Conference Brochure

LPIP HUB

UKRI Delivered by ESRC, AHRC and Innovate UK

LPIP Hub Place Partnerships Networking Conference

2 - 3 November 2026

The Exchange

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Welcome to the LPIP Hub Place Partnerships Networking Conference

We are delighted to welcome you to this two-day conference, marking the culmination of the **LPIP Strategic Co-ordination Hub (2023–2026)** and celebrating three years of place-based partnership across all four nations of the UK.

The Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIP) programme has brought together universities, communities, practitioners and policymakers to address local challenges through place-based research and collaboration. This conference is an opportunity to celebrate what we have achieved, share what we have learned and look ahead to the future of place-based working across the UK.

Over the next two days, you will hear from the people and places at the heart of the programme—including community partners, researchers, policymakers and fellows. Through interactive sessions, an immersive exhibition, a specially commissioned theatre performance and open conversations about what works—and what does not—in place-based research, we hope to create space for reflection, connection and new ideas.

Thank you for joining us. We hope you enjoy the conference and leave feeling inspired by the partnerships, learning and possibilities that lie ahead.

Professor Rebecca Riley



Key Information



Conference Venue Address:

The Exchange,
3 Centenary Square,
Birmingham,
B1 2DR

Click here to see the venue on Google Maps
Click here to view the accessibility guide for the venue.

Conference Registration Desk

Date	Opening Times	Location
Monday 2 November	9:00am – 5:00pm	The Shared Catering Lounge, The Exchange
Tuesday 3 November	9:00am – 4:00pm	The Shared Catering Lounge, The Exchange

Conference Social Events

Date & Time	Event	Location
Monday 2 November, 5:30pm – 6:15pm	Stan's Café: "At Home with the Green Book" A specially commissioned theatre performance	The Café at The Exchange
Monday 2 November, 6:15pm – 7:15pm	Pre-Dinner Drinks	The Shared Catering Lounge, The Exchange
Monday 2 November, 7:15pm – 10:00pm	Conference Dinner	The Assembly Room, The Exchange

Travel Information

Sustainable Travel

Please help us to reduce the environmental impact of the conference by considering your method of travel carefully.

If you download/access **the app "What 3 Words** you can locate The Exchange with the following references:

1. North Entrance location: **pack.boom.grit**
2. South Entrance location: **chins.monday.farmer**

Train

The nearest train station to The Exchange is Birmingham New Street, a short 10-minute walk away. Snow Hill and Five Ways stations are 0.7 miles away, whilst Moor Street is 0.9 miles from the venue. All are within a 20-minute walk of The Exchange.

Visiting us from Campus?

Just hop on the train at University Station, direct to Birmingham New Street, and walk to The Exchange all within 25 minutes (service permitting).
Timetables and service updates are available from the **National Rail website**.

Metro

The **West Midlands Metro** takes you directly to Centenary Square from New Street Station/Grand Central. From here, there are only two quick stops until you arrive at The Exchange (stop opposite the Library).

Bus

Centenary Square is served by several bus routes, and the nearest bus stop is Baskerville House. **Online bus timetables are available on the National Express West Midlands website.**

Car

Centenary Square cannot be accessed directly by car. Therefore, we recommend putting the postcode of your chosen car park into your satnav, rather than The Exchange's postcode.
The Exchange lies within Birmingham's Clean Air Zone. You can find out if you need to pay for your vehicle via the GOV.UK website, as well as pay the daily fee (if eligible) after or before your journey.

Parking

There is no on-site parking at the venue, however, you'll find plenty of pay-and-display parking nearby. The nearest multi-storey car parks are Paradise Circus, Town Hall, and Navigation Street, just a 5-minute walk away (0.3 miles). Street parking is also available at Bridge Street, located just 5 minutes away.

The nearest car park to The Exchange with designated Blue Badge parking bays is Cambridge Street. From here, the venue is just 192 yards away. A good alternative is Paradise Circus multi-storey car park (243 yards away).

For detailed information about the travel options, please visit the of the conference website.



Explore Birmingham

Birmingham Library

The award-winning Library of Birmingham is one of Europe's largest regional libraries and a landmark building at the heart of the city's redevelopment. Visitors can explore its extensive collections, enjoy a coffee, and take in spectacular panoramic views of Birmingham from the rooftop terraces.





Victoria & Chamberlain Square

Victoria and Chamberlain Squares are at the heart of Birmingham's cultural and civic quarter. Together, they showcase some of the city's most iconic landmarks, including Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which houses world-class art collections, as well as the impressive Council House and historic Town Hall.

