

## **Public Policy and Politics**

Series Editors: Colin Fudge and Robin Hambleton

---

Public policy-making in Western democracies is confronted by new pressures. Central values relating to the role of the state, the role of markets and the role of citizenship are now all contested and the consensus built up around the Keynesian welfare state is under challenge. New social movements are entering the political arena: electronic technologies are transforming the nature of employment: changes in demographic structure are creating heightened demands for public services; unforeseen social and health problems are emerging; and, most disturbing, social and economic inequalities are increasing in many countries.

How governments – at international, national and local levels – respond to this developing agenda is the central focus of the *Public Policy and Politics* series. Aimed at a student, professional, practitioner and academic readership, it aims to provide up-to-date, comprehensive and authoritative analyses of public policy-making in practice.

The series is international and interdisciplinary in scope and bridges theory and practice by relating the substance of policy to the politics of the policy-making process.

## Public Policy and Politics

Series Editors: Colin Fudge and Robin Hambleton

---

### PUBLISHED

Kate Ascher, *The Politics of Privatisation: Contracting Out Public Services*  
Rob Atkinson and Graham Moon, *Urban Policy in Britain: The City, the State and the Market*

Jacqueline Barron, Gerald Crawley and Tony Wood, *Councillors in Crisis: The Public and Private Worlds of Local Councillors*

Danny Burns, Robin Hambleton and Paul Hoggett, *The Politics of Decentralisation: Revitalising Local Democracy*

Aram Eisenschitz and Jamie Gough, *The Politics of Local Economic Policy: The Problems and Possibilities of Local Initiative*

Christopher Ham, *Health Policy in Britain: The Politics and Organisation of the National Health Service* (third edition)

Ian Henry, *The Politics of Leisure Policy*

Peter Malpass and Alan Murie, *Housing Policy and Practice* (fourth edition)

Robin Means and Randall Smith, *Community Care: Policy and Practice*

Gerry Stoker, *The Politics of Local Government* (second edition)

Kieron Walsh, *Public Services and Market Mechanisms: Competition, Contracting and the New Public Management*

### FORTHCOMING

Robin Hambleton, *An Introduction to Local Policy-Making*

Clive Harris, Michael Keith and John Solomos, *Racial Inequality and Public Policy*

Patsy Healey, *Places We Could Make: The Future of Environmental Planning*

#### **Series Standing Order (Public Policy and Politics)**

If you would like to receive future titles in this series as they are published, you can make use of our standing order facility. To place a standing order please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address and the name of the series. Please state with which title you wish to begin your standing order. (If you live outside the UK we may not have the rights for your area, in which case we will forward your order to the publisher concerned.)

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd,  
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 2XS, England

# **Urban Policy in Britain**

**The City, the State and the Market**

**Rob Atkinson  
and  
Graham Moon**



© Rob Atkinson and Graham Moon 1994

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 1994 by  
MACMILLAN PRESS LTD  
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS  
and London  
Companies and representatives  
throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-56747-0      ISBN 978-1-349-23290-1 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-23290-1

A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3  
03 02 01 00 99 98 97

Edited and typeset by Povey–Edmondson  
Okehampton and Rochdale, England

# Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
<i>Guide to Reading the Book</i>	xi
<b>1 Analysing Urban Policy</b>	<b>1</b>
The Urban	1
Theoretical Approaches	7
A Framework for Urban Policy Analysis	17
Conclusion	20
<b>2 Post-War Urban Problems and the Rediscovery of Urban Poverty</b>	<b>21</b>
The Physical Approach to Urban Problems	21
Challenges to the Physical Approach	31
Assessment	38
Conclusion: an emerging urban policy?	41
<b>3 First Steps: Urban Initiatives and Urban Problems in Early 1970s Britain</b>	<b>43</b>
The Early Urban Initiatives	43
The Demise of the Physical Approach	53
Assessment	58
Conclusion: the crisis of the mid-1970s	61
<b>4 The Watershed? Urban Policy 1977–79</b>	<b>64</b>
The Background to the White Paper	64
The White Paper: <i>Policy for the Inner Cities</i>	66
The Partnerships	75
Assessment	81
Conclusion	85

