City government in an age of austerity: discursive institutions and critique

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ABSTRACT

Austerity is an increasingly important feature of urban society and in western countries, both as a site interwoven with the crisis tendencies of capitalism and as spaces mitigating austerity programmes instigated by nation states. Cities have therefore become key spaces in the mediation of 'austerity urbanism', but where such processes involve deliberation, making the production of consensus highly problematic. Such tendencies require far greater intellectual sensitivity towards the practices of agents as they seek to enact social control and coordination, as well as subordinate resistance and critique. 'Pragmatist Sociology' is utilised in this paper to examine the construction and deployment of discursive institutions seeking to control the behaviour of actors, including reducing critique, with the intention of legitimising austerity programmes. Such discursive institutions establish semantic links between the discursive aims of those seeking to control, and the pragmatics of the everyday lives of those subject to such institutions. The paper seeks to examine, through a case study of an English city, how key decision-makers construct discursive institutions in the implementation of austerity and subordination of resistance and, second, the actual practices of resisting austerity. In conclusion, the paper finds that austerity governance is characterised by discursive austerity institutions based on market and bureaucratic values, where large scale critique has been marginalised, resulting in minor forms of critique in the everyday, and compounded by constant efforts at the reconfirmation of discursive institutions.

Austerity   Urban Governance   Discursive Institutions   Critique

INTRODUCTION

Austerity has become a key feature of Western countries since the 2008 financial crisis, as manifest in the restructuring and reduction in the scope of the nation state (Streeck and Schafer, 2013). The actual detail of how austerity is strategically and operationally implemented and managed is very much a devolved process to urban spaces and state agencies (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013; Hastings et al, 2015). For Peck (2012) these conditions are leading to 'a new operational matrix for urban politics' within 'austerity urbanism'. Correspondingly, Peck et al (2013) advocate the critical role of pursing 'place-based investigations' of urban spaces through the examination of ideologies, institutions, practices and power relations (1096). Such a perspective must recognise that cities are emergent and relational spaces, constituted by topologically assembled heterogeneous actors, practices and objects which work through differing socio-spatial relations (Massey, 2005). With such convoluted socio-spatial relations there is negotiation around service priorities and forms of implementation, and the constant need to produce agreement amongst disparate stakeholders (Fuller, 2014).

This paper seeks to conceptualise and examine through a 'place-based investigation' of an anonymised case study city in England, the discursive institutions of austerity and resulting resistance. This builds largely on Peak et al's (2013) belief that neoliberalism in the pre-2008 financial crisis form does not exist, rather it is the case that 'all-too-familiar neoliberal discourses and policy formulations is connected to a more deeply rooted and creatively destructive process of diachronic transformation', encompassing constant and wide-ranging institutional change, which that is transforming urban areas and their governance (1092). To take such an approach seriously, this paper examines three main questions: firstly, what efforts through hegemony-seeking discursive institutions are being deployed by key decision-makers

in the implementation of austerity programmes and displacement of resistance? Secondly, to what extent has austerity been resisted and distorted? Third, how has resistance been prevented by key decision-makers?

These discursive institutions are socially constructed by particular actors and involve the utilisation of particular broader societal values. The paper utilises conceptions of values based on French pragmatist sociology, where they are defined as socially produced conceptions of worth based on particular understandings of 'common good' (see Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). They are deployed by actors in deliberative episodes to critique or justify an argumentative logic, but where actors can call upon various values in different situations (Fuller, 2014). In conclusion, the paper argues that the governance of austerity involves discursive austerity institutions based on market and bureaucratic values, in which large scale critique has been marginalised but everyday critique and circumvention of austerity is evident, leading to constant efforts at their reconfirmation.

In the next section the paper examines austerity and austerity urbanism, before outlining a pragmatist sociology conceptual framework for analysing the processes of critique and justification, which is then used to examine the case study city. The city is illustrative of urban areas struggling with high rates of deprivation, and relatively large budget cuts to the city council in the context of strong levels of public service usage. As such, it is not unique in itself, but corresponds to a set of tendencies being experienced in cities struggling in an austerity landscape.

In response to Blanco et al's (2014) argument that many accounts fail to critically examine the urban state, the focus of the paper is on how the City Council is implementing austerity

programmes. **The case study has been anonymised because of the party political sensitivities around elements of the austerity measures.** The analysis involves 25 semi-structured open-ended interviews with senior and middle managers, and Councillors, as well as 15 such interviews with officers at lower tiers, all of which were undertaken in early 2015 as the 2016-17 budget was being consulted on. Rather than focus on one particular policy area the paper examines all Council policy areas. However, officer-level interviews are focused on the voluntary sector and economic development units, the rationale being that these are service areas under considerable threat of cuts, but where they are integral to the corporate strategy of the Council.

In terms of positionality, the researcher was very much an 'outsider' to the internal intricacies and politics of the local authority and implementation of austerity. Whilst the benefits of 'social proximity' are reduced (see Shenton and Hayter, 2004), interviewees recognised the researcher as being socially, politically and geographically 'distant' from the day-to-day politics of the Council and broader conurbation, producing an interview environment more conducive to expression and discussion. This interview data was supported by content analysis of budget and strategy documents, service-level documents, speeches made by the leader of the Council and media reports, all over the period 2010-2015.

AUSTERITY, INSTITUTIONS AND CRITIQUE

Austerity and 'austerity urbanism'

For Krugman (2013) and Blyth (2013), austerity is an ideologically-based crisis discourse that seeks to legitimise a reduction in the state and impose fiscal constraints. For Peck (2012) these

tendencies underpin 'austerity urbanism' which encompasses, firstly, 'destructive creativity' in which the already existing neoliberalised state apparatus and responsibilities are reduced (Lowndes and Gardner (2016) on 'super-austerity'). Secondly, 'deficit politics' involves greater difficulty in opposing austerity within a context of the normalisation of tighter budget restraints. Finally, the nation state has 'devolved risk' for implementing austerity to urban areas, but not any greater powers in which to address this issue (see, also, Davidson and Ward, 2014; and Hastings and Matthews 2014).

While Peck (2012) and Warner and Clifton (2013) present heuristic frameworks in which to explore urban austerity, there is space in which to deploy a conceptual framework for further examining the 'why' and 'how' of the social practices and 'deliberative' landscapes where austerity occurs. For instance, Warner and Clifton (2013) present a three-fold typology of different urban austerity governing scenarios, whilst recognising that 'marketisation of policy is complex and multi-layered'. However, they only describe these regimes, rather than conceptualising or empirically examining how such decisions are made through particular social practices. Such analysis is critical given Peck's (2013) belief in the variegated nature of neoliberalism and austerity (see Meegan et al, 2014), which arises from the (historically configured) mediating actions of actors and contingencies of spatially-specific institutional arrangements and policy actions (see Lobao and Adua, 2011).