BrindleyPlace

If you're looking for somewhere to eat and drink, head to BrindleyPlace, one of Birmingham's most vibrant destinations. Just a 10-minute walk from Birmingham New Street Station, BrindleyPlace offers a variety of international restaurants, cafés, and bars, set among attractive tree-lined squares with picturesque canal-side views.





Digbeth

Located less than a 10-minute walk from Bullring & Grand Central, named the 'Coolest Neighbourhood in Britain' by the Sunday Times, Digbeth is renowned for its vibrant independent scene, including the Custard Factory's cafés, shops, cinemas, and arts venues. The area is also home to historic pubs, street art, and a thriving food and drink scene.

Sea Life Centre

Located close to Brindleyplace, the National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham offers a unique underwater experience, including the UK's only 360° Ocean Tunnel. Walk through the ocean as sharks, a giant turtle, rays, and hundreds of tropical fish swim all around you, creating an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages.





Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park

Located just one mile from campus, Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park is home to a fascinating collection of animals from around the world. Visitors can discover a variety of species, including red pandas, lemurs, meerkats, otters, reptiles, birds, wallabies, and monkeys, making it a great destination for animal lovers of all ages.

Cadbury World

Located in, Bournville is home to the famous Cadbury's World attraction. A visit offers a fun-filled chocolate experience, making it a popular day out and one of the UK's favourite family attractions.



Still looking for more to do? Find more at www.visitBirmingham.com

Conference Programme

Day One – Celebrating What We Built

Looking back, sharing stories, showcasing evidence

Time	Session
9:00 – 9:30	**Registration, Coffee & Exhibition** Arrive, explore the exhibition, and add your story to the interactive "**Place Wall**" — what does place mean to you?
9:30 – 10:15	**Opening Plenary Session: "The LPIP Story"** • **Welcome & Introduction** — Professor Des McNulty, Advisory Board Chair, University of Glasgow • **The Hub Journey** — Professor Rebecca Riley, Principal Investigator, LPIP Hub, University of Birmingham • **The Funder's Perspective** — David Legg, UKRI **Location:** The Assembly Room
10:15 – 11:15	**Plenary Panel Session: "Place-Based Working — Has UKRI's Moment Arrived?"** Drawing on the UKRI Working with Places Forum (March 2026), this session examines whether place-based research funding has come of age — and what needs to happen next. **Panellists:** • Professor David Sweeney — Former Head of Research England (Chair) • Professor Rebecca Riley — LPIP Hub • Dr. Joe Shearring - UKRI Place Lead • Dr. Andrew Charlesworth-May - MHCLG Representative • Dr. Nina Ruddle LPIP Fellow — Civic Perspective Drawing on the UKRI Working with Places Forum (March 2026), this session examines whether place-based research funding has come of age — and what needs to happen next. **Location:** The Assembly Room
11:15 – 11:30	**Coffee, Networking & Exhibition**

<table>
<tr><td>11:30 – 13:00</td><td colspan="4">LPIP Showcase: "Four Nations, Four Stories"

Each of the four Local Policy Innovation Partnerships presents their journey, achievements, and legacy — told through the voices of both researchers and community partners: Human stories first, research framing second.

• Cymru Wledig — Rural Wales – Professor Michael Woods
• EPIC Futures NI — Northern Ireland - Professor Kristel Miller
• Forth2O — Scotland - Katherine Champion and Katriona Lundberg
• YPIP — Yorkshire - Kersten England CBE

Location: The Assembly Room</td></tr>
<tr><td>13:00 - 14:00</td><td colspan="4">Lunch, Networking & Exhibition
Meet the Place Fellows over lunch. Browse the full exhibition and poster displays.</td></tr>
<tr><td>14:00 – 15:30</td><td colspan="4">Parallel Break Out Sessions – Round 1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Track A: What Works in Place-Based Research Partnerships
Sophie Duncan
Contributors: Kirsty Blackstock, Amy Nicholass
An interactive workshop exploring governance, trust, co-production, and power dynamics. Work through real scenarios from the LPIP programme and discuss what happens when partnerships are fragile and funding is short-term.

Location: Stuart Hall Room</td><td>Track B: Evidence for Place — The Hub's Research Legacy
Anne Green
Contributor: Melissa Tornari
A rapid showcase of the Hub's thematic evidence reviews — Innovation, Skills, Cultural Recovery, Economic Performance, Communities in Place, and Net Zero — followed by roundtable discussion on the gaps that remain.

