



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
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The energy leaders and laggards in UK local authorities: An institutional analysis of local energy governance and prospects for energy innovation in UK towns and cities

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Breaking the Rules! Energy Transitions as Social Innovations Conference

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What are the patterns of UK local authority engagement with energy, *and why?*

- Are multilevel governance factors being missed?
- Few *energy leaders*
- Heat & EE focus
- Highest proportion of *energy leaders* in:
 - Scotland
 - English single tier LAs (unitary, London, metropolitan) & counties
- Reflection of challenges of embedding energy provisions in council structures?
 - LA capacities shaped by MLG structures and inter-relations
 - Institutional approach building on Andrews-Speed (2016); Lockwood (2015)

Data and methods

- Population survey (434 LAs / now 419)
- Secondary data: clean energy plans & investments (30 data sources)
 - 21 on grants and loans
 - 8 on operational sites
 - 1 on strategic energy plan
- Class of engagement spanning ‘leaders’ to ‘laggards’
 - *energy leaders*
 - *running hard*
 - *at the starting blocks*
 - *yet to join*



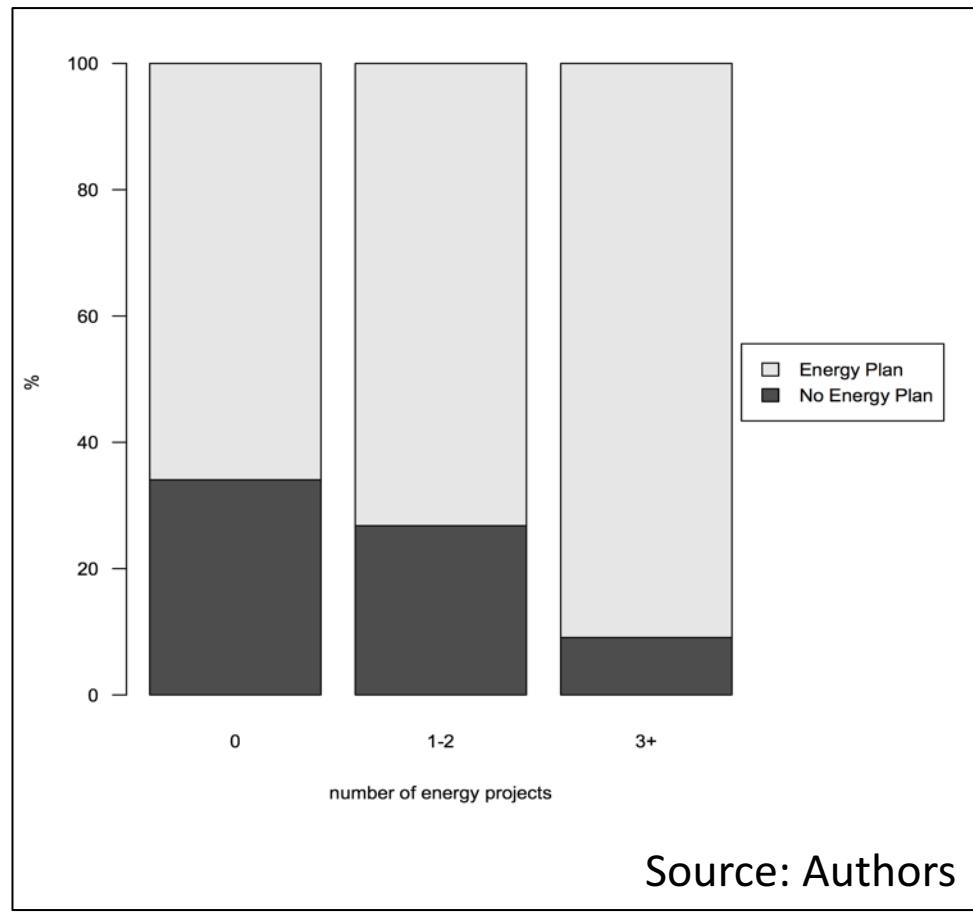


What We Know about Local Authority Engagement in UK Energy Systems

Ambitions, Activities, Business Structures & Ways Forward

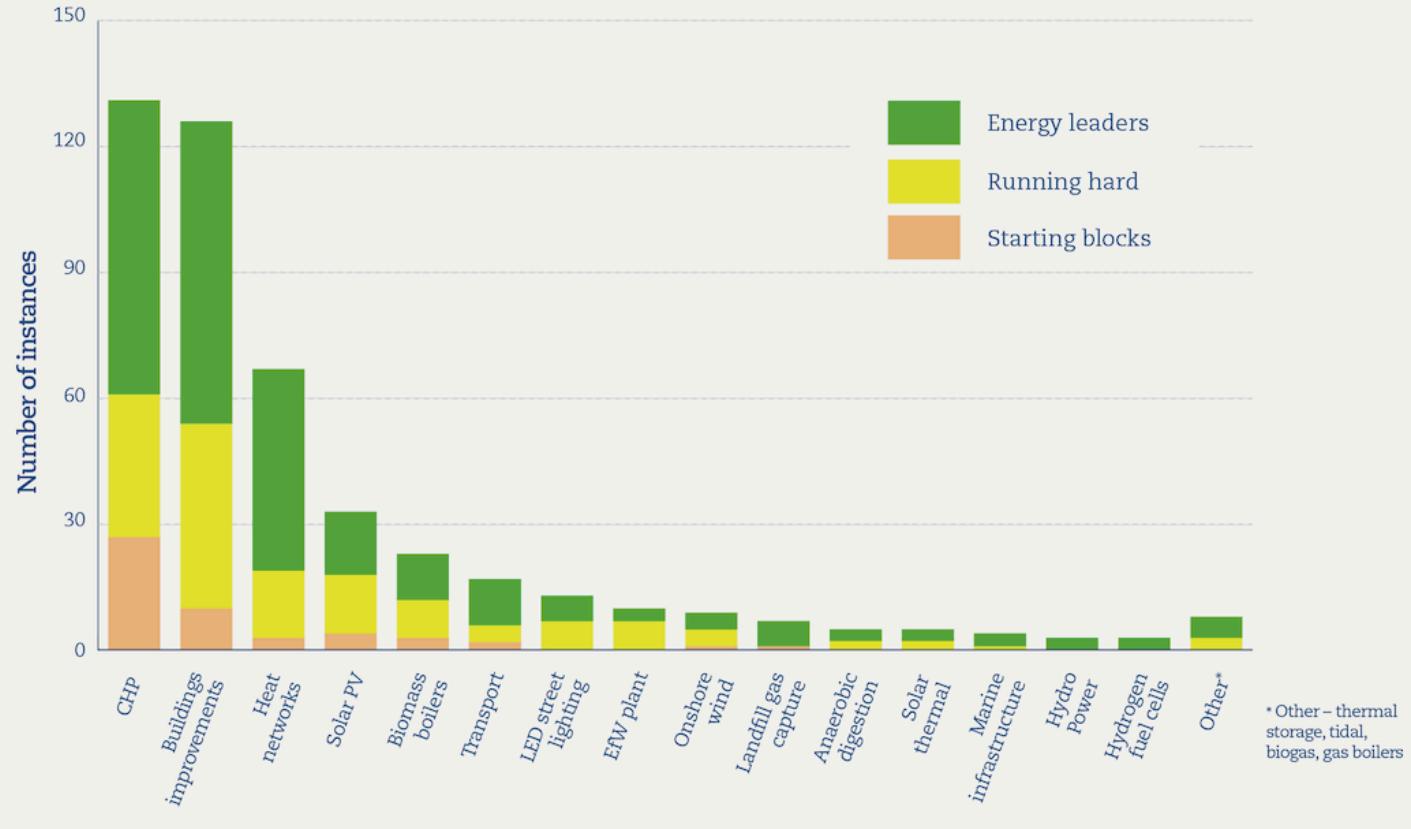
Aggregate findings across all UK local authorities

- Widely established ambition
 - 82% active to some degree (357)
- Small scale relative to energy system
 - CHP less than 1% local heat demand
- More strategic energy plans than investments in projects
 - 72% had Local Energy & Carbon Plans (311)
 - 48% had one or more energy projects (208)



