

pnuuk: planners' network uk

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Hopefully this space can be used by the Barker response group to exchange work/ ideas/ news etc.

Hopefully this space can be used by the campaigns and advocacy group to exchange work/ ideas/ news etc.

Planning education – a critique based on a personal experience

Eeva Berglund

Here's how the Royal Town Planning Institute's website addresses prospective planning students.

'Are you interested in shaping the way our cities, towns and villages are developed and built?'

'Do you want to play a role in preserving biodiversity and safeguarding our architectural heritage?'

'Would you like to help shape policies to combat global warming, contribute to the creation of self-sufficient communities and shrink our ecological footprint?'

'Do you believe in social justice ... agree with taking a long-term view on economic development ...?'

'If you can say yes to even one of these questions then consider a career in planning.'

http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education_and_careers/planning_as_a_career/

My answers were all emphatic yes-es. And so I got myself onto a masters course designed to 'equip graduates with a high level of knowledge in spatial planning. These, taken with the Assessment of Professional Competence, form the education package that leads to Chartered Membership of the RTPI.' The course only lasted twelve months, assuming that one had a 'relevant' first degree already.

(http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education_and_careers/education/)

Apart from some reservations about bureaucracy, I had only one serious worry about planning. I believe the imperative to 'create sustainable communities', endlessly reiterated by the RTPI as well as CLG and other agencies, is so vague and all-encompassing and so compromised as to be useless as a horizon of action let alone as a focal point for learning how to plan our surroundings.

Perhaps those in charge think planning education doesn't particularly need a focal point. Planning itself is necessarily a composite enterprise, and it's caught up in political processes over which it has little or no control. The sheer breadth of the issues it must address and the range of conditions under which it operates, means that there must be a certain eclecticism in teaching and variation in the backgrounds that both teachers and students bring to the exercise. This is a real benefit but it's not sufficient for producing good planners.

On my course each staff member injected their own enthusiasm into their part of the curriculum, largely unaware, it seemed, of what others taught. This did not help us understand what planning is for and what it could be. Worse, I felt, in such short bursts and with so little contact time with staff, it was hard to develop a sense of what was being sought, what were the criteria by which our academic work, and the work of the planning system, would be judged. Still, as frustrating as this was, within the British educational tradition it's not unusual. In many fields competence is supposed to be built up through work experience.

Unfortunately in the workplace I found little focus and I was given so little feedback that I achieved no sense of how, or whether, professional judgement might be exercised. I did hear routine complaints about Whitehall and poor resources. This, combined with a sense that planning had lost political weight, meant

that over the eight months I worked, the various aims of planning – creating sustainable communities, making places and mediating space – became even less meaningful than before.

My sojourn in the world of spatial planning left me with the capacity to draw a salary and to help produce 'evidence' and even, maybe, 'evidence-based policy', but it certainly hasn't convinced me that as a planner I would ever be able to contribute to a project I believed in. (As a campaigner I probably could, but that would be another story. I didn't study to become an activist.)

So from my enthusiastic affirmation that planning was right for me, how did I get to being so frustrated?

Taking my cue from the RTPI website, I'll consider this by looking at the supposed aims of the profession in turn: 1) shaping our built environment, 2) preserving natural and cultural heritage and 3) supporting social justice and a taking a long-term view of things economic. The third question on that website, the one about combating global warming and conjuring up self-sufficient communities, isn't on my list. That's because it's pure rhetoric, its utopianism and impractical grandeur suited to political posturing but useless in education and in practice.

1) Shaping the built environment

I agree, broadly, with the following assessment. "Crap architecture is the norm in this country. The car parks and shopping developments, business parks, sports and leisure centres, cinemas, office buildings, housing, schools and university buildings that have been designed with no flair, no imagination, no ambition, no feeling – the ones that every day you look at or use and wonder how on earth such crap got planning permission – these are the real monuments to our culture that will be raked over by future historians" (letter to RIBA Journal from Madoc Jones, 2008).

And I agree that what desecrates Britain's landscapes are "pseudo-Victorian hutches and neo-vernacular closes stranded in infrastructural limbo" (Meades 2007: 17).

It sounds harsh, but the outcomes of the last few decades of regeneration are rarely anything to be proud of. The supposed renaissance of urban centres has transformed many places into jolly-looking shopping areas and, for the time being at least, been able to label them 'vibrant'. Beyond them, planning permits structures that embody resources and colonise the future but that are anything but vibrant or jolly. On the whole, those who can afford it seek out quality of life, most likely a town with a university and probably some cultural life, and which is easy to travel around on foot or by bicycle. Meanwhile the rest move into smaller and smaller homes surrounded by poorer and poorer amenities, often hemmed in by transport infrastructure designed for the convenience of non-residents .[[#_ftn1|[1]]]

Although I learned a lot about 'infrastructural limbo', housing crisis and abstract theory, I left the course with an exceedingly wobbly understanding of how cities etc. are actually developed. We were lectured in short bursts on political theory, sociology, economics and environmental issues, on general principles and on urban design plus a specialist subject. I learned virtually nothing about what shaped cities in the past. Perhaps history, like time for contact with teaching staff, is victim to the policy of churning out planners in quantity rather than quality.

Although we had no sense of the history of planning, we were warned about planning today, i.e. about

neo-liberalism. The only problem is that, as with sustainable communities, nobody really analysed what neo-liberalism is. Yet it was held responsible for the shortcomings of planning. So the problems of planning, we were taught, came from beyond it.

Instead of stimulating our critical imagination and developing our analytical powers with an aim to improving things, we were left with the overwhelming sense that nothing can stop the neo-liberal juggernaut. Of course now, in December 2008, we know that the juggernaut was itself less real than it seemed. In the mean time planning has facilitated the construction of an environment better suited to corporate innovators and cool techno-bohemians than to people with more sustainable lives.

Even though many blame neo-liberalism, an even easier scapegoat for a poor built environment is 'the modern', 'modernity' or 'modernism'. Planning is a modern institution, born of the need to manage large areas and to be impartial. Particularly in the UK, since the mid-twentieth century planners have been perceived as aloof professionals and self-appointed priests of a high modernism that ordinary people don't want. We are now being told that instead of this horrible old-fashioned top-down model, planning has improved with the rise of participation and consultation. On the course the imperative to involve the community was unquestioned. In the local authority I worked for it was more of a joke. Sherry Arnstein's classic paper on the ladder of participation could have told us about the pitfalls (Arnstein 1969) but we weren't given the reference. [[#_ftn2|[2]]]

My later work experience made me even more pessimistic about the role of planning in shaping the built environment. I began to suspect that mostly it facilitates the transformation of greed and stupidity into concrete materiality. I saw it broker negotiations with developers to secure just the minimum required infrastructure. I saw, like Arnstein, how it offers a veneer of legitimacy to processes that worsen inequality.

In fact, based on my experience, it seems planning doesn't actually shape anything. It is a mop-up of democratic deficit where narrow interests prevail, and an arranger-in-chief of endless consultation.

2) Preserving biodiversity and safeguarding our architectural heritage

Surely though, when it comes to saving the planet and policing architectural standards, planning must be confident, able to judge between good and bad decisions. I'm not sure about that either. Both conservation ecology and architecture are specialist areas. On my course and in my job, there were several people whose interest and understanding of the issues stopped at stating the blatantly obvious.

Occasional reference was made in urban design courses to architecture, but planners are not, it would seem, required to have the first inkling about architecture either as an art or as a fundamental element of social existence. In answer to the question how might planning help negotiate these matters, I found confidence almost as lacking as professional interest. At work I discovered that design quality was beyond the competence of a local authority to judge. And so it was a low priority.

If architecture is of little interest to planners, nature conservation barely went beyond acknowledging that green space is a Good Thing. Unfortunately underneath a surface of unequivocal environmentalist virtue and positive sounding words, lies a complicated arena where ecological, economic and cultural goods are extremely difficult to negotiate let alone reconcile.

3) Social justice and economic development

The history of environmental politics is full of ways of using 'nature' and 'countryside' as if they were free of politics. This reinforces existing injustices. The Nazis' cult of nature was utterly of a piece with their racism and their claims to territory. In England and elsewhere, the preservation of the countryside has for centuries been depicted as pure virtue. Alas, such talk often masks violent social dislocation as well as significant ecological change.

To even begin to support social justice, not only does planning need to be confident about buildings, biodiversity and other non-human elements, it has to find ways of bringing them together with the voluble and often mutually exclusive demands of human beings.

To plan under these conditions requires judgement. It also needs some choosing, as it were, between apples and oranges. Consultees can contribute local knowledge and express a preference. Activists can raise new issues and alter the framework of a debate. But only a planner could be expected to show the professional judgement and the sense of prevailing power relations required to produce good plans.

But instead of professional judgement I found a glut of 'evidence' accompanied by talk of 'sustainable communities'.

The quantity-theory of knowledge vs. professional judgement

Instead of getting on with the job they trained for, many occupational groups have become used to getting on with pleasing accountants and auditors. Arguably the triumph of audit culture has made planners too acquiesce to demands for always more evidence and evidence about the evidence (sometimes glossed as 'transparency'). So they produce endless information, churn their way through mind-numbing policy guidance, worry about best practice and national indicators, agree to produce and input data and, more than likely, lose their professional identity. Fortunately this hasn't gone unnoticed within the planning literature (Campbell and Marshall 2005).

The call for always more evidence is ludicrous given that the world is already awash with information, and the planning world particularly so. (We can still consider ourselves lucky. By some estimates more than 5,000 medical research papers are published every day!) Let's be clear: there is an excess of information, not a deficit.

I spent my months in a planning authority producing more of it even though the MSc had left me practically ignorant of the basics of statistics. I learned something about some databases and some new policy initiatives, a little about the authority I worked for and enough about the public sector to make me weep. The way it's currently set up certainly keeps planners busy counting and demonstrating how busy they are (or, as in my case, waiting for the computer to do its thing). But I was under-worked and learned little that might count as specialist knowledge. Information and data, after all, are ephemeral compared to knowledge. That requires understanding and judgement.

In the current framework of extremely flexible policies, a deficit of understanding and judgement will inevitably lead to poor decisions. Planning more than most other occupations deals with such a breadth of

issues with such levels of uncertainty that reducing them to numbers – or a price? – only makes sense in the abstract. Targets may have been reached then, but the concrete outcomes are often grim.

My view is that rather than developing or exercising the skills that make judgement possible, planners have come under the spell of a kind of quantity theory of knowledge. Rather than applying themselves to detail and learning from experience, they seem extremely willing to participate in a national orgy of counting. I am not sure how this might change inside planning authorities.

But the educational side is easy to fix: teach more history, think more critically and lobby for better educational resources, time in particular. Learn to plan by walking and talking, by asking questions. Yes, do this both in the classroom and on the job, but make sure that students are familiar with examples, with others' experiences and, ultimately, with the real impossibility of planning by numbers alone.

A one-year Masters course, even in a highly respected university with pretensions to world status (or perhaps particularly so!) is not going to achieve these things. The current APC is unlikely to fix the problem. Mine consisted of a self-service course on the 'transferable' skill of bureaucratic waffle generation.

The simplest answer is a two-year postgraduate qualification to follow a good first degree. Use it to teach core skills to students who bring the full breadth of human experience to the task. Require that they develop an intellectual as well as practical understanding of their chosen career. Esteem and a strong occupational identity would surely follow.

Arnstein, S. (1969). "A ladder of citizen participation." Journal of American Institute of Planners **35**(4): 216-24.

Campbell, H. and R. Marshall (2005). "'Professionalism and Planning in Britain'." Town Planning Review **76**(2): 191 - 214.

Meades, J. (2007). 'Space? Place? Life?'. Learning from Place 1. B. Evans and F. McDonald. London, RIBA Publishing: 16-25.

[[#_ftnref1|[1]]] The devastating impacts of transport inequalities on poorer children in the UK have been recognised, but a critique of commuting that would encompass the damage it does to ecology, social relations and economic opportunities is virtually non-existent.

[[#_ftnref2|[2]]] Also available online, at

<http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html> (December 2008)

Careers in planning: searching for progressive practice

Andy Inch

Recently much has been said about the need to attract more people into planning in the UK, people like the new students on planning courses that this guide is aimed at. New skills are needed, new attitudes, more resources. As a result a series of changes have been made to planning education and the conditions for entry into the profession. Amongst the more significant of these postgraduate planning courses have been cut from two years to one, bursaries have been made available to some, and new forms of professional certification have been introduced (see the contributions on planning education for a more personal view of these changes).

The motivation for this has been genuine concern about both the shortage of planners, and the shortage of the right skills to renew planning, or to make the transition from land-use to *spatial* planning (whatever that might be) work in practice. Students of planning history will know that worries such as these are not new. Indeed, concerns about the supply of planners, and about the capacity of the profession to attract the 'brightest and best' talent have periodically resurfaced, often at times when the planning system has been reformed and new demands have been made of planners.

This time around there have also been concerns about the image of planning, and how negative perceptions of planning as a career might be acting as a barrier to recruitment and to the capacity of planning to fulfil its potential. Amongst the responses to such concerns there has been talk of making planning 'sexy'. As far as I can tell this seems to be another way of saying that jobs in planning need to be made more attractive. But this prompts as many questions as it does answers - about the kind of work that we expect planning to be, the kind of work it has become, and, in relation to this guide, the possibility of a more progressive planning practice. This reflection seeks to consider these issues, and in so doing to consider what we might expect of planning as work, and how we might begin to think differently about it. First of all, I consider the kind of work planning is in the UK today, and how it came to be as it is. After that I move on to offer some thoughts about what people might mean when they talk about 'sexy' work. Finally, I try to offer some more speculative reflections on the kind of work planning might be.

I offer these thoughts in the hope of opening up discussion. Anyone who doesn't agree is encouraged to respond. Indeed one point I want to stress is that there is not enough discussion about these questions going on, and that one of the aims of pnuk should be to promote more of it. I should also say that I write as someone who decided not to enter planning practice after completing a one-year masters course. Instead I stayed behind to study some more, and in a strange way I have spent my time since thinking about planning practice rather than doing it. One of the things that really struck me during all this studying, however, was the difficulty of getting beneath the 'spin' to consider the real ethical and political choices that planners must make in their working lives. I hope that what follows might therefore help to demystify some of these issues about what planners do as much as to disorientate.

If planning isn't sexy work, what kind of work is it anyway?

As most academic introductions will tell you, the impulse for planning to become a public issue, and something that governments needed to be concerned about, emerged in the early years of the twentieth century. The 'planning movement' was effectively an eclectic set of pressure groups, reformist thinkers and activists concerned with the negative impacts of life in the industrial city. They successfully

campaigned for governmental intervention to improve living conditions, and the resultant legislation established the early outlines of the planning system we have today. The result was that a need was created for experts able to produce town plans, and the planning profession and the professional planner emerged from the 'parent' professions of engineering, architecture and surveying to fill the gap.

Professionalisation can be understood as an attempt by a group of people to lay claim to the expertise to undertake a particular set of tasks, in this case planning. The nature of professionalism will be discussed elsewhere in this guide, but it is important to stress that we cannot assume that professions act altruistically in the public interest. Amongst the most important tasks of professions is to sustain a market for the services of their members and this affects what they can and can't do and say. One of the effects of planning's professionalisation was to distance the practice of planning from the political activism of the planning movement, which might have jeopardised the appeal of the profession to the political sponsors required to sustain the demand for planners.

One of the other chief things that sustains professions is the construction of a shared collective identity, and with it a mythology about the way in which the professional serves a higher purpose. In this sense the planning profession continues to trade on the progressive roots of the planning movement today. They provide a basis for the ideology that continues to animate planning professionalism, giving a progressive image to what planners do and helping to attract people interested in somehow 'making a difference' (as I was, and perhaps some of those reading this have been). In reality, however, the ability to 'make a difference' as a professional planner has always been quite limited and would-be planners must be wary of assuming that what they do serves the interests of either social or environmental justice.

In particular, throughout the post-war period any such claims have necessarily rested on the ability of the state to pursue progressive goals. The needs of post-war reconstruction and the ideological shift towards social and economic 'planning' led to the expansion of town and country planning as a governmental activity. The 1947 planning system therefore established a safe market for the services of the planning profession in local government. As a result planners became a part of the bureaucratic machinery of the state, claiming to bring the expertise required to shape the physical development of a more rational future. Thus although the skills required of planners have changed, with social scientists replacing architects, for most of the past sixty years careers in planning have been synonymous with the fortunes of the state.

During the 1960s and 1970s planners and planning increasingly came under attack from left-wing critics. They argued that the claim that planning was helping to bring about a better world disguised the reality of a system that helped to maintain the quality of environment and property values of the wealthy, whilst acting in an insensitive way towards the underprivileged. Amongst a raft of different criticisms, they questioned the ability of the state in a capitalist society to act in a genuinely redistributive fashion, and the ability of professionals such as planners to 'know' what was best for people. Planning it was pointed out was a political not a rational process. Such criticisms led some planners to consider alternative roles, as advocates for disadvantaged communities, or as guerillas in the bureaucracy, working 'in and against the state' to advance the interests of the less powerful. However, whilst such ideas have gained considerable influence in some parts of the world they have been less influential in the UK where the twin institutions of professionalism and the state have dominated the way in which planning is practiced.

Indeed, whilst these criticisms have remained a strong element of academic debates about planning in this

country, they have less directly influenced the profession or the practices of planners. Workplace socialisation has always seemed a stronger influence on the identity of planners than education and, perhaps understandably, practising planners do not often seek to question the underlying value of what they do. Professional practices have gradually adjusted to some of the implications of such criticisms - the idea of public participation in planning for example is a product of concern about insensitive development being imposed from above by 'experts'. However, they have also continued to base their legitimacy on vague appeals to the planning ideology and the ability of experts to find a rational path to progress.

So where does this leave us in our attempt to make a difference through planning? Should we abandon the idea, change career, or reconcile ourselves to working at an awkward distance from the values that motivate us? These are all choices that some planners have made at some times. I want to suggest, however, that we might instead seek to work to identify some small spaces of possibility for progressive practice through the state. Spaces that allow us to re-imagine the politics of planning practice. Indeed, I want to argue that purposefully unsexy work in the state might, in the wake of thirty years of neoliberal restructuring, represent a bulwark against the further erosion of some of planning's progressive ideals.

Re-imagining a career in planning: from sexy to slow planning

During the 1980s and 1990s the idea that the state acted as a guarantor of the 'public good' came under concerted attack from the political right. The neoliberal ideological commitments of successive Conservative and more recently New Labour governments have been hostile to the idea of planning, and of a redistributive state. As a result those, like planners, who work inside the state have come to be seen as inflexible bureaucrats, stifling the dynamic and creative energies of private market forces. Meanwhile the centralisation of control over planning policy, and imposition of performance targets have gone some way to making this negative image a reality.

The sociologist Richard Sennett suggests that one of the results of this ideological shift has been that the experience of work and our image of 'good work' have been transformed in recent years by models emanating from the cutting edge of the 'new capitalism'. Quite how the current crises will influence these is, of course, anyone's guess. However, Sennett suggests that the drive to realise shareholder value has created a culture of compulsive change; success, he argues, has become predicated on a never-ending process of flux designed to send the right signals to financial markets. He argues that this model of work has serious effects on the lives of workers - they experience their careers as cast adrift, out of their control, and they struggle to narrate a sense of themselves, what they're doing and where they're heading. He is even more concerned by the wholesale and uncritical adoption of this way of thinking into the public sector, where he sees its capacity to undermine the traditional ethos of public service as dangerous. So if this is the basis for today's models of 'sexy' work then perhaps we should be careful what we wish for from a career in planning.

Indeed, I would argue that the growth of the consultancy sector in planning, part of the wider privatisation of the public sector since the 1980s, has come to play a large part in defining models of *sexy work* in planning. The RTPI, amongst others, has recently expressed concern that the private sector now appears to offer more dynamic career opportunities for young planners, rather than the slow and staid work found in local authorities. But if we endorse such a view of work in planning, and encourage planners to think in these terms, do we risk losing more than we gain? As I have argued these images define fulfilment in terms of constant change and the promise of a stream of new challenges. Above all they value speed and

fast results and suggest that successful planning can be accomplished with very limited engagement with the particularities of place (since it is implicit in the logic of consultancy that it is possible to be in Bournemouth one week and Blackpool the next, and that the expertise of the consultant is perfectly mobile). They also, of course, work on the assumption that the pursuit of profit in the private sector is compatible with the professionals' claim to work towards progressive ideals in the public interest.

If on the other hand we define these ideals, and our conception of progressive planning practice, as resting on genuine sensitivity to the embedded qualities of particular places and the people that live in them, then we must stand against such images. Instead we must value knowledges that are rooted in place and an understanding of the people and places we are planning. We must also stand on the side of the public sector, and the principles of democratically accountable decision-making about land use.

This is not easy in a world where values such as these have come to seem unfashionable. As much as anything, values of place-rootedness have been eroded by the mobility many of us enjoy, and the expectation that people will move on several times in the course of a career. However, might we not consider whether a thoroughly unsexy, 'slow' planning might not represent a different way of imagining the work that planning should do? Here we can imagine links to the slow movement that has emerged around the principles of slow food, but also to a planning practice that harks back to the radical promise of some of the thinkers that helped to forge the modern planning movement. People like Patrick Geddes whose own life was lived in service of his values, with and for some of the then disadvantaged people of Edinburgh.

Of course the public sector offers no panacea. Nor is it an easy choice. As Eeva Berglund's contribution on planning education following this makes clear, the public sector is not an easy place to work, or in which it is possible to easily imagine realising progressive values. However, what I have sought to argue is that there is a need to challenge the models of "sexy work" that have driven change in planning in recent years. Part of this needs to rest on a recognition of a set of values that seem far from sexy and that have been too often denigrated, but that are vital to the imagining of a more progressive planning. Such a project requires support from both inside and beyond the state, and a commitment to holding the progressive rhetoric of planning to account.

Further Reading-

- Campbell, H. and R. Marshall (2005) The changing conception of professionalism in planning
Thomas, H. and P. Healey, Dilemmas of Planning Practice, Avebury Technical
Town Planning Review, 76(2), pp. 191-214.
Sennett, R. (2005) The Culture of the New Capitalism, Yale University Press

Introduction to the Guide

Following the inspiration of the longer established Planners Network in North America (see <http://www.plannersnetwork.org/>), one of the things that was discussed when pnuk was formed in 2006 was that it would be good to produce a disorientation guide aimed at new students entering planning courses in the UK. This is the result of our first steps towards realising this goal.

As a network pnuk aims to provide a forum for all those interested in a more progressive planning practice in the UK and beyond. We want to bring together people concerned by the state of planning and committed to the belief that another kind of practice is possible, a practice in which social and environmental justice are central, a planning that is done by people and not to them and the world we share. This requires both critique of the status quo, and the articulation of alternatives. We hope that the *disorientation guide* can help to achieve both of these goals. Its chief purpose is to provide a resource for new students interested in progressive planning, though it will hopefully also prove interesting for others thinking about engaging with planning.

The Disorientation Guide produced by PN in North America begins in the following way:

The language of urban planning is full of socially conscientious terminology: sustainability, diversification, community action, ecologically sound, consensus-building, anti-poverty. It is this language and this type of thinking that draws most planners to the field, and as a result, planning students tend to be a forward-looking lot, with a particular consciousness of human societies and their infrastructure as dynamic, evolving systems. For many, a planning education is a chance to learn how to put into practice the ideals that they already possess. These instincts are often challenged at graduate school, where the presentation of an “objective” and ostensibly depoliticized planning process potentially undermines our prior understanding and knowledge.

Here in the UK the terminology is different (with some disparity between the planning systems in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland since devolution). But whilst we might be more likely to speak about spatial planning, sustainable development, community involvement, social inclusion or social justice, the sentiment remains much the same. Many students are drawn towards a career in planning by the idea, however fuzzy, of somehow “making a difference”. Very quickly, however, they meet a world of acronyms, of PPSs, SAs, LDFs, RSSs, (to name just a few from the English system), of regulations and processes and protocols. They may well find themselves asking if this is really the way to make a difference.

Recent years have also seen wholesale changes to planning education, driven by a strong desire to reinvent the profession. This reinvention has involved the creation of a raft of new acronyms, and bold claims about the difference that planners can make. It is all too easy to get lost in this thicket of professional jargon, or to be swept along by upbeat claims about the work that planning does. There is, therefore, a danger of losing sight of the point of the whole exercise – the complex politics of making a difference. Of course, there is no single way of making that difference, and individual planners must find their own path. This guide aims to provide a modest resource to help would-be planners to find their way through this thicket without losing sight of the ethical implications of the choices that they make. In this, for some, what follows may be as much a reorientation guide as a disorientation guide. Either way we hope it helps.