Location: The Assembly Room</td><td>Track C: The Business Case Game
Alice Pugh
The interactive game developed for the Culture & Place hackathon, where mixed teams of academics, practitioners, policymakers, and community members work through the dynamics of building a place-based business case. Revealing, provocative, and fun.

Location: Dhani Prem Room</td><td>Track D: Skills for Place Leadership — What's Missing from the Curriculum?"
Abigail Taylor, Jamie Ounan
Contributor: Katriona Lundberg
What should place leaders know? How do we embed innovation, trust-building, and community voice into professional development for local leaders? An interactive session exploring the gap between what's taught and what's needed.

Location: Mary Sturge Room</td></tr>
<tr><td>15:30 – 16:00</td><td colspan="4">Refreshment Break</td></tr>
<tr><td>16:00 – 17:00</td><td colspan="4">Plenary Session: "Honest Reflections — What We'd Do Differently"
Professor Rebecca Riley
Contributors: Kirsty Blackstock

Location: The Assembly Room</td></tr>
</table>

17:00 – 17:15	**Day One Close** Professor Des McNulty **Location:** The Assembly Room
17:30 – 18:15	**Stan's Cafe presents: "At Home with the Green Book"** A specially commissioned theatre performance **Location:** The Banking Hall
18:15 – 21:00	**Drinks Reception followed by Conference dinner** • **Placecast Live** — special recording with guest interviews; drop by the mic • **Recognition moments** — celebrating key partners, fellows, board members, and the people who made the programme possible. – **Abigail Taylor, Des McNulty, Rebecca Riley** • **Community voices** — a partner from an LPIP shares what the programme meant to them **Location:** The Shared Catering Lounge and The Assembly Room

Day Two – What Comes Next

Legacy, sustainability, and the future of place-based working

Time	Session			
9:00 – 9:30	**Coffee, Arrival & Exhibition**			
9:30 – 10:15	**Opening Keynote Speaker: The Future of Place in UK Economic Development Policy; Lessons from Fifty Years of UK Regeneration Policy** Professor Pete Tyler Chair: Des McNulty **Location:** The Assembly Room			
10:15 – 11:30	**Parallel Breakout Sessions — Round 2**			
	Track E: Civic 2.0 — Universities as Place-Based Anchors Richard Brabner, Lee Sanders Contributors: Rhian Curtis, Amy Nicholass Exploring findings from the Civic 2.0 programme and the future role of universities in place. **Location:** The Assembly Room	**Track F: Culture, Creativity & Place** Dan Ashton, Abi Gilmore, Sara Hassan Contributors: Katherine Champion, Eifiona Thomas Lane Drawing on the Cultural Recovery evidence review, this workshop explores cultural strategies, the Cultural Strategies Think Kit, and creative placemaking — with perspectives from arts and cultural organisations. **Location:** Stuart Hall Room	**Track G: AI, Skills & the Green Transition — Inseparable Agendas** Anne Green, Calvin Jones Contributors: Kirsty Blackstock, Sophie Wynne-Jones, Aimee Morse A practical policy session on the cross-cutting themes emerging from the Hub's research. AI adoption is accelerating but uneven — what governance is needed? Skills and the green transition are inseparable — how do places plan for both? **Location:** Dhani Prem Room	**Track H: Innovation & Growth Transitions** Fumi Kitagawa, Chloe Billing, Nicola Headlam, Si Chun Lam, David Legg, Nina Ruddle What works in innovation approaches at the local level? A participatory mapping exercise: "What does innovation look like in YOUR place?" Drawing on the Hub's evidence and blog themes. **Location:** Mary Sturge Room
11:30 – 12:00	**Refreshment Break**			
12:00 – 13:00	**The Legacy Session: "A Letter to the Next Funder"** A **World Café** session where delegates rotate between themed tables, each addressing a key question and building a collective output: • **For Funders** — "If UKRI funds place-based research again, what three things must they do differently?" • **For Universities** — "What institutional infrastructure does place-based research need to survive beyond project funding?" • **For Communities** — "How should community voice be embedded in research partnerships from day one?" • **For Government** — "What does central government need to understand about local governance capacity?" • **For the Next Generation** — "What skills and training do future place leaders need?" **Location:** The Assembly Room			

