

# Working Where We Live: Designing Future Employment for Young People

Wareing, Laura<sup>\*a</sup>; Rodgers, Paul. A. <sup>a</sup>; Dunn, Nick <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

\* l.e.wareing@lancaster.ac.uk

This paper describes ongoing research exploring how a place-based collaborative approach to design has the potential to enhance learning experiences for young people and businesses, as well as raise awareness of future employment opportunities in the local area. It highlights current challenges in skills and education, focusing on how a new approach to tackling these issues could be nurtured through design. The paper explores two projects in towns in the North West of England that have barriers to future work opportunities, in which collaborative design processes are having a positive influence on young people, businesses and the wider community. In the first project, a design company, youth workers and design researchers are designing a digital intervention for young people and businesses to connect through learning and work experiences. In the second project, a creative practice, secondary school pupils and design researchers are co-designing a place-appropriate programme of activities to be included in a major festival in the North West. This paper concludes with findings on how a co-design approach can engage and inspire local young people and businesses around future work opportunities, shape learning experiences, as well as foster resilient, sustainable communities, an area to be explored further in design research.

**Keywords:** *Young people, future employment, co-design, place-based, inequality*

## 1 Introduction

This paper focuses on ongoing research that examines how the application of a place-based collaborative approach to design in overlooked areas of the United Kingdom can engage and inspire local young people and businesses around future employment opportunities. It highlights how design might respond to current challenges in education and regional disparities in the UK, contribute to communities' resilience, as well as enhance learning for young people. The paper describes two projects 'Yplinkedin' and 'Redesign by the Sea' where a co-design process is being applied to engage young people around their views on future work prospects in their hometowns and create meaningful engagements with local businesses. Within both of the examples, various actors including design researchers, creative businesses, school pupils and other organisations have connected at various stages of the co-design process. In doing so, the collaborations help to produce a variety of design interventions including experiences, strategies, visualisations and service concepts. There are also opportunities for the voices of young peoples from a variety of backgrounds to be heard and for mutual learning to take place.

Section three of the paper discusses the approaches taken and the outcomes of the projects. Section four presents findings from the two projects that link to four key themes; employment and learning opportunities, learning through a collaborative design process, learning about and shaping places and design for inclusive growth. It concludes with a reflection of how design practice and research can help to bring about creative and meaningful place-based engagements between communities and businesses.

## 2 Background

The research in this paper is being conducted as part of doctoral research on a programme called Transformation North West (TNW), which is part of the North West Consortium Doctoral Training Programme (NWCDTP), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Through TNW, a cohort of twelve PhD researchers from different creative backgrounds, supported by five universities (figure 1) are co-creating projects with businesses and organisations, exploring how design and creative techniques can foster growth and prosperity throughout the North West of England.



*Figure 1: A map of the North West including the locations of the TNW universities and the two projects. Source: Transformation North West*

The research presented in this paper is being conducted in support of the UK Government's Industrial Strategy, published in December 2017, which provides a plan for how to transform the country's economy and productivity. The strategy highlights how the UK has greater regional inequalities in productivity than any other countries in Europe and has regional differences in education and skills, including major disparities in educational attainment for

young people. One of the biggest challenges is to make improvements across the entire country ‘with opportunities available for everyone wherever they live’ (HM Government 2017, 229). It suggests that this can be reached by making better use of local assets, working to address regional differences in educational attainment, providing clear careers information and opportunities for lifelong learning, not just learning in formal educational settings.

The TNW cohort have collectively highlighted how the UK’s creative industries, in which design is the fastest growing sub-sector (DCMS 2016) can play a key role in driving growth across the country. TNW believes that design research and practice has the potential to influence future policymaking, support work readiness in young people, as well as tackle the place-based divide in the country, bringing together local communities and businesses to shape where they live (TNW 2017 Cohort 2018).

## **2.1 Challenges for Young People and Skills Development**

Young people, aged between 15 and 24, need to be provided with better opportunities to develop new skills and confidence required for the future employment markets, which will in turn have a positive influence on the UK’s workforce and productivity. Schools, colleges and businesses need to work together more creatively to provide pupils with rich and meaningful employer encounters that help build a clearer picture of what is required to be successful in the workplace (CDI and The Careers & Enterprise Company 2018; Children’s Commissioner for England 2018; Collins and Barnes 2017). Meaningful employer encounters occur when young people are active participants, experience detailed, hands-on learning and are able to choose and shape the engagement and experience that takes place and reflect on their learning (Children’s Commissioner for England 2018; Collins and Barnes 2017; Mann and Dawkins 2014). Creative roles are three times less likely to be replaced by automated processes than other workplace roles in the future (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi 2016). As a result, there is growing demand for a workforce equipped with these skills, sometimes referred to as ‘soft skills’ or ‘twenty-first century skills’ including creativity, communication and teamwork, which are typical of creative and design practitioners (Bakhshi et al. 2017; Design Council 2018; Wright et al. 2018). Young people, teachers and businesses value these skills as highly as good grades, yet not enough is being done to help young people achieve these skills (The Princes Trust 2017; Wybron, Vibert, and Smith 2017). Barriers include educator’s lack of experience, training and resources, as well as barriers in the educational system such as assessments and curriculum priorities (Luckin et al. 2017).

Design approaches can be drawn upon to connect young people with businesses and future opportunities, enhancing learning experiences, generating meaningful encounters that contribute to growth and prosperity in communities across the UK. In a co-design process, which builds on participatory design, participants with different backgrounds and experience actively participate in ‘collective creativity’, which is applied across an entire design process (Sanders and Stappers 2008). In this process, participants share knowledge from their own backgrounds and develop a shared understanding in order to develop a design intervention, such as a product, service or process (Kleinsmann and Valkenberg 2008). Joint inquiry throughout the design process results in mutual learning, where all participants learn together through participating in the design process (Merkel et al. 2005; Sejer Iversen and Dindler 2014; Steen 2013). Co-design has similarities to learning through collaborative problem solving in which a number of people work together as equals to apply knowledge and solve a problem, which are key skills for improving attainment and preparing young people for future work (Luckin et al. 2017).

