The Creative City

Setting the Scene

The Creative City describes a new method of strategic urban planning and examines how people can think, plan and act creatively in the city. It explores how we can make our cities more liveable and vital by harnessing people's imagination and talent. It does not provide definite answers, but seeks to open out an 'ideas bank' of possibilities from which innovations will emerge. Most of us sense that where we live could be a better place. Many of us know of places that show how cities can be made more human and more productive. Yet cities balance on a cusp – decision-makers can repeat past policies in a climate of slow decline, or they can seek to reinvent their city as a vibrant hub of creativity, potential and improving quality of life. Undoubtably, for the most part, old approaches do not work. We cannot solve 21st-century problems with 19th-century mindsets: the dynamics of cities and the world urban system have changed too dramatically.

Yet the urban utopia already exists in the dispersed experience of global best practice. Here are innovative ways of creating employment or applying technology and unleashing the skill of the young or the elderly. There is inspiring architecture that speaks to a city's soul and identity, and there are clever energy-saving devices or public transport that is a joy to use. There are retail environments that merge entertainment and learning, and public spaces that encourage urban buzz and celebrations that capture the unusual, the uplifting and the creative.

Since these good examples are widely dispersed they are hard to recognize and difficult to learn from. Instead we see the city as a place of fear, crime, pollution and degradation, forgetting that cities are the wealth creators – over 80 per cent for developed nations – generating the prosperity of nations, however unfairly distributed or shared. Cities provide opportunities and interactions which can

solve their own problems and improve the quality of life of whole regions. Yet urban life is still seen in a derogatory light.

The Century of Cities

The Creative City is a call to action because the 21st century is the century of cities. For the first time, over half the world live in cities – in Europe the figure is already over 75 per cent and in the developing world it will shortly reach 50 per cent, whereas in 1980 it was 29 per cent worldwide. Yet most live in cities through need, not desire. A regular UK survey shows that over 80 per cent of people want to live in a small village compared to 4 per cent who do. We cannot create enough villages to meet these aspirations. Instead we must make cities desirable places to live and be in, partly by re-creating the values that people perceive to exist in a village – a sense of place and belonging, continuity, safety and predictability – and partly by nurturing distinctly urban possibilities – buzz, interaction, trade, unexpected delight and much more.

Creativity: The Lifeblood of Cities

Cities have one crucial resource – their people. Human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources. The creativity of those who live in and run cities will determine future success. Of course this has always been critical to cities' ability to survive and adapt. As cities became large and complex enough to present problems of urban management, so they became laboratories that developed the solutions – technological, conceptual and social – to the problems of growth.

Yet there are special reasons for thinking about the problems of cities today in terms of creativity and innovation – or lack of it. Today many of the world's cities face periods of transition largely brought about by the vigour of renewed globalization. These transitions differ from region to region: in some areas, like Asia, cities are growing, while in others, such as Europe, old industries are disappearing and the value added in cities is created less through what is manufactured and more through intellectual capital applied to products, processes and services.

Paradigm Shifts and Beyond

The Creative City outlines the fundamental changes occurring in the city at every level; in their entirety they represent a paradigm shift from the typical city of 1970 to the city of today. In this situation, older solutions do not work. What might seem an impenetrable problem from within one mindset might be eminently solvable from within another and the new thinking and conceptual toolkit outlined aims to help readers think through the dilemmas.

Examples are cited only to illustrate a point: *The Creative City* is not intended as sourcebook of urban good practice but many references to those will be found. Many of the cases come from my own experience of working in Europe and the rest of the developed world. While the story of urban dynamics is told from a worldwide view, *The Creative City* is written from a European perspective – not because European cities are more creative, but because I know more about them. I am aware of the great creative cities of yesterday and today in China, India, Africa and South America, yet am deeply etched by my own European culture and have an image of the 'good city' that reflects European urbanism. It includes ideas such as that the city centre matters as the neutral meeting place for all parts of the city; the sense that publicly shared space adds to the wealth of cities by enhancing interaction, connections, trade and urban buzz; the feeling that urban life itself has a self-sustaining quality beyond the individual; the notion that mixing, diversity and culture create potential.

Some of these views are shared worldwide, others perhaps not. Nevertheless the concepts, principles and ways of analysing urban problems can be used by anyone and should apply anywhere. The toolkit seeks to enable citizens, policy-makers and decision-makers to grasp opportunities which may only be possible in a city. Once you explore below the surface nearly every place has its creative potential, but in many cities it is blocked. Surprisingly little is known about the conditions necessary for creativity and innovation to emerge – the formal and informal structures that have helped Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Barcelona, the Third Italy around Emilia Romagna, the advanced technology enclaves surrounding Tokyo or Bangalore develop world reputations for creativity and generation of new businesses and services. *The Creative City* will seek to explore the underlying dynamics of creativity and in so doing show the need to get beyond the idea

that creativity is the exclusive domain of artists or that innovations are largely technological: there is social and political creativity and innovation too.

Creative Solutions to Urban Problems

At the heart of creativity are creative people and organizations who have particular attributes: when these come together in one area they establish a creative milieu. *The Creative City* asks how such a milieu comes about, enabling cities to become innovative hubs. It assesses how new forms of business and banking get off the ground and what the principles are of organizations such as a South Shore Bank in Chicago, which provides banking services to the deprived. I looked at how ecological approaches to urban development, like those undertaken in Emscher Park in the Ruhr in Germany, got off the ground. I studied the mechanisms of arts solutions to create civic pride and gain momentum like the Love Festival in Berlin. I asked what triggers the imaginative uses of technology for urban development as in Helsinki and new forms of governance as in Tilburg. I wanted to discover the ways in which creativity can be organized and how creative people can be managed; and whether the Huddersfield Creative Town Initiative is the right way forward. It is important to find out how government can work best with business and NGOs and how links between formal and informal networks can be fostered to produce the best results. I was interested too in the role of technology in developing a creative city and considered whether other forms of creativity are more important.

A Toolkit for Practitioners

The Creative City argues above all that changes in mindset can generate will, commitment and energy which allow us to look afresh at urban possibilities. A range of approaches and methods to 'think creatively', to 'plan creatively' and to 'act creatively' are described. In their entirety they provide a new way of addressing urban planning. Once taken on board the techniques can be absorbed subconsciously and naturally embedded in day to day decision-making, as well as applied in more formal, methodical ways. A set of new terms and concepts for talking about cities runs

through the text: civic creativity, a creativity harnessed towards the public good; the cycle of urban creativity and how it can be developed, implemented and made virtuous; the lifecycle of urban innovation concept; urban R&D and how pilot projects can be developed, mainstreamed and replicated; cultural resources and how they can be applied; how to think of the city as a learning organism and, finally, the creation of a new form of literacy – the capacity to 'read' and understand cities, whoever you are – called urban literacy.

Why this Book?

The Creative City was written with three primary aims:

1. To provide readers with a more integrated and holistic approach to thinking about and analysing cities. In the longer run this will change the way decision-makers consider the assets and potential of cities as well as how cities might be organized and managed.
2. To offer a 'mental toolkit' that provides readers with the cornerstones of a new mindset and so stimulate readers' own ideas and solutions for their city.
3. To engender a critical debate amongst decision-makers at different levels and to influence the policy, strategies and actions undertaken in cities.

Preface

The Drama of Urban Change

The first edition of *The Creative City* was published in 2000 and it has reprinted nine times. For this revised edition I have written a new extensive overview chapter (page xxi) that brings the thinking up to date, explains how and why the idea came about, summarizes key issues that are later elaborated upon and describes how cities can rethink their potential assets. I have left the original text and examples almost entirely as written then* and I am aware that if the book were written completely from scratch again, different examples might be used. The main point about the existing examples is the thinking that lies behind them.

