Long-Term Resilient and Sustainable Cities: A Scoping Paper

A NESC-Maynooth University Webinar

15th April 2021

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta
National Economic & Social Council

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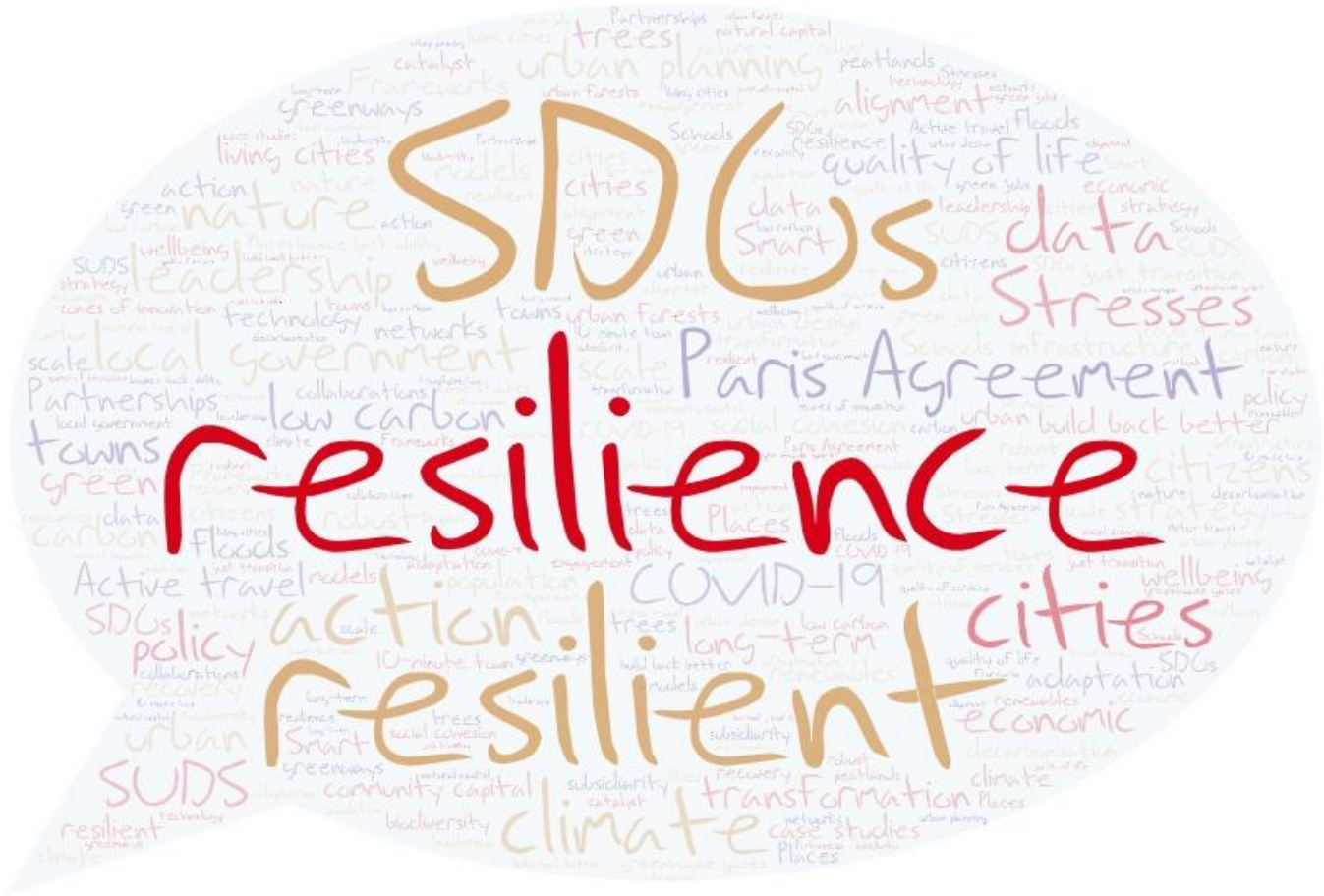
Purpose of the research



