

Designing Policy for Cities

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Abstract—Cities are impacted both by the way we live in them and by policy which is implemented on different scales in city living. Cities and broader urban areas are highly impacted by human behaviour and the unprecedented challenges they face; this indicates that a siloed urban policy approach cannot support city policy because its impact is felt across multiple sectors. To achieve a clearer picture of policy design, a mapping methodology is proposed to document policy that is essential in responding to challenges holistically. This mapping exercise will explore and understand the connections across urban policy, breaking down the silos of policy that currently exist in cities and allowing better communications between policy officers and other stakeholders in cities. One of the expected results of this proposal is to create a model for designing policy infrastructure and clarify policy implications into local practice and local action for cities and urban areas. Furthermore, to understand policy on a local level through implementing initiatives into local policy and strategies.

Keywords—Urban design policy, mapping policy, local urban policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

THIS paper explores urban policy on different levels of implementation (international, national, and local).

This research aims to understand the influences of local policy and how to design urban policy in the future as a transparent and participatory method for alternative policy solutions. It becomes clear that the main objective to fulfil the aim is to explore the current policy according to the three levels (international, national, local). The research will make recommendations based on the observations across the urban policy levels.

Historically, policy considerations are found in the early scriptures as a decision-making process in war times, and today decision making led to the interdisciplinary approach of policy [1]. Policy design primary purpose is to

identify goals and aims to bring them together into a shared vision to improve public services by offering the choice of new actions in governance [2]. Policy is a traditional practice because it depends on bureaucratic procedures in the past and its current stage; it often creates administration groups focused on specific areas, which Howlett [3] describes as the ‘traditional norm’ into how we understand the policy. Exploring the past influences on policy is probably a step into understanding the contextual implications that can influence policy and inform future policy design [4]. For example, during the 1970s, used urban design to coincide with policy to implement design solutions in the urban real - urban development was flourishing at the time [5]. White (ibid) also describes this relationship as often problematic because urban design can be seen as a doctrine imposed by the urban design team; on the contrary, policy can affect everyone within the public realm. Nowadays, due to the current urban trends (for example, digitalisation), cities generate data (usually informed by the public) and achieve high scores according to standards to compete.; that is, in a way, it gives insights for the city operations and the city assets [6]. This means that different assets in the city system impact city governance; one of the strongest assets can be considered to be the financial mechanisms of the private investment and collaboration with city governance [7]. Often, the lack of policy in urban design can also be considered policy. In cases where urban development developed arbitrarily without careful future considerations, those strategies that were developed following the arbitrary decision-making were a result of the urban design decision-making [8]. Cities have now moved on from their post-industrial development period and now have participation opportunities that they didn’t have before. This is what Evans [9] describes with the digital development into a participatory movement. It is probably clear that we lack policy to support the participatory movement in cities locally in the UK and nationally. The urban policy agenda needs to design

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participation from the local communities and design systems to assess the various stages of policy-making [10]. To implement this change process, we need to understand the challenges that change in the governance systems entails from any shift in political structures [11].

II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a mapping methodology to explore policy across the current international, national, and local contexts. The policy mapping scope aims to re-design democratic processes, understand the value of a system and the holistic impact, and vision a bottom-up approach [12]. Policy design so far considers a top-down and hierarchical process because the stakeholders in policy formulation are part of organisations in silos, or the consultation on public matters often does not represent all those affected by the developed policies. In contrast, Meissner and Kergroach [13] (2019) consider mapping an innovative tool for policy understanding and evidence. Policy design aims to understand interventions across the community and their impact on various policies [14]. Because urban policy affects all those who live, work, and spend leisure time within the urban environment is affected by how city systems are designed and operated, therefore should involve all stakeholders and communities in the urban policy agenda. Mapping policy can offer a cognitive approach to participants and obtain observations using the mapping system or sections for the democratic process [15].

A participatory process involving all community members needs supporting systems to understand the relation between the three scales of urban policy and if these can improve city living. In essence, mapping the policy landscape offers a better understanding of any contextual implications influencing policy and informing policy design [16]. Mapping is part of similar discussions, for example, the trilemma mapping for energy policy evaluation in complex systems as an informal tool to connect participants with information (either online or face to face) [17]. Similarly, Wang et al. [18] developed a mapping process for business policy documents not as a participatory method but as a document analysis using algorithmic systems to create innovative concepts. Overall, mapping policy is established as a methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the policy system and develop the ability to explore design and co-design for future urban policy [19].

