



CONTENTS

1) CITY-REGION & BUILT ENVIRONMENT	2
2) 'ECONOMIES'	3
3) 'SOCIETY & COMMUNITY'	4
4) 'ECOLOGIES'	5
5) 'GOVERNANCE'	6
6) CONTEXT: 'DEVO'	7
7) PUTTING IT TOGETHER	8
8) METHODS	9

NOTE:

The Greater Manchester 2040 project is a demonstration of work in progress in a complex political situation, so this report and all related materials for the moment are:

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Visual thinking is a powerful catalyst for creative thinking about the future (and the future itself is like a mirror on the present). See www.urban3.net/visual-thinking

At the GM2040 success scenario workshop, some initial images were produced, to be developed as the project moves forward. A further set of images were made in the Generation 2040 project at Loreto College.

1) CITY-REGION & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

‘CITY-REGION’ looks at the whole of the GM built environment... from the bright lights to the bare hills, and from the ‘nice neighborhoods’ to the ‘human landfills’.... Also there are choices, between physical infrastructure (much in favour) and the social infrastructure: and the overall question of how to achieve the vision – democratic policy or free market enterprise??



2) 'ECONOMIES'

This first asks where is GM or MCR – climbing out of its rust-belt image, or boldly facing the global future?? magical new infrastructure such as HS2 might suck the brains and investment out, as much as bring them in. Everything would seem to revolve around the knowledge economy – but if we've seen the whole internet revolution in just the last 20 years, what could happen in the next? And how could a city-region economy of the future face the challenges of work-life balance and the ageing of the workforce? (maybe the teenagers will have more clues...)



3) 'SOCIETY & COMMUNITY'

is there really such a thing, in an age of mobile, transient, global networks and super-diversity?? Community leadership and trust are vital, as is the question of 'quality of life' ?? (for some it's on the sofa with netflix and a pizza...). Meanwhile it's clear there are new divisions in society – between 'nice people' (coming out of the concert hall) and the skivers / scroungers (lowering the tone and putting off investors). Ageing is also not what it used to be – with an average life expectancy of 150 (within this century), we would see great private sector opportunities coming up.



4) 'ECOLOGIES'

... takes many visionary themes – climate proof cities, circular economy, low carbon transition, green-blue infrastructure etc – and aims to weave them all together (not easy on one page). But how to mobilize in the face of inertia, scepticism and the industrial-financial complex? at the top we see a whole set of aspirations, visions, liveabilities, well-being and resilience factors and so on – all fuzzy and inter-connected – but just possibly, powerful forces for change.



5) 'GOVERNANCE'

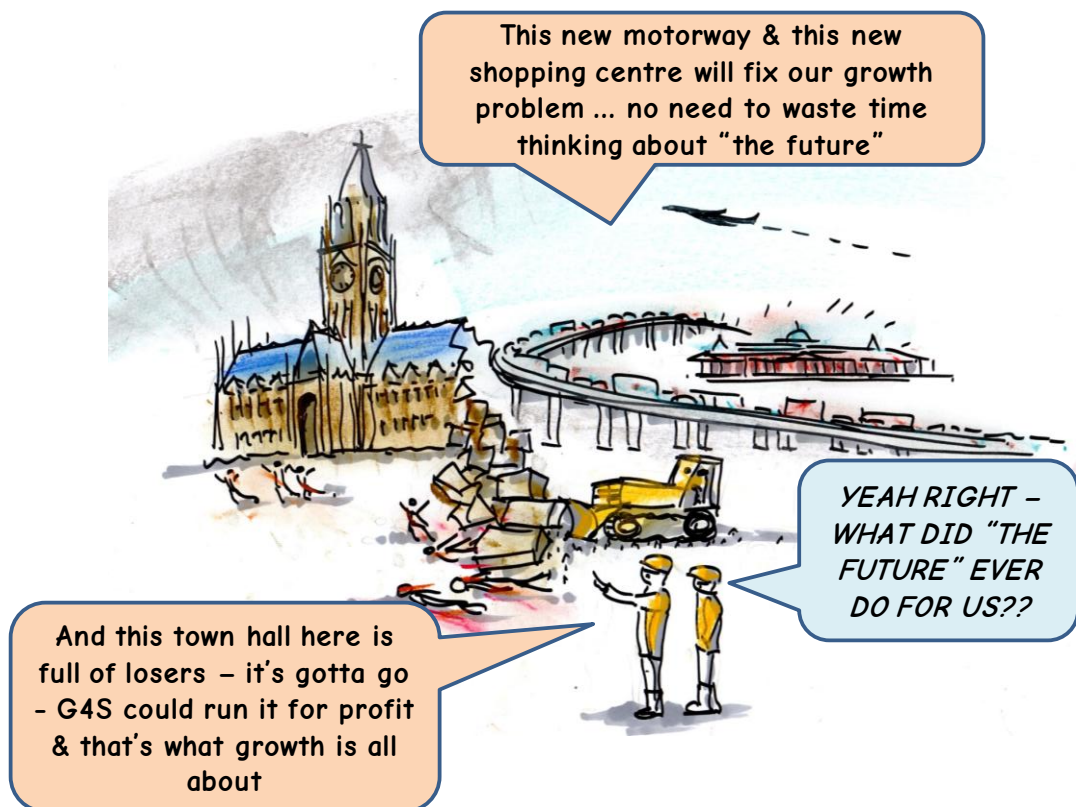
sees topical themes – the 'rolling back' of the public sector by the 'winds of austerity', to make way for private business and enterprise..... The big news for GM is the Devo-Manc – is this a tidal wave of power and money heading up from London – but looking at the whole balance of give and take, maybe we should ask 'devo-what'? In any case 'citizens' are being urged to 'take responsibility' (like a parcel from Amazon) – but looking at the devo-photo-ops, by strange coincidence all the leaders are white male and middle-aged...



