

# Reimagining Local Governance in the UK: understanding public discourse on the Preston model

Michael Farrelly

## Abstract

Shifts in models of governance have been closely theorised in cultural political economy; Jessop and Sum (2013), for example, suggest that governance change is achieved - in part - through the adoption of simplified discourses (patterns of language use) which re-describe and re-conceptualise objects of governance. Drawing on analytical methods of critical discourse policy analysis (Mulderrig, et al, 2019), this chapter analyses and evaluates public media representation and communication of the Preston Model as re-conceptualisation of how to govern in the UK. The chapter presents a framework for analysing how media texts engage with and represent the Preston Model; it presents an analysis of pro- and anti- Preston model texts. It argues:

- a) that proponents of the Preston model have used a more elaborate, coherent, and specific concept formation than its opponents;
- b) that the analysis points to clear areas in which the concept formation of the model could be strengthened.

## Introduction

The Preston Model of local economic development seeks to implement policies of community wealth building; it is a deliberate effort to create and implement a new model of local governance in England that simultaneously serves the material, social and health needs of the people of the city and empowers them economically. The Preston Model combines local procurement by Anchor institutions, a preference for worker-owned co-operative businesses to 'fill the gaps in the local economy' (Manley, 2017), and the establishment of several strategic partnerships which have responsibility for the development of local procurement and cooperative business. These include a partnership between the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), the city council and The Preston Co-operative Development Network. The work undertaken under this model has had a clear effect. According to Manley, 'In 2012/13, out of £750m spent on goods and services by six Anchor Institutions, 5% was spent in Preston and 39% in Lancashire as a whole. By 2016/17, out of £620m spent on goods and services by the same Anchor Institutions, 19% was spent in Preston and 81% in Lancashire as a whole' (Manley, 2017). Official figures show that the rate of employment, during a period of near recession at a national level, improved in Preston and has bucked the national trend. The Preston Model has widely been seen as a success. Positive portrayals of the model can be found across the political spectrum of the mainstream print media in the UK: The Daily Mirror, The Independent, The Guardian, The Times and The Telegraph can all provide examples of praise. Critics have called the model a form of unwelcome 'protectionism' that could not work across UK local authorities. A joint Preston City Council and Centre for Local Economic Strategy (CLES) report, 'How

we built community wealth in Preston', gives a baseline understanding of what the model is and what it entails. Key to this understanding, from the perspective taken in this chapter, are the participants in, processes context and purpose of the model: it sees the model as an instantiation of community wealth building in which 'businesses, public and social sector organisations across the UK who are now driving a shift in economic development thinking' (CLES, 2019: 8). However, both the burgeoning scholarship, and the discussion of the Preston Model in the wider public sphere have, as yet, tended to overlook the discourse of the Preston Model - how language is used to conceptualise the model, deliberate and argue over the model, and to communicate its merits - or de-merits - to wider public understanding. This chapter presents an analysis of how proponents and opponents of the Preston Model have represented the model in public media texts.

Based on this analysis, I argue four things. First, that in the texts I analysed, opponents of the Preston Model presented a limited version of the model; all of these texts focussed exclusively on the procurement element of the model and presented businesses in the city as passive recipients of funds rather than active and dynamic 'winners' of contracts. Second, that some proponents of the model also followed this rather limited focus on procurement and, surprisingly, also represented business in the city in a passive way. Third, opponents and proponents with a limited focus excluded reference to citizens, residents, and workers in the city. Fourth, that some proponents of the model engaged in more detail with the model and these texts included more aspects of the model, a wider range of process and participants and provided an example of the most incisive critical engagement of all the texts analysed with potential improvements to the model. The following section describes the Preston Model in more detail and academic approaches to policy discourse. In section 3, I set out the theoretical perspectives taken in this chapter which draw in work in critical discourse analysis and cultural political economy. Section 4 sets out the analytical method for analysing the representation of social actors and social action used in the chapter. I go on to present analysis first of opponents of the Preston Model and then some of its proponents.

