What makes a great city?

Chris Tunnell and Lynne Miles
Integrated City Planning
Arup
‘A city is not one thing, but many things in negotiation’
Needs of people, business, place

Complex

Change

Contradict

Compete
What makes a great city?
A good place to do business

Source: Centre for Cities, *Urban Demographics*
Culture
Environment
Independent leisure & retail
Responsive to change
Resilience: adapting to change

- Economic fluctuations
- Climate change and environment
- Separating regeneration from gentrification
- Adapting, improving, reinventing infrastructure
- Global competition
There’s a reason Alan Partridge comes from Norwich and that’s because it’s a joke.

Other cities might get The Arse about that. What do you do, Norwich?

You mount a huge social media campaign to get the world premiere of the Alan Partridge film in a manky cinema in the crumbling and universally unloved remains of the Anglia Square shopping complex.

And of course, Norwich, you win. Steve Coogan even turns up in a helicopter for it.

*Jessica MacDonald, ‘A Love Letter to a Fine City’*
What are qualities of great cities?

### People
- Full Employment
- Opportunities for jobs and training

### Place and Space
- Suitable and affordable working and living space
- Clean and green public realm
- Well connected, accessible places
- Vibrant city centres

### Economy
- Opportunities for business to grow
- Access to resources (human, financial, physical)
- Adaptable to change and innovative

### Culture
- Open and accepting
- Creative

### Government
- Democratic and locally-accountable
- Responds to needs of local residents and businesses
Push and Pull factors

- City
- Social Networks
- Markets for business
- Job opportunities
- Culture and amenities
- Agglomeration
- Dispersion
- High competition for resources
- High Rents
- Congestion
- Crime

Arrow directions indicate movement between factors.
Milton Keynes: today and beyond
## Top economic performer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Rank in UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business start-ups per 10,000 population</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>2/64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GVA per worker</td>
<td>£61,900</td>
<td>4/63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patents granter per 10,000 population</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>10/64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Intensive Business Service Jobs (%)</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>6/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekly Earnings</td>
<td>£577</td>
<td>7/64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Centre for Cities, [www.citiesoutlook.org](http://www.citiesoutlook.org)
Milton Keynes: First-time “real city” issues

- Superlinear scaling: for better or worse
- Density and congestion
- Crime
- Urban decay and regeneration
- Growth versus historical identity
- “Big City needs”
## Tensions/issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Tension or challenge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Community collaboration vs NIMBY Greenbelt vs locations for growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Growth vs retaining character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy and skills</td>
<td>Improving local skills while attracting new talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Need vs ability to pay Car vs sustainable transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Local powers (e.g., MK Tariff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Populism vs ‘What Works’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opportunities: for discussion

- Big data, smart cities
- Valuing green infrastructure
- Cities as systems (with one another)
- Cities as innovation hubs
- Coalition building with private sector
- Devolution
- ‘Medium cities fastest growing urban agglomerations in the world.
- Flexible cities (Oxford Future of Cities programme)