Critical to this is the theoretical exploration of the causal factors underpinning why and how the normalisation of particular austerity tendencies is constantly performed (e.g. deficit politics), and the role of broader social institutions in such processes. This comprises a need to understand how austerity is implemented in a cumulative manner, since this requires on-going deliberation, justification and agreement, which is often characterised by contestation

(Blyth, 2013; Williams et al, 2014). Moreover, austerity rests on particular conceptions of morality, such as the moral responsibility to be frugal (see Clarke and Newman, 2011). This suggests a far greater emphasis on normative values based on particular conceptions of common good and worth, and how different conceptions underpin contestation (see Barnett, 2014) in ways that have not been appreciated in various austerity accounts (see Schipper, 2013; and Färber (2014).

Peck (2012), and others within the tradition of political economy-based accounts of neoliberalism (e.g. Brenner et al, 2010), tend to downplay the disparate nature of governing arrangements, subordinating it to capital relations (Fuller and Geddes, 2008; Nolan and Featherstone, 2015). Yet other accounts highlight the critical significance of such alternative forms of governing and resistance to pro-market values (Ong, 2006; Williams et al, 2014; Featherstone, 2015; Milbourne and Cushman, 2015; Fuller and West, 2016). For Featherstone (2015), the spatially 'situated' nature of practices and actors involved in neoliberal tendencies means that resistance is integral to this contemporary landscape. This demonstrates a need to take account of the various geographical spaces involving 'situated' causal agency and practices that are engaged in the complexities of neoliberal tendencies and their alternatives (Fuller and West, 2016). This is not to downplay broader institutional arrangements and policy actions, as outlined by Brenner et al (2010), but to recognise that such institutions are performative, emergent and uneven in nature; and interwoven with human actors and practices.

Institutions, practices and actors

Debate has continued on how neoliberal tendencies should be analysed, between those emphasising the macro and hybrid (e.g. Peck et al, 2013) and those concerned with contextual micro techniques and modalities (e.g. Ong, 2006). Each perspective tends to underplay the

other's focus, suggesting the need for a 'middle road' which takes account of the emergent social construction of macro institutions (guiding behaviours) through micro social practices, modalities and techniques. One such approach is that of Boltanski's (2011) recent 'pragmatist sociology' perspective, which is based on the understanding that institutions are 'discursive' performative configurations seeking to state the 'whatness of what is', with the aim of bringing about coordination, order and dominance in particular social arenas. Institutions are normatively organised, assigning meaning and appropriate behaviour through morality-based values involving particular conceptions of common good, and which come about through historically configured social deliberation (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). They are thus 'bodiless' in the sense that they cannot be attributed to the opinions of anyone particular human actor, but stem from social construction and contestation by social groups, based on 'different frameworks of meaning' (Browne, 2014:21).

Such a perspective significantly moves beyond certain institutionalist approaches, such as rational choice theory, that tend to see institutions as relatively concrete social constructions based on sanctions and incentives, and where the role of change through human agency has been largely absent (Fuller, 2010). These institutionalist perspectives tend to equate institutions with authority, based on legitimacy, where there is a problematic differentiation between formal and informal institutions, rather than as social constructs relying upon performativity, emergent forms of knowledge and non-authoritarian forms of power (DuGay and Morgan, 2013). Indeed, Boltanski's (2011) conception of institutions, which itself stems from French 'conventionalist' accounts based on 'orders of worth' (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006), is congruent with institutionalists that explicate their normative nature, particularly within institutional and evolutionary economies, but also extending into institutional sociology and organisational analysis (e.g. Brandl et al, 2014). For Hodgson (2006) and other

institutionalists within the Veblenian tradition, institutions are 'systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interaction', rather than being solely embedded within formal authoritarian rule regimes (2). These non-authoritarian social rules are 'socially [constructed,] transmitted and customary normative injunction or immanently normative [contestable] dispositions', which frame preferences and perceptions through 'shared habits' (as a disposition to adopt particular behaviours or thoughts).

The power and durability of institutions as these 'social rule-systems' derives from the sense in which they guide the form and consistency of particularly ordered and stabilised forms of thought, behaviour, expectation and action, and conceptualised in terms of 'shared habit'. What Boltanski (2011) brings is a specific conceptual framework for examining the role of human agency in (de)constructing and performing such normative and dynamic institutions through discursive means, including the normative rule content constructing and constituting 'habits'. This includes being able to examine and understand the deliberative situations and spaces in which normativity and conventions (as expressed in values) are produced, deployed and contested. In essence, Boltanski's (2011) approach proposes that there is an intrinsic connection between discursive institutions and institutions as norms and conventions, since the latter are constructed and constituted by the former.

Thus, Boltanski's (2011) recognises the emergent, communicative and disparate nature of institutional power, where it is subject to critique and contestation. The strength of institutions comes about by semantically presenting a 'reality' through symbolic-discursive means that fixes meaning, reduces uncertainties and can state and guide the 'pragmatic' world of lived experiences; thus creating normative social rules and providing the normative basis for authoritarian power to act (see, for example, Patriotta et al, 2011). Normative 'legitimacy' and

other forms of non-coercive power, such as seduction, are thus fundamental to the production and strength of institutions (Allen, 2003). Through such a 'practical register' actors develop these discursive institutions, seeking social control and coordination, and subordinating alternative discourses, critique and pragmatic lived experiences.

Boltanski's (2011) later work has sought to expand this tendency in late capitalism for quotidian critique to be suppressed through a 'complex/managerial' 'regimes of domination'. This is based on the semantic framing of the imperative of fluidity and change within contemporary global capitalism. Change mechanisms are symbolically constructed as being abstract, impersonal and beyond the reach of human laws (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2006). The role of institutions is to configure particular 'experts' as the only ones able to define this reality of substantial change, thereby bringing together the symbolic and pragmatic, and bestowing legitimacy on experts (see Donald et al, (2014) on the rise of unelected experts in urban austerity regimes). Dominant actors can therefore dispel critique during times of crisis by reiterating their role and the abstract nature of capitalism, and thus leading to the continuation of existing approaches. An integral element of this is quotidian 'tests' of institutions as actors reflect upon their relevance to their lived experience. Whilst such tests are central to critique when they are in the form of 'reality tests' they can reaffirm the 'semantic security' of institutions in defining reality (Boltanski, 2011).