A. The relationships in urban policy.

In the same way, external and internal influences affect how cities are governed, operate, and prosper. In urban policy, these influences should be considered and are internal, for example, the local culture or climate. According to national strategies, they can also be external, for instance, decreasing by half the buildings' energy, one of the Missions from the Grand Challenges [20]. These

influences should be explored in policy mapping and underpin the urban policy design. Because cities across the globe are connected to the central administration for their countries, Figure 1 below shows that national policy is central to that relationship.

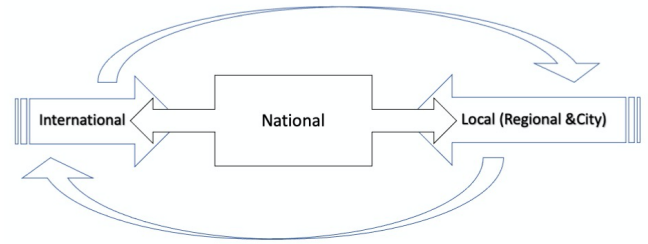


Figure 1. The three scales of international, national, and local urban policy.

International and local influences impact urban policy while there could be a need that international guidelines should be implemented locally, without becoming a national priority first [21]. This also could happen in cases of a big metropolis, implementing international policies. The methodology of this paper is applied to explore the potential relationships across these three levels and offer a basis of urban policy scales to explain and discuss among the broader stakeholder communities.

III. MAPPING URBAN POLICY

Initial findings are explained in this section across the three scales.

A. International urban policy

Internationally, there is not a common agenda for urban policy. However, some challenges are considered global, for example, climate challenges. Additionally, international concepts, one of them is smartness, which are also considered global, yet they have not adopted internationally implemented policies [22]. Figure 2 shows some of these international policies, these often suggest guidelines to respond to global challenges. These are often part of a wider policy, for example the National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP), or strategies not yet designed in policy.



Figure 2. International urban policies showing the policy landscape.

For example, the Sustainable Development Goals recommendations on a better and more sustainable future are part of a framework agenda, not yet implemented into a robust policy. Programmes which collaborate (NUPP), provide further support to countries, often with economic backing or other overarching support packages.

B. National Urban Policy (UK)

It is likely not very clear how a national urban policy can link directly to the international ones. In the UK, urban policy is described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The White Paper on Planning for the Future recently described the three pillars (development, beautiful and sustainable places, and infrastructure and connected places). Figure 3 shows the UK urban policy and influences, for example, the Planning for the Future White Paper relationship to Land Use, Archaeology, and Local Plans. This relationship can bring discussions on poorly explained areas; for example, in the Planning for the Future paper, 'beautiful places' are not fully explained, but can be realised through policy in the land use and local plans.

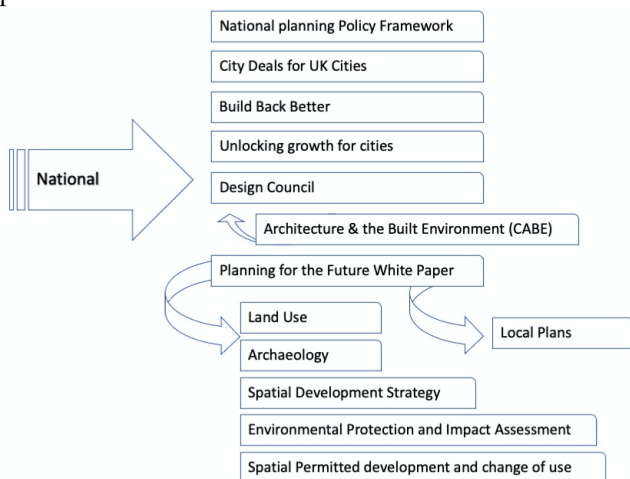


Figure 3. The national landscape of urban policy and relationship between some policies.

C. Local Policy: Regional and City level

A local policy sets the local priorities, usually described in the 20- or 30-year vision. Cities publish their local plans through an examination stage, which later brings them to a public consultation process where the wider public can provide comments or concerns before the documents are published and are accessible as public documents.