Carvalho and Goodyear (2018) and Bang and Vossoughi (2016) link participatory design to innovative learning. Carvalho and Goodyear state that although learning outcomes are emergent and cannot be designed, it is possible to design the components of a network of learning, a complex configuration of various tasks, activities, roles, relationships and artefacts that generate learning. They explore this through their Activity Centred Analysis and Design (ACAD) framework, which they use for service design in educational contexts, highlighting components that could be improved in further design iterations. The tasks and artefacts are comparable to the structure and tools used within a co-design process, which help draw out dialogues between participants and ‘identify, frame and solve design problems’ during a design process (Vaajakallio and Mattelmäki 2014, 68). The designed components of a network of learning can support designing as well as the learning, which could be the ‘hands-on learning’ of the participants involved in the co-design process, potentially contributing to the high-quality employer encounter.

## **2.2 Inequalities in the UK**

The UK has significant regional inequalities (Children’s Commissioner for England 2018; Cox 2018; Cox and Longlands 2016; HM Government 2017; Pike et al. 2016) and within those regions, there are inequalities that vary from place to place. This paper focuses on the North West region of England where, like other regions in the country, there are prosperous areas but there are also more deprived communities than many other regions in the country (Children’s Commissioner for England 2018; New Economy 2015; ONS 2016), badly affected by public funding cuts (CentreforCities 2019; Raikes and Johns 2019). The Northern Powerhouse is a government strategy for rebalancing the country’s economy and strengthening the North, which has been criticised for being vague and not giving enough attention to people’s needs (Lee, 2017; The People’s Powerhouse, 2017). Many young people in the North are not confident that they will benefit from regeneration through initiatives, such as the Northern Powerhouse, believing the effect is only skin deep (Children’s Commissioner for England 2018).

People who grow up in remote rural, coastal or former industrial areas face more barriers to improving their future life prospects than those who grow up in cities and the surrounding areas (Social Mobility Commission 2017; The Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities 2019). People in these areas may face lower levels of educational attainment, weak employment markets, more low skilled, low paid employment, poor physical and mental wellbeing and poor transport links (Balata 2015; Goodwin and Heath 2016; Rodríguez-Pose 2018; Social Mobility Commission 2017). The Inclusive Growth Commission’s strategy tackles an economy ‘leaving too many people behind’ (p.5), which benefits a wide range of people facing barriers to high quality employment (RSA 2017). Inclusive growth is place-based, therefore utilising local assets, connects different groups including businesses and schools, delivers opportunities to learn skills needed in the future, find quality jobs and attracts people to ‘live, work and stay in the place’ (RSA 2017, 44).

The potential of design and creativity to contribute to growth and prosperity in disadvantaged communities, including rural, coastal or former industrial towns is underexplored. Yet a need has been identified, for example, The European Design Leadership Board believes that design can contribute to ‘inclusive growth’ and help improve the lives of ‘all the citizens of Europe’(European Design Leadership Board 2012, 3). The Design Council has highlighted the challenge alongside a need for the benefits of the design economy to be better distributed, bridging an increasing gap between regions, companies and people that use

design and those who do not (Design Council 2018). Both emphasise developing design skills specifically as means to drive growth throughout the country, rather than how design interventions could contribute to social change, linking local assets as well as focusing on positive impacts in learning and employment. An example of design research in rural areas by Wright and colleagues (2018), found that running a place-based learning programme for design skills in rural areas had the outcome of providing ‘tools for active citizenship and resilience’ (p. 17) and awareness of the local community and industry beyond the classroom. Their approach was influenced by place-based learning, which enables people to actively engage with their community through ‘hands-on experiences’, which is believed to improve academic achievement, active citizenship and building twenty-first century skills (Sobel 2004; Wright et al. 2018)

### **2.3 Methodology**

The two projects described in this paper form case studies for the larger TNW doctoral training programme described in section 2.1. The methodological approach to these two projects is influenced by the nature of the TNW programme where PhD researchers co-create short projects with businesses, which may produce new products or services and also develop an understanding of how design techniques can drive growth and prosperity in the North West.

Broadly, the approach to research on the TNW programme is, as Christopher Frayling (1993) describes it, ‘Research through Design’ wherein research takes place throughout the design process, gaining an understanding of *how* the design takes shape, not simply shaping the final outcome. An action research approach is suitable for these projects, building upon the learning in each one and applying to the next. The aim is for the researchers, businesses and organisations to collaborate equally and for the projects to include cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, which is similar to a design process (Swann 2002). The aim is to gather information for the researcher, as well as produce a beneficial outcome for other participants, which may be business partners or groups of people taking part in the design process. Swann stresses that action research in design is more than ‘just a multidisciplinary design team approach’, that the beneficiaries of the work should be ‘genuine collaborators’, not merely involved for tokenistic feedback (2002; p.57), which fits well with the aims of a co-design approach, where participants work together as equals.

Design work for education can be categorised as a sub-category of socially responsible design (Carvalho and Goodyear 2018). The social design presented in this paper is in line with one of Tromp and Hekkert’s (2019) three definitions of social design, which ‘builds social capital’, a network of values and understandings that facilitates co-operation in communities (OECD 2007). Design is used with the community rather than for the community and there is a focus on the well-being and resilience of a community, using a participatory design process that ‘empowers people to redesign better alternatives’ to current solutions (2019, 19). A co-design approach complements research in this area, combining a range of different experience and learning through a process of mutual inquiry, aiming to support the sustainability of designed interventions. TNW is focused on the North West of England and both of these projects focus on drawing on the strengths and ideas of businesses, organisations and groups of people who work or live in specific locations. Therefore, a place-based approach, as described in section 2.2 is combined with a co-