Following Lefebvre (1991) and Hodgson's (2006) conception of 'shared habits' as contestable dispositions', Boltanski (2011) argues that institutions are never able to be discursively congruent with the 'everyday' pragmatic lived experiences of actors, since they have to appeal to the universal rather than particular (Browne, 2014). Moving beyond Bourdieu's downplaying of the critical competences of actors, Boltanski (2011) argues that human actors

have opinions and bodily dispositions, such as emotions, taking place beyond the symbolic and underpinning the abilities of actors to critique. What subsequently arises is discursive critique and alternative performative actions, characterised by actors contesting the normative legitimacy and worth of discursive institutions from the position of the 'state of affairs' (West, 2013).

Actors move beyond the 'doing' of tasks to reflecting on their 'appropriateness' and thus legitimacy, which can encompass various forms, including reflexivity, imaginaries, and affection (Blokker, 2014). This can involve a 'reality test', but this relies upon the validity of the reality created by the institution. An alternative is the more radical 'existential test' which identifies new injustices arising from the 'semantic violence' of institutions (e.g. persecution), or 'semantic security' is critiqued in reference to the complexities of the 'world' and the inability of institutions to provide certainties and security. This takes place from a particular 'cultural vision' based on a certain conception of 'worth' in relation to achieving a 'common good' (Boland, 2013). What Boltanski's (2011) perspective brings therefore is a conceptual emphasis on the causality relating to human efforts to construct and contest institutions, and which we now go on to examine in the case study (see also Fuller, 2014).

AUSTERITY IN THE CITY: A PLACE-BASED INVESTIGATION

The case study city has been a notable victim of austerity measures, compounding already high levels of deprivation and social inequality. The city lies within a broader urban conurbation, with the actual city administrative boundary and its immediate hinterland comprising a population over 300,000 in the 2011 census. Central Government's Indices

of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (2010) indicates that the case study city has become increasingly deprived, moving from being in the 8% to the 6% most deprived areas in England between 2007 and 2010, and with the IMD 2015 indicating that the city remains firmly 'ranked' in the 20 most deprived local authority areas (DCLG, 2015) (Table 1). This is congruent with other indicators in Table 1, including high levels of children and young people living in poverty, all of which are above the UK average. As such, the case study is representative of the most deprived local authorities in England (including other cities such as Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Hull, Birmingham, Manchester, Blackburn and Stoke), but not obviously representative of all English local authorities.

[TABLE 1]

As illustrated in Table 2, the 'Council budget requirement' has remained relatively static since 2011/12, representing continuing service demands, and including central government funding for mandatory services (e.g. social services). Importantly, there are major extra budgetary requirements stemming from the increasing costs of providing support for children in care, inflationary pressures, staff costs, and demographic and demand pressures. These are costs that are not offshoot by increases in central government grant provision, culminating in the overall Council income falling substantially from £360m to £243m between 2010/11 and 2016/17 ([Anonymised case study, 2015).

'Net budget requirements' in Table 2 represent the budget required after specific central government grants (e.g. education, housing and various benefits) and use of Council reserves have been excluded. 'Projected corporate resources' is the actual funding

available, and the difference with net budget requirement is indicative of the savings required in the medium term. It is important to note that the figures for 'Projected corporate resources' represent cuts that have already occurred to budgets, with many austerity measures enacted in anticipation of major future deficient. Overall, a deficit of £123 million to £134 million was identified for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19, with savings of £87.8 million identified during 2014/15 and 2015/16 ([Anonymised], 2015). The financial year 2015/16 represents a period where savings have been met up to this point in previous years (including £3.5m in 2014/15), but where an additional £20m of savings are required for 2016/17, and a further of £26m up to 2018/19 ([Anonymised], 2015). On a per capita basis this represents a decline in real terms as there has not been a dramatic change in the nature and size of the Council's income, population and level of broader service demand in this period.

Table 3 outlines the distribution of austerity measures that will take place between 2014/15 and 2018/19, but this is obviously an emerging agenda (as the table stems from 2015 data) with many further austerity measures needing to be identified and enacted.

[TABLE 2]

The most substantial austerity measures are in adult services, city services, leisure and communities. These include service areas where discretionary services tied to specific mandatory services and government grants tend to prevail, and where marketisation (leisure services and facilities) and the neoliberal personalisation agenda of adult care are occurring (see West, 2013). Of the savings that have been identified, the vast majority derive from what has been discursively framed by the Council as 'efficiency' measures, with 'cuts in service' only constituting £12.9m ([ANONYMISED], 2012, 2013a, 2014,

2015, 2016). A number of redundancies at the Council have also accompanied these reductions. From 2008/09 until 2012/13 this included 600 redundancies and voluntary redundancies, and a further 2000 are proposed from 2015/16 until 2018/19, whilst 715 workers accepted voluntary redundancy from 2013 until 2015 ([ANONYMISED], 2013a; 2015).

[TABLE 3]

Formulating discursive austerity institutions

Cuts at the council have initially been concentrated in discretionary service areas and those subject to national changes (e.g. creation of independent Academy schools), and accompanied by extensive 'efficiency'-based measures (see Table 3). They are now extending outwards to mandatory services in a more comprehensive manner, such as social care, and focused more on actual 'retrenchment' (i.e. decreasing service provision) as the overall budget decreases, and which conforms to the results of Hastings et al (2015). For instance, in the financial year 2016/17 there will be a £3.75m reduction in spending for children and young people services, whilst a further £19.7m is being cut from 'base' budgets across various council services ([ANONYMISED], 2016). While these are often framed as 'efficiency' measures, in reality they typically represent reductions in overall service scope. Examples include proposed reductions in mental health and physical disabilities social workers, and replacing these with health assistants, which represents a reduction of £430,000 up to 2018/19 ([ANONYMISED], 2014b).

More importantly, the Council has exhausted all possible 'salami-slicing' of budgets and efficiency measures, to the point where from 2014-15 it is a case of managing major service

restructuring up to 2018/19. The main strategic priorities are geared towards economic development and supporting vulnerable communities, with service retrenchment judged on their relevance to these priorities ([ANONYMISED], 2015). At the same time senior management have been significantly reduced to a level "where we can just about manage the organisation" (senior management interview), with only £140k reductions projected for management and supervisory staff up to 2018/19, as the majority of such cuts have already occurred. The Council is now divided into two main directorates: 'People' and 'Place'. Many mandatory and large budget services are located in the People directorate, including social care and education services. The Place directorate hosts many physical environment services, as well as discretionary activities such as economic development, which have experienced significant cuts up to 2015.