vi *Contents*

<b>5</b>	<b>Urban Problems since 1979: The Conservative Approach</b>	<b>87</b>
	Thatcher and Thatcherism	87
	Urban Problems since 1979	90
	Putting Theory into Practice	96
	Conclusion	109
<b>6</b>	<b>Reshaping the Urban Policy Inheritance</b>	<b>111</b>
	Regional Policy	111
	The Urban Programme	115
	Urban Regeneration	126
	Housing Initiatives	131
	Employment-related Initiatives	135
	Conclusion	138
<b>7</b>	<b>Urban Initiatives since 1979: Innovation, Consolidation and Assessment</b>	<b>139</b>
	Innovation in Urban Policy	139
	Consolidation in Urban Policy: Action for Cities	155
	Assessment	161
	Conclusion	172
<b>8</b>	<b>Urban Planning under Conservatism</b>	<b>174</b>
	The 1947 Town and Country Planning System	175
	Planning under Thatcher	182
	Planning in Action	191
	Assessment	197
	Conclusion	200
<b>9</b>	<b>Local Government and Urban Policy</b>	<b>201</b>
	The Structure of Local Government	201
	Central–Local Government Relations	203
	Local Government and Urban Initiatives	207
	Local Economic Development Policies	209
	Privatisation	217
	Assessment	222
	Conclusion	228
<b>10</b>	<b>Race, Urban Problems and Urban Initiatives</b>	<b>229</b>
	The Construction of the ‘Race Problem’	230
	Urban Initiatives and Race since 1968	233

Race and Urban Local Government	240
Employment	243
Housing	245
Assessment	247
Conclusion	250
<b>11 Conclusion</b>	<b>253</b>
The European Dimension to Urban Regeneration	253
Understanding Urban Policy	257
Assessing Urban Policy	264
Conclusion	271
<i>Guide to Further Reading</i>	273
<i>Bibliography</i>	276
<i>Index</i>	302

# List of Tables

1.1	The CURDS classification of local labour market areas	4
2.1	First generation new towns	28
2.2	Multiple deprivation in British cities, 1971	35
2.3	Physical urban policy: an assessment	40
3.1	Early urban initiatives: an assessment	69
4.1	Partnerships, programme areas and designated areas	76
4.2	Urban policy 1977–9	82
6.1	Unemployment by region 1979–89	113
6.2	The Urban Programme 1979/80 to 1986/7	117
6.3	Categories of expenditure in partnerships and programme authorities	118
6.4	City Challenge winners by rounds and deprivation ranking	123
6.5	Expenditure on regeneration grants 1988–9 to 1994	131
7.1	Urban development corporations	145
7.2	UDC expenditure 1989–92	145
7.3	Conservative urban policy post-1979: an assessment	166
8.1	Post-1979 urban planning: an assessment	199
9.1	Local government and urban policy: an assessment	226
10.1	Race and urban policy: an assessment	249



# List of Abbreviations

BIC	Business in the Community
BUD	British Urban Development
CAT	City Action Team
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCP	Comprehensive Community Programme
CDP	Community Development Project
CPS	Centre for Policy Studies
CURDS	(Newcastle) Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies
DES	Department of Education and Science
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security
DLO	Direct Labour Organisation
DoE	Department of Employment
DoI	Department of Industry
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EC	European Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EZ	Enterprise Zone
FIG	Financial Institutions Group
FP	Free Port
GLC	Greater London Council
GDO	General Development Order
GEAR	Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal Project
GLEB	Greater London Enterprise Board
HAT	Housing Action Trust
HCPAC	House of Commons Public Accounts Committee
HMCE	Her Majesty's Customs and Excise
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
IAS	Inner Area Studies
IEA	Institute for Economic Affairs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	Industrial Reorganisation Committee

x *List of Abbreviations*

LDCC	London Docklands Development Corporation
LEB	Local Enterprise Board
LGPLA	Local Government, Planning and Land Act
LLMA	Local Labour Market Area
LRG	London Regeneration Consortium
MDC	Merseyside Development Corporation
MHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NEB	National Enterprise Board
NF	National Front
NAO	National Audit Office
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
RDG	Regional Development Grant
RSG	Rate Support Grant
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SDO	Special Development Orders
SPZ	Simplified Planning Zone
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TVEI	Training and Vocational Education Initiative
UDC	Urban Development Corporations
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UP	Urban Programme
URA	Urban Regeneration Agency
WMEB	West Midlands Enterprise Board

# Guide to Reading the Book

Britain today is a predominantly urban society; the majority of the population living or working in cities. These cities are continually changing and adapting in the face of economic pressures; at times they prosper, and at other times they decay. 'Urban policy' is centrally involved in these changes. It seeks to foster prosperity or, more often, to bring about a return to prosperity and moderate the impact of decay. It is inevitably contentious. For some commentators it is inadequate, for others it constitutes unwarranted interference by government. Local government has not always wanted the same from urban policy as central government. We can even question whether or not there is actually such a thing as urban policy; whether it is 'urban'; and whether it is a 'policy'. These conflicts and debates form the subject matter of this book.