## **The Preston Model and Language**

The Preston Model has many important elements and many of these are described in detail in a joint report by Preston City Council and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies(CLES). Understanding something of these elements is crucial for our critical analysis of the public discourses about the Preston Model that I examine later in this chapter. First, it describes the overall approach of the Preston Model as a 'community wealth building' approach to local economic development; the importance of this emphasis on development (rather than protection) and the community (rather than local business only) will become clear as a contrast to some of the texts analysed below. Moreover, the purpose of this approach is clearly stated to be that 'local economies are reorganised, so that wealth is not extracted but broadly held and income is recirculated' (p8). The approach is realised through five strategies:

- Plural ownership of the economy
- Making financial power work for local places
- Fair employment and just labour markets

- Progressive procurement of goods and services
- Socially productive use of land and property

According to CLES, progressive procurement, 'can develop dense local supply chains, SMEs, employee owned businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives and other forms of community business' (CLES, 2019: 9) The intention, importantly, was to identify which 'contracts could be opened up to more [local] competition' and 'not to simply to increase local spend but to identify areas where money was leaking out of the Lancashire economy or being used in socially unproductive ways, and to find ways to recapture this spend to better benefit local workers, employers, and businesses' (CLES, 2019: 12) We shall see that the extent of ambition shown in this approach, and the detail it gives, contrasts starkly to many of the representations of it found in the media texts analysed below.

Furthermore, the range of 'anchor institutions' is important: Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Preston's College, Community Gateway, Cardinal Newman College the Office of the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner and UCLan. In particular, UCLan adhere's to the principles of being an anchor institution in the Preston Model: 'Over the course of the three years to the financial year ending in July 2017, it increased the proportion of this money spent with Preston suppliers from 8 per cent to 21 per cent. In 2016-17, that amounted to £63 million spent with those Preston suppliers' (Morgan, 2018). However, as well as being an anchor institution, UCLan is integral to the development of the model (Morgan, 2019). As reported in the THE: 'for some goods and services, there are no local suppliers. Filling these gaps is part of the aim of Uclan's support for undergraduates and graduates to work in, and own, cooperatives. ' (Morgan, 2018). I show below that many of the texts I analysed included very few of these key actors.

How policy is represented in texts is important. In previous work, I have argued that that 'analysis of how policy-makers and legislators represent social actors in texts can give valuable insight into their conceptualisation of objects of governance' (Farrelly, 2019a: 147). As an example, I analysed the discourse of 'competition' in UK parliamentary debates on the shift in the governance of its gas industry from state ownership and control to shareholder ownership and the 'control' of 'market discipline'. During the 1980s, 'competition' had become an important trope for the Conservative government and, by 1985, was repeatedly used in reference to the privatisation of British Gas. In those debates 'competition' was almost universally referred to by government ministers without specifying who would compete with whom. 'Consumers' were consistently represented in a 'passive' way - receiving 'benefits' of competition without having to do anything. I argued that the absence of 'competitors' and the passive representation of 'consumers' in the competition discourse predicted observable problems in the contemporary UK gas retail industry: there are few competitors in the gas 'retail' sector and consumers tend not to switch suppliers. This chapter applies the same analytical methods to texts on the Preston Model: does the analysis show significant absences in the discourse?

# Understanding Discourse in Economic Policy

For this chapter, I view the language of deliberation and communication of the Preston Model from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2003; Farrelly, 2019b). In CDA, 'discourse' refers to patterns of language that are typical, or conventional ways of using language in a particular social practice. This can include the types of text typically used in social practice (opinion or news articles, blog posts for examples are typical for practices of public policy debate) and it can include the types of other texts that are referred to - as 'evidence' to support an argument, for example (quotes from politicians, or summaries of research reports). In this chapter, we shall see examples of these types of text and types of evidence but I shall focus mostly on another aspect of discourse: ways of describing and representing policies - specifically, how the Preston Model is described and represented. This includes vocabulary: 'procurement' is more typically used by people involved in local government or the study of local government, whereas 'buying' is more typical of journalists writing about local government, for example. I shall focus, also, on what is included and excluded from these representations of how the Preston Model is framed.

I also draw in the work of cultural political economy (Sum and Jessop, 2013; Jessop, 2010) for a more specific view of how discourse works in practices of economic governance - such as in the Preston Model - and practices which engage in public discussion of how economies are governed. Work in cultural political economy argues that to understand how economies are governed, why some choices lead to failure or why some unlikely decisions are sometimes made, we should take account both of material elements of economies - actual work, resources and conditions, for example - and semiotic, or meaning-making that goes into creating economies. Major functions of discourse are in complexity reduction and in the selection of economic strategies. Complexity reduction is an inevitable aspect of economic governance:

Because the world cannot be grasped in all its complexity in real-time, actors...must focus selectively on some of its aspects in order to be active participants in that world (Jessop, 2010: 338).