13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 – 14:45	**Panel Session: "Universities in Place — Civic Mission Under Pressure"** Kiran Trehan, Rebecca Riley, Andrew Westwood Chair: Catherine Mangan **Key Questions:** • How do universities maintain civic partnerships without core funding? • What does UKRI's "single front door" expectation mean in practice? • Can the LPIP model be embedded in university structures permanently? **Location:** The Assembly Room
14:45 – 15:00	**Refreshment Break**
15:00 – 15:50	**Closing Plenary Session: "Place Matters — Our Collective Commitment"** Angela Jeffery, Jamie Ounan, Kevin Fenning, Liam Smyth Chair: Abi Taylor • **Presentation of "A Letter to the Next Funder"** — rapporteurs from the World Café • **Reflections from the Funder** — ESRC/UKRI representative responds to what they've heard • **Reflections from Researchers** — The next generation of place-based researchers share what the programme has meant for them **Location:** The Assembly Room
15:50 – 16:00	**Conference Close & Closing Remarks** Professor Anne Green

Conference Speakers

Keynote Speaker

Peter Tyler



Emeritus Professor in Urban and Regional Economics, University of Cambridge

Professor Peter Tyler is Emeritus Professor in Urban and Regional Economics in the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge and an Emeritus Professorial Fellow at St. Catharine's College. He has been a Project Director for many major research projects for Government, many involving the evaluation of public policy. Besides his work in the United Kingdom for HM Government, he has also undertaken research for the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on urban, regional, industrial and evaluation policy. He has been an Expert Advisor to the OECD, European Commission. HM Government and in 2016 Expert Advisor to UN Habitat III.

Invited Speakers

Dan Ashton



Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, University of Southampton

Dan Ashton is Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. Current projects include the *Cultural Strategies Think Kit* in partnership with the Local Government Association and creating a platform to support the use of qualitative data in place-based decision-making. He is a member of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) College of Experts and on the editorial board for the journal *Cultural Trends*.

Chloe Billing



Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

Chloe Billing is a Research Fellow at City-REDI, University of Birmingham, specialising in the UK space sector. Her research focuses on advanced manufacturing, innovation ecosystems, regional economic development, and industrial policy, with particular interests in commercialisation pathways, innovation pathways and programme evaluation. She has contributed to major funded projects for Innovate UK, the ESRC, the UK Space Agency, and the West Midlands Combined Authority, examining space cluster development, innovation assets, and how universities and industry can work together to develop regional talent. She has published in journals including *Industry and Innovation*, *Urban Studies*, *Regional Studies*, and *Economic Geography*.

Katherine Champion



Senior Lecturer in Creative Industries and Cultural Policy, University of Glasgow

Dr. Katherine Champion is Senior Lecturer in Creative Industries and Cultural Policy at the University of Glasgow. Her research focuses on the relationships between culture, place and public value, with particular interests in cultural and social infrastructure, sustainability, creative labour, and regional development. Katherine is Work Package Lead for Culture and Natural Heritage on the Forth20 programme, exploring how environmental, social and cultural outcomes can be enhanced across the region. Her recent projects include developing approaches to evidencing the social value of public libraries across Scotland and mapping ecologies of care within grassroots creative hubs, examining how cultural spaces support wellbeing, resilience and sustainable local communities.

Kersten England CBE



Charities and Public Sector Leader, University of Bradford

Passionate about building community, social justice, equality, diversity and healthy democratic practice, Kersten's career over four decades has included work in the voluntary and community sector, higher education, central government and more than 30 years in local government. Between 2009 and 2023 she was a local authority Chief Executive, initially in York for 6 years and latterly 8 years for the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Kersten's current portfolio of work includes : Chair of the Bradford Culture Company, Chair of The Young Foundation, consultancy for the Association of Local Authority Chief Executives (ALACE) Trustee of the National Literacy Trust, a Commissioner for

the National Preparedness Commission, Co-Director of the Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)and Yorkshire Policy Engagement and Research Network (YPERN) for Yorkshire Universities. Kersten was born and grew up in Edinburgh and has strong family roots in Scotland. But she has lived in Yorkshire for nearly 35 years. She was awarded a CBE in 2019 for her service to the communities and businesses of Bradford.

Kevin Fenning

Founding Director, Evidence First



Kevin Fenning is the Founding Director of Evidence First, a consultancy specialising in economic analysis, strategy, and investment cases for places across the UK. Kevin works extensively with local and central government to support and promote economic development, as well as working on behalf of a range of other organisations and anchor institutions, including research councils, universities, colleges, business representative organisations, investors and developers, and NHS Trusts. Kevin is a Fellow of the LPIP Hub and has led and published research for the Hub on AI in Local Government, and Development Corporations. He is currently working on a forthcoming report on what Mayoral Strategic Authorities can do to support economic growth.