At the time, *The Creative City* was an ambitious book in seeking to inspire people to think, plan and act creatively in their city and to get an ideas factory going to turn urban innovations into reality. Its aim was to make readers feel 'I can do that too', and to spread confidence that creative and innovative solutions to urban problems are feasible, however bad they may seem at first sight. It argued that if we keep trying to solve urban problems with the old intellectual apparatus and mindset we will come up against the same obstacles. In taking an eagle-eye view of cities around the world it noted that it is astonishing how many ordinary people show leadership qualities to make the extraordinary possible when given the chance.

The book threads a path between being practical and playing with ideas, and is unashamedly conceptual in parts. I believe

* I have made very few, and very minor, updates to information in the original text. Mostly I have restricted myself to a few minor changes such as clarifying ambiguities over dates and amending out of date contact details.

concepts have immense power to shape how we view the world and to simplify the seemingly complex. When change is deep-seated, understanding its underlying dynamics is crucial. It involves thinking afresh about the concepts we use and logics we apply in solving problems and harnessing opportunities. Some things may have been said many times before but not necessarily in the context of the city and this is what I hope will give the book a distinctive feel.

When I first began talking about the Creative City idea around 20 years ago I did not think that it would take off as a concept. My original impulse was to respond to the dramatic economic, social and cultural transformations happening in Europe at that time as our cities needed to restructure and rethink what their role and purpose were. Subsequently, these transformations have affected cities worldwide as cities everywhere have been drawn into the maelstrom of a reinvigorated globalization. In this process, cities have become the hubs of wealth creation and so increasingly more important than nation states; as a result, it is often cities that are competing as proxies for states.

The maturing of the globalized network of cities and its connected competitive drive has led the world of cities to change dramatically over the last 15 years. Led by transnational businesses and, at times, parastatal institutions, and enabled by information and communications technologies, global production networks and associated supply chains have spread like tentacles throughout the world. This has changed the world's urban hierarchy with some cities rising in importance and others falling. Cities of every size in every location face periods of deep transition.

In this new global dynamic, all cities, small and large, need to reassess and rethink their role and positioning – regionally, nationally and globally. This challenges cities to think their opportunities and problems with ingenuity and to review their assets – or lack of them. Cities have had to ask themselves: who am I; where do I go next; what is my identity; what is distinctive about me and what are my assets? What are the conditions my city can create for people and institutions to think, plan and act with imagination and ride the wave of change so that it can benefit?

Every city of real ambition wants to move up the value chain and capture centrality for themselves and become a central hub of wealth creation by exporting, yet controlling from a distance, low-

cost activities and attracting high-value ones to itself. These include research and knowledge creation centres, headquarters, advanced manufacturing, or cultural and artistic creativity. Territory can also be captured in the imagination by driving perceptions and image, and cities such as Dubai, Shanghai and, more recently, Madrid have focused extensively on this.

The overall aim of ambitious cities is to increase their 'drawing power' and to get on the radar screen. This assesses the dynamics of attraction, retention and leakage of power, resources and talent. The right blend makes a city attractive and desirable, with different aspects tempting different audiences: power brokers, investors, industrialists, shoppers, tourists, property developers, thought leaders. Overall, this creates the resonance of a city. The consequence of achieving drawing power shows itself in economic, political and cultural power – the ability to shape things – and, thus, performance and wealth.

Cities now compete by harnessing their tangible (as well as hard and intangible) soft-asset base and project and orchestrate this 'iconically'. Very few cities understand this. The aim is to pull attention to the city, to create a richness of association and recognition, and to grab profile in order to create conditions that can generate downstream impacts.

During the last decade the world axis has shifted markedly towards the East with China and India emerging forcefully as new production hubs – and even they are rising up the value chain, not only turning out mass product but also inventing sophisticated goods and services that are increasingly a match to what is happening in the West. At the same time, the Arab Renaissance has moved apace, in spite of the conflicts in the Middle East. The oil-producing Arab countries are speedily diversifying their economies; in places such as Dubai, oil now only represents 4 per cent of their income. Their sovereign wealth funds (entities that manage state savings) increasingly influence the global economy – for instance, buying up shares in Western banks and financial institutions such as Citibank or Merrill Lynch or owning strategic logistical assets such as ports.

This has created renewed confidence in these regions. Cultural power or soft power always matches economic and political power; indeed, it sometimes drives the latter. Hence it is not surprising that as if out of the blue we suddenly find Chinese art or film compelling and interesting, or are reassessing the Arab contribution to world development or finding its literatures interesting.

In the new interconnected global system, there are cultural zones, which are groupings of cultures and sub-cultures that have a binding narrative or common way of explaining the world, and help us to understand the big cultural differences. Each of these needs a hub or set of hubs through which the major transactions with the rest of the world occur.

These are strategic places and communications nodal points that have a direct effect and influence on world affairs economically, culturally and politically, where global agendas are created, facilitated and enacted. This explains the rise in importance of Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai or Dubai and the continued importance of Moscow, Paris or New York. These cities, too, are asking: 'How can I be creative?'

In parallel, new ethical agendas have moved forcefully to the fore, of which the environmental imperative is the most important. Cities that do not address sustainability will find it increasingly difficult to be stable and competitive. Their own populations are demanding greater responsibility towards the health of the world and the mobile talented workforce they need does not want to be associated with places that harm our planet. As a consequence, cities are falling over themselves to be more eco-friendly and the eco-cities movement is one expression of this. We will increasingly see cities measuring their eco-footprint and attempting to adjust their regulations and incentives regimes so they approach carbon neutrality. Even the gas-guzzling Arab world is seeking to lead this movement with projects such as the new carbon-neutral Al Masdah city in Abu Dhabi. The so-called clean, lean and green industrial revolution provides the opportunity for mass creativity in science, technology and new design given the raft of products and services that need to be reinvented.

Another issue is inter-culturalism: increasingly vital in a world with mass movements of people. This is different from multi-culturalism. In the latter, we acknowledge and even celebrate difference; yet it often leads to parallel lives. In the former, we ask instead: what do we share and what can we do together? The focus is on diversity advantage rather than its problems since if the possible difficulties of managing diversity are overcome, innovation potential and insights increase. This requires greater cultural literacy, the understanding of how different cultures work and the ability to look at the world through an inter-cultural lens. Great cities manage the art of living together well.

In this context for many the Creative City idea has become a new way of looking at city development as, in essence, it looks at urban assets in a different way and some even talk of a Creative Cities Movement. This is encapsulated in the idea that we are moving from an 'urban engineering'* approach to urban development, to a 'creative city-making' approach.

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* Thanks to Professor Paul Tanimura for providing me with this phrase, and for helping me understand the planning history trajectory.

Introduction

The Creative City: Its Origins and Futures

The Original Idea

The Creative City idea emerged from the late 1980s onwards along a number of trajectories in response to these emerging trends. The idea, when introduced, was seen as an aspirational concept: a clarion call to encourage open-mindedness and imagination. It intended to have a dramatic impact on organizational culture. Its philosophy was that there is always more potential in any city than any of us think at first sight. It posits that conditions need to be created for people to think, plan and act with imagination in harnessing opportunities or solving seemingly intractable urban problems. These might range from creating wealth to enhancing the visual environment or addressing a social problem such as homelessness. It is a positive concept: its assumption is that ordinary people can make the extraordinary happen if given the chance. Creativity in this context is applied imagination using qualities such as intelligence, inventiveness and learning along the way. In the Creative City, it is not only artists and those involved in the creative economy who are creative, although they play an important role. Creativity can come from any source, including anyone who addresses issues in an inventive way – whether a business person, a social worker, a scientist, an engineer or public administrator. Yet, creativity is legitimized in the arts, and artistic creativity has special qualities that chime well with the needs of the ideas-driven knowledge economy.

