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ENTREPRENEURIAL URBANISM, AUSTERITY AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

Many austerity accounts focus on the shrinkage of city governments, with less emphasis on state-building responses. Utilising the Cultural Political Economy approach, this paper examines the ‘selection’ of pro-growth ‘economic imaginaries’ that seek to mediate austerity. These issues are examined by way of a case study analysis of the city government of Coventry, England. The paper finds that a pro-growth/market imaginary dominates through sedimentation and discursive and governmental depoliticisation, resulting in the marginalisation of social regeneration priorities. Critical to this is the role of historically constituted discourses and nation state ‘selectivity’ that legitimises this particular economic imaginary.

Austerity City government Economic imaginaries Pro-growth

INTRODUCTION

Austerity in the post 2008 financial crisis period has been displaced to subnational sites, involving performative enactment and mediation by a range of actors working through heterogeneous subnational institutional spaces (Pike et al, 2018; Fuller, 2017). There have been various studies on the shrinkage of city governments and the negative implications for urban governance arising from austerity (e.g. Kennett et al, 2015; Hastings et al, 2017), but very few accounts of the state-building responses to these processes, in-effect how city governments are seeking to mediate the adverse consequences of austerity through pro-growth strategies (LGA, 2012; Nurse and Fulton, 2017). This takes place at a time when economic development and related services, such as planning, have been disproportionately influenced by budget cuts since 2010, with fears raised on the actual ability of cities to foster economic development (see LGA, 2012). The impact of austerity and the importance of pro-growth strategies are therefore critical issues. In essence, it is not enough to simply analyse and describe the restructuring and shrinking of the state. We must know what is developing in its place and through what aims and means, which involves understanding why and how politicians and city bureaucrats select, legitimise and perform particular aims.

This paper examines these issues by way of a case study analysis of the city government of Coventry in the West Midlands of England. The city was chosen because it represents a mid-range city of 352,900 (2016) that is presently experiencing economic rejuvenation and growth, but with high levels of social deprivation and substantial state austerity taking place. The city continues to have a manufacturing presence, based largely on the automotive sector and the global expansion of Jaguar Land Rover, with employment in this sector totalling 12.35% (2016). The majority of people are employed in private services (41%) and public services

(30%) in 2016, with the movement to a more service-based economy producing a relatively low unemployment claimant rate of 1.95 (2018). Social deprivation remains widespread as 18% of neighbourhoods are within the 10% most deprived in England, and with no relative improvements to deprivation levels between 2010-15 (IMD, 2015). Coventry City Council has experienced considerable austerity since 2010, with the net expenditure budget falling from £380m (2010) to £233m in 2017 (Hastings et al, 2017). Such shrinkage has had a substantial effect on economic development activities, with the budget of the Economy and Jobs service being reduced (see Table 1) at the same time as it has incorporated other shrinking services within the City Centre Development Services directorate, such as city marketing, leaving it with an operational budget of £10,677,000 but spread across a number of activities. The department has gone from being 60% funded by the Council and 40% from external sources in 2010, to now being 70% sourced from external funding or income, such as ERDF funding, and 30% from the Council. Correspondingly, there has been an overall reduction in the size of the economic development team from 35 in 2010, to 14 officers presently employed.

[TABLE 1]

The empirical analysis centres on those state personnel, politicians and broader governing organisations concerned with economic development/regeneration in the case study. This involves examining the selection and construction of discursive economic imaginaries by city government state personnel and politicians as they seek to reduce complexity, but within the context of a dialectic relationship with material arrangements. As such, the paper utilises Fairclough's (2009) 'dialectical-relational approach' with its onus on dialectically examining the discursive in relation to the material context, and focusing on 'discursive practices' and 'social practices'. Of principal concern in the semiotic meaning making and narration of

contemporary economic issues and their prioritisation as the ‘economy’. Such discursive practices have to be situated as historical social constructs (e.g. embedded within particular values) dialectically related to social practices and material conditions, including institutional arrangements and prevailing power relations. These concepts are operationalised into analytical categories that inform the coding of interviews and documents. Analysis of selection and ‘sedimentation’ involves the recording of ‘events’ but within the context of social practices, with the analysis of change and differing opinions involving comparison of discourses (documents and discourses) and statements (interviews). This includes a longitudinal analysis of city government strategies since 1993. NVIVO was deployed as means of categorising statements in accordance to the analytical categories.

A total of twenty interviews were conducted following the Council’s budget announcement in April 2017. Interviews were undertaken with officers and managers from the Council, totalling thirteen interviews. This included the Director of Place, and Assistant Director of Development Services; the managers for business support, employment and skills, and external support and bidding; and eight officers fulfilling various economic development tasks. A further four interviews were conducted with politicians from both the ruling and opposition political parties, and one ex-senior manager. An anonymised business association and a voluntary sector representative organisation were also interviewed. Various documents are analysed, including media reports from 2010/11 until present, annual Council plans, the strategies of the Council, and the minutes of Cabinet and Scrutiny Board meetings. In conclusion, the paper finds that the response by the city government to austerity has been a pro-growth imaginary, requiring legitimisation and naturalisation. Such legitimisation works through both the ‘selectivity’ of state strategies and particular historically constituted discourses, which are based on certain value and norms about the ‘economy’ and how to govern economic development.

AUSTERITY, ENTREPRENEURIALISM, AND THE URBAN STATE

Austerity and urban state governments

There has developed an extensive number of studies on urban austerity, but many focus on the mediation of austerity in urban areas through changing collaborative governance, or its imbrication within broader institutional changes and metagovernance (e.g. Davies and Blanco, 2017; Pill and Guarneros-Meza, 2017). Studies such as Davies and Thompson (2016) are important in explicating a governing landscape of ‘austrian realists’ (see also Lowndes and McCaughie (2016) on ‘pragmatic politics’), characterised by local government reluctantly implementing rather than resisting austerity. However, these accounts are far less concerned with the multi-dimensional agency of city government, since they tend to interpret their composition, strategies and practices by way of broader governance trends. This includes a lack of attention towards their motives and actions as they articulate and mediate state austerity programmes, whilst having to adhere to politico-bureaucratic rules and regulations from the nation state that undermine local political agency (Chorianopoulos and Tselepi, 2017). Indeed, Lowndes and McCaughie (2016) have importantly argued that greater sensitivity to the agency of local government is critical in understanding the nature of change arising from austerity. They argue that while there has been no ideational institutional impetus or change, creative responses by actors through practices have occurred, centring on novel institutional arrangements developed from existing alternatives, resources and capabilities (‘bricolage’). Nonetheless, such accounts interpret strategies and practices in terms of particular institutional conceptions of change (e.g. bricolage) and stasis (e.g. path dependency), rather than placing the complex and uneven motives (e.g. imaginaries) and practices (e.g. legitimisation) of city governments at the forefront of analysis.