- A scoping paper to explore the conditions required to enable cities across the island of Ireland to build resilience, and develop sustainability.
- Review of literature and policy, vignettes, case study and interviews with government officials
- Identification of
  - principles for resilient and sustainable cities
  - readiness of Irish cities
  - future investigations needed

A Five-Part Presentation

- Understanding ‘Resilience’
- Global Goals and Local Responses and Actions
- Resilience on the Island of Ireland – An Analysis
- Key Findings
- Further Investigations

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Understanding Resilience

Understanding Resilience

- A concept rooted in action – not just high level principles
- Not well defined - criticised for vagueness & malleability
- A ‘bridging concept’
- Speaks to ability of places to engage with hazards/stressors
- Engaging the quadruple helix

Fostering Resilience

Resilience is not a new concept…but it is evolving

1960s: Associated with systems change and achieving equilibrium

2000s: Shift to association with place and their ‘bounce-back ability’

2010s: emphasis on ‘bounce-forward’ and Build Back Better

Defining ‘Resilience’

“Urban resilience refers to the ability of an urban system – and all its constituent socio-ecological and socio-technical networks across temporal and spatial scales – to maintain or rapidly return to desired functions in the face of a disturbance, to adapt to change, and to quickly transform systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity”

(Meerow et al, 2016)

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Global Goals and Local Responses and Actions

Global Goals

FRAMEWORKS

- ICLEI Milestone Framework
- UN-Habitat City Resilience Profiling Tool
- Rockefeller & Arup
- World Bank
- U.S. EPA

PROGRAMMES

- UN SDGs
- Paris Agreement (COP 21)
- UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
- UN's New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)
- European Green Deal

NETWORKS

- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
- Resilient Cities Network (previously 100 RC)
- Global Convenant of Mayors
- C40 Cities
- 8 80 Cities

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PIONEERED BY THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

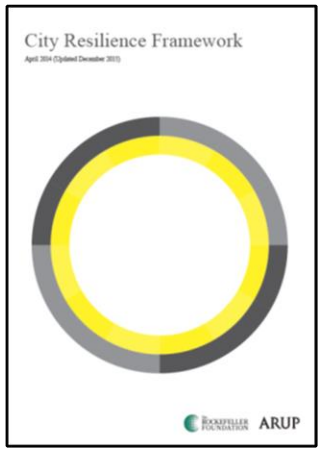
(@ Visit Belfast)

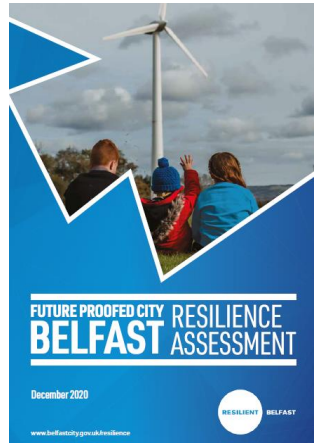
(@ The Guardian)

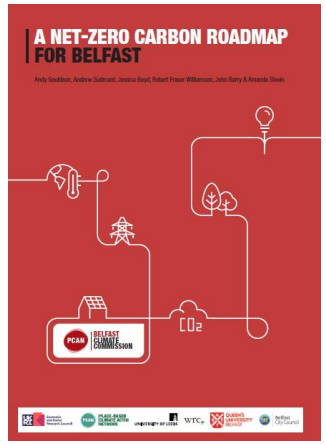
(@ Lonely Planet)

The Value of Collaboration

- Collaboration key to delivering place-based impact
- Importance of timing..
- Engagement with higher education – research & longitudinal analysis
- The evidence base – understanding the paradoxes