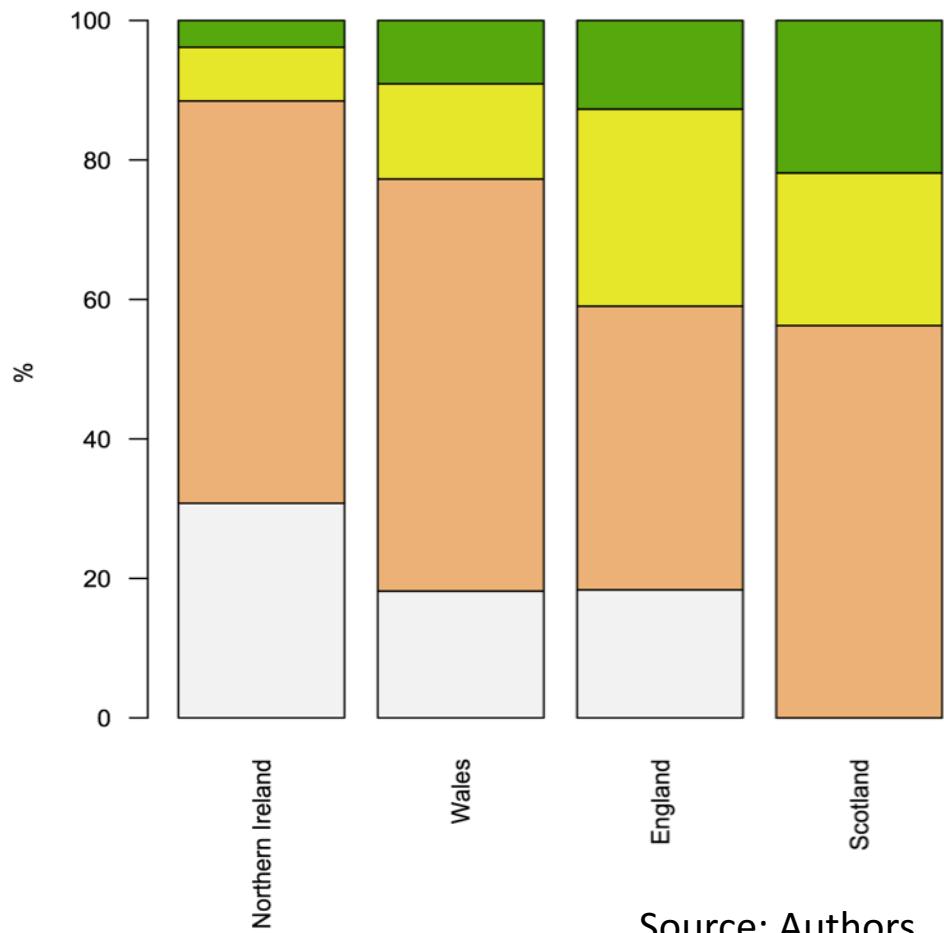
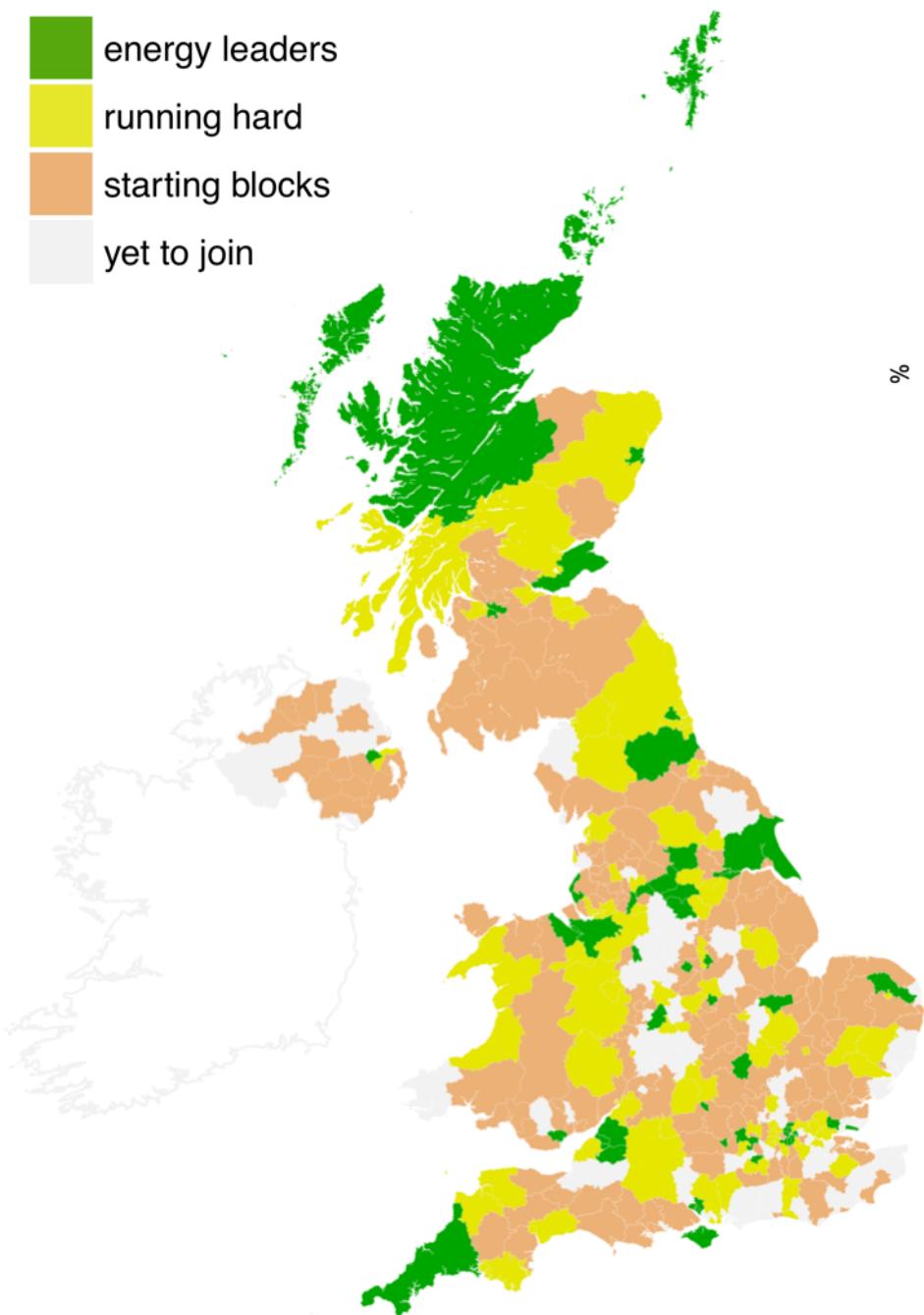
Technologies used in LA energy projects