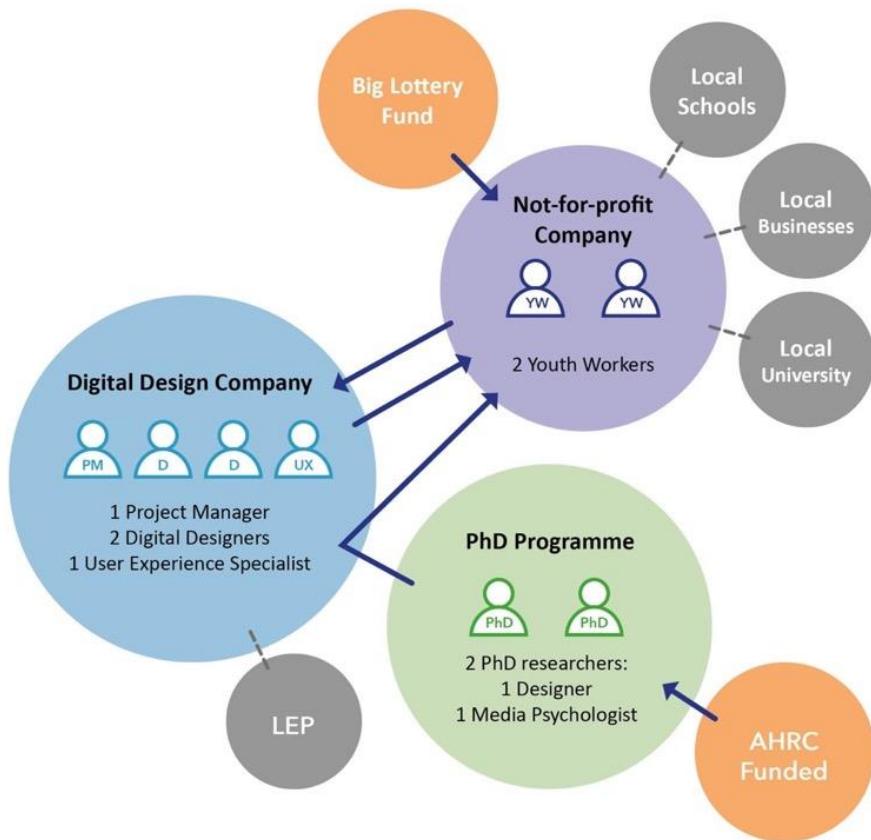
design approach in these projects in order to use design as means to engage, draw out local knowledge and connect a variety of people with the assets where they live.

## 2.4 Transformation North West Projects

This section includes a description of project one; Yplinkedin and a brief description of project two, Redesign by the Sea, which is still in progress. The Yplinkedin project outlines how a place-based collaborative design approach engaged young people and businesses around learning and future employment opportunities, as well as adapting Carvalho and Goodyear's 'Activity Centred Analysis and Design' (ACAD) framework (2018) to visualise and analyse the components of the engagements contributing to emergent learning and for this research, includes an adaptation on the original framework, the outcomes of the co-design.

## 2.5 Project One: Yplinkedin, Burnley

TNW researchers co-designed with digital design practitioners from a company called Blackbeard and youth workers from Participation Works, a not-for-profit company in Burnley, Lancashire on a six-month Big Lottery funded project called Yplinkedin, which aimed to connect local young people to learning and work opportunities. Figure 2 shows the many different actors involved in the project. The project aimed to tackle challenges facing school pupils across the town, such as limited knowledge of work and low confidence, as well as factors contributing to economic decline including low educational attainment and a declining population (Burnley Council 2017; Lancashire County Council 2018).



*Figure 2: The range of actors involved in the Yplinkedin project in Burnley. Source: Author's own*

The design practitioners structured the phases of their design process based on the Design Thinking Model created by the Hasso Plattner Institute (Plattner, Meinel, and Leifer 2011),

moving through phases of planning, discover, define, ideate, pausing the project at the deliver stage whilst seeking additional funding to deliver the design intervention (Figure 3).

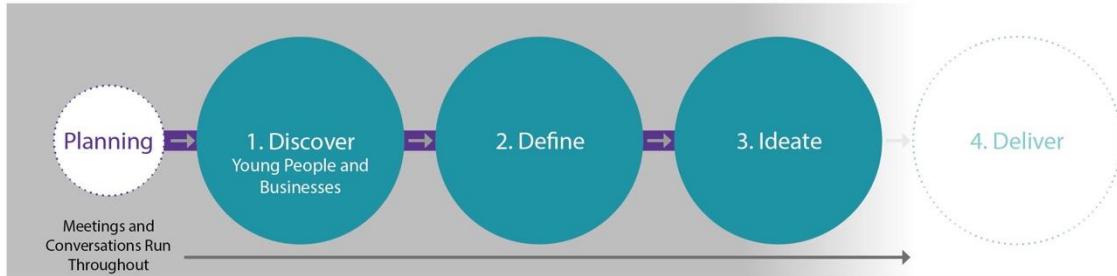


Figure 3: The design process used to structure the project. Source: Author's own

The youth workers used existing local networks of schools and businesses to set up and deliver engagement sessions for both groups, seeking views on skills, work experience and living in Burnley from the two different groups. These sessions were structured with a range of tasks, supported by various tools and the facilitation skills of the youth workers and design practitioners. Figure 4 adapts the Activity Centred Analysis and Design framework to visualise the configuration of designed components that contributed to the emergent learning and design activity and outcomes on the project. The team co-designed a number of tasks for the project, which were organised according to the Design Thinking Model, which were supported by a number of different tools for capturing information, analysing and designing, as well roles and division of labour depending on background and expertise (Figure 5 and 6). This combination resulted in emergent activity, such as capturing the views of young people and businesses, the input of larger organisations, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the decisions made on the direction of the design, which produced the outcomes of learning for the various actors involved, design prototypes for a website and new youth service outcomes.

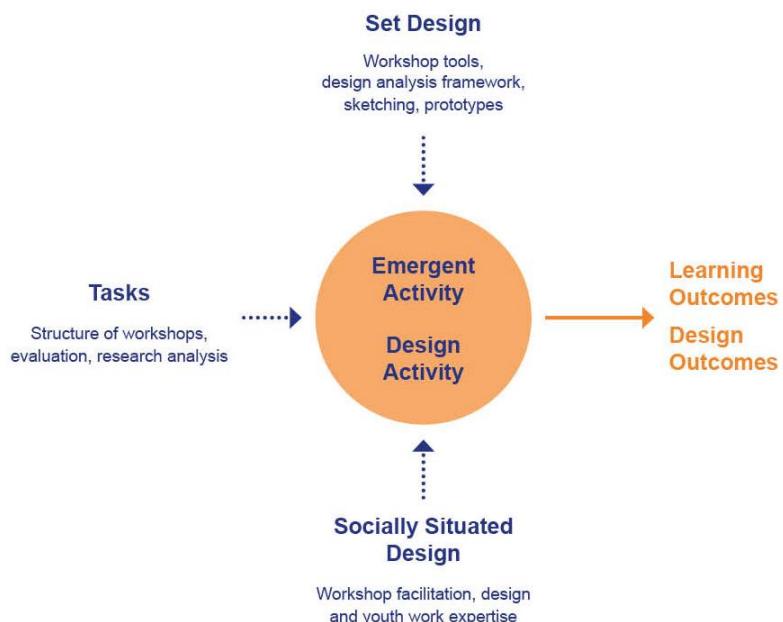


Figure 4: Activity Centred Analysis and Design (ACAD) for the Yplinkedin project. Source: Author's own, based on Carvalho and Goodyear's framework



# THE BUCKET LIST

- Try to skydive from a helicopter.
  - Do / Create something that I can be recognised with.
  - Start a small family.
  - Have a fancy small house
  - Own a car. Not a lamborghini and not a mini something in middle.
  - Travel to various countries and see their culture.
  - Try to do yachting if it works out.
  - Before I die I wanna have grand kids.
  - Have a medium sized tattoo on my left arm.