Other studies adopt an interpretivist perspective as a means in which to place the agency of local government at the heart of their analysis. Gardner and Lowndes (2016) argue that actors are negotiating a path through austerity by utilising ‘traditions’ and local knowledge to develop new hybrid narratives and practices (e.g. ‘municipal enterprise’), but that negotiations and narratives are partial and contested. While they demonstrate the importance of examining the creativity of ‘situated agency’ and locally specific knowledge, such an approach internalises broader deficiencies within interpretivist analysis, underplaying the interaction and power relations between related and competing narratives, as well as placing the discursive at the forefront of analysis (Orr, 2005).

Further studies, including Fuller and West (2017) and Griggs et al (2016), are concerned with the discursive ‘fantasmatic’ logics deployed by actors within the local state to justify the ‘necessity’ of austerity. Nevertheless, such discourse perspectives tend to downplay the role of institutionalised economic power and instrumental forms of state power, and lack a framework in which to be able to explain and critique both the semiotic and material (Jessop, 2010; Varro, 2015). What all these studies do emphasise, however, is that urban state retrenchment through austerity is a complex process, which is not just regressive in the sense of an absolute reduction in the scope and scale of the state. Austerity is accompanied by the uncontested and contested ‘filling-in’ of state (space), suggesting a greater onus on the ‘agency’ of city government as a site of mediation and invention (Jones et al, 2005; Gardner and Lowndes, 2016).

Responding to the shrinking state: Urban entrepreneurialism and pro-growth strategies

Faced with declining resources and capabilities, local government has increasingly turned to the generation of income as a means in which to fill the budgetary gap for public services left by decreasing central government funding transfers (Donald et al, 2014 Warner and Clifton, 2014). This has involved promoting economic development as a means of increasing tax incomes and prosperity, and reducing poverty and public service requirements (LGA, 2012; Peck, 2012; Oosterlynck and Gonzalez, 2013; Meegan et al, 2014; Warner and Clifton, 2014; Fuller and West, 2017; Pike et al, 2018). This can be broadly encompassed within arguments around ‘urban entrepreneurialism’, defined in terms of urban governing actors adopting pro-growth/business policies (Lauermann, 2016). Place-based interventions rather than spatial equalisation across territories is the main policy impetus, with the belief that this will produce trickle-down benefits (Peck, 2014). It typically involves collaborative efforts with market actors and engaging global markets and agendas, and the use of state powers to promote and protect municipal investments (Allen and Cochrane, 2010; Lauremann, 2016).

Within the UK such practices now occur within, firstly, a strict austerity landscape where city governments have far less resources and fewer capabilities in which to act (LGA, 2012; Fuller and West, 2017). Faced with budget reductions for social services and community regeneration, economic development policies have gained greater importance as a means of promoting growth and reducing deprivation (Donald et al, 2013). Integral to this is the further embedding of market values and priorities within city government strategies, the spatial consequence of which is to focus predominantly on those sectors and economic spaces that present the greatest opportunities for inward investment and economic growth (Doucet, 2013). Secondly, despite the UK government increasingly devolving responsibility for economic development to subnational areas, this does not fully translate into greater discretion for cities

(see Clarke and Cochrane, 2013). Many priorities and actions have to adhere to UK central government pro-growth policies, typically as a means in which to acquire funds, resulting in the subordination of social regeneration as a major policy priority, with a renewed focus on creating ‘efficient and dynamic markets’ and removing barriers to growth (see HM Government, 2010; CLG, 2011; Pugalís and McGuinness, 2013). Understanding how city governments are mediating these issues is therefore critical.

Economic imaginaries, sedimentation and depoliticisation

Understanding the motives and actions of city governments as they mediate austerity and state shrinkage, requires attention to why and how they select and legitimise particular actions. Through the development of a cultural political economy (CPE) approach, Jessop (2004; 2009) argues that the convoluted nature of economic and social life leads to actors seeking to reduce this complexity (‘variation’) through semiotic means, although recognising that social practices cannot be entirely reduced to semiosis (Sum and Jessop, 2013). Discourses involve the exclusion of many aspects of chaotic economic and social life, with the aim of producing coherence by ‘selecting’ particular aspects to be representative of a complex world, and manageable/calculable (Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008).

Selection occurs by way of ‘imagined economies’ where there is a semiotic selecting, framing and privileging of a particular social relation as an object of intervention (Jessop, 2013; 2016). Imaginaries are constituted by various semiotic mediums which frame a subjects lived experiences and interpretations, and which therefore seeks to structure their lives through various ‘retained’ institutionalised arrangements which represent the enactment of structured lived experiences (e.g. through norms and routines) (Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008). Actors construct economic (spatial) imaginaries in relation to underlying hegemonic projects linking

economic growth to various popular social interests, with the actual selection of imaginaries dependent on the balance of power within society (Jessop, 2013; Varro, 2015). Intrinsic to this are narratives which seek to support political motives through the construction of ‘causal stories’, which include blame avoidance, accusations, and new courses of action (Blyth, 2002: 39). Past modes of thinking, behaviours and courses of action all influence contemporary options through their utilisation within such narratives, but where they are embedded within historically constituted (structurally selective) institutional norms and values of behaviour deriving from previously ‘selected’ imaginaries (Sum and Jessop, 2013).

For a particular imaginary to be selected through such processes it has to be enunciated with existing semiotic and extra-semiotic (material) processes, requiring mediation through prevailing (structurally selective) institutions and the logics they work towards. This includes, for instance, imaginaries having to resonate with the interests and strategic selectivities of particular social groups, such as organised business interests, as well as broader institutional arrangements (e.g. norms and values) (Jessop, 2004). Moreover, the nature of agency is critical as actors have differential access to the (semiotic and material) capabilities for having economic imaginaries realised, such as in having membership of important social groups within polity (Sum and Jessop, 2013). Utilising Foucault, imaginaries are understood to be performative in nature as they come to influence and are enacted by actors through the everyday. One element of this are ‘styles’, which relates to the role of imaginaries in producing identities and ‘ways of being’ (e.g. providing behavioural meanings) that correspond to particular semiotic configurations (Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008; Watkins, 2015). Construction and regulation of such subjectivities through meaning-making, and thus retention of imaginaries, takes place through various ‘technologies’, as conceived by Foucault, such as performance management systems.