Decision-makers and commentators must simplify the way they describe and represent economies; the question is: are their simplifications adequate to successful economic governance? Descriptions and representations of economies must also be argued over so that they are selected as a model for economic strategies.

## Method of Analysis

To analyse the discourse of public deliberation over, and description of, the Preston Model I applied two analytical frameworks which focus on a) the representation of social action and b) the representation of social actors. Doing so, we can critically analyse how the participants in the Preston Model are conceptualised and how the processes in which they are taking part are imagined. The frameworks are taken from Van Leeuwen's work (2008). In these frameworks social actions - what people do - can be categorised in several ways; for this chapter, I used the following categories:

- a) Activated action (representing action as dynamic) or deactivated action (representing action as static)
- b) Transactive action (representing action as taking place between two or more people) or non-transactive action (representing action as involving only a single participant)
- c) Agentelised action (representing action as being brought about through human agency) or de-agentelised action (representing action as being brought about without human agency)
- d) Generalised action (representing sequences or sets of specific actions in an amalgamated form) or specified action (representing component actions of a generalised action)

Social actions that appear in the analysis sections below have been italicised.

Social actors - the people represented as doing things in texts - can, according to Van Leeuwen, also be represented in several ways. For the analysis presented in this chapter I used the following categories:

- a) Included social actors or excluded - as we shall see, almost all the texts analysed include Preston City Council but many exclude the citizens or people of the city;
- b) Active social actors or passive social actors - again, as we shall see, Preston City Council is often represented as the one doing an action, whereas business is sometimes represented as being passive recipients of the actions of others
- c) Nomination (named) social actors - some business are named, for example, or Categorised (represented by function or identity) - again, as we shall see, in most cases businesses are not named but categorised as 'local business', for example.

Social actors in the examples below are in bold. Analysis of the representation of social action and action can, as I have argued elsewhere (Farrelly, 2019b) give valuable insight into how objects of governance, or in this case an economic policy, are conceptualised. It highlights not just the words used but the perspective from which the Preston Model is understood, deliberated over and communicated to a wider public audience.

The texts analysed in this chapter were collected in two ways. First, from the LexisNexis newspaper database. National newspapers from the UK were searched for the phrase 'Preston Model' from 2008 to 'present'. This found 15 Articles. Second, intertextual links – where one of the texts referred to the Preston Model in another text (Farrelly, 2020) to other relevant texts were sought out and used. In total, this gave 20 articles which discussed the Preston Model. Each of these texts was then categorised for its stance on the Preston Model; sections of articles that discussed the Preston Model were identified and these sections were analysed for the inclusion and exclusion of social actors and actions. Social actors were analysed for passive and active participation; social actions for transactive and non-transactive processes. The texts were analysed for the representation of context: social circumstances within which actions and actors were set. The representations were compared with each other and against the descriptions of the model discussed in the literature. This allowed me to critically analyse the textual representation and the implicit conceptualisation of the Preston Model as discussed in the public sphere. In the following sections we shall see critical analysis first, of texts that oppose the Preston Model, then texts that are supportive of the model.

## Analysis: Opponents of the Preston Model

All of the texts that are in opposition to the Preston Model present this opposition as part of a broader criticism of another issue: of 'protectionism', 'local' procurement, or 'Corbynism'. Two of these texts - the What Works blog on 'Local Procurement' and the Centre for Cities' blog on 'protectionism' - have only a passing engagement with the model; the third text - an opinion piece by Daniel Finkelstein in The Times - is a little more elaborate than the others. Each presents a limited representation of the participants and process in the model and excludes reference to its purpose and context entirely. First, we shall examine the What Works blog on 'Local Procurement'. Its brief encounter with the Preston model comes in a text which comes out against 'local' procurement, urging 'considerable caution on the ability of such policies to deliver local economic growth'. In this text Preston is used as an example of what they call 'local procurement':

Using Preston as an example, *the argument goes* that if **the council employs a Preston construction firm** for a local building project, **that firm** is *more likely to source* supplies from **neighbouring businesses**, and their **staff** *will provide* more business for **local cafes and shops**. If **a firm from outside Preston** *wins* the contract — let's say one based in Sheffield — more of their supply chain spending and salaries will be in Sheffield. The economy there *will benefit* instead.