In putting the guide together it has also become clear that there are still some important absences in what we have to say. We are much stronger on the critical part of the task we have set than on providing examples of how it is possible to pursue that impulse to make a difference through planning. The guide is therefore patchy in places at the moment, but we hope that it will be a dynamic and living document, open to new contributions and capable of growing over time. As a result we have published this very

early version here on the wiki, where it is available for comment, debate and public editing. Please do get involved.

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Planners and the Planned

Yas Beebeejaun

Very recently when asking students to think about justifications for planning I was surprised and also a little alarmed by their responses. To them planning was primarily a regulatory activity which ensured equality by providing a set of rules which were the same for all. We were very concerned about these responses which emphasised planning's procedural or bureaucratic nature rather than thinking about engaging with substantive values or goals. Who were we planning for and why, did they even want or need our interventions?

This did not chime with my reasons for deciding to study planning which was the rather late realisation about how certain people suffered at the hand of the State through poor living conditions and access to services, through poor planning. My crowded commute to central London often consisted of periods stuck on an overcrowded train waiting for a clear platform. There I saw the equally slow progress of an estate transformation. However, to my eyes this seemed to consist of the process of re-cladding a set of tower blocks in bright colours. I am unsure as to the scale of the works but it did make me start to wonder whether this seemingly superficial change fundamentally altered the life experiences and chances of the people that lived there.

Before going any further I want to emphasize that I don't think my reasons for entering the profession are 'right' or better than any other reason. There are many other viewpoints about planning and also more pragmatic reasons for so doing and this is to be expected and welcomed. However, on becoming part of the planning community there is a great responsibility that we have to 'the planned.' This is one of the fundamental things that makes planning a worthwhile profession. However, we have not treated our responsibility well.

In thinking about 'the planned' despite the rhetoric of community involvement they are often left out of our thoughts. Planning history will teach you that in the 'old days' there was a post-war consensus and that people were happy to be shipped out of their slums and off to Crawley or somewhere we planners think will be better. Now apparently we know that such intervention is wrong and we are much improved than those naïve planners. The story is of course not so simple as that. Planners were trying to improve peoples' lives but their focus on technical matters made them miss the social consequences of their actions (Taylor, 1998).

Nowadays, the story continues, we of course practice community engagement and give them a full chance to participate. However, the

evidence is not encouraging. Our thinking about the community means that we often perceive them in one of two ways.

The first is that of the NIMBY who interferes in the operation of the planning system by their objections to the proposals of the so-called experts. They are only concerned about protecting their property prices and will object to every planning application near to their homes.

The second, group are the generalised masses, typically poor communities, certainly experiencing disadvantage in one form or another who we have to try to engage. The poor dears struggle to understand planning and are unwilling to read a core strategy or other baffling planning document. We have to make special efforts to engage them and even then they are often not interested or are highly critical of 'the council.' Nonetheless this can make for valuable photo opportunities for local politicians/ planners.

Planners must work with people sharing the world but not the same viewpoints. This is intensely difficult and challenging. Moreover, people do not always agree with planners' recommendations or even understand the planning process. This is frustrating for planners. Yet, dismissing these differences and assuming that others should learn about a framework that planners and politicians have created seems more than a little unreasonable.

Planning should be about working to create a better environment. It is a challenging task. It can never be for others if it is not done without the involvement of the planned and more importantly without respect for them. What is the point of planning for people if we don't care about them?

Returning to the students I mentioned at the beginning of this piece. We were heartened when earlier on this week we found a great deal of enthusiasm for critical thinking about planning and the reading of theories about planning. I was even more heartened when one of our undergraduate students proposed that planning should want people to be happy. If the communities we work with are the faceless planned then we continue to miss the importance of their lives. Can planning contribute to happiness rather than rule-bound processes?

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Planning and (Big) Infrastructure

The 2008 Planning Act

Tim Marshall

Planners trained or training to work in England and Wales have a new challenge, to work with a new planning system, set up specially to deal with big infrastructure projects. This is enshrined in the 2008 Planning Act, alongside some less important measures. This note discusses this major change to how planning in these countries may play out: note, Scotland is bringing in a new system, to a degree on similar lines, and not all parts of the new system will apply to Wales. Northern Ireland also has a different regime.

The reason for looking at this new regime is simple. It raises sharply the question of the politicalness of planning. The question this raises, is: should I accept the legitimacy of all planning law as a given? Should I be prepared to challenge this and support other values than those of business and government, values which may be identified by groups branded by dominant media as minority and disruptive?

How the new regime will work

You can find the system described on the government webpages [\[link\]](#), and in the Act itself [\[link\]](#). [\[plus links to ngos etc\]](#) So I am going to give only the briefest summary here of how the new system works. Essentially there are three steps.

First, a set of types of development are removed completely from the Town and Country Planning system. These are mostly defined by size, so, simply put, big increases to airports or ports, large new power stations, new railways or major highways, large waste treatment plants, large reservoirs – all these and some more infrastructure categories are lost to local determination. Or, that is to say, lost to first decision making by local authorities. The long established arrangements always entailed final decision by government, normally after public inquiries held on each scheme.

Second, for each of these types, the government prepares a National Policy Statement (NPS). These are drawn up by the relevant government departments (Transport, Energy, Environment, mostly), with public consultation, and have to be placed before Parliament.

Third, a new body, the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC), decides all the relevant schemes, following the appropriate NPS, within a six month period, normally. Local authorities are consulted, and the public will normally get an open-floor hearing opportunity to have their say. But the need as expressed in the NPS, and the appropriateness of the location (which may or may not be identified in the NPS) are the key factors for the Commissioners to take into account.

There are opportunities for legal challenge, but these have been deliberately made to be minimal – or that is the intention of the Act.

The key issues for critical planners

Here I just want to raise questions around how planners might approach this new part of their professional territory. I will structure this around what some may see as very political (too political) issues:

democracy, legitimacy, depoliticisation.

My analysis, and that of many of the opponents of this Act, is that this measure comfortably crosses over into the zones of questionably democratic and legitimate state practice. This is what local authorities and environmental NGOs have argued since this measure was proposed by the two big inquiries set up in 2005, the Barker one on planning and the Eddington one on transport. In fact these reports only in a sense went back to proposals made in 2001 for reforming infrastructure decision making. Those proposals were opposed just as vigorously, by the same interests, and that time round, were dropped (the rest of the 2001 proposals going on to be the 2004 Planning Act). However business interests did not let up their pressurising for a regime which would make the building of big infrastructure projects easier. So that is one point to bear in mind: in implementing these measures, we are involved with an Act that was very far from representing a consensus in the fields which deal with planning in England and Wales. So for many interests, this Act does not carry the legitimacy that many more widely supported measures would have.

For the government, and for people like Barker and Eddington who were paid to advise on policy, the preferred model for making decisions is to hand power to “independent” bodies. Now, in principle, the IPC (how many journalists or even planners already continually think the I stands for Independent!) will decide, rather than the minister whom voters elected to decide on their behalf. This had been done for the Bank of England in 1997, with an “independent” panel of economists or bankers deciding monetary policy, previously a core role of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Neoliberal economists see this model as ideal, taking “temptation” away from the democratic arena. Colin Hay [2005 [Why we hate politics](#)] has tracked the ancestry of these ideas to the public choice theorists of the American Right of the 1970s, which became hegemonic after the Reaganite and Thatcherite regimes. The aim is to create increasingly large zones of “depoliticisation”, where so called “technical” and “rational” criteria trump “subjective” opinions or feelings. The underlying idea is that democracy can be bad for large areas of public decision making, and risks decisions inimical to capitalist core values. US writers, like many British conservative thinkers over the long debate since democracy raised its head in the 1600s, had and have profound doubts about democracy. Surprising though it may seem, the 2008 Planning Act connects directly to this old and vital debate.

By now you, as a planner, may be beginning to smell something familiar: those discussions on the planning course, or in the bar after a council meeting, about the right way to run planning. Is it to be open and allow full play for discussion and up to a point conflict and strong local politics? Are those “ignorant councillors” to be trusted with “our” planning expertise? Is almost 100% delegated decisions the way to go? I know from teaching many part time planning students that many are deeply antipathetic to the elected role in planning. Appeals to the importance of democracy make them reflect, but there is clearly a technocratic instinct in many planners. Is it better for planners to take decisions away from the pressures of local politics, or even of any local interests?

Essentially the debate over the new NPS/IPC regime is on this same territory, although there are differences of scale and mechanisms. Evidently I cannot tell what you think on either the local debate always buzzing through planning, or on this bigger issue. I know my view, that lots of conflict between the organised interests in planning will make better decisions, and we should always allow these to have full voice and full play. Speed should generally be the last concern, especially where very strong value laden decisions are at issue. Consensual and legitimate processes should be, for me, the watchwords. The

old system was already generally giving a great deal of power to the big business battalions, in alliance normally with government. But it did give local authorities and other non-business interests some chances, and so opened the debates over controversial projects to media and therefore public gazes, and gave time for these debates to be played out.

The infrastructure business

It is worth remembering who will be carrying out these schemes. These are mainly not the publicly owned and controlled bodies which carried out the last round of major investments in infrastructure in the 1970s or 1980s (yes the private companies we virtually gave our utilities to mainly “sweated the assets” since 1990, taking the profits; there are exceptions - Terminal 5, some gas fired power stations). The companies are by now a mix of mostly European or globally owned mega corporations, who have been scrambling since the 1990s to mop up the major cash cows that the infrastructure sectors can be – there are long term large returns to be made in the UK in energy, water, waste, airports and ports, even in buses, trains, and, if the companies can force it through, in private highways. This is partly because of exceptionally loose and business friendly regulatory regimes in most sectors. Planning, as one occasionally sharper regulatory arm, remained a thorn in the profit making process, and hence came under attack as the new utilities system bedded in from the late 1990s.

So the investors pressing all these schemes will be continental or global corporations – EDF, EoN, RWE, Macquarie, Ferrovial, and a long list more of mostly unknown acronyms and non-UK based names. They will of course be paying British planning consultants to push their case, first to make sure the NPS is helpfully written – this is quite critical – and then in the IPC process. There will be good pickings for the UK consultancies, especially welcome if the downturn in housing and other non infrastructure development is severe and long lasting. Planning lawyers, on the other hand, might not mind if conflict over the proposals becomes complex or drawn out, giving them more money making chances. The complexities of some parts of the assessment regimes (Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment) may in fact favour such conflict episodes, rooted as these are in EU judicial systems. (This is the nightmare scenario for businesses and government).

It is this wider part of the restructuring of the issue which is, for me, quite as much the problem as the new planning regime which the UK government has brought in. Several countries have moved somewhat in this direction. France has always had a largely centrally determined mechanism. But this has sat within a more publicly controlled industry. In the Netherlands for example, despite their real liking for privatisation, they take care to keep control of the key bits of infrastructure investment within easy reach of the government (often literally with the Finance Ministry as the holding company). So when a scheme comes forward, even if the procedures have been “speeded up” (in Netherlands this means cutting from say 5 to 3 years of consultation), there is a sense of legitimate public action by a publicly validated body. This is unlikely to be the feeling towards the various developers of airports and power stations and reservoirs in Britain in the 2010s.

Where are we now?

For the government, things go roughly like this:

2009 NPSs are drawn up and approved by Parliament.

2010 The IPC starts working. We may expect some controversial projects during the first year, such as nuclear power stations and airport expansions, assuming the economic crisis does not simply wipe all investment off the map.

Many in Britain are not in favour of these schemes. Many individual planners will be completely opposed to them in principle, given their commitment to the values of sustainable development and trying to meet climate change objectives. NGOs and many others will probably be seeking to stop approval of the projects. NGOs like Friends of the Earth have been predicting large scale protest, legal or illegal, in the face of these schemes. In other words, depoliticisation will be likely to fail.

As mentioned above, perhaps the key moment is the making of the NPSs. In the Netherlands national sectoral and spatial planning is done with great care, building coalitions of consensus over years. An example is nuclear power, where the present coalition government is divided, reflecting society. The compromise is to make no plans for nuclear power stations, but to order local authorities not to make long term decisions impossible later on (by say building housing next to a potential site). This compromise, whilst still controversial, maintains the overall consensus. In Britain we should take at least two years to carefully debate the content of all the NPSs, so that everyone, not just informed pressure groups, is clear what is at stake. This is against government plans, which are to whisk the Statements through by late 2009.

Where does that leave planners? We have been going through a “quietist” period, where it has been unlikely that planners would show themselves siding with communities or protesters, against government backed schemes. I wonder whether the dubious legitimacy of this Planning Act’s new system will open a new era of self questioning among many planners. It may be that the professional institute will need to make clear that it is not committed to this particular regime. The RTPI has been quite equivocal about the Act, making weak noises about public consultation, but broadly supporting the core of the reform. And no other planning voice has had the force to have much say during the 2007-8 period of debate (certainly not PNUK!).

As always, planners will be left in an “interesting” force field. We are here to “run the system”, but we also have our views and our varied positions. How will this part of the work play out over the next five years? Reflection on this would be valuable.

Planning, science and the public – some contradictory history

Eeva Berglund

Good planning requires a wide range of aptitudes and skills. In earlier generations too planning was seen as a broad-based, holistic profession. One hundred years ago what seemed necessary in order to make the profession more robust was to make it scientific. These days by contrast, the talk is not about enhancing the intellectual let alone scientific credentials of the profession, but about improving planning by being more “customer-focused, proportionate and transparent” (Killian Pretty 2008).

Here I'm going to plug the scientific side of planning, but I'll also be arguing for a serious rethink about what science is. It's true, as critics say, that science is not the truth. On the other hand society as a whole has lost something very precious in downplaying the importance of technical and scientific expertise. With that bathwater we have thrown away some important babies: specialist skill, craftsmanship and professional pride not to mention the capacity to judge between competing knowledge claims. Let's face it, some 'obvious' claims to truth are counter-intuitive: intuitively, the world remains flat.

By approaching planning through a discussion of scientific knowledge, I'll try and complement rather than compete with critiques of planning focussed on economic and political practices.

To resist technocracy is not to dismiss science

Understanding what science is, is more important now than ever. One of today's political head-aches well beyond planning is the question of how to deal with a risky and unknown future. 'Top-down' expertise isn't infallible or disinterested. But it is necessary for creating a new airport, a medical treatment or running the support infrastructure of a city. Assessing and alleviating the distress of being 'decanted' or 'regenerated' also necessitates sophisticated expertise.

No doubt many planners have a technocratic streak. Worse still, class and power make relations between the planners and the planned unequal. Planning seems to be more concerned with process, managerial protocol and risks to reputation than with good decision. This contributes to confusion surrounding supposed decision-making and also renders the task of the active citizen extremely difficult. Even when science is on their side, they can be marginalised with the help of bureaucracy or the disgruntled technocrat's demand for better evidence. But planners are not served well by this trend towards ever greater procedural concern either.

Even if planners don't plan so much as manage these days, to do a good job, they need to access the best technical expertise available, which, given the dangers we all face, includes much that in turn requires scientific understanding – of everything from climate change to social reproduction. If planning isn't a science itself, it certainly needs the sciences. But then the more important point is that science and non-science aren't easily distinguished.

Science sometimes represents what we might call silent interests, notably unborn generations and nature. In fact by Western convention it is above all science which 'speaks for' these stakeholders, even if we sometimes kid ourselves that facts speak for themselves. When it comes to land-use decisions, however, experts rarely speak with one voice. For example, there is unlikely to be agreement about whether land and resources should be committed to nuclear power, to genetically modified crops, to roads, railways or airports, where and in what quantities. This does not always come down to competing interests or even to

stronger or weaker ethical principles. It is simply the case that science is based on (scientific) judgements which are continuous with other human institutions and require considered opinion and evaluation.

Science is not and never has been separate from society, nor can it be divided into 'good' versus 'bad' (Collins and Pinch 1993). Unfortunately for anyone who wants simple things, scientific expertise with all its social, technical and creative complications, will be in high demand for the foreseeable future. If planners had a better sense of what scientific knowledge can and can't achieve, how it changes and how it stays the same, they might recapture a sense that they are doing something truly valuable and, importantly, persuade Government that their own expertise is something a civilized country should prioritize. The planning system should not be afraid to use science, just as the public uses science to challenge bad or risky planning decisions. Everyone should be alert to the possibility that science can be used as a decoy. It's a tough call, but planners who want to make a difference can't ignore the fact that governing and scientific knowledge have always been entangled in each other.

Planning was and is modern

The impulse for a planning system arose in the late nineteenth century within a variety of political and ideological circles, left, right and anarchist. The appalling human costs of rapid industrialisation led many to turn to science to help make life bearable for the losers. Planning was established to serve the common good, and became a key vehicle for translating scientific discoveries and technical innovations into collective reality, turning abstract knowledge into improved hygiene, proper conduct, healthy living and, occasionally, beautiful cityscapes.

These things seemed innocent enough, but they were political acts. As the Editorial in the 'What's Left of Planning' issue of *International Planning Studies* 20008 puts it, "planning is essentially the application of Reason to questions centred on land use. For practical city politicians from Augustus in Rome, Frederick in Berlin, or Boris Johnson in London, it is a rather more pragmatic business. It is what you do to respond to what you regard as quite obvious needs [...] Accordingly, as urban planning became a reality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it came to be seen as apolitical" (Editorial 2008: 90). The telling phrase here is 'quite obvious'. It was axiomatic in the era of high modernism that progress, modernity, technology and science are somehow of a package; there is no point in resisting. Modern thought in a sense shamed society into leaving behind tradition, ritual, superstition and so on and embracing efficiency and universal economic growth as highly virtuous. It has been planning above all which has helped create the environment that locks everyone into structures and behaviours that reinforce the ideology of economic efficiency. In their mundane everyday-ness the location of roads and shops as much as the size of a classroom cease to feel like political things even though, in very fundamental ways, they are.

For decades planning has been rightly critiqued for hiding behind apparently but falsely scientific or technical matters in order to disguise what are really political or value judgements (Jacobs 1961). Critics have characterised planning as a top-down, even dictatorial, technocratic exercise (Scott 1998). Imagined as a purely problem-solving exercise it has become contrasted with various opposites like ideology, politics or the social. In the UK it has often been seen as a left-inspired threat to established privilege. It has always been legitimated through being able (or claiming to be) to arrange the physical environment to the benefit of all. This includes restraining the capacity of the very wealthy to make life miserable for the rest. Of course it is all about people and society.

You can no more take the politics out of planning than you can pretend it's not technical (Forester 1989). It deals in both society and science at the same time, never encountering either in some pure form. That's not because of some inherent lack within planning, but because neither science nor society, as real as they are, are ever 'pure', but are always defined and even created by each other (Latour 1987).

With the spread of market-oriented cultural ideals like “choice” or “demand”, concepts like society and science can seem weak or old-fashioned. But this narrow view of life as commerce has made it almost impossible for planning to be more than a handmaiden of commercial interests. The problems this has created require us to go back to science, but also to be clear about what science is.

Planning as science

Whatever it is, science is value-laden. It is massively consequential, it leaves little untouched, from micro-level processes within our bodies to planetary change. Increasingly, not just in planning but in many other matters, like biotechnology or nuclear power, the value-aspect is recognised and the public is invited to comment. It has become necessary to manage different view points and claims made in the name of science (e.g. Irwin and Michael 2003) as the confidence and pretensions of older generations of experts have been discredited. A high modernist of the early twentieth century like Le Corbusier would no longer get away with imposing normative ideas of “standards” and “averages” on the back of claims to be scientific.

In his time there was great optimism about the power of science, and planners could well afford to see the factory as a vehicle for creating prosperity, and science as a tool for freeing society from the fetters of painful tradition. Housing in “machines for living in” promised shelter and comfort for millions who would otherwise remain homeless or in squalor. Architecture and planning had a huge role in getting the public caught up in the machine age and in its optimistic approach to science and technology. To make good plans and to build good buildings, it was understood, one needed to have a systematic knowledge of what one was working with, that is the natural environment and of society or “man”. To this end planners developed techniques of surveying, very much based on scientific models, to represent “the world as a matter of fact, a mechanical universe of causal relationships, levers and handles to be operated” (Dehaene 2002: 47).

In academic literature there has been a renewed focus on the sociologist Otto Neurath who specifically wanted to use knowledge and expertise to create a better world for everyone. Besides published research on his achievements, *Land of Promise*, the film he made in 1946 with Paul Rotha, on the post-war housing crisis, was issued on DVD in 2008.

Neurath was trained in economics, but like many of his contemporaries he saw science as a unified method and system of knowledge. Neurath is remembered for the novel technique of visual universal signs he created, the Isotype. His ambition was to democratise knowledge, and he saw that the print media, growing so fast in the early 20th century, could help because even the less educated could read images even if they were not interested in text. To represent urban realities he created standard pictograms. For instance he contrasted infant deaths per household in “bad and good homes” by using stylised images of houses, graves and babies (see Whyte 2007: 29). His hope was that such visual representations would make everyone take an interest.

Although bricks and mortar were what produced the living conditions of the poor, in this modernist view

the planner was definitely also interested in behaviour and values, and in all the things that now come under the rubric of “soft measures”. For Neurath this included thinking about the aspirations of the working classes, trying to find out what they wanted and use that knowledge to guide the design not just of homes but of public space (Whyte 2007: 19). In the 1940s, Neurath worked in England, in Bilston, with planners and architects to inject sociology and a concern for human happiness into an ambitious programme of slum clearance. In fact Neurath’s efforts looked a lot like advocacy or citizen-centred planning, not unlike today’s fashions for bridging the gap between experts and the public (Whyte 2007).

Another similarity with today is the way that tremendous hope about the future benefits of science was combined with hysterical rhetoric about the dangers of falling behind. Despite accelerating technological improvement, all around was talk of needing more and more, better and better. Science policy then was a matter of urgency just like it is today, but unlike now, planning had a place in this too. In 1942, while war was raging a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science agreed that planning, economic planning in general, but town planning too, had to be at the centre of political efforts. Despite the horrors of war, those involved were confident that modern science would answer their needs, and that as long as the population remained insufficiently educated, the “gentlemen in Whitehall” were best equipped to plan and construct the future. And yet even there, the concern was to ensure democracy by bringing the elites and the masses closer together, in aspiration as well as in understanding and skill.

Tensions were also apparent between setting standards (e.g. adequate nutrition or space standards for homes) and the constantly changing nature of scientific knowledge. There may have been much patronising and technocratic elitism, but there was also an acceptance of limitations. Neurath meanwhile, through his experience of town planning, seems to have arrived at a pragmatic view which combined great hopes for scientific progress with a rejection of universal architectural or sociological principles (Whyte 2007: 35).

A new mode of science?

In the 1960s politics became more fragmented. Knowledge claims became complicated in the wake of new, terrifying technological capacities. Typically the 1960s is also thought of as a period when top-down technocracy began to be seriously questioned. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* of 1962 challenged scientists and engineers, Jane Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) claiming that the good urban life cannot be created by top-down planning. Thomas Kuhn’s 1961 *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* challenged received wisdom about scientific progress.

There was frustration with science leading, in some cases, to post-modern forms of nihilism and loss of confidence in many other social institutions also. Technology wasn’t all good after all and the public wasn’t composed, it turned out, of people with standard needs. Planners and architects had to admit they were catering to users with very different desires and experiences. And so, rather than leaving the gentlemen in Whitehall to assume they knew what users wanted, they were urged to find out through consultation. Meanwhile specialist knowledge, i.e. expertise of the technocratic kind that inspired earlier generations, has become sidelined or, at best, outsourced.

Society can no longer turn to science as a transcendent truth. Science no longer simply speaks for the mute. To manage the political and social strains this creates, we now have professorships in the public understanding of science and science policy which is anxious to avoid appearing technocratic. Politics today demands “different forms of engagement between experts, decision-makers, and the public than

were considered needful in the governance structures of high modernity” (Jasanoff 2003: 227). Instead of trusting experts, the public increasingly articulates passionate critiques of technocracy.

Consultation has been offered as the best remedy for the malaise, not just in planning. But when people are reluctant to participate, decision makers assume, wrongly, that the public is happy. Unfortunately planning policy has made this mistaken assumption into a core belief. Citizens meanwhile are required to inform themselves about complex matters and to accept responsibility for extremely complicated issues. And so, there are ample grounds to revisit the issue of consultation. Otherwise we might even end up with helpless citizens and helpless experts. Already there are far too many situations where the only knowledge that counts is knowledge of “the markets”.