*Figure 5: An example of one of the tools used in the discover phase of the project, asking young people to list what they wanted to do in the future as a ‘Bucket List’. Source: Yplinkedin project*

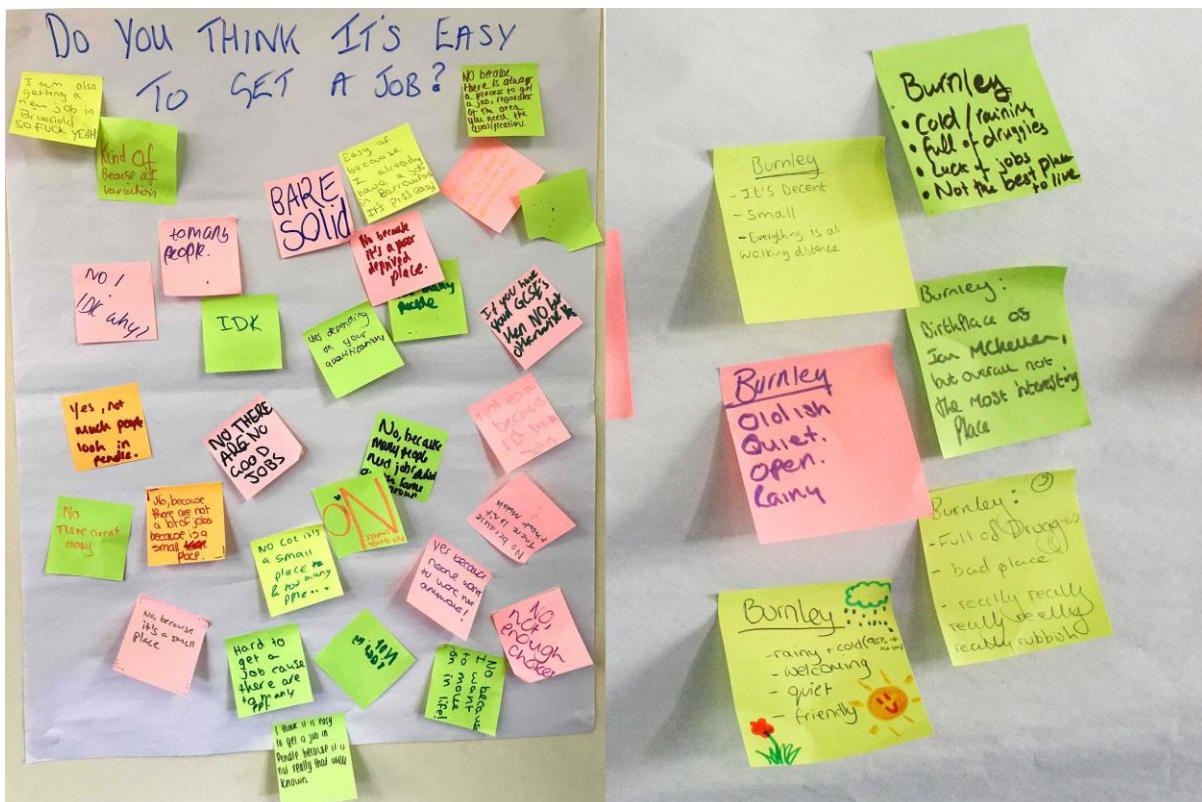


Figure 6: Young people responded to questions about their opinions of Burnley and finding a job there. Source: Yplinkedin project

Co-design on the project took place between the team of design practitioners, youth workers and researchers (Figure 7). The co-design team worked together throughout the entire design process, ensuring that the youth workers had ownership of the final design intervention as they would be responsible for driving and sustaining it. In interviews throughout the process, the team reflected on a range of learning outcomes the co-design process had delivered, from knowledge of the challenges facing Burnley, new methods, skills and increased confidence in their own abilities, as well as its effect on strengthening their social capital. Restraints on time and funding prevented the team from engaging the school pupils and businesses in actively designing the intervention and no evaluation of emergent learning for the school pupils was undertaken. However, we can assume that the young people developed awareness of their skills and views of Burnley from informal feedback collected during the workshops. It was generally felt that the co-design experiences had a positive effect on the careers support service provided by the youth workers as a result of the project.



Figure 7: The co-design team analysing the information collected in the workshops. Source: Yplinkedin project

The designed outcome is a prototype website aimed at young people, businesses and education providers in Burnley, which enables connections with each other for mutual benefit (Figure 8). Businesses can advertise opportunities and seek young people who fit their criteria, young people can access support, opportunities and build and seek mentorship from role models, and educators can help to mediate the connections. Focus groups were held with school pupils and businesses to gain feedback to shape the prototype and the team are now seeking funding for further development of the prototype website. More detail on this project is included in the author's previous paper (2019).