6) CONTEXT: 'DEVO'

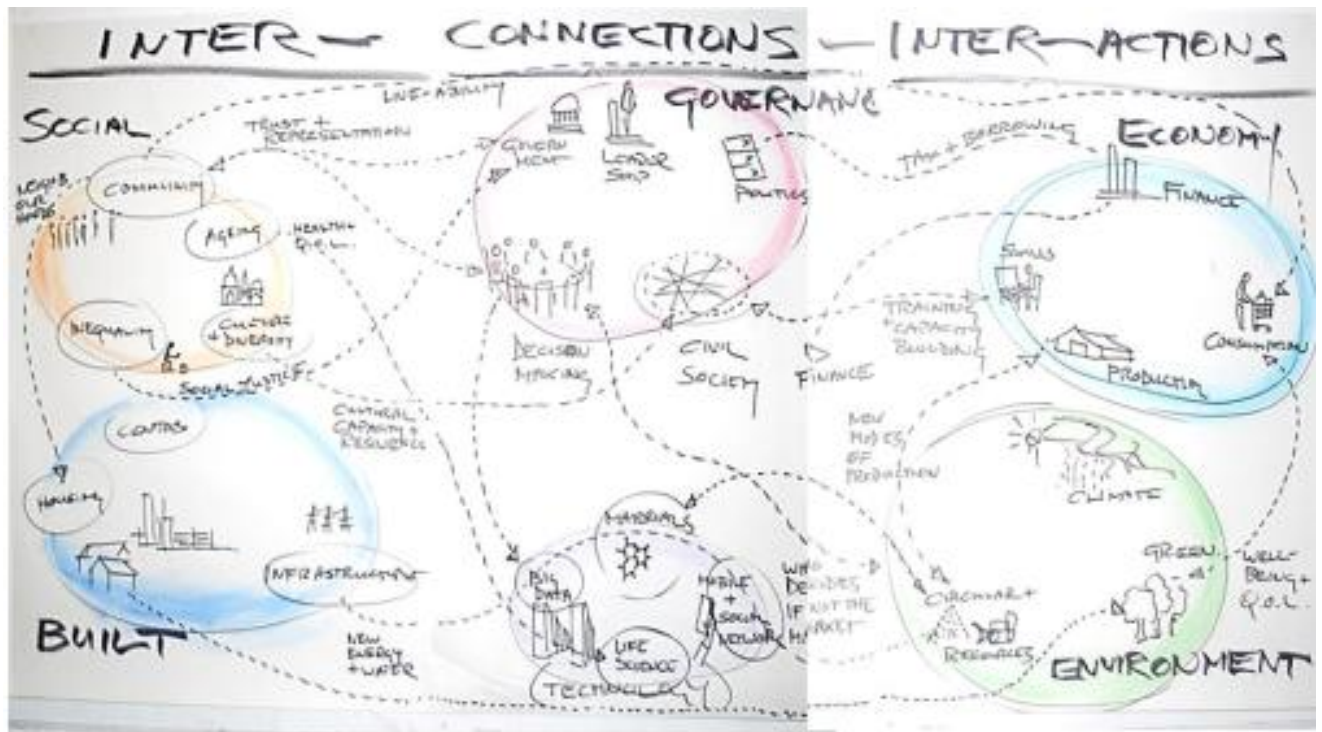
There are growing expectations that our great cities can re-emerge as 'powerhouses'. But behind the rhetoric there are deep concerns: lack of political trust: low productivity: divided and insecure society: crumbling infrastructure: growing regional disparities, and so on. Cities may shortly have more aspiration but less resources. Building their capacity for learning, collaboration, strategic thinking and shared intelligence may be the only option.