Andreas Müller, architect, designer and critic, sees the situation like this:

“A remarkable reassessment has occurred since the early days of participative planning and many of the former claims have been realised. The old figure of the user corresponds to a certain extent with today’s ideal of the autonomous subject who acts creatively and self-responsibly. The promising potentials of participation – self-responsibility, individuality, creativity, etc. – have lost much of their liberating impact, and instead almost turned into demands that are enforced upon today’s consumers of architecture.” (2008: 80-81).

And, I would add, enforced upon everyone through planning.

Many in the built environment field would, agree with Alan Irwin’s comment on public debate about science, that it appears more as “talk about talk” (2006: 317) than as institutionalised listening, let alone learning. Local knowledge can be dismissed, consultation fatigue set in. And just like in science policy, the ‘new’ governance can also “aggravate rather than assuage, [...] raise expectations and subsequently disappoint” (Irwin 2006: 317). Regeneration in fact creates interest groups and then pits them against each other under the seductive banner of local democracy.

This kind of planning doesn't just erode democracy, it can discredit the knowledge and knowledge work of the planning profession. It compromises a principle of enlightenment humanism that planners would probably cherish, if they ever thought about it, namely that knowledge is power. It has the capacity to transform. If planners are to take responsibility for sound scientific as well as political judgement they require a better grasp of what science is and what it isn't, and a better idea of the dynamic relationship between expert knowledge and its publics.

Science cannot be a replacement for transcendent or religious truth but for all its political and social entanglements, to sideline it is to court disaster.

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How to Keep the Poor Out of the Countryside: A Short History of Rural Planning in England

Simon Fairlie

One objective of the rural planning system is to protect the countryside. Another is to keep poor and working people out of it — at least most of them. These two aims are not incompatible, in fact they work hand in hand. In order to understand fully their origins, we need to look back first to the process of enclosure.

During the 18th and 19th centuries (though the process had already started long before) poor landless rural workers were progressively squeezed out of countryside by the Enclosure Acts. These authorized wealthy farmers in each locality to fence off and take over for their own use the common lands that traditionally provided a place where commoners could graze their cows and geese, and find fuel and other products. One of the avowed objects of enclosure was to force independent peasants into wage labour, either on the fields of their betters, or increasingly in the burgeoning industrial towns.

Largely as a result of enclosure, between 1831 and 1901 the rural population in England declined by 1.4 million even though the country's population rose by 14.5 million, and most of the poor were living in towns, working in mills, or in service. There were few independent peasants left: most of the landless who remained in the countryside worked on farms belonging to a handful of landowners. In 1870, 2025 individuals owned more than half of England between them.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Liberal Party campaigned for land reform to combat rural poverty and in 1906 were elected to parliament on that platform. The Liberals (as well as bringing in the Allotment Acts) introduced land taxes which, after the First World War, resulted in about a quarter of all the agricultural property in England changing hands. Moreover, because of the agricultural recession it was going cheap. Here was a real opportunity for landless people who had managed to save a bit of money, or had a war pension. Entrepreneurs bought up fields, subdivided them into small plots and sold them off to ex-soldiers and other working class people who wanted to escape the grime of the industrial cities for a simple, healthy and independent rural life.

But the plotland movement, as it was called, posed a threat to the unsullied beauty of the English countryside, and to those who considered it was their privilege to enjoy it. There was outrage amongst a section of the middle classes at the "artistically deplorable wooden shanties" and the "congeries of discordant huts and caravans whose cumulative effect is to produce a shoddy, unplanned and unsightly blight."

At the same time the countryside was threatened from another quarter. The spread of the motor car meant that more and more people could build houses anywhere they liked, yet still travel into the city to work. Commuting was born: ribbons of jerry-built suburban villas spread outward from the towns along major roads, like the tentacles of an octopus. "With the growing use of the car" the town planner Thomas Sharp wrote in 1932, "all of the land in the country is being laid out as a gigantic building estate."

This too was an affront to middle class sensibilities and the growing campaign to protect the countryside from these two threats — pioneered by the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) — was so influential that by soon after World War II, it had already achieved its main aim. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act took away the ancient right of people to build on land that belonged to them —

unless they could obtain planning permission. Local plans decided what were appropriate areas for residences and what weren't. The very first local plan, in Shoreham, Sussex, was introduced in a hurry to prevent plotlanders, whose huts had been removed for the war effort, from reinstating them.

There was, of course another way to prevent the spread of ribbon development. Had the 1947 Act restricted the reach of the motor car (the cause of the problem), then few people would have been able to reside or build in the countryside unless they worked in the countryside — or alternatively were sited close to public transport networks. But this wouldn't have prevented low income people leaving the city, buying a plot of cheap land in the country, building their artistically deplorable wooden shacks, and staking out a rural livelihood. In any case, a good number of the middle classes were accustomed to driving out to their preferred rural retreat at weekends in their Bentleys. They weren't about to support restrictions on the right to drive.

So it was that the right of a person to build his or her own house on their own piece of land— a right enjoyed since time immemorial — was confiscated by the state, in the name of environmental protection, even though the catalyst of environmental degradation was not housing but the motor car.

The result of the 1947 Act, still the basis of the current planning system, is that land with permission to build a home on has been made artificially scarce, and its price is 100 or 200 times as much as agricultural land. The number of houses available in the countryside is far lower than the demand for them, with the result that rural houses are too expensive for people who earn their living by working in traditional rural employment, and they are bought up by people with inflated city incomes. The government recognizes that there is an affordable housing crisis, and that villagers on low incomes are being forced into the towns — but it refuses to acknowledge that it is the planning system that is the root cause of the problem.

Low income rural people, of course, do not take all this lying down, and there is a constant stream of rural people battling with their local planners to establish, by hook or by crook, the right to live in the countryside in a caravan, shack, or self-built ecohome. The inability of the planning system to deal with this phenomenon either effectively, consistently or fairly undermines its credibility.

There is also a movement whose aim is to adjust the rural planning system so that instead of engineering a scarcity of building opportunities, it promotes quality. The advocates of Low Impact Development argue that planning consent in the countryside should be given when a proposed development can show that it is environmentally low impact, rather than when the developer can afford to pay £100,000 for a plot of allocated land. This they say would open up the countryside to people who want to live and work there, rather than to speculators and people with urban incomes seeking second homes.

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Urban regeneration

By Libby Porter

Regeneration is a really sexy topic for planning students at the moment. Perhaps it's because of the vast array of activity and 'talk' about regeneration within planning and urban development circles, not to mention the media. In the UK, there are centres of regeneration excellence, best practice awards, practitioner networks and magazines, a multitude of partnerships and quango's set up to deliver regeneration, a vast array of different pots of money to 'do' regeneration and also research it, and of course endless scholarly debates. Or perhaps it's because of that missionary zeal that seems to be at least a partial reason why students take up planning (it was certainly a big factor in my own choice of profession). The idea of regeneration – of growing something anew from the ashes of decay, of change for the better – speaks to that zeal rather seductively. Or perhaps it's just because regeneration has become accepted wisdom within the urban policy and planning canon, just another of those things we do without question because we've been told so often it's a good thing.

Regeneration is a very elastic concept, used in lots of different policy settings, for different ends. In this reflection, I'm specifically referring to place-based regeneration of the kind we see in contemporary Britain – the regeneration of derelict waterfronts, old railway yards, old industrial estates, poor quality housing estates. This is a fairly critical reflection, and it necessarily glosses over the many instances where things are happening slightly differently or with a different agenda. My reflection, and critical points, are aimed at sparking debate and thinking for new practitioners and students in our field, to ask them to critically question what is being presented, and therefore how they might pursue their role within that practice. The piece is deliberately contentious.

Regeneration in its contemporary practice in the UK stems very substantially from an influential narrative about decline of inner cities in Britain. This narrative of decline is legitimated by evidence along a number of indicators: declining population numbers; changing demographics (more poor people, less affluent people); depressed or declining land values; and lack of, or declining, investment in the built form. The evidence of these things occurring is built into a story about the inner city districts of British metropolitan areas. In this story, inner city areas become the places modern society has turned its back on. They are edgy places, often dangerous, full of abandoned warehouses and derelict land, of sink housing estates and unsavoury social types, of fly-tipping and marginal social activities.

Yet those same districts are also the potential heroes of economic, social and cultural development in Britain. Often they have some nice old Victorian buildings (or at least their facades), intricate street networks, and sometimes interesting 'gritty' urban features like canals or railways viaducts. And of course, those inner city districts have two critical features that make them not just interesting but *ripe* for regeneration: proximity to the city centre, and low land values.

Much of the purpose, then, of regeneration policy has become to establish the conditions for inner city districts to realise their potential. This generally requires action along two fronts: to get rid of the stuff that's defined as 'bad' in the narrative of inner city decline, and to make the good stuff even better in order to attract the interest of land developers. It is very often the case in regeneration practice in the UK today (though not always) that the existing conditions (other than those features outlined above as either good or bad) are made invisible by the planning instruments designed to enable regeneration. In some instances, whole communities of people are overlooked, or significant activities made invisible to

produce a narrative that a particular inner city space is ready for regeneration. Unfortunately, in so many instances, urban regeneration in Britain today amounts to the class remake (through gentrification) of city districts.

Here's just some of the language we might encounter in an average regeneration policy or programme document:

'sustainability' = use of funky, add-on technologies to building developments to achieve a certain green rating

'mixed use' = a Starbucks at the bottom of a high-rise apartment tower

'vibrant and thriving' and '24 hour city' = more places to consume over more hours of the day

'tired industrial zone' = old ways of making stuff (some might still be economically viable) but its noisy and dirty and we don't want it too close to the city centre

'innovative architecture' = flagship (expensive) buildings designed by 'starchitects' to make a city attractive to the global creative class

'city living' = more middle class and wealthy people coming back to the city (the poor have for a long time been city dwellers)

'potential of waterfront' = luxury apartments to overlook the water, potential for curtailing of public access to waterfront

'new high quality public open space' = demolish old corner parks with swings and slides and develop more plazas with Cinzano umbrellas

'land assembly' = buy land and package into large parcels to get developers interested

'land remediation' = the public purse will pay to clean up land that was damaged by previous occupant, usually an industry, so that a new owner (usually a development company) will buy it

'prestige address' = luxury development aimed at upper class occupation and activity

'mixed community' = dilute the concentration of the poor by moving them out, and bringing in more middle class people (note that mixed communities are never a policy aim for wealthy suburbs)

'arts and culture' = replace existing, gritty cultural uses (if the land values are there, these will be present) with new, less gritty ones that can afford higher rents

Does this mean we should give up on regeneration, or declare it a universally bad thing? Absolutely not, in the same way that we should question when it is presented by its advocates as an unquestionably good thing. There are parts of our cities that are failing to flourish in the ways they should be able to. The poor should not be asked to live in low quality housing and derelict urban environments. There is indeed a need for regeneration in circumstances where human flourishing and environmental justice is severely curtailed by disinvestment and neglect. Disinvestment and de-population often (though not always) means declining job opportunities and other forms of social and economic marginalisation.

It doesn't have to be so. We might think about how to reclaim regeneration back from neoliberalism's tight grip, which has rendered regeneration a euphemism for gentrification. That grip may now be loosening, as the vulnerabilities of 'comprehensive' style regeneration programmes – the 'slash-and-burn' approach where all existing uses are destroyed to make way for the new – are now being exposed by economic crisis. Different practices and approaches are possible, and are being tried out all around the world. In Barcelona (Spain), local people have at least partially successfully ensured that retail rent prices for a quota of shops in a part of the Old Town subject to a regeneration programme were kept low and subsidised for low-income locals to keep their businesses open. In Salvador de Bahia (Brazil), locals got together to stop the total eviction of existing residents by a regeneration programme and managed, by

various innovative policy means, to keep a group of existing low-income residents housed within the regeneration area. In San Francisco (USA), local policy advocates have successfully championed the inclusion of a suite of policy initiatives designed to protect the poor, necessary local services and public open spaces from the ravages of seemingly unstoppable condominium development in the inner city. In Berne (Switzerland), an innovative approach to housing tenure and the use of obligations for communal occupation of housing have contributed to a slower, grassroots regeneration of Berne that has maintained the right of the poor to the city.

If you are interested in reading more about how to develop your own critical awareness of the 'urban renaissance', plus the possibilities for reclaiming regeneration, and shifting the nature of regeneration policy, then try these:

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Editor's Introduction

David Harvey has made a crucial, radical contribution to thinking about how cities are made. This text was originally delivered as the opening speech at the Urban Reform Tent, at the World Social Forum in January 2009. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author. At the time of publication it provides a topical introduction to his critical contributions on the Right to the City, and the relationship between capitalism and city-building.

The Right to the City: opening speech at the Urban Reform Tent, World Social Forum, Belem, Brasil, January 2009

David Harvey

I'm delighted to be here, but first of all I'd like to apologize for speaking English which is the language of international imperialism. I hope that what I have to say is sufficiently anti-imperialist that you people will forgive me. (applause)

I am very grateful for this invitation because I learn a great deal from the social movements. I've come here to learn and to listen and therefore I am already finding this a great educational experience because as Karl Marx once put it there is always the big question of who will educate the educators.

I have been working for some time on the idea of the Right to the City. I take it that Right to the City means the right of all of us to create cities that meet human needs, our needs. The right to the city is not the right to have - and I'll use an English expression - crumbs from the rich mans table. We should all have the same rights to further construct the different kinds of cities that we want to exist.

The right to the city is not simply the right to what already exists in the city but the right to make the city into something radically different. When I look at history I see that cities have been managed by capital more than by people. So in this struggle for the right to the city there is going to be a struggle against capital.

I want to talk a little bit now about the history of the relationship between capital and city building and ask the question: Why is it that capital manages to exercise so much rights over the city? And why is it that popular forces are relatively weak against that power? And I'd also like to talk about how, actually, the way capital works in cities is one of its weaknesses. So at this time I think the struggle for the right to the city is at the center of the struggle against capital. We have now - as you all know - a financial crisis of capitalism. If you look at recent history you will find that over the last 30 years there have been many financial crises. Somebody did a calculation and said that since

1970 there have been 378 financial crisis in the world. Between 1945 and 1970 there were only 56 financial crises. So capital has been producing many financial crises over the last 30 to 40 years. And what is interesting is that many of these financial crises have a basis in urbanization. At the end of the 1980s the Japanese economy crashed and it crashed around property and land speculation. In 1987 in the United States there was a huge crisis in which hundreds of banks went bankrupt and it was all about housing and property development speculation. In the 1970s there was a big, world-wide crises in property markets. And I could go on and on giving you examples of financial crises that are urban based. My guess is that half of the financial crises over the last 30 years are urban property based. The origins of this crisis in the United States came from something called the sub prime mortgage crises. I call this not a sub prime mortgage crisis but an urban crisis.

This is what happened. In the 1990s there came about a problem of surplus money with nowhere to go. Capitalism is a system that always produces surpluses. You can think of it this way: the capitalist wakes up in the morning and he goes into the market with a certain amount of money and buys labor and means of production. He puts those elements to work and produces a commodity and sells it for more money than he began with. So at the end of the day the capitalist has more than he had at the beginning of the day. And the big question is what does he do with the more that he's picked up? Now if he were like you and me he would probably go out and have a good time and spend it. But capitalism is not like that. There are competitive forces that push him to reinvest part of his capital in new developments. In the history of capitalism there has been a 3% rate of growth since 1750. Now a 3% growth rate means that you have to find outlets for capital. So capitalism is always faced with what I call a capital surplus absorption problem. Where can I find a profitable outlet to apply my capital? Now back in 1750 the whole world was open for that question. And at that time the total value of the global economy was \$135 billion in goods and services. By the time you get to 1950 there is \$4 Trillion in circulation and you have to find outlets for 3% of \$4 trillion. By the time you get to the year 2000 you have \$42 trillion in circulation. Around now its probably \$50 Trillion. In another 25 years at 3% rate of growth it will be \$100 trillion. What this means is that there is an increasing difficulty in finding profitable outlets for the surplus capital. This situation can be presented in another way. When capitalism was essentially what was going on in Manchester and a few other places in the World, a 3% growth rate posed no problem. Now we have to put a 3% rate of growth on everything that is happening in China, East and Southeast Asia, Europe, much of Latin America and North America and there is a huge, huge problem. Now capitalists, when they have money, have a choice as to how they reinvest it. You can invest in new production. An argument for making the rich

richer is that they will reinvest in production and that this will generate employment and a better standard of living for the people. But since 1970 they have invested less and less in new production. They have invested in buying assets, stock shares, property rights, intellectual property rights and of course property. So since 1970, more and more money has gone into financial assets and when the capitalist class starts buying assets the value of the assets increases. So they start to make money out of the increase in the value of their assets. So property prices go up and up and up. And this does not make for a better city it makes for a more expensive city. Furthermore, to the degree that they want to build condominiums and affluent housing they have to drive poor people off their land. They have to take away our right to the city. So that in New York City I find it very difficult to live in Manhattan, and I am a reasonably well paid professor. The mass of the population that actually works in the city cannot afford to live in the city because property prices have gone up and up and up and up. In other words the people's right to the city has been taken away. Sometimes it has been taken away through actions of the market, sometimes its been taken away by government action expelling people from where they live, sometimes it has been taken away by illegal means, violence, setting fire to a building. There was a period where one part of New York City had fire after fire after fire.

So what this does is to create a situation where the rich can increasingly take over the whole domination of the city. And they have to do that because this is the only way they can use their surplus capital. And at some point however there is also the incentive for this process of city building to go down to the poorer people. The financial institutions lend to the property developers to get them to develop large areas of the city. You have the developers but then the problem is who do the developers sell their properties too? If working class incomes were increasing then maybe you could sell to the working class. But since the 1970s the policies of neoliberalism have been about wage repression. In the United States real wages haven't risen since 1970, so you have a situation where real wages are constant but property prices are going up. So where is the demand for the houses going to come from? The answer was you invite the working classes into the debt environment. And what we see is that household debt in the United States has gone from about \$40,000 per household to over \$120,000 per household in the last 20 years. The financial institutions knock on the doors of working class people and say, "we have a good deal for you. You borrow money from us and you can become a homeowner, and don't worry, if at some point you can't pay your debt the housing prices are going to go up so everything is fine".

So more and more low income people were bought into the debt

environment. But then about two years ago property prices started to come down. The gap between what working class people could afford and what the debt was was too big. Suddenly you had a foreclosure wave going through many American cities. But as usually happens with something of this kind there is an uneven geographical development of that wave. The first wave hit very low income communities in many of the older cities in the United States. There is a wonderful map that you can see on the BBC website of the foreclosures in the city of Cleveland. And what you see is a dot map of the foreclosures that is highly concentrated in certain areas of the city. There is a map beside it which shows a distribution of the African American population, and the two maps correspond. What this means is that this was robbery of a low income African American population. This has been the biggest loss of assets for low income populations in the United States that there has ever been. 2 Million people have lost their homes. And at that very moment when that was happening the bonuses paid out on Wall street were coming to over \$30 Billion - that is the extra money that is paid to the bankers for their work. So \$30 billion ends up on Wall Street which has effectively been taken from low income neighborhoods. There is talk about this in the United States as a financial Katrina because as you remember Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans differentially and it was the low income black population that got left behind and many of them died. The rich protected their right to the city but the poor essentially lost theirs. In Florida, California and the American South West the pattern was different. It was very much out on the periphery of the cities. And there a lot of money was being lent to the building groups and the developers. They were building housing way out, 30 miles outside of Tuscon and Los Angeles and they couldn't find anybody to sell to so they actually went for a white population that did not like living near immigrants and blacks in the central cities. What this then led to was a situation that happened a year ago when the high gas prices made it very difficult for communities. Many of the people had difficulties paying their debt and so we find a foreclosure wave which is happening in the suburbs and is manly white in places like Florida, Arizona and California. Meanwhile what Wall Street had done is to take all of these risky mortgages and to package them in strange financial instruments. You take all of the mortgages from a particular place and put them into a pot and then sell shares of that pot to somebody else. The result is that the whole of the mortgage financial market has globalized. And you sell pieces of ownership to mortgages to people in Norway or Germany or the Gulf or whatever. Everybody was told that these mortgages and these financial instruments were as safe as houses. They turned out not to be safe and we then had the big crisis which keeps going and going and going. My argument is that if this crisis is basically a crisis of urbanization then the solution should be urbanization of a different sort and this is where the struggle for the right to the city becomes

crucial because we have the opportunity to do something different.

But I am often asked if this crisis is the end of neoliberalism.. My answer is "no" if you look at what is being proposed in Washington and London. One of the basic principles that was set up in the 1970s is that state power should protect financial institutions at all costs. And there is a conflict between the well being of financial institutions and the well being of people you chose the well being of the financial institutions. This is the principle that was worked out in New York City in the mid 1970s, and was first defined internationally in Mexico it threatened to go bankrupt in 1982. If Mexico had gone bankrupt it would have destroyed the New York investment banks. So the United States Treasury and the International Monetary Fund combined to help Mexico not go bankrupt. In other words they lent the money to Mexico to pay off the New York bankers. But in so doing they mandated austerity for the Mexican population. In other words they protected the banks and destroyed the people. This has been the standard practice in the International Monetary Fund ever since. Now if you look at the response to the crisis in the United States and Britain, what they have done in effect is to bail out the banks. \$700 billion to the banks in the United States. They have done nothing whatsoever to protect the homeowners who have lost their houses. So it is the same principal that we are seeing at work - protect the financial institutions and fuck the people. What we should have done is to take the \$700 billion and create an urban redevelopment bank to save all of those neighborhoods that were being destroyed and reconstruct cities more out of popular demand. Interestingly if we had done that then a lot of the crisis would have disappeared because there would be no foreclosed mortgages. Meanwhile we need to organize an anti-eviction movement and we have seen some of that going on in Boston and some other cities. But at this historical moment in the United States there is a sense that popular mobilization is restricted because the election of Obama was a priority. Many people hope that Obama will do something different, unfortunately his economic advisors are exactly those who organized this whole problem in the first place. I doubt that Obama will be as progressive as Lula. You will have to wait a little bit before I think social movements will begin to go in motion. We need a national movement of Urban Reform like you have here. We need to build a militancy in the way that you have done here. We need in fact to begin to exercise our right to the city. And at some point we'll have to reverse this whole way in which the financial institutions are given priority over us. We have to ask the question what is more important, the value of the banks or the value of humanity. The banking system should serve the people, not live off the people. And the only way in which at some point we are really going to be able to exert the right to the city is that we have to take command of the capitalist surplus absorption problem. We have to socialize the capital surplus. We

have to use it to meet social needs . We have to get out of the problem of 3% accumulation forever. We are now at a point where 3% growth rate forever is going to exert such tremendous environmental costs, its going to exert tremendous pressure on social situations that we are going to go from one financial crisis to another. If we come out of this financial crisis in the way they want there will be another financial crisis 5 years from now. So its come to the point when its no longer a matter of accepting what Margaret Thatcher said, that "there is no alternative", and we say that there has to be an alternative. There has to be an alternative to capitalism in general. And we can begin to approach that alternative by perceiving the right to the city as a popular and international demand and I hope that we can all join together in that mission. Thank you very much. as you all know - a financial crisis of capitalism. If you look at

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So more and more low income people were bought into the debt environment. But then about two years ago property prices started to come down. The gap between what working class people could afford and what the debt was was too big. Suddenly you had a foreclosure wave going through many American cities. But as usually happens with something of this kind there is an uneven geographical development of that wave. The first wave hit very low income communities in many of the older cities in the United States. There is a wonderful map that you can see on the BBC website of the foreclosures in the city of Cleveland. And what you see is a dot map of the foreclosures that is highly concentrated in certain areas of the city. There is a map beside it which shows a distribution of the African American population, and the two maps correspond. What this means is that this was robbery of a low income African American population. This has been the biggest loss of assets for low income populations in the United States that there has ever been. 2 Million people have lost their homes. And at that very moment when that was happening the bonuses paid out on Wall street were coming to over \$30 Billion - that is the extra money that is paid to the bankers for their work. So \$30 billion ends up on Wall Street which has effectively been taken from low income neighborhoods. There is talk about this in the United States as a financial Katrina because as you remember Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans differentially and it was the low income black population that got left behind and many of them died. The rich protected their right to the city but the poor essentially lost theirs. In Florida, California and the American South West the pattern was different. It was very much out on the periphery of the cities. And there a lot of money was being lent to the building groups and the developers. They were building housing way out, 30 miles outside of Tuscon and Los Angeles and they couldn't find anybody to sell to so they actually went for a white population that did not like living near immigrants and blacks in the central cities. What this then led to was a

situation that happened a year ago when the high gas prices made it very difficult for communities. Many of the people had difficulties paying their debt and so we find a foreclosure wave which is happening in the suburbs and is mainly white in places like Florida, Arizona and California. Meanwhile what Wall Street had done is to take all of these risky mortgages and to package them in strange financial instruments. You take all of the mortgages from a particular place and put them into a pot and then sell shares of that pot to somebody else. The result is that the whole of the mortgage financial market has globalized. And you sell pieces of ownership to mortgages to people in Norway or Germany or the Gulf or whatever. Everybody was told that these mortgages and these financial instruments were as safe as houses. They turned out not to be safe and we then had the big crisis which keeps going and going and going. My argument is that if this crisis is basically a crisis of urbanization then the solution should be urbanization of a different sort and this is where the struggle for the right to the city becomes crucial because we have the opportunity to do something different.