Despite the prominence placed on such semiotic means, CPE is criticised for reducing the explanatory power of the semiotic to the extra-semiotic conditions of capital accumulation and state regulation, and that the Regulationist underpinnings of the approach means agency is subsumed by structures (van Heur, 2010). In response, Sum and Jessop (2013) argue that such criticism tends to downplay the centrality of semiosis within CPE, and that the material is viewed in dialectical terms. The role of agency is central to such an endeavour as meaning-making is considered more important than abstract structures, since the latter are not pre-constituted but constructed by agents as objects of governance as part of the strategic-relational approach (Jessop, 2004). Actors possess the causality in which to construct particular imaginaries that produce meanings, but at the same time are constituents of broader social relations as they can be Foucauldian ‘subjects’ or agents contesting imaginaries through various political means (Jessop, 2010). Further criticism relates to the belief that CPE presents a simplistic understandings of the economic-political nexus and the nature of political action, while González (2006) argues that there is insufficient consideration of how economic imaginaries are constructed (Varro, 2015). What this requires is the utilisation of González’s (2006) approach of focusing on the actual ‘how’ and ‘why’ practices of selecting imaginaries (in relation to the material), but where there is a need for further conceptual clarification of how retention occurs.

Sedimentation and depoliticisation

While the concept of economic (spatial) imaginaries provides a framework for examining the selection of particular economic strategies, what is critical is the discursive framing and justification for why certain elements of the economic are viewed as governable and retained. Jessop (2013; 2014) terms this ‘sedimentation’, the semantic process by which ‘selected’

discourses are semantically legitimised, routinized and performed as an objective reality by actors with the resources to enact such action. Sedimentation works through various forms and practices (e.g. ‘styles’ and ‘ways of being’), but one important aspect is that of depoliticisation. The latter relates to the attempt to remove imaginaries and their performativity from political deliberation and contention by placing them within the realm of ‘policy’, and can involve both ‘discursive’ and ‘governmental’ depoliticisation. In relation to the former, critical to this is the ‘forgetting of the contested origins of political discourses, structures and processes’, and, thus, retention of imaginaries relies upon overlooking and disremembering alternative strategic options and past forms of intervention, and emphasising how the selected imaginary, which itself is historically constituted, can bring about structural fixity (Jessop, 2014: 214). For Flinders and Wood (2014), this ‘discursive depoliticisation’ involves only limited choices being framed as possible and legitimate. Complex policy issues are presented in a simplified and biased manner to ensure widespread support, most important of which is to highlight them as a ‘common sense’ solution.

Sedimentation also stretches beyond the purely discursive, with Flinders and Wood (2014) arguing that there is ‘governmental depoliticisation’ relating to actors and institutions. This includes bureaucratic actors ensuring there is no political interference, and both state officials and politicians blaming others for issues. Moreover, it relates to ‘structurally-selective institutions’ associated with particular political and social forms of organisation and their institutionalised patterns of social interaction (Jessop, 2013). One key agent in this sense is the nation state which acts through ‘state strategies’ that are strategically selective towards particular social groups and geographies (Brenner, 2004). In the case of the UK, central government control and direction of local authorities remains an enduring feature of centre-local relations (Ward et al, 2015).

For Burnham (2014), depoliticisation is not the loss of politics, but a displaced and submerged politics taking place in alternative realms, often beyond scrutiny by non-participants. Depoliticisation is therefore not the loss of politics and contestation, with sedimentation and depoliticisation being practices rather than a static end state (Hay, 2014). Governing spaces are constituted by actors making legitimacy claims as they seek to convey particular economic development strategies and priorities, which are used to legitimise their ability to address previous policy failures (Etherington and Jones, 2017). This understands that sedimentation can be subject to critique by way of ‘politicization’, a process that denaturalises sedimented semiotic and material elements, and which is partly contingent on ‘structurally-selective institutions’, and where action and change are viewed as possible through individual agency (see, also Hay, 2007). Politicisation involves the upsurge of unstructured complexity, encompassing both the semiotic and increasing importance of the extra-semiotic (Jessop, 2014). Only through such an approach is it possible to examine the shrinking state not in absolute terms of decline, but rather encompassing discursive and material efforts by the agency of city government to mediate austerity and shrinkage.

AUSTERITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CITY GOVERNMENT

Selecting pro-growth strategies in an austerity regime

Many of the New Labour Government’s (1997-2010) social deprivation programmes, which had been a central element of Coventry City Council’s regeneration activities, were discontinued following the initiation of substantial austerity by the Coalition government in 2010, or had reduced budgets for the remainder of their lives. This included the loss of £127m

of funding through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Working Neighbourhood Fund, and New Deal Communities programme (which was a 10 year programme) in the period 2001-11. This was coupled with a reduction in the general budget allocation from central government for the Council, based on the narrative of an indebted state, and representing a reduction of £95m per year in government grant funding from 2010/11 to 2017/18. For Council managers and the Labour Party administration, these broader austerity narratives and material actions from central government justify, legitimise and depoliticise the selection of an economic imaginary that has moved away from ‘discretionary’ funding of social regeneration targeted at deprived communities, towards pro-growth aims and material actions (see Pearson, 2013; see also Ponzini and Rossi, 2010). As highlighted in a recent strategic statement: The Council’s key priorities incorporate a need for the city to become more prosperous and for the Council to lead the drive for economic growth’ (CCC, 2016b: 11).

Through ‘discursive depoliticisation’, the reductions in discretionary services have been partly framed in terms of the Council being forced to do so by central government, following the forms of ‘austrian realism’ outlined by Davies and Thompson (2016), and with little contestation by both Labour and opposition Conservative politicians as “We have had no choice about developing proposals that will affect the services we know Coventry people value” (Cllr Maton, quoted in Bannister, 2017). At the same time, the ‘causal stories’ (Blyth, 2002) of declining fiscal and economic conditions, following the national austerity narrative, is further deployed as a means of justifying and discursively depoliticising a pro-growth imaginary, and producing new pro-growth ‘styles’ of being for civil servants: “We had been doing a hell of a lot of social regeneration for many years, we could afford to do it because the economy was moving rapidly, we could afford to focus on those that were hard to reach, but not anymore” (Council Manager Interview, 2017). The consequence of this has been the

deselection and marginalisation of formal arrangements and informal institutionalised behaviours around neighbourhood working and community regeneration, replaced by a pro-growth imaginary, and without any politicisation of this change due to the prevalence of ‘austrian realism’.