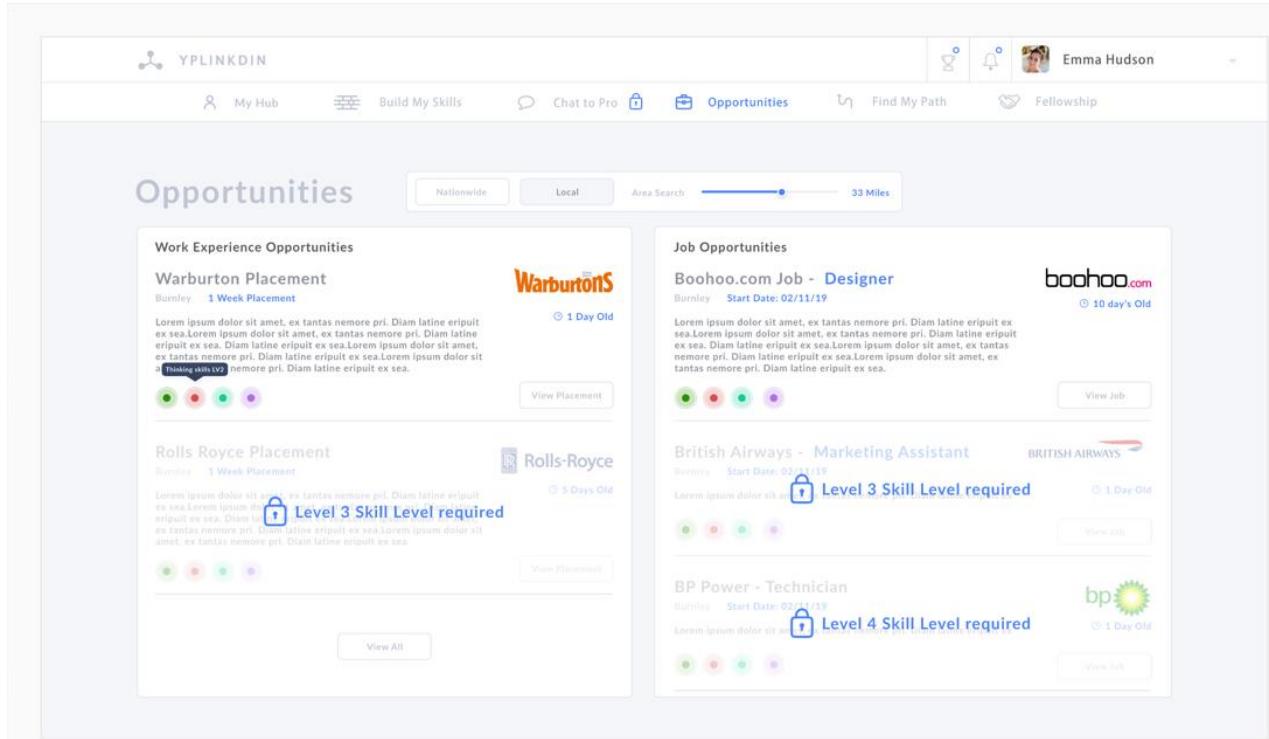
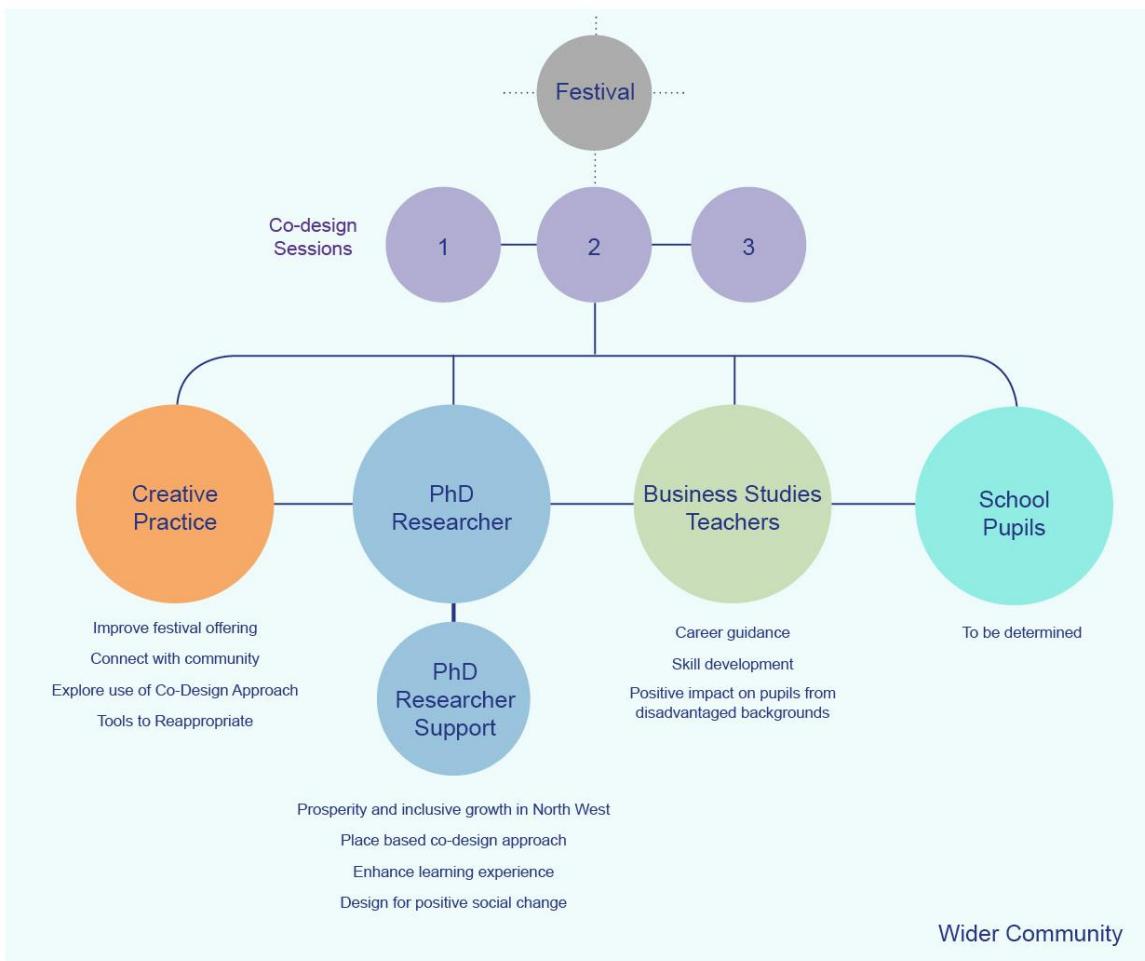


Figure 8: A screenshot of the prototype Yplinkedin website. Source: Yplinkedin project

## 2.6 Project 2: Redesign by the Sea, Morecambe

This project, in progress at the time of writing, is a collaboration with a creative practice called Deco Publique who co-curate major public art and cultural festivals throughout the North West of England with a focus on placemaking and regeneration. The aim is to foster new sustainable links between the creative practice and the community and co-design a place appropriate programme of activities with and for young people at the annual Morecambe Vintage Festival. Although Morecambe is challenged by significant economic decline and areas of deprivation, the Festival is a major asset, celebrating arts and culture from the past and present as well as reflecting the character of the town. Each year the festival generates over £1 million a year to the area providing a much needed economic boost (Lancaster City Council 2016). The project comes at a turning point for Morecambe, as it plans to be the new home to Eden Project North (Eden Project 2018).

Co-design sessions have been co-developed with Deco Publique, the first author, TNW PhD researcher colleagues, and teachers at a local secondary school in the centre of Morecambe. The lead researcher (first author) conducted conversations between the different actors to deliver co-design activities that will produce benefits for all involved, which will be reflected on through the cycles of the action research process. Figure 9 shows the different needs of everyone involved in the co-design sessions, which feed into the festival programme.



