
- ③ Financial sustainability

Further information

- [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal website](#)
- [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal case study](#) (OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, 2020)
- [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Channel](#) (YouTube)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

How might resilient economic development be unlocked through jointly-developed local government initiatives at regional scale?

How can regional investment strategies help in responding to demographic shifts in regional and rural communities?

What scale, location, and fit enables useful aggregation?

Bristol One-City Plan

Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Bristol One City Plan is a cross-sectoral approach to achieving a “*fair, healthy and sustainable city, a city of hope and aspiration where everyone can share in its success*”, to be realised by 2050. Bristol City Council was the creator and is custodian of the plan but importantly it is not seen as a corporate council strategy. Rather, it is a long-term vision and shared responsibility of stakeholders and residents across the city. The plan is overseen by a governing board of public and private organisations from across the city and seven thematic boards overseeing priority areas.

The plan promotes structural change by addressing six key themes; economy and skills; children and young people; transport; homes and communities; environment; and health and wellbeing. Three Goals are agreed on annually for each theme, drawn from the convergence of working plans from hundreds of Bristol organisations. This approach elevates the plan’s impact, promotes systemic change, and localises against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A public dashboard provides tracking on the achievement of the plan’s goals.

Bristol One City Plan indicates that a bold ambition for transformation can be achieved through the coordination of many stakeholders to achieve a shared long-term vision. The collective potential of public-private partnerships is maximised through the identification of intersections between social, economic and environmental goals.

Bristol, United Kingdom

Population: 479,024 (metro 720,000)
Population density: 4,368 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 Local economic development
- 2 Social equity
- 3 Citizen participation

Further information

- [Bristol One City](#)
- [Bristol One City Channel](#) (YouTube)
- [Local Action for Global Goals](#) (University of Bristol)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

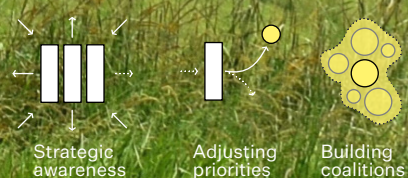
How can we create shared responsibility between government, industry and community to achieve local sustainable visions?

Can shared strategic decision making help mitigate the negative impacts of short-term political cycles?

What role do municipalities have in catalysing shared leadership and where should their responsibility end?

Cairns Smart Green Economy

Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Cairns Smart Green Economy is a multi-stage strategic planning and feasibility study designed by Cairns Regional Council to position Cairns and Far North Queensland as a leader in the Smart Green Economy in Australia. The project addresses challenges in resource depletion, growing greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss and a reliance on traditional industries (tourism to natural sites and aviation connectivity) which were severely impacted by COVID-19. It integrates the region's traditional custodians' knowledge systems alongside "tropical expertise and innovation".

Leveraging the region's natural environment and expertise, the project spotlights net zero energy systems, circular economy activation and biodiversity carbon markets. Its integration with local operations maximises existing resources and eases the region's transition. The project is expected to generate 250 jobs and \$100m/year in turnover.

The project is governed by a working group of government, industry and academic partners including entities focused on economic development, tourism, research and development and environmental management

The Cairns Smart Green Economy is innovative in its goals to spur investment and revitalisation in the region while protecting the unique natural environments of Far North Queensland. (At time of writing no formal publicly available evaluation of the strategy has taken place).

Cairns, Queensland, Australia

Population: 153,181 (metro 1,080,980)

Population density: 602 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- ① Local economic development
- ② Climate and biodiversity action
- ③ Infrastructure resilience

Further information

- [Cairns and FNQ Smart Green Economy \(Cairns Regional Council\)](#)
- [Far north to unlock potential of the Smart Green Economy \(Cairns Regional Council\)](#)
- [Smart Green Economy \(Cairns Regional Council YouTube\)](#)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

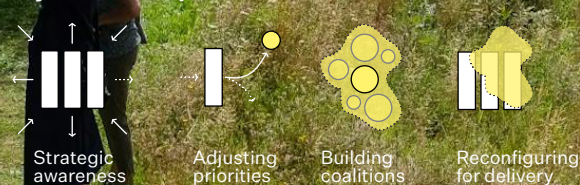
How might we attract meaningful green investment to Victoria's regional and rural communities?

How can circular economy principles and practices be embedded into local economic development plans?

How might traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) best inform and shape innovation programs?