The processes represented here (italicised) are problematic - the elaborate processes of progressive procurement in Preston that we saw above are reduced to 'employs' and 'more likely to source'.

Absent are:

- processes which help to develop the capacity of local firms to tender successfully for contracts
- development of selection criteria which may specify short supply chains
- engagement in local cooperative networks to set up new businesses which could meet procurement needs

The model does more than 'employ' firms, it develops the capacity of firms across the city; it does not leave it to chance that firms source supplies from neighbouring businesses, it tries to develop supply chains in the city so that its businesses can provide supplies. Absent, too, are the anchor institutions which are part of the progressive procurement aspect of the Preston Model. Finally, this hypothetical example excludes important elements of the real context: high levels of deprivation, unemployment and health inequality; the inclusion of Sheffield as the imagined implicit loser from the Preston Model ignores the actual context in which it is firms based in the more affluent area of London and the South East of England that are the more likely losers of progressive procurement in Preston.

Next, we shall examine the Centre for Cities' blog on 'protectionism'. It uses the Preston model as an example of a 'Corbynomics', which it equates with 'protectionism' and the position of Donald Trump:

Do we stand on the verge of a new trade war?...I'm not talking about **Donald Trump**, steel and whiskey. I'm talking instead about the idea of **councils** *buying* their goods and services locally, an idea that has been dubbed 'Corbynomics' and has **Preston** as its poster child. But the parallels are striking.

In recent years **Preston City Council**, in particular, has been *active in increasing its spend on local businesses, giving them preference* over suppliers from elsewhere.

As with the previous example, the elaborate processes of progressive procurement in Preston that we saw above are reduced to 'buying' and 'active in increasing its spend'; the active development of local business capacity is, again, absent. Importantly, in this case, these processes misrepresent the procurement process in which local businesses do not 'buy' goods locally but go through extensive and auditable decision-making steps; the text excludes the context in which most of the money spent by the anchor institutions still goes out of the local economy. The representation of participants is limited too: Donald Trump, councils, Preston, Preston City Council and local businesses are present but the people of Preston, be that as a citizen, resident, employee, worker or business owner are all absent. In terms active and passive representation of social actors, the City Council is active, local business is represented as being a passive recipient of the 'spend' as though they have not had to work hard to win contracts. Again, a central pillar of the model, the anchor institutions, are absent. This limited discursive representation of the model disguises the complexity of the changes in Preston in a problematic way; it equates its limited description with protectionism instead of recognising the many efforts that go toward building capacity. It misses the purpose of community wealth building to combat deprivation and unemployment and to create wealth for the people of the city.

Last, in this section on texts that are in opposition to the Preston Model, we shall examine the more elaborate opinion piece by Daniel Finkelstein in The Times newspaper. As with the example above, this text is primarily an expression of opposition to the former leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. The Preston Model is given as being emblematic of 'Corbynism':

The poster child for this idea is **Preston city council**. What is known as the Preston model is *much talked about* in Corbynite circles. **The council** has *embarked* on a strategy of getting "**anchor institutions**" such as **the council itself, local universities and the police**, *to buy* from **local business**, some of them co-ops, who will also *invest* locally.

It's inspiring and dynamic but there is an obvious problem as the experiment spreads. What happens when **the next-door council** *keeps* all the money in their area? *All you get* are a load of mini-states *paying more* for their local goods. When this question is asked of **Preston** they simply say "no one can suggest with any credibility that all of local government, or the local public sector, will swing into action in the same way". And this works for Preston, but means, logically, it cannot be a model.

In contrast to the previous examples of oppositional texts, this includes 'anchor institutions' as a group and lists some of them by category (although it also appears to misrepresent the one university, UCLan, and two FE anchor institutions (Preston's College and Cardinal Newman College) as 'universities'). However, there are still key absences in the text: the people of Preston are absent; at the crux of the argument the social actors for whom Preston could be a model are also excluded: 'it cannot be a model' for whom? The major problem in this text is in the social action 'keeps all the money'. As we saw above, the anchor institutions do not spend all of the money at their disposal in their area, as the text implies; nor are local councils the only economic actors spending money. We have also seen that 'paying more' is not 'all you get' from the Preston Model; the article excludes key benefits and beneficiaries of the model: reduced deprivation, reduced unemployment, reduced health inequality amongst the people of the city.