While a voluntary sector stakeholder acknowledges far less central government funding being available, they believe that the Council’s strategic thinking and discretionary resources are being targeted at the city centre and capital funding objectives, despite the negative impact of austerity on deprived communities, as is evident in the material actions of the Council presented in Table 2 and the budget funding statement for 2016-17: ‘Despite the financial pressure it faces the Council is maintaining an ambitious approach to investing in the City’ (CCC, 2016a). In contrast, for senior managers it is a case of pro-growth policies and related economic spaces being selected because of the ‘structurally inscribed strategic selectivity’ of the nation state, with their predominant focus on economic development-based capital spend in areas such as infrastructure provision, and representing ‘governmental depoliticisation’ (Jessop, 1990: 10; Pugalis, 2016). In this sense the materialities of the availability of government funding influences the economic imaginaries of the Council, but at the same time as the Council has very limited resources for economic development; most important of which includes only having 14 members of staff covering all functions and a limited budget spread across a broad range of economic development functions.

[TABLE 2]

Senior management and the ruling administration believe in, and construct an economic imaginary based on the ‘simple’ trickle-down of economic prosperity from city centre property

redevelopment and particular important economic sectors, such as advanced manufacturing (e.g. automotive), to the rest of the city's population (Council Manager Interview, 2017). Such a belief is based on the understanding that in an age of austerity there are few discretionary Council resources in which to support communities in marginal areas, as well as promote economic growth more broadly. For instance, in the period 2018/19-2022/23, there is only £115k of planned capital spend on community development (CCC, 2018). This thinking is embedded within the Jobs and Growth Strategy (2014-17) where objectives around pursuing private sector capital investment, central government funding for infrastructure and physical redevelopment of the city centre, provision of business support programmes to businesses, and active relationship building with firms that are defined as 'key' sectors (e.g. automotive production), are now priority (CCC, 2014) (see Table 2 with regards to capital spend). The purpose of this is to therefore discursively create a specific 'spatio-temporal fix' that demonstrates the city government is positively impacting on the most important sectors and areas in the city, but by reducing a heterogeneous economy to city centre growth and the provision of business support to advanced manufacturing.

Senior managers and ruling Labour Party politicians have sought to legitimise, discursively depoliticise and sediment these new pro-market strategies in positive terms by framing them as a means of bringing "clarity" and thus a 'cohesive strategy', and prioritise what they consider to be the most important issues and needs, and thus austerity is an 'opportunity' (Senior Council Manager Interview, 2017; see also Griggs et al, 2016). This makes the deployment and sedimentation of calculation and management of economic relations more possible. A critical element of this narrative, and its actual performativity through the 'ways of being' of state personnel and organising (governmental depoliticisation), is one in which: "You can't do everything. It makes you think, right what are my top three priorities? I'll do those, other things

will have to go” (Senior Council Manager Interview, 2017). What we see here therefore is a more market-based approach, rationalisation of provision based on demand by the market, and which is comparable to the more commercial perspective being taken by city governments during austerity and movement away from ‘collectivist’ traditions of reducing inequalities (Warner and Clifton, 2014; Gardner and Lowndes, 2016).

An important element of this pro-growth imaginary is the politicization of past economic development/regeneration approach where there was an oversupply of funding from various central government programmes for regeneration activities, which produced and sedimented particular performative ways of being and styles. The identities and practices of officers were based on finding projects for the large amount of funding they had and with far less attention on actual needs. This includes a performance management regime focused on spend (based on successful project delivery), and where there were many different siloed programmes leading to a lot of time and effort devoted to administrative and reporting tasks (Ex-senior Council manager interview, 2017). This was notable during the New Labour social exclusion agenda, with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal Communities (total funding of £127m, 2001-11) focusing on small geographical areas and populations (c.16,000) in the inner city (e.g. Hillfields and Foleshill) and suburban sites in the northeast and southwest (e.g. Wood End, Henley Green, and Canley). One particular manager notes in regards to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) that “it was very much driven by project outputs, number of citizens on a training course, those sorts of things, and spending the money, so that drove the purpose of the organisation and you” (Council Manager Interview, 2017).

‘Technologies of performance’ are important in the selection of pro-growth imaginaries and underpin austerity-based change and the performativity of imaginaries, since they make the

‘economy’ manageable and calculable. Judgements on which priorities and services will be adopted are based on individual project outputs and costs per head (i.e. beneficiaries of interventions), and thus firmly embedded within market conceptions and technologies of efficiency and cost-benefit thinking (Dean, 2010). This translates into the performativity of such imaginary economies through the ‘styles’ (i.e. identities) and ‘ways of being’ (i.e. meanings of behaviour) of state personnel, with them being organisationally defined by their ability to deliver individual project outputs. More broadly, this has major implications for the breadth of economic development and social regeneration projects, which has been substantially narrowed under an austerity regime, representing what Hastings et al (2017) terms ‘residualisation’. The Council had other priorities which were calculated as producing marginal benefits but not being cost-effective, and so they are not included in the top three priorities despite being critical to deprived communities, producing particular ‘[un]calculative spaces’ (Miller, 1994). This is justified to other stakeholders and citizens in terms of being the consequence of national austerity, as is evident in the leader of the Council stating that: “For a number of years now we have had to find savings and our options are becoming far more limited” (Cllr Mutton, quoted in CCC, 2016c).

Such a situation is not judged to be negative since the framework is increasingly monetary-orientated in terms of the semantic, material and performativity through ways of being and styles of human agency. It is justified in terms of a model based on how private economic actors function in a competitive marketplace where there are cost considerations stemming from austerity, leaving a budget of only £10,677 across a number of economic development-related activities (e.g. tourism), and the rationalisation of need and provision, as one senior manager notes: “Personally, I don’t think that’s an unhealthy position to be in, because you will grow exponentially if you don’t have that force driving you. Every private business will

have that to overcome this” (Council Manager Interview, 2017). Voluntary sector actors and particular Labour politicians note that this decision making framework, with its onus on breadth of provision and impact, rather than the targeting of those with major needs through ‘collectivist’ local government traditions (see Gardner and Lowndes, 2016), introduces a form of rationalisation that negatively impacts on communities experiencing deprivation in marginalised places, since they are now judged to be beyond a semiotically defined ‘economy’. It also represents a dimension of governmental depoliticisation, with political deliberations and scrutiny focused on decision-making in and around technologies of monetary modelling and cost effectiveness, but for the ruling Labour Party and managers this is a consequence of the institutional spatial selectivity of central government austerity (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012).