Copenhagen Cloudburst Management Plan

Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Following several destructive, sudden-onset rainstorm events, known as cloudbursts, the City of Copenhagen developed the Copenhagen Cloudburst Management Plan (CMP) in 2012 as a component of its Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP). The CMP combines traditional sewer systems with innovative blue-green stormwater management infrastructure, aiming to achieve a level of climate resilience that limits water levels reaching 10cm above surface level to once every 100 years. It restructures Copenhagen's drainage system and re-direct rainwater to retention basins and outlets through the implementation of 300 infrastructure projects over 20 years. This integrated and structural solution is projected to produce an estimated socio-economic surplus of AUD\$1.2 billion over a 100-year period.

Given the city's limited capacity and budget for the large-scale transition demanded in the Plan, the municipality developed an innovative financing plan that was only possible through lobbying the national government for legislative change, indicating the use of innovation to meet the scale of adaptation required. The Plan coordinates citizens, governmental and non-governmental partnerships to integrate nature-based infrastructure and community region-specific needs. The collected data is publicly available and, as Copenhagen forms partnerships with other cities to further their climate resilience work, is promoted for widespread implementation.

Copenhagen, Denmark

Population: 1,396,508 (metro 2,135,634)

Population density: 2,560 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 **Climate and biodiversity action**
- 2 **Infrastructure resilience**
- 3 **Social equity**

Further information

- [Cloudburst Management Plan \(City of Copenhagen\)](#)
- [Copenhagen Cloudburst](#) (Eurocities YouTube)
- [The economics of managing heavy rains and stormwater in Copenhagen](#) (Climate Adapt)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

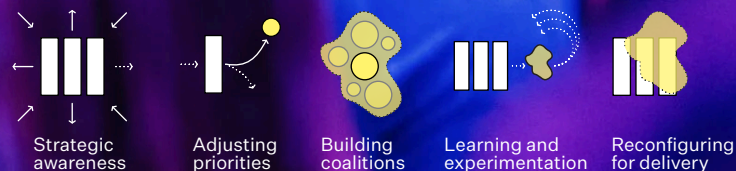
What shared value is unlocked through shared-purpose climate resilient infrastructure? (e.g. Copenhagen's recreational spaces which offer flood mitigation)

What financing mechanisms do municipalities need to create and enable for climate adaptive infrastructure?

London Office of Technology and Innovation



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

As with other sectors, technology brings challenges and opportunities. In governance, it is transforming the practises and positioning of municipalities, not only through effective service design but by creating entirely new services, infrastructures and platforms. In response to these far-reaching and wide-ranging disruptions, both positive and negative, the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) was founded in 2019 to address reduced borough budgets and increased services demand, as well as direct and enhance contemporary tech's transformative capabilities.

LOTI is an innovation team that identifies, funds, and scales ideas across all London's local governments, as well as the Greater London Authority. Importantly, they do not endorse the services of a specific company but provide local governments with expertise, procurement practises, and supplier engagement. The team represents the interests of all London boroughs, which often have their own agenda. LOTI attempts to achieve shared visions through innovation and collaboration.

LOTI also works closely with domain experts who specialise in the specific challenges that digital innovation can address, often acting as a conduit between local government and the technology sector. LOTI's model is an innovative initiative to improve digital accessibility, maximise available resources, and promote a systematic approach to create new opportunities through technology.

London, United Kingdom

Population: 8,945,309 (metro 15,100,000)

Population density: 5,690 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 Digital transformation
- 2 Local economic development
- 3 Financial sustainability

Further information

- [LOTI website](#) (Greater London Authority)
- [City Hall's evaluation of LOTI, 2024](#) (Greater London Authority)
- [LOTI Channel](#) (YouTube)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

Where do Victorian municipalities look to for digital innovation? Where should they look?

How do Victorian municipalities best develop in-house tech capability? How could they contribute to building shared platforms at scale?

What does a future Victorian municipality look like, in terms of tech capacity?

London's public housing

Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

As with Australia, the UK's 'housing crisis' has been a long time coming. Successive governments prevented municipalities from supplying housing, which produced a deficit of public, community-led, or otherwise affordable housing, and a highly financialised sector. From 2007 onwards, the UK government has eased borrowing restrictions for councils and funded local authorities, enabling the rebuilding and retrofit of public housing. Scotland has removed the 'right-to-buy' policy entirely. Subsequently, London rediscovered the value of public housing and has helped lead a transformation of the sector, with high quality design and architecture, effective construction management, advanced sustainability performance, and a reinvigoration of the housing association sector. The country's best architects are now working almost exclusively on social housing, particularly for London boroughs like Camden, Enfield and Hackney.

London's Affordable Homes Programme receives £4bn from central government to enable large scale social housing construction projects, and it is complemented by specific programmes addressing housing mobility. Both the charity Shelter and researchers at UCL have calculated that the return far outweighs the cost of public housing. Albeit no way near previous housing investment, London's new series of housing programs is bold in scale and scope, helping to shift perspectives on public housing whilst helping the city's most vulnerable people.