In this Finkelstein article - the critical questions ('Who will create any new business, though? How will it be financed? Won't whoever provides finance (even if it is the state) want to take some of the control from the co-op?'), that ought to probe the model and push it for conceptual clarity fail because its engagement is with an impoverished version of the model; this is a pity because important social actors, actions and circumstances are missing; there is slippage between distinct social actors from one point to the next. Ultimately, the impoverished conceptualisation sets up a straw man. This means that their engagement is too limited to be of value - critique becomes a rhetorical engagement only - it is about who can find the expressions that win rather than who can correctly and accurately engage with the changes the model had brought and thereby deliberate over its merits. This leads to another question - how is it that it is possible to discuss the Preston Model without discussing the protagonists, processes, purposes and wider circumstances?

## Analysis: Supporters of the Preston Model

My search found twenty articles that were broadly in support of the Preston Model. Of these, half mentioned the Preston Model in passing - that is, the article was clearly about something other than the model but made a passing reference to it in one or two sentences. As we shall see, these passing references had very similar discursive features to those examined in the section above. Half of the supportive articles were primarily about the model, or a particular aspect of it and represented the model in detail. Let us look first at the articles that mention the Preston Model favourably, but in passing. These are articles which appear in a range of mainstream newspapers: The Telegraph (1); The Observer (1) and The Guardian (7) and letters to the Editor which appear also in The Guardian (1). In the first text, from The Telegraph, includes part of the progressive procurement element of the model:

We could also expand the so-called Preston model in which **local institutions - the police, universities, NHS trusts** - *pledge to spend* a proportion of their budgets locally. (David Goodhart, Telegraph)

The action, though, is non-transactive: the pledge to spend does not represent either the participants who bid for the contracts or the business owners and employees who stand to benefit from these contracts.



The second example, from The Observer, is likewise limited to the procurement element of the model but is more elaborate than the example above - including as it does transactive social action in which the beneficiaries are included:

The basic idea is that **big public sector bodies**, such as the **police**, should spend their budgets as far as possible with **local businesses**. In Preston, the £1.6m council food budget was awarded to **local farmers** and **the constabulary's** £600,000 printing contract went to **a Lancashire supplier**. Four years after starting the initiative in 2012, the city council spent an extra £4m a year in its area (Helen Lewis, The Observer).

These beneficiaries are represented passively, however (contracts were 'awarded to' and 'went to' those businesses). Excluded too, are the employees of those firms who may stand to keep their jobs, or become an employee if the contract leads the firm to expand.

Finally, from The Guardian:

The new Labour party is setting great store by the so-called Preston model, whereby that **city's council** *is boosting* the local economy by *using* its financial clout to help **local business** (John Harris, The Guardian).

The representation of social actors here is limited, again, to the procurement element and the inclusion of just the city council and local businesses. Again, local business is not represented actively.

The second group of supportive texts draws on a much richer set of discursive resources in its representation of the Preston Model than critics and the supportive but brief examples shown above. Let us first look at a text from The People newspaper:

The city was in the bottom 20 per cent of deprived areas and life expectancy for its **poorest** was just 66.

Preston had *the second-best improvement* on the Multiple Deprivation Index between 2010 and 2015. And last year it *was named* the best city in the North West to live and work in.

In this first extract, only one social actor is included in the representation: the poorest. What is striking, in comparison with all of the other texts we have seen, is that this category of social actor is absent from the texts which oppose the Preston Model, yet it is one of the most crucial groups of people for understanding the purpose of the Model. The article goes on to illustrate one way in which the progressive procurement strategy of the Model works to reduce deprivation in the city:

**Farmers** benefited when **the council** allocated £1.6million of its food budget to be spent locally and **local builder Conlon Construction** won the £2.6million deal for a new market hall, plus a deal to regenerate the bus station.

**The firm** *was able to take on five extra staff* and **three apprentices**, with more jobs being created for **subcontractors**.

Again, in striking contrast to the opponents, this text includes reference to a type of social actor not seen in the representation of opponents to the model: farmers. Even more striking is that in contrast to oppositional texts that universally represented the model in terms of a generic category of social actors - local business- this text gives a more specific category, local builder, and specifies that business by name: Conlon Construction. Conlon Construction is represented as being *active* not passive as in each of the oppositional texts: it *won* the £2.6million deal; it was not the recipient of 'spend'. Perhaps most crucially of all, this text demonstrates a mechanism by which progressive procurement strives to work, not explicitly but by the inclusion of *was able to take on five extra staff* and **three apprentices** - showing how money spent in this way can lead jobs that did not exist before, implicitly combating the undesirable deprivation in the city.