Placing an Emphasis on Implementation

A dedicated resource

Oversight Body: Partnership Board

Number of sub-boards established

Multi-agency - getting key agencies around the table with role in building resilience

Learnings from Local Responses

- Resilience is highly contextual
  - Need to be multi-faceted, with large stakeholder groupings
  - Solutions must take into account local considerations (geography, legacy infrastructures, local knowledge)
- Resilient Cities must have the ability to self-govern
  - Principle of Subsidiarity …..while also having ‘authority’
  - Institutionalisation…..providing legitimacy and disrupting ‘silo-thinking’
  - Appropriate governance structures
- Resilience must include social resilience
- Resilient Cities are ‘Living Cities’
  - Resilient Strategies are ‘Living’ Documents

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Resilience on the island of Ireland – An Analysis

Climate Resilience

A deepening – and better integrated – policy environment emerging

Planning for climate change is non-linear

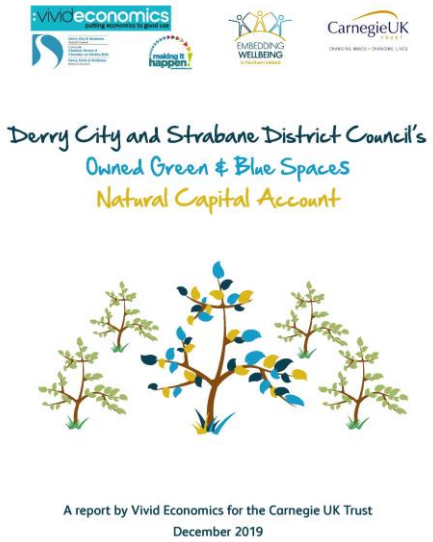
Approaches to mitigate & adapt to climate change will impact future enterprise, jobs and shape society

Key role of place – compact growth, sustainable mobility, energy transition, food security, retrofitting, etc.

Growing role for Local Government - vital role of place-based approach…..and ensuring no-one gets left behind.

Environmental Resilience

- Focus on nature-based assets – parks, green spaces, open spaces
- Contribute to climate resilience but also better air quality, health, and quality of life
- National Agenda: Emphasis on decarbonisation zones
- Regional Agenda: Just Transition / bog restoration
- Local: green infrastructure



" a £5.5bn investment in urban green infrastructure would generate over £200bn of physical and mental health benefits" (Vivid Economics, 2020)

Socio-Economic Resilience

- Strongly linked to climate resilience, environmental quality, quality of services and creating better opportunities
- Post-COVID, growing emphasis on green recovery as pathway to better economy, better health and wellbeing and a just transition
- Diversification (with culture change) needs to be embraced
- Keep role of education – LLL and upskilling
- Right conditions requires integration between the liveability, community , natural capital, health and sustainability of place
- Opportunities for rural Ireland

(@Our Rural Future, 2021)

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Key Findings

The Principles for Resilient Cities

Open Data – key role in identifying and understanding shocks, stresses and strains – and their inter-connectedness

Openness and transparency – Who, What, Where, When and Why

Inclusivity of process – collaboration and strong local leadership

Principle of Subsidiarity

Create liveable cities

Effectiveness of Resilience to Environmental, Social and Economic Challenges

BEING INTEGRATED INTO OTHER SUSTAINABILITY AGENDAS

RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘PLACE’ AND SPATIAL PLANNING

ACCEPTING ITS LIMITATIONS AND IDENTIFYING ANY STRATEGY AS A ‘LIVING DOCUMENT

UNDERSTANDING ITS RISKS, ITS VULNERABILITIES

HAVING ACCESS TO OPEN DATA AND RELEVANT INFORMATION

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Further Investigations

There is no one single model…….

- Definition of a ‘living city’ in an island of Ireland context
- Who are the actors?
- The inter-relationships between local and central government
- The inter-relationships between cities….considering scale
- Models of governance
- The variances – if any – between urban and rural resilience

Thank You