A critical task for senior politicians and managers has been to justify austerity measures to the broader council and local population. This takes place within a context where there has been no overt publically-stated declarations of outright opposition to austerity, but acquiescence is an uneven and complex process. Senior councillors and managers argue that there is a pragmatic response to nation-state imposed austerity, but enforced with the perceived threat of sanctions. As one councillor argues:

> "We had the debates about whether we should all resign, refuse to do it, increase
> rates and refuse to hold a referendum. But we decided that this wasn't going to
> be an authority where Government decides to despatch commissioners to run it."
> (Councillor interview)

Such a pragmatic perspective takes a form in which senior politicians and councillors frame austerity as a new set of priorities forced upon the Council, and where the nation state has long symbolically institutionalised values and beliefs based on the understanding that it will

intervene directly where councils are failing to make progress towards achieving austerity aims (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012). As one senior manager suggests: "We are making choices that we don't want to make, but have to make, and most people realise that this is reality".

For senior managers and councillors this symbolic institutional form is constituted by values configured around a 'top-down view of democracy' and 'government knowing best' (see Rhodes, 2007; and Marsh et al, 2002). The strong discursive hegemonic position of central government is evident in the acquiescence of local government to punitive nation state measures in previous reform eras, but it also underpins an authoritarian form of power based on the threat of direct intervention in Councils by central government, but notwithstanding the ability of local government to adapt (Wilson, 2003; Stewart, 2014; John, 2014). Such processes are particularly evident in the controversial cessation of neighbourhood wardens, which was justified by way of national government regulations and symbolic institutions of 'potential' direct intervention. Faced with considerable cuts in the 2014-15 budget, the Cabinet was unable to simply state that the service would be funded from 'unspecified savings', since any such financial arrangements have to be formally stated because "you've got to be able to legally satisfy our Director of Finance and auditors" (senior councillor interview).   Such institutionalised behaviours stem from Section 151 of the 1972 Local Government Act which states that the Chief Financial Officer has legal responsibility to the proper administration of a councils financial affairs.

Correspondingly, these values of central government legitimacy and control provide the basis for bureaucratic procedures, as is evident in the budget consultation document that was sent to all residents: 'The most important thing to understand about the council's budget is that by law, it has to balance. That means the amount of money the council spends on services must match

the amount of money it brings in as income'. ([ANONYMISED], 2014b: 3). There is a critical geographical element to such discursive statements, with the Council publicly stating in their budget consultation exercise that 'Most of the money to pay for council services comes from the Government in the form of grants and not from Council Tax raised in the city' ([ANONYMISED], 2014b: 3). In justifying measures based on the 'national' territorial government, but working through scalar apparatus, it is brought within close proximity to the situation at hand, demonstrating an important role for topological relations. So that rather than the forms of physical encounter that Allen and Cochrane (2010) speak about, this is a situation where the discourses and semantics of national government are discursively framed as a proximate constituent in the governance of the city and daily lives of citizens.

It is these beliefs in nation state powers that underpin the construction of new austerity institutions, which we define as attempts at bringing together the semantics of a reduced and restructured state which provides less services, to the pragmatic daily working practices of council officials and the broader population. In this thinking senior officials and politicians work from the assumption that everyone accepts austerity, that it is the new national norm constructed and institutionalised by the nation state, epitomised in the Conservative government's discourses of an "age of austerity" and "permanent austerity" (senior management interview). Here, we see the construction of austerity as something beyond individual agency, as an 'age', encompassing a set of abstract processes not in the realm of comprehension and control by officers.

For instance, austerity is framed not just in terms of national decisions but also market dynamics situated elsewhere, encompassing a set of uncontrollable processes: 'rising inflation and energy prices, along with increased demand for council services, have left the council

facing greater cost pressures' ([ANONYMISED], 2013a: 4). Such a stance is critical in informing decisions and judgements by managers, officers and politicians regarding budget allocations, not least in terms of their framing of ambiguity, as can be seen in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 ([ANONYMISED], 2016): 'That, due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could, therefore, result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council' ([ANONYMISED], 2016: 2). This is reiterated by a senior manager who states that in regards central government funding allocations: "we have the Comprehensive Spending Review where Government gives us indicative funding levels, but of course things can change rapidly, such as a general election".

The case above also demonstrates how the justification for decisions on the distribution of austerity measures has been based on the inevitability and 'pragmatics' of the situation, with the symbolic framing of such 'pragmatics' through new discursive institutions being critical. This relies on a discourse of "common sense" and "a realistic way of thinking" in mitigating austerity measures (senior councillor interview). Such framing is firmly embedded in broader stringent central-local financial relations where local government relies upon pragmatic thinking when setting budgets, involving second guessing of what funding allocations they will have: "There are not many million pound organisations where strategic financial planning is in the hands of someone else and they don't tell you till three months before. It's like planning in the dark" (senior management interview). The effect has been the discursive framing of the need for conclusive and concise practical action as a mechanism for conveying a managed 'reality' in a 'world' of complexity, as emphasised in a recent public budget consultation: 'because of the Government grant cuts, the Council has to cut spending now – and why it has to be decisive' ([ANONYMISED], 2014b: 7). Moreover, the basis of the consultation was that the Council had already 'come up with a savings plan for 2014-2015 that will find £16.3 million

to help plug the budget gap', thus representing decisiveness, but that they 'want to get the views of residents and businesses' ([ANONYMISED], 2014b: 7).

This 'inevitability' and 'pragmatism' is accompanied by the further infusion of market values, working through market networks beyond but through the case study city, that are seeking to influence behaviours, and which build upon the existing quasi-market organisational elements of city government. Market values are presented both as a solution to centrally imposed cuts and, more importantly, a way forward for the organisation in the contemporary age, one in which change is an inevitable and uncontrollable process, but that can have positive ramifications, as suggested by Cameron (2015) in the assumptions that a 'smarter state' (which harnesses market values) can do more with less (Lowndes and Gardner (2016). The corporate strategy 2012-15 explicitly states that "…a city built on creativity should be at home with change" ([ANONYMISED], 2012: 4). This change is framed in terms of market values based on the individual consumer and a 'flexible' organisation, involving an "ambitious internal transformation that will make it more customer-focused, agile, flexible and responsive" ([ANONYMISED], 2012: 4).