*Figure 9: The different actors and their needs for the co-design engagement. Source: Author's own*

The plan is to run three 2-hour workshop sessions for the school pupils. The first workshop will gain an overview of the views of the group and the second will aim to redesign the programme for the Vintage Festival. In the third workshop, the ideas will be refined further with expert input from Deco Publique. The ACAD framework for the project will have a similar form to the one from the Yplinkedin project (Figure 4). However, the teachers will be present to encourage the young people and the project will aim to provide a meaningful employer encounter through an exploration of Deco Publique's work, skills, roles and its relevance to Morecambe. This will be followed by a hands-on co-design experience, supported by a range of tools and resources to learn what it is like to be an events programmer and develop creative and collaboration skills. The outcome will be learning for all actors involved in the process and festival programme concepts that will be used to shape the Festival in the future.

Like the Yplinkedin project, the young people will provide their views on living in and their future in Morecambe but the discussion they generate will not just benefit Deco Publique, it will help the whole group co-design a programme of Festival activities for young people. In the Yplinkedin project, the information collected on perceptions of current and future life in Burnley were underused in the design development and focus was placed on the specific needs of the young people. This will not be the case in project two, where the views on Morecambe will be key to place-based learning and place-based co-design of festival

activities. For example, in the Yplinkedin project the young people were asked for a rating of Burnley based on the website ‘Trip Advisor’, in the second project, we will build on this method in more detail through reviews, ratings and information on what is missing using a specifically developed tool (Figure 10). Observations on how the young people respond to the co-design sessions will be recorded throughout, coupled with an evaluation of the learning and any other outcomes the different actors gain from each workshop, focused particularly on the young people and Deco Publique.

**Your Top Things to See & Do in Morecambe**

Search:

Europe > United Kingdom > England > Lancashire > Lancaster District > Morecambe

**Your Top 3**

What is it?	Ratings:
1. What is it? Review it: Eg. Why did you choose it?	Fun: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> How easy to do: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Cost: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
2. What is it? Review it: Eg. Why did you choose it?	Fun: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> How easy to do: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Cost: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
3. What is it? Review it: Eg. Why did you choose it?	Fun: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> How easy to do: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Cost: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

**Vintage by the Sea Festival**  
Review it:  
Suggested attraction

**What do you think is fun or interesting outside Morecambe? Why?**  
Write and/or draw:

**What activity is missing in Morecambe? Why?**  
Write and/or draw:

**TRANS FORMA TION NW DECO PUBLIQUE**

Figure 10: An example of one of the tools used in the first session. Source: Author's own

Despite the project only being in the planning phase, the collaboration is already having a positive impact on the sustainability of the festival and the local community. Deco Publique has included details of the project in a bid to Arts Council England, stating that the collaboration expands their ‘knowledge in meaningful and impactful cultural intervention and localised change’ (Deco Publique, 2019).

### 3 Findings

#### 3.1 Employment and Learning Opportunities

A collaborative design approach can structure meaningful and sustainable engagements between young people and businesses, which many careers and education focused organisations are calling for but providing little information on how to implement. These interactions can offer young people a unique and engaging opportunity to learn through designing something beneficial in partnership with professionals working in the field.

The process outlined in the first project demonstrates how a co-design team can gather, analyse and take action through design using the information on aspirations and barriers to work experience and skills development with young people across schools in a town. Specifically, they found that pupils across Burnley had little awareness of the job opportunities in the local area or how to take steps to finding and applying for them. The team transformed these insights into a prototype for a website to connect young people, educators and businesses, which would provide routes to learning opportunities and employment opportunities for a wider community of young people and businesses in the district.

Despite research that shows that schools are inflexible and often difficult to engage with, the youth workers had strong ties to local schools, which made the engagements easy to facilitate. However, engagement between the youth workers, design practitioners and schools could have been reinforced for increased direct benefit to the young people by enabling them to understand more about design, through co-designing ideas for the platform. In the second project, mutual benefits to Deco Publique and the pupils will be delivered by gathering information and opinions on the Festival and pupils will be given the opportunity of a high-quality employer encounter through co-design.

### **3.2 Learning through a Collaborative Design Process**

Working as genuine collaborators in the co-design process facilitates a number of different learning outcomes. In the Yplinkedin project, the designers and youth workers worked together as equals, which helped develop skills and influence future practices for both companies. In the situation where there was limited funding, they were able to learn from each other through practice rather than undergoing any formal training. The youth workers reported during the process that they had new ideas for how to improve their service offering for young people. Five months after the end of the project, they report that they are now running new careers support services and have implemented changes to the way they work as a direct result of the project.

Knowledge of the skills, confidence and aspirations of young people in Burnley were collected as a result of the process, which has fed into both the prototype design and youth workers services. The young people were not directly involved in the co-design of the platform and no formal evaluation of the learning of the young people and businesses involved in the project was carried out due to time and resource. The second project will build co-design into the engagement from the beginning and will evaluate the emergent learning with the actors involved throughout the project to build insight in this area.

This paper has adapted the ACAD framework to reflect the emergent learning activity, with the additional outcome of design produced by the project. The framework includes the design of components, both physical and social, for co-design activity. The tools and tasks utilised are dependent on the skills of the people involved in the facilitation of the project. In the Yplinkedin project, the team reflected that the tools used in the workshops with young people and businesses required the facilitation skills of the team to help identify and frame views. The design practitioners' frameworks applied during the 'define' and 'ideate' stage of the process also needed additional knowledge and facilitation skills to use, as the youth workers found them difficult to grasp corresponding with research by Donetto, Pierri, Tsianakas, & Robert (2015) and Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki (2014). As a result of the Yplinkedin project, the team of facilitators of the second project will be involved in the

co-design of the tasks and activities for the engagement so that they are comfortable using them to help prompt ideas from the young people.

### **3.3 Learning About and Shaping Places**

Specific tasks and tools in design projects that prompt a reflection on place help young participants to think about where they live and what learning development and employment opportunities are on offer there. The Yplinkedin project gathered views on the prospects available in Burnley but the ideas were not fully utilised in the design of the platform. The second project will also seek to enable young people to reflect on their hometown, however tools and facilitation will also seek to help the participants think creatively about what they would like in their hometown in the future. The participants will reflect on how arts and cultural events provide benefits to their hometown and come up with new ideas to improve where they live through conversations and interactive activities with creative practitioners who are experts in this field.