Abi Gilmore

Professor of Cultural Policy, Institute for Cultural Practices, University of Manchester



Abi joined the University of Manchester in 2009 following a five-year role outside of Higher Education as founding Director of a regional Culture Observatory working within local government, the arts and cultural sector and regional agencies across the North West of England. She has been researching cultural policy and place for over twenty-five years, beginning with a PhD on urban cultural policy and popular music, followed by postdoctoral research on local music industries, national 'grand projects', such as the Millennium Dome, and local cultural strategies. She has published widely in international cultural policy and cultural studies journals and co-edited volumes with a focus on local cultural policies and place governance; her recent monograph on cultural policy and municipal public parks. Large funded projects include AHRC Connected Communities Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Value (2012-2018) and the AHRC Policy and Evidence Centre for Creative Industries (2018 – 2023). As a UKRI Policy Fellow with the Department for Cultural, Media and Sport (2023-2025) Abi is developing place-based frameworks for sustaining equitable cultural infrastructure. She has recently led the 'Beyond the Creative City' with colleagues at the University of Manchester, the University of Toronto and the University of Melbourne leading to an international network on cultural districts and place-based policy.

Anne Green



Professor of Regional Economic Development, City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Anne Green joined the University of Birmingham as Professor of Regional Economic Development in June 2017. Her research interests span employment, non-employment, regional and local labour market issues, skills strategies, urban and rural development, migration and commuting, associated policy issues and evaluation. She has published in high profile journals and has written numerous reports for UK Government Departments and agencies. Anne is experienced in disseminating the results of her research to academic, policy and practitioner audiences.

Sara Hassan



Research Fellow II, City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Dr. Sara Hassan is a place-based policy researcher at City-REDI, Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, with a background in urban planning. She leads the Culture theme of the Local Policy Innovation Partnership (LPIP) Hub, which brings universities, councils and communities together to test new approaches to local policy. Her theme looks at how arts venues, creative spaces and heritage contribute to inclusive growth. Sara works with communities rather than on them. She uses participatory and co-design methods so that residents help shape the questions, the plans and the outcomes. In Digbeth, she leads a project on how the area's creative heritage can inform the planning of new public spaces as the neighbourhood changes. She also evaluates cultural and regeneration programmes, helping organisations show the social value of their work. She co-leads place work in a national network linking university research with policymakers.

Angela Jeffrey



Co-Chair, Birmingham Citizens UK

Angela is an LPIP Fellow working in the Communities theme focussing on Community Cohesion. She has been working at the interface between communities, universities, business and the public sector for the last 25 years. She is also Co-Chair of Birmingham Citizens UK, (an alliance of Faith, Education, Community and Union partners), Director at the Blesst Centre (a social enterprise focussed on supporting young people's mental and physical health), Executive Director at Saathi House (a women's charity in Aston focussed on empowering local women and young people to

achieve their full potential and contribute positively to society) and is Strategy and Policy Lead for Community Connexions at Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust. Angela was previously Director of Regional Strategy at Aston University and led on the development and implementation of their Civic University Agreement. She set up significant regional partnerships and secured funding from West Midlands Combined Authority for programmes such as the Decarbonisation Net Zero UKSPF and Business Energy Advice Service for the West Midlands. She has D. Phil in Molecular Biology from The University of Oxford, an MSc in IP Management (Queen Mary, University of London) and importantly for her current roles has a certificate in Community Organising from Newman University in association with Citizens UK.

Calvin Jones



LPIP Hub Research Associate, City-REDI
Visiting Professor, University College Cork

Professor Calvin Jones is a specialist in regional development, sustainability, and energy economics. He holds a PhD in the Economics of Tourism and Major Events and is interested in regions, sustainability, and economic and environmental accounting and modelling. Calvin is founding director of Jones the Numbers Cyf., an Adjunct Professor at Cork University Business School and a Research Associate at City-REDI, University of Birmingham. He also is a board member at Natural Resources Wales. He has written and spoken extensively on sustainable development, regional policy and energy transformations. Possibly too extensively.
Calvin is a failed novelist, rock star and screen writer, but served a successful and rewarding (if short) period in Nelson Mandela's security detail. He is a winner of both the Moss Madden Medal in regional science, and the People's Choice Award at the 1996 Milwaukee International Snow Sculpting Championships, representing Cymru.

