

Governing sustainable cities: institutional capacity and governance in Europe

Bob Evans
Sustainable Cities Research Institute,
Northumbria University UK

ICLEI WORLD CONGRESS 2006 CAPE TOWN

Sustainability is not a thing – it's a way of doing things.....

Two themes...

- Governing, government and governance**
- Capacity building for sustainability**

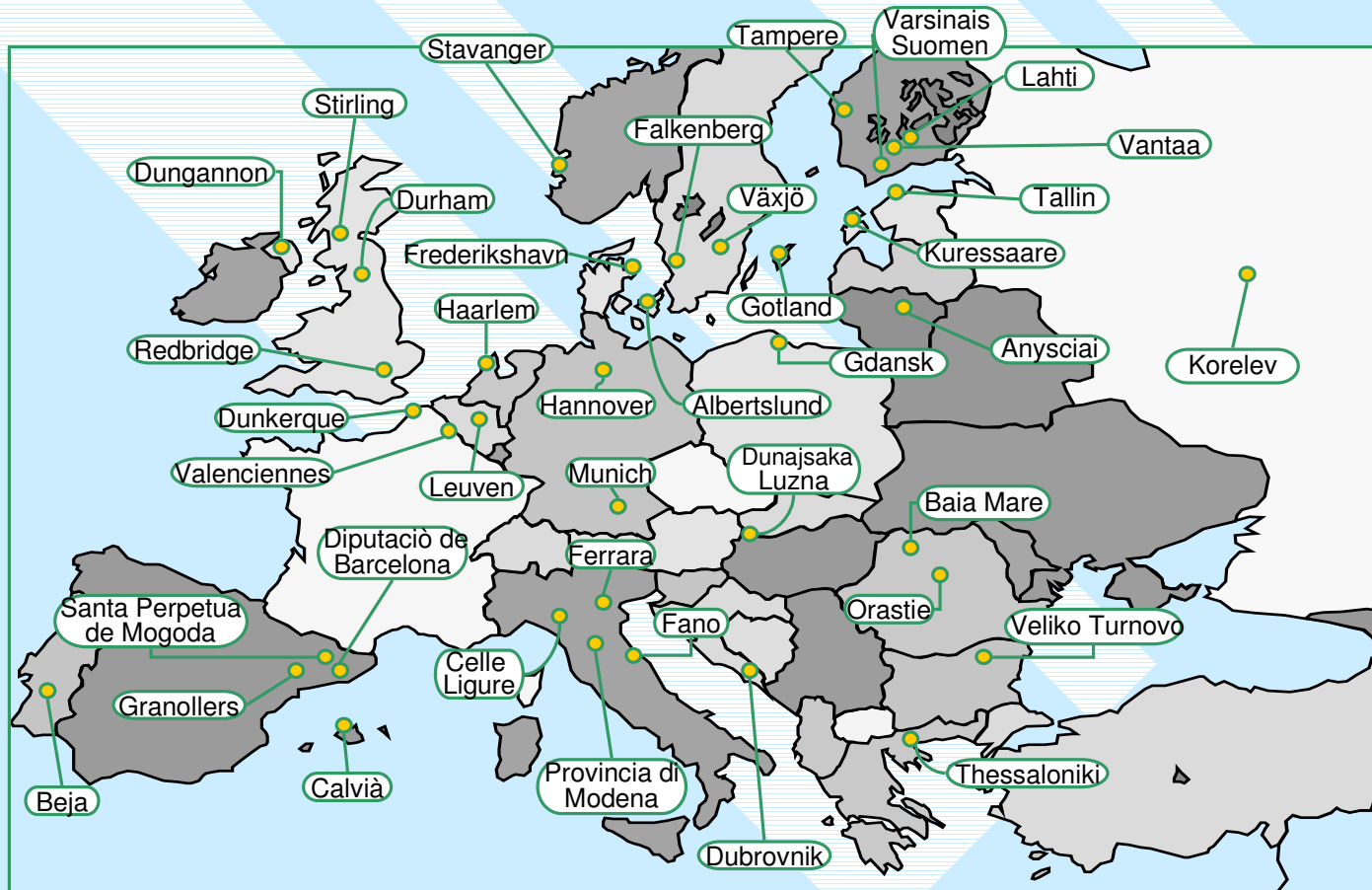
DISCUS

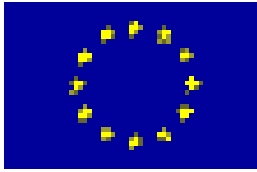
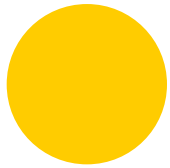
Developing Institutional
and Social Capacities
for Urban Sustainability

