'Worrying lack of strategy' for U.K. smart cities

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City residents are not benefitting from a clear strategy for developing cities that are 'smart' according to a new RICS Research Trust report by University of Reading academics.

The research, which examined four case studies (Bristol, Milton Keynes, Amsterdam and Taipei) also found that less than a quarter of UK cities had an smart city action plan. Of those that did, the main focus in the smart city case studies is on open data. There is also little or no evidence of the built environment real estate and construction sectors engaging directly with the smart city agenda.

Professor Tim Dixon, Chair of Sustainable Futures in the Built

Environment at the University of Reading said:

"With directly elected mayors in large cities such as London, Liverpool and Bristol, and more to follow in six large city regions today, city heads need to consider how big and open data would enrich the lives of their populations.

"In particular, those newly elected city mayors need to work hard to promote increased collaboration between authorities, the built environment sector, and technology companies, to harness the power of built environment data".

Key findings from the report include:

- Less than half (47 percent) of UK cities have an established definition for a smart city.
- 22 percent of respondents had a smart city action plan.
- 22 percent had a smart city framework.
- 33 percent of respondents stated their city had a data strategy.
- 22 percent stated that the strategy mentioned big data.

Prof Dixon continued:

"A key priority for cities is the need to develop clear smart city and data strategies to demonstrate the benefits for citizens and help improve incentives for companies to share their data. This also means professional bodies need to act more decisively, by championing change and promoting the uptake of data and smart city skills within the built environment sector."

Dr Jorn Van de Wetering, Lecturer in Real Estate and Planning at the University of Reading said:

"The focus in this report on the experiences of international smart city stakeholders informs innovation in the built environment sector. This research has identified many interesting international smart city projects and big and open data sharing initiatives. There are significant opportunities for built environment professionals to learn from this best practice to create value through the adoption and transfer of innovative knowledge and skills."

Dr Clare Eriksson FRICS, Director of Global Research & Policy (RICS) said:

"The built environment sector is faced with increasing opportunities and challenges in unlocking the potential offered by the fast rate of technological change. The new report provides highly pertinent and timely insights into how the development of data platforms at the city level can be better used by built environment professionals. It identifies how RICS professionals need to become more "data savvy" and identify where big and open data, alongside the smart city agenda, can help inform and improve organisational performance. Professionals and sector leaders will also need to focus on data interoperability and the necessity of a common data language and standards."

More information: Smart Cities, Big Data and the Built Environment: What's Required? Report Available at: www.rics.org/uk/knowledge/rese… ment-whats-required/

Provided by University of Reading

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