The Creative City idea advocates the need for a culture of creativity to be embedded within how the urban stakeholders

operate. It implies reassessing the regulations and incentives regime and moving towards a more 'creative bureaucracy'. Good governance is itself an asset that can generate potential and wealth. By encouraging creativity and legitimizing the use of imagination within the public, private and community spheres, the ideas bank of possibilities and potential solutions to any urban problem or opportunity will be broadened. This is the divergent, broad-ranging thinking that generates multiple options, which needs to be aligned to convergent thinking that narrows down possibilities from which urban innovations can then emerge once they have passed through the reality checker. This, the notion argues, will provide cities with the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and thereby create the necessary resilience to possible shocks to the system.

In its original formulation, the 'Creative City' notion focused strongly on the potential of the cultural industries as it seemed that cities needed to concentrate on what made them unique and special. Within this context, arts projects and re-using old buildings were especially significant. In 1989 I undertook a study for the city of Glasgow called *The Creative City and Its Cultural Economy*, which shaped my initial thinking. Over time, it became clearer that the economy, the political system and the bureaucracy were all part of a creative ecology as the world of cities needed to refocus. It required a shift from thinking about lifting production volumes and quantity to addressing how to add value, how to create innovations and how to increase urban quality. This has been a challenge for all cities. They have had to adjust their priorities. Rather than managing themselves with standardized or codified rules or by concentrating on the efficiency paradigm centred on inputs/outputs or cost and profit management, they have had to shift to thinking how experimentation and creativity can be encouraged in order to safeguard future profits.

From Urban Engineering to Creative City-making

The city of the future needs to be thought of differently from how we considered cities in the past. A city that encourages people to work with their imagination goes well beyond the urban engineering paradigm in city-making. This focuses largely on hard infrastructures such as roads, monotonous housing developments

or undistinguished office buildings, even though, like frenzied bees, architects try to create 'iconic' buildings. It requires, instead, a combination of both hard and soft infrastructures. Soft infrastructure includes paying attention to how people can meet, exchange ideas and network. It shifts focus and encourages physical developments and place-making or urban design that foster communication between people. These places have high levels of amenity and quality. It promotes 'third spaces', which are neither home nor work where people can be together. This might be a cafe or other kinds of gathering places. These are likely to be a combination of quiet places and more stimulating ones within a setting where there is greenery and great attention to aesthetics. It is also technologically advanced with public wireless zones where people can work and communicate as they move about.

Those planning this kind of city will think about how to create a good atmosphere; they will be aware of the negative psychological effect of ugly or soulless buildings and how this reduces people's capacity to work well. They will acknowledge how important being sensitive to culture is and they will balance being globally oriented and locally authentic. They will encourage the artistic imagination in how the city is put together. This is more likely to attract the highly skilled and flexible labour force that the Creative City needs as, increasingly, people with good skills have choices about where they want to live. This city wants dynamic thinkers – creators as well as implementers as creativity is not only about having ideas, it is about making them happen too. It requires a large formal and informal intellectual infrastructure. Yet, interestingly, most universities feel old-fashioned and more like factories for producing knowledge. Often massive and monolithic looking from the outside and uninspiring inside, they are usually not very creative places. This means rethinking what universities look and feel like and considering new kinds of more informal education or learning spaces. Importantly, this more open city is able to give maverick and unusual personalities space to operate, as creative organizations know that in order to work well, mavericks are necessary as they often push the boundaries that are blocking progress.

In this process, strong communication linkages are established internally in the city and with the external world. There is a need for 'local buzz and global pipelines'. This then helps develop an overall culture of entrepreneurship, whether this is applied to social or economic ends. In other words, a vibrancy fostered by a local

talent pool generates learning processes embedded within a community, and channels of external communication built to reach selected outsiders speed up knowledge and technology transfer. Innovative places ride the paradox of being intensely local and intensely global.

The soft creative infrastructure also includes the overall mental infrastructure and mindset of the city. This is the way in which a city approaches opportunities and problems: the environmental conditions that it creates to generate an atmosphere, and the enabling devices that it fosters to generate innovation through its incentives and regulatory structures, and its rules and laws.

Finally, being creative does not mean that someone is only concerned with the new. Instead, there is a willingness to review and reassess all situations in a flexible way. At times, one needs the courage to either change things if required or to have the sound judgement to keep things as they are after reconsidering things openly. Therefore, history and creativity can be great partners: often, great achievements are combinations of the old and new.

Creativity as a Currency

In the new configuration of cities, creativity is one of the main currencies. Five key words form a seamless quintet: curiosity, imagination, creativity, innovation and invention. Being 'curious', 'creative', 'imaginative', 'innovative' or 'talented' are nearly synonymous. They are different words with similar meanings. Some clarity is helpful. Curiosity is the starting point because it is the ability to open the mind and to search for insights, learning, possibilities and solutions. This develops the capacity to have insight and to imaginatively understand potential and apply it to projects. Having imagination is the ability to visualize, conceive, dream up or create a mental picture of something. The attributes and qualities of being creative are the ability to think afresh; be enquiring and flexible; see unusual connections; not be frightened of ambiguity, paradox or contradictions; and be original. It is concerned with being pioneering, advanced and ahead of one's time. To be innovative requires creativity and imagination. The process of innovation uses convergent thinking. It takes creative ideas and assesses them, reducing them to those that can work. Being inventive is to be adroit and clever; but the invention is the tangible, often patented, result of an innovation. Talent implies someone with abilities, intel-

ligence and potential. With such attributes, they are more likely to create innovations and to be creative and imaginative. It is only possible to develop assets by, for instance, inventing new services, if a city has individuals, schools and organizations that encourage a spirit of curiosity from which the other things such as innovations flow. The result of these processes can be an innovation in terms of end-product, a service, a technology, a technique and procedure, a process, an implementation mechanism, a problem redefinition, or new professional attitudes.

Creativity is context-driven. What is creative in one circumstance may not be in another. Whereas in the past we might have needed to harness engineering and related inventiveness to solve urban infrastructure problems or public health issues, today the needs are different. Of primary importance is the ability for joint visioning, integrated thinking, grasping the essence of different disciplines, and understanding what the new resources are.

Creativity is like a new currency that is more sophisticated and powerful than finance capital, which is one-dimensional and narrow. The process of being creative combined with other attributes, such as tenacity and focus, sets the preconditions and generates the ability to make money. The process of being creative, though, does even more. It can, in principle, help to solve any problem and can grasp potential. It has many expressions, such as physical things like great design or architecture or transport systems. It is invisible, too, as the ability to express oneself can provide motivation or engender confidence. Creativity also helps to develop culture and identity because the innovations that it generates shape what a place becomes.

The most important condition for creativity is open-mindedness and the capacity to listen. Most Fortune 500 companies recognize this asset and apply a variety of theories of inventive problem-solving to enhance their competitiveness. Those that run, manage and govern cities also need to see its potential. In a society where ideas are increasingly the key currency, the ability to create ideas drives both social well-being and prosperity, provided the culture is willing to change, and fosters the infrastructure to turn concepts into innovations. Places with a large talent pool, clusters of innovation-driven firms, significant research centres, and a business and social climate conducive to risk taking have greater capacity to solve problems and create opportunities.

Creativities: Individual, Organizational and City-Wide

This 'creative city of imagination' must identify, nurture, attract and sustain talent so that it is able to mobilize ideas, talents and creative organizations in order to keep their young and gifted, as well as older interesting people too. What being creative means as an individual or organization is relatively easy to understand; yet to be creative as a city is a different proposition given the mix of cultures and interests involved that need to be brought together in some coordinated way.

It is simple to grasp what a creative individual might be like – for instance, their capacity to make interesting connections, to think afresh, to have sparks of insight fostered by a listening capacity. They have energy and some sense of where they are going, although how is often unclear. The same is true for a creative organization. But already the priorities are different and it adds a layer of complexity and a different dynamic takes place.

A creative organization needs creative individuals in it; but for the organization to work it needs other types of people too: consolidators, sceptics, solidifiers, balancers, people with people skills, solid administrators. Some people consider them as less interesting; but that is dangerous because for the creative organization to work, it needs mixed teams and diversity. It may be the case that a creative organization has quite 'ordinary' people in it; but because its spirit or ethos is open, exploratory and supportive, this maximizes the overall potential. This, then, leads to greater sustained organizational achievements.