40 participating cities

DISCUS

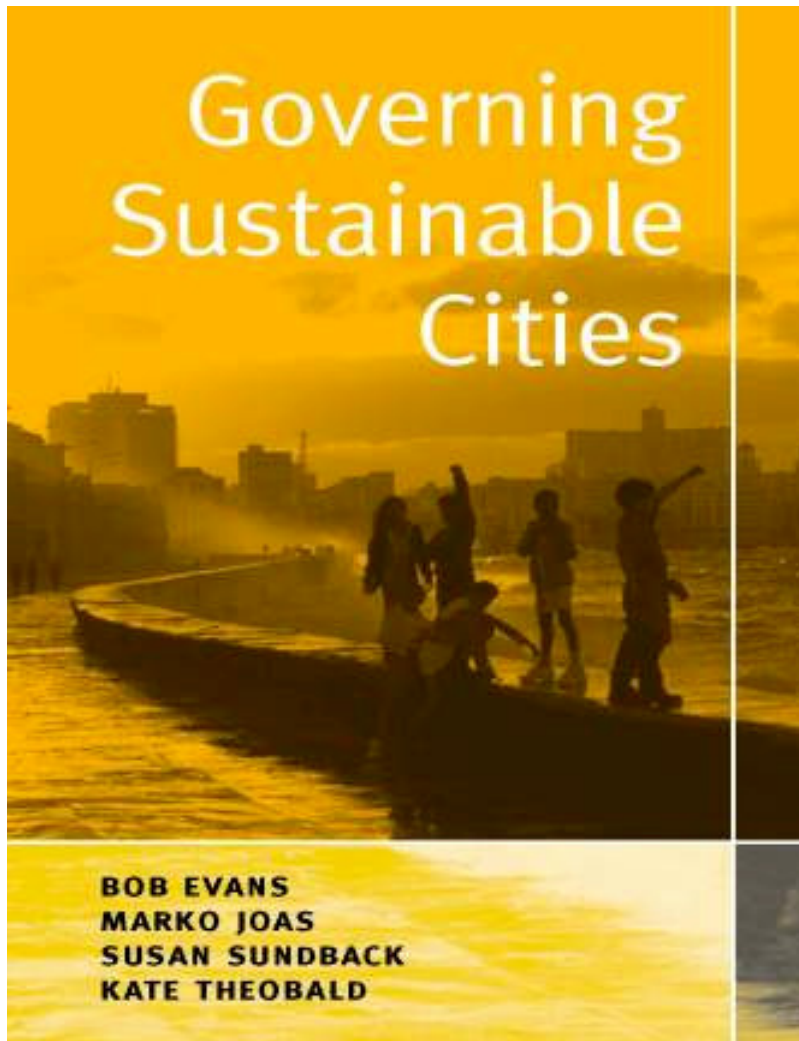
Developing Institutional
and Social Capacities
for Urban Sustainability





DISCUS

Developing Institutional
and Social Capacities
for Urban Sustainability



www.governingsustainablecities.org



What do we mean by governance?

“a process of open and inclusive public decision-making which actively seeks the commitment and engagement of citizens, stakeholders and interest organisations”

...and ‘good governance’ is

**collaborative, consensual, democratic, and
‘bottom-up’ rather than ‘top-down’**

What are the key principles which underpin good governance?

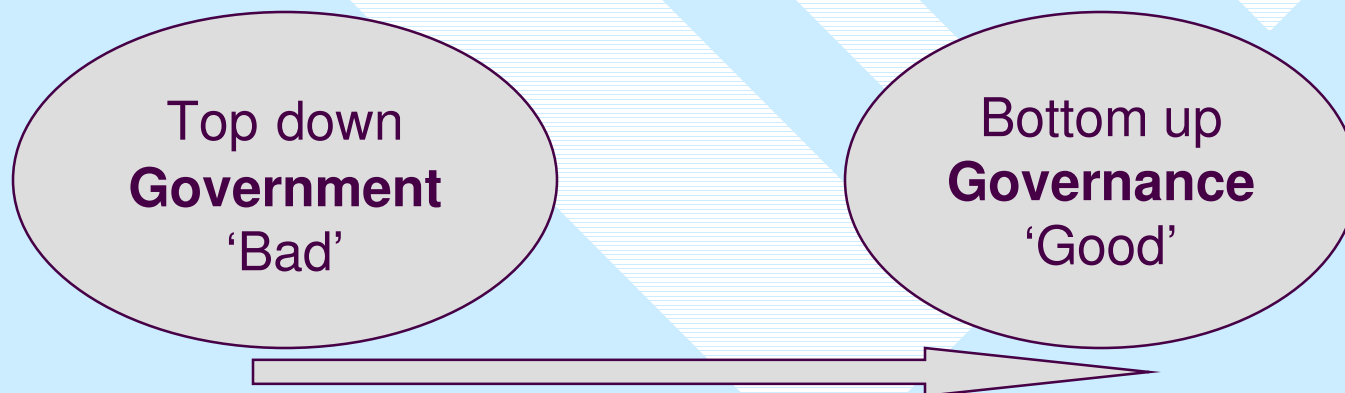
- Openness**
- Participation**
- Accountability**
- Effectiveness**
- Coherence**

