

## **The Green Economy, Dr Tammi Sinha, University of Southampton**

This is a response to the Southampton city vision local plan consultation that's running from the 31st of October 2022 to the 3rd of January 2023. This piece explores what we can do to help businesses move from their current state, which may be starting to think about green issues, starting to become more sustainable and looking at approaches such as the circular economy.

Businesses are sometimes in a quandary thinking about where to start. There are many communities of practise and programmes set up locally with the LEPs, with the local universities, with enterprise zones, to look at how we can work collectively as the business community to help to address climate change.

There are various themes that businesses can start to address.

### **Number one - resilience.**

We know the cost of living crisis and the soaring cost of energy is having a massive impact on spending power, on the ability of businesses to invest and to provide cost of living salary increases.

Businesses can start by looking at their processes. The business model canvas is a really good way of doing this. Look at what you are providing in terms of value for your different customer segments, think about this value proposition and ensure that it is clear. At this stage you might like to think about how you link this to sustainability and to the circular economy. The circular economy has at the heart of its working: designing out waste and pollution, keeping materials in use at their highest value and regenerating natural systems.

### **Number two - circularity**

One thing that businesses can contribute to the local economy and the local ecosystem is working as part of the circular economy. If the Southampton City Vision can help to do this (by looking at business ecosystems and making it easy for businesses to work together to share costs in terms of logistics, in terms of embodied carbon, in terms of sharing skills and resources, and building a true ecosystem where circularity is at its heart) then I think we are onto a good thing.

### **Number three - ambition**

The city plan needs to be ambitious in its desire to become a thriving city where people want to live, work and play. We must live within our eco systems and contribute to the natural budget, not deplete it. I urge the city to look at Amsterdam, Melbourne and Barcelona as a blueprint for living within planetary boundaries and with firm social foundations. **This is missing from the plan.** Businesses need to thrive within the natural environment. Clean energy, transport networks based on zero carbon solutions, homes heated with renewables, businesses working within local regenerative business zones, using local circular economy hubs, the 12 minute city where all services are within walking or cycling distance. Green space, community gardens, and green corridors with a budget for greening neighbourhoods to help us cope with extreme weather events such as the drought

in the summer, and the severe freezing conditions experienced in the last couple of weeks. Please look again at incorporating [doughnut economics](#) and the [UNSDGs](#) into this plan.

Dr T J Sinha