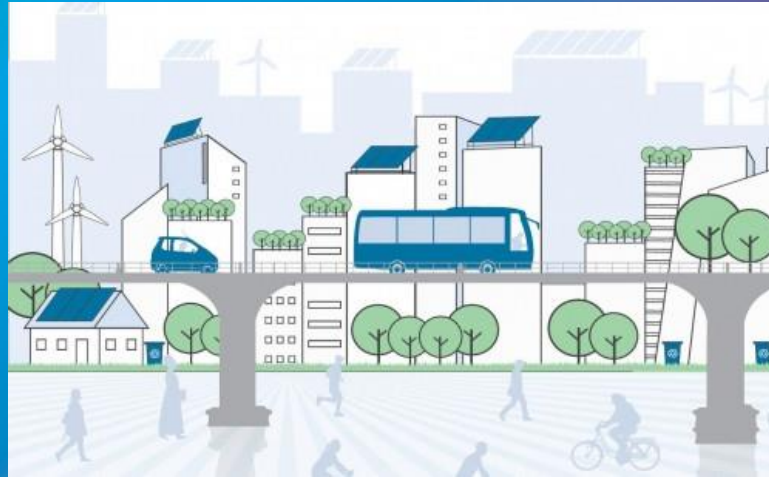


Local government sustainable energy capacities: scale, context and materiality



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Outline

- Specific focus on capacity of local government in sustainable energy
- ‘Capacity’ widely referred to but largely in relation to (1) a lack of capacity or (2) how capacity relates to national institutions
- Developed a typology of local government capacity and linked to contextual factors
- Applied conceptual framework to 7 case studies in England.
- Based on 60+ interviews, three workshops and attendance to numerous events

Capacity Type	Description
Responsibilities	Statutory duties; defined political responsibility; often assigned by central government and/or national constitution
Autonomy	Policy discretion; capabilities to decide on policies in relation to the locality, rather than contributing to national policy
Financial Assets	Local financial resources; tax raising abilities; access to capital; property and land ownership
Personnel	Personal capital; numbers and quality of staff capable of making and implementing sustainable energy strategies, policies, investments
Knowledge	Experience; access to specific forms of knowledge; sustainable learning
Energy Geographies	Proximity to renewable/clean energy resources; space for renewables; low carbon energy assets; energy legacies

But what about context?

- But capacities to ensure sustainable energy transitions are also contextually contingent (Beveridge and Kern, 2016; Kuzemko, 2019)
- Examined factors that interrelate with capacities
- What factors are driving shifts in, or limiting realisation of, capacities?

Local Authority Sustainable Energy Capacity Types

Capacity Types

- Responsibilities
 - Autonomy
- Financial assets
 - Personnel
 - Knowledge
- Energy geographies

Context

National and global
political economies

Local political
economies

Energy & Climate
Policy

Material aspects
of energy systems



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Local Authority

Context

National and global political economies

Supporting the Energy Service Bristol



City Leap Prospectus

A soft market test exercise for potential partners in a city low carbon, smart infrastructure project

Devolution focus

Barriers

ECO programme poor fit for Cornwall

Grid constraints

Stagnating community energy groups

Cornwall Deal

Energy Efficiency pilot

Grid and Storage pilots

Community ownership pilots

Geothermal and Enterprise Zones



ENERGY CAPITAL



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Local Authority Sustainable Energy Capacity Types

- Responsibilities
- Autonomy



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Context

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Local Authority Sustainable Energy Capacity Types

- Responsibility
- Authority
- Financial
- Political
- Knowledge
- Energy geographies

DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY



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Local Authority Sustainable Energy

Capacity

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- Au
- Finan
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- Kno
- Energy



Context

National and global political economies

Local political economies

Climate

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systems

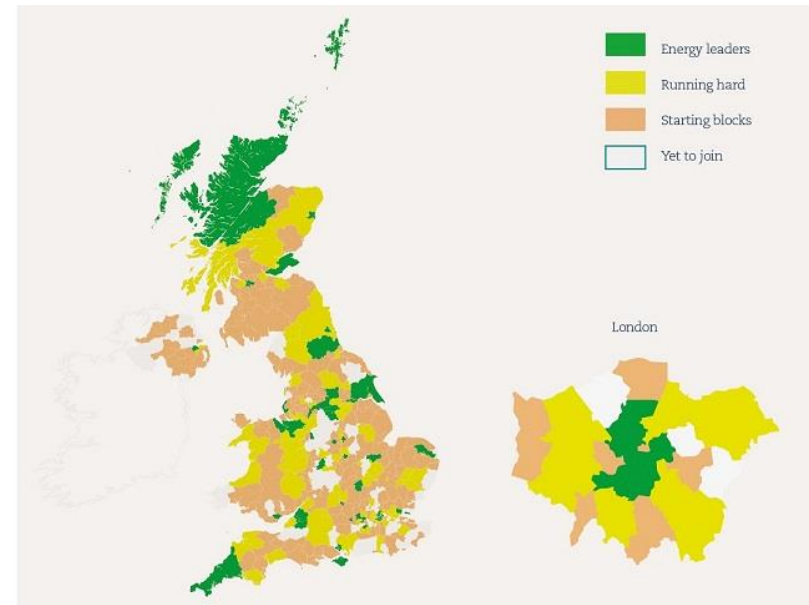


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Conclusion

- Presented framework to help understand not just how LA capacity is constrained but the diversity of capacity and how it can be shaped by changes to political and material landscapes.
- Being specific about capacity reveals some types of capacity are particularly important – e.g. knowledge and responsibilities.
- Could suggest embedding specialist staff and knowledge in LAs could driver longer-term capacity in other areas (financial, autonomy, understanding of local energy materialities)?
- But still the question of responsibilities



Webb, Tingey and Hawkey 2017