(European Governance – A White Paper, 2001)

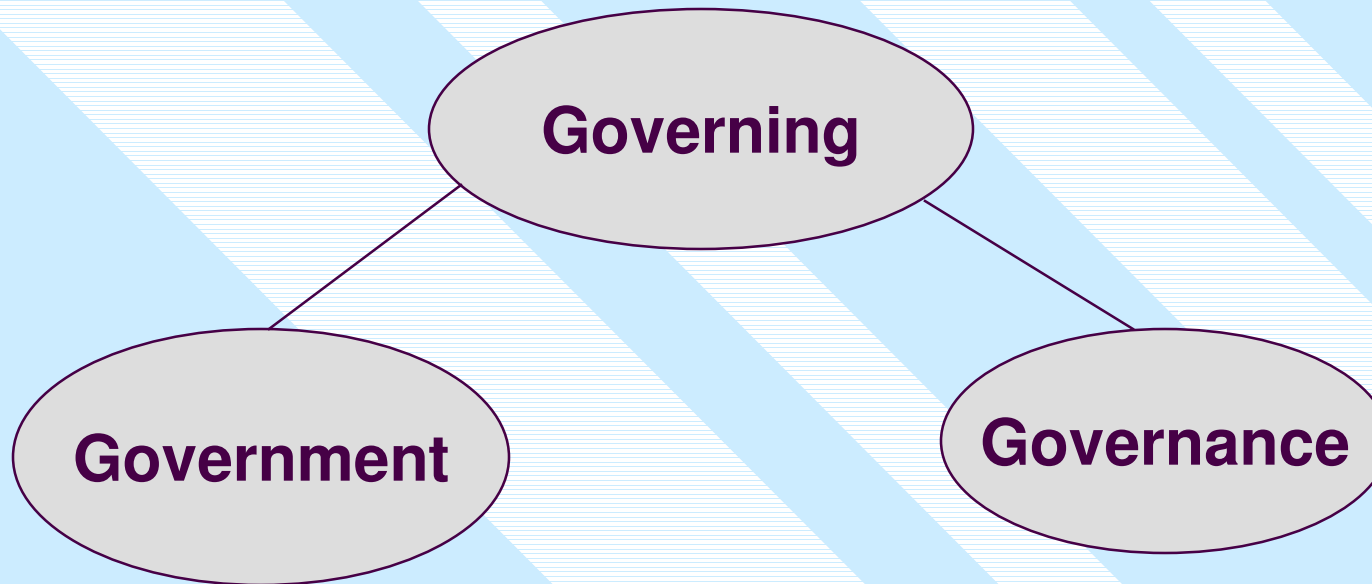
Is governance.....

- unarguably a ‘good thing’?**
- and somehow better than ‘government’?**

**The traditional/normative model: the government –
governance continuum**



The DISCUS Model



**From 'Governing Sustainable Cities' by Evans, Joas,
Sundbach & Theobald, Earthscan Press, 2004**

So governance is.....