These projects have the potential to contribute to discussions and decisions that influence the wider community. Businesses and organisations engaging with and developing ideas with their local communities also have the potential to influence local authorities and organisations with the decisions that affect the communities. For example, youth workers from the Yplinkedin project are approaching Burnley Council and University of Central Lancashire to discuss the outcomes of the project. Deco Publique intend to present information from the project to the local board of councillors, who make funding decisions, demonstrating connections with the local community that contributes to the sustainability of their practice.

### **3.4 Design for Inclusive Growth**

Place-based design has a role to play in delivering inclusive growth. This paper presents examples that demonstrate how a co-design approach and methods have been used to contribute to positive futures in coastal and post-industrial towns in the North of England that face economic and social decline. Both examples utilise and connect local assets, such as businesses varying in size and sector, and youth organisations. Through design processes, they draw out and include the voices of young members of the local community, that may not otherwise be heard. The projects aim to design services and products that break down barriers for community members to find quality work experience or mentorship in the local area. They also bring together young people, educators and businesses to work together creatively, delivering high quality employer encounters through participation in a co-design process. In addition, these encounters can incorporate place-based education, learning and developing through reflecting on the community beyond the classroom walls. All of these approaches have the potential to tackle negative perceptions of the local community and future employment prospects in the local area and throughout the North.

## **4 Key Contribution to the Field**

This paper has highlighted new ways in which design practice and research can structure and strengthen creative and meaningful place-based engagements between communities and businesses, which is underexplored in current research. The paper demonstrates how it is possible to shape co-design projects that draw on and connect local assets, as well as help equip people with the knowledge about high quality work where they live. This paper has stressed how important it is that these meaningful engagements are distributed across the whole country, to places that are often overlooked, which can help with one of the UK's

biggest challenges of providing opportunities for everyone everywhere, tackling regional disparities. This is believed to have the potential to influence the future workforce and national prosperity. This paper calls for more design research into both meaningful learning experiences and place-based inequalities, which are interlinked.

The research on the Redesign by the Sea Project is still in progress and therefore insights could only be drawn from the limited work to date. Insights on the impact of the Yplinkedin project are still emerging as the team continue to seek further funding and develop a network of potential users and contributors. However, changes to the services delivered by the youth workers to both young people and businesses as well as ongoing meetings with local institutions should produce new insights.

This paper brings together findings from the first two projects from a series of projects shaping future patterns of work, employment, training and skills for young people. These insights will be strengthened by forthcoming projects, which will contribute further to research in the area of inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity across the UK.

## 5 References

- Bakhshi, Hasan, Jonathan M Downing, Michael A Osborne, and Philippe Schneider. (2017). The Future of Skills. Employment in 2030. London. [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk).
- Balata, Fernanda. (2015). Blue New Deal.  
[https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/2ec4a9d52360c8dd5a\\_a7m6yt6ik.pdf](https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/2ec4a9d52360c8dd5a_a7m6yt6ik.pdf).
- Bang, Megan, and Shirin Vossoughi. (2016). "Participatory Design Research and Educational Justice: Studying Learning and Relations Within Social Change Making." *Cognition and Instruction* 34(3): 173–93. <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=hcgi20>
- Burnley Council. (2017). Making It in Burnley: Burnley Council's Strategy for Raising Aspiration 2017-2020. Burnley. [https://burnley.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s5767/Aspiration Strategy 2017.pdf](https://burnley.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s5767/Aspiration%20Strategy%202017.pdf)
- Carvalho, Lucila, and Peter Goodyear. (2018). "Design, Learning Networks and Service Innovation." *Design Studies* 55: 27–53.
- CDI, and The Careers & Enterprise Company. (2018). The Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit Practical Signposting Tools for Schools The Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit. London.  
[https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/gatsby\\_benchmark\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/gatsby_benchmark_toolkit.pdf)
- CentreforCities. (2019). "Austerity Hit Cities Twice as Hard as the Rest of Britain: Northern Cities Budgets Have Faced the Biggest Cuts." CentreforCities.  
<https://www.centreforcities.org/press/austerity-hit-cities-twice-as-hard-as-the-rest-of-britain/>
- Children's Commissioner for England. (2018). Growing Up North. London.  
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Growing-Up-North-March-2018-1.pdf>
- Collins, Jill, and Anthony Barnes. (2017). Careers in the Curriculum. What Works? London.  
[www.careersandenterprise.co.uk](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)
- Cox, Ed. (2018). "Britain's New Giants." RSA. <https://www.thersa.org/discover/britains-new-giants>
- Cox, Ed, and Sarah Longlands. (2016). The Role of Small and Medium-Sized Cities in Growing the Northern Powerhouse. Manchester. [www.ippr.org/north](http://www.ippr.org/north)
- DCMS. (2016). "Creative Industries Economic Estimates - January 2016 - GOV.UK." [gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-economic-estimates-january-2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-economic-estimates-january-2016>
- Design Council. (2018). "Designing a Future Economy."  
[https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Designing\\_a\\_future\\_economy18.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Designing_a_future_economy18.pdf)
- Donetto, Sara, Paola Pierri, Vicki Tsianakas, and Glenn Robert. (2015). "Experience-Based Co-Design and Healthcare Improvement: Realizing Participatory Design in the Public Sector." *The Design Journal* 18(2): 227–48.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rfdj20>
- Eden Project. (2018). "New Vision for Morecambe's Eden Project Revealed." Eden Project.  
<https://www.edenproject.com/media/2018/11/new-vision-morecambes-eden-project-revealed>