But I am often asked if this crisis is the end of neoliberalism.. My answer is "no" if you look at what is being proposed in Washington and London. One of the basic principles that was set up in the 1970s is that state power should protect financial institutions at all costs. And there is a conflict between the well being of financial institutions and the well being of people you chose the well being of the financial institutions. This is the principle that was worked out in New York City in the mid 1970s, and was first defined internationally in Mexico it threatened to go bankrupt in 1982. If Mexico had gone bankrupt it would have destroyed the New York investment banks. So the United States Treasury and the International Monetary Fund combined to help Mexico not go bankrupt. In other words they lent the money to Mexico to pay off the New York bankers. But in so doing they mandated austerity for the Mexican population. In other words they protected the banks and destroyed the people. This has been the standard practice in the International Monetary Fund ever since. Now if you look at the response to the crisis in the United States and Britain, what they have done in effect is to bail out the banks. \$700 billion to the banks in the United States. They have done nothing whatsoever to protect the homeowners who have lost their houses. So it is the same principal that we are seeing at work - protect the financial institutions and fuck the people. What we should have done is to take the \$700 billion and create an urban redevelopment bank to save all of those neighborhoods that were being destroyed and reconstruct cities more out of popular demand. Interestingly if we had done that then a lot of the crisis would have disappeared because there would be no foreclosed mortgages. Meanwhile we need to organize an anti-eviction movement and we have seen some of that going on in Boston and some other cities. But at this historical moment

in the United States there is a sense that popular mobilization is restricted because the election of Obama was a priority. Many people hope that Obama will do something different, unfortunately his economic advisors are exactly those who organized this whole problem in the first place. I doubt that Obama will be as progressive as Lula. You will have to wait a little bit before I think social movements will begin to go in motion. We need a national movement of Urban Reform like you have here. We need to build a militancy in the way that you have done here. We need in fact to begin to exercise our right to the city. And at some point we'll have to reverse this whole way in which the financial institutions are given priority over us. We have to ask the question what is more important, the value of the banks or the value of humanity. The banking system should serve the people, not live off the people. And the only way in which at some point we are really going to be able to exert the right to the city is that we have to take command of the capitalist surplus absorption problem. We have to socialize the capital surplus. We have to use it to meet social needs . We have to get out of the problem of 3% accumulation forever. We are now at a point where 3% growth rate forever is going to exert such tremendous environmental costs, its going to exert tremendous pressure on social situations that we are going to go from one financial crisis to another. If we come out of this financial crisis in the way they want there will be another financial crisis 5 years from now. So its come to the point when its no longer a matter of accepting what Margaret Thatcher said, that "there is no alternative", and we say that there has to be an alternative. There has to be an alternative to capitalism in general. And we can begin to approach that alternative by perceiving the right to the city as a popular and international demand and I hope that we can all join together in that mission. Thank you very much.

The politics of Planning

There is little doubt these days that Town Planning is highly political because it is about power over the use of land and property. Yet in spite of this it has a low profile in national politics. This section of the guide explains why this is so, and hopefully throws some light on the underlying forces that shape the planning system.

The Illusion of Planning

The property market with its land ownership patterns, demand sectors, property companies and infrastructure of property investment funds and banks, is the process that does most to shape Planning in the UK.

Yet it does not appear to be doing this, largely because the planning system hides the market behind complex bureaucratic processes including obligations on local authorities to produce land use plans, as if the market was accountable to them. It adds consultation exercises, development agencies, and public/private partnerships that together give the impression (illusion) that Government (and the people) can direct and control development in their areas.

Planning authorities ask local residents what they would like to see in a forward plan for their area, when in fact much of what happens to the use of land and property is outside the control of the planning system. For example, landlord and tenant activity, service provision, differences over public and private development, the dynamics of the retail and business sectors, health and employment issues, are just some of the factors that determine community life and the environments people live and work in. Planning is limited to the control of land use, and not much else.

Even land use is largely determined by private and public land owners, who have the resources when they need it, to employ consultants and planning lawyers to secure what they want. It is rare for ordinary people using the instruments of the planning system i.e. local authority development control powers or the public inquiry system to beat these market and private interests. It does happen, but not often.

Who benefits?

There is a widely held assumption that town planning is a progressive post-war welfare state reform which is positively redistributive i.e. benefits the poor (and the wider public) at the expense of the rich and individual landed interests. The purpose of the “nationalisation of development rights” through the 1947 Act and subsequent legislation, was to replace private control over land use by the exercise of the public interest.

In fact, what has happened is that the public interest as expressed through plans, or in legal terms what constitutes “a planning matter”, has been interpreted broadly (with exceptions of course) as what the land and property market wants. In other words, private land market pressures tend to win out when it come to plan making and development control.

The reason for this is simply that, without land itself being in public or social ownership, and with planning legislation being restricted to land use, planning does not effectively control the built environment. The public as individual home owners, or via local government and central government do put forward their own schemes, but these proposals are a small proportion of commercial and private housing schemes submitted to the planning system. And, local communities are rarely able to put forward their own schemes because they do not own development land and do not have the funding to develop it. Nor can they block development they do not want because they are “third parties” with no legal stake in the land or property in question.

The outcome is that, on the balance sheet of “winners and losers”, planning decisions generally benefit the better off and wealthy interests (who are in the main the applicants for planning permission) and the communities they live and work in, rather than those on lower incomes. Lower income communities tend to get the negative effect of strategic developments like roads and power stations. Richer neighbourhoods are protected, often by planning designations such as Conservation Areas, from these “negative spillovers”. Thus, planning in practice has a marked class bias.

The degree of “bias” within the planning system is not fixed, however. Economic and political context affect the outcome. In the Thatcherite period for example, land use planning was steered by Government using Development Corporations and national planning circulars towards the requirements of business and the property market. Under New Labour, during the years of economic growth, the system was a little more redistributive, through the sustainable development policy framework for example. The degree of party political control over local authorities (which is reflected in the lobbying of national local government associations) also affects the outcomes. But these swings in the pendulum do not change the underlying fact that the planning system reflects the underlying balance of economic and political power; it does not fundamentally change it.

Development Control

Town planning has one exceptional and important power over private interests in land – to determine the use of land through granting or withholding planning permissions and land use plan designations. It thus holds a vital card; the power to affect land values. It follows that although the influence of planning over communities and their neighbourhoods is limited (frustratingly so) its role is of great political importance.

The political and economic importance of land ownership and value means that individual planning decisions and land use plans are contested at many different levels – by landed interests, property market professionals, political parties and community groups (whether they are nimbys or those with more strategic or altruistic aims).

Party Politics and Planning

Interestingly, in spite of this power over land value, town planning policy and practice does not evoke much prominent national party political debate, for example, for or against more regulation, for or against more local control, for and against special powers for Development Corporations or Compulsory Purchase. Often the level of party political debate is quite hidden. The manifestos (and web sites) of the main political parties generally have little to say about town planning.

It is interesting to note that in most local authorities the Planning Committee is regarded as a “non political” committee, with its business managed independently of the party controlled Cabinet of the Council.

At a national level, town planning is a minority concern – there are not many votes in it. It is technical and perceived as a legislative minefield if Ministers want to introduce new planning laws. There appears to be all party consensus that control over land use in principle is acceptable, with differences over how much control should be exercised by the state. Even so, most political parties fear that too much regulation will block economic expansion. Both Labour and Conservatives have competed to speed up the planning system or increase flexibility, for example, over targets for dealing with planning applications or the mechanisms for accelerating the approval of major infrastructure projects. The call for flexibility and reduced regulation is the perennial cry of the business and property lobbies - and Governments of all persuasions listen. The Barker reports for Treasury in 2004 and 2006 on making the planning system more compatible with economic expansion are a classic case in point.

However, growing concern about the environment and climate change has thrown this debate about planning and economic efficiency into some confusion. Government and political parties are faced with a dilemma – protect the environment and insist on sustainable development which may restrict the market, or be flexible about development to attract investment and create jobs. The future of the Green Belt, additional runways at Heathrow, more road schemes and urban extensions lie in the balance. How can the circle be squared?

Both Labour and Conservatives support the idea of National Planning Policy Statements on key areas of policy e.g. housing, transport, energy. But again, how these national guidelines should be interpreted at local and regional level is disputed. Conservatives and Liberal Democrats argue that the Labour Government is “statist”, imposing too much central direction on local planning decisions. They want to “re-empower people”, give powers back to local authorities to control development without the interference of central or regional government. They see centralised planning as part of government “control freakery” and “box ticking”. Both parties use the Eco Towns programme as an example.

The Tories would like to abolish regional spatial strategies, and deregulate small scale development “to free up planning departments to focus on larger developments”. They say that under a Tory Government “the centre will not tell local communities what they should do.”

The green agenda, at the heart of which is the notion of sustainability, is broadly shared by all the political parties. Labour has strongly promoted “sustainable communities” and sustainable building but this is criticised by the other parties as too top down, with Lib Dems and Greens advocating a more localised bottom up approach and the Tories (with their current large local government majority) placing more faith in local authorities.

The Liberal Democrats attack the perceived centralisation of UK planning eg. over major infrastructure projects and present themselves as a greener party than Labour or Conservative in terms of environmental concerns, and green taxes. The Green Party holds the moral high ground on green politics but again its view on planning, as such, are less clear.

Radical change

Little of the political debate over planning, such as it is, centres on changing the planning system or planning law, let alone altering the structure of land ownership or land taxation. Little is heard of including non-land use issues such as the quality of employment or business, environmental quality, housing tenure, or public service delivery, as “material considerations” in determining planning applications or drawing up formal plans. There is silence over the important demand for the right of third parties to appeal against planning applications. The issue of land taxation is avoided like the plague.

The political parties appear to be competing for who is most green at a rhetorical level – this being a lot less contentious than rethinking the planning system and introducing new laws. It is almost as if the politicians are afraid of what a truly democratic planning system would do to the private market in land and property.

Bob Colenutt

The Planners Network UK Disorientation Guide

A contribution to progressive planning education and practice

This is the pnuk disorientation guide, or at least a work in progress that we hope will become the pnuk disorientation guide. The guide is written with new students on planning courses in mind, with the aim of providing a resource to support critical thinking about planning education and the possibilities of a more progressive planning practice. This is a working draft published here with the aim of stimulating debate, inspiring further contributions to fill gaps, and opening up the contributions so far for editing. We hope to maintain a 'living' wiki version of the guide, and also eventually to produce a downloadable pdf version. Please do get involved (if you want to join the pnuk wiki to contribute follow the links above.)

Guide to the guide:

Section 1 Introducing the disorientation guide

[Introduction](#)

A bit of a radical planning history

[The Right to the City - David Harvey](#)

What's the point of planning? (short sections from various eminent, critical voices/ collection of quotes?)

Section 2 The politics of planning in the UK today

[The politics of planning – Bob Colenutt](#)

[Planning and Big Infrastructure: the 2008 Planning Act](#)– Tim Marshall

[Planning the people out of the countryside](#)– Simon Fairlie

[Housing policy, planning and the credit crunch](#)- Duncan Bowie

Section 3 Planning Education and practice: choosing the kind of planner to be

[Careers in planning: searching for a progressive purpose](#)– Andy Inch

[Planning education: a critique from personal experience](#) - Eeva Berglund

Section 4 Unpicking the mythologies of planning

[Regeneration and urban renaissance](#)– Libby Porter

[Planning, science and the public](#) - Eeva Berglund

Housing markets and mass housebuilders – Samuel Fisher

Sustainable development – planning and the environment

[Planners and the planned](#)– Yas Beebeejaun

Section 5 Supporting radical planning activity

Hopefully this space can be used by the education, research and communication group to exchange work/ ideas/ news etc.

Events and News:

The aim of this page is to try and better integrate our fixed web content, and the wiki, and to allow all members to add news of upcoming events, publications or whatever that might be of interest. So please feel free to edit this page and let us know what's going on. To go back to our homepage [click here](#).

We are currently looking to develop further events, perhaps focused around recent mailing list discussions about the planning impacts of major supermarkets and their implications for communities and local democracy. If you are interested in participating then [get in touch](#).

5/2/13: Manifesto for a progressive planning - ways forward on planning and land

Launch meetings are being held in London and Sheffield for the [current draft manifesto](#).
London meeting 5 February 2013; Sheffield details to follow soon.

Beyond con-dem nation: towards an alternative agenda for planning

Tuesday 24th, May 2011 in Birmingham

As part of its wider targeting of local government and public services the con-dem government's attack on planning has begun to take shape. Whilst there are marked contradictions in the reform agenda, there are worryingly few voices publically arguing for planning. Following from a successful event in March in London, this meeting will consider the threat to planning from a range of different geographical perspectives, and how PNUK and others can best campaign for a more just planning system and society.

Venue: Millennium Point, Curzon St., Birmingham, B4 7XG (near city centre)

Time and date: 10.30 am-4pm, Tuesday 24th May, 2011

Cost: £10 to cover cost of lunch (we also hope to make a small travel fund available to assist anyone who genuinely can't afford to make it)

Programme

10.30-12.30 Session 1: perspectives from the south, the midlands and the Celtic fringe

Speakers: Peter Studdert (lately of South Cambridgeshire)

Geraint Ellis (Queen's University Belfast)

Chris Crean (Friends of the Earth West Midlands)

12.30-13.15 Lunch

13.15-15.30 Session 2: Workshop on the agenda for campaigning

Topics: 1. How can we challenge the 'evidence-base' and influence of free-market economists to argue for a more just and balanced model of urban development?

2. What alliances can planning and planners form to make the case for alternative views of planning?

3. What instruments and tools can we use to achieve this?

15.30-16.00 Feedback and closing comments

16.00 Close

Planners Network UK is a collective of practitioners, students, academics and activists that want to develop and support critical thinking about the current state of planning in the UK (see www.pnuk.org.uk). This event aims to bring together those interested in assessing current challenges and attempting to articulate a progressive response. There will be plenty of space for discussion, and considering strategies for action. Places are limited.

To book email either Tim Marshall (tmarshall@brookes.ac.uk) or Andy Inch (a.inch@sheffield.ac.uk)

PNUK EVENT

In trouble again: Planning under threat. What's worth fighting for?

The Con-Dem government's attack on local government and public services makes this feel like a pivotal political moment, but how should planning and planners respond to it? How can we define and defend a conception of planning that is worth fighting for? How does planning reform fit into the wider picture and the struggles that are emerging as the cuts bite?

Venue: TCPA, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AS

Time and date: 10am-4pm Tuesday 15th March, 2011

Cost: £7.50 to cover lunch (please pay on the day)

Programme:

9.30 Coffee and Registration

10-12.00 Session 1: assessing the threat

Speakers: Hugh Ellis (TCPA)

Bob Colenutt (University of Northampton)

12.00 -13.00 Lunch

13.00 -14.30 Session 2: what's worth fighting for?

Speakers: Michael Edwards (UCL)

Duncan Bowie (University of Westminster)

14.30-15.00 Break

15.00-16.00 Session 3: What's to be done? (discussion)

16.00 Close

Planners Network UK is a collective of practitioners, students, academics and activists that want to develop and support critical thinking about the current state of planning in the UK (see www.pnuk.org.uk). This event aims to bring together those interested in assessing current challenges and attempting to articulate a progressive response. There will be plenty of space for discussion, and considering strategies for action.

Places are limited. Please email either Tim Marshall (tmarshall@brookes.ac.uk) or Andy Inch (a.inch@sheffield.ac.uk) to book.

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PNUK Roundtable meeting on planning and supermarkets

This meeting has been arranged for **Friday 29th January, 2010**

10.30am til 3.30/4pm, at Chandler House, 2 Wakefield Street, London WC1N 1PG.

Within the overall PNUK aim of redirecting the role of planning to contribute to a just and sustainable society, the purpose of the meeting is to:

- Share information on the current planning and policy issues around supermarkets and retail, what can be done to protect local retail diversity, and what support communities and campaign groups need.
- Identify how PNUK members can contribute, e.g. advice, influence teaching programmes, independent impact assessment, research, policy work.
- Take back our ideas and action points to the network.

This meeting was originally proposed in response to coverage of the proposed Machynlleth Tesco but will not focus specifically on this case. Attendance will be a mix of practising planners, academics in planning or related fields, and voluntary sector organisations including Tescopoly and Friends of the Earth.

There is an attendance limit of around 25 to keep it as a 'roundtable' discussion. There are some places left within this limit. Anyone interested should contact the coordinating PNUK member Karen Leach as below.

A very small travel bursary fund is available on a first come first served basis. Timings may be altered slightly but we will certainly finish by 4pm latest.

Contact:

Karen Leach

Coordinator

Localise West Midlands

The Warehouse

54-57 Allison Street

Digbeth B5 5TH

0121 685 1155

www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk

Tea and coffee from 10.30am; start at 11am

1. Agree note-taker, chair and agenda/structure of meeting
2. Participant introductions 11.10am
3. Reminder of objectives of PNUK and this meeting specifically 11.15am
4. Policy context and national campaigning environment: information sharing, discussion, identify major opportunities for change
 - PPS4, FOE's view on it, select committee (Helen/Gay)
 - Competition test (Helen)
 - LDF process and proactive retail planning
 - Other inputs/discussion 12.30pm
5. Campaigning (site-specific) and community support environment : information sharing, discussion, identify gaps/needs
 - Tesco; summary of trends in supermarket expansion and recent decisions (Judith)
 - what support community groups need (Gay)
 - other inputs/discussion 1.30pm

Short break to grab lunch

The current issue of the journal *Planning Theory & Practice* takes a look at the personal cost and experience of being displaced by a major sporting event, raising questions for planners. The feature explores the deeply marginalising effects of being on the “receiving end” of the policy and planning processes designed to achieve displacement. In doing so, the contributions in this feature confront those processes head on and challenge not only the assumptions, but also the procedures by which displacement is actually given effect. Contributions are from people who have been displaced, or are watching it occur, in London, Glasgow and Vancouver.

Link to: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/offers/rptp/>

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PN Conference 2010

6. What can PNUK and its members do to contribute locally and nationally (perhaps under the following headings)
 - Research
 - Teaching/curriculum
 - Lobbying
 - Support to community groups
 - Awareness raising 3pm
7. Action points 3.30pm

Call for Proposals - Deadline March 1, 2010

Presentations, Posters and Workshops

As cities and towns around the world grapple with the impacts of multiple and concurrent crises, progressive planners, urbanists, activists, and citizens face the challenge of transforming crises into opportunities to advance profound changes in the way we plan, build, design, live in, and govern our cities.

We invite **submissions** addressing, but not limited to, the following questions: How are today's crises impacting cities and transforming contemporary debates about justice? What possible futures emerge as cities and local communities respond to rapid economic, political, demographic, and environmental change? What is a just distribution of local, national, and global responsibilities? What possibilities and/or responsibilities will move us toward a more just metropolis? How do we collaborate to achieve change towards social justice, equity, better living conditions, and the right to the metropolis? What innovative ideas can crises prompt in the quest for a just and inclusive metropolis? And how do we get there?

Submission could be in the form of **workshops, panel discussions, paper/project presentations, and posters**. We encourage the grouping of papers in pre-organized sessions but reserve the right to realign papers once proposals have been accepted. The conference will feature a special reception for posters, during which authors will display and discuss their work one-on-one. We encourage collaboration across disciplines and communities.

DEADLINE: All submissions are due by March 1, 2010

Applicants will be notified within a month of submission. Our review committee will begin work as soon as proposals are submitted, so interested participants are encouraged to submit proposals before the deadline. **All participants in sessions - including local panelists - are required to register for the conference.**

SESSION TYPES: We have identified four types of sessions, which are described below. If you have an idea for a different format, i.e. a film or art session, you will have the option to choose "other" on the abstract submission form.

Paper/Project Presentations – These sessions are designed for people to present their research, projects, ideas, accomplishments and failures. **Individual presentations should be limited to 15 minutes.** Qualifying presentations will be grouped together based on subject, geography or other thematic considerations. Paper/project sessions will be between 1 and 1.5 hours, and all authors should be present for the full duration of their session, to allow for audience Q&A.

Panels – Panels may be a collection of individual papers and projects or a panel facilitated by a moderator. Priority will be given to panels that reflect diversity of opinions, backgrounds and geography. Panels must have a minimum of three and a maximum of five panelists. The panel organizer must submit ONE abstract on behalf of the entire panel. The abstract should include the title, purpose, and the names of the panelists and the moderator. Qualifying panel discussions will be between 1 and 1.5 hours and should leave room for Q&A. If you would like us to help identify an outside moderator/discussant, please indicate so in your submission.

Participatory Workshops – The goal of a participatory workshop is the involvement of ALL workshop participants in a discussion or other exercise designed to learn, communicate, debate, etc. Workshops can be led by a single person, although workshops led by a diverse range of people will receive priority. "Presenting" by the workshop leader/s should be limited. Workshop proposals should include the title and purpose of the workshop, the names of all presenters/leaders, and should indicate how leaders intend to involve others in the workshop. Workshops will be between 1 and 1.5 hours and will take place in classroom-sized rooms, unless special arrangements are made. Please indicate if the workshop will require any special arrangements for space, scheduling, etc.

Posters - Posters emphasize the visual communication of ideas and are an excellent way to present one's research, designs or project outside of a formal session. The conference will feature a special reception for posters, during which authors will present and discuss their work one-on-one, and the posters will be on display in the main conference site during the classroom sessions on Friday June 18th and Saturday June 19th. Poster abstracts should include the title, purpose, names of all authors/presenters and preliminary description or design of the poster.

Other – We enthusiastically invite the submission of proposals for other presentation formats, such as film, installations, project exhibitions, student work, etc. Abstracts in this category must include the title, purpose, names of presenters/authors, description of the work to be presented, and any required special arrangements (space, scheduling, etc.).

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Presenters/authors must first submit an abstract-length proposal of approximately 250-400 words. Proposals must also include:

- Title

- Purpose
- Key words (minimum of 1, maximum of 5)
- Abstract (250-400 words)
- Name(s) of all authors, presenters, panelists, workshop leaders, etc.
- Name(s) of suggested discussant(s), for pre-organized sessions and panels only
- Special arrangements (space requirements, scheduling, etc.)

To submit an abstract, click on the link below, which will take you to an offsite abstract submission system which we are using to manage submissions.

Abstract Submission Page

Please direct any questions about proposal submissions to Kate Ervin (HunterMUP at gmail.com). We look forward to having you participate in the Just Metropolis!

Our most recent event was held in London on April 10-11, 2008 and, in conjunction with [gamesmonitor](#), looked to develop strategies for research and action around the 2012 Olympic redevelopments. Click [here](#), to read a report about the event. Or [here](#) to read our keynote speaker from the event Iain Sinclair's recent article on the Olympics. A piece by Libby Porter also appeared in Scottish Planner in June 2008, read it [here](#).

____RESISTING REGENICIDE : STRUGGLES IN THE CITY

"Our relationship to the built environment is perhaps the most crucial element to the quality of community life."

1.00-5.00pm Saturday 1 November

CCA, 350 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow

[[<http://www.cca-glasgow.com/>|<http://www.cca-glasgow.com>]]

and

7.00-9.30pm Sunday 2 November

The Forum : ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh, EH7 5HA

[[<http://forumcollective.wordpress.com/>|<http://forumcollective.wordpress.com>]]

Free discussions bringing together representatives of community & activist

groups - including local groups from Glasgow, Edinburgh, London and Manchester - to share their experiences of community-based engagement

in the
planning processes of urban regeneration and the built environment.

A strong dimension connecting the diverse groups is their shared concerns

for community video as a basis for connecting people.

Mark Saunders The Spectacle, Martin Slavin Games Monitor, Nick Durie Glasgow

Residents Network, Carl Taylor Hackney Independent, Libby Porter Planners

Network UK, Neil Gray Variant, Jonathon Atkinson Urban Research Collective,

Anthony Iles Mute.