London, United Kingdom

Population: 8,945,309 (metro 15,100,000)

Population density: 5,690 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 Social equity
- 2 Climate and biodiversity action
- 3 Financial sustainability

Further information

- [What the Mayor doing to increase council housing for Londoners](#) (Mayor of London)
- [Council-led housing case studies](#) (Future of London)
- [Paul Karakusevic on London's public housing](#) (MSD YouTube)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

What proportion of the housing sector should municipalities directly provide? What possibilities lie in the procurement of public housing in Victoria?

How much would the value of producing public housing outweigh its cost?

What capabilities and capacities must Victorian municipalities develop to address a housing crisis?

Paris' 15-minute City



Dynamic capabilities at work



Overview

Intended to achieve the city's sustainability goals whilst improving quality of life and public health as well as infrastructural resilience, the 15-minute City model is based on enabling everyone, in all neighbourhoods, to meet most of their daily needs within a short walk or bike ride of home. This is realised through numerous measures, such as repurposing 70% of Paris' street car parking spaces, significantly increasing cycle paths, improving public transport, car-free childrens' streets around schools, and a city-wide planting programme across all streets and schools.

Paris's 15-minute city concept has travelled far and wide, not least as its core values—for example, can school-children walk to good local schools nearby along green, clean, tree-lined streets?—are so fundamentally desirable and applicable. Equally, however, the concept has been 'gamed' by small lobby groups, causing difficulties for some municipalities. Yet London has overcome initial skirmishes over its similar Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods, just as leaders in cities deploying congestion charges had to hold their nerve prior to implementation—and within weeks, all such programs were highly popular, creating positive outcomes. The case of Paris indicates that strong and effective leadership, backed by solid research and careful communications, can produce extraordinary results within a handful of years. Mayor Anne Hidalgo made the 15-minute-city model the core of her successful 2020 re-election campaign.

London, United Kingdom

Population: 8,945,309 (metro 15,100,000)

Population density: 5,690 people/km²

Key drivers of change

- 1 **Climate and biodiversity action**
- 2 **Social equity**
- 3 **Local economic resilience**

Further information

- [Why every city can benefit from a '15-minute city' vision](#) (C40)
- [Paris' Vision for a '15-Minute City' Sparks a Global Movement](#) (WRI)
- [Why has the '15-minute city' taken off in Paris but become a controversial idea in the UK?](#) (The Guardian)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

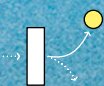
What would it take for Victorian municipalities to produce meaningful 15-minute city programs?

What kind of municipal leadership qualities, activities, and structures are required to produce similar outcomes in Victoria?

What range of benefits might accrue to towns and cities in a value model based on 15-minute city outcomes?

UK councils Shared Services model

Dynamic capabilities at work



Adjusting
priorities



Building
coalitions



Reconfiguring
for delivery

Overview

The United Kingdom Local Government Association published a report entitled ‘*Stronger Together*’ in November 2016, focusing specifically on the sharing of chief executives and senior management teams between local governments.

This shared services model was deemed necessary to achieve financial sustainability after UK local government funding was significantly reduced—cut by at least 50%—from 2010–2018. This austerity-led agenda has been coupled with continued economic slowdown, urbanisation, and the fiscal challenges posed by an aging population. What followed was the implementation of a model for shared services which has reduced costs by centralising human resources, finance, procurement, resources and data. In some cases, this has improved satisfaction with council services, which indicates that efficiencies could be found by structural sharing of services. In other cases, council services have been reduced without replacement, even in areas which have a legal requirement to operate (over 800 libraries have closed or been transferred to community groups since 2010).

Well-delivered service redesign clearly offers practical models for cost-sharing and collaboration across councils. It could offer a systematic approach to combining expertise, data, and resources to achieve shared goals, showcasing the collective potential of local government collaboration. However, it must be noted that efficiency is rarely a good strategic goal in itself.

United Kingdom

Population: n/a

Population density: n/a

Key drivers of change

- 1 Financial sustainability
- 2 Demographic change
- 3 Social equity

Further information

- [UK Local Government Association Shared Services webpage](#)
- [Local government: alternative models for service delivery briefing paper](#)
- [The impact of austerity measures on local government funding for culture in England](#)

Strategic questions for Victorian municipalities

What areas might be appropriate for shared services models, and which areas are not? What agendas and values might best guide such strategic questions?

What are the likely barriers to widespread adoption of shared services? What capabilities do municipalities need to design and build shared services?