The semiotic and material constitution of the pro-growth imaginary

A central element of the pro-growth imaginary and strategy, with its strict parameters of what constitutes the economy, is the commercial redevelopment of the city centre. This is embedded within historically-sedimented semantic and institutionalised routines, involving values and norms around a commercialised property view of economic development and regeneration, which produce particular ‘styles’ of being for state personnel. An ex-senior manager and existing managers argue that Coventry has long specialised in commercial property development, rather than people-focused regeneration within neighbourhoods, despite the large amount of funding previously acquired. This was evident in housing schemes dominating large scale regeneration projects in the New Deal for Communities programme, and the private sector-led Canley Regeneration Project (see Table 2) (author’s interview; see also OECD, 2001). Such an imaginary stems from entrenched beliefs and values in the persistent need to mediate the negative consequences of job losses in manufacturing since the 1970s with ‘like for like’ jobs, and diversification into the service sector. Brownfield redevelopment and

infrastructure were viewed as a critical intervention to replace such jobs since 1980s as ‘municipal socialism’ gave way to Thatcherite neoliberalism (Healy and Clarke, 1984; Benington and Geddes, 1992; CCC, 1993, 2001; OECD, 2001). A long term local politician, presently in opposition but having held previous Cabinet posts, argues that these values and norms developed into a “mentality” and identity held by both local politicians and officers at the Council. This led to the Council employing people that held similar values, beliefs and identities, ensuring an institutionalised, sedimented and congruent approach over time, and the continuation of these particular subjectivities and ‘ways of being’ (Opposition Politician interview, 2017). Importantly, this corresponds to Gardner and Lowndes’ (2016) argument that it is those strategies that most adhere to historically constituted ‘traditions’ that are utilised and uncontested.

The economic imaginary and its performativity through ways of being and ‘styles’ by senior management and the ruling Labour Party administration are therefore viewed as an historical construct. This represents a set of embedded values, beliefs and identities of performing around commercial property-led economic development and community regeneration, which has now been ‘converted’ to pro-growth aims and material interventions in particular economic spaces (See also OECD, 2001). This has subsequently become institutionalised and performed as values and norms which strongly inform the appointment of certain civil servants, and guides the behaviours of managers and officers; demonstrating that historically constituted imaginaries, and their institutionalisation in the everyday, has a critical role in ‘agency selectivities’, which then ensures the retention of the semantic and extra-semantic (Sum and Jessop, 2013).

There is, however, a notable disjuncture with past approaches in that the ruling Labour Party administration and senior managers have also sought to sediment, by way of politicization, a view that the city's past 'state spatial strategies' have been incorrect. The purpose of this has been to further justify a property-led approach by ensuring that any criticism is focused on the approach within the imaginary, not of the imaginary. By doing so they intend to further sediment and discursively depoliticise this approach, ensuring there is no overall critique. The argument has been that past strategies have had the material consequences of encouraging dispersion, involving the building of new business and retail parks on the outskirts of the city connected to key road arteries into and beyond the city, and thus developing new economic landscapes away from what were perceived as being diseconomies of agglomeration (see CCC, 1993; CCC, 2001). The approach led to what policy-makers frame as having a detrimental impact on keeping consumer spending within the city centre, as well being located in sites that were difficult for marginalised communities to access. The consequence of this strategy leading up to the austerity period was for the city centre to lack investment, leading to the Council arguing that the city centre loses 56% of spend to neighbouring urban areas as there had been no major urban redevelopment since the 1960s (Council Manager Interview, 2017).

The materialities of city centre disuse are dialectically embedded within the subsequent property-based economic imaginary. Faced with far fewer resources from austerity and a changing national policy focused on pro-growth, from 2010 the strategy has been based on re-imagining and redeveloping the city centre as critical to the overall city economy: "the first impression that you have of this City is what you see when you first arrive by car or train, everything works around this" (Senior Council Manager Interview, 2017). This city centre-based strategy is heavily influenced by the institutional selectivity of market demands and aims of property developers, rather than by city government (see Strom, 2008), and with two main

elements to the strategy, both of which represent efforts to create a new post-industrial image (MacLeod, 2002). In effect, austerity and state shrinkage mean that the response by the state is intrinsically related to and dependent on the materialities of private sector property capital and the economic geographies they seek to produce, but legitimised by the materialities of a disused city centre.

Creating new student spaces

The first part of the strategy involves legitimising and sedimenting a focus on student-led economic development, which seeks to exploit the growing student intake at Coventry and Warwick Universities as a means in which to foster city centre regeneration, but representing the re-commodification of a space to be consumed by what is a transient social group (Hall and Hubbard, 1998). Critical to this is the construction of an economic imaginary that seeks to discursively depoliticise the agenda, involving a narrative of student accommodation provision being poor in the city, but that it produces substantial economic development benefits. Efforts at legitimising, sedimenting and depoliticising such an economic strategy involves a narrative of it being, firstly, “dead easy to fund” for developers, with urban redevelopment considered relatively cost-free for the Council (Council Manager Interview, 2017). This is explicit within the planning application for the 922-bed Paradise Street residence, which states it “will enhance a previously run-down site and provide a sustainable location for student accommodation” (cited in Mullen, 2017). Using this as an example, the materialities of urban redevelopment are being framed in terms of simply replacing the previous usage of a garage and large retail unit, with new buildings for students who are considered central to economic development, but with no new services, housing or employment sites for local residents. Secondly, student accommodation is framed as going to sites that are cheap as there is a lack of competition for use because of their ‘obsolescence’ in terms of

exchange value (Weber, 2002). Their new use as a space of student consumption is narrated as producing strong economic multiplier effects as investment is considered to be cumulative, since investing in student accommodation will bring in complementary investment in related social and cultural facilities that will produce employment opportunities.