[[<http://www.metamute.org/>|<http://www.metamute.org/>]]

[[<http://www.spectacle.co.uk/>|<http://www.spectacle.co.uk/>]]

[[<http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/>|<http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/>]]

[[<http://www.pnuk.org.uk/>|<http://www.pnuk.org.uk/>]]

[[<http://glasgowresidents.wordpress.com/>|<http://glasgowresidents.wordpress.com/>]]

[[<http://www.hackneyindependent.org/>|<http://www.hackneyindependent.org/>]]

Organised by Variant affinity group

[[<http://www.variant.org.uk/>|<http://www.variant.org.uk/>]]_____

Libby Porter is convening a meeting to consider the legacy of the Glasgow commonwealth games on Saturday 11th October. Find further details by downloading a pdf [press release here](#).

Glasgow's Games:

Genuine legacy or gentrification?

A public discussion event convened by Libby Porter

Venue: The Market Gallery

334 Duke Street, Glasgow, G31 1QZ

Tel: 0141 556 7276 Email: market@marketgallery.org.uk Web: www.marketgallery.org.uk

Date and Time: Saturday 11th October 1pm.

Guest Speakers: Petra Biberbach and Jo Winterbottom

Developing a clear perspective on the benefits and costs of the Commonwealth Games is not easy. All forms of

'Games' (Commonwealth and Olympics and various other sporting tournaments) are money-making machines

through television licensing, ticket sales, merchandising and sponsorship. But it is also clear that large-scale

sporting events can provide inspiration and ways of out poverty for all sorts of people. What is important

for

Glasgow's Commonwealth Games is to ensure that those most in need get to benefit.

This event will provide a forum to start a wider public discussion about these issues and present some useful information from an independent standpoint. Different speakers will give some varied perspectives followed by time for plenty of discussion and debate. Libby Porter teaches planning and urban geography, and will give an introductory talk about the experiences of Games legacies in other cities and what lessons we can learn. Petra Biberbach from Planning Aid for Scotland will talk about how you might get involved in the planning and development of Games sites, and where support and advice is available. Jo Winterbottom from Glasgow City Council will talk about current legacy activities that involve the community and particularly work on a Health Impact

Assessment

This event is open to anyone who wants to attend but is particularly relevant for the residents of the east end of Glasgow. If you live, study, work, invest or volunteer in the East End, please come along, join the discussion, and feel free to put forward your views.

Details about our **next event** on April 10/11 on the impact of planning for the Olympics on local people in London's East End are now on the website at <http://www.pnuk.org.uk/bluefence.htm> you can download the conference poster and booking form here <http://www.pnuk.org.uk/documents/olympics%20flier.pdf>

The **Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanisation in the South (N-AERUS)** is pleased to alert you all to the following call for papers and invite you to its annual conference:

N-AERUS 2008 Conference
Barcelona 11-13 September 2008

CALL FOR PAPERS

SECURING POSITIVE CHANGE IN INTERNATIONAL URBAN POVERTY REDUCTION POLICIES:

Is international action changing urban poverty on the ground or not?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework has been put in place through one of the international agreements hosted by the United Nations where governments from around the globe have

committed themselves to developing a series of actions addressing the reduction of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Those MDGs most directly related to urban development and planning are located within Goal Number 7, which addresses environmental degradation and sets objectives in the areas of access to safe water and sanitation and improvements in slums. The MDG framework is but one example of several efforts emerging in the last half century identifying development targets at an international level of governance. However, such initiatives raise the following questions:

- How *successfully* do such policy efforts transcend the various tiers of the existing multilevel governance structures from the global all the way to the local?
- How effectively are they translated and operationalised in context so as to secure the intended objectives on the ground?
- What scope do they possess for in-built replicability and flexibility and what are the conditions required for such processes to deliver the targeted results?

The conference aims to provide a platform to discuss the policy-praxis nexus in today's multilevel governance context and explore the actual delivery of development and poverty reduction in a localised manner, hence the emphasis on their operationalisation at the urban level. The relevance of such issues is highlighted by the celebration in 2008 of the International Sanitation Year, urban sanitation being one of the issues this conference will address, among the wide range of other themes linked to urban poverty reduction which will be discussed.

We are interested in the analysis of actors involved in development and urban poverty reduction projects and the scales at which they work, the different aid cultures, and the different scales of intervention, focusing on the range from the local to the urban. We are also interested in analysing their technological discourses and capabilities and their adaptation to local realities. Within this framework, we wish to explore the role of universities and research centres working on urbanisation in the South.

The conference will include papers addressing poverty reduction approaches from an urban to local perspective including specific experiences from programmes and projects and their links with the responses to goals such as the MDGs and other internationally-driven initiatives.

To this end, 4 sub-themes are proposed:

1) Poverty reduction theory and ideology within a context of globalisation

How do political and macro-economic ideologies and approaches influence the formulation and operation of poverty reduction policies? This sub-theme proposes a critical analysis of whether, and how, governments at various levels pursue a balance between policies which respond to pressures from globalisation (e.g. privatisation) and those which seek to protect urban livelihoods and equity. Is there a meeting point in framing and applying policies related to poverty while favouring globalisation-linked policies? This sub-theme offers scope to address issues such as: macro-economic ideologies and their interaction with national/local contexts; implementation of urban poverty reduction programmes within the context of globalisation and neoliberal economic agendas; alternative approaches to urban development and poverty reduction; and policy approaches to livelihoods among the urban poor.

2) Institutional articulation of urban poverty reduction programmes and projects with government spaces, popular spaces and negotiated spaces

To what extent do these programmes and processes respond to the institutional structures (i.e. the

organisational structures and mental models that both underpin and result from these) that exist in each place or to imported models? The sub-theme proposes a critical review of the appropriateness to context of organisational processes related to the achievement of the MDGs and other internationally-driven initiatives, and of how internationally-promoted processes such as participation, negotiation, etc. are adapted to specific contexts in the preparation and implementation of local programmes and projects. This sub-theme therefore offers scope to address issues such as: cultural influences; legal and regulatory frameworks; planning, implementation and monitoring frameworks and processes; role of public, private, aid agency, NGO and community actors; development of civil society organisations and networks; partnerships; social capital; and finance.

3) Appropriate responses for urban poverty reduction: technologies and organisational approaches

This sub-theme proposes a review of the issue of appropriate technologies within the framework of the discourse of sustainability and the context of new emerging technologies which leapfrog the need for large fixed infrastructures (micro-generation, photovoltaics, decentralised services management, etc.). It provides the opportunity to explore the potential of, and experience in, using such technologies to reduce urban poverty and support urban livelihoods. It also allows an examination of the environmental impacts of such technologies and the implications of such impacts for long-term sustainability of urban poverty reduction approaches. This should be seen in conjunction with organisational structures, both in terms of adapting/developing technologies which are appropriate to existing organisations and institutional models, and in terms of the impact of new technologies on organisational restructuring. This sub-theme offers scope to examine issues such as: advantages and disadvantages of the use of appropriate technologies in urban poverty reduction; experiences and lessons in the use of such technologies to aid urban poverty reduction; social, economic and environmental impacts of appropriate technologies; use of local knowledge in identifying and developing appropriate technologies; interactions between technologies and social and organisational structures in urban poverty reduction; scaling up of appropriate technologies to the scale of the slum, city and beyond.

4) Role of research in urban poverty reduction

Within this context, what is and what ought to be the role of research, especially from universities and research centres, in generating discourse and proposing appropriate rather than imposed organisational approaches and technologies? What intellectual (and other) forms of collaboration can be established – and are established – between researchers and research centres in the North and the South? To what extent is the ‘North-South’ conceptualisation still valid when it comes to research and to possible research collaboration? There is scope therefore within this sub-theme to discuss issues such as: implications of research infrastructures (funding streams, organisational structures, capacity, etc) in the North and the South, and potential for, and experiences of, higher collaboration between these; examination of trends in research approaches and capacity related to urban poverty; potential and examples of impact of research on urban poverty reduction, from policy-influencing and lobbying level to local project implementation level; interactions between researchers and the urban poor.

ABSTRACTS :

Deadline for submitting abstract is Monday, 30th June 2008 by 12AM. The length of the abstract should be not more than 300 words (not more please). You should submit the abstract to the address calls@n-aerus.net

Authors of the selected papers will be notified by e-mail by Monday, 18th July 2008. Final papers should

be submitted by Friday, 29th August 2008 and will be posted on the N-AERUS website.

The abstracts should contain: 1) The title of your presentation 2) Up to five short keywords 3) The major goals of your presentation (what do you want to achieve?) 4) Context and relation to the conference topic (e.g. to *which* 'state of the art' and *which* 'gaps' does your research relate?) 5) Approach and Methodology (Which methods and techniques do you use?) 6) Structure of your presentation (How do you structure your arguments?) 7) Author's name and contact details__

Women's Design Service have recently launched two publications which may be of interest to PNUK members - "Women's Safety in Parks" and "Doing Things Differently - Women's Design Service at 20".
http://www.wds.org.uk/www/pub_current.htm

Leeds: Are we going in the right direction?

28th of February, 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

<http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/groups/leedsdirection/>

Rupert Becket Lecture Theatre. Michael Sadler Building. University of Leeds

How to get here: <http://tldynamic.leeds.ac.uk/campusmap/detail.asp?ID=193>

Drinks and nibbles

Free

EVERYONE WELCOME

Leeds has enjoyed major economic success in recent years, becoming the fastest growing city in England and number one financial centre after London. Its universities attract thousands of students and retail is booming. All this is reflected in the changing face of the city centre. But is the price of success now too high? The well loved Corn Exchange shops are all but gone; Kirkgate Market traders await an uncertain fate; skyscrapers and over-priced flats are set to dominate the skyline with little consultation while affordable council housing is demolished;

So we ask: Is Leeds going in the right direction? What does the general public think? Are there any alternatives?

This event will discuss the positive and negative things that are happening to Leeds as well as proposals for change. Leeds City Council has a major role to play but it is not alone – the public must have a big say in the future of the city.

Come to this Public Event where your views will be heard, debated and recorded in a public report.

Organised by academics at the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University

Chaired by Andrew Edwards from BBC Radio Leeds 'Andrew and Georgey's Breakfast Show'

For more information contact whorunsleeds@leeds.ac.uk

This is the wiki for planners' network uk (pnuk). All members of the group are welcome and encouraged to use the space to share and edit content. It is intended as a more interactive supplement to our fixed [web site](#) and will hopefully become useful as the network develops. Find information about joining pnuk, or our wiki [here](#).

Areas of interest...

A manifesto for a more progressive planning has been drafted by a PNUK working group and will be published here (on the public part of the web site) in the last days of October 2012. It is designed for discussion and further development on issues which vary between the countries of the UK the focus (so far) is on England and there is probably a bias towards the southern half of the country reflecting the authors' experience. This draft has been prepared for discussion and further development by Bob Colenutt, Michael Edwards, Andy Inch and Tim Marshall, with contributions from other PNUK members at various stages.

[Manifesto draft download](#)

Read about the plans for, and developing work on our [disorientation guide](#).

Share your thoughts and feelings about the [economic crisis here](#)

Find details of upcoming [events here](#). [Beyond con-dem-nation - future of planning - event in Birmingham 24th May](#)

See the [Steering Group](#) page for reports of our recent meeting and new ideas for the future of PNUK. On this page is also posted our recent revisions to the PNUK Statement of Principles - please read, think, discuss, contribute...

We have also added a page that includes some of the email discussion that has been going on since our meeting on July 17 in Sheffield. The aim of this is to decide on how best to take the network forward. If you have any ideas or comments then please add them:

- [July 17 discussions](#)

Feel free to add or edit anything you want to share.

Editor's Introduction

An earlier, and somewhat longer version of this contribution was published as a Compass think piece (see <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/publications/>). It's reproduced here with the kind permission of the author, Duncan Bowie.

The idea that restrictions on the supply of land are responsible for housing shortages in the UK has been a fundamental part of the drive to reform the planning system in recent years. This has been driven by a model of supply and demand that views planning as a restriction on the proper functioning of markets. Here Duncan places this argument in a wider context, drawing into question the basis of housing policy under New Labour since 1997, and particularly since the onset of the economic crisis since 2007.

Housing and the Credit Crunch – Government and Market Failure **Duncan Bowie**

The obsession with home ownership

In 1997 Tony Blair inherited two fundamental ideological assumptions that had driven government policy on housing from the Thatcher/Major period: that home-ownership was the essential basis of citizenship and should be promoted, and that the market would enable the provision of affordable housing. New Labour recognised that Thatcher's policy of council house sales was a popular in winning over the votes of middle income and 'aspirational' working class voters and that any proposal to repeal would be an electoral mistake. New Labour also accepted the simplistic view that as most poor households lived in council housing, it was their housing status that conditioned them to dependency and that home ownership would somehow liberate them from this constraint. The Government argued that they were responding to consumer choice and if surveys showed that 90% of households wanted to be home owners, then it proved home ownership was a good thing and that government in promoting it was doing what the people wanted. Few of the surveys actually asked households whether they could afford to buy a home.

The Government focused its policies on encouraging more households to become homeowners, creating a range of routes to homeownership, including a succession of schemes targeted at professional middle-income households providing public services, defined as 'key workers'. This used up increasing amounts of government investment resources to the extent that by 2006/7, Government through the Housing Corporation was funding nearly as many households to buy homes as new rented homes to be available in perpetuity for lower income households.

Government also encouraged, or at least did not use the Bank of England or the Financial Services Authority to in any way discourage, the availability of mortgages to prospective purchasers on terms that were neither sustainable for the borrower nor for the lender. Compared with more traditional arrangements requiring a 5% deposit and lending on 95% of property value assuming a loan of 3.5 household income, with the credit boom, and the widening of mortgage lending beyond the pre-existing Building Societies, loans of 110% of value on multipliers of 5:1 or higher became commonplace. Not content with the fact that the proportion of households who were homeowners had increased from 27% in 1918 to 71% in 2003, the Government sought to increase this further to 75%, a target which does not seem to have been based on any assessment of affordability.

Government has believed that all they needed to do was set higher housing targets, make councils grant more planning permissions and the new homes would be built. The more homes built, the more affordable they would be, through more social rented and shared ownership homes provided. When the housing figures did not go up, and prices come down as the government's macroeconomic model said they should,

government blamed councils for not allocating enough land for housing and not granting enough planning permissions, overlooking the fact that consents had increased. For example in London there was nearly four years worth of planning consents in the development pipeline. This was when the market was positive and demand, at least for market homes, was strong. This was the case even in the Northern cities where the Government pathfinders programme was planning to demolish homes to reduce supply in order to increase house-prices – always a rather bizarre strategy, prices were going up anyway.

The idea of such a crude direct relationship between new building completions and house-price inflation ignored more external economic factors. Well, these external economic factors have now hit. It is not just the housing market which is in disarray, but the government's housing policy as a whole. It has been caught in the contradiction of its own policies – if house prices fall, existing home owners are unhappy, terrified of negative equity and potential default, if house prices go up faster than the rate of income, fewer households can afford to buy. In effect Treasury policy was to try to defend the status quo – to try to link the rate of house price inflation to the rate of wage inflation – unfortunately the market does not work quite like this.

Public sector housing renewal programmes have increasingly depended on transfer of stock to housing associations or developers, the private finance initiative and cross-subsidies from profitable private development. Until five or so years ago, there were direct public sector grants for estate renewal – with the end of such programmes, and the Government's continuing rejection of the 'Fourth option' of estate based reinvestment for improvement or replacement by the local authority, tenants now have no alternative to a market led route, generally involving transfer of the ownership of their homes with reduced security.

Government has also increasingly relied on the market to provide affordable housing. Now we have a rent target system, which allows rents to reflect value as well as affordability for tenants; an average grant at only between 30% and 50% of capital cost [for building of affordable housing]. The Treasury assumes that, even if build costs go up 5-10% a year, and land costs climb at a much higher rate, housing associations through 'efficiency savings' can increase output by 7% a year in quantity terms for the same amount of cash. The government and the Housing Corporation also believe that affordable housing can be piggy-backed on the back of private housing and that if only local planning authorities were better negotiators, less public subsidy would be needed as developers would provide much if not all of the affordable housing required from their profits – developers would also help fund the roads, train networks, buses, the schools, the health centres, the parks and the public realm as a whole, so the new sustainable communities would be virtually self-financing. With the collapse of the housing market, these assumptions are all invalidated.

With the 'Credit Crunch', the government has got the worst of both worlds – house price falls with negative equity panic. This will lose them some votes, but with the 'Credit Crunch' and restrictions on lending, homes only become more affordable in theory, as less households can afford to buy. A 10% fall

in prices is not much use to marginal homeowners if their purchasing power has reduced by 35%.

The fundamental change of policy required is that a Labour government must promote collective ownership over home ownership, and must ensure that the provision of public investment or revenue support is conditional on democratic public control, regulation of standards and access to housing on the basis of housing need. These basic socialist principles need to be reasserted if we are to move away from the market led ideology which has been disastrous both for the Labour government and for millions of households across the country. In the current context of the credit crunch, this radical shift in policy is now necessary as well as being right in principle.

Post-July 17 Discussion on taking pnuk forward:

Hi there everyone,
It was good to see quite a few folk in Sheffield yesterday for another really interesting and inspiring day (thanks to Libby and others for organising).
On the train home I had a bit much time for thinking about pnuk and where it's headed. I think that Libby and I share a feeling that the network really needs to stake out a purpose and start to go somewhere in the coming months to prevent it just fizzling out. This seems a shame with a hundred and twenty odd names on the mailing list but we need to become useful to these people in order to make pnuk work. We also need to become useful to ourselves otherwise there's not much point in putting effort into maintaining things. This requires a bit of effort from all of us. In the attached file [this is included as text below and can be downloaded as a [word file here](#)]
I've tried to outline, i suppose, a kind of program for pnuk to pursue in the coming months (apologies if the register shifts around a little, I started writing as if to put it on a web page and then came around to addressing it more to all of you).
This is intended as a discussion paper to at least generate some argument (and hopefully even some agreement) over what we want from the network. It would be great to hear your thoughts and feelings about this in the next few days
Best,
Andy

Andy

thanks so much for kicking off a discussion so quickly after Tuesday's meeting. (Thanks again to Libby for organising this).

I really enjoy the PNUK meetings nonetheless I still feel that I don't feel if I am struggling with thinking about PNUK and creating alternatives. But nonetheless thought it worth an initial response as now I am about to send off this email - I can see that it's strange to send a set of thoughts out into your mailboxes...

I have pretty mixed feelings about the meeting. Whilst there was much to encourage me in the presentations and discussions - I did feel uneasy about some of the terms of the discussion. Perhaps this was because of the agenda for discussion? I just felt as if we were talking about planning's impacts on people in the abstract. And that these people seemed rather an amorphous 'lump'. I can't remember who or in what context - discussed planning for cities as systems - and I just worried that alternative visions for planning are inherently disengaged from the realities and complexities of peoples' lives. Even though our concern about the negative impacts upon people are behind much of our worries about planning. I am not saying that we didn't bear this in mind and discuss this. But I wondered how do we keep in mind the various levels from changing the world through planning through to the unequal impacts of planning for and at the expense of different identities and people. I think that would be helpful to me as I think some of my problems on Tuesday were with the either/or nature of some of the presentations - which I really struggle with (but maybe that's just to do with my way of thinking).

I suppose that's enough pessimism. Probably some of my struggling in terms of thinking are scale related - planning as an entity is riddled with problems but the suggested actions seem rather small. So I think PNUK is or has the ability to be incredibly valuable. In the immediate term I agree with Andy I think we do need to generate some thinkpieces/ short articles etc etc in order to present some of the thoughtful views of the members. Not only is there too much from the dominant thinking - but some of the 'critical comment' from the media

and think tanks has little of substance within it. Gathering together and producing some resources for the website would be important for me so it has value for those contributing and reading/ using the resources.

It would be good from a teaching point of view to be able to direct students to viewpoints and resources that do outline an alternative. One of the hardest things in teaching planning theory is how deeply embedded the Thatcherite approach is within most of them. Accessible information would be of great use.

Michael mentioned that he was thinking of his list of top ten planning texts - maybe we could all think of selecting ours and posting them on the wikispace with our reasons for this - it's a small thing in some ways but something that might be both useful and interesting. Here's a link to Michigan's one <http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/urp/summerreadinglist.html>

Practically - in terms of the wikispace what is the protocol if any for posting things on there, does it need to go past Libby/ Andy - do let me know

look forward to reading more thoughts,

best wishes
yas

porterej writes:

Andy and everybody, sorry for the slow reply. It seems I've run out of puff of late. Must be needing a holiday. Andy, what you've thrown together here is great, and some good ideas to keep us ticking over. My feeling is, like you, that we just need to do some small things just now to keep things going, keep some momentum up etc. One of the things we can do fairly quickly and easily is be a web-based resource. And its a good way to get the wider membership involved.

So, my thought would be to distill from Andy's discussion paper a set of clear requests for pnuk

members and post to the list, receive contributions and get them up on the website. Eg please send in your 'top ten planning books' (suggested by Yas), annotated bibliography with links if possible, website links to useful 'alternative' ideas, media articles, short think-pieces if you want to write one, papers you haven't been able to get published anywhere else but that you'd like to have an airing (idea from Eeva, we might need to do some quality control on this one), links to media articles etc. Andy's list of these at present can provide a good starting base and we add from there.

I'm about to post around to the list a brief set of thoughts about the day, what we discussed and the presentations from each of the speakers. After I've done that, Andy could you post around with your list as above and ask for contributions? Questions - where should people send their contributions and how should we manage constant changes to the website (I'm going to talk to our IT guy, again, about this).

I also think we should start up some more discussion on the wiki and try and get others involved. Anyone want to volunteer on that one? focused on the white paper perhaps as a timely point of discussion? The wiki should be openly available to post to for anyone. If you can't post to it and it tells you that you aren't a member, there's a button somewhere that asks you to become a subscriber or something similar, and it'll get sorted out from there.

Which might also help in generating enthusiasm for making submissions on the white paper. this was another idea we came up with at the meeting. Again - a web-based list of resources and ideas for people to draw on to make their own submissions (we're not going to do a pnuk submission). And an email to prompt people to do it. Volunteers?

Yas, I enjoyed your comments and thoughts. I know what you mean about thinking about the impact of planning on people as a kind of undifferentiated population. I wonder if its all a question of scale and the quirk that pnuk appears to have come about

somewhat in response to Barker etc. Which require national type responses... but point taken. What should we do on a different front, do you think?

More from me soon on the pnuk posting.
Libby

[porterej](#) writes: ; [Andy's original discussion paper:](#)

Planners' Network UK
Proposal for Campaigns

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci famously spoke of the need for political action to be motivated by a pessimism of the intellect and an optimism of the will. Our recent event in Sheffield was an interesting mixture of both and it was widely agreed that each was a necessary part of any pnuk project, the former reflecting a broadly shared, critical understanding of the state we're in, the latter the work that needs to be done to make the network relevant to a wider constituency and to help to build real alternatives. With this in mind and a desire to establish pnuk as resource for both critical analysis and conversations about how things might be better we propose two central strands of work to take the network forward. These two projects are far from distinct- they overlap and infuse one another in much the same way that our own optimism is always tempered, and our pessimism always capable of being lifted.

What's Left?

This was the question we used to frame our recent discussions. There was a shared feeling that there was an absence of effective resources for countering the dominant rationalities of our time. This is a feeling that is shared across the political left and is a particular problem in a climate where planning and related issues are once again high on the political agenda "What's left?" can be understood as a project aimed at developing critical analysis of the state we're in, exploring the pessimism of our collective intellect. There is a need for discussion and debate about the current state of planning, joining up to

wider questions about the state of the world, and planning's position within it. PNUK should become a focus for that discussion, linking to other projects and campaigns that share an interest in challenging the injustices and inconsistencies that sustain the neoliberal order of things. This project must seek to discover the contradictions within that order, and therefore to analyse the bases from which alternatives might spring. It must also provide the bases for acting and responding to the challenges of the current conjuncture.

Work towards this could include:

- Critical think-pieces on current events/ developments in planning and related fields trying to help us to understand the political moment. (including perhaps distillations of research into accessible think pieces for those without access). These can be anything from a paragraph on a recent news story to a more thought out piece of research. The key is to generate the resources for discussion.
- Collecting Resources to help deconstruct the conventional wisdom:
 - o An annotated bibliography with links to downloadable articles etc.
 - o A disorientation guide for students, similar to the one produced by PN in North America
 - o Resources for campaign groups/ support for them
- Research agendas: analysis of the gaps in research that might help to develop a better understanding of where we're at.
- An attempt to develop analyses that we can promote through various media
- Debates: the event in September could be billed as the first pnuk debate. If further events are taken forward as discussed on land tax, and housing market renewal this can hopefully become a regular pnuk activity. These can allow discussions to move from being virtual to face-to-face and perhaps become the basis for publications, other publicising.