David Legg



Regional Manager, Innovate UK, Engagement Lead, UKRI

David is Regional Manager for London and South East England and works in the Place Global and Business Growth Directorate in Innovate UK. He is also the Engagement Lead within UKRI central place team for the London Local Innovation Partnership Programme. He is responsible for strategic stakeholder engagement for innovation and collaboration. Prior to joining Innovate UK, David worked as a government economist at HM Treasury, Home Office, Defra and the Business department. He has an MBA from Henley Management College and MSc Oxford University

Katriona Lundberg



Co-Director of the Forth2O, Local Policy Innovation Partnership

Katriona Lundberg is Co-Director of the Forth2O, Local Policy Innovation Partnership. With over 20 years of experience in collaboration and partnership delivery in local government, coastal partnerships, and across several roles in Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Katriona specialises in cross-sector collaboration, policy and public sector innovation. She previously delivered River Basin Management Planning and now leads SEPA's Research, Innovation and Collaboration Framework, leading a team to build cross sector collaborative approach. Katriona brings practical insights on public sector delivery policy insights and building delivery momentum through local partnerships.

Catherine Mangan



Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head, College of Social Sciences

Professor Catherine Mangan is the Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College. She has a background as a policy maker and practitioner in public service and as such as a particular interest in developing research which can deliver change within the public sector. Her research-informed areas of interest include developing the public service workforce, leadership and the integration of health and social care.

Jamie Ounan



Director, Inner Circle Consulting

Jamie Ounan is a founding Director of Inner Circle Consulting. He has over 20 years of public service leadership and consulting experience in city planning and development, service design from strategy to delivery, and a track record of building teams that provide innovative and effective solutions to complex challenges in the public sector. Currently Jamie leads the Inner Circle team in their mission to create prosperous places and transformed public services to unlock a better future for all.

Alice Pugh



Senior Economic Analyst, City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Alice is a Senior Economic Analyst at City REDI with significant experience in appraisal and evaluation. Alice led the development of several economic impact assessments across a variety of projects, programmes and institutes. Including having completed some of this work whilst on secondment to both Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) as Research and Intelligence Manager and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) as a Senior Data and Policy Analyst. Developing economic impact methodologies, measuring the impact across a variety of outputs, including impact at varying geographical scales and across differing demographic groups. As part of the LPIP Hub work Alice has been leading on the Inclusive and Sustainable Local Economic Performance strand. As part of this she has also been leading on the Business Case element and has been on secondment to MHCLG for the past several months, supporting on improving appraisal guidance and work around economic appraisal capacity and capability within place. Alice is also an HM Treasury Green Book Better Business Case practitioner, leading on business case development team at City-REDI, working with partners to develop business cases when developing projects and/or programmes. Focusing largely on the development of value for money models, similar to economic impact assessment models. Alice has supported the securing of over £89m in government funding for various projects and programmes for partners. As part of this, earlier in the year, Alice also provided expert advice to HM Treasury for the review of the Green Book.

Rebecca Riley



Principal Investigator & Director of the LPIP Hub City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Professor Rebecca (Bec) Riley is Co-Director of City-REDI, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Regional Engagement, Director of the Local Policy Innovation Partnership (LPIP) Hub, and Professor of Enterprise, Engagement, and Impact at the University of Birmingham's Business School. Bec joined the University of Birmingham nine years ago to set up City-REDI, to build a distinctive local, regional, national and international research platform through the development of a Birmingham approach to understanding and facilitating growth in city regions. This systemic approach in identifying and conceptualising the inter-dependencies within and between regional economies has provided new opportunities for understanding, conceptualising, modelling, evaluating and comparing economic activity and business trends at the city-region level.

As the newly announced Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Regional Engagement, Bec will lead on setting the civic and regional vision for the University, while building on the work she has been

doing with the University's Regional Engagement Group. Alongside her new role, Bec remains the Principal Investigator (PI) and Director of the LPIP Hub, addressing nationwide issues through local partnership and place. Bec's research interests focus on regional economic development, including research to develop policy and regional strategies, monitoring frameworks, economic forecasting, skills and labour market analysis, and strategic business cases and project evaluation. She applies a mixed methods approach in her research, with a strong focus and record of impactful policy-relevant applied research and stakeholder engagement. She is an experienced lead on research projects, with over 200 research projects carried out across academia, policy, and consultancy roles.

Nina Ruddle



Head of Public Policy Engagement, Wrexham University

Nina Ruddle leads civic mission and public policy engagement at Wrexham University and is a LPIP Fellow. With 25 years' experience across universities, Welsh Government, local government and regional partnerships, including leading work on community benefits and the Wales Procurement Policy Statement and delivering significant project and programmes across Wales and the UK focused on economic and social regeneration and tackling inequity. She chairs the Wrexham and Flintshire Public Services Board and founded the North Wales Insight Partnership. Her research explores how the Well-being of Future Generations Act can be put into practice through civic innovation, community voice and stronger connections between evidence and decisions. She was named one of Wales's 100 Future Generations Changemakers.