Figure 1. Technologies used in 458 LA energy projects



Source: Webb, Tingey and Hawkey (2017)

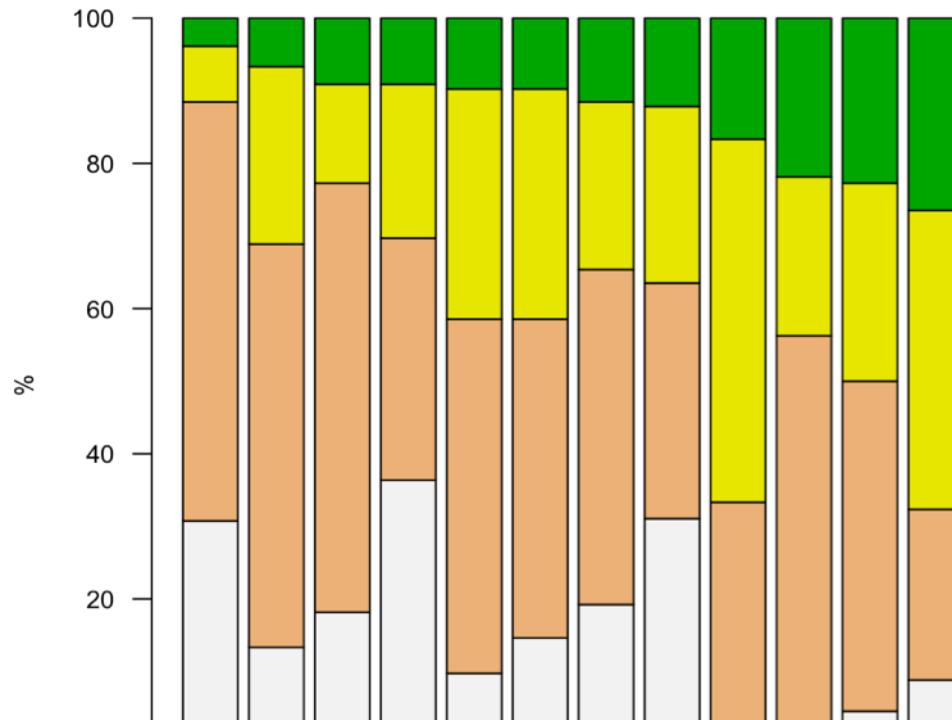
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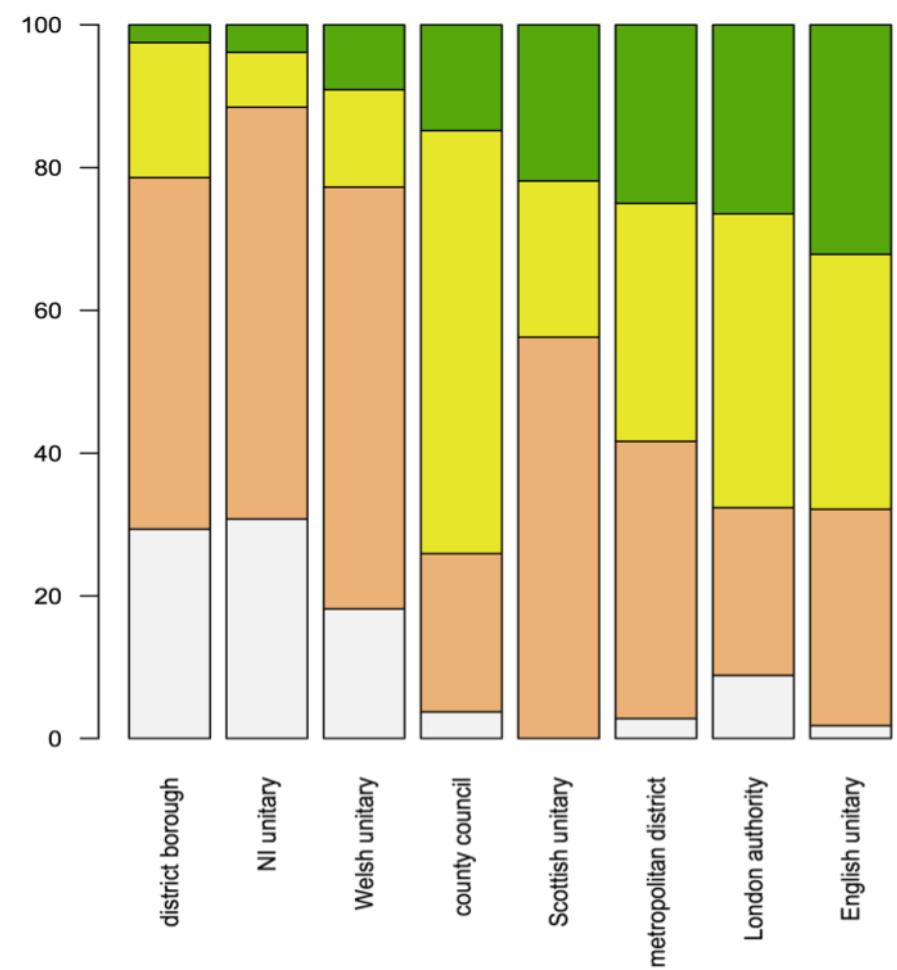
Source: Authors

Source: Webb, Tingey and Hawkey (2017)

