

INTERNATIONAL ECO-CITIES INITIATIVE

International Eco-Cities Initiative

April 2017

Welcome to the latest issue of the International Eco-Cities Initiative newsletter. The bulletin (published three times per year) provides information about our research, events and publications, and contributes to analysis and discourse on 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

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Article: The smart city and its publics

Smart cities have been criticised for implementing technology in ways that do not pay sufficient attention to political or social issues. In response, this new article, published in the *Journal of Urban Research & Practice*, explores the role of the public in smart city initiatives. Co-authored by Rob Cowley, Simon Joss and Youri Dayot, the article conceptualises different public dimensions of the smart city, and examines related practices across six UK cities: Bristol, Glasgow, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, and Peterborough. Based on the 68 initiatives analysed, the authors conclude that the 'service user' and 'entrepreneurial' modes of the public are dominant, while 'civic' and 'political' forms are more ephemeral and underdeveloped.

- [Read the full article](#)

Essay: Beyond the compact city – a London case study

Might it be time to reconsider the 'compact city' ideal in planning? A new paper by Duncan Bowie, using London as a case study, argues that development options beyond the city core should be given more consideration. Many urbanists argue that the compact city approach to the development of megacities is

preservation and reductions in transport costs, congestion and emissions. This paper critiques the continuing focus on higher density and hyper-density residential development in London. It considers the compact city assumptions incorporated in strategic planning in London from the first London Plan of 2004, examining the failings of these, before reviewing the options for, and potential benefits of, alternative development pathways.

- [Read the full news item](#)
- [Download the paper](#)

Article: The New Urban Agenda – key opportunities and challenges

The UN-HABITAT III conference held in Quito in late 2016 enshrined the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) with an exclusively urban focus. SDG 11, as it became known, aims to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through a range of metrics, indicators and evaluation systems. It also became part of a post-Quito 'New Urban Agenda' that is still taking shape. In response, this paper, co-authored by nine international scholars with a joint interest in urban futures, raises some pertinent questions around the potential for reductionism in this new agenda, and argues for the reflexive need to be aware of the types of urban space that are potentially side-lined by new trends in global urban policy.

- [Read the full article](#)

Report: Smart-eco cities in China

A new research report provides a comprehensive overview of 'smart-eco' policy trends in China, including case studies of twelve cities. It is the latest of a number of country reports published as part of the SMART-ECO research programme, which looks at initiatives across Europe and China. The concept of the 'smart-eco' city reflects what is often a large overlap between the newer 'smart' agenda (usually focusing on areas such as ICT, urban infrastructure and governance) and the existing sustainability agenda (covering areas such as energy, waste management and mobility as well as economic development).

- [Download the China report](#)
- [Visit the SMART-ECO Project page for more information](#)

Doctoral researcher: Florence Nassali

We are pleased to welcome Florence Nassali, a doctoral researcher investigating resilient governance processes for emerging economies in the wake of climate change. Using Kampala Capital City Authority (Uganda) as a case study, her work will focus on examining opportunities for, and barriers to, improved governance practices in emerging African economies. She seeks to analyse institutions in terms of their transparency and accountability, and their ability to promote community resilience, effective reconstruction and recovery after weather-related shocks. She hopes her work will lead to recommendations on how to improve governance systems for sustainability. This doctoral project is supervised by Dr Dan Greenwood and Professor Simon Joss.

- [View Florence's full profile](#)

Doctoral researcher: Megan Sharkey

We are also pleased to welcome Megan Sharkey, a doctoral researcher whose research aims to link community-led movements to the larger urban infrastructure needs required to attain more resilient and sustainable cities. This research focuses on movements across three countries (Australia, USA, and UK). Through a large-scale macro study, it aims to identify barriers that may prevent these movements from creating permanent sustainable development infrastructure within local government and the potential impacts they could achieve without such barriers. It will also investigate interactions between government and industry groups. Megan is particularly interested in tactical urbanism, community energy, active travel and urban gardening movements. This project is supervised by Professors Michael Neuman and Simon Joss.

- [View Megan's full profile](#)

Presentation: Dresden Nexus Conference 2017

Please join us next month in Dresden, where Jan Gerhards will be presenting his doctoral research at the

and soil and waste management. Jan's research project is a collaboration between the University of Westminster and Bioregional, the creators of the One Planet Living framework. His project explores the issue of standardisation versus context sensitivity for urban sustainability frameworks that are replicated, and used for certification, across varied local contexts. The session will be co-convened by Professor Bernhard Müller, the Director of the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER), and Professor Simon Joss.

- [View the conference website](#)
- [Read Jan's profile](#)

LinkedIn discussion forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 640 members, including researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It invites contributions from around the world, aimed at discussing and sharing information, reflections and practical learning on sustainable urbanism in its various forms.

- [Join the International Eco-Cities Forum](#)

Further information

For more information about the International Eco-Cities Initiative and to sign up for news and events, please see our [website](#).

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