Next steps for the Newcastle Learning and Action alliance

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Structure of session

• What are LAAs?
• Role within the wider BlueGreenCities project
• The Newcastle experience
  • Group formation
  • Vision and objectives
  • Activities undertaken
• Challenges and lessons learnt
What is a Learning and Action Alliance?

- A cooperative, horizontal forum where people can bring expertise, but talk freely outside of any organisational constraints in an atmosphere of mutual trust and ownership.
- Dynamic groupings that can grow organically, being open to all who have an interest, but within it specific sub-groupings to focus on particular interests and problems are encouraged.
- A platform to facilitate open knowledge-sharing and discussions, encouraging the development of a clearer vision and enabling progress towards that end.
- This may involve participants willing to take risks and discuss options previously outside the constraints of existing formal institutional settings.
- Solutions or ideas are afterwards presented in formal inter-organisational decision-making processes.
- Used successfully in Sheffield, Bergen, Hamburg, Hannover and Taiwan to support FRM strategies.
Why?

- Lack of trust
- Lack of knowledge
- Jargon
- Too Busy
- Somebody else’s problem?
- Silo thinking
- Fragmentation of knowledge
Stages in the life of the LAA

- **Establishment** – core group of investigators driven by a shared vision
- **Functioning** – delivering on the vision (reference, legitimacy, mutual respect and trust), challenging regulations and developing novel ideas
- **Sustainability** – maintaining interest, specific project focus, continual emphasis of the benefits of participation and addition of new benefits over time
Role within the BlueGreenCities project

- Main project selected Newcastle as demonstration City (WP5)
- Main vehicle to enable local communications into the project (WP1)
- Sought to maximise local engagement with researchers, but also each other
The Newcastle experience

• A number of regular meetings, which aimed to increase shared understanding through:
  • Developing a shared vision and strategic objectives
  • Stakeholder Mapping
  • Mapped known/existing projects
  • Reviewed ongoing projects (e.g. City Centre North Transport)
  • Sharing knowledge, skills and experience (e.g. financing blue and green infrastructure, implementing SuDS)
  • Provided steer and input into main work packages of project – leveraged local knowledge
• Established through local networks and informal drinks
Model adopted

• Set out different levels of involvement
• Allowed flexibility for different stakeholders to participate as they felt appropriate
Vision and strategic objectives

• “The Vision is for Newcastle to become a city that follows the principles of a Blue-Green City by maximising the opportunities to achieve multiple benefits of Blue-Green approaches to surface water management.”
Strategic Objectives

- To develop novel ideas and Blue-Green strategies for Newcastle, and promote these to create opportunities for uptake of Blue-Green approaches in Newcastle.

- To explore ways in which institutional barriers can be overcome and seek to promote the “best” options that incorporate Blue-Green development.

- To identify and communicate with important influencers, stakeholders and communities about the benefits of the Blue-Green approach.

- To challenge traditional approaches and indicate how new benefits will be generated and how these can promote partnerships in Newcastle.
Strategic objectives (cont’d)

• To promote the broad vision through identifying specific challenges and locations of interest in the Newcastle region that may be improved by Blue-Green approaches.

• To develop location-specific Blue-Green strategies that may inform the plans enacted by the organisations represented by LAA members and beyond.

• The strategies will include input from multiple organisations with diverse drivers for supporting the approaches, resulting in a negotiated approach that can create multiple benefits.

• The LAA will communicate these strategies to other stakeholders including the Blue-Green Cities Research Consortium in order to influence stakeholder actions and research directions.
Stakeholder Mapping

- Identified stakeholders that were not at the start-up workshop but that play a key role in Newcastle FRM and the creation of a Blue-Green vision, and so should be represented.

- Discussed relationships between key stakeholders and developed a draft stakeholder map, to show the different levels of influence and responsibility regarding implementation of Blue-Green infrastructure.
Sharing aspirations

- Freemen of the City
- Newcastle City Council
  - Flood Risk
  - Climate Change
  - Transport
- NWL
- Newcastle University

Pilot study on Tyneside

- Multi agency
- Sustainable ‘joined up’ solutions
  - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
  - Rain gardens
  - Removing surface water
  - Sustainable growth
- Outputs identified real opportunities
  - Monkton Village
  - Killingworth & Longbenton
  - SW separation in Newcastle City
- Template for future partnership working
  - Independent review
  - Industry leading approach
Personal perspective

• Can be a leap of faith – so much focus on delivery and known priorities

• Challenges perceptions, views and opinions

• Initial effort needed to overcome inertia

• Number of potentially interested people!
Next steps

• Continued meeting of group
• Inviting others to attend and explore ideas – e.g. NE1 Business Improvement District, Health?
• Move into delivery?
• Seek new collaborations to change approaches:
  • £K Innovate project – ‘cities integrated by design’
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