- part of the process of governing and it is**
- the sphere of public debate, partnership, interaction, dialogue and conflict entered into by local citizens and organisations and by local government**

Local government is the key to local governance

- Effective urban governance is nurtured by local government**
- The governance process can build institutional capital**
- The governance process can build social capital**

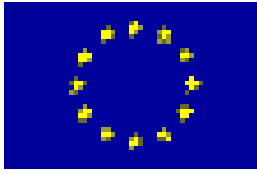
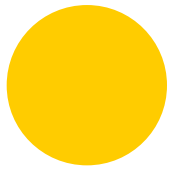
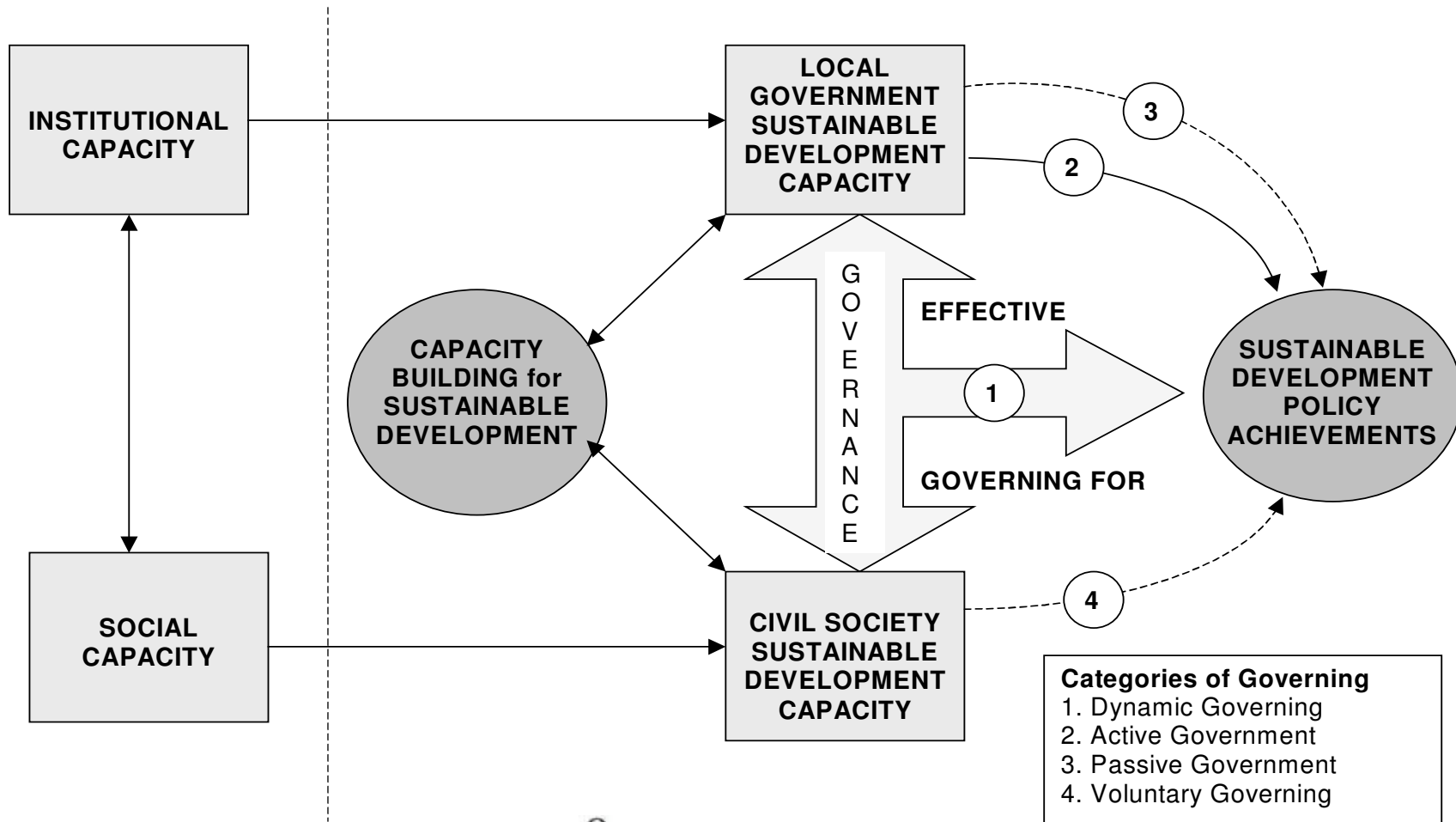
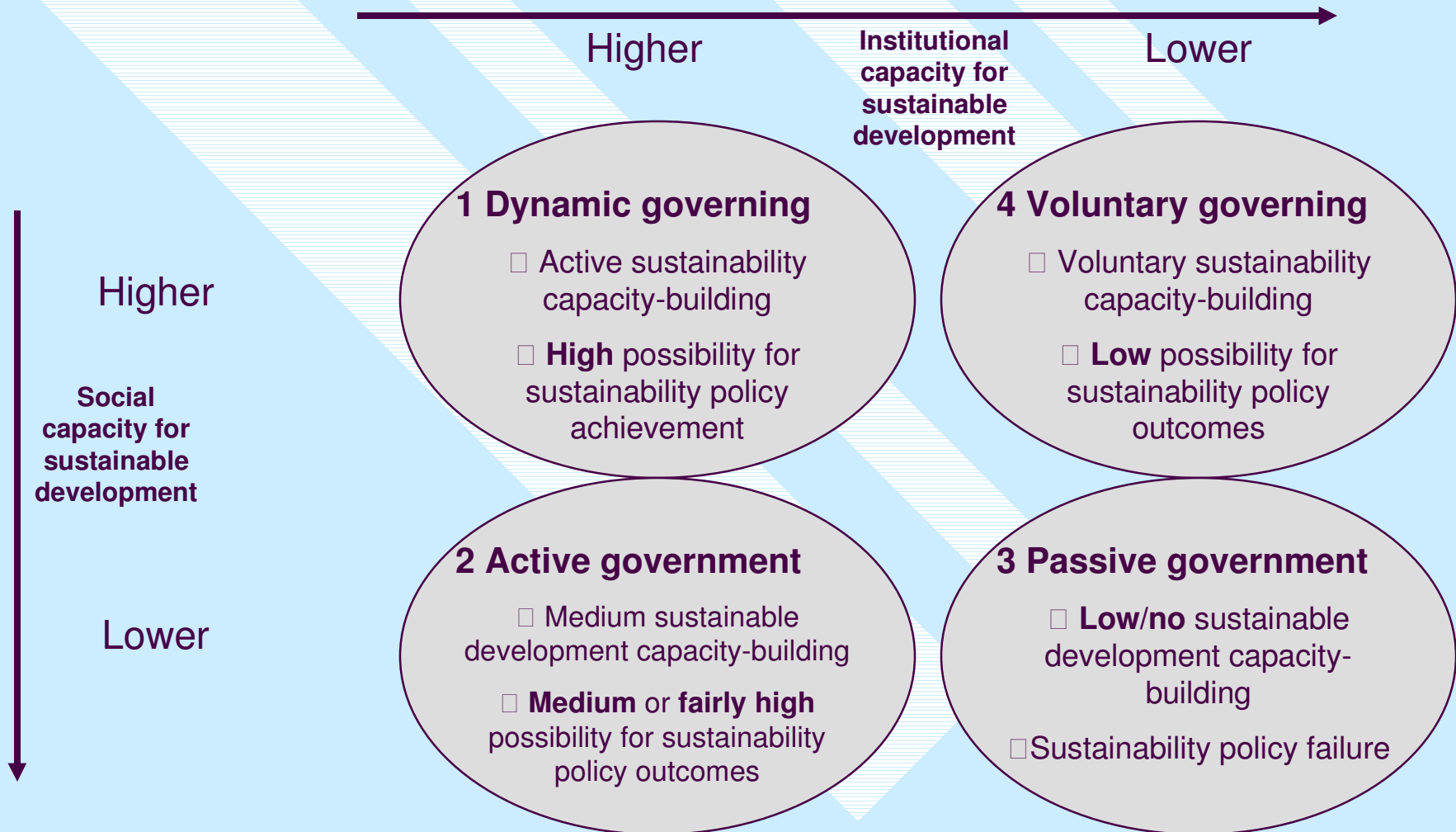


Figure 6.6
DYNAMIC INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY ACHIEVEMENT



The relationship between social and institutional capacity, capacity-building measures and sustainable development policy outcomes



Capacity building is...

- ❑ The Rio Earth Summit ‘means of implementation’**
- ❑ One of the most overused phrases in the sustainability vocabulary**
- ❑ In many, if not most contexts, virtually meaningless**

So, what can building capacity mean for local government?

- It means building the institutional capacity of local government
- And the social capacity of local civil society
- These two processes are inseparable. Each reinforces the other

Institutional capacity is....

- The knowledge, values, relationships, skills and wisdom which underpin action**
- Civic entrepreneurship and innovation**
- Dynamic leadership and policy drivers**
- A culture of learning and openness**

Social capacity is.....

- The process of civic engagement**
- Resilient social networks**
- Trust in local government**
- Confident and effective local community organisations**
- Social capital.....**

Building local capacity.....

- The sphere of local government**
- Local government autonomy**
- Investing in people**
- Building alliances**
- Looking outwards**

Bob Evans
Sustainable Cities Research Institute
Northumbria University,
Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

bob2.evans@northumbria.ac.uk

www.sustainable-cities.org.uk