The centrality of market values to austerity institutions can also be seen in many aspects of the organisation. Where possible the Council has sought to reconfigure services to be more commercially viable, involving the reduction in subsidies for leisure centres and arts venues, their re-branding, and the Council allocating funding to refurbish a concert venue. This business mentality also stretches into larger service areas around children's social care, reflecting broader trends (see Levitas, 2012; Taylor-Gooby, 2011). Following government agendas of cutting bureaucracy and requiring public servants to be focused on 'managing' (like a business) rather than administering services (see Newman and Clarke, 2009), there has not

just been a redefinition of 'service users' to 'customers of services' through 'business language', but also the focusing of resources on the most in need ('needs led assessment'). This has involved the introduction of service rationing through 'outcome based accountability' systems, which are based on "individual customer satisfaction with the service they receive from us" (senior management interview). This requires efforts and resources at identifying such citizens (i.e. the most as risk), whilst rationalising support to other social groups that do not fall into this category ([ANONYMISED], 2014a). The focus on 'efficiency' and outcomes is also evident in the recent creation of eight 'Multi Agency Support Teams' in child protection and behaviour, discursively framed as representing the need for the "efficient use of what are limited amount of resources for social care" (senior management interview) ([ANONYMISED], 2013b). This has involved a range of efficiency measures, including greater co-funding of Education Welfare Officer by schools, and replacing eight Advisory Teacher posts with two Behaviour and Attendance Consultant posts that are lower paid, all of which produced savings of £40,000.

What this represents is the strong influence of market values within the actual practices of social care. As one senior manager argues: "social work needs to be more business savvy about what the roles of the business are, what the individual roles are. To be evidencing impact, effectiveness, efficiency and value for money" (senior management interview). This ties in with a view that services need to be collecting "business intelligence of what has the best impact" (senior management interview). The youth service is one discretionary service of the Council that has been significantly reduced to now operating through one centre as part of a youth area, representing savings of £1.1m in 2015-16, and supporting the voluntary and community to provide services ([ANONYMISED], 2013a). This has been justified by way of market values and enacted through bureaucratic arrangements. As one senior manager notes:

"It wasn't a statutory service, wasn't good at demonstrating its effectiveness and value for money. Nor could it demonstrate that to challenge its closure."

Strategy formation and austerity institutions

Market values are also imbricated with bureaucratic values in the Council's corporate strategy process where there is a particular managerial approach. For Boltanski (2011), this relates to the development of 'managerial/complex' forms of domination, with their onus on the role of particular experts in understanding contemporary trends, and constrained ability of actors to address abstract and complex processes. Firstly, there is a commitment to more open consultation around strategy development, but only through certain instruments, such as the '100:100 consultation'. The role of these initiatives is to construct an institutional landscape of consultation, and which takes account of all topological practices of the council, where employees perceive empowerment and capacity to influence, but in reality their influence is limited to consultation routes that are defined by senior management (see Diefenbach (2009) on such managerial forms). The internal strategic consultation process itself is discursively framed in terms of market values of efficiency and effectiveness, rather than inclusiveness. As one senior manager notes: "we've involved people as much as possible given the huge task of reconfiguring our corporate plan. There is a risk that we don't get to an end stage, which we're constantly consulting." Consultation and consensus are therefore finite exercises, thus legitimising a limited level of officer consultation, but still giving employees a perception of being agents that are able influence. This is comparable to neoliberal organisational dynamics with their expression of decentralisation, but which conceals centralisation (see, for example, Courpasson 2000).

This framing of strategy as encompassing greater officer influence hides further efforts to guide the behaviours of workers. The corporate strategy has been reconfigured around a set of key issues, rather than a "40 page document that sits on the shelf gathering dust" (senior management interview). By simplifying there is a belief in being able to have greater influence on officers, particularly in relation to disciplining dissenting voices and fostering entrepreneurial "can do" attitudes which are considered critical in maintaining service quality and efficiency, but with far fewer resources. As one senior manager argues: "There are a group of employees that are resistant to change and don't care about the corporate plan… we need employees to embrace that [corporate priorities] and talk that language" (senior management interview). By simplifying the corporate strategy to one-page, using "simple language", senior managers believe that there will be "no excuse to understand how you fit into the big picture." This has:

> "made visible and real, living and breathing the corporate plan, in the language we use, it's in the behaviours that the SEB [Senior Executive Board] strategy group identified as important for enabling delivery, one of those behaviours is 'can do' so that employees will then be engaged in the process" (senior management interview).

Secondly, we see the consolidation of strategy production at the very senior level, and thus city-wide local authority scale, which is justified by the need to respond to the significant challenges of austerity in a more holistic manner, and adheres to Overmans and Timm-Arnold's (2016) argument that the 'nature of municipal austerity plans is the product of an elite decision-making process'. Indeed, this represents congruence to state restructuring through (disparate and uneven) new public management practices since the late 1970s, characterised by organisational centralisation and hierarchies through the primacy of a managerial culture, with managers the only agents deemed worthy to undertake managerial tasks (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2011; Diefenbach, 2009).

This has occurred through the Senior Executive Board (SEB) strategy sessions that have identified the main strategic issues and high level priorities. The group included the managing director, the Place and People heads, Finance director and Transformation manager. Such a small high level group was conveyed as a necessity, particularly given the need to maintain service levels in relation to key issues, whilst restructuring and reducing other services in the face of continuing societal challenges. The solution has been framed as the need for a thematic rather than directorate-based approach, based on holistic measures that can mediate the restructuring of services and address complex societal issues. This was considered to, first, require senior management defining the main issues facing the Council, and from there it would go to consultation with service heads and the further development of these thematic priorities.

Bureaucratic values, market values and austerity institutions

Following the arguments of Graeber (2015), it is clear that market values have permeated the formation of austerity institutions, but these are intricately connected with bureaucratic values and daily organisational practices, along with bureaucratic efficiency being discursively framed as a key strategic aim. Indeed, for Raudla and Kattel (2013) and Pollit and Bouckaert (2011), the austerity strategies of local government are partly a function of organisational factors, including 'administrative culture' and 'governing conventions'. Along with fiscal measures to reduce expenditure, there have been organisational initiatives designed to indirectly reduce expenditure (Overmann and Timm-Arnold, 2016). The Council's corporate plan (2012-15) naturalises austerity in positive terms by relating the production of a more efficient organisation to beneficial societal outcomes:

> 'Restructuring of the council's senior management in early 2011 began to reshape the organisation to focus more on the key priorities…. becoming more customer-focused and efficient in its delivery of services. Restructuring at lower

tiers of management is continuing and is likely to be ongoing as the council continues to strive to achieve more with less' (8).