The book focuses on the development and evolution of British urban policy since 1945. Its central theme, and one which distinguishes it from others on a similar theme, is a focus on the growing importance of the private sector in the framing and practice of urban policy. When, after the 1987 United Kingdom general election, the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, announced that her Government was to give specific attention to the inner cities, the result, *Action for Cities*, favoured an approach in which the economic fortunes of urban areas were to be revived by the private sector; the market rather than state planning was to be the key instrument. This represented the culmination of a trend evident for over a decade and traceable throughout the period since 1945.

The structure of the book is straightforward. The first chapter considers the concept of urban policy. It begins with a discussion of the nature of 'the urban'. It then outlines key theoretical perspectives concerning policy, describing pluralist, New Right and Marxist analyses. Finally, it sets out a framework for policy analysis. The two latter sections provide reference points to which subsequent chapters return.

The following three chapters provide a chronological analysis of urban initiatives in the period prior to 1979. Chapter 2 considers the physical approach to urban problems evident throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It notes the changing fortunes of the private and public sectors through the period and the relative lack of coherence regarding approaches to urban problems. Chapter 3 assesses the emergent urban initiatives of the late 1960s and the conflict between area-based and structurally-based approaches to urban decay. Chapter 4 reviews the milestone 1977 White Paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities*, in the context of contemporary politics. Although these chapters stand on their own as statements about pre-1979 urban initiatives, the reader requiring a full understanding of the periods to which they refer will need to refer also to Chapters 8, 9 and 10, where contextual material concerning town and country planning, local government and race is covered.

The core of the book comprises three chapters on the post-1979 period. In Chapter 5 we consider the extent to which New Right theoretical positions underpinned the actions of the post-1979 Conservatives and examine the application of these principles to the subject of urban regeneration. Chapters 6 and 7 make an admittedly crude but convenient distinction between the initiatives which were inherited by the post-1979 Conservatives, and those which they created themselves; the distinction is not complete, nor is it always clear, but it does allow us to break up what would otherwise be a very long chapter indeed. Chapter 6 considers the inheritance and the ways in which the Conservatives reframed and restructured existing approaches to urban problems. Chapter 7 focuses on the initiatives which were originated after 1979 and presents an overall assessment of post-1979 Conservative urban policy.

Three further chapters present the material referred to above on thematic topics related to urban regeneration. Much day-to-day urban policy is effectively carried out through the town and county planning system. Chapter 8 considers the gradual marketisation of that system and its realignment with private-sector needs. Chapter 9 focuses on the role of local government in addressing urban problems and examines central-local conflicts. As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, the presence of minority ethnic groups in inner city areas was intimately associated with the emergence of early

urban initiatives; in Chapter 10 we review the extent to which urban policy has been and continues to be a 'race issue'.

Chapter 11 concludes the book. It provides an overview of British urban policy using the framework for policy analysis set out in Chapter 1 and addresses the subject of the overall coherence of urban policy. It also speculates briefly on the likely future of urban policy in the context of continuing economic crisis and confusion over Britain's ties with the European Community.

In writing this text we have drawn on our experiences of teaching urban policy to undergraduates and postgraduates in social policy, politics, sociology and geography. Our own backgrounds span these disciplines and, in our experience, there is a considerable amount of common ground in the material which they cover. We have accordingly sought to integrate perspectives across these disciplines in the firm belief that a full understanding of urban policy requires an analysis of its socioeconomic, sociopolitical and spatial contexts. We would anticipate a readership drawn from courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The academic debts which we have incurred in the preparation of this text have, of course, been considerable. We would like to thank first the many students on whom we have tried out ideas over the past ten years. Second we wish to acknowledge the help, encouragement and assistance of Stephen Savage and Steven Kennedy. Finally, we dedicate this book to our parents and to Liz, Tomáš and Laura with thanks for their forbearance, support and love.

ROB ATKINSON  
GRAHAM MOON