At the next layer of complexity – the Creative City – issues become very difficult as the complexity rises exponentially since it contains a mass of individuals and an amalgam of organizations with different cultures, aims and attitudes. The task of urban leaders is to orchestrate and align these differences with an overarching set of ideas or a vision that takes the city forward. The Creative City notion stresses how rules of engagement between differences of opinion can be negotiated to move forward. Therefore, mediation between differences and finding common threads become an important skill.

The characteristics of such a city tend to include taking measured risks, widespread leadership, a sense of going somewhere,

being determined but not rigidly deterministic, having the strength to go beyond the political cycle, and, crucially, being strategically principled and tactically flexible. To maximize this requires a change in mindset, perception, ambition and will. It requires, too, an understanding of the new competitive urban tools, such as a city's networking capacity, its cultural depth and richness, the quality of its governance, design awareness, and understanding how to use symbolic and perceptual knowledge and eco-awareness. This transformation has a strong impact upon organizational culture and will not be achieved within a business-as-usual approach.

The Creative City balances a dynamic and occasionally tense equilibrium since when the old and new come together there is a creative rub. The stability is provided by an ethical framework that provides the overall guiding principles to the evolving, more creative city. This is what I mean by cities needing to strive to be the most 'creative city for the world', rather than 'the most creative city in the world'. The word 'for' indicates giving something back and taking on responsibilities for the global community – so, for instance, trying to be creative in how one deals with environmental challenges.

To move from the more traditional city to a more imaginative one requires thousands of changes in mindset, creating the conditions for people to become agents of change rather than being passive recipients or victims of change. This sees transformation as a lived experience, not a one-off event. It demands invigorated leadership.

The built environment – the stage, the setting, the container – is crucial for establishing such a milieu. It provides the physical preconditions or platform upon which the activities or atmosphere of a city can develop. A creative milieu is a place that contains the necessary requirements in terms of 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions. A milieu can be a building, a street or an area and, ultimately, a whole city.

The Need for Creativity

Why did the popularity of creativity come about? From the late 1980s onwards, there was an increased recognition that the world is transforming radically even though industries in the more devel-

oped Western world already had to restructure from the mid-1970s onwards. For those at the receiving end, it felt like a paradigm shift.

The creativity movement has taken time to take root and to unfold in its fullness; but its momentum has moved apace with the shift in the global terms of trade now apparent. This was eased by the Internet-based 'new economy' where we move from a focus on brawn (physical labour) to brain work, where value added is generated by ideas that are turned into innovations, inventions and copyrights.

This development process has left many countries and cities disoriented and flailing as they searched for new answers to creating a purpose for themselves and new kinds of jobs, while their cities were physically locked into their industrial past with old structures waiting to be re-used or torn down. This led to soul-searching at different levels and many decision-makers concluded that the old ways of doing things did not work sufficiently well as they did not prepare cities for the emerging context. The education system, for instance, did not seem to prepare students for the demands of the 'new' world. Equally, traditional organizational systems, management techniques and leadership models with their control ethos and hierarchical focus did not seem to provide the flexibility, adaptability and resilience to cope in the evolving competitive environment. Noticeably, cities whose atmosphere, look and feel were seen as coming from the industrialized factory age did not do well, especially where they viewed the quality of design as an add-on rather than as the core of what makes a city attractive and competitive.

Coping with these changes required cities to reassess their resources and potential and led to a process of necessary reinvention on all fronts. This in itself is an act of imagination and creation. Being creative thus seemed like the answer and the battle for greater creativity occurred on several fronts. First, for example, the educational system with its then more rigid curriculum and tendency to rote-like learning did not sufficiently prepare young people who were being asked to learn more subjects, but perhaps understood them less. Critics instead argued that students should acquire higher-order skills such as learning how to learn, create, discover, innovate, problem solve and self-assess. This would trigger and activate wider ranges of intelligences; foster openness, exploration and adaptability; and allow the transfer of knowledge between different contexts and disciplines as students would learn

how to understand the essence of arguments rather than recall out-of-context facts. Second, harnessing the motivation, talent and skills increasingly could not happen in top-down organizational structures. Interesting people, often considered to be mavericks, increasingly were not willing to work within traditional structures. The brightest instead often set up their own firms, where they worked with a portfolio that they could control rather than being part of a corporation. This also led to new forms of managing and governance with titles such as matrix management or stakeholder democracy, whose purpose was to unleash potential and bring greater fulfilment. The drive for innovations required working environments where people wanted to share and collaborate for mutual advantage. This was necessary outside the workplace and increasingly the notion of the creative milieu came into play, which is a physical urban setting where people feel encouraged to engage, communicate and share. Often, these milieus were centred on redundant warehouses that had been turned into incubators for new companies.

The Power of Cultural Resources

Today we can talk of creativity and even the Creative City Movement; but back in the late 1980s when most of the constituent ideas were developed, the key terms discussed were culture, the arts, cultural planning, cultural resources and the cultural industries. Scientific, technological and engineering creativity were not part of the original vocabulary even though they have a substantial contribution in making cities work. Creativity as a broad-based attribute, as a new kind of currency, only came into common (as distinct from specialist) use during the mid-1990s. Later, some of the phraseology changed. The cultural industries became the creative industries and the creative economy. There is still a lack of clarity between the terms. 'Cultural industries' are those that shape the culture and, thus, include casinos or theme parks as well as design or the arts. The creative industries exclude the former as they only involve creative invention.[1]

The notion of the creative class then emerged in 2002 and the publication of Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class*[2] gave the 'movement' a dramatic lift. Equally, the rise of the digital media and increased focus on design became a bridge in

linking technology with innovations arising from the arts. This, in turn, opened up discussions of combinatory creativity, such as the sci-art movement, where the joint insights of scientific and artistic thinking are pulled together. In addition, the rise of the notion of the 'experience economy' increased the importance of artistic creativity given its focus on sensory experience.

The necessary broader imagination required to establish a creative city, such as bureaucratic creativity or social innovation, remain, unfortunately, under-explored even though without it, it is impossible to call oneself a creative place.

There remains rightly a strong focus on cultural resources given that being distinctive is vital in an age of increasing blandness and homogeneity. These are embodied in people's history, habits and past knowledge, and they are unlocked through imagination and then turned into unique, practical possibilities and solutions. These resources are not only material 'things' such as buildings, but also traditions or attitudes such as the idea of '*wakaf*' in Islam based on its tenet of charity. This has encouraged the endowments in Muslim countries that, for instance, provide low-cost housing, contributing to social inclusion in many cities. Another resource can be a symbol, such as a monument recording the foundation of a city or troubles overcome, that inspires citizens. In 1995, Kobe had the massive Great Hanshin Earthquake, referring to the elevated freeway that collapsed, and every December in commemoration Kobe holds an event called *Luminarie*, where the city centre is decorated with illuminated metal archways. This reminds them of their remarkable achievement, largely through voluntary activity, in getting the city back on course. It can be the repertoire of local products in crafts, manufacturing and services, such as the intricate skills of violin-makers in Cremona, Italy, the woodcarvers of the Cracow region in Poland, or the makers of ice hotels in northern Finland.

Urban cultural resources include the historical, industrial and artistic heritage representing assets, including architecture, urban landscapes or landmarks, such as bridges like San Francisco's Golden Gate or the Eiffel Tower. They can be traditions of learning in science, the humanities or the arts, such as in Bologna, whose rich learning environment has made it one of the most vibrant places in Europe. The same is true both in Cambridge, England, and Cambridge, Massachusetts – the home of Harvard. They involve local and indigenous traditions of public life, festivals,

rituals or stories, as well as hobbies and enthusiasms, such as Adelaide's sense of itself as a city of 'free citizens'. Amateur cultural activities can exist simply for enjoyment; but they can also be rethought to generate new products or services. Resources such as language, food and cooking, leisure activities, clothing and subcultures, or intellectual traditions that exist everywhere are often neglected, but can be used to express the special nature of a location. And, of course, cultural resources are the range and quality of skills in the performing and visual arts and the creative industries. Cultural resources are the raw materials of the city and its value base, and they replace our traditional assets.