This strategy is thus indicative of a shrinking city government fostering and depending on the private financialisation of urban redevelopment for particular ‘consumers’, with an institutional apparatus geared towards valuing pro-growth and pump-priming the market (Harvey, 2006). In effect, the Council argues that they do not possess the requisite resources and capabilities required to undertake substantive regeneration across the city centre, with only a small team of physical regeneration project specialists within the department to undertake such tasks, and with a limited discretionary budget, meaning they are dependent on the private sector. As highlighted in Table 2, developer investment in new student accommodation totals around £339 Million, which is an amount of money that the city council does not have access to through central government (e.g. Growth Fund and West Midlands Combined Authority Growth Deal) and ERDF funds, and with these focused on infrastructure and environmental improvements. This adheres to Gardner and Lowndes’ (2016) argument that austerity is leading to the further embedding of a local government ‘enabling’ role. For instance, in the case of the ‘Study Inn’ development, encompassing three student residences, the Council provided a loan to the developer through prudential borrowing in 2013, but undertook no other action with regards to regenerating the area. This was because the Council believed that only the private sector had the capabilities and risk-taking abilities to successfully regenerate and operate in the property market. It does mean that the Council does not place any stringent demands on developers for additional redevelopment tasks that would increase developer risks and reduce potential profits (Council Manager Interview, 2017).

There has been criticism of the approach by residents in the local media and a signed petition of around 200 residents for one proposal, as they seek to politicise the imaginary. Critique centres on the belief that it represents the construction of new physical spaces for ‘external’ student flows, producing student-focused landscapes of consumption and gentrification, and thus new forms of social inequality (Moulaert et al, 2003). In contrast, there has been very little disapproval conveyed by both the ruling Labour Party, opposition parties, and business organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce. The response by the Council to criticism has been to discursively depoliticise and re-image the materialities of the city in the context of being both a university city and a ‘global’ space, and which is used to legitimise their much smaller role in economic and social issues. In relation to the new £40million Belgrade Plaza Student Village, which includes a twenty storey block, one politician stated that: “We are a university town, we have one of the top 50 universities in the world, and Coventry University as well is a highly sought-after university to come to, so there’s going to be incredible demand for this type of accommodation” (Cllr McNicholas, quoted in Lillington, 2015). The Head of Planning at the Council further justified and defined the high-storey development in terms of being part of a ‘global’ ubiquitous urban trend: “Tell me a city that doesn’t have tower blocks” (quoted in Lillington, 2015). Importantly, this represents efforts to dispel critique by re-emphasising the economic imaginary, rather than by connecting it more with the everyday life of citizens, suggesting a lack of consideration of potential future crisis tendencies.

Creating new city centre commercial spaces

This student-centred strategy has accompanied efforts to redevelop the city centre since 2012 when Olympic football was held in the city, and forms part of a £300m masterplan to redevelop the city centre, which is dependent on future private capital investment, as well as central

government and EU funding to regenerate the environment. Council managers utilised this event as an “excuse to say that we need to sort out the public realm of the city centre, actually put a functioning spine back into the city so that people could find their way around” (Council Manager Interview, 2017). For senior managers it was a case of framing the football event as a means in which Coventry would be “showcased to the world” (Senior Council Manager Interview, 2017). Moreover, it was used to legitimise a particular imaginary and course of action, further institutionalising a pro-growth city-centre first approach which is framed as producing achievable outputs (e.g. number of visitors) and outcomes (e.g. retail job growth); but requiring only limited Council resources that are focused on acquiring grants for infrastructure provision and environmental improvements (Council Manager Interview, 2017). In so doing, the Council is seeking to legitimise and sediment the belief that a smaller city government still equates to an ability to produce manageable/calculable city centre regeneration and economic development, but where the materialities of redevelopment depend on developers, the property market and central government and EU funding priorities. Efforts at naturalising and depoliticising such an approach have been based on presenting public realm improvements as a space for all residents, but many stakeholders note that citizens have such a bad opinion of the city centre they are happy with any efforts for change (author’s interviews). This is epitomised in the media framing the masterplan in terms of: ‘The £300m plan to ‘save’ Coventry city centre’ (Bannister, 2017).

With the success of these public realm improvements, it was possible for councillors to be convinced by officers to support efforts at acquiring further investment in the city centre, through bidding for Priority 3 ERDF funding (Sustainable Urban Development), central government funding via the CWLEP Growth Fund and West Midlands Combined Authority Growth Deal, and small amounts of Council investment (see Table 2 on the various initiatives).

This includes the proposed £100m ‘Friargate’ development in the southern area of the city centre which forms part of the masterplan, involving proposals for thirteen office buildings, two hotels, 400 new private homes and shops. As before, the Council seeks to legitimise its role as one of market ‘enabler’. The approach they have taken is one of dependence on the desired market outputs and profits of developers, irrespective of the joint venture with the developer (Cannon Kirk), but for many stakeholders there is a lack of Council intervention in what will be developed in the area, with a bias towards pro-growth activities (e.g. offices) (Gilbert, 2017). What we see therefore is the ‘agency’ of the city council being limited in regards to the materiality of regeneration. Furthermore, the success of the Council in acquiring public sector grants has to be situated within a context where programmes have to adhere to government and EU economic development pro-growth priorities. For instance, the West Midlands Combined Authority’s (WMCA) (the city-regional body which the Council forms part of) Strategic Economic Plan is focused on eight economic development priorities. Acquiring WMCA Regional Growth Fund money for the Friargate development and redevelopment of Coventry train station has meant adhering to the pro-growth priorities of the Plan, namely in terms of transport priorities (‘HS2 growth’ priority) and supporting the ‘places’ of city centres (‘exploiting the economic geography’ priority). Similarly, the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership ‘Growth Fund’ (which is a central government economic development fund) has Friargate as a ‘key investment site’ as part of its ‘Unlocking Growth Potential’ priority.

The (semiotic and extra-semiotic) dialect between a city government as only having a limited market ‘enabler’ role under an austerity regime, and the material realities of dependence for urban redevelopment on property developers, has become more complicated. The Council has moved beyond the role of simply the semiotic leader of the masterplan, to encompassing a

more material position. This occurred as the Council had to provide a loan to the developer (Cannon Kirk) in December 2017, as the Friargate land is security against Irish government loans to the developer, and without the loan the development could not go ahead, including being able to acquire the £51.2m of West Midlands Combined Authority funding. At a time of austerity when service reductions are publicly occurring, leading to the possibility of the politicisation of the project, the Council has sought to justify and discursively depoliticise the loan in terms of future taxpayer returns through business rate revenue increases, with the market framed as a potential saviour of future service provision.