- Discussion and analysis of emerging policy: including power-points to support practitioner presentations, resources to help people frame responses to consultations.

This is only intended as an indicative list. Anything anyone wants to contribute helps. The network is what we all make of it. People taking forward research or other work in areas of particular interest are encouraged to share it through pnuk. All of this is of course work in progress, and we're working from a standing start. If you are interested and feel that pnuk is a worthwhile project then your time and energy will be very much appreciated in helping us take this forward.

Resources

(for starters, the idea would be to try and develop a collectively maintained list of useful resources...)

Soundings left futures debate:

<http://www.soundings.org.uk/>

Feelbad Britain report:

<http://hegemonics.co.uk/docs/feelbad-britain.pdf>

Compass: <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/>

See especially the publications and think pieces sections and the three substantial reports of their project of renewal

See our links pages (we need to develop these with info on mailing lists/ articles/ books/ films/ art...)

NEF report mentioned by Roger Levett

Roger Levett's powerpoint and Barker critique for CPRE

Cliff Hague's presentation

Heather Campbell's July presentation

Tim's longer Red pepper piece

Patsy Healey's RTPI speech

New Labour papers after the September event

Tim and Andy's critical review of planning literature and the emerging bibliography

Libby and Eeva's discussion on the wiki

Literature, film, art, whatever: PN has a list of films on urbanism/ planning (I can't find the link right now), we should nick this but also try to add to it. I recently watched Nick Broomfield's film Ghosts about the Morecambe Bay cockle-pickers for

example.

More?

[These are from the top of my head, or from notes I made on the train home from Sheffield. They need to be added to, argued over, developed...]

Alternatives

It has become almost a cliché to invoke the roots of planning as a progressive social movement. In fact the radicalism of the early reformers is often appropriated in decidedly reactionary ways. Perhaps the greatest strength of that early movement, however, was its capacity to imagine that the world could be made better by planned intervention. In neoliberal times the mantra of TINA (there is no alternative) has become dominant. Now at the end of history we are told there is no choice but to let the market shape the future. For nearly thirty years this ideology of the right has ruled with disastrous implications for society and the environment. Images of alternative worlds have become scarce; belief that alternatives are possible has become a rare commodity.

There is, however, a growing challenge to this. Concerns over social mobility, housing and climate change all suggest a coming crisis of neoliberalism. There is a need to explore the optimism of our will, to examine the possibility of better futures and to imagine how planning can contribute to shaping them. Powerfully articulated alternatives can help to challenge the dominance of TINA and exploit the contradictions created by climate change, or acute housing shortages.

The early planning movement made links between housing and land campaigners and was successful in generating a vision of better places and better lives. Today planning has been abandoned by many progressive groups but it retains the capacity to act as a nexus between progressive movements, for example on environmental and social issues. PNUK should try to bring these together and generate alternatives that can tell persuasive stories about a

society and a planning system that put people's wellbeing and the environment ahead of the false promises of economic growth.

Work towards this could include:

- Think pieces like Michael Edwards' on the Thames Gateway that try to imagine how things could be (see below). These could tackle any range of subjects from alternative economics to eco-building. Small contributions on people's particular areas of interest or expertise would be a great start.
- Alternatives events focussed on, for example, particular projects (ie the Thames Gateway) or parts of the planning system (ie. Reimagining the White paper) bringing together expertise from a range of different places to discuss how things might be done differently.
- Setting research agendas for example, what skills would alternative planning require? Certainly wouldn't be the MBA courses some people are proposing now...
- Collecting Resources to help imagine alternatives:
 - o annotated bibliography with links to downloadable articles etc.
 - o A disorientation guide for students, similar to the one produced by PN in North America
 - o Resources for campaign groups/ support for them
- An attempt to develop analyses that we can disseminate through various media

[Many of these categories are the same as for the previous project. This suggests the limits to my thinking but also where I see pnuk being able to make a useful contribution at present. As above though it should be emphasised that other sources of work and ideas should be pursued through the network as much as possible.]

Resources:

Michael Edwards work on the Thames Gateway:

<http://www.metamute.org/en/Blue-Skies-Over-Blue-water>

Anything ever written by JG Ballard (see especially Millennium People and Super Cannes): the HG Wells of these dystopian times

Real Utopias project: run out of Wisconsin I think, a long running research project along these lines

David Harvey's Spaces of Hope

Patsy Healey's RTPI gold medal speech

Roger Levett's stuff on well-being wherever that is...

Transition towns and their intentions...or places in other countries that have developed models we can learn from or should be jealous of...

There are a number of eco-village and related sustainability groups on our mailing list, what do they have to say?

See the 'background readings' on the soundings website, what does all this mean for planning?

What about proposals for a land-tax? (see piece no.2)

More?

Through this the website becomes a communally maintained resource of links and comments which can be developed and refined over time and used to stimulate events/ debates/ publications etc. Files can be kept for downloading on the fixed site at Sheffield which can be revamped a little, whilst people are encouraged to engage using the mailing list but especially the wiki which allows interactive posting. If the network becomes a useful resource in this way I think that it might be easier to encourage people to engage with the network and make use of it to collaborate/ seek assistance etc. At the moment I reckon it's too much of an empty shell to work properly at that level.

Libby's email about July 17 and what was discussed:

Dear pnuk members, I wanted to give you a short summary of our recent 17 July meeting and report the ideas that were raised.

We had a very successful meeting and were treated to some excellent speakers. Cliff Hague,

Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Association of Planners, opened the morning with some thoughts about planning and its relationship to global development and in particular poverty and justice in developing countries. His 'new planning rap' to close might make it onto a record label sometime soon!

Heather Campbell, Head of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield, then inspired us with an agenda for inspiring hope and belief in the positives planning can offer while being tempered with good critical analysis. She offered some important thoughts on strategy and how PNUK might best think about delivering its messages to those in power! Perhaps most importantly, she reminded us that there is power in asking questions, reframing problems and offering real alternatives even when it seems hopeless.

After lunch, Roger Levett, Director of Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants, then treated us to an incisive debunking of the assumptions and myths underpinning the latest Planning White Paper. Roger did exactly what Heather suggested we should do - he reframed the problem into an alternative language that offered more productive avenues for critique and the development of real alternatives.

In the afternoon business session, we had the very great fortune to have Richard Milgrom from University of Manitoba and former Chair of Planners Network (North America) with us. Richard had a conversation with us about how PN operates, the importance of the local chapters, and the nature of events and campaigns that PN run. He reflected that due to geography and scale, PNUK has a great opportunity to make a real contribution at the national level, something which PN has more difficulty with, and encouraged us to pursue that agenda. Richard remains on the Steering committee of PN, and I (Libby) have also been elected to that Steering Committee to be a point of connection between our two networks.

We then discussed various aspects of 'where to next' for PNUK. The following list presents some ideas that we talked about:

1. organise an 'alternatives' event on a particular subject eg housing renewal pathfinders/anti-demolition event or on any other subject.
2. Put on events on key and current issues and attempt to reach a wider audience eg an information session on the White Paper?
3. When members (that's YOU!) are attending conferences, take a set of PNUK information with you (we can supply posters, fliers etc) to take along and spruik with.
4. media strategy and press releases - is this something we should get into?
5. Use website to link to further information and thoughts/reflections on Barker, white Paper, other issues. Note - submissions on the white Paper are due 7th August. Further emails of encouragement on that one soon.
6. build an 'alternatives' bibliography (Michael may do this one).

We will be sending around more information and requests for action very soon, so watch this space...

Libby

A manifesto for a more progressive planning has been drafted by a PNUK working group in the last days of October 2012. It is designed for discussion and further development on issues which vary between the countries of the UK the focus (so far) is on England and there is probably a bias towards the southern half of the country reflecting the authors' experience. This draft has been prepared for discussion and further development by Bob Colenutt, Michael Edwards, Andy Inch and Tim Marshall, with contributions from other PNUK members at various stages. You can download a copy of the manifesto here:

[Manifesto draft download](#)

The next manifesto event will be held in Belfast on the 21st of May:

Towards a progressive planning manifesto for Northern Ireland

Senate Room, Queens University Belfast

5.00-7.00pm 21st May 2013

The Northern Ireland planning system is undergoing unprecedented changes, yet reform has done little to ensure that planning improves community well-being and sustainability. There is a dire need to look beyond short term economic issues and to propose long term responses to planning's big challenges, in ways which could promote social and environmental justice. This event will discuss the draft manifesto for progressive planning produced by the Planners Network UK (www.pnuk.org.uk) and consider whether a similar document should be developed for Northern Ireland.

Programme

5.00pm: Welcome and Introduction (Geraint Ellis, QUB)

5.10pm: The Planners Network UK Manifesto – Andy Inch, University of Sheffield

5.30- 6.00pm Questions and panel discussion including:

□ Colm Bradley (Community Places)

□ James Orr (Friends of the Earth NI),

□ Geraint Ellis (QUB)

6.00pm Break and refreshments

6.15 – 6.50pm Discussion on a progressive planning manifesto for NI

6.50pm Wrap up and next steps

7.00pm Close

There is no charge for this event, but please register in advance at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/progressiveplanningmanifesto

or phone Elaine at Community Places to book a place on 028 90239444.

The Senate Room is located on the north side of the main quadrangle at Queens and will be signposted.

Previous events were arranged in London and Sheffield to discuss the manifesto.

Below are Michael Edwards' summaries of both events. All comments welcome. We will post details about next steps soon.

pnuuk Sheffield launch meeting

The Sheffield event took place on the afternoon of Friday the 1st of March ([download a pdf flyer here](#))

Julian Dobson Director of 'Urban Pollinators'

Jamie Gough, Sheffield University

Aidan While, University of Sheffield

General discussion

Planning manifesto launch in London

Short introduction to the manifesto:

Why are we doing this?

What are we proposing?

Long-term change or immediate reforms?

What next?

Hugh Ellis – head of planning at [TCPA](#)

Yvonne Rydin, Prof of Planning at the Bartlett and head of the Environment Institute at UCL

Anna Minton, writer, journalist

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General discussion

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Members' details

Name	Organisation (if any)	Other organisation s/background/experience	Areas of interest related to PNUK
Anzir Boodoo	The Institute for Transport Studies (Leeds Uni)	CILT (UK), BSA Urban Theory & Research Group, Urban Morphology Research Group (Birmingham Uni), Transition City Leeds	urban planning & regeneration, sustainable cities, transport
Karen Leach	Localise West Midlands	Birmingham Friends of the Earth (local group)	community-scale enterprise; economic decentralisation, democratic deficit in new planning system
Michael Edwards	UCL and various london bodies	INURA and London planning; blog at michael.edwards.org.uk	rent theory; property markets in relation to planning, urban economics
Andy Inch	Heriot-Watt Univ.	Planning Democracy	Politics and planning/ Democracy in the new planning system
Monika Vykoukal	University of Wolverhampton	curator, currently at School of Art & Design; art theory background	learning more about planning/'regeneration' context; interest in supermarket-issues
Samer Bagaeen	University of Brighton	Course Leader, MSc Town Planning; socially responsible planner; www.samerbagaeen.net	Urban gatedness; military brownfields; international planning and development; power and community planning
John Sturzaker	Newcastle University	RTPI North East volunteer, previously a practitioner in	The use of power to manipulate the planning system;

		local government in the North East	broadening community involvement in planning
Eeva Berglund	Freelance	passion for good built environments, MSc in spatial planning, paltry LA experience	culture of planners, architects & developers, retail in urban life
Susan Fitzpatrick	Manchester Metropolitan University, Institute for Social and Spatial Transformation	Research student and artist, interested in how creative activity is mediated in the public realm, particularly in response to regeneration initiatives	interaction between elites and non-elites in planning and policy, meanings of 'regeneration'
Ian Wight	Dept. of City Planning University of Manitoba Winnipeg MB Canada	PN North America; Member, Canadian Institute of Planners; Observer of RTPI + other professional planning institutes; Member, Integral Institute	Evolving Professionalism: Beyond the Status Quo... exploring a post-conventional professionalism... more activist, more civic, more spiritual
Stuart Hodkinson	School of Geography, University of Leeds, UK	Participatory Geographies ; Working Group ; MA Activism and Social Change	Housing and regeneration policy / markets; gentrification; enclosures and commons; participatory planning;
Geraint Ellis	School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Queen's University, Belfast	Sustainable Northern Ireland, Transition Town Whitehead, Belfast Healthy Cities, INURA and other academic-community links	Environmental justice, equality and minorities in planning, energy transitions, "professionalism" in planning

Giancarlo Cotella	Eu-polis Dipartimento Interateneo Territorio (DiTer) Politecnico di Torino Torino - Italy	Architecture & Planning academic background Member of the ExCogovernance; of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) Founding member of the research&action network EquaTerritoria	European spatial planning; EU multi-level impact of knowledge on policy-making; urban governance
Susana Alves	Consultancy in Urban Planning - Portugal	MSc Contemporary Urbanism; Previously Working in London Local Authority	Urban Planning: regeneration, gentrification, housing, participation and decision-making in planning practices
Libby Porter	University of Glasgow	INURA and Planners Network, practitioner many years ago in Australia	Critical planning, ge ntrification/regenerat ion, planning and cultural diversity especially Indigenous peoples, participation and people's plans
Julian Cheyne		gamesmonitor.org.u k	local planning campaigns, compulsory purchase, the Olympics, community involvement in planning
Julie Templeton	Save Our Streets in Carlisle		Campaign to save town centre community, historic buildings, small businesses and homes from regeneration in Carlisle

Nick Bailey	Professor of Urban Regeneration School of Architecture & the Built Environment		Urban regeneration
Mark Barrett	Teacher and Civil Society worker	Campaign for Real Democracy; <a href="http://www.peopleincomm
on.org">www.peopleincomm on.org ; campaign for a community owned street market, Southgate, London	local sovereignty, democracy
Francesca Sartorio	Cardiff School of City and Regional Planning		
Dellé Odeleye	Department of the Built Environment, Anglia Ruskin University		Critical thinking - not enough now with the new, centralised, LDF system

Type in the content of your page here.

The idea of this page is that we can share links to news and other media that may be of interest to pnuk members, or worth developing a pnuk response to.

Options for cheap accommodation in London for the Olympics event

Hope these are useful, feel free to add further options here.

University College London (UCL) has student buildings where you can make an individual reservation. There are some double rooms (no double beds). Details from this link:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/residences/prices/index.shtml>

Generator hostel near St Pancras station, shared rooms from £15 pp per night. Details here

<http://www.generatorhostels.com/london/pricesandrooms/>

Also a YHA hostel near St Pancras station, details here:

http://www.londonethotels.co.uk/YHA_London_St_Pancras.htm

A website on other cheap accommodation in London is here:

<http://www.housing.london.ac.uk/cms/short-term-housing.html>

And finally, an offer of a floor-space, provided you fit the terms and conditions (!) from one of our hosts:

Floorspace for 2 persons (bring sleeping bags, towels, etc) in single room 'bedsit' flat.

12th floor 60's-built tower block overlooking Britain's only Olympic-sized Lido. Panoramic views to west from the Foster Gherkin to Alexandra Palace. 15 mins walk to St Marks Hall, 100 minutes brisk walk along canal from Limehouse. Secure deck level parking for 1 car. Secure lockup storage for single motorcycle or 2 bicycles. Networked wireless broadband. No TV.

Terms and Conditions

Available to trusted established members of pnuk only. Vegan kitchen (cowjuice and cheese allowed if very careful). No shower, and limited hot water for bath in morning, but heated Lido open from 7am.

Must be able to co-exist in confined grungy space with cranky obsessive-compulsive parsimonious/low-impact geezer. Visually illiterate dried up statisticians need not apply.

On the Economic Crisis

This is intended, following a suggestion by Michael Edwards, as a space where we can share stories and resources about the effects of the ongoing economic crisis on the places where we live and work. See also the collection of files and links on the '[economic crisis](#)' page of the main website. Feel free to post your own resources or reflections here, or to share links to any interesting resources, or upcoming events. Content can be added below or in the discussion channel (see the tabs above).

Here is an excellent list of resources on the urban impacts of the crisis and the new urban agenda collected by Claire Colomb:

The global crisis post-2008 and its impacts on cities

[additions May 2011: 2 very useful articles clarifying the Eurozone impacts of the crisis: **both are in Soundings, issue 47, 2011**

Who benefits from the crisis in Ireland?

Michael Burke

Crisis in the Eurozone

John Grahl

[most articles listed here refer to the UK or US context]

Aalbers, M. (2009) 'Geographies of the financial crisis', *Area*, 41(1): 34-42.

Aalbers, M. A. (2009) 'The Sociology and Geography of Mortgage Markets: Reflections on the Financial Crisis', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(2): 281-290.

Ball, M. (2010) 'Critical Commentary. Cities and Housing Markets: Changes and Continuities in the Aftermath of the 2007-08 World Financial Crisis', *Urban Studies*, 47(5): 931-944.

Bailey, D. and Chapain, C. (ed.) (2011, forthcoming) *The Recession and Beyond. Local Authority Responses to the Downturn*, London, New York: Routledge.

COMPASS *Housing and the Credit Crunch – Government and Market Failure. Compass Thinkpiece* (left-leaning Think Tank).

Online:

<http://www.pnuk.org.uk/documents/COMPASS%20THINKPIECE,%20Housing%20and%20Credit%20Crunch.pdf>

Cooper, M. (2009) 'Cities in Recession-The Crisis in UK Financial Services', *Local Economy*, 24(2): 170 – 173.

Dymski, G. A. (2009) 'Afterword: Mortgage Markets and the Urban Problematic in the Global Transition', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(2): 427-442.

Edwards, Michael (2010 in progress) Towards better urban development, appearing as a paper of the University of Northampton Institute of Urban Affairs. Draft at <http://societycould.wordpress.com/michael-edwards-draft-paper/>

Fox Gotham, K. (2009) 'Creating Liquidity out of Spatial Fixity: The Secondary Circuit of Capital and the Subprime Mortgage Crisis', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(2): 355-371.

Harrison, M. (2010) 'Housing America: Building Out of a Crisis', *Housing Studies*, 25(3): 428-430.

Harvey, D. (2010) *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism*, London: Profile Books.

Harvey, David: website, videos and texts on the crisis (David Harvey is one of the leading neo-Marxist urban

geographers and has published extensively on the dynamics of capitalist urbanization):

<http://davidharvey.org/>

<http://www.counterpunch.org/harvey03132009.html>

Hollander, J. (2011, forthcoming) *Sunburnt Cities. The Great Recession, Depopulation and Urban Planning in the American Sunbelt*, London, New York: Routledge.

Immergluck, D. (2009) 'Core of the Crisis: Deregulation, the Global Savings Glut, and Financial Innovation in the Subprime Debacle', *City & Community*, 8(3): 341-345

Immergluck, D. (2010) 'Neighborhoods in the Wake of the Debacle: Intrametropolitan Patterns of Foreclosed Properties', *Urban Affairs Review*, 46(1), 3-36.

International Planning Studies (2011) Special issue: The great recession: a transformative moment for planning, Volume 15 Issue 3.

Kantor, P. (2010) 'City futures: politics, economic crisis, and the American model of urban development', *Urban research and practice*, 3(1), 1-11.

Keil, R. (2010) 'Crisis, What Crisis? — Towards a Global Bust Regime?', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34(4): 941-942.

Keil, R. (2010) 'Real Estate, the City and Place: The Crisis Unfolds', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34(3): 647-651

Kim, K.-H. and Renaud, B. (2009) 'The Global House Price Boom and its Unwinding: An Analysis and a Commentary', *Housing Studies*, 24(1): 7-24.

King, P. (2010) *Housing Boom and Bust. Owner Occupation, Government Regulation and the Credit Crunch*, London, New York: Routledge.

Lovering, J. (2010) 'Will the Recession Prove to be a Turning Point in Planning and Urban Development Thinking?', *International Planning Studies*, 15(3): 227 – 243.

Marcuse, P. (2009) 'A Critical Approach to the Subprime Mortgage Crisis in the United States: Rethinking the Public Sector in Housing', *City & Community*, 8(3): 351-356.

Martin, R. (2010) 'The local geographies of the financial crisis: from the housing bubble to economic recession and beyond', *Journal of Economic Geography*, Advanced preview

at: <http://joeg.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2010/06/11/jeg.lbq024.full>

Richardson, J. (2010) *From recession to renewal*

The impact of the financial crisis on public services and local government, Bristol: Policy press.

Soundings (left-wing critical journal) (2009) Credit Crunch Seminar 2009: articles available online at

<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/ReadingRoom/contents.html>

Sourelis, K. and Youn, E. (2009) 'Urban Restructuring and the Crisis: A Symposium with Neil Brenner, John Friedmann, Margit Mayer, Allen J. Scott, and Edward W. Soja', *Critical Planning*, summer 2009, pp.

35-59. Online: http://www.spa.ucla.edu/critplan/past/volume016/Sourelis_34_59.pdf

Turner, G. (2008) *The credit crunch: housing bubbles, globalisation and the worldwide economic crisis*, London: Pluto Press.

Urban Geography (2008) Special issue: Cities Destroyed (Again) For Cash: Forum on the U.S. Foreclosure Crisis, Volume 29, Number 8.

Walburn, D. (2009) 'In Recession', *Local Economy*, 24(2): 168 – 169.

Ward, M. (2009) 'Regeneration Projects and the Credit Crunch', *Local Economy*, 24(2): 174 - 177

Some interesting blogs:

Blog of Michael Edwards, Senior Lecturer at the Bartlett, with links on the crisis:

<http://michaeledwards.org.uk/>

Blog of Ann Pettifor, author and analyst of the global financial system, and co-author of the Green New Deal

<http://www.debttonation.org/>

Blog of the Centre for Cities

http://centreforcities.typepad.com/centre_for_cities/

The post-2010 urban policy agenda of the Conservative-Lib-Dem Coalition (UK - and much is just England because Scotland and, to a lesser extent, Wales and NI have semi-autonomous planning regimes)

There are obviously not many academic articles or books published on the urban policy agenda of the Conservative-Lib-Dem coalition government and the impact of its policies on cities. The two important concepts of relevance for planners, cities and urban sociology are the notion of the 'Big Society' and the related concept of 'localism'.

See a good bibliography compiled by the British Library in October

2010: <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpsubject/socsci/topbib/localism/sct-localism.pdf>

Bochel, H. (2011, forthcoming) *The Conservative party and social policy*, Bristol: Policy press.

You do a web search (on Google or Google Scholar or other search engines) with keywords such as 'big society', 'localism' or 'localism bills': many articles, blog entries, think thank reports, press releases will pop up. When you quote such documents in your essay, make sure you are aware of the political/ideological positioning of the authors to know from what standpoint they are writing.

The official government's discourse and approach:

<http://thebigsociety.co.uk/what-is-big-society/>

Norman, J. (2010) *The Big Society – the Anatomy of the New Politics*, Birmingham: University of Buckingham Press.

Cox, E. (2010) *Five Foundations of Real Localism*, London: IPPR. Online:

<http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=789>

Cox, E. and Schmueker, K. (2010) *Growing the Big Society: Encouraging success in social and community enterprise in deprived communities*, London: IPPR.

Online: <http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=761>

Jordan, B. (2010) *Why the Third Way failed. Economics, morality and the origins of the 'Big Society'*, Bristol: Policy press.

Understanding the “Localism Bill” and proposed reforms of the planning system:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/about/>

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3741&ap=1>

<http://www.cles.org.uk/files/106484/FileName/No.80-LocalismBill.pdf>

Critical articles on the notion of the ‘big society’ (just a sample!):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/apr/14/david-cameron-big-society-conservatives>

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/04/society-cameron-state-labour>

Asthana, A. Helm, T. and Hall, L. (2010) ‘Welcome to the ‘chaos theory’ of government’, *The Guardian*, 18 December, Online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/dec/19/coalition-government-chaos-theory-politics>

New Economics Foundation (left-leaning think thank):

10 questions on the Big Society:

<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/ten-big-questions-about-the-big-society>

Cutting It: The ‘Big Society’ and the new austerity <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/cutting-it>

Spending cuts will break Big Society, press release

<http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/spending-cuts-will-break-big-society-warns-nef>

Finlayson, A. (2010) The broken society versus the social recession. How should we approach the social problems of a post-crash Britain?, *Soundings*, 44. Online:

<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/articles/s44finlayson.pdf>

Rutherford, J. (2008) ‘Fraternity without equality, and other Conservative ideals’, *Soundings*, 39. Online:

<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/articles/10s39rutherford.pdf>

Rutherford, J. (2010) ‘Labour’s good society’, *Soundings*, 46. Online:

<http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/articles/s46rutherford.pdf>

For a critical perspective on the social impacts of the government’s current policy decision, see *The Guardian*, in particular the ‘Society’ section.