The role of these institutionalised bureaucratic values also work through 'transformational' programmes aligned with new strategic priorities and cost-saving exercises, and follow more general trends of organisational retrenchment as a consequence of austerity (Hastings et al, 2015; Overmann and Timm-Arnold, 2016). They are geared towards managerial principles of 'demand management', which emphasises greater understanding and responsiveness to citizen service demands, leading to changes in the behaviours of officers, but also seeking to change the behaviours of customers and, thus, representing greater sensitivity towards the demand-side (see Osbourne, 2010). A key element of this is to 'mitigate, rather than instigate, the need for public services in the future' (LGA, 2014). It is therefore an approach adhering to state services aimed at the most vulnerable, whilst mitigating the demands from the general population by facilitating citizen 'responbilisation' for their well-being (Lowndes and Garner, 2016).

For senior managers these transformational programmes are legitimised because "people realise that we have to do something to respond to the funding challenge", and that it "provides a strategic direction for the future" (senior management interview). As with most strategic management models they seek to frame a reality of complex societal issues and appropriate organisational priorities and modes of working (see Whittington, 2001), but in the context of reduced budgets and organisational uncertainty. One element of this is the role of such programmes in providing certainty, or 'semantic security', in the sense of framing a reality that expresses a future role for the Council, rather than leaving officers without any security for the future (officer interview).

The construction of austerity institutions is interwoven with significant management and officer turnover following the restructuring of the Council. This can be situated within the context of long term pro-business management models seeking to foster entrepreneurship and innovation, and organisational initiatives designed to indirectly reduce expenditure, as well as promote revenue-generating activities (see Hood and Peters, 2004). Discursively framed as a positive process, senior managers argue that there was a "sorting process" in which "we've lost the more negative ones", those that have worked here a long time…and not worked in any other organisations", and who lacked belief in the necessity of change (senior management interview). Senior management have subsequently been able to select new managers and officers that are believed to have the right values and beliefs in which to perform austerity governance, described by one senior officer as a more "pro-active and creative culture" (senior management interview). As one senior manager notes with regards to morale: "if you look around the room [at a leadership meeting] the morale was good, but these are naturally more positive people up for the challenge" (senior management interview). Another senior manager suggests that: "I have a group of positive staff that have 'can do' behaviours, they are buzzing about change" (senior management interview).

Following Overmans and Timm-Arnold (2016), this concern with more entrepreneurial officers is an important 'organisational change' mechanism, designed to reorient the long term culture of the organisation as part of its broader retrenchment under a regime of austerity. Similarly, Kinder (2012) argues that innovation and learning will be critical in an age of austerity, representing the continuing relevance of elements of neoliberal new public management principles. The actual extent to which there is a focus on relative creativity is represented in the strong emphasis on revenue generating practices where 'some are predicated on relatively unproven or untested approaches', as deemed by another local authority chief

executive (Dave Smith, quoted in [Anonymised newspaper], 2015). Such tendencies can firmly be situated within the context of urban entrepreneurialism, Hastings et al's (2015) emphasis on local government's greater 'responsibilisation' for economic growth and distribution, and Warner and Clifton's (2014) 'riding the wave' as local government seeks to become more market-orientated.

Contestation, acquiescence and austerity

In the present context we see a distinct lack of large scale, overt resistance to austerity measures and institutions at the Council, but this is a complex and uneven organisational landscape. For officers and Labour party politicians (who run the Council), there has been a lack of organised national and regional resistance from beyond the organisation, and particularly that of the national opposition Labour Party, which they could draw upon in the large scale critiques of austerity (officer and councillor interviews). Traditional local government values based on local civic duty were also not extensively utilised in critiques of austerity, by either senior councillors towards central government, nor by workers towards senior management's distribution of austerity across the council (officer interviews). These officers and Labour party politicians defined such values in terms of a duty towards the universal provision of services to all communities with the aim of ensuring social equality, but at the same time being democratically accountable for their actions (officer and councillor interview). These have co-existed, albeit in antagonistic relations, with various neoliberal reforms since the 1970s (see John, 2014). For many officers and national opposition party politicians these values had not been deployed in critiques, largely because of the ability of nationally constructed discourses on a debt crisis, and overextended state, to construct 'reality'. Such discourses do not

completely construct a reality for Council officers and politicians, but they have legitimated austerity enough for it to hinder the motivation to organise large-scale resistance at the Council (officer interview).

In other instances where critique occurred, arguments failed to elucidate the actual impact on vulnerable communities within places, with arguments often framed in relation to the impact on officers working conditions and future employment at the council (officer interviews). This is particularly evident in annual budget press releases with their onus on council services and employees: 'no area of the council would be left untouched by the cuts - with services scaled back - in some cases stopped altogether - and up to 2000 job losses at the authority' ([ANONYMISED], 2014a). Where actual impacts on the city are publicly stated it is often in the context of council employees: "More job losses are hugely regrettable, not just for the individuals who face losing their livelihoods but also for the city because many of these people live here and spend their money here" ([Anonymised Politician], quoted in [ANONYMISED], 2014a).

Critique was therefore geared towards a 'reality test' that confirmed the semantic validity of central government discourses around the necessity of austerity, given national state debt and role for local government as one of many actors in urban governance. This was instead of an 'existential test' that questioned the actual pragmatic basis of those austerity discourses in the daily lives of citizens and their disparate socio-spatial relations. This was compounded by opposition political parties emphasising the financial management failures of the Council as the cause of job losses, rather than austerity: "The council will say it's because of the cuts from government and I don't dispute this but the council has not handled its finances well" ([Anonymised Politician], quoted in [Anonymised newspaper], 2016).

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Despite the lack of large scale opposition, day to day critique and circumvention of austerity policies does occur, as workers disrupt the semantic security of austerity institutions (see Williams et al, 2014). One such example is the '100:100' initiative which allows employees to suggest new ways of doing things at the Council. Such initiatives have been met with scepticism by certain officers, with many arguing that these do not offset the effects of austerity, principally around job cuts and having greater responsibilities as the number of officers falls. This is typically manifest in quotidian practices that question the semantic security of austerity institutions by diverting and subordinating their discourses. As one senior manager notes: "certain members of our staff tend to say 'there is nothing new here, why are you bothering'..." (senior management interview). In such a context the '100:100' initiative is looked upon favourably as an effort to engage more with officers, but that the daily demands of public servants heavily mediate such initiatives. This has been reiterated publicly by a Conservative Party politician who framed the initiative in terms of its connection to the "good old fashioned suggestion box", whilst emphasising its semantic insecurity by stating that the Council should not "need a slogan to re-enforce" its statements around being a 'confident' and 'capable' organisation ([Anonymised Politician], quoted in [Anonymised newspaper], 2014).

