

Staveley Town Deal

Towards a Social Infrastructure Research Project



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Social Infrastructure

The concept of **Social Infrastructure** has become increasingly popular among local policymakers, researchers and urban planners, often in the context of programmes of local **investment, regeneration** and **socio-economic** development.

Different definitions are used, though in the public policy arena Social Infrastructure tends to refer to “spaces, services and structures that support the quality of life of a nation, region, city or local community” (British Academy 2023).

In practical terms, Social Infrastructure is usually associated with a range of **physical spaces**, including:

- Public service (libraries, health centres, advice centres, etc.)
- Formal and informal spaces of social interaction and support



Connecting infrastructure and people

Social Infrastructure plays a key role in enabling communities to “create social **connections**” (Barratt, 2023) and to facilitate **interactions** “between and within the **diverse** sections of a community” (Kelsey and Kenny, 2021) leading to the development of meaningful relationships and feelings of trust, reciprocity and **belonging**.

Thus, Social Infrastructure is related to well-established concepts such as community networks, **social cohesion** and inclusion, and **social capital**.

However, the (re)development of physical spaces, resources and services does not guarantee, on its own, an improvement of Social Infrastructure.

Resources must be open and **accessible** to diverse members of a local community, address needs in a culturally appropriate manner, and act as nodes of tight **social and physical networks**.



Researching Models

Different models of Social Infrastructure Research can be used to e.g.:

- **Map** community **assets**, resources and sources of support, identifying different levels of access and (un)met **needs**.
- **Investigate** community **experiences**, perceptions and **aspirations** regarding local opportunities and support.
- **Assess** the community **impact** and effectiveness of regeneration, local **investment** and community **engagement** programmes.
- **Identifying gaps and priorities** for local development, investment and intervention, feeding into strategies and development plans.

A Staveley Scoping Exercise

The proposed activity is a **scoping exercise** with the main aim of informing the development of a longer-term Social Infrastructure project.

The scoping exercise will:

- identify and detail the **research needs** of the ‘Staveley Town Deal’
- develop a **full proposal** for the Social Infrastructure project

It will allow us to:

- collect **preliminary data** on the Town Deal projects and how they link to Social Infrastructure
- identify potential **additional opportunities** for research, consultancy, and community interventions



Proposed work plan

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6
Project inception						
Preliminary literature review						
Preliminary background research						
Site visits						
Focus groups with stakeholders						
Methodological workshop						
Report on preliminary data analysis					*D1	
Development of project plan						*D2
Scoping out additional activities						

* Deliverable 1: Preliminary Report

* Deliverable 2: 3-year Project plan

Resourcing and Funding models

The cost of the 6-month scoping exercise would be of around £ 15,500.

The cost of the long-term Social Infrastructure project would depend on the funding model adopted. Main options include:

- **Sponsored PhD**

Cost: Tuition Fees (~£5k pa) and Stipend (~£20k pa)

Timeframe: PhD starts dates are in September or January.

- **Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)**

Cost: £30-35k pa of partner contribution (total budget of £90-100k)

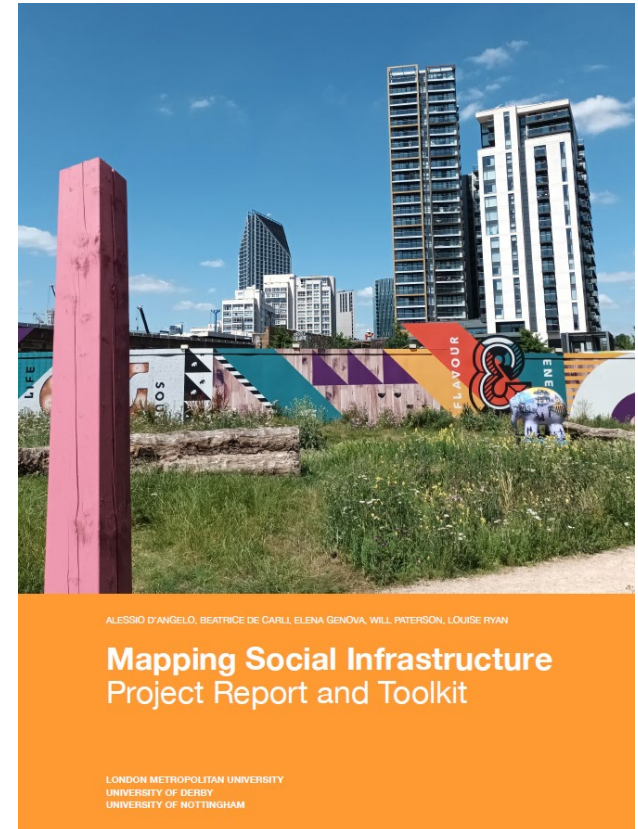
Timeframe: application development + 12 weeks assessment

- **Contract research**

Cost: depends on the project specs; usually from £ 30-60k pa

Timeframe: Can start as soon as funds and project details are confirmed

Questions and Discussion



Alessio D'Angelo, Beatrice De Carli, Elena Genova, Will Paterson and Louise Ryan,
*Mapping Social Infrastructure:
Project Report and Toolkit*
London, June, 2024

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