Dobson, J. (2010) Can a big society be a fair society? Online

presentation. <http://www.slideshare.net/juliandobson/can-a-big-society-be-a-fair-society>

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, London: Allen Lane

Here is a contribution from Michael Edwards about the effects of the crises on London:

The rather arbitrary destruction of capital in this crisis is well illustrated by the activities linked through the UCL Hospital PFI in Bloomsbury, London The Islington Tribune has a story on 31 October 2008 which reports that the UCLH Trust now foresees problems because changes in accountancy rules (designed to bring PFI debt back onto the balance sheet) will make their balance sheet look worse, and that in turn may prevent them from borrowing for future projects. This links with the Brill Place site, with the sale of the former Middlesex Hospital site, with the National Temperance Hospital site and....

The UCLH skyscraper was built in the biggest-yet health PFI in which a private consortium (Health

management UCLH - HMU for short) was contracted to build the £422m hospital, The Trust must pay £46m a year to HMU for 40 years. The CEO says they could borrow up to £100m on today's rules for further capital projects but under the new rules which start in April he does not know.

"We have a lot of cash, around £140m, none of it in Iceland,... because we sold the former Middlesex Hospital site for £175m. If we sold today, I have been told by leading property developers, we wouldn't get £75m. The reality is we made £100m out of the private sector."

These problems could affect a whole series of projects in which UCLH is involved: the Cancer centre (which is apparently safe) and then the huge proposal for a national medical research centre at Brill Place (joint with UCL, Wellcome and the MRC), a new heart hospital and a replacement for the Eastman dental hospital.

Interestingly, the developers of the old Middlesex hospital site have now run into difficulties too. I can't now recall exactly but will find the details and add them in here. It was a massively dense housing scheme which provoked major local opposition. The project is branded as NoHo (? north Soho?) and sits in Westminster Borough, but adjoins Camden. I must ask Max Neufeld, the indefatigable Fitzrovia campaigner for an update.

Curious that, in this case, it seems to be private fictitious capital which has been destroyed, and the public sector which has gained. But let's not be too cheery about this: the public health authority still has to pay £46m per year..... Their windfall pays 2 years rent.

Later the Camden New Journal (6 November) reports that the developers of that former Middlesex Hospital site project (Noho), who are the brothers Nick and Christian Candy, have pulled out. The project for 273 apartments on a site of 3 acres (just over 1 hectare) just north of Oxford Street is dead.

The paper says that the project is owned 33% by the Candy brothers' CPC Group, 10% by Richard Caring who is described as "Camden Market Magnate" and the biggest shareholder is Icelandic bank Kaupthing, now in trouble. The paper reports that CPC has dumped its shareholding onto Kaupthing in exchange for its share in another joint venture in Beverley Hills.

A local councillor Rebecca Hossack says the land (already cleared) should be a park. The local activists' leader Max Neufeld is reported as saying it should be a temporary open space. We'll see.

To me it all feels a bit like musical pass-the-parcel: who is holding the parcel when the music stops?

No wins for London: no social housing; not even any luxury housing; historic buildings demolished.....

Story form New York via Roger Keil in Toronto:

Simon Black, who is an associate of the City Institute at York University and a Fulbright fellow at the City University of New York has just published this interesting piece:

[[<http://www.rabble.ca/news/economic-crisis-urban-crisis>]]

You can find more of Simon's writings at[[<http://www.simonjblack.com>]]

A conference report from the Institute for Welsh affairs [[<http://www.iwa.org.uk/blog/2008/10/regeneration-after-crunch.html>]] with important people saying that the future should be different from the past...

People's Plans

Planning is usually seen as the domain of governments, private consultancies and even developers. It tends to wrap itself up in claims about expertise, technical competence and professionalism. Yet planning is a potentially far more democratic, radically democratic, activity than this. And that's because it offers all of us, as citizens of our neighbourhoods, the opportunity to think and act creatively about the future of the places we live in, to creative alternative visions. There are many examples of community led plans and campaigns which have succeeded in stopping public and private sector development proposals and realising alternative community inspired visions in their place. They are small in scale, but have significantly shaped the function and form of British cities, and even the approach of planning itself. Movements such as the Homes Before Roads campaign in the early 1970s contributed to the eventual revolution of transport planning, particularly as it was being practiced in London. More contemporary campaigns such as Homes Under Threat are bringing people together to fight demolitions in housing market renewal areas. And recent efforts by local campaigners on the London Plan are also helping identify alternative visions.

This section of our website is about just those kinds of planning activities – by ordinary people creating alternative plans from those being foisted on them by governments and developers. So we've called it 'People's Plans'. Members of PNUK are involved in, or know about, all sorts of community-led or 'people's' planning initiatives across the UK. We have pulled together many of their useful stories, links, tools and resources to help anybody interested in community-led, people-focused plans. If you have more to add, please let us know! Contact Libby Porter by email at: libby.porter@glasgow.ac.uk

Transport 2000 (now Capital Transport campaign) tries to bring transport workers and transport users together to campaign for better public transport in Greater London. Contact capitaltransport@aol.com

Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation and Planning for Real – founded by Tony Gibson in the 1977 and now a well-established tool used by the team at the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation for helping local people do planning. <http://www.planningforreal.org.uk/>

Town and Country Planning Association – a leading charity campaigning for a planning system more responsive to people and sustainable development. See their website, campaigns and tools and resources here: <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/about-us.html>

<http://www.environmenttrust.co.uk/>

Community Land Use www.communitylanduse.org.

New Funding and Delivery Mechanisms

Community Development Trusts – approximately 753 spread right across every region of the UK find them at <http://www.dta.org.uk/aboutourmembers/MemberSearch>

Equally interesting though certainly far far fewer in number, are Community Land Trusts, see this website: <http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/home>

Campaigns and networks

There are many regional or UK-wide campaigns and networks relating to planning issues that are not just about one neighbourhood or project, but are about the system, wider impacts and the things that affect our everyday lives. Here we've pulled together as many as we know about with some information and links to help.

Homes Under Threat (HUT) - In response to the threat of demolition in Housing Market Renewal areas, some residents groups have successfully managed to resist demolition and ensure investment in existing housing stock through producing their own community plans. Contact Sylvia Wilson, coordinator of Homes Under Threat network: sylvia@homesunderthreat.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

<http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>

Tescopoly - This is a UK-wide network of campaigns against the giant supermarket corporation – see their website at <http://www.tescopoly.org/> PNUK has recently held meetings for people concerned with the impacts of large supermarkets, their land banks, and the way they manipulate the planning system. You can read about the results of that meeting and find out more on our supermarkets page:

<http://www.pnuk.org.uk/supermarkets.htm>

Lammas is about low impact developments. It both campaigns for these, and actually builds them. See their website at <http://www.lammas.org.uk/>

This Land is Ours – a land rights campaign for Britain to campaign for access to the land, its resources and decision-making processes about them, for everyone. TLIO run campaigns, have a magazine, helpful resources and an email list you can join. See their website for all of this at <http://www.tlio.org.uk/>

Projects and Plans

There are also many locally-based, sometimes small but always significant projects, campaigns, plans and activities going on all around the UK. Here we've tried to list as many as we in PNUK know about.

Where we know a bit about the story, we've provided that here, where we don't we can just provide some contact details and links for you to find out more.

Calthorpe Community Garden - <http://www.calthorpeproject.org.uk/>

Covent Garden Community Association - without the local community based action since the 1970s that this group has been doing, Covent Garden would today be just another anonymous urban motorway surrounded by drab office blocks and segregated public realm, probably ripe for redevelopment! Find out more about their long-standing campaign and activities, how they did it and their events here

<http://www.coventgarden.org.uk/id1.html>

Coin Street – perhaps the most-cited contemporary example of community building in the UK today. Located on London's South Bank, Coin Street redevelopment began from the local people, who mounted a campaign to purchase some land and regenerate their local neighbourhood. See here for more information <http://www.coinstreet.org/>

In Liverpool, the Eldonians successfully battled with Derek Hatton and Militant against demolition of their homes, leading not only to the retention and refurbishment of Eldon Street tenements and surrounding area but through the grant of over £1 million to their Association by Mrs Thatcher (to spite Hatton et al), and the eventual redevelopment of the old Tate and Lyle factory site. Since then, Eldonians Community Based Housing Association are still going strong and they have developed hundreds of affordable homes, health sports and other social and cultural infrastructure. For more information visit their website here: www.eldonians.org.uk

They have also published a book on their experiences called 'The Rebirth of Liverpool -The Eldonian Way' - see some images & details in their 2007 annual report at this link:

[http://www.eldonians.org.uk/podium/eld/ces_docstore.nsf/wpg/3B746F27903B270F802573A8002F0ACB/\\$file/ELDONIAN%20CBHA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202007.pdf](http://www.eldonians.org.uk/podium/eld/ces_docstore.nsf/wpg/3B746F27903B270F802573A8002F0ACB/$file/ELDONIAN%20CBHA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202007.pdf)

Stonebridge Estate in Brent –In the 1980s, communities used Planning for Real (assisted by CLAWS and PAL) and the Stonebrige Tenants Advancement Committee to establish a Housing Action Trust and the redevelopment of the estate into mainly high density medium rise terraced housing.

Isledon Road in Finsbury Park - Also in the 1980s, the Finsbury Park Action Group, assisted by CLAWS and PAL, successfully opposed a developer-led initiative for a 'fashion centre' in a sea of car parking on redundant land north of the Harvist Estate and east of Isledon Road. Eventually, they produced a Community Plan comprising in the main affordable housing, a Garden Centre, a re-sited and refurbished park, health centre some shops and some local employment space. The Community Plan was then taken up by Hunt Thompson and initially a Community Development Trust and eventually by a number of Housing Associations.

New Wortly Residents Action Group in Leeds – Some years ago, Leeds City Council was proposing, without much consultation, to demolish a lot of homes, mainly Council housing but a few owner-occupiers were affected, in the New Wortley estate. Together, the residents organised and took on the local planning process. Eventually, they produced a community plan for how they wanted any demolitions to be done, managed to get to the proposed Local Statutory Plan thrown out and agreed a new one with the Council. From nothing, the proposal to demolish inspired huge community organisation and bottom-up control, and they are now looking at taking more control and powers to run their estate. See their story at this website: <http://www.newwortleyactiongroup.btck.co.uk/>

2013 March: Jonathan Rosenberg adds:

Perhaps the reason why South Kilburn is not heard about is because there is no recent trouble there with the scheme. [Master Plan - South Kilburn Partnership](#) and <http://www.skpartnership.net/>

Walterton & Elgin Community Homes WECH is about to embark on a £10 million scheme to

'regenerate' the Elgin estates, adding some 45 new homes, a new community centre, new children's centre and new offices. Not only did it obtain over 90% support from its residents when it consulted them, it also has £3million from Westminster Council towards it.

People's Plan for the Royal Docks was produced in 1983/4 as an alternative to what is now London City Airport. Done with support of GLC (so a little question mark over whether it was really a 'people's' plan). There is an article about it in the journal *Planning Practice and Research* in 1988 (Vol 2 no 4).

Oxford, Cowley Road Matters was a local response to a redesign of a local high street, again lots of compromises along the way but there's a good video on eastoxford.com.

Wards Corner Coalition – this is a grassroots organisation working to stop the demolition of the homes, businesses and indoor market above Seven Sisters tube station in London and fighting the attempts of Grainger PLC to force out the local community. They have had lots of successes along the way. See their useful website at: <http://wardscorner.wikispaces.com/>

Portland Works, Sheffield – this industrial building in Sheffield, now housing a range of small arts and crafts based industries, was mooted for conversion into flats, but tenants and local people have mounted a campaign to hold onto this important space for small enterprises. The community-led action group has set up a social enterprise (you can buy a share in it). See their website for more details at:

<http://www.portlandworks.co.uk/>

Yiewsley Community Involvement Group - an organisation of local retailers who finance a fortnightly news-sheet and have successfully challenged plans for inappropriate development in Yiewsley. The group regularly holds street surgeries where people can sign up to petitions for or against development plans, including getting six inappropriate local applications turned down in the last two years and against a huge out of town superstore (Tesco) appeal (which was later granted illegally). The group has asked local opinion on the planned town enhancement and put forward their views. At present they are fighting the closure of our local pool.

Portland Oregon Green Street/MainStreet plan – from outside the UK this excellent example of using very localised planning to regenerate and rezone a local corridor using sustainable methods. This was a joint venture between the planning authority and local groups, but was community-led. See their website at <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=41524>

Resources, Tools and Links

Community Development Trusts : <http://www.dta.org.uk/>

Community Planning website: http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/design_game.php

This Land is Ours have a planning section called 'Chapter 7' which has a useful planning handbook and runs all sorts of campaign for a fairer planning system. See their website here:

<http://www.tlio.org.uk/chapter7/>

We will try and keep track of issues and ideas being discussed by the steering group in this space so that others can comment and contribute.

Revised Statement of Principles: please contribute your comments, suggestions, ideas and changes via the 'discussion' tab. Here's the draft Statement of Principles for PNUK:

We are a network of people who believe in the transformative possibilities of planning and who wish to revitalise its social, political and environmental significance. Yet we are concerned about the corrosiveness of contemporary agendas that systematically produce injustice, undemocratic decision-making, inequality, and harm to our environment. In the face of those agendas, we have formed this network to provide an umbrella under which people can do two inter-related things:

1. Talk – where people can debate and share critical perspectives on mainstream dogma, and keep principles of justice on political agendas; and
2. Act – where people can work for progressive change by developing viable alternatives

PNUK offers a forum for talk and action to bring about fundamental change through planning.

October 2007

Recently, some members of the steering group met to discuss future ideas for PNUK. Here's a summary of our meeting. Please feel free to comment, contribute etc. via the 'discussion' tab:

What should PNUK focus its efforts on, what can we add? We should always see ourselves as adding to the weight of 'good voices' for alternative thinking. In addition, our particular contribution could be as follows:

1. we are a network – so it is a forum for bringing people together to share knowledge, ideas and experiences, to find help and advice, to provide a resource. All of this (knowledge, ideas, experience, help, advice, resources) is provided by the network itself (ie the membership). The role of the steering group should be to make sure we can facilitate that happening (we don't have to produce advice, resources, whatever ourselves).
2. we have a focus on both planning practice and research/theory – PNUK, as a network, should offer an additional way by which better links, communication etc. are facilitated between practitioners and academics.
3. Alternatives – PNUK seeks to be about expressing alternatives (hopefully based on critical analysis) in a world where alternatives seem less and less possible. PNUK thus should have a lobbying role. Quite how this might work remains unclear.

1. wiki is underused (almost never used) - how can we generate discussion on this space? Need to 'embed' the wiki into the website to make the link clearer. Encourage use by continuing to generate discussion and notify the email list. various changes to the website required - we are working on 'accessibility' issues

2. PNUK 'disorientation guide' to be developed for the website (along the lines of PN's disorientation guide - see [Planners Network Disorientation Guide](#)). Themes could include:

a. What's Left? – could we commission a piece from someone like John Friedmann on the progressive roots of planning, or 'remembering the wheel' (not reinventing radical ideas but remembering old ones

- that have been forgotten), or 'what not to forget'. And then commission alongside this a piece on the challenges currently faced in planning (onslaught of neoliberalism, new forms of marginalisation etc)
- b. Land Tax – critique by TLIO people; alternative by someone like the people written up in the Guardian Society on 31 October in Devon who are attempting to develop affordable housing through alternative means (Libby has article)
 - c. Housing market renewal – critique by Lee Crookes; alternatives by Lynsey Hanley
 - d. Publishing or Research-Practice question – critique by Huw Thomas, alternatives by Michael Edwards
 - e. Planning Reform – critique by the group of PNUK folk who were working on the Barker review a few months ago; alternative by Libby?
 - f. Best Value – critique by Danny Miller; alternative by ??
 - g. Design – critique by ??; alternative by Women's Design Service?
 - h. Planning Education – critique by ??; alternative by ?? (Simone Abram doing some work presently in this area)

Other ideas??

3. Next PNUK event - London Olympics visit and 'action' meeting. Possibly February 2008 - ideas, suggestions, contributions, offers of help gratefully accepted. Post your ideas via the 'discussion' tab.

7 February, 2007

After some concern that pnuk activity had stalled after the initial burst of post-conference enthusiasm the steering group has been trying to generate some ideas for getting things moving. Some of the suggestions we've been discussing include:

- Putting together a series of papers on 'what's left in planning today?' trying to explore agendas for progressive planning in the UK today. This might include a general call for papers and some work commissioned on pre-determined themes, both shorter and longer pieces that can hopefully be placed in journals (Francesca is investigating the idea with International Planning Studies) and also kept available on our website. Contributions to shaping this idea would be very welcome, particularly since we also thought;
- It might provide a good theme for the next pnuk event in June (or thereabouts) where some of these papers could be presented.
- We're aiming to try and show some kind of pnuk presence at conferences and events in the coming months. So far this involves INURA, AESOP, the North American Planners Network and the Planning Research Conference in Edinburgh.
- The need to look back on the notes from our December event (now available [to read](#) on the website) and see what other kinds of action we were proposing and where we're getting to with them.
- Establishing a way of responding to [news stories](#) and other opportunities as they emerge.
- How we all feel that we need to get beyond the academic, but none of us have any really bright ideas about how to do it.

Sure there was a whole lot of other stuff too (can anyone else add anything that I've missed?), and hopefully there'll be more to come. Let us know if you have any other ideas or thoughts on any of this.

Below is a compilation of emails from the PNUK mailing list put together by Michael Edwards (with two further messages subsequently added). The exchanges discuss the impacts of Tesco and other major supermarkets on local communities and democracy. Hopefully this will lead to further work, including a possible event.

This email is a compilation of a recent correspondence, mainly on pnuk. It is circulated now as a quick way for anyone to get up-to-date, and also because - as Libby pointed out - the exchnages took place using the OLD pnuk mailing address. Some people (recent joiners) therefore will not have seen it at all. If this is your first sight of this stuff then you need to sign up to pnuk right away. If you get this only because it is cc to you, that's because I'm not sure that you are on the pnuk list; you also need to sign up to pnuk now if you want to remain in this loop.

Note also that Tim Marshall of pnuk has just been in touch with George Monbiot about all this - see end. Stuart, Karen, Simon and others please note.

Cumulative posts about Tesco / Machynlleth, starting with first. (Initially done to help Stuart brief George Monbiot, but may help in other ways).

11 August George Monbiot article in the Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/aug/10/tesco-planning-superstore-independent-shops>

This generated a rapid accumulation of posted comments (at the same URL), some of which I might extract and insert here later.

11 August Michael Edwards to Planners Network UK list (pnuk.org.uk) I just read a Monbiot article in the Guardian which is a compelling case against a threatened Tesco at Machynlleth. The LPA said to be too weak or so scared of costs that they would not dare reject the application. I posted a suggestion that they should try and get a call-in.

But can anyone with a more up-to-date planning law/procedure knowledge help??? It's at [URL]

12 August Massimo Allamandola <[[<https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrel>

mail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=suburbanstudio%40runbox.com|suburbanstudio@runbox.com]]> wrote to M.E.

to say he had forwarded my comment to the diggers list
[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=diggers350%40yahoogroups.com|diggers350@yahoogroups.com]] and [[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=info%40tescopoly.org|info@tescopoly.org]],

12 August Libby Porter <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=e.porter%40lbss.gla.ac.uk|e.porter@lbss.gla.ac.uk]]> wrote to PNUK

I can only think of a call-in... but then my planning law knowledge is not exactly detailed!

But the questions are bigger, aren't they... there's the democracy question that Monbiot poses, and also that of power. Perhaps PNUK should be thinking about a bigger campaign addressing these issues - lobbying for/suggesting alternatives toward reducing the power of the tesco's of the world within national planning policy (eg regulating the size/floorpspace of new mono-retail in a town centre; or regulating edge of town retail development?). I know, I know... it's all been tried before. But maybe it's worth reinvigorating?

12 August Stuart Hodgkinson <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=S.N.Hodkinson%40leeds.ac.uk|S.N.Hodkinson@leeds.ac.uk]]> to PNUK

There is an identical battle going on in Leeds: <http://www.haveoursay.co.uk/>

I think everything has been tried before, probably a million times, but it doesn't avoid the fact that it will have to happen again and again just as a mere defensive operation if anything else. I think a lot of us have seen through any kind of resistance that little victories can be achieved that do matter. A key factor is sustainability of struggle - making sure that the current resistance doesn't undermine your next resistance. A lot of people could get burnt out fighting an unwinnable fight, but make real progress by setting their sights a little lower.

Does anyone know of an anti-supermarket lobby group or campaigning network?

Aren't there clauses in the Local Government Act to do with local empowerment that can be used, legally or politically?

I'm up for a PNUK campaign. No time whatsoever, but that's hardly a reason

12 August Karen Leach <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=karen%40localisewestmidlands.org.uk|karen@localisewestmidlands.org.uk]]> to PNUK

I agree with Libby that a wider campaign would be useful. It's something FOE used to work on in the past (and the tescopoly alliance). And it's of a lot of interest to us - Localise West Midlands. As Libby says, it's been tried before but the changed awareness climate might make it a good time to reinvigorate. In relation to this specific (and other specific) applications, one thing we have tried is an 'independent' (ie not commissioned and paid for by the developer) impact assessment, using the same and additional criteria (eg local multiplier, social capital). But although it provides statistics for the opposers to use I doubt it carries either legal weight nor anything that would overcome a council's fears that Monbiot describes. However we'd probably need to meet to thrash out the best target/objective on any campaign on this.

12 August Peter Matthews <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=p.matthews.1%40research.gla.ac.uk|p.matthews.1@research.gla.ac.uk]]> to PNUK

I found Monbiot's point at the end of the article most interesting: that local authorities want to challenge Tesco on occasions such as this but cannot afford the appeals process (all comes down to a good ol' Marxist interpretation of power in the end...).

The application could be called-in, but it would have to be rejected by the planning authority first (I believe...), which they'll be unwilling to do by the sounds of it.

The other odd aspect is that PPS6 and the sequential test really will not help in this case as the store is edge-of-centre. What would probably be of more use is the Competition Commission's proposed "Competition Test". And by the looks of the way that's going, I think the big boys are going to win again on that score and dilute the initial plans.

I'd be interested to know what the poor old officer writing the report to the Planning Committee thinks about this. They must know what's going on (eg. the dodgy community engagement and submission timetable) and have a strong view on the matter. They're just at the heart of the storm trying to work out what to do I suspect.

12 August Monika Vykoukal <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=M.Vykoukal%40wlv.ac.uk|M.Vykoukal@wlv.ac.uk]]> to PNUK

Been following this for a few months here in the West Midlands: I am not in planning, all I found:

1. Tesco has a regeneration strand: [[<http://www.tesco.com/talkingtesco/>]]

stores/?page=article1

2. And apparently something called a 'regeneration subsidiary':

[[<http://www.brw-regen.co.uk/spenhillwestbromwich.html>]]

3. There are developments [mostly, but not only Tesco] that are branded as such regeneration efforts in various states of progress in West Bromwich, Wolverhampton and Stoke-on-Trent, just to mention three I am aware of and actively following in the media.

4. The Tesco in West Bromwich have their planning permission pending, the application is here:

[[[http://planapps.sandwell.gov.uk/MULTIWAM/showCaseFile.do?](http://planapps.sandwell.gov.uk/MULTIWAM/showCaseFile.do?appType=Planning&appNumber=DC/09/50896)]]
appType=Planning&appNumber=DC/09/50896

5. Tesco have also started to advertise their new stores as following the Tesco Eco-Standard. I could not find much info on this but wonder what this means and suspicious that they do not choose to adopt a more widely recognized standard etc. etc...

Reason I am so into this is that I just started a two-year job on public art and regeneration in the West Midlands [am a contemporary art curator] and whenever there is a regeneration scheme it seems centered on a massive supermarket... This is all new to me.

I'd be keen to see if and how I [one] can do something [not strictly as part of my job], so would welcome contact [noticed someone on the list is in West Midlands too].

12 August Massimo responded to Stuart on PNUK

Does anyone know of an anti-supermarket lobby group or campaigning network?