More broadly, attempts at the circumvention of austerity have occurred at senior levels, reinforcing the fragility of austerity institutions. As substantial retrenchment occurs certain managers seek to protect their service areas. One process has been for managers to collate evidence on how much they have already saved compared with other services, and that if this is the case then "they should be saving more money in the future, and that we have spent a long time battling that….its takes us back to salami-slicing rather than thinking about how we target scarce resources on our priorities" (senior management interview). Quashing this resistance is

problematic through quantitative analysis of savings because the organisation has been restructured so many times that it makes comparison problematic.

The response to the everyday critique outlined above is for senior management to constantly re-confirm austerity institutions. The purpose of this is to re-establish the semantic link, or 'security', between discourses of austerity as the only way forward and the daily working practices of employees, with the aim of producing agreement. For senior managers, reconfirmation of austerity involves conveying discourses of openness and inclusiveness through consultation. This was initiated by the previous chief executive holding an early meeting informing staff of the Council's financial position and a large scale redundancy scheme. This is considered to have "mitigated potential overt resistance… people felt, they might not have agreed with it, I know what's coming and why" (senior management interview).

Critical to such discourses are various practices, including a monthly staff forum chaired by the strategic director, and meet and greet sessions. Through these mechanisms the leadership conveys discourses of openness and inclusivity, which is believed to encourage positivity. As one senior manager notes: "I work quite hard at embedding positivity, being clear that people have opportunities to make comments, there is a communications strategy so that people know what's going on". But what is critical in such dynamics is that managers define the pathways, procedures and parameters of consultation and debate, rather than it being in the control of workers, and thus issues raised by the latter are always filtered through these official procedures (officer interview).

These efforts at openness and inclusivity convey important attempts at semantic security, thus ensuring agreement, rather than resistance. This comes in the forms of pacifying workers to

accept and pursue austerity measures that stem from the nation state, which is constantly reconfirmed through these discourses of togetherness at the organisational scale. For senior managers it is a case of: "People understand the challenges like savings targets…. but people understand the reasons behind it", including that "we have to do something different" (senior management interview). This is further complemented by discourses conveying the breadth of austerity, whereby "people understand that the climate isn't much better elsewhere", so that austerity measures are framed as both endemic and inevitable.

A further critical element of this process of confirmation is the semantic framing of officers as having the ability and welcoming the opportunity in which to change the bureaucratic nature of the organisation. Austerity is defined as empowering managers and officers to bring about change to a monolithic and distant bureaucratic body, in ways that were not possible before austerity. One senior manager describes this as: "they have welcomed it as an opportunity to review what we're doing, to refocus, to ensure that we're targeting stuff in the right place" (senior management interview). This is particularly evident in the significant reconfiguration of youth services where:

> "There was resistance, shutting down a whole profession, valued by young people. It wasn't welcomed, but there was no more resistance that couldn't be managed. People accepted the change, embracing it and moving on" (senior management interview).

Related to this is the 'semantic violence' of framing opposition to austerity as not being overt or large scale, but just the "type of complaining" you get with organisational transition and changes to people's responsibilities, and thus it relates to the internal dynamics of the organisation rather than the broader socio-spatial relations of austerity (senior management interview). As one senior manager notes: "I wouldn't call it resistance, but I don't think people

have welcomed it all the time…" (Senior management interview). Senior managers subsequently frame cynics of council initiatives, such as 100-100, in terms of inherently sceptical officers, rather than them responding to austerity. As one senior manager argues: "It's difficult to turn their positivity around because they've been like that for a long time, so it's not a reaction to change and austerity in local government in the last few years."

There has also been recent management turnover, with long term managers framed as leaving because of their disdain for austerity. Their resistance to austerity has been described in terms of their own interests, rather than that of the broader Council, and therefore you see the individualisation of resistance based on their own selfishness, as well as negatively associating them with silo-thinking which is deemed as an undesirable trait:

> "There had been a lot of silo-mentality in the organisation that has been broken down. A lot of managers have left because they didn't want to play the corporate line, they didn't want the best outcome for the Council, they were thinking about their own services." (Senior management interview)

This discourse has subsequently been used to change managers who "still think that they need to protect their service" (senior management interview). So that the inevitability of austerity is semantically linked with resistance that is based on organisational change rather than the broader socio-spatial relations of austerity. Thus, it is possible to marginalise particular opposition to austerity by discursively dispelling the link between austerity and the greater working difficulties of council workers in their daily working practices.

CONCLUSION

Following the suggestion for 'place-based investigations' by Peck et al (2013), the case study analysis in this paper has found that 'devolved risk' for implementing austerity to city governments has led to senior managers and councillors formulating discursive institutions. These actors have been able to construct semantic security through institutions, based on market and bureaucratic values, which seek to guide the daily practices of officers. Large scale overt opposition has not occurred, with no critique of the semantic link between the discursive and everyday, although micro daily critique and circumvention of austerity does occur. Senior actors have been able to displace potential resistance by reconfirming discursive austerity institutions, linking the semantic with the daily practices of the organisation. Such processes are therefore similar to Keil's (2011) idea of 'roll with it neoliberalization' in which neoliberal practices and cognition scripts are naturalised within governing arrangements. **The future of the case study is one in which there will be a considerable reduction in public services in the future, with the dominant role of the Council one of children and adult services provider (as part of state mandatory requirements), as well as pursing entrepreneurial activities in economic development and other policy areas. From such a position, any contestation of austerity institutions could thus come about through civic values emphasising the failure of the city authority to ensure social justice for all through service provision, or the failure of the actual market which the city government is relying upon to produce economic benefits to the whole population (see Davies, 2014).**

Such a trajectory, with its lack of large scale resistance to austerity within and beyond the state, is partially congruent with a politics of no alternatives. What Boltanski's (2011) later work has sought to address is the powerful tendency in late capitalism for everyday critique to be suppressed through 'complex/managerial' 'regimes of domination'. When denied the outlets for their collective exploration of the norms embedded in democratic

institutions, such that might lead to the consideration of new democratic arrangements based on a 'compromise' between different 'orders of worth', the more actors will retreat into what Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) characterise as an attitude of 'relativisation'. Subjects avoid recourse to a 'test' of commonality, as epitomised in the particular conceptions of common good, by simply agreeing that 'nothing matters' and to 'return to the [embodied] circumstances' (ibid, p 340). Any effort to therefore critique and contest austerity to the level of a particular conception of common good is avoided, and instead what we see are expressions of injustice from no particular vantage point.