Regions



LA structure



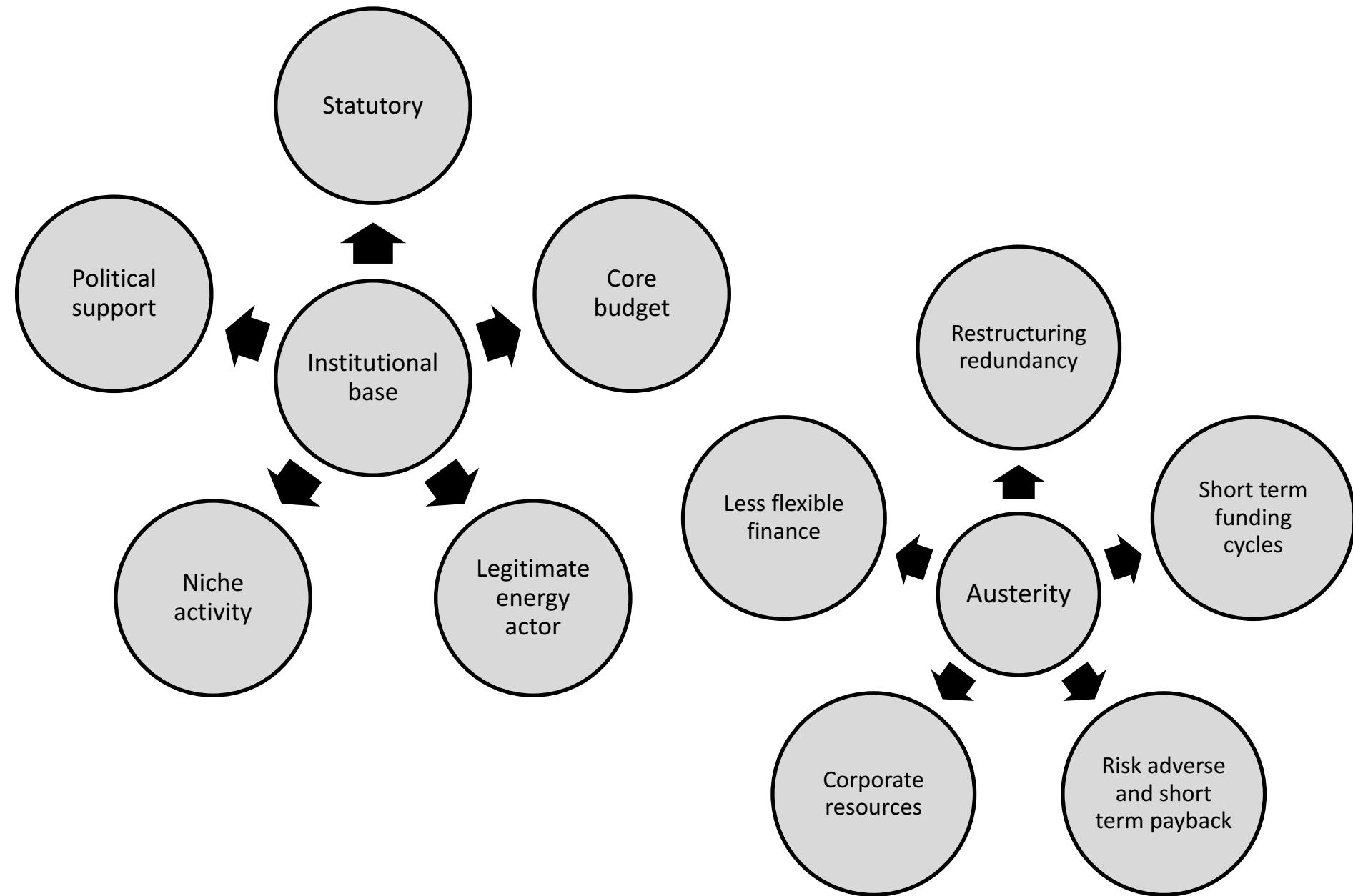
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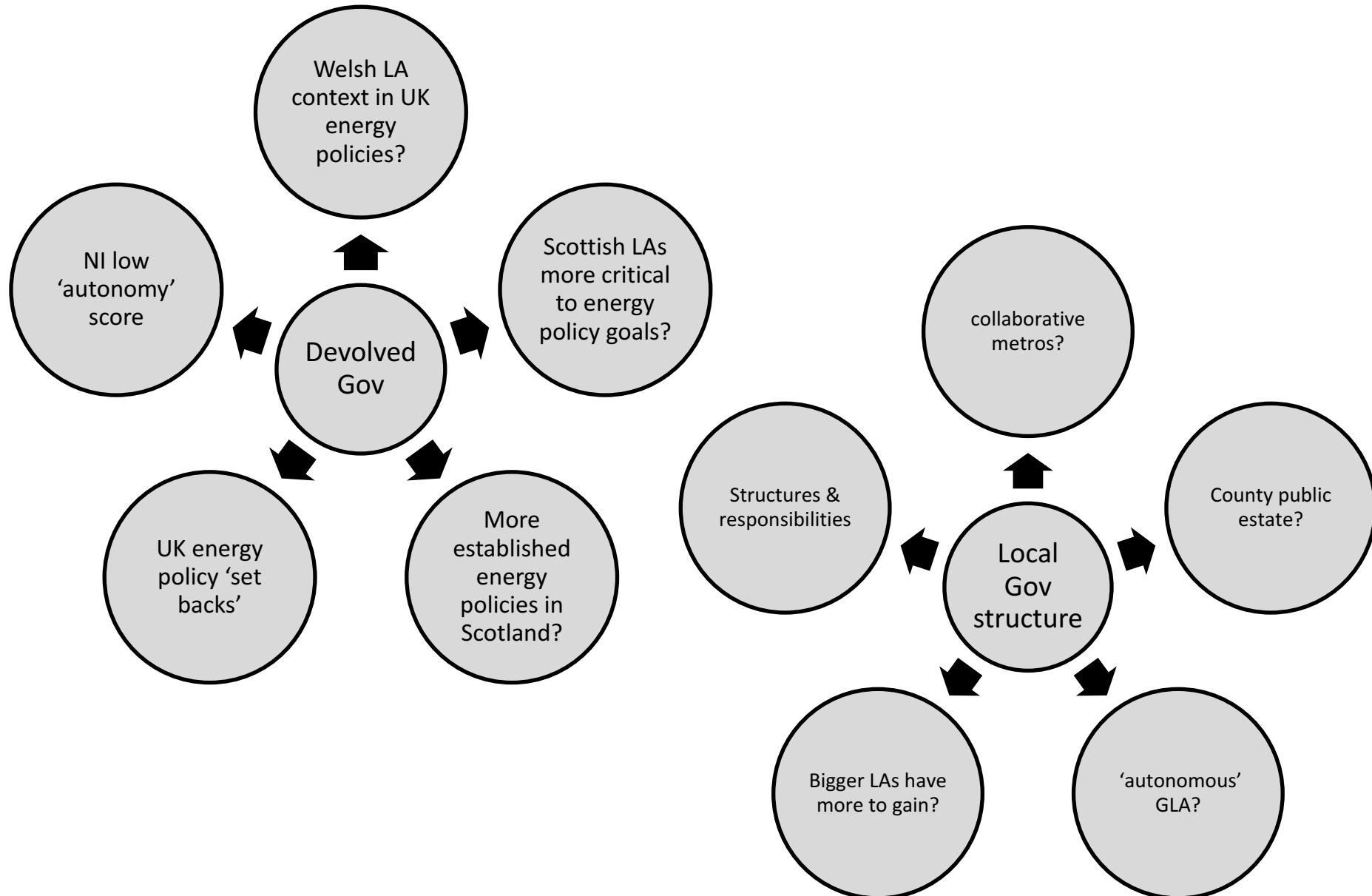
Summary

- Untapped ambition
 - only few *energy leaders*
 - Small relative to energy system
- Mostly focus on heat and EE
- More widespread energy & carbon plans than material investment in projects
- Highest proportion of *energy leaders* found in:
 - Scotland
 - Greater London, Yorkshire & the Humber
 - English single tier LAs (unitary, London, metropolitan) & country councils

Why does it seem so hard to embed local energy?



LAs face differing opportunity structures across the UK



Implications for governing (UK) urban innovations in energy and climate governance: closing the gap between leaders and laggards

- Untapped potential across LA population
 - Heat & EE core areas to build on
- Currently few systematic opps for LAs to contribute to local energy
- Weak institutional capacities
 - Clearer & more significant statutory role (& resourcing)
 - Collaboration in combined authorities for energy investment programmes & scaling up
- Problems exacerbated by
 - Austerity measures
 - Unclear trajectory for energy policies

Thank you



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Researching the Interface between Policy and Practice for Local Environmental Sustainability



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