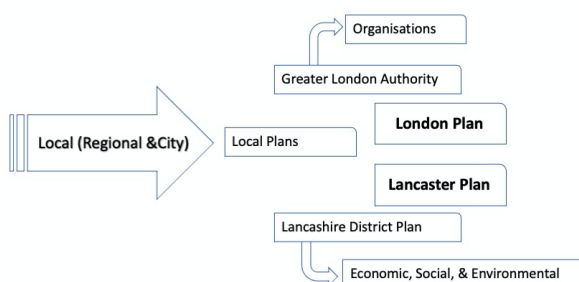


Figure 4. Mapping the local urban policy landscape (Regional and City).

The city publishes a local plan in collaboration with the County Council or as part of the unitarian authority. The city's Local Plan sets planning guidelines, whereas the County Council provides city services (education, transport, and waste). This paper highlights the importance of the local policy for cities. The local plan's vision and policy can identify the pitfall and opportunities for the city itself; this offers a good opportunity for local participation. For this reason, in the next section, London and Lancaster are used to demonstrate that cities across the UK need a tailored Local Plan to the local city context; for this reason, the London Plan and Lancaster Plan are used as references. Because this research aims to adopt a democratic and local approach, the policy contrast between London and Lancaster explores urban scale issues. A local character has a positive role in democratic policy design..

IV. WHY LOCAL POLICY MATTERS: LONDON & LANCASTER

This paper used mapping for three levels of urban that could influence the design of urban policy as a way of understanding and policy design in the broad sense [23]. There is a robust hierarchical approach across the scales, and it is essential to explore further the influences between an overarching vision considering local solutions and international visions [24]. International policy can affect local policy, an opportunity to design urban policy, especially when local policy lacks an overarching vision. A way of adding to the local design policy agenda is the use of tools for designing policy based on national policies [25]. Policy tools entail participation from across the communities in the city, ensuring transparent processes of using the tools. When it comes to implementing new policy agendas for decision-making, for example, making cities smart (or smart-er), an assessment process in the SMART tool can assess policy across the environmental, societal, financial, and governance lenses [26]. The SMART assessment is a transparent way of assessing policy. Understanding the current policy landscape and governance systems is also essential to ensure a bottom-up approach, which in policy is not a traditional route for decision-making [27]. Similar tools, can be implemented in evaluating policy, for example to understand the policy landscape. In Figure 5, the London Policy landscape shows the organisations and the themes of the Local Plan involved in the capital's operations.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) demonstrates a clear role for the organisations. In contrast, the London Local Plan sets contemporary matters (for example, the Circular Economy and Greener and Healthier cities) into the planning agenda. London's current local plan demonstrates the vision and critical areas to achieve this vision. The 'Covid Recovery' section demonstrates

changes in the urban setting, for example, to allow for more spacious public spaces.

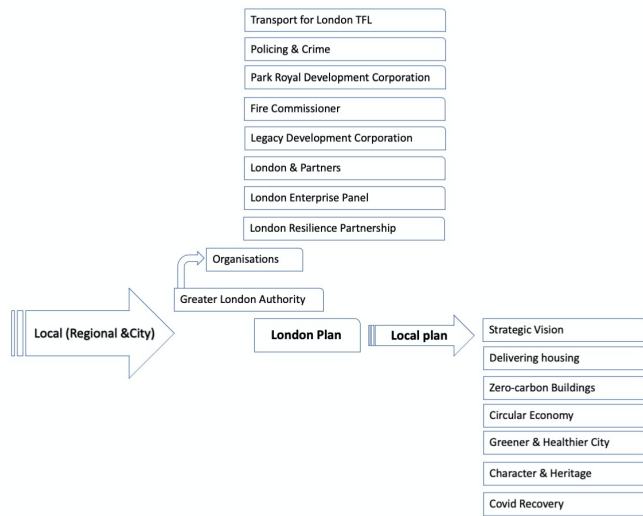


Figure 5. The London urban policy mapping, including the GLA and Local Plan.

The case for the Lancaster Local Plan differs in organisation and depth, as Figure 6 shows, it doesn't reflect the local character, as the research initially expected. Rather, the District and Local plan show generic policy areas – these can refer to any medium-size cities.

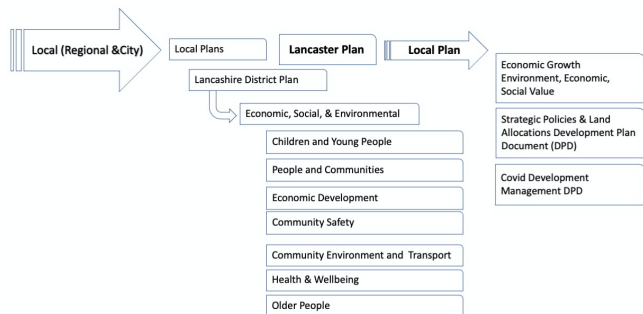


Figure 6. The Lancaster urban policy, including the Local Plan and Lancashire District Plan.