SCENARIO X: "WHAT DID THE FUTURE EVER DO FOR US?"



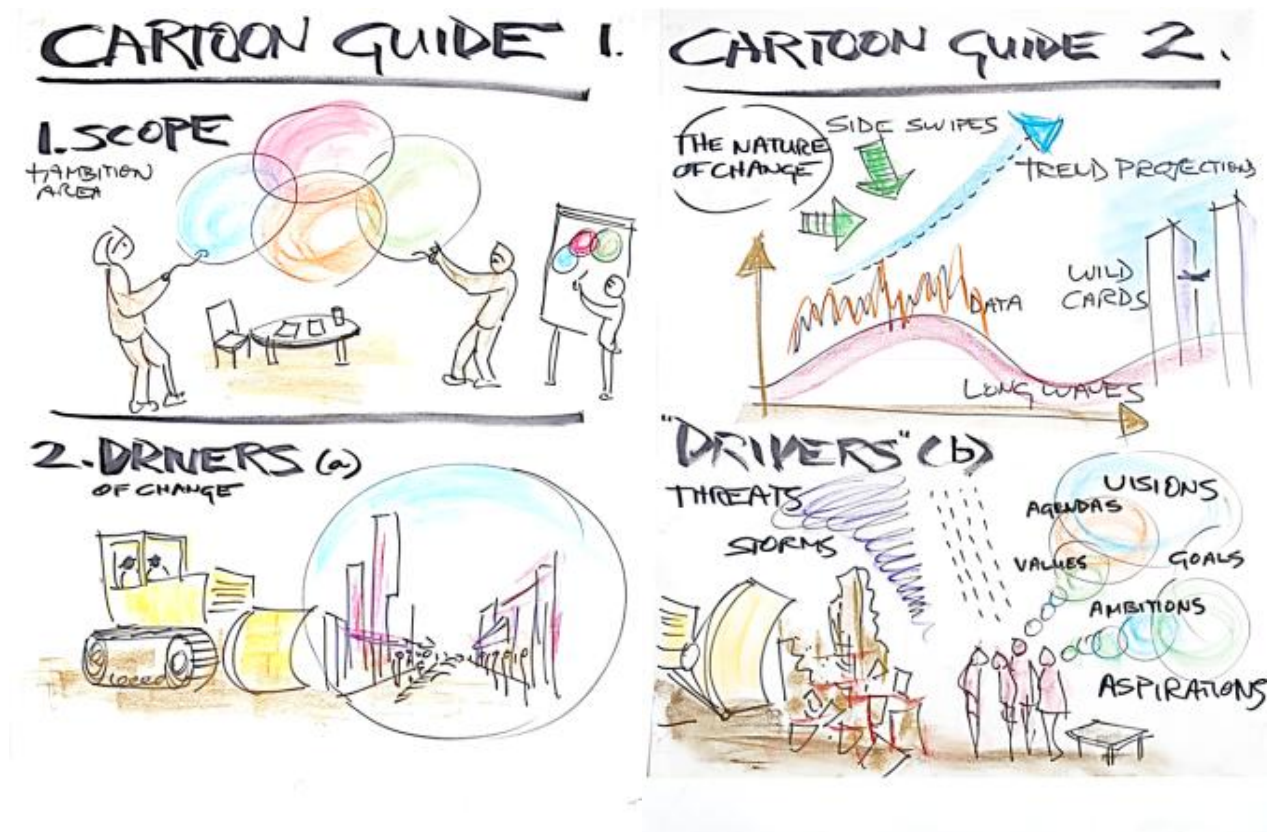
7) PUTTING IT TOGETHER

at the end of this first session we tried just that on a 8 foot wall chart – this being just a starter for a more detailed exploration of how things fit together (or not as the case may be...)



8) METHODS

– at the start we threw up a few ideas for a Cartoon Guide to the Future – easy questions like ‘what are we talking about’ – ‘what is change’ – ‘how does change happen’ – ‘how to track threats and catastrophes and turn them into responses and opportunities and responses’.... etc..



For enquiries on this draft report please contact

Joe Ravetz,
 Co-Director,
 Centre for Urban Resilience & Energy,
 School of Environment & Development, HBS
 Manchester University, Oxford Rd, M13 9PL, UK
 m. 07719 233115: t.+44(0)161 275 6879:
 skype: joe.ravetz f.306 6428
joe.ravetz@manchester.ac.uk – joe.ravetz@gmail.com
www.urban3.net - www.urban-energy.org