Further on we discuss and contrast traditional assets and resources with emerging notions of urban assets, including the use of 'iconics' or eco-awareness.

Creativity is the method of exploiting these resources and helping them to grow. The task of urban planners is to recognize, manage and develop these resources responsibly. An appreciation of culture should shape the technicalities of urban planning and development rather than being seen as a marginal add-on to be considered once the important planning questions, such as housing, transport and land use, have been dealt with. So, a culturally informed perspective should condition how planning, as well as economic development or social affairs, should be addressed. Cultural resources reflect where a place is, why it is like it is and where its potential might lead it. This focus draws attention to the distinctive, the unique and the special in any place.

The Changing Planning Paradigm

General transitions in the history of societies, cities and their economies are reflected in how cities develop and how urban planning is conceived. The form and priorities of city-making to develop a city's assets are different under the era of labour-intensive mass production-based industrialization from those of high-technology-focused and knowledge-based development.

In the former, planning is largely top down and seen, in essence, as urban engineering and the construction of public works, such as roads, railways and ports. Over time this developed as a bureaucratic, professionalized and centralized planning system that was largely closed. This focuses on dealing with the surge of urbaniza-

tion and, especially, housing and facilities, such as hospitals, as the city spreads into the suburbs. As the effects of this approach showed its weaknesses, planning has emerged as more participatory, and open systems of planning have materialized that are increasingly more communal. This creates a strategic dilemma. It is easier to get things done in a more top-down way without consultation – the issue is whether it is sensitive and reflects people's deeper needs and whether these forms of development are resilient over time. Think here of Dubai or Beijing.

To survive well, bigger cities must play on varied stages – from the immediately local, through the regional and national, to the widest global platform. These mixed targets, goals and audiences each demand something different. Often they pull and stretch in diverging directions. One, for instance, demands a local park or public transport link, the other airport connectivity for people and cargo across the world and the ability to insert themselves into strategic global production networks.

An alignment is beginning to emerge between the needs of local communities and the global mobile class – and cities need to attract these talented itinerants – as both want a high-quality environment and facilities.

A city suitable for factory work looks and feels different from one geared to encouraging people to be curious and inventive. In the one, people are seen simply as units of mechanical production; in another, as the key ideas and, thus, wealth generators.

This, in turn, is recasting the planning paradigm. The notion of the creative city proposes that planners broaden their horizons and insights and become more imaginative in understanding the lived experience of the city. At the same time, the imagination and creativity of the wider public are encouraged. This requires that a larger group work together to plan the city rather than those merely concerned with land use. Only then can the asset base of the city represented by its people be properly harnessed.

Creating sustainable, vital and economically successful places requires core professions, such as physical planners and landscape designers, whose primary concern is planning, delivering and maintaining the city. It also includes elected and appointed decision-makers or infrastructure providers. The second group of associated professionals has a great impact, such as the police or health professionals, economists, cultural activists or those who understand social issues, as well as the wider public. The capacity

for 'inclusive visioning', team-working, leadership and the ability to manage processes and change then rises to the fore. Planning and strategy-making then becomes more of an enabling process whose goal is to provide the conditions for contact, vitality and liveability.

People as Assets

Seen in this way, people and how they feel are highlighted as the crucial resource. The material infrastructure that makes cities work organizationally needs to support their well-being. This means planning needs to think emotionally. People resources have supplanted natural resources as the main source of competitiveness. Human talent, skills and creativity are replacing location, natural resources, undifferentiated pools of labour and market access as the central urban resources. The inventiveness and innovations of those who live in, work in and run cities determine their future success.

This switches the central planning question around so that it fosters those things which support people's imagination, competence and capabilities with an entrepreneurial spirit to match. There is, then, a focus on a city's sensory landscape and its emotional and psychological impact. These invisible, soft, intangible and less definable assets become more important and focus on questions such as 'How do we create conditions for people to become curious or imaginative?', 'What atmosphere encourages people to give of their best?' or 'How do we show eco-awareness?' as these characteristics draw people to places and respond to their deeper yearnings.

Making the best of urban assets

Good city-making is about maximizing assets and what is considered an urban asset has broadened dramatically. Urban assets and resources can be:

- hard, material and tangible, or soft, immaterial and intangible;
- real and visible, or symbolic and invisible;
- countable, quantifiable and calculable, or to do with perceptions and images.

Normally, cities thought of assets rather like inventories in a factory or warehouse merely as tangible things, such as a transport system, a research institute or facilities like hospitals, parks or iconic buildings.

What was true for companies is now true for cities. Yet, just like once on a company's balance sheet patents, human capital or talent were not calculated because they were seen as intangible. In 1950, 80 per cent of assets consisted of material things: equipment, real estate and inventories. Today, the figure is around 50 per cent; the rest are intangible assets. They are the drivers of corporate wealth creation and prosperity. Now we know they have value and need to be calculated. They are the new equivalents of physical and material assets. For instance, attributes such as 'reputation' or a city's global 'resonance' become significant and these are built up as a composite from hard and intangible factors.

For investment projects where access to highly skilled people is critical, the 'soft' considerations have a higher importance in the decision-making process. This relates primarily to functions such as headquarters, research and development, creative industries employment and shared service centres. It does not relate to cost-based facilities, such as manufacturing plants, distribution centres and back office operations.

In rethinking the repertoire of urban assets creatively, there are 15 main elements to assess. They fall into four groups: material things, activities, matters of attitude, and perception and organizational concerns.

The first category includes the natural setting and location; natural resources; history, heritage and the built fabric; infrastructures from the physical, such as metro-systems and housing, to information technology connectivity.

The second includes urban housekeeping from noise maintenance and waste collection to social care; traditions, both tangible and intangible; the presence of industries and services; levels of skills and talent; and the range of activities, from trade fairs to sporting, artistic and community-based festivals and events.

The third involves attitudes and attributes, such as levels of openness, tolerance, joined-up thinking, a 'can do' approach and entrepreneurship; the perceptions of the city internally and externally; and the presence of a culture of curiosity, creativity and competence.

The fourth category is organization, management and delivery, such as empowering individuals and companies; traditions of 'walking the talk'; and strong partnership working, as well as rethinking the regulations and incentives regime.

The flip side of assets comprises obstacles, and fixing these conditions is often the most creative thing a city can do. It is an effective route to getting initially onto the pace before advancing to more forward-looking initiatives. Obstacles include dull landscapes, degraded, polluted ex-industrial environments, as well as a low-quality and fragmented built fabric; over-engineered road systems, insufficient accessibility, lack of transport options, or out-of-date connectivity; inadequate adjustments to new economy needs; inefficient urban maintenance and housekeeping; low educational achievement and choice at different levels resulting in low expectations; strong social stress; and low levels of cultural provision, urban programming and animation. All of this shapes the culture of a city.

The main point is how you deal with an asset. In one person's hand, they explode with potential; in another's, they go nowhere or lie dormant. As the world of resources and assets opens out, it is clear that every place can have unique niches, and even ugly cities, cold or hot cities, or marginal places can get on the radar screen. Every city can be a world centre for something if it is persistent.

Many of the newer indicators are soft factors and are less easy to measure than factors such as levels of employment. In part, this is because people have been researching and calculating these indicators for decades.

Traditional urban indicators assess location; physical characteristics; infrastructure; human resources; finance and capital; knowledge and technology; industrial structure; institutional capacity; and business culture. A more modern way of describing assets is the economic profile; market prospects; tax levels; the regulatory framework; labour climate; suppliers and know-how; utilities; incentives; quality of life; logistics; and sites, community identity and image.