As stated above, actual public debate on the nature of the masterplan has been minor, with Council managers and ruling politicians conveying a narrative that the poor state of the city centre means that any redevelopment plans are broadly welcomed by residents and stakeholders, and that in reality there has been no extensive public debate or opposition to the plans. This is therefore not depoliticisation, but public acquiescence to proposals which are “viewed as better than not having anything in place... and actually representing some sort of response” (Opposition party politician interview, 2017). From this position it is possible for the Council to undertake decisions beyond the scrutiny of non-participants, and pursue a pro-growth city centre first strategy by way of governmental depoliticisation. This can be conceptualised in terms of the construction of citizens as passive subjects through semiotic ‘styles’, but this does not take account of why and how such acquiescence occurs. A post-structural discourse perspective would view this in terms of the role of fantasmatic logics or narratives gripping human agency. For Fuller and West (2017), austerity has not been substantially resisted because of various fantasies that fill a discursive void, such as in policymakers arguing that a particular route will ensure benefits in the future. One can therefore interpret acquiescence to this city centre-based property development imaginary as a

consequence of “having at least some sort of plan in place that is enough to satisfy the public that we’ve got an idea of what we’re doing” (Council Manager Interview, 2017).

What is critical for the Friargate development is the complete relocation of the Council to a new £40m office block, demonstrating a movement beyond the semiotic to a material role. This is mainly funded by the Council through prudential borrowing (of £31m), and is being used to pump-prime further private sector redevelopment that is not guaranteed: “This plan is value for money for Coventry taxpayers and will send the clearest message to developers for decades that the city is open for business and prepared to do what it takes to stimulate the local economy” (Cllr Lucas, quoted in Bagot, 2013). What is critical in this statement and others by the Council is the discursive connection that is established between direct monetary benefits to citizens, framed as ‘the taxpayer’ rather than citizen, and a strategy of being conducive to the private economic aims of developers and inward investors, rather than a major redevelopment that seeks to benefit citizens (Opposition party politician interview, 2017; Anonymised stakeholder interview, 2017). Correspondingly, this sensitivity to private capital and the strategic priorities more generally epitomises a situation where city government is facing far less funding from central government, with the resources that are available restricted to pro-growth capital projects and, as a consequence, it has very limited avenues for undertaking economic development beyond such a high risk strategy. As one ex-senior manager notes: “It’s quite a gamble... it’s got to work because you can only do this once in 40 years” (Ex-Senior Council Manager interview, 2017).

There is tension in austerity-driven urban entrepreneurship between a Council following a pro-growth agenda that adheres to central government priorities and developers, and non-state bodies and the local population experiencing the negative consequences of austerity. Through

its entrepreneurial actions the city government is essentially ‘capital’ funding rich, but revenue funding poor. However, there is little understanding of this by citizens and non-state actors, but managers seek to discursively depoliticise this in terms of the inherent and natural ignorance of citizens to central government relations and requirements, rather than because of the actual strategy and project: “While we might spend £40m on our new office block, that’s money we can’t spend on staff and services. Internally, that message is very clear. Externally to the public, that message is far from understood. I don’t know whether you’ll ever get over that position” (Senior Council Manager Interview, 2017).

In response, the Council seeks to sediment a semantic link between developer objectives, which underpin the Friargate development, and associated state funding for capital projects, with social and employment benefits for citizens but where they are defined in terms of economic parameters. The Friargate development, for instance, is framed in terms of “not just for the Council but for the city”, and with broader employment benefits: “Friargate is set to create over 15,000 new jobs”, and “We want to be a top ten city once again and developments like this, and the jobs and investment they create, will help us get there” (former Leader Cllr Lucas, quoted in Eccleston, 2015). Such discursive imaginaries have not been substantially contested by other stakeholders or residents; while the Conservative opposition has sought to politicise the development within the paradigm of pro-growth and market values and norms (e.g. whether there is a “viable” business case), suggesting that ‘governmental depoliticisation’ of this imaginary remains strong.

Efforts towards discursive and governmental depoliticisation, involving the management of tension and potential politicization, is persistent in a terrain of state shrinkage arising from austerity, pro-growth change and dependence on private capital. This follows the

understanding that economic imaginaries cannot encompass all of the everyday, leaving interstitial spaces of contestation and crisis tendencies (Sum and Jessop, 2013). One prominent example in 2017 involves the city government secretly buying-out, for £11million, the joint ownership of a manor house that is commercially used for events. Conflict arose because this was at the same time as there were protests around a decision to stop funding a transport service for disabled children.

Critique of this action has been disparate, and essentially alludes to the failure of a cohesive political and societal response to austerity (Davies and Blanco, 2017). The opposition Conservative Party only contested the decision in reference to the viability of the business, and thus the critique conformed to the actual institutional values and strategy underpinning the action (Hainey, 2017). In contrast, protesters discursively subverted the Council's place-marketing boosterism for its City of Culture 2021 bid, by relabelling it "City of culture? City of cruelty" during protests (Sandford, 2017). Yet this gained no major political or civil society traction, resulting in a lack of more substantial politicisation and collectivism by other stakeholders experiencing austerity, following broader trends within UK cities (see Davies and Branco, 2017; Fuller, 2017). The reasons for this are both material and semantic, with the former including voluntary sector bodies being distracted by the need to survive in the face of fewer public sector service contracts, and the substantial decline in funding support for community bodies, unable to mobilise local communities behind particular campaigns. At the same time the Council successfully depoliticised the episode by deploying 'fantasmatic' narratives (Fuller and West, 2017), involving discourses projecting future benefits if all adhere to the Council's further marketisation: "Local government is still at risk of losing funding so this is a way that we can make our own revenue going forward - we are investing in a profit making business" (Cllr O'Boyle, Cabinet member for Business, quoted in Hainey, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The culmination of the argument in this paper is that examining the shrinking state is as much about understanding state building as it is retrenchment and retreat (Allen and Cochrane, 2010). Pro-growth imaginaries dominate the case study city's approach, representing the marginalisation of social regeneration priorities. This has arisen through the nation state-led austerity instigated since the 2010 election of the Coalition government, and the endogenous decisions taken by city government officials and politicians. What is critical regarding the latter is the historically-constituted values, norms and beliefs of officials and politicians that are semiotically embedded within a new economic imaginary of commercial property-based development, which had previously been dominant in community regeneration under New Labour in the city. The city government has attempted to reduce the complexity of the 'economy', and legitimise and depoliticise the pro-growth agenda and sediment an imaginary of the importance of the 'city centre' to the whole city's prosperity, and framed as there being no alternative. Through such an imaginary it has been possible for the city government to legitimise the utilisation of public funds to subsidise market development concentrated in the city centre (Moulaert et al, 2003).