This richer set of discursive resources is in evidence in different ways across these more expansive supportive texts. These give sometimes more explicit overviews of the mechanisms of the model but, perhaps surprisingly, some of them also level more insightful critical challenge to the model than do its opponents. An example of a more explicit overview of the mechanisms of the model is given in this extract taken from an article by Hazel Sheffield in The Independent:

**Preston council** *is supporting the development of new businesses in the city* organised as co-operatives, where *profits are shared* between **workers** rather than **external shareholders**...**Matthew Brown, Preston council leader**, sees co-ops as one way to *reorganise* power within the economy, *taking it* from **shareholders in the City of London** and *putting it* into the hands of **local workers**.

Here we see named individuals and social actors absent from oppositional texts: workers and shareholders and actions not hinted at in those oppositional texts: supporting development; sharing profits; reorganising power; taking and putting power. Reference to evidence is also a feature of this set of supportive and detailed articles. This from Aditya Chakraborty writing in The Guardian is one such example:

**The Federation of Small Businesses** has published research by **CLES** showing that for every pound *spent* with a **small or medium-sized firm**, 63p is *respent* locally. That drops to 40p for every pound *given to* a **large or multinational company**.

Supportive as Chakraborty is of the Preston Model, he also levels the most insightful critical challenge to the model than any other seen in the texts examined in this chapter; part of this challenge is to recognise some of the characteristics of people who might not yet have become part of the Preston Model:

I fully expect some of these ideas to crash and burn. Others need to be improved. Preston hosts an annual carnival, its **taxi drivers** can speak Urdu, and its shop signs are often in Polski. Yet its new-model economy is, so far, white and male. But as

Rawlinson [a Councillor on Preston City Council] argues, more of the same policies will produce more of the same failure.

All of the passing representations of the Preston Model, limit their representation to the procurement element of the model and represent local business as passive recipients of this procurement. The contrast with the less detailed articles is stark. Each of these includes a much wider range of participants in the Model, shows many more them as active participants, and includes a fuller range of actors who for whom the model takes its purpose: businesses and employees. Most strikingly of all, it is from this more detailed and expansive representation that the most crucial critique of the model comes: Chakraborty's intervention challenges the protagonists to consider how the model might better serve women, immigrants and people of colour. This critique is, indeed, already being addressed: there is now a BAMME steering group that advises on inclusion and diversity for the Preston Model, and that one of the new coops, Taxis NW, is operated largely by taxi drivers of Asian descent.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented an analysis of how the Preston Model has been represented in public media texts. Drawing on theories of discourse and political economy taken from critical discourse analysis and cultural political economy, I analysed and compared the representation of social actors and social actions in texts of opponents and supporters of the Preston Model. I argued that opponents of the Preston Model presented a very limited version of the model. Each of these texts focussed exclusively on the procurement element of the model and excluded business and educational development, the cooperative network, promotion of the living wage and the development of a local bank. I argued that some proponents of the model also followed this rather limited focus on procurement and, surprisingly, as with the opponents, presented businesses in the city as passive recipients of funds rather than active and dynamic 'winners' of contracts. Finally, I argued that some proponents of the model engaged in more detail with the model and these texts included more aspects of the model, a wider range of process and participants and, in the case of one of Chakraborty's articles, provided the most incisive critical engagement of all the texts analysed with potential improvements to the model.

I would draw out two implications from these arguments, the analysis and methods of analysis on which they are based. First, the limited engagement with, and representation of, the Preston Model by its opponents means that the quality of critique is impoverished. This is a pity: matters of public policy, of shifts in economic governance, can benefit through being subjected to high quality, engaged, scrutiny. Second, in dealing with the complexity of real economies, decision-makers must to a great extent, focus on a simplified version of that economy; good scrutiny can help to point out where they might be oversimplifying and missing important gaps. In the absence of engaged critique from opponents, we need an alternative mode of deliberating over how the model might develop. Focusing on the people and processes and purpose of the community wealth building can guide the development of the model both in Preston and beyond. Opening up the range of social actors and

social actions, imagining new participants and processes are engaged in and served by the Preston Model can be a path toward continued democratisation of city economies.

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