The Local Plans mapping can indicate differences between some UK cities. London as the capital might be expected to demonstrate an excellent link to national services; however other UK cities should demonstrate how their local services support the City Plan. For example, the Lancashire District Plan provides Economic, Social, and Environmental information across several areas. Lancaster's Local Plan aims to achieve Economic Growth, Environmental, and Economic value. It shows an overall agenda of areas for example, social and environmental, yet not a clear strategy of using services, especially those needed locally. This is demonstrated across two sets of documents, the Strategic Policies and Development Plan Documents.

There are considerable differences between the London and Lancaster local policies; this demonstrates local services differ in medium and larger cities. Especially in medium and smaller cities, local plans should reflect the local character in the city's vision and support the city's local characteristics. Because of the connections to organizations, capital (or larger) cities have better

opportunities for designing their urban policy. Overall, both these actions can be more self-explanatory and rationalise the policy decision-making when it comes to public consultations and local participation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING URBAN POLICY

This paper provides a mapping overview y across the international, national, and local urban policy. This was done to show a basic hierarchy across the three levels and how urban policy differs between London and Lancaster. From this research, it is recommended that local urban policy need to be designed to:

- Reflect the local character in the local services provided by the County Council and the city's Local Plan.
- Explore the hierarchical impact between international and local policy design.
- Demonstrate the city's vision to respond to current challenges as long-term planning.
- Provide an understandable, accessible explanation of the city's agenda, so the public can picture policy design and the connection to urban policy and planning.
- Explain how local urban policy is linked to the wider agendas of the national and international guidelines. Especially, demonstrate how local solutions can respond the global challenges, for example, using the SDGs as guidelines.

VI. CONCLUSION

A significant concern for this paper was to give an overview of urban policy. This overarching task is essential when designing urban policy, especially on designing policy a local level. While London seems to collaborate with organisations, Lancaster, a medium-sized city, lacks this support and its local character and needs are not designed into the local policy. When it comes to policy design, participation is also an essential aspect. Therefore, urban policy needs to be understood by all in a city, so everyone can play a part and feel that they can participate, in how policy is designed. This paper sets the foundation for further research using this mapping methodology to achieve a bottom-up approach in adverse to the hierarchical solid structures of the local urban policy. Further research is needed along with input from local policy officers to understand the limitations and opportunities of designing urban policy in the UK cities.

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- National Urban Policy: A joint initiative: The National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP) is a joint initiative of UN Habitat, OECD and Cities Alliance, aimed at working together to support the development and implementation of NUPs globally. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/national-urban-policies.htm>
- National Urban Policy <https://unhabitat.org/programme/national-urban-policy>
- Urban Development World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview>
- International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning. <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/international-guidelines/> https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ig-utp_english.pdf
- Global State of National Policy 2021 https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/GlobalStateNUP2021_Brochure_CitiesAlliance_OECD_UN-Habitat.pdf
- Cities Alliance <https://www.citiesalliance.org/>
- Urban Policy platform <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/national-urban-policy/>
- The evolution of National Urban Policies <https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/National%20Urban%20Policies.pdf>
- International Urban Cooperation programme <https://iuc.eu/na/home/> <https://www.iurc.eu/brochure/>
- Urban Policies Programme <https://www.wiego.org/our-work-impact/core-programmes/urban-policies#goals> <https://www.wiego.org/>

NATIONAL POLICY

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commission-for-architecture-and-the-built-environment-cabe>.
 Design Council <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/>
 City Deals for UK Cities.
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07158/SN07158.pdf>
 Unlocking growth for cities
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7523/CO_Unlocking_20GrowthCities_acc.pdf
 Build Back Better
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/968403/PfG_Final_Web_Accessible_Version.pdf

LOCAL POLICY

London Plan 2021
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf
 Lancaster District economic, social and environmental factors / info across 7 areas
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/lancaster-district/>
 Lancaster Local Plan
http://www.lancastergreenspaces.org.uk/uploads/8/1/1/9/8119213/2015-09_local-development-scheme.pdf
<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/about-local-plan>