This suggests practices of depoliticisation common to the post-political paradigm, but through the utilisation of Jessop's (2013; 2014) perspective it is possible to focus more fully on the actual practices of sedimentation and depoliticisation by the state, and how such processes relate to broader institutional tendencies and selectivities such as austerity. Important in this process is the 'structurally-selective institutions' produced by the Coalition and Conservative

governments as they favour pro-growth interventions, relegating social regeneration priorities in marginalised inner and outer city spaces, and which have provided the opportunities for the city government to pursue this agenda (see Pugalis, 2016). One critical aspect of this structural selectivity is the role of central government ‘austerity institutions’ (Fuller, 2017) targeted at local government, which have reduced the actual capacity of city governments to undertake community regeneration, with one ex-senior manager suggesting that community regeneration and working is now the preserve of the Arm's-length management organisation (ALMO) for housing, Whitefriars Housing Group, and certain charities (ex-Senior Council Manager interview, 2017). The consequence of this is a very narrow form of social regeneration, targeted at particular groups and areas, nothing like the large scale interventions witnessed under New Labour, and is a significant representation of the materiality of the shrinking state. More broadly, what we see in the shrinking urban state, under a regime of austerity, are significantly changing state-market-society relations, where a narrowly defined ‘economic’ typically subsumes the ‘social’ (Peck, 2012; Meegan et al, 2014; Fuller and West, 2017).

The implications of this study for the CPE approach, with its semiotic/extra-semiotic dialect, is to take seriously Peck’s (2017) recent call for greater recognition of the importance of examining ‘local specificities’ within the context of ‘conjunctural analysis’. This means taking account of ‘the cumulative and combinatorial consequences of patterned processes of restructuring, across sites and scales’ (328). The semiotic and extra-semiotic dialectical governing tendencies occurring in cities should be examined within the context of broader historically-configured institutionalised processes of neoliberalisation, financialisation and austerity that are integral to state restructuring, but where the analysis is not reduced to these broader trends, thus, appreciating the importance of a ‘relational’ and ‘territorial’ understanding of urban state arrangements (McCann and Ward, 2010). Integral to such a

perspective is the need to be sensitive to actual practices that are embedded within and constitute historically-contingent institutionalised forms of behaviour (e.g. 'styles') and change, and which come to influence economic imaginaries, depoliticisation and sedimentation, and how actors seek to re-politicize through de-naturalisation.

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Table 1: Gross expenditure budget for economic development (£ 000s)

Service area title	2009/10a	2010/11b	2011/12c	2012/13d	2013/14d	2014/15e	2015/16e	2016/17e	2017/18e
City development	8,777	9,284	5,699	6,347	4,001				
Business, Enterprise & Employment						11,766	15,254	12,552	10,677

a. Regeneration Strategy & Resources, Development Projects, Employment & Community Regeneration, and Local Enterprise Growth Initiative.

b. Regeneration Strategy & Resources, Employment and enterprise, and Development services.

c. Regeneration Strategy & Resources, Employment and enterprise, and Development services

d. Economy and community, and Development services.

e. Economic Development, City Centre, International Trade and Inward Investment, Commercial and Operational Property, Urban Regeneration, Transportation, Tourism and Marketing, Climate Change Strategy and Development, Energy Policy, Conservation and Renewables, Sustainability and Digital Strategy. This represents the restructuring of the service with a number of additional responsibilities. Specific budgets for these service is unavailable.

Table 2: Major economic development/regeneration activities completed/planned since 2010/11

Major Projects (Cost)	Activity	Geographical focus	Funding source	Completed
City Centre South (£200m)	Demolition of an office block New retail centre and student/residential accommodation	City centre	West Midlands Combined Authority Private sector investment	2020 start
Friargate (£1.5b proposed)	New bridge and boulevard	City centre	LEP Growth Fund Council Private sector West Midlands Combined Authority (£51m)	2014-2027
	New Council building (£40m)			
	25 new offices, housing and retail			
Coventry Train station (£82m)	Redevelopment of station New tunnel New platform	City centre	LEP Growth Fund West Midlands Combined Authority (£39.4m) Integrated Transport Block Fund Network Rail	2019-2021
Gosford Street and Coventry University campus (£50m)	Public realm improvements Pedestrian improvements New offices, shops and housing, Creation of new creative industry village Student accommodation (280 rooms)	City centre	European Regional Development Fund LEP Growth Fund Coventry University Growing Places fund (infrastructure) Private sector investment	2014-2017
Belgrade Plaza (£113m + £35m student accommodation)	Pedestrianisation and road improvements	City centre	European Regional Development Fund Growth Deal	2012-2017
	Hotel and restaurants		Private sector investment	
	Student accommodation (597 rooms) and retail		Private sector investment	
Junction One and pedestrian link to the Canal Basin (£7.5m)	Pedestrian crossing	City centre	European Regional Development Fund	2015-2017
Broadgate/Hertford Street (£2m)	Demolition of an office New pedestrian links	City centre	Growing Places funding (infrastructure)	2011- present
Lidice Place (3m)	Road improvements Pedestrian improvements	City centre	Growth Deal	2011-2014
Leisure Centre/Waterpark (£37m)	Swimming pool/Waterpark	City centre	Coventry City Council	2017-2019
Bishopgate (75m)	Student accommodation (1200 rooms)	City centre	Private sector investment	2015-2017
London Road (£73m)	Student accommodation (1400 rooms)	City centre	Private sector investment	2017-2018
Lower Ford Street (£43m)	Student accommodation (769 rooms)	City centre	Private sector investment	2015-2017
Cathedral Lanes (£5-6m)	New restaurants	City centre	Private sector investment	2014-2015
Burges (£25m)	Regeneration of buildings	City centre	Heritage Lottery bid	Bidding
Jaguar Land Rover expansion (£35m)	New bridge	SE suburbs	LEP Growth Fund	2018-2020
Canley Regeneration Project (£13m)	Private and social housing	Canley (SW suburbs)	Private sector Whitefriars Coventry City Council	2009-present
Wood End, Deedmore Road, Henley Green, Manor Farm (£360m planned)	Private and social housing	Wood End, Deedmore Road, Henley Green, Manor Farm (NE suburbs)	Private sector Whitefriars Coventry City Council	2010-present