More broadly, the analysis demonstrates the need to critically engage austerity urbanism models, including their tendency to downplay the intricacies and heterogeneous social practices and actors constituting and performing 'austerity regimes' (Donald et al, 2014). All three austerity urbanism processes identified by Peck (2012) (e.g. devolved risk) are occurring through the broader political economies of the UK government. However, as this case study demonstrates, the actual manifestation and trajectories of such processes occurs through 'deficit politics' in sub-national governance spaces. Yet while 'deficit politics' provides an important categorisation it requires greater conceptual and empirical investigation in governing spaces where it is 'actually existing', as is also the case with Warner and Clifton (2013) and Donald et al's (2013) insufficient consideration of actual political practices.

Pragmatist sociology provides a framework in which to explore the political actions and deliberations characterising austerity urbanism tendencies. Through this approach it is possible to examine the construction and performativity of (historically and spatially configured) discursive institutions in seeking to bring about social coordination, but at the same time appreciating the critical role of human agency in performing and contesting such institutions.

The case study illustrates the ability of actors to develop quite powerful discursive institutions (as experienced by actors), and how these incorporate and utilise particular broader values. Such a perspective can, for instance, inform Warner and Clifton's (2013) perspective on how marketisation of public services is spread through the utilisation of market values that provide semantic security between the aims of civic duty and community well-being, and market forms of delivery. This is not to suggest that such semantic security is endemic throughout austerity urbanism. **While there is no evidence of any *substantial* resistance to austerity or development of radical alternatives at the case study (see also Fuller and West, 2016; Lowndes and Garner, 2016), there is a difference between large scale overt struggle and everyday mundane practices of resistance. Such overt resistance requires 'existential tests' that deploy alternatives values and conceptions of common good (e.g. social justice) through practices of argumentation, and which seek to produce 'compromises' with 'orders of worth' that justify austerity (e.g. industrial efficiency), although such alternatives have not yet developed in the case study.**

Integral to this is pragmatist sociology's belief that actors continually possess the competencies and opportunities in which to critique and justify alternatives in reference to moral values and principles. Deliberative practices are thus critical to future analysis of austerity in urban governance. For example, this approach can examine the antecedents and genesis of Polanyian 'counter movements' ('push-backs') in the Warner and Clifton's (2013) framework, largely by way of elucidating how critique develops based on the pragmatics of the everyday and utilisation of alternative societal values in 'tests'. Such considerations also presents a pragmatist conceptual framework that can further elucidate the political action and democratic politics as actors seek to state their 'equality' in Rancierian understandings of resistance and contestation (see Davidson and Iveson, 2014).

This makes it possible to examine the 'why' and 'how' of practices by actors that are enacting and reacting to austerity through micro arrangements, as well as how justification, legitimisation and normalisation are key macro elements in austerity and neoliberalism (Blyth, 2013). Indeed, whilst Brenner et al (2010) have highlighted the critical role of particular neoliberalization processes connecting sites of neoliberalism (e.g. regulatory experimentation), they have not elucidated the major role of societal values and conceptions of common good that underpin social coordination and order (e.g. pro-market values of Anglo-Saxon economies), and which are key in legitimising neoliberal tendencies (see Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006; Hall, 2011). Similarly, Warner and Clifton (2013) argue that state retrenchment rests on the reconfiguration of values (i.e. the delegitimisation of 'public values' in public policy) in underpinning the legitimacy of austerity, yet they deploy no substantial conceptual exploration of their construction or constitution. Consideration should therefore be placed on how neoliberal and austerity practices are constantly and unevenly performed through forms of legitimacy, which relate to much broader values, and that are relationally connected between different geographies (see Barnett, 2014). The pragmatist sociological perspective of Boltanski (2011) is one such approach where it is possible to appreciate contingency-laden macro institutional arrangements, as well as the emergent, alternative and performative micro practices of neoliberal and austerity tendencies.

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Table 1: Population and Deprivation in the case study

Indicator	Figure (%)	UK average
Population characteristics		
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents	35.5	12.0
0-14 children	18.5	18.0
65 year and above	16.2	16.0
Poverty		
Income deprivation (Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010)	23.8	n/a
Children and young people living in poverty (2010)	33.4	13.0
Life expectancy	76.5	78.0
Economy		
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate$_1$ (2015)	4.0	1.6
Employment Deprivation (2010)	18.7	n/a
Youth unemployment claimant rate (2015)	27.0	13.7
Commercial property vacancy rate in the city centre (2015-16)	21.8	12.3
People with no qualifications (2011)	31.0	23.0
People with a degree (2011)	20.0	27.0

Source: 2011 Census, Department for Work and Pensions (2010; 2015); IMD (2010; 2015)

1. Refers to the number of people unemployed in receipt of government welfare support but that are seeking employment.

Table 2: [Anonymised] Council budget 2011/12 to 2015/16 (£ millions)

	2011/12	2012-13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Council budget requirement *(including specific govt. grants and use of reserves)*	607.794	617.435	632.424	614.533	623.025
Total projected required changes from previous budget	-17.857₁	-9.641	14.989	-17.891	-8.492
Net central govt. grants *(Schools, housing and council Tax benefits)*	363.446	370.121	359.530	358.865	397.191
Net budget requirement *(excluding specific govt. grants and use of reserves)*	244.348	235.688	272.894	255,668	224,875
Projected Corporate Resources *(before use of reserves and new savings proposals)*	244.348	232.654	255.630	237,412	224,875
Projected Cumulative Budget Deficit and required savings	0.0	3.034	17.264	18,256	0.0

Source: [Anonymised] Annual budget statements (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)

1. Calculated as a difference between the 2010/11 (£625.651m) and 2011/12 budgets.

Table 3: Identified savings by service area (£000)

Service area	No.	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
Resources	23	1,344	501	376	1,043	1,720	**4,984**
Leisure and communities	24	4,020	2,045	512	529	666	**7,772**
City services	48	48	3,187	2,506	1,239	1,957	**11,800**
Governance	16	16	560	315	-	-	**1,335**
Regeneration and prosperity	14	1,286	796	176	140	159	**2,557**
Schools and learning	1	1,913	1,427	-	-	-	**3,340**
Health and well being	2	556	650	-	-	-	**1,206**
Adult services	29	3,405	6,569	5,850	3,750	4,464	**24,038**
Children and families	8	1,948	2,014	-	-	-	**3,994**
	165	**18,119**	**17,068**	**8,468**	**8,373**	**8,966**	**60,994**

Source: [Anonymised] (2015)