Lee Sanders



Professor of Practice in Leadership, Governance and Higher Education Policy, University of Birmingham

Lee has over 35 years' leadership and management experience in universities. Before his retirement in autumn 2025, Lee was Registrar, Secretary and COO at the University of Birmingham. Prior to that he was Registrar and Secretary at Durham University and held senior roles at the University of Warwick. He is now part-time Professor of Practice at the University of Birmingham and LPIP Fellow with City-REDI.

Joe Shearring

Head of Regional Engagement, EPSRC



Head of Regional Engagement, working within EPSRC's partnership directorate, with a focus on the East Midlands. Aiming to help EPSRC to be an intelligent investor through engagement with relevant stakeholders. Previous experience leading a major/strategic bid development team within a research-intensive university.

Liam Smyth

Programme Lead, UK National Commission for UNESCO



Liam specialises in place-based cultural development that puts communities in charge of their own destinies. He is currently Head of Governance and Operations at United By 2022, the legacy charity of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, which delivers youth programmes, social value consultancy and volunteer management for major events and sports and culture led regeneration across the West Midlands.
From 2022-2025, at the UK National Commission for UNESCO, Liam led the fundraising, research, development, and delivery of the Local to Global strategic investment programme. The programme built a more resilient and adaptive network of UNESCO-designated sites, which cover 13% of the country's landmass. Liam has overseen the development of new resources in audience development, stakeholder mapping and inclusion; fundraising and financial sustainability; and digital transformation – and increased devolved decision-making through horizon-scanning, open innovation and collaborative futures techniques.Liam's previous experience includes establishing the people-centred practice principles for an Arts Council England Creative People and Places project in the Black Country – focused on inspiring more people to choose, create and take part in brilliant art experiences in the places where they live. He has worked as a consultant for various Arm's Length Bodies, combined and local authorities, to develop localised cultural policy. As a lead evaluator for the Birmingham 2022 Festival, Liam authored two public reports on region-specific cultural programmes that support global exchange and decentralised soft power and methods to embed inclusivity into mega events. Liam is a trustee at Birmingham's internationally renowned Ikon gallery.

David Sweeney



Former Executive Chair, Research England

David Sweeney has played a leading role in shaping UK research policy for nearly two decades, particularly in research assessment, funding, knowledge exchange and open science. He was the founding Executive Chair of Research England, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and is Professor of Practice in Research Policy at the University of Birmingham. After graduating in Statistics from the University of Aberdeen, he began his career in agricultural research, working in statistics and mathematical modelling, before moving into university management and leadership at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he served as Information Services Director and subsequently Vice-Principal (Research). He joined the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in 2008, leading the development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), including the introduction of research impact assessment. Subsequently, at Research England, he was responsible for research funding, knowledge exchange and university–business relations. Within UKRI, he championed place-based research and innovation, open science and commercialisation. David currently chairs the Pandemic Institute Steering Group and the Materials Innovation Factory Advisory Board in Liverpool. He is Deputy Chair of Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research in Wales, and of the Cardiff Capital Region Local Innovation Partnership Board. He is also Treasurer of cOAlition S, the international open access initiative, a Trustee of The Conversation UK and a member of the Advisory Board of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI). He has advised governments and organisations internationally on research policy, assessment and scholarly publishing. He was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2022 and holds honorary doctorates from Aberdeen, Keele and Edge Hill universities. He is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.

Kiran Trehan



Pro- Vice Chancellor for Enterprise, Partnerships and Engagement, Professor of Entrepreneurship, University of York

Professor Kiran Trehan is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise, Partnerships and Engagement at the University of York. A leading voice in debates on entrepreneurship and enterprise development, she has led major research grants and shaped enterprise and business support policy, and has published widely across journal articles, policy reports, books and book chapters. Her work has been funded by a broad range of bodies, including the Economic and Social Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, government departments, regional and local agencies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and Chambers of Commerce, and the private sector. A prominent figure on the

national stage, Professor Trehan has chaired national boards and presented at leading international conferences and symposia. She works with policymakers, public services and community networks to promote entrepreneurship, enterprise and family business. She has held visiting scholar positions at universities across Europe and beyond, and is internationally recognised for her research, which appears in high-quality peer-reviewed journals. From 2019 to 2022, she served as President of the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE), the UK's foremost body for SME research and policy.