- European Design Leadership Board. (2012). *Design for Growth and Prosperity*. Helsinki.  
[http://europeandesigninnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Design\\_for\\_Growth\\_and\\_Prosperity\\_.pdf](http://europeandesigninnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Design_for_Growth_and_Prosperity_.pdf)
- Frayling, Christopher. (1993). "Research in Art and Design." *Royal College of Art Research Papers* 1(1): 9. [http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/384/3/frayling\\_research\\_in\\_art\\_and\\_design\\_1993.pdf](http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/384/3/frayling_research_in_art_and_design_1993.pdf)
- Goodwin, Matthew, and Oliver Heath. (2016). Brexit Vote Explained: Poverty, Low Skills and Lack of Opportunities | JRF. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/brexit-vote-explained-poverty-low-skills-and-lack-opportunities>
- HM Government. (2017). *Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain Fit for the Future*. London.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf)
- Kleinsmann, Maaike, and Rianne Valkenbergh. (2008). "Barriers and Enablers for Creating Shared Understanding in Co-Design Projects." *Design Studies* 29(4): 369–86.  
[www.elsevier.com/locate/destud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/destud)
- Lancashire County Council. (2018). "Burnley District." Lancashire County Council.  
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/burnley-district/>
- Lancaster City Council. (2016). "Vintage by the Sea Returns!"  
<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2016/aug/vintage-by-the-sea-returns/>
- Lee, Neil. (2017). "Powerhouse of Cards? Understanding the 'Northern Powerhouse.'" *Regional Studies* 51(3): 478–89. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00343404.2016.1196289>
- Luckin, Rose et al. (2017). *Solved! Making the Case for Collaborative Problem-Solving*. London.  
<https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/solved-making-case-collaborative-problem-solving.pdf>
- Mann, Anthony, and James Dawkins. (2014). *Employer Engagement in Education*. Reading.  
[www.inspiringthefuture.org](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org)
- Mateos-Garcia, Juan, and Hasan Bakhshi. (2016). *The Geography of Creativity in the UK Creative Clusters, Creative People and Creative Networks The Geography of Creativity in the UK*. London. [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)
- Merkel, Cecelia Bridget et al. (2005). "Sustaining Computer Use and Learning in Community Computing Contexts: Making Technology Part of 'Who They Are and What They Do.'" *The Journal of Community Informatics* 1(2): 158–74. <http://ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/215/174>
- New Economy. (2015). *The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 - Results for the North West*. Manchester. <http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/media/1570/the-english-indices-of-deprivation-2015-results-for-the-north-west.pdf>
- OECD. (2007). *Human Capital : How What You Know Shapes Your Life*. OECD.
- ONS. (2016). *Towns and Cities Analysis, England and Wales, March 2016* - Office for National Statistics. London.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiesanalysisenglandandwalesmarch2016/2016-03-18>
- Pike, Andy et al. (2016). *Uneven Growth: Tackling City Decline*. York.  
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uneven-growth-tackling-city-decline>
- Plattner, Hasso, Christoph Meinel, and Larry Leifer. (2011). *Design Thinking: Understand - Improve - Apply*. Potsdam. <http://www.springer.com/series/8802>
- Raikes, Luke, and Marcus Johns. (2019). "The Northern Powerhouse: 5 Years In." IPPR.  
<https://www.ippr.org/blog/the-northern-powerhouse-5-years-in>
- Rodríguez-Pose, Andrés. (2018). "The Revenge of the Places That Don't Matter (and What to Do about It)." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 11: 189–209.  
<https://academic.oup.com/cjres/article-abstract/11/1/189/4821289>
- RSA. (2017). *Inclusive Growth Commission: Making Our Economy Work for Everyone* - RSA. London.  
<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/final-report-of-the-inclusive-growth-commission>
- Sanders, Elizabeth B. N., and Pieter J. Stappers. (2008). "Co-Creation and the New Landscapes of Design." *CoDesign* 4(1): 5–18.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15710880701875068>
- Sejer Iversen, Ole, and Christian Dindler. (2014). "Sustaining Participatory Design Initiatives." *CoDesign* 10(2–4): 153–70.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=ncdn20>
- Sobel, David. (2004). "Place-Based Education: Connecting Classroom and Community." *Nature and Listening* 4: 1–7. <http://www.kohalacenter.org/teachertraining/pdf/pbexcerpt.pdf>

- Social Mobility Commission. (2017). State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/662744/State\\_of\\_the\\_Nation\\_2017\\_-\\_Social\\_Mobility\\_in\\_Great\\_Britain.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf)
- Steen, Marc. (2013). "Co-Design as a Process of Joint Inquiry and Imagination." *Design Issues* 29(2): 16–28. [http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/10.1162/DESI\\_a\\_00207](http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/10.1162/DESI_a_00207)
- Swann, Cal. (2002). "Action Research and the Practice of Design." *Design Issues* 18(1): 49–61. <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/10.1162/07479360252756287>
- The People's Powerhouse. (2017). "The People's Powerhouse Charter." <https://peoplespowerhouse.org.uk/charter>
- The Princes Trust. (2017). The Prince's Trust Report Results for Life. London. <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/research>.
- The Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities. (2019). House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities - The Future of Seaside Towns. London. <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords->
- TNW 2017 Cohort. (2018). Driving the Industrial Strategy for North West Growth - The Role of the Creative Industries. Lancaster. [https://transformationnorthwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018\\_TNW\\_Driving\\_Industrial\\_Strategy\\_for\\_North\\_West\\_Growth.pdf](https://transformationnorthwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018_TNW_Driving_Industrial_Strategy_for_North_West_Growth.pdf)
- Tromp, Nynke, and Paul Hekkert. (2019). Designing for Society : Products and Services for a Better World.
- Vaajakallio, Kirsikka, and Tuuli Mattelmäki. (2014). "Design Games in Codesign: As a Tool, a Mindset and a Structure." *CoDesign* 10(1): 63–77. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15710882.2014.881886>
- Wareing, Laura, Paul A. Rodgers, and Nick Dunn. (2019). "Co-Designing Pathways to Opportunities for Young People in the North West of England." *The Design Journal* 22(sup1): 863–83. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14606925.2019.1595405>
- Wright, Natalie, Evonne Miller, Les Dawes, and Cara Wrigley. (2018). "Beyond 'Chalk and Talk': Educator Perspectives on Design Immersion Programs for Rural and Regional Schools." *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*: 1–31. <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10798-018-9487-7>.
- Wybron, Ian, Simone Vibert, and Josh Smith. (2017). Next Generation UK. London. [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/h030\\_next\\_generation\\_uk\\_report\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/h030_next_generation_uk_report_final_web.pdf)

### About the Authors:

**Laura Wareing:** Design PhD researcher on Transformation North West at Lancaster University. Her research uses a co-design approach with young people in overlooked places in the North. She was a previously designer and researcher at ImaginationLancaster and is a Fellow of the RSA.

**Paul A. Rodgers:** Professor of Design at Imagination, Lancaster University. He is also the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Design Leadership Fellow in the UK. He is a co-founder of the Design Disruption Group who focus their research on making positive change in health and social care and elsewhere.

**Nick Dunn:** Executive Director and Chair of Urban Design at Imagination the design research lab at Lancaster University. He is Senior Fellow of the Institute for Social Futures, leading research on the future of cities.

**Acknowledgement:** The authors would like to thank all those who contributed to both projects, including Blackbeard Design, Participation Works North West, Deco Publique, school pupils and staff and those who supported through TNW. We would also like to acknowledge the NWCDTP, funded through the AHRC for their support.