



FUTURE CITIES AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The University of Birmingham is at the forefront of research into the development and productivity of cities and economic regions. Our interdisciplinary capacity enables us to take an integrated economic, infrastructure engineering and social policy approach to these challenges. The University takes seriously its role as a convening power and economic driver for the West Midlands.

Key messages

- The City-Region Economic Development Institute (City-REDI) is making an important impact on EU and UK regional policy and on policy development across the West Midlands.
- The Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) is the UK's leading academic centre for research and teaching on local governance and strategic public management, enriching the world of local public service with research evidence and innovative ideas, making a positive difference in this area.
- The Public Service Academy (PSA) plays an important part in the civic engagement work of the College of Social Sciences,

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£1 MILLION

spanning the research/policy/practice divide and offering a platform for strategic interaction with public service bodies within the city as well as other national and international partners.

Background

- The ongoing devolution agenda in the UK has returned the region and local economy to the centre of the policy-making agenda. It has become important to understand the functioning economic geographies of local economies and specifically of urban economies.
- City-REDI provides an important mechanism for bringing together the University's research on local and regional economies to develop new approaches that can be translated into policy.

- The city of Birmingham and the West Midlands is responding to the simultaneous challenges: of maximising the benefits of significant new opportunities offered by inward investment and major infrastructure projects; matching the skills of its workforce to the emergent needs of a range of employers; balancing the need to attract skilled workers to the region with the need to generate employment opportunities for its existing citizens; enabling citizens to take greater ownership of the public services that citizens want and need; and fostering an inclusive, cohesive and fair city region for its large and growing super-diverse and young population.
- This ongoing area of research reflects the sustained interest in how sub-national and urban governance arrangements can help to facilitate and drive economic development and growth.
- At a national level, this was manifested under the UK coalition government through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and enterprise zones. These initiatives have been accelerated with the recent announcements concerning devolution to English cities, notably to Manchester, which are designed to boost local growth.

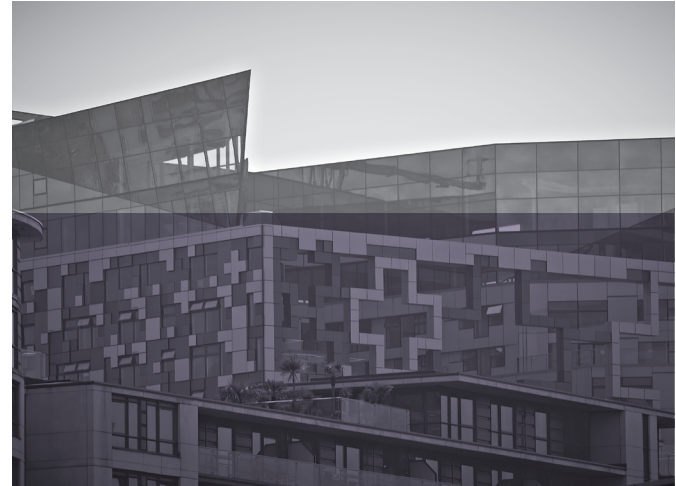


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The evidence

- Research undertaken by the City-REDI has been funded by national and international private and public sector sponsors. The group has long-standing engagements with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), Birmingham City Council (BCC), the UK government and the European Commission (DG Enterprise and Industry), demonstrating the practical relevance and credibility of the research and its impact, particularly on the development of EU policy interventions in the area of regional policy and on policy development across the West Midlands.
- In the past five years, INLOGOV has won almost 40 new research grants to a value of approximately £1 million.
- The PSA has a strong record of working in partnership with Birmingham City Council and new partnerships with Birmingham Education Partnership, Warwickshire County Council and West Midlands Police are in development.



Key projects

- The Second City and Regional Economy Research Programme is exploring the regional dynamics of the economy of the West Midlands, including the city of Birmingham and surrounding rural areas. Ongoing research focuses on local infrastructure and alternative business models in addition to the competitiveness of manufacturing and business and professional service firms.
- Research, impact and engagement work undertaken by the PSA includes the '21st Century Public Servant' knowledge transfer project; 'Destination Work Youth Employment Initiative' evaluation; the 'Social Work Academy' seminar series; and ongoing contributions to BCC's 'Future Council' initiative, including current contributions to the city partnership and 'City Plan', and 'Localisation' and 'Fair Funding' initiatives.
- Research at INLOGOV spans themes such as public institutions and governance, public performance and delivery, and democracy, representation and participation.