Andy Westwood

Professor of Politics and Public Policy, University of Birmingham



Andy Westwood is a Professor of Politics and Public Policy at the University of Birmingham. He is a board member of Skills England and a member of the College of Experts at both the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Technology (DBIST) and the National School of Government and Public Services. He has previously worked as an expert adviser to a range of organisations including the IMF, OECD, EU and for the Economic Affairs Committee in the House of Lords and as also a special adviser to ministers on science, skills, industrial strategy and regional policy during the 1997-2010 Labour government.

Michael Woods

Professor of Human Geography, Aberystwyth University



Michael Woods is Professor of Human Geography at Aberystwyth University and Co-Director of the Rural Wales Local Policy Innovation Partnership (Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales), as well as Co-Director of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD). He has 30 years of experience of place-based and policy-focused research in Wales and internationally, especially on rural communities, community governance, local civil society and polarisation, spatial justice, globalization and rural areas, and assemblage approaches to place. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales, and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society in 2025.

Additional confirmed speakers include:

- Andrew Charlesworth-May, Head of Economic Appraisal, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Sophie Duncan, Director, NCCPE
- Nicola Headlam, Independent Economic Advisor
- Fumi Kitigawa, Professor in Regional Economic Development, City-REDI, University of Birmingham
- Si Chun Lam, Head of Research, Intelligence, and Inclusive Growth, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Des McNulty, Advisory Board Chair, University of Glasgow
- Kristel Miller, Professor of Entrepreneurship, Ulster University
- Abigail Taylor, Research Fellow, City-REDI, University of Birmingham

Place Fellows



Glenn Athey

Managing Director, Mylocaleconomy



Ed Atkins

Senior Lecturer, Sciences, University of Bristol



Val Birchall

Chair of National Alliance for Cultural Services, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts



Amy Burnett

Research Fellow, , Middlesex University's Business School



Linda Christie

Applied Economist and Strategic Policy Professional



Tamara Cincik

Professor of Fashion and Sustainability, Bath Spa University



Sophie Cloutterbuck

Director of London Engagement, London Metropolitan University



Tom Crick MBE

Chief Scientific Adviser, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)



Ceri Davies

Director, Centre for Deliberation



Kevin Fenning

Director, Evidence First



Jon Gleek

Head of Research for the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)



Ian Harvey

Head of the Institute of Place Management, Joint Founder and Vice President of Civic Voice



Nicola Headlam

Independent Economic Advisor



Sue Jarvis

Co-Director, the University of Liverpool's Heseltine Institute for Public, Policy, Practice and Place



Angela Jeffery

Co-Chair, Birmingham Citizens



Lisa Jones

Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning, Health, Housing and Communities, Sunderland City Council



Allan Macleod

Head of Civic and Inclusivity, University of West England



Stuart Mills

Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Leeds



Helen O'Gara

Public Health Professional and Local Charity Leader



Joseph Owen

Research Fellow at the University of Southampton



Andrew Reeves

Associate Professor, De Montfort University Leicester



Ges Rosenberg

Research Fellow in Engineering Systems and Design, University of Bristol



Nina Ruddle

Head of Public Policy Engagement, Wrexham University



Liam Smyth

Programme Lead, UK National Commission for UNESCO



Mark Swift

Chief Executive Officer, Wellbeing Enterprises CIC



Graham Thrower

Head of The Institute for Economic and Social Inclusion, University of Sunderland

Delivery Team



Annette Boaz

Professor of Health and Social Care, King's College London



Chris Chapman

Chair in Educational Policy and Practice (Educational Leadership & Policy), University of Glasgow

Sophie Duncan

Co-Director, National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement



Elizabeth Goodyear

Programme Manager
City-REDI, University of Birmingham



Anne Green

Professor of Regional Economic Development City-REDI, University of Birmingham



Abi Gilmore

Professor of Cultural Policy, Institute for Cultural Practices, University of Manchester



Kathryn Higgins

Founder and Director, Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP)
Queen's University Belfast



Sarah Longlands

Chief Executive
Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)



Paul Manners

Founding Director
National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement



Jeffrey Matsu

Chief Economist
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)



Kathryn Oliver

Professor of Evidence and Policy
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London



Jamie Ounan

Director
Inner Circle Consulting



Rebecca Riley

Principal Investigator (PI) and Director of the LPIP Hub
City-REDI, University of Birmingham



Kiran Trehan

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Partnership and Engagement, Professor of Entrepreneurship, University of York



Carly Walker-Dawson

Director of Capacity Building and Standards, Involve



Vicky Ward

Reader in Management and Director of the Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU)
University of St Andrews



Jane Wills

Honorary Professor of Geography, University of Exeter