A third way to look at assets was developed by my company Comedia in 1994[3], which includes the critical mass of activities; the identity and distinctiveness or the innovative capacity of a place; its diversity and accessibility; levels of security and safety; linkage and synergy; competitiveness; organizational capacity and leadership.

A new method of analysing urban assets is to think of a city's various 'capitals', and a number of organizations have been considering this simultaneously, including ourselves (eg the World Capital Institute in Monterrey, Mexico). This framework assesses on the basis of a variety of indicators: identity capital; intelligence capital; financial capital; relationship capital; human individual capital; human collective capital; instrumental material capital; and instrumental knowledge capital.

An interesting and emerging way of thinking about measures of urban success is promoted by CEOs for Cities,[4] which consists of four elements, each with a list of indicators to match:

1 *talent churn:* the capacity to identify, nurture, harness, promote, attract and sustain internal and external talent and to mobilize ideas, resources and organizations;
2 *creativity and innovation potential:* the level of innovations being produced from within a city;
3 *connectivity:* the presence of internal and external linkages, either through physical infrastructure, face to face possibilities or virtually;
4 *distinctiveness:* once a city has baseline facilities, ideally benchmarked with the best (ranging from transport systems and education to health care), when retailing it, it is difference, diversity and distinctiveness that matter.

Importantly, CEOs for Cities has recently undertaken research on the attitudes of more educated segments of the population in the US. Significantly, 15 years ago, 80 per cent of people looked to a company or a job in making a location decision. Today, 64 per cent choose a city first and then the job. This has implications for how cities are put together – are they interesting enough, do they have enough amenity or are they environmentally friendly?

Leadership: The Asset of Assets

Ultimately, the most important urban assets are the personal qualities of its leadership groupings. There is no simplistic formula to find and maximize urban assets. It requires imagination, hard work, deep thinking and risk taking. It requires a sophisticated understanding of urbanism and how cities work globally. It relies

on a deeper understanding of what a resource can be and that potential raw materials are everywhere – from the obvious, like a waterfront setting, to that which is less apparent, such as turning around a lack of ambition in a city. To harness these resources requires different approaches, from the classic physical regeneration initiatives of older urban areas to appreciating that good thinking on its own can generate potential.

Leadership and organizational capacity comprise the asset of assets since they force-feed potential. They are the ability to inspire others towards a shared big picture aim. Leaders have a clear vision that recognizes ever-present complexity, yet can communicate this in simple terms, rather like a compelling story. This engages listeners so that they want to be an agent of the proposed transformation and help shape, make and co-create the vision. There are ordinary, innovative and inspirational leaders. The first simply reflect the desires or needs of the group they lead. An innovative leader questions circumstances to draw out the latent needs, bringing fresh insight to new areas. Inspirational leaders, by contrast, look to the long term and harness the power of completely new ideas, which are often uncomfortable and in the short term seemingly disadvantageous, and have strategic focus in getting beyond the ding-dong of short-term day to day debate.

The form of leadership changes with context. Given that cities need educated people who are unlikely to want to be bossed around as in traditional factories, this is crucial if the most of their knowledge is to be made. An enabling, facilitating and cajoling form of leadership, which understands that influencing is better than exerting direct raw power, is best. Importantly, a city needs many leaders at different levels operating in different contexts. If a city of 1 million had just 1 per cent, this would amount to 10,000 leaders. In democratic societies, especially, the challenge for cities wanting to achieve things is to harness the collective will of the diversity of its leadership groupings. The six qualities of urban leadership essential today are:

1 *foresight:* the ability to imagine and vision and to assess how trends play themselves out;
2 *strategic focus:* the skill of concentrating on the 'big picture' and long-term future-oriented perspectives; being strategically principled and tactically flexible;

3 *understanding urbanism and city dynamics in a holistic way:* this includes understanding the qualities and characteristics that make cities great;
4 *developing a culture of openness and curiosity:* adopting an ethos that values debate, critical thinking and learning;
5 *organizational agility:* the ability to move from a controlling, centralizing, uniform, high-blame, low-risk culture to one that values responsiveness and flexibility;
6 *determined delivery focus:* the motivation, will and ability to make what is promised happen.

Developing leadership and strategic thinking is the primary task of the city on the move.

The Creative Class

Richard Florida's recent notion of 'the creative class' connects to the Creative City idea and is an important aspect of it. These are the groupings of people – designers, scientists, artists and brain-workers – deemed to need creativity to pursue their jobs. His central concern is on the 'quality of place'. He asks rhetorically:

- What's there (the combination of the built environment and the natural environment; a proper setting for the pursuit of creative lives)?
- Who's there (the diverse kinds of people, interacting and providing cues that anyone can plug into and who help to make a life in that community)?
- What's going on (the vibrancy of street life, cafe culture, arts, music and people engaging in outdoor activities – altogether a lot of active, exciting, creative endeavours)?

Florida makes an important conceptual shift by focusing on the creative role of people in the '*creative age*'. He argues that the economy is:

- moving from a corporate-centred system to a people-driven one; and
- companies now move to people and not people to jobs; and
- cities need a people climate as well as a business climate.

He notes the emergence of a new social group or 'class' – the *creative class*, who are demographic segments of the population – and he develops indicators to measure the attributes of places that attract and retain the creative class, which in turn attracts companies.

Artists are one group at the core of this class, as are creative economy people and scientists. Cities are locked in competition to attract, keep or grow their own creative classes and the factors that contribute to this, such as good air connections, research capacity, venture capital investment, and clusters of producers, are all well known in the widely copied 'Silicon Somewhere' model. For Florida, though, these alone are not enough because the creative class are not simply economic units of production, but people with a whole range of personal, social and cultural needs and desires that are at least as important to releasing their creative productivity as the old economic levers.

The cities which are succeeding in the new economy, it appears, are also the most diverse, tolerant and bohemian places. Cities that are investing heavily in high-technology futures but who are not also providing a broad mix of cultural experiences are going to fall behind in the longer term.

The Creative Economy

The 'creativity city paradigm' is also connected to the notion of the 'creative economy'. Every urban leader knows brainpower has taken over from brawn power – physical labour – and that cities need to compete beyond merely low-cost and high-volume productivity. The hallmarks of the 21st century economy are innovation, openness to intense knowledge exchange and technology transfer, and an adaptable skilled global workforce. Knowledge rivals labour efficiency or natural resources as the source of economic growth and wealth creation.

The creative economy is a platform for both developing the economy and even the city. At its core there are three main domains:

1 the media and entertainment industries;
2 the arts and cultural heritage;
3 creative business-to-business services.

The last sphere is perhaps the most important since they can add value to every product or service. Design, advertising and entertainment, in particular, act as drivers of innovation in the broader economy and shape the so-called 'experience economy'. This energizes the city, and artists are increasingly used to provide the imagination.[5]

The creative economy involves transactions in the creative output of the four 'creative industries' – namely:

1 *copyright industries:* industries that create copyright as their primary product, such as advertising, computer software, photography and film;
2 *patent industries:* those industries that produce or trade in patents, such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, information technology, industrial design and engineering;
3 *trademark industries:* widespread and diverse types of creative enterprises that rely on the protection of their trademarks or brands;
4 *design industries:* very widespread and diverse creative enterprises that rely on individuality in designs.[6]

This is a different definition from the way in which the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, a pioneer in the field, categorizes the industries. For them, the creative industries are:

> *… those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. … [These industries] include advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer games, television and radio.*[7]

In the old economy, returns start to diminish with the increasing scale of production as the cost of inputs increases as they become scarcer. In the creative economy, there are no limits: endless increasing returns are possible from the production of more ideas and the subsequent innovation that generates further transactions.