Yes ... here is the contact with [[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=judith%40jwhateley.fsnet.co.uk|judith@jwhateley.fsnet.co.uk]] from

[[<http://www.tescopoly.org/>]]

[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=info%40tescopoly.org|info@tescopoly.org]]

12 August Anne Marie Carty <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=acarty%40globalnet.co.uk|acarty@globalnet.co.uk]]> personal email to

M.E.

[personal stuff. then...] I just spotted your response online to Geroge Monbiot's article about Tesco in yesterday's Guardian, & just thought I'd let you know that I've been following this development in some detail on film over the last 9 months as I live in Machynlleth myself. I've been able to film something of the Tesco representation locally, local supporters & objectors to the scheme & the local Town Council. Unfortunately I haven't been able to get access to Powys County Council Planning department to film - I wish I knew how to persuade them, it'd be very interesting to talk to them! I've also been trying to look at the way in which this proposed development has

brought to the surface community divisions (ostensibly between 'incomers' & 'locals', although in reality more complex than this.) There are strong reactions which highlight all sorts of interesting issues around 'progress' & 'modernity'.

I'm not quite sure yet what I'll do with the material; documenting the full process & outcomes will be a long job, but it's an opportunity to follow a planning process & its impacts on my doorstep so it's irresistible.

If you'd like to see some of the filmed material at any stage I'd be delighted to get your comments; I've been doing this one completely off my own bat so an outside eye & input is always very helpful.

12 August Karen Leach <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=karen%40localisewestmidlands.org.uk|karen@localisewestmidlands.org.uk]]> to PNUK

Ok, there seems to be enthusiasm for doing something on this... I've not been very involved in PNUK before so am not quite sure how you work things.

Does anyone feel we should NOT try to run some sort of campaign on this?

Should we contact Tesco and FOE and perhaps the Retail Enterprise Network and find out 'where they are at' and what they feel the blocks and priorities are, as a starting point for our discussions? Should we set up a discussion list or an actual physical meeting? Is it worth asking George if he'd like to be involved personally or are there disadvantages to the involvement of celebrity guardian journalists? ;-)

Who'd be happy to get actively involved?

I'm happy to do some of the above eg call FOE etc and organise further discussion, though I am not someone with a lot of spare time.

12 August Stuart Hodkinson to PNUK

I think we should try to work out what we as Planners / Academics / etc can add to the clear patchwork of opposition to Tesco and the big supermarkets. That means being clear what currently is happening in terms of networking and support.

My particular interest is in stopping displacement / gentrification. Others will bring their own specific knowledges and skills. But I want to be clear what PNUK can add to what is going on.

An important tactic is to simply force delays - objecting to force public inquiries and then appealing decisions can contribute to this; so can finding someone who qualifies for legal aid to seek a Judicial Review against any decisions, and to study very carefully the entire decision-making trail to try to take the process back as far as possible. Of course, Tesco has the economic power to fight and win all of these, but trying to delay and slow down the process enables

other future unknown factors to enter the battle further down the line - the world economy, the climate, change of government, building of very strong grassroots power etc etc.

Perhaps we should call a one day PNUK meeting on how to challenge supermarket power and support local shops etc. I'd be up for it!

12 August Ellie Gingell <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=e.l.gingell%40googlemail.com|e.l.gingell@googlemail.com]]> to PNUK

I would like to draw your attention to a recent "anti-Tesco" campaigns that

have occurred within Milton Keynes. Whilst the issues are somewhat different, with the authority minded to reject the application on various

grounds such as transport, I think the way that the local groups went about

the co-ordination could help you organise your campaign.

[[<http://notesco.org.uk/>]] was the group's main website. As a little

history for

those unfamiliar with Newport Pagnell, it is located on the urban boundary

of Milton Keynes and is a historic centre (one of the few we have in Milton

Keynes) and the store was to be located on a Brownfield site on the old site

belonging to Aston Martin. Following the campaign, Tesco withdrew its application. The campaign included high profile publicity stunts- the one

that caught my eye was a Hurst in which local business mocked a "wake" for

Newport Pagnell town centre. Also within Milton Keynes was an application to

extend a current store in Wolverton- this too has gone rather quiet seemingly following the opposition to the Newport Scheme.

A good site for all things "Tesco" related in terms of current planning is

"Tescopoly" ([[<http://www.tescopoly.org/index.php?>]] option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)- I think

someone gave the email link, if so, please forgive me I've had a long day! Tescopoly is sponsored by the GMB union and Friends of the Earth amongst others. I know that as a professional, this has often be a good

point of call to gauge what else is going on in the surrounding areas- before trying to do the "digging" to locate the actual committee reports or

contact case officers.

In terms of a proper debate, I think one is long over-due. In my opinion much of the government policy on retail does not capture the breadth of the market, which stores such as Tesco, no inhabit- clothes retailing, electronic goods etc.

I hope the links provided are useful, unfortunately I'm no expert on retail policy nor development control matters!

12 August Michael Edwards responded to Libby Porter on PNUK well yes libby, maybe we should do this kind of thing. But there seem to be so few of us.... or at least hardly anyone ever takes part in pnuuk exchanges....

On retailing, I have trawled through some of the hundreds of comments on the Monbiot article and, amongst the dross, and a lot of leakage from the Daily Mail and from conventional economics, there are some serious challenges which have to be answered. Most serious is the challenge which could be summarised as...

rich / middle class people can afford to patronise costly local shops and farmers' markets but for poor people the low-price and predictable-quality and range of a Tesco is very welcome....

and the linked point

yes of course there will be more job losses in the extinguished small shops than there are 'new' jobs in the Tesco. That's because the Tesco has high productivity and the small shops have low productivity so the demise of the small ones will release a lot of workers to do other work. gains all round.

12 August Ellie Gingell responded directly to that on PNUK

I was interested to read your last point. By means of a quick explanation (and yes- I did put into the "tesco" debate!) I presently work within the MKSM growth area as a policy planner. One of the greatest sources of new "jobs" that we have been asked to plan for are cited as those in the "non-B" use classes, so for example retail and leisure activities. I wonder how such views square with what Employment Land Studies and Economic action Plans actually tally with this "supermarket" issue. I'm also fairly certain that when elected members are presented with applications they don't consider the job losses from existing small shops- seeing it as a net gain.

Whilst I am under no doubt that Tesco is a productive company, I think there are far wider reaching implications that the retailing

and town centre impacts that are being floated around especially for planning practice and policy formulation.

13 August Mark Barrett <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=marknbarrett%40googlemail.com|marknbarrett@googlemail.com]]> to PNUK

Yes, sounds great about a PNUK input into the anti-Tescos campaigning. But how to add to what is already happening from a planning perspective?

There are so many angles to this, from anti-gentrification as

Stuart points out to anti-corporate control and the as others have mentioned the need to preserve local trader economy and, possibly even to find common cause with Local Authorities who don't like the fact that they go into these agreements due to forces outside of their control (although I am skeptical about this).

Some of you may be aware that some of us are working on the conceptual and practical development of a 'real democracy' campaign here in London, although we do have comrades elsewhere. I've set out some blurbs and links about this below.

Obviously we are keen, as indicated by George Monbiot that the

struggle about democracy gets wider purchase. Our view is that for this to happen (and my apology if this appears to be stating the obvious) we need a joined up movement that is not just 'against' this or that, but that is also visibly 'for' something visible, a vision of real democracy. So we need at least some sense of what that is going to have to look like as part of the plans. But also, we think it needs to shape itself through democratic processes in which all walks of life get to take part in its design. By design I mean not just the movement's direction, but also the work of putting together an alternative vision, and the putting forward of viable policies to get us there.

Obviously we want as many of the good PNUK as possible on board in this and we'd like to see groups affiliate to the CRD project in whatever way they feel able to.

On the topic of Tescopolis, in my experience where I live, the

most fruitful line of attack would seem to be the one indicated by Ellie, as traders have the most obvious degree of self interest from an anti-competition point of view. Making common cause with LAs may also bear fruit, in terms of centralisation, but I would guess this is more about identifying sympathetic allies in the Council hierarchy than expecting a lovely revolution, at least to begin with. And that may simply mean losing one battle with that recognition of what has

been gained (an understanding of who are allies and how the council works, and what residents and traders are interested to struggle over, and so to fight another day, and better) rather than seeing it as another nail in the coffin. Buildings can always be torn down - metaphorically as well as literally - and started again, and so can city centres.

Considering ways to join the struggle of traders with residents

is tricky. Alienating residents, many of whom quite like their trusty Tescos as people have indicated in their responses to the article, is quite easy. In my experience, residents of even the more progressive political stripe often end up with more of an ambivalence to tescos, for this reason. Deep down people like Tescos, COSTA etc where they basically know what they're going to get, and it's cheap and quick. They may have misgivings because of the negative changes to town centres they help bring, and a sense of a real alternative such as a really well run locally owned market but really I think we are up against is about the need to persuade of the call of democratic utopianism, the idea that things can and must be much better, in an alternative society of our making in which Tescos will no longer hold such a sway on our collective imagination, as well as wielding less power. In the place of that, people need to be persuaded that they will possess more power, more freedom, and will have the opportunity for a happier, more fulfilled and stress free existence. People's ambivalence and negativity is about the TINA 'no alternative' feeling. Whereas traders have economic incentive, not just moral / aesthetic ones. We need to make the residents see an economic, or perhaps a political economic incentive to join the fight wholeheartedly. Don't we?

My LVT Henry Georgist colleagues tell me that this is good territory

for a campaign, as land owners like Tescos would have to pay a fortune for their ownership if all economic rent went to the public and right wingers proponents who feel that this kind of change (the collectivisation of land values, with exemptions for 1st home owners of, say up to 200,000 pound houses) could go with the effective privatisation of income (eg an extension of the tax free band to, say 50,000) would be loved by all traders and residents alike and of course the monies could be used to pay for the kind of infrastructure that would make communities come back together again. But all this requires a joined up campaign and the further development of a peoples plan with lots of engagement in the discourse around it.

Anyway, here's the blurb about CRD, which (as you'll see from the

blurb) is not affiliated to LVT, although personally I am involved in both. The Project 2012 list is discussing LVT along with lots of

other issues on the subject of cultural and political change, whereas the CRD list is solely on the topic of democracy.

As I've tried to say above, my suggestion is that we need to focus ourselves on is a wholesale manifesto project; something that is visibly *for* an alternative, democratic planning system, or in other words an alternative, parallel political economy. If we are to beat these corporate beasts, of which we all know Tesco's is only one, I can't see any other way.

Would be great to have some more of you localists on board! CRD is at [\[\[http://21stcenturynetwork.ning.com/group/CivilRights\]\]](http://21stcenturynetwork.ning.com/group/CivilRights) and Project 2012 is at [\[\[http://groups.google.co.uk/group/project2012\]\]](http://groups.google.co.uk/group/project2012)

13 August Brianna Stolper <[\[\[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=brianneshona%40gmail.com|brianneshona@gmail.com\]\]](https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=brianneshona%40gmail.com|brianneshona@gmail.com)> comments on the price comparison point to PNUK

How have the 'poor' people of Machynlleth managed so far having to shop in such expensive shops and farmers markets then?

There is often a misconception that goods in local shops cost more than in supermarkets. I did see a price comparison article a couple of months ago that proved local shops were actually no more expensive, and sometimes cheaper than supermarkets.

13 August Monika Vykoukal to PNUK

Apart from Joanna Blythman etc, this is a supermarket book I read recently and would recommend in terms of the links made to the wider issues of democracy and also in locally specific terms [the elements of public/private relations, involvement of citizens via consultation etc. etc.]: Benda Hofmeyr, ed., *The Wal-Mart Phenomenon. Resisting Neo-Liberal Power through Art, Design and Theory*, Jan Van Eyck Publishers, 2008.

Another idea might be for people to look to produce a leaflet in the spirit of those: [\[\[http://www.makingpolicypublic.net/\]\]](http://www.makingpolicypublic.net/), which could well be something the planners network can work on in the larger setting of Tesco-poly, FOE, etc. based on your/their expertise?

Also [apologies for the part that may appear/constitute a 'plug' of my job], I am going to organize a seminar about regeneration touching

on this issue at some point this autumn. There will be a call-out [not just for artists] to take part in this soon and given the importance of Tesco's and other big chains in shaping this agenda, I would welcome submissions from this perspective...

13 August Massimo Allamandola to PNUK

In my brief PAST experience working as architect for the commercial sector in Uk,

one of the client of the practice I was working for, was

[supermarket chain X]. There was a development

plan and X wanted to extend and buy all the other industrial buildings around....

One of the building was owned by The Campbell Soup Company and they didn't want

to sell their land to X...

X answered that was not a problem but, if they couldn't get the land

from them, they

would have removed The Campbell Soup Company from their suppliers...

(the following of the story is clear to follow... it is either sell or we make you bankrupt ...)

This story, I think, represent quite clear the democratic aspects of

X Corporate planners

and decision making process...

The other question is all the PR companies dealing with the "public

consultation issue"... as appeared

on Monbiot's article : << I asked its PR man whether the consultation would be independently audited.

The answer was no. Tesco announced that the great majority of residents were in favour of the store >>

Yes it may be cheap shopping at Tesco for 46p like it is cheap flying with Ryanair for 50c but that does

not clearly make it better for the local people that still produce food or for the environment or for the CO2 emissions...

(on the price question...)

In Italy there has been a similar problem with "farmers markets" alike, and "slow-food", becoming a great

shop window for local products, sold at expensive prices but forgetting about the local people that produce

that particular cheese or tomatoes... (slow food for products but not for producers !) After all, farmer markets

in the countryside are mostly for the second-home owners weekend shoppers not for the poor locals that can't

afford anymore to live there.... (most moved to London back in the 50s - or before - to work in factories...)

I think the question of "distribution" is more linked to the question of "local democracy" than anything else...

<< that local suppliers would have to sell their produce to the company as a whole.

It would be trucked to the nearest distribution centre - now 120 miles away in Avonmouth -

and then trucked back across Wales to Machynlleth. Incredibly, Tesco proposes that its new store will reduce traffic on our congested roads >>

Finally we can not forget that TESCO yes is a supermarket company

but it is also the

Europe's largest retail real estate owner... therefore any out-of-town shopping centre

is an opportunity for a "new town extension" in order to "cash local people out of the town"

(this are the words that I have heard from direct experience during a site visit...)

13 August Troy Hayes <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=troyhay%40gmail.com|troyhay@gmail.com]]> to PNUK

I question whether it is economics that is at the heart of this debate - or is it more to do with the identity of communities and places in a global market?

Big box stores offer efficiency in terms of economies of scale and the reduction of vehicle trips, at the expense of local character. As far as I'm aware, the planning system does not address 'identity' as a legal / policy consideration.

In respect of planning applications, Ludlow Tesco may be of some use in understanding processes that LAs and community groups can employ to gain more benefits from large retail proposal / applications:

[[<http://www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/tesco-ludlow>]] I used Ludlow Tesco as a Case Study in my MSc dissertation and have contacts from the community there if anyone is interested in initiating a dialogue with them.

13 August Mark Barrett responding to Massimo on PNUK

yes agree it's about local democracy, power. but also the need for a different culture and system of economics. to answer (briefly) yr point about costs of markets theyt could be much cheaper if rental for stalls was minimal (which it isn't under council rules, regs,

insurance but could be of neighbourhood set them etc etc) but also, more important, if land prices and taxations costs (for local producer and consumer) were not so inflated by reactionary forms of taxation and planning. if permitted use was decided in a rational, properly organised and democratic way, and taxation was dependent on rental value of land at that permitted use, a lot of these taxes (and the upward, speculative pressures on land prices) would, it is argued by Georgists, fall away. ok, that's my full whack on LVT as i know it's probably off topic for PNUK list. thanks for public policy link Monika and off list reponse to my earlier post which I will reply to as soon as possible!

13 August Neale Upstone <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=neale%40nealeupstone.com|neale@nealeupstone.com]]> to PNUK

The mention of Tesco caught my interest. In Cambridge they're planning to open a store on Mill Road this month, and break the law by making deliveries from the highway. Our MP has written to their CEO asking if this means that it's okay to shoplift.

In addition they don't yet have an alcohol license, and I suspect won't get one, as they're in a cumulative impact zone.

Also, that Tesco gets good wind from the government may well have something to do with their fellow cartel member, Sainsburys. The big supermarkets stay hugely profitable because they are in government. Both the Tories and Labour have Lords who are members of the Sainsburys family. See [[<http://politicalfundingwatch.blogspot.com/>]] search/label/supermarkets.

13 August Michael Edwards to letters at the Guardian (where a number of letters had been published that day on the issue - all online) Monbiot's article on the Tesco threat (12 August) has unleashed a rich correspondence and a vast tumult of opinion ranging from anarchism to market fundamentalism in the online commentary (not to mention a rapid exchange in the Planners Network UK). Drawing on these strands I suggest the following:

- (i) Machynlleth, the home of Intermediate Technology, would be a specially good place to fight this battle;
- (ii) A referendum has attractions but until Wales becomes a canton of Switzerland there is no legislative basis for it and, as Robin Harrison argues in his letter, it would be a crude way to resolve nimby conflicts with wider interests;
- (iii) A public inquiry could be the best way to have a really serious debate but if the local council lacks the nerve or resources to

refuse Tesco (and thus trigger an appeal) the campaigners should press the Secretary of State to call in the application for an inquiry and for his own subsequent decision on the evidence. The local authority could then take part without the threat that costs would be awarded against them;

(iv) The campaign would have to confront the fact - which the market fundamentalists stress - that many people, especially poor people, would value and use a Tesco because of its low prices and reliable quality. On this point they would have to show how supermarket prices are artificially low, understating the environmental costs of their activities and the effective subsidy to their supply chains from under-paid labour around the world and government subsidies for low pay at home;

(v) It would be wise to develop a counter-proposal, at least as a fall-back. They should identify a site within the existing centre where a small supermarket would be welcome and press the council to insist that the harm it does is minimised - for example by making sure that the car parks benefit all the shops equally - and that there are maximum benefits - for example ensuring that 'locally sourced' goods are delivered direct, not via Avonmouth.

If we want to change the world we have to start somewhere and Machynlleth looks good.

14 August Karen Leach to PNUK

I am off on holiday after today for just over a week, but will moot the idea of a get-together to discuss the potential for a campaign, to contacts at Tescopoly and FOE for the time being, and pick it up again on my return. If no-one has contacted Monbiot by the time I get back, then I'd do that too, so if someone does, let me know.

Michael, I like your letter a lot. Hope it gets in

and later (after Stuart had offered to contact George Monbiot, whom he knows)

Great that you know George Monbiot, Stuart.

I would be tempted to say slightly more than this to Monbiot and say that PNUK members are thinking it might be good to run a campaign (whether hung on the Machynlleth case or not) focused around local democracy in planning processes and particularly in the specific case of supermarkets and the imbalance of power that Monbiot's article highlights. And that we might organise an initial meeting to discuss this and is he interested in discussing it with us in some way; but also as Michael suggests bring to his attention the discussions people have been having in case any of it is directly useful to the Machynlleth campaign in the shorter term*. I think a collated version of all responses would be good for that

*Maybe the other way round!

14 August Stuart Hodgkinson to Michael Edwards

I have already sent a short mail to George [Monbiot]..... Today I was in touch with a Planning Solicitor who regularly takes on Tesco on behalf of smaller retailers like the Coop. He's going to send me some ideas and also, there is another idea - to contact the Coop.

16 August Tim Marshall <[[https://webmail.brookes.ac.uk/squirrelmail/active/src/compose.php?send_to=tmarshall%40brookes.ac.uk|tmarshall@brookes.ac.uk]]> to Michael Edwards

Very good work on the pnuk and tesco front. Before adding in anything, I contacted George and he says he is going to keep going on this and would be ready to join in things if possible. I took the liberty of sending him your Guardian letter

From Stuart Hodgkinson, 18 August

If Tim has been in touch with Monbiot, then I probably don't need to - Tim did u

send him the massive email compilation? My email to him bounced back as his mailbox was full, probably with Tesco wellwishers.

Before Mark raised the midlands proposal, I was just about to make this proposal:

How about a 'PNUK and others' gathering in November in Leeds?

However, rather than simply being about Tescos or supermarkets vs. local communities, I would want to incorporate it within an action based discussion about the general problem of democracy within the planning system and what we can do about it. I also would want us to include how to fight displacement through housing, retail and mega-development / gentrification, and how to get alternatives (economic, residential, energy etc) through the current (e.g. TLIO / Lamma) and a future (better) planning system.

I am currently putting together an activist handbook called 'Hands Off Our Homes' and this kind of gathering would really help me and other campaigners to put together a comprehensive guide on legal rights, opportunities and strategies within the current planning system for fighting developers and local authorities' attempts to displace communities, as well as identify the current problems as targets for future political campaigning.

I don't want to start a massive email tidal wave about location, location, location:
I had planned to organise an activist roundtable on how to resist housing displacement in the UK Leeds in November so am simply offering to open this up to the bigger picture and kill 2 birds with one stone.

So let's discuss the nitty gritty of the meeting first before deciding where it should happen - the Leeds meeting will happen anyway.

stu

From Mark Barrett, 18 August

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<span style="font-family: Times; font-size: 16px; line-height: normal; white-space: normal; -webkit-border-horizontal-spacing: 5px; -webkit-border-vertical-spacing: 5px;">[[code]]
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Hi again, this all looks great!

Re a gathering and ideas for where Karen (Localise Midlands) and I did have a brief conversation off list about idea for a midlands-based meeting which would probably make sense for obvious reasons of accessibility. Sure it won't be needed but, just in case, I have some good links among students and academics at Nottingham Uni.

Also, this later contribution to thread may be of interest (was on different thread so didn't make it to summary)

Best wishes

Mark

Re Tesco's conversation. One more thing I wanted to say about what might work, tactically for local democracy movements to flourish, and potentially start the all important link up, is linking up with schools and colleges. More and more they are looking for opportunities to do 'active citizenship' and engage in actual community building / cohesion projects. Another harder political side to this is the NCIA who have a strong youth worker element in their ranks and are uncompromising about their critique and determination to fight neo-liberalism and managerialism. I will forward their latest after sending this [see their website/ M] so you can see what I mean. ([National Coalition for Independent Action.]

On a further strategic / tactical note, or maybe more pertinent about what can PNUK do, how about organising a demo (and maybe a small conference ..) at the Central Planning Inspectorate, or some other more suitable target. With the protest specifically pinned on fighting Tescopolisisation / ASDA / Sainsburys etc and our unity / solidarity for greater local / real democracy.

I am sure there are lots of individuals and groups who would be interested to take part if we publicised it correctly.

Also here is a Tesco related response, relating to connections in high places, from another list.

M
[code](#)

Type in the content of your page here.

Consultation on the [White Paper](#), the latest episode in the ongoing saga of planning reform in England, closes on **August 17**.

The White Paper takes forward many of the ideas proposed in the Barker Review last year, emanating from a set of questions with a clear pro-business bias. There is therefore much to be concerned about in it. It is important that as many people as possible register their concern at this latest round of threatening reform. This page is intended to provide a space to share and develop ideas for individuals or organisations to prepare responses. Please add to, access and make use of the information here and then submit something...responses should be sent to...planningreformconsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk. Alternatively, postal responses can be sent to the following address:

Planning Reform Team
Communities and Local Government
Zone 3/J2
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Fax: 020 7944 3919

Resources on the White Paper

During the pnuk meeting in Sheffield on July 17 Roger Levett of Levett-Therivel sustainability consultants provided a really penetrating deconstruction of the limited logic and contradictions of both the Barker review and White paper, arguing that the premises of both are fundamentally flawed, unsustainable, unlikely to achieve the goals they seek to and even less likely to improve our quality of life . Copies of this presentation are available by [email from Libby](#).

A coalition of groups have got together to fight against the white paper and protect communities' rights to be involved in the planning process. [On their website www.planning-disaster.co.uk](http://www.planning-disaster.co.uk) you can find plenty of information, including their initial joint statement and news about their campaigning. You can also send a quick online consultation response direct to the government. If nothing else let's all try and do this at least!

Friends of the Earth have also prepared a briefing note for MP's that can be [read here](#)

In the July edition of the magazine [Red Pepper](#) Tim Marshall offers an analysis of the threat posed to democratic accountability in the planning process by the White paper. Unfortunately this is not yet available online without subscription but a longer version can be [downloaded here as a word file](#).

Comment: I was on holiday and did not spend as much time as I should on this but I did send in a comment - which you can find at "<http://www.michaelledwards.org.uk>" Michael Edwards, UCL