Clustering and Creative Quarters

Clustering is important in creative places and these places are often called creative quarters. Clustering of talent, skill and support infrastructures is central to the 'creative economy' and the creative milieu. A spatial cluster of activities or concentration of an industry, such as design, bio-tech or education, is an urban asset. Central to every discussion on urban vitality and prosperity is clustering, and the arguments are well known: mutual financial, technical and psychological support; increasing the efficiency of markets; bringing together buyers and sellers; creating overlaps between adjacent disciplines or accessible centres of excellence; and stimulating competition, generating 'multiplier' effects, synergy complementary interchanges and swapping of resources. Clustering is not new – the convenience has been obvious since trading began. With real and virtual worlds coalescing, the spatial geography of creativity and clustering is changing; but, crucially, face to face contact remains key.

Activating Creative Assets

There are some conceptual triggers that can act as catalysts and multipliers to generate assets. They include the following.

Redefining how things are conceived and operated:

- Transport is then subsumed under a mobility and accessibility division, which is concerned as much with pedestrians as with cars or metro systems.
- Waste or sewage issues become part of a resource management system as new ecological thinking turns waste into an asset – for instance, 'Factor Four – Doubling Wealth and Halving Resource Use', promoted by the Rocky Mountain Institute in the US. This is a simple concept that switches the focus away from considering labour productivity as the key to wealth creation, to 'resource productivity'. Equally, defining the city as an organism rather than a machine draws out different potentials.
- The overarching paradigm for urban development changes from an urban engineering- or infrastructure-driven approach to creative city-making. This is the art of making places for people, including the connections between people and places,

movement and urban form, nature and the built fabric, as well as the processes of building successful settlements.

Other devices include:

- *Problems as opportunities for innovation*: turning weakness into strength, such as seeing waste as a resource or pollution as providing prospects for a new environment-healing industry. Linked to this is the creative use of crisis. Crisis creates focus and requires an urgent response that may help to overcome previous obstacles to innovation.
- *Focusing on the equation 1 + 1 = 3*: trying to solve a problem or to create an opportunity by achieving multiple objectives simultaneously, such as inspiring disaffected youth to take responsibility for a self-organized project.
- *Changing job designations*: such as calling the highways department the mobility section – refocuses attention onto pedestrians.

Orchestrating Soft Assets

A seismic shift is beginning to occur in the management of urban reputations. Design, eco-, arts and cultural advocates or soft infrastructure experts need now to argue less for the 'value' of their work, as witnessed in the numerous studies on 'the value of creativity, design or arts'. The argument now is shifting to: 'What is the cost of bad design?', 'What is the cost of not involving an artistic approach to urban development?', 'What is the cost of lack of cultural awareness and understanding of diversity?' or 'What are the retrofitting costs of lack of eco-awareness now?'. Rather than the design, arts or eco-community needing to justify themselves, the argument is on the other foot. Those who do not increase design quality substantially or use artistic approaches to city development need to explain 'why not'.

The problem for urban leaders is that city management is organized along traditional functional lines, such as housing, parks, health, police or transportation. Important as these are, no one is responsible for the other dimensions. Some think that it is a 'marketing' task; but the issues are far too important to be left to marketers. Key new notions include:

- iconics;
- design consciousness;
- eco-awareness;
- artistic thinking;
- atmospherics and experience;
- associational richness and resonance creation;
- cultural depth;
- networking capacity;
- communication and language skills.

Iconics

In a period of attention deficit when people have little mental space, urban leaders need to know how to orchestrate 'the iconic' to keep their city in the forefront. Cities now compete by projecting themselves 'iconically' and success can depend upon how their 'iconics' are orchestrated. Icons are projects or initiatives that are powerfully self-explanatory, jolt the imagination, surprise, challenge and raise expectations. Most memorable are the physical ones. They are there for all to see: there is a constant reminder. You grasp it in one. Artistic approaches to achieving this are often the most powerful. In time they become instantly recognizable and emblematic, such as the Olympic facilities in Beijing, the developments in Pudong in Shanghai or the 101 building in Taipei. The most memorable icons are the physical ones; but an icon can be tangible and visible or intangible and invisible: a building; an activity; a tradition; having a headquarters of a key organization in the city; the association of a person with a city; a plan or an event such as the Olympics or the World Expo.

A city can even be iconic when it has many associations that build upon each other into a powerful composite picture. So, when we say 'Paris', 'London' 'New York', 'Tokyo' or even 'Dubai', a vast set of associations springs into the mind. Emblematic initiatives can leapfrog a lengthy process of understanding and avoid prolonged explanatory narratives through the force of their idea and symbolism. Working iconically cannot be formulaic and imitative as communication needs to relate to place, its traditions and identity.

Design awareness

The trajectory of thinking about design has moved from design as decoration, frippery or as an add-on, to design as an essential. Icon

frenzy has at the very least dramatically increased discussion of standards of design. Doing things cheaply with little attention to quality and thoughtful design decreases a city's asset base. Investment in good design generates economic and social value. It does not cost more when measured across the lifetime of the building or place. It generates cultural debate.

Eco-awareness

Views on environmental awareness have shifted from 'good to have' to 'absolutely essential'. It is no longer the domain of fluffy eco-warriors and woolly socked sandal wearers. Among the strongest supporters of eco-awareness are precisely those people whom urban leaders need to attract to their city. A city that cares little about sustainability will, all other things being equal, fail to be competitive. There is a deep yearning amongst citizens and the mobile professionals to reconnect with nature, to give back to the world and to 'walk the talk' on sustainability.

Art and artistic thinking

In an economy based on ideas and the imagination, the relevance of arts rises noticeably. The arts, with science, are one of the few areas where being imaginative is legitimized. The lesson learned is that perhaps it is artistic thinking which provides the strongest message from the arts. The line of arguments for the arts has moved from the paradigm that going to the symphony orchestra 'is good for you', reflecting a civilizational and educational mission. From this followed the idea that a cultural activity or cultural building attracts simply by its presence. Then people recognized that a new or refurbished building can act to revitalize an area. Parallel to this, people measured the economic impact of the arts. Currently it is recognized that the arts have multiple impacts, including a social impact. Now we are beginning to understand that artistic thinking has an even greater impact as we enter the age of sensuality, experience and creativity.

Many realize that planners, engineers, business people and social workers could all benefit from seeing their worlds through the eyes of artists and the additional power and potential that this can give to projects of any kind. The out-of-the-box lateral thinking and use of imagination present in the arts is perhaps the most valuable thing the arts can offer the city and other disciplines such

as planning, engineering, social services, or to the business community, especially if allied to other emphases such as a focus on local distinctiveness.

This is well beyond the commonplace fact that the arts are part of the urban development repertoire. They help to create destinations, foster a city's image, as well as generate economic impact and much more. Design, media, art and retailing are merging and there is a constant battle between art as an independent, critical activity and art as commerce and as an adjunct to social affairs and entertainment.

Importantly, the values and attributes that dominate the modern world are almost *diametrically opposed* to the values promoted by artistic creativity. The former worldview is summed up by goal, objective, focus, strategy, outcome, calculation, measurable, quantifiable, logical, solution, efficient, effective, economic sense, profitable, rational and linear. At its best, artistic creativity involves a journey not knowing where it will lead or if one will arrive; it involves soul-searching and embodies a quest for the profound and truth; it has no calculated purpose and is not goal oriented or measurable in easy ways, or fully explicable rationally – it denies instant gratification; it accepts ambiguity, uncertainty and paradox.

Atmospherics and experience

Issues such as urban atmosphere do not fall into the responsibility of any specific department. An atmosphere is made up of the sensory experiences that comprise a city. Just like economic health, these experiences need considering, managing and monitoring. They are a vital part of the perception of a place and can determine its chances of success. A bad atmosphere can reduce a city's prospects for investment. Instead, cities take aspects that shape the atmosphere, such as safety concerns, noise or waste, and deal with these in isolation. This leaves out the connections, the relationships between things and the bits in between, such as how good-quality design can reduce crime.

Thinking of atmosphere requires urban leaders to think psychologically about their city in the same way as they might about their personal environments, such as their home. The city, especially one operating at a more global scale, needs to perform a difficult trick and be both stimulating as well as provide for the reflective. It needs

to be homely, comfortable and comforting, and equally uplifting, aspirational and driven.

In thinking about atmosphere, cities need to develop a different language, which will lead to different, perhaps non-traditional, solutions. Instead of discussing land use, zoning or bypasses, one might ask: Does my city inspire or deflate? Does it generate desire or apathy? Does it enliven or dull the senses? Does it create civic pride; does it make me want to give back?

Associational richness and resonance creation

In a world of information overload, messages need to come across clear and sharp. Most cities have little external recognition, and the further you move away, the more hazy and unfocused it is.

Recognition comes when you can name a city and a flood of connections and associations are made that unfold in layers as with New York or Paris. Together they make a story. These are a mix of realities and perceptions. The city in its totality is a bundle of associations and has connotations from the physical to the intangible, to stories, images, products or even ideas.

Generating associations is complex. It takes a long time. Think of Paris's link to love built on its artistic reputation that itself took 30 years to mature, then reached a climactic period lasting a few decades and is now slowly ebbing away. Associations can be negative and linger for too long. The association of Chicago with the criminal Al Capone is irrelevant to the city's current realities. To blast through associations that a city does not want requires boldness and verve. Chicago's intention to be seen as green requires the glamorously iconic, such as creating the Millennium Park or green skyscraper roofs, as well as many unseen and unglamorous sustainability initiatives, from waste recycling to car sharing.

Cultural depth

Some places have cultural depth deriving from history. History can push forward by anchoring identity, by allowing the city to work with the patina of ages and by giving the confidence generated by civic pride. It can give institutions an authority and credibility which becomes self-reinforcing, such as the Harvard–MIT, educational cluster around Boston. This is not easily taken away by an upstart city or institution as reputation takes a long time to build, especially in the educational field.

At the same time, history can hold back. People can hark back to old times. They can glorify their history, which gives little space for the young and ambitious to feel they can shape the future. The power configurations in the city can block newcomers, a conservative attitude to new ideas can take hold, and arrogance can emerge. Using heritage and history wisely is the challenge.

Cultural depth can be generated even in young places if they are bold. When you survey two of the great global innovation waves of the last century – the film and media industries and the information technology economy – they took root in upstart places: Los Angeles and Silicon Valley.

Innovation and history can be difficult bed fellows. The challenge for the old city is to make itself relevant for the future competitive edge. Adopting a 'green focus' is one route, especially if the greenness can be seen in the physical environment – as in eco-friendly skyscrapers.

Networking capacity

For the first time in history, size and scale do not matter any more. Large cities no longer have the automatic advantage. This creates opportunities for many second-tier cities if they are globally connected. Size, indeed, can now be a disadvantage because networking is difficult, transactions are too cumbersome and ease of movement is constrained. In short, quality of life is not good enough. This is why in surveys of the world's best cities, places such as Copenhagen, Zurich, Stockholm and Vancouver always come on top. Most are below 2 million inhabitants. They are walkable, accessible and networked.

Any place anywhere can become the centre of a universe, whether in a tiny niche or something more substantial, as long as it is tenacious, connects adroitly and thinks long term. A way of overcoming talent leakage is to develop and promote very strong niches where localized critical mass can be attained. Within global markets, cities can be smaller; but they must be competitive to operate globally.

A city can accrue power by *capturing imaginative territory* in the imagination of the world. It can become the central location for an activity, the headquarters of an important entity or be associated with an area to which others aspire.

The words 'networks' and 'networking' have become a mantra

imbued largely with positive connotations as we perceive networking to be about connecting in an open way. Yet, networks can have a flip side because when they are too tight, closed in or self-referential, they only benefit those who are part of the group. This reduces creative capacity.

Communication and language skills

Finally, in order to operate globally, cities need language capacities at a high level. This is one reason why cities such as Amsterdam or Rotterdam can punch above their weight. Urban leaders need to understand these dimensions. In general, they do not. It is either left to the marketing people or forgotten and put into the 'too vague or hard to handle box'.

The Balanced Urban Scorecard

More urban leaders are now thinking of a city as fields and domains of capital that need to be balanced. We think of capital too narrowly, inevitably influenced by economics and finance, in this way forgetting the many other forms of capital. Successful places understand how a city's forms of capital and assets work at a deeper level – how you amass them, invest in them, orchestrate them and use them to powerful effect. This is a different framework for thinking about the future than merely looking at traditional assets such as your location, your business environment or heritage possibilities. Successful places go out of their way to accumulate all types of capital and so, for instance, can build wealth creation and social capital simultaneously. More shallow places think the trick is simply to amass one alone – finance – and to judge everything on that criterion alone, thinking that this ensures efficiency and effectiveness. They could not be more wrong. It is useful to consider the following:

- *human capital*: the talents, skills and special knowledge of their people;
- *social capital*: the complex web of relationships between organizations, communities and interest groups which makes up civil society and more;
- *cultural capital*: the sense of belonging to and understanding the unique identity and distinctiveness of a place expressed

tangibly and invisibly from heritage and memories, to the capacity to dream and aspire;
- *intellectual capital*: the ideas and innovative potential of a community;
- *scientific and technical capital*: marrying the ability to discover possibilities and solve problems with the technology to turn these into practical applications;
- *creativity capital*: harnessing the capacity to be curious, to imagine, to stand back, to connect the seemingly disconnected, to relax into ambiguity, to be original and inventive;
- *democratic capital*: the ability of communities to foster a culture of discussion and choice within a framework of public accountability and transparency;
- *environmental capital*: the built and natural landscape and ecological diversity of an area;
- *leadership capital*: the motivation, will, energy and capacity to take responsibility and lead;
- *financial capital*: how resources are garnered to pay for services and infrastructure.

Where Next?

The Creative City has now become a catch-all phrase in danger of losing its bite and obliterating the reasons why the idea emerged in the first place. It is essentially about unleashing, harnessing and empowering the potential of people and organizations from whatever source, whether this is in science, the arts, technology or social affairs. Cities tend to restrict the meaning of creativity to the arts and activities within the creative economy professions, calling any cultural plan a 'creative city' plan, when this is only an aspect of a community's creativity.

Overuse, hype and the tendency for cities to adopt the term without thinking through its real consequences can mean that the notion becomes hollowed out, chewed up and thrown out until the next big slogan comes along. The Creative City is not a static notion – it is concerned with a journey of becoming, a fluid state of affairs. It is a challenge, when taken seriously, to existing organizational structures, to habitual ways of doing things and to power configurations. It is concerned with enabling, implementing and delivering potential in communities. It means overcoming deeply entrenched

obstacles, many of which are in the mind and mindset, including thinking and operating within silos and operating hierarchically in departmental ghettos, or preferring to think in reductionist ways that break opportunities and problems into fragments rather than seeing the holistic and more interconnected picture. This is a precondition for good city-making. The creativity of the creative city is about lateral and horizontal thinking, and the capacity to see parts and the whole simultaneously, as well as the woods and the trees at once.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, SEE *www.charleslandry.com*

NOTES

1 Thanks to Kian Woon Kwok for making this distinction.
2 See Florida, R (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class – and How It Is Transforming Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books.
3 Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini, *Indicators of Viability and Vitality*, available as a free download from www.charleslandry.com.
4 See Joseph Cortright in partnership with CEOs for Cities (2006) *City Vitals: New Measures of Success for Cities*, Chicago, IL: CEOs for Cities.
5 Paul Rutten, Professor of Digital Media Studies at Leiden University, has written well on this formulation of the creative economy.
6 See Howkins, J (2001) *The Creative Economy*, London: Penguin Books.
7 From Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2001) 'Foreword' to *Creative Industries Mapping Document 2001*, London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK Government, available for download at www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm.