'National' Spatial Strategies in an Age of Inequality
Insights from the United Kingdom, Ireland and France

Edited and introduced by:

Mark Boyle *(University of Liverpool)*
Aileen Jones *(Liverpool City-Region Combined Authority)*
Olivier Sykes *(University of Liverpool)*
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With articles by:

Neil Harris *(Cardiff University)* on *Planning Wales Spatially*
Xavier Desjardins *(Sorbonne Université)* on *Planning France Spatially*
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FOREWORD

The persistent social and economic inequalities across the UK need to be challenged. This need is heightened by the political and economic uncertainties brought by Brexit and the global challenges of technological and climate change. This report by the University of Liverpool Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, titled ''National' Spatial Strategies in an Age of Inequality', is therefore very timely.

Cities and regions are increasingly taking ownership of their futures through the devolution agenda, yet deeper structural inequalities cannot be tackled by local action alone. National frameworks are needed, not least, given the lack of one for England and, more generally, because of the sectoral approach which is taken to policy.

In October 2018 I therefore launched the UK2070 Commission, an independent inquiry into city and regional inequalities in the UK. The UK2070 Commission not only aims to Illuminate the nature of these inequalities but also to Illustrate the potential value of national spatial frameworks, and to identify the range of policy interventions needed to address them, including governance and fiscal instruments. The UK2070 Commission will report its findings in November 2019.

This report profiles international practice and draws together valuable experience from Wales, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland, and England. It identifies fifteen 'lessons' which in combination have implications for a potential new generation of national spatial planning in the UK and beyond.

This report was submitted initially as a response to the UK2070 Commission's call for evidence. I am therefore delighted to see it now published as a Policy Report by the University of Liverpool Heseltine Institute. Gleaned from direct experience in the practice of national spatial planning, it will inform the considerations of the UK2070 Commission and of all those seeking more effective planning of development across the UK.

Lord Kerslake
Chair of the UK2070 Commission

INTRODUCING 'NATIONAL' SPATIAL STRATEGIES IN AN AGE OF INEQUALITY: INSIGHTS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, IRELAND AND FRANCE

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'We have reached a tipping point. Inequality can no longer be treated as an afterthought. We need to focus the debate on how the benefits of growth are distributed. Our report 'In it Together' and our work on inclusive growth have clearly shown that there doesn't have to be a trade-off between growth and equality. On the contrary, the opening up of opportunity can spur stronger economic performance and improve living standards across the board.'
(José Ángel Gurría Treviño, Secretary-General OECD Paris, 2015)

Abstract

In the introduction to this University of Liverpool Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place report on 'national' spatial strategies in an age of inequality, we first discuss why there is today a compelling imperative to return to national spatial planning; second concomitant with a rethinking of the overall prevailing political-economic paradigm, we argue that spatially conscious national regulations, policies and resource allocation practices can do more to support polycentric territorial development, local institutional empowerment, place sensitive development policy, and beyond a few 'hot' national economic cores, sustainable urban development in a broader number of flourishing second-tier city-regions (regional cities, their satellite towns and rural hinterlands); and third, reading across the articles to follow on spatial planning in Wales, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland and England, we identify fifteen lessons for national spatial strategies which in combination have the capacity to instruct planning initiatives which seek to promote balanced regional development.

Introduction

The Kerslake UK2070 Commission's 2018/19 'Independent inquiry into city and regional inequalities in the UK' provides an opportunity to think again about the status of 'national' spatial strategies and 'national' spatial plans in and for the UK, and for comparison, in and for the UK's nearest neighbours. The word 'national' is being used here to incorporate spatial strategies conceived and enacted in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and in nearby Ireland and France. Our supposition is that these countries might benefit by sharing their experiences of plan-making and execution, and in addition might usefully harness their collective learning to inform the possibility of a national spatial strategy for England, where territorial planning at scale has been conspicuous by its absence. And so we ask: what spatial strategies exist in these jurisdictions? What have been their recent histories? What is the current status of spatial strategising? What kinds of politics surround plan-making and implementation? Who owns plans? Who funds plans? How are plans governed? What works and what does not?

In framing the contributions to follow, this introduction **first** asks: why national spatial planning and why now? It underscores growing concern throughout the advanced capitalist (OECD) world with the efficacy of the prevailing neoliberal model of development and widening social and spatial inequalities, exacerbated by spatially blind development policy and manifested most clearly in a so-called 'revolt of the rustbelt' and a rise in political populism. We argue that three significant developments may lead (in fact arguably already are leading) to a final exhaustion of consent for this model, paving the way for an alternative template for growth

and providing further impetus for a purposeful (re)turn towards national spatial planning: a) post-crash (post 2008) neoliberalism redux and austerity, b) Brexit, and c) the emerging importance of artificial intelligence and big data in the national economy.

Second, alongside rethinking of the mainstream hegemonic political-economic paradigm, we then argue that spatially conscious national regulations, policies and resource allocation practices and place-sensitive development policies can do more to support a broader number of flourishing city-regions beyond 'hot' core cities, which in turn can support a more egalitarian, productive and sustainable distribution of national economic activity. Engaging but moving beyond the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), 'New Regionalism' literature, and the EU Urban Agenda, our focus is upon building resourceful city-regions which we define as city-regions capable of mobilising their strengths to promote sustainable urban development, characterised by democratic dialogue and participatory and integrated governance, diverse economies and growth, social cohesion and inclusive economies, and environmental conservation and resilience.

Third, we read across the articles to follow in the rest of the report, examining inter-alia spatial planning concerns, traditions, and practices in Wales, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Irish Republic, and England, and whilst recognizing that existing spatial planning is enacted within neoliberalism suggest that national spatial planning should attend to fifteen 'lessons' which together might enhance the capacity of territorial strategies to promote more balanced regional growth.

Why National Spatial Planning, Why Now?

After more than forty years of globalisation, deindustrialisation, neoliberal reform and entrepreneurial capitalism, it comes as little surprise that socio-economic inequalities within the advanced capitalist (OECD) countries have forced themselves onto the political, policy and intellectual scene with heightened force and vigour. Inequalities not only exist and persist but over time it seems they have widened and become more impactful. Exacerbating already existing structures and geographies of inequality, supply side economics, deregulation, marketization, city-regional entrepreneurialism and trickle-down economics has in the end failed a generation; a rising tide, it transpires, does not lift all boats, certainly not at the same speed. An affront to social justice, inequalities are also now understood to be detrimental to economic growth and to political stability.

Embodied in the popularity of works such as Joseph E. Stiglitz' (2012) *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* and Thomas Picketty's (2014) *Capital In The Twenty First Century,* it is clear that the question of the causes, extent, chronological development, consequences of, and potential remedies for income and wealth inequalities within and between societies now excites acute interest and controversy. For their part, planners, regional scientists, and geographers such as David Harvey,
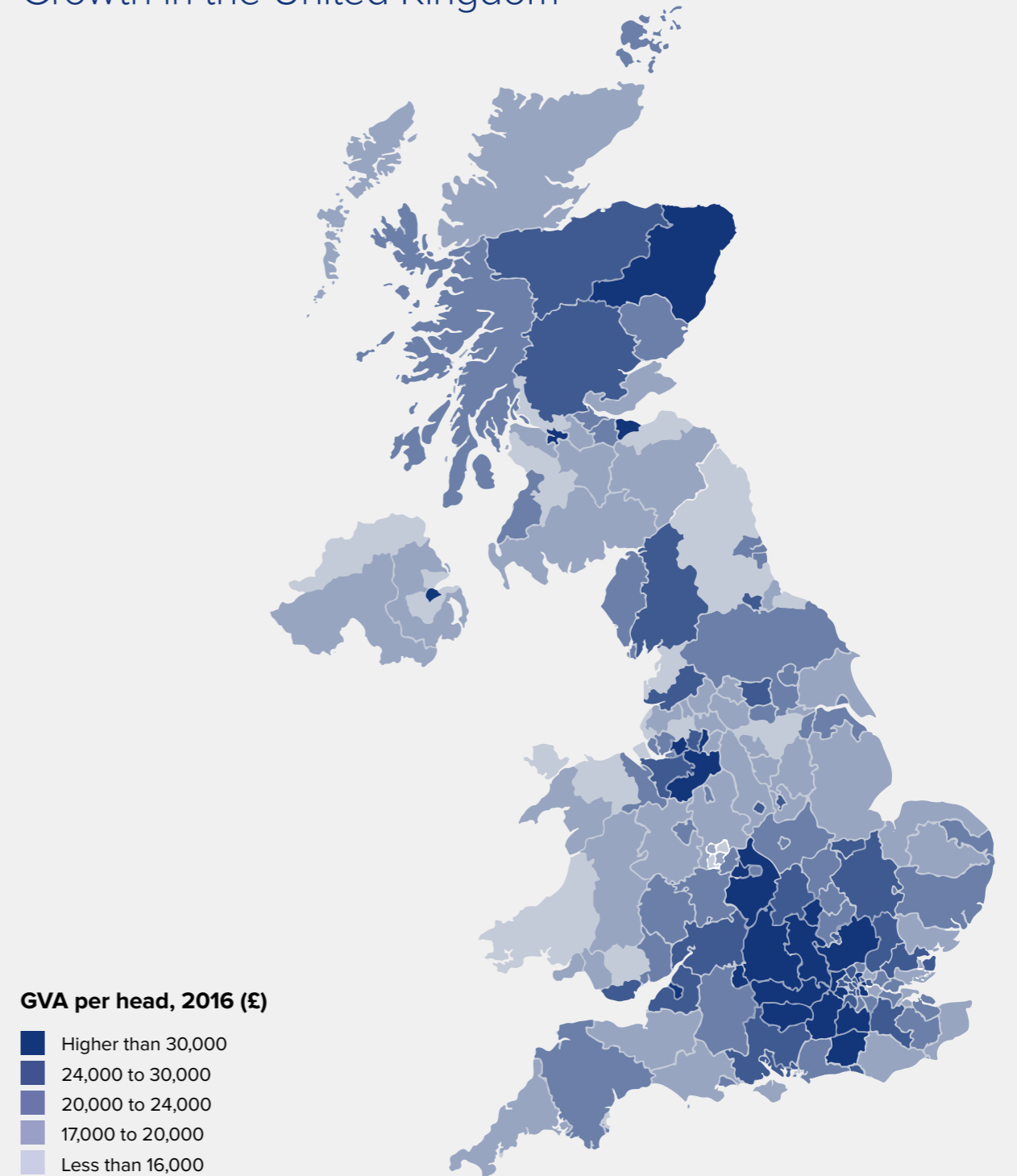
Michael Storper, Danny Dorling, Gillian Bristow, John Tomaney, Ron Martin, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Doreen Massey, Anne Green, and Philip McCann have contributed a geographical lens to these debates, pointing to the existence of accelerated socio-spatial polarisation, sharpening uneven geographical development, and growing regional disparities (see for example McCann 2016, Gal and Egeland 2018, and Storper 2018) and debating the meaning and implications of thinking in terms of 'spatial justice' (Soja 2010).

Perhaps not surprisingly then, there has arisen a new politics of inequality signalled by claims of a growing dislocation between representative democracy and popular sovereignty. Political populism has mushroomed in so-called 'left behind' communities. In the words of Goodhart (2017), counterposed to the 'globalists' and hypermobile 'anywheres', the 'left behinds' constitute the 'somewheres', marked by a particular class, education and age profile, anchored in places now rendered redundant by global capital and abandoned it seems to managed decline. Inclusive growth is recognised as the necessary antidote to the further descent of socio-economic and socio-political exclusion into revanchist populisms rooted in fear, resentment and retrenchment; one nation politics and good jobs for all, the call to arms. But how to do? Whilst the Right has shown itself to be particularly adept at seizing the moment (Trump, Farage, Hofer, Wilders, Kurz, Orbán and Le Pen, Bolsonaro), Left populisms too have entered the fray (for example Syriza, Podemos, Costa, Sanderson, Corbyn). In all of this centrist-mainstream politics appears to have lost ground. As emboldened 'yellow vests' occupy the streets, we live it seems in dangerous times and at least for the current generation, new uncharted political waters beckon.

In the UK and more specifically post-imperial England, this historical dynamic has etched an indelible imprint on the geography of the space economy, leaving a much discussed North-South divide, although in reality spatial injustice and disparities in living standards are distributed in complex ways at a variety of scales throughout the entire country. The mid-twentieth century demise of the UK's metropolitan dominance over what has been referred to as an 'imperial world economy' or 'old international division of labour' paved the way for an age of globalisation and a 'new international division of labour' marked by <u>both</u> a consolidation of TNC headquarters, financial institutions and producer services in London and the South-East and in consequence an accelerated growth of the UK's capital city as a cosmopolitan 'alpha' global city <u>and</u> a globalisation of some industrial processes, deindustrialisation of once vibrant imperial industrial workshops and port cities, in particular northern English city-regions, capital flight, and as a result a comparative lack of prosperity and opportunity (see Figure 1). Uneven geographic development has been accelerated by a disposition to favour a spatially blind national investment strategy which wittingly and unwittingly has reinforced and aggravated socio-spatial polarisation. There has emerged a growing sense in these so-called 'rustbelt regions' of limited futures and alienation, and it is perhaps predictable that many (although importantly not all) registered their disaffection with the political status quo by voting to 'Brexit' from the EU.

Figure 1

Regional and Local Economic Growth in the United Kingdom

GVA per head, 2016 (£)

- Higher than 30,000
- 24,000 to 30,000
- 20,000 to 24,000
- 17,000 to 20,000
- Less than 16,000

Source Harari 2018 1 Number 05795, 5 September 2018
http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05795/SN05795.pdf

Three further developments are combining to ensure that the current direction of travel is not sustainable and will not self-correct in the absence of significant state intervention.

Firstly, a depressing although not altogether surprising feature of the post-2008, post-crash regulatory environment has been neoliberalism's 'Houdini-like' ability to appropriate a crisis it was centrally implicated in causing to gain further momentum and entrenchment. Invoking the idea of 'neoliberalism redux' to describe the 'solutions' which have followed, Peck, Theodore and Brenner (2013 1091) wryly note, 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'. But still the mantra 'there is no alternative' has never looked less shaky. Austerity has visited unprecedented pain on people throughout the OECD world but especially on these countries' most vulnerable communities, diminishing key local government services, entitlements and social protections, public and private sector pay, capital expenditure programmes, investments in education and health care and access to affordable housing (see Figure 2). The response as noted has been a rise in political populism, anti-au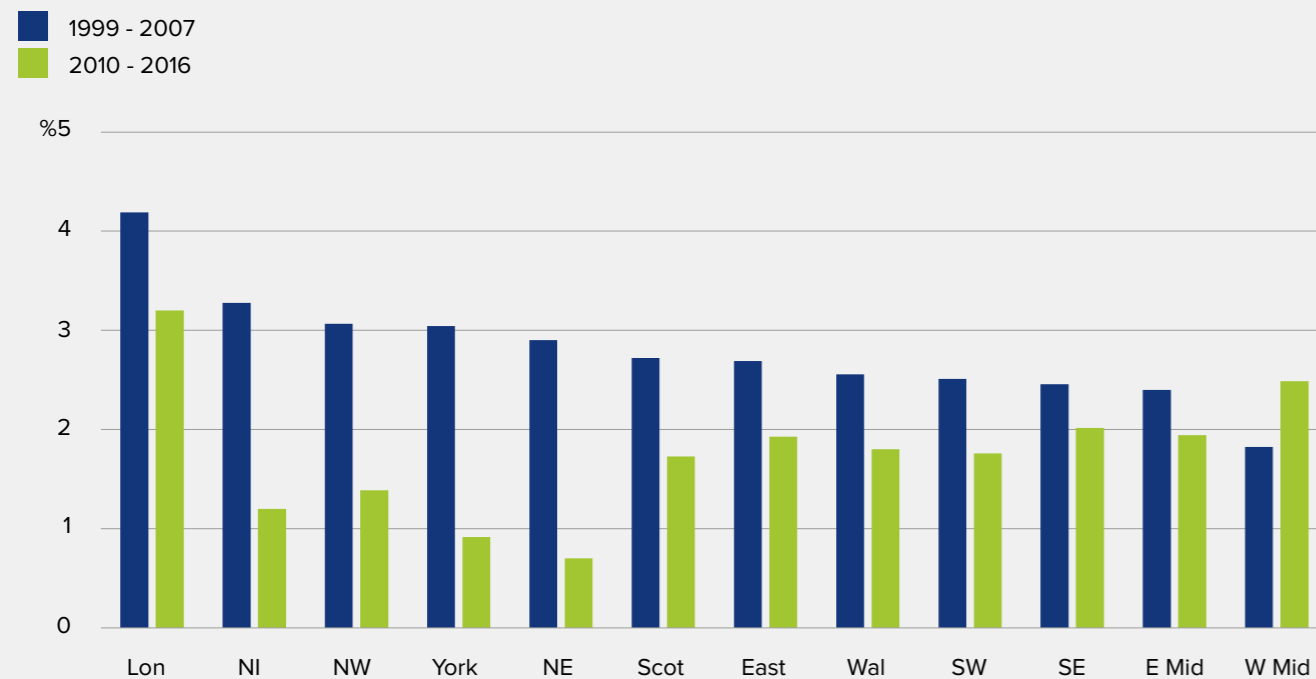sterity protests, and a series of earthquake elections which have shocked the body politic. In the early 1960s, following twenty glory years of capitalist growth in the advanced capitalist world, few would have predicted the collapse of the Fordist-Keynesian compromise. And yet it rapidly unravelled and quickly became obsolete. As we approach the 40th anniversary of the election of Margaret Thatcher, there is no reason to think that neoliberalism will have a longer life expectancy and there is every reason to believe that we may be living at yet another fulcrum point in political-economic history. Rather than a new chapter of an old story, neoliberalism redux might well prove to be the last throw of the dice for a failing regime of accumulation.

Second, what does rigorous social science tell us about the likely potential impacts of 'Brexit'? Of course, the uncertainties surrounding Brexit mean that we cannot say for sure what its likely impacts will be. But, in reality, there are precious few reasons to prefer optimism over pessimism. With few exceptions most of the rigorous impact assessments conclude that Brexit, whether 'soft' or 'hard', will depress and damage the UK economy and result in slower growth in the UK's city-regions and towns than would otherwise be the case. Five conclusions are garnering favour in the research community: first, Brexit is already seemingly impacting negatively on the UK economy; second, Brexit is likely to depress the UK economy into the foreseeable future; third, the harder the Brexit the more damaging its effects will be, a 'no deal' promises to be a catastrophe; fourth, it will be difficult for good trade deals with other countries to mitigate losses incurred by reduced trade with the EU in the short and medium terms; and fifth, city-regions in the UK will be more impacted than those in the rest of the EU, with the exception of the Republic of Ireland. Of particular significance here is the further observation that Brexit will have different consequences for different UK city-regions, ironically impacting most negatively those city-regions and rustbelt blue collar towns which voted for it. By dint of deindustrialisation and their marginality, arguably these places suffer from greater susceptibility (likelihood of suffering harm from Brexit), weaker coping capacities (are less able to withstand the shock of Brexit), and weaker adaptation capacities (ability to put in place purposeful Brexit mitigation strategies) (Dhingra et al. 2017, Los et al. 2017).

Thirdly, a Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are widely advised, beckons. Whereas the First Industrial Revolution used water and steam to power production, the Second, electricity to create mass production and the Third, electronics and information technology to automate production, the future prosperity of the UK will depend on the data revolution, powerful new data analytic tools and more complex automated systems, including and in particular machine learning and artificial intelligence. And so 'artificial intelligence and the data-driven economy' stands as one of the four Grand Challenges identified by the UK government in its 2017 White Paper *Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future*. In this new age, not only will software and code permit robotic devices to perform complex tasks; now sophisticated algorithms will enable machines to mimic aspects of human consciousness – perhaps to reach reflexive decisions, to undertake cognitive and sentient reflection, and even to make moral judgements. The extent to which the UK is finally able to address its pernicious problem with low productivity will in no small way depend upon its capacity to roll out artificial intelligence, big data, digital technologies and automation, broadly across the whole economy, and deeply within sectors. And yet this emerging economy risks aggravating existing inequalities. Firstly, the 2017 *Industrial Strategy* White Paper observes that AI ecosystems are already more developed in some UK regions; for example in London, Bristol, Cambridge and Edinburgh. Will these regions benefit from this head start so as to further entrench uneven geographical development and open up a new productivity gap between them and say England's Northern Powerhouse? Secondly, whilst the impact of AI on the labour market is the subject of much debate, it is possible that it will further polarise income inequalities, creating more very high and very low paying jobs at the expense of a squeezed middle. Once machines replace human beings: No Humans Need Apply!

Our thesis then is that the UK's path-trajectory across the past fifty years, in combination with current and emerging developments, makes it impossible to countenance a resolution to the country's social and spatial inequalities within the confines of the current political-economic status quo. Certainly, further deregulation and the machinations of an unbridled market ('roll back neoliberalism') will not remedy that which they have played a significant part in birthing; ongoing blind faith that they can only make matters worse. Concomitant with a wider rethinking of the mainstream political-economic paradigm, there is a need to interrogate policy options which might arrest and reverse unsustainable uneven geographic development and socio-spatial polarisation. The case for a new national spatial plan for the UK, and in particular for England where the need for such a plan has been particularly overlooked and ignored, has never been more compelling. With the nation bifurcating along class and regional lines and populism threatening to boil over into something less palatable, failure to act, it would appear, is no longer an option. We need to find a way to promote balanced regional growth and we need to do so urgently.

Framing Spatial Planning: In Support of Polycentric Place-Sensitive Development Policy, Local Institutional Empowerment and Sustainable Urban Development

In the UK, territorial inequalities have expanded without recourse to a strong UK Government national spatial plan or redistributive regional policy. This was not always so. Following the second-world-war, regional policy ascended to a position of some prominence as debates over the country's North-South divide captured the attention of elected representatives and Whitehall. Following accession to the EU in 1973 however, the UK steadily ceded the obligation to invest in lagging regions and regions undergoing sectoral restructuring, to EU Structural and Cohesion Funds. Undoubtedly, these funds have played a significant role in ameliorating what might otherwise have been even greater regional inequities. Given its history of professional expertise, the UK in fact played a central role in lobbying for and designing EU regional policy. But this transfer of responsibility to the EU did create something of a vacuum in the UK itself (Sykes and Schulze-Baeing 2017); as we will witness later in the report, certainly some parts of the UK have experimented with regional policy, plans and instruments, and not without success, but there has been no central national directive or dedicated fund of scale supporting balanced regional development. Meanwhile Brexit is likely to remove or reduce EU investment in UK regions. Whether a new UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be capable of delivering the same resources and benefits as EU Structural and Cohesion Funds remains to be seen.

Figure 2

Comparison of economic growth by UK regions/countries before and after crisis

Annual average real terms % change during period; ordered by 1999-2007 average

- 1999 - 2007
- 2010 - 2016

Source Harari 2018 1 Number 05795, 5 September 2018
http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05795/SN05795.pdf

Efforts need to be radically scaled: concomitant with a reset of the wider hegemonic political-economic model, there needs to be a renewed focus upon national spatial planning. Both need to exist in conversation, the latter being informed by and playing a key role in realising the former. Quite what needs to replace neoliberalism and its actually existing and mutant forms is unclear; certainly we refrain from venturing here into much wider debates concerning post-crash alternative varieties of capitalism, economic democracy, institutional redesign, and structural reform. These debates are far from settled and in many cases are merely embryonic; intellectual and political positions remain hotly contested. But we do note that the substantive content of and efficacy of national spatial planning will depend in no small way on the structural political-economic system within which it nests and draws strength from, and to which it contributes and gives concrete expression.

By national spatial planning of course we mean something other than central command of the national space economy. Whilst not an altogether moribund pursuit, at least in liberal capitalist polities efforts to reengineer the geography of economic activity through muscular state mandate have proven to be politically and practically problematic, not to mention largely ineffective. Instead, we envisage spatial strategising to occupy itself with deploying scarce resources (and by implication in the case of national spatial strategising, scarce national resources) to secure not only the ongoing flourishing of successful city-regions, but also to build resourcefulness and capacity in places left behind by globalisation and neoliberalism so that they too might become self-starting and energetic centres of sustainable urban development. Place-sensitive policy mixes require inter-alia a heightening of awareness of the spatial impacts of currently spatially blind sectoral resource allocation decisions, a shift to spatially reflexive and geographically conscious resource allocation, and a fortifying and scaling of already existing spatially aware resource allocations and explicitly regionally targeted funds. Following Lammarino et al. (2019), our approach is 'place sensitive' in that we see a need for different policy surgeries in different places; development policy needs to be radically endogenous to reflect the historical pathways different city-regions are following.

The key terms here are 'polycentricity', 'local institutional capacity' and 'sustainable urban development'. Of course there exists a vast literature on each and each has been subject to sustained critical interrogation (see for example Davoudi 2003. Macleod and Jones 2001 and Krueger and Gibbs 2007). We do not pretend these critiques are not without consequence. But here we wish to persevere with these key terms, albeit with caution. They continue to speak to the significant themes we wish to engage and convey in spirit even if they lack in political awareness and analytic sophistication. We encounter again the need for parallel reflection on wider political-economic reform and the virtues and vices of key spatial planning concepts. Alternative political philosophies, institutional reform, new models of capitalism and revised market-state-third-sector relationships will in due course imbue fresh meaning on and afford fresh possibilities for spatial planning lexicons, which by their very nature exist as meaningful only *within history*. For some, the ideas of polycentricity, local institutional

competency and sustainable urban development come freighted with intractable limitations and remain too wedded to building resilience so as to maintain the political-economic status quo. But if approached as aspirations not particularly tethered or even untethered from the existing dominant order and invested with variable meaning in given contexts, they remain powerful ideas and laudable destinations to aim for.

Polycentricity: Our thinking is consistent with the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP 1999), a framework adopted by EU member states in 1999 which promotes balanced regional development through polycentricity (ESPON 2018).

To counter the established tendency for national economies across to EU to be increasingly dominated by their respective metropolitan cores, the space economy is now to be planned around a wider number of second-tier city-region hubs. Whilst growth in core cities is for the most part to be welcomed and has the potential to entrain second-tier cities in its wake, balanced regional development requires more spatially conscious and crucially place-sensitive national resource allocation models. Place-sensitivity matters as the particular mix and weight of policy instruments need to be customised to the histories and structural prospects of different city-regions. According to the ESDP, city-regions comprise territories in which multiple (and frequently interlinked) spatial systems are simultaneously articulated, incorporating such activities as commuting, supply of consumer and public services, transport, communication, contact networks and production chain linkages. As such they are ideally placed to lead regional development and in so doing distribute national economic growth more equitably. The ESDP also devotes considerable attention to the simultaneous and integrated development of regional cities and their hinterlands (semi-rural, rural and marine) as complementary units. Polycentric place-sensitive development not only promotes social and spatial justice; arguably it mobilises a wider pool of national productive assets and generates more overall growth in the national economy. Equity and efficiency conjoin.

Local Institutional Capacity: Polycentric development is best realised through spatially sensitive national policies which harness local institutional capacity.

In order for cities to thrive, regional and local tiers of government must have effective powers. Consistently, weaker city-regional institutional capacity is associated with poorer economic and regional economic-social outcomes. Better national support for city-regions must unfold in tandem with and be underpinned by stronger local capacity. This philosophy has its origins in 'New Regionalism' scholarship which in broad outline evangelises for a widespread movement towards the acquisition by subnational regions of greater responsibility for their own affairs (Keating 1998). In more centralised states, this demands a degree of devolution from central government to local governments. The UK for example remains one of the most centralised states in Europe, to a fault. But devolution of powers and resources from the UK parliament has commenced, albeit unevenly across the country: the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales,

the Northern Ireland Assembly and the London Assembly are all good examples. Moreover, since July 2012, waves of city deals (bespoke funding packages overseen by local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships) have worked to fortify institutional capacity in different localities and to harness local communities in decision making. And in the cases of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City-Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, and Sheffield City-Region, devolution deals have been overseen by directly elected metro-mayors. National spatial strategies which seek to fortify the competitive strengths of multiple city-region economic engines will require these city-regions to have even greater institutional capacity, autonomy, and resources than they currently do, if they are to be effective.

Sustainable Urban Development: The objective of place-sensitive spatial planning is to prompt, prime and catalyse sustainable urban development in both fast growing city-regions and in a wide range of second-tier and otherwise stagnating, declining, and struggling city-regions.

The principles behind sustainable urban development are elaborated in the EU's Leipzig Charter and Toledo Declaration which prioritise integrated development (institutions aligning their work horizontally and vertically so that plans are reinforced), participatory models of governance (co-created solutions with all impacted stakeholders included in key decisions), diverse economies (wealth for cities including new wealth for old cities), social justice (inclusive growth and degrowth) and environmental sustainability (low carbon and resilient cities). The Leipzig Charter is consistent with the Quito Declaration, UN Habitat III, and the global New Urban Agenda and underpins the Urban Agenda for the EU which was launched in May 2016 with the 'Pact of Amsterdam'. In support of this agenda, the EU has created 14 urban partnerships which collectively are working to help EU city-regions unlock their potential by attending to: sustainable land use, public procurement, energy transition, climate adaptation, urban mobility, digital transition, circular economy, jobs and skills in the local economy, urban poverty, inclusion of migrants and refugees, housing, air quality, culture and cultural heritage, and security in public spaces.

Improving The Efficacy Of National Spatial Planning: Extracting lessons from Scotland, Wales, France, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and England

In the articles to follow below (with the exception of the English case), to aid comparison, authors have structured discussion around three sub-headings: *Planning Spatially (Wales/France/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Republic of Ireland)* (which provides a review and status report of national spatial planning in each case); *Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues* (where authors articulate their thoughts on the planning tradition under scrutiny), and *Wider Implications of the Welsh/French/Northern Irish/Scottish/Irish cases* (where authors extract key take away messages from their reflections which might have wider significance for comparators). The final article on the English case documents how and why England appears to be an outlier with no strong recent national spatial planning tradition of note and reflects upon what might be done in response.

Neil Harris first reviews the Welsh experience, observing that the Welsh Government is in the process of preparing a twenty year National Development Framework re-focusing on land-use planning, replacing the broader spatial planning approach preferred in the earlier Wales Spatial Plan. Xavier Desjardins meanwhile notes that whilst the uneven development of French regions has always been a major political and social preoccupation, the French state's capacity to promote balanced regional development has been diminished; the heyday of 'aménagement du territoire' now presents itself as to a degree an exercise in nostalgia. Brendan Murtagh reflects upon changes over time in Northern Ireland's Regional Development Strategy 2025, noting the particular challenges which attend to spatial planning in post conflict societies. For his part, Greg Lloyd discusses Scotland's highly-regarded National Planning Framework but warns that post-crash neoliberal pressures and austerity have conspired to degrade, dilute and dissolve key aspects of this model. Niamh Moore-Cherry then reflects upon Ireland's bold new 2040 National Planning Framework, which aspires to a step change in spatial planning in Ireland following the poor performance of the earlier National Spatial Strategy. Finally, Vincent Goodstadt notes that whilst unlike other administrations England lacks an explicit national spatial plan, already one exists *de facto* by dint of the cumulative effects of spatially blind national policies. Alas this has largely conspired to entrench existing inequalities.

Collectively these articles bear witness to the uneven mosaic of national spatial planning practices currently at work across the

UK and its nearest neighbours. It is clear furthermore that the case for national spatial strategies in each jurisdiction has waxed and waned in popularity through time and although now more established in some nations than in others, has yet to secure universal consent anywhere. Equally variable over space and across time is the meaning of national spatial planning: its aims and objectives, approaches, concepts and practices. Furthermore, there exists insufficient evaluative work to extract a conclusion about the efficacy of different strategies and tactics. These qualifications made, a reading across the articles suggests that plans which attend to the following fifteen lessons (in no particular order) may stand a greater chance of success. Our final caveat is that the spatial plans under scrutiny exist within neoliberalism, albeit they occupy a complex relationship with market logics; our lessons need to be read with an awareness of history and context to the fore.

1. **National spatial plans depend upon, and constitute a vital test bed for, new models of leadership within the planning profession.** Plans require skillful leaders – perhaps even a new generation of planners/leaders – who are able to reconcile planning expertise with the demands of both national investment for economic efficiency *and* social control over national investment decisions for equity and economic democracy. The need for hard political choices and professional and technical expertise necessitates that plans cannot be wholly driven by stakeholder communities. But radically new consultative mechanisms must be instigated from the outset, and the voices of often excluded communities heard and ingested. Balanced regional development is assuming new importance given the ascent of political populism. Traditional models of consultation risk deafness to historically novel grievances and modes of political organisation and proposed solutions upwelling from below. National spatial plans will only work if they are meaningfully co-produced with the communities they are seeking to support and underpinned by participatory governance. They need to be authentically co-authored, not least with so-called 'left behind' communities.

2. **Both national economic cores and second-tier cities require support.** National spatial planning must concern itself with spatially conscious national investment strategies which foster sustainable urban development in both economic cores and a wider range of second-tier city-regions, including stagnating and declining city-regions. A focus upon polycentricity should not be taken to imply a disregard for already hot and surging economic engines, including capital cities and global cities. Whilst one should approach claims of the rise of 'planetary urbanization' (Brenner 2014) with caution, second-tier cities are indeed imbricated in the hinterlands of large mega-cities and spillovers can cascade development throughout urban networks. These networks comprise complex power geometries in which second-tier cities are not always subordinate and passive actors. Growth in London, Cardiff, Dublin, Paris, Belfast, and Edinburgh is not always at the expense of the rest of the country. It is necessary both to further promote already thriving national champions as well as

to build the capacity of city-regions whose performance has been less favourable and whose prospects are less promising.

3. **Plans should make explicit the need for difficult investment choices.** This said, because of the highly charged political environment and fiscal constraints in which they operate, it is often difficult for spatial plans to acknowledge the fact that difficult choices need to be made and cannot be avoided. For as long as resources are scarce and there is a need to ration, decisions will be required vis-à-vis investing in one place at the expense of another. Win-wins are possible but are not the norm. Instead of persisting with creative ambiguity or spreading finite resources too thinly, it is best that hard choices be vigorously debated at the outset and consent (at least working consent or mutual understanding) reached concerning priorities, before departure. If spatial justice, territorial equity, and new understandings of equity as a progenitor of efficiency are to be essential criteria in resource allocation formula, this needs to be made explicit and argued for. Which second-tier cities are to be prioritised for investment investment and at what scale constitutes a key question; there must be no fudge when answering this question.

4. **Plans must focus upon both inter-urban *and* intra-urban inequalities.** Distributive iniquities are not only inter-urban, they are also intra-urban. Whilst cities constitute potential engines for wider regional development, it is important not to assume the trickle down to surrounding towns and hinterlands will inevitably follow. In fact some of the most severe inequalities exist between cities and their hinterlands, including cities and smaller satellite towns and depopulated rural areas. Urban planning, town, marine and rural planning and brown, blue and green growth strategies need to combine to effect growth which works for entire city-regions and not just for principal cities and their downtowns and CBDs.

5. **Plans must carry authority and be able to discipline decisions, behaviours and actions.** Plans must have a grip on, and be able to influence and direct actions. Spatial strategies which merely inform and frame resource allocation, investment and development decisions all too often get sidestepped and even simply ignored. To deal effectively with laissez-faire development pressures, it may be necessary for plans to have juridical and legislative force and standing. This said slow moving statutory plans, prepared under the rubric of the regulatory Town and Country Planning system can be ineffective at steering activity and in some instances non-statutory and informal plans have been effective, faster to prepare, and more engaged with political decision making processes. Whether to place plans on a statutory basis then remains open to debate; whatever the outcome the key point is that plans must carry authority and a sufficient spirit of seriousness to discipline behaviour and direct actions and outcomes.

6. **Building the institutional capacity of city-regions is a prerequisite for the success of plans.** Top down directive

solutions to regional inequalities, conceived and administered remotely and from afar from the political centre will perform less well than local solutions, devised and enacted by local institutions, and in particular democratically elected local institutions. Weak local institutional capacity is consistently associated with poor regional policy outcomes. Strong local institutional thickness and competence is positively correlated with more effective regional policy outcomes. For more centralised states, national planning and devolution must be essential bedfellows.

7. **Plans need to be accompanied by dedicated state spending strategies and capital investment funds.** National spatial strategies and national investment funds need to be brought into close alignment; ideally the latter needs to be devised and administered according to principles set forth in the former. Too often, competing pressures on capital spending and infrastructural funds result in a drift from what planners conceive to be a better or more strategic allocation of resources. Planning and investment need to be brought under a single governance mechanism; if administered by different institutions they should at least be legally obliged to cross-reference tightly to each other.

8. **Plans need to be governed so as to ensure they remain apart from the exigencies of political cycles and can consolidate around a long term vision.** Whilst it is essential that plans are subjected to democratic accountability, it is also the case that they are best overseen by governance structures which are immune from immediate political pressures so that they can adhere to a long term vision. This is not to invoke an age old tension between professional technocratic planning and elected politicians but is to insist that strategies underpinned by sound planning principles must never be compromised by the need for quick political wins, or even in some cases 'stroke', patronage and clientalist politics.

9. **Plans need to promote both vertical and horizontal integration in decision-making.** National spatial plans occupy a niche within multi-scalar governance regimes and need to draw upon, inform, be consistent with and consolidate EU regional policy, regional and city plans and community and neighbourhood initiatives (vertical integration). At national level, there also needs to be integration across the breadth of the government's own departments. A cross-sectoral, all -of-government approach is needed, in which departments future-proof their spend systematically against an agreed list of spatial priorities (horizontal integration). Plans need to be reinforced rather than undercut by sectoral policies enacted at other levels and elsewhere in the state machinery. National spatial planning can be compromised by fiscal regimes which bring city-regions into a heightened competition. Where the local tax base constitutes an important revenue stream, local authorities can be driven into a competition for investment and a 'race for rates' which can in turn undermine their enthusiasm for spatial equity and balanced regional growth. The fiscal environment has a role to play in incentivising and disincentivising popular subscription to the principle of

national spatial planning.

10. **A wider concept of economy is required: economic development is best achieved by supporting a mixed economy cherishing each of the 'market economy', the 'foundational economy', and the 'social economy' and therein interactions between all three.** Spatial strategising should occupy itself with building resourceful city-regions. Certainly, such regions ought to be able to better compete in the national and global economy. Plans should work with national, regional, and local industrial and development agencies to support the attraction of FDI, the growth of SMEs and an indigenous export sector and the promotion of skills and innovation policies. But alongside the central role of the market or 'commodity economy', the foundational economy' and the 'social economy' also have a role to play in the renaissance of particularly lagging places. The former invites debate concerning the role of public ownership and public sector entrepreneurship in directing and better harnessing (through new procurement practices for instance) critical and often invisible, essential but mundane 'soft' and 'hard' infrastructure (for example transport, energy, digital capacity, ports) and items of collective consumption (for example schools, hospitals, and houses) (Bentham et al. 2013). The latter suggest a new focus upon social enterprise and economic actors with ethical motives who exist in opposition to strictly market logics (Murtagh 2018). Diverse economies should be managed so that they complement and reinforce each other. Finally, welfare and welfare reform has a role to play in supporting all three economies, by addressing health inequalities, education disadvantage, a lack of affordable housing, poverty, and precarity, all of which undermine productivity.

11. **Plans should knit together development visions which cross borders**. Spatial plans introduced in countries which share a border should be designed so as to be complementary. Where possible, cross-border spatial planning, itself a distinctive planning tradition with its own competencies, skills and expertise, should be undertaken, not least because border regions often face unique challenges and can in some cases be debilitated by especially marked isolation and marginality. Where formal cross-border spatial planning is not possible, national spatial planning should take cognisance of the aspirations and visions for border regions which exist in adjacent territories.

12. **Both 'growth' and 'degrowth' need to be planned for.** Whilst 'overall growth through balanced growth' constitutes a central objective for national spatial plans, there is a need at times also to plan for de-growth, either because city-regions are shrinking but doing so haphazardly or because further growth might contribute excessive carbon emissions and jeopardise aspirations to meet emissions reductions targets and transition to a low-carbon future. Increasingly, GDP per capita is coming to be understood as an insufficient and perhaps even a distracting and unhelpful indicator of regional development. Unplanned de-growth can be as deleterious as unplanned growth; planned de-growth in contrast can be as productive and beneficial as planned growth.

13. Plans should be informed by international good practice. It is clear that planners are interested in the work being undertaken in other countries and already policy ideas are being shared and trafficked. But much more could be done. There is now a wealth of expertise capturing learning from prior experiences of designing and implementing national spatial strategies. Of course learning culled from one context cannot easily be applied to good effect in other contexts. But equally there is no reason to begin in each instance from scratch and reinvent the wheel. Expertise is easily accessible and routinely sourced through established policy transfer and exchange networks. Networks such as those supported by the ERDF's ESPON (territorial development) and Urbact III (sustainable urban development) programmes provide learning opportunities and resources for improved spatial planning. Universities and 'knowledge quarters' meanwhile present essential partners, not least as they themselves seek to build data infrastructures and extend their impact and reach through enhanced civic engagement.

14. Plans need to be delivered on. Once established, it is important that plans are seen to be followed through on. Persistent failure to implement plans fully – or even partially – may undermine public enthusiasm for spatial planning per se. Inaction is not only disappointing but it can be corrosive, and a litany of past failure can lead to paralysing apathy for the wider endeavour and unhealthy cynicism. We must not pretend to plan if we do not plan to plan.

15. The efficacy of plans needs to be subject to constant appraisal. To ensure that plans are evaluated according to their merit and that their strengths and weaknesses are widely understood, there needs to be a political commitment to evidence-based and scheduled monitoring – from the outset so that a baseline and results framework can be put in place.

Conclusion

Forty years of neoliberal economic development and socio-spatial inequality, in combination with a decade of biting austerity, Brexit's uneven geographical risks and impacts, and the potential geographically polarising consequences of a much vaunted Fourth Industrial Revolution, necessitate that urgent attention is placed (once again) on national spatial planning and national spatial strategies. These plans and strategies need to emerge in conversation with a rethinking on the institutional configuration of the dominant political-economic mainstream; spatial planning philosophies, concepts, and practices assume meaning and purpose only within given historical conditions. For us, there is an urgent need to interrogate the spatially differentiated impacts of currently spatially blind national policies and resource allocation practices and within the context of debates concerning new varieties of capitalism, economic democracy, institutional and regulatory shifts, alternative growth paradigms, diverse economies, and evolving thinking on market-state-civil society relationships; to work towards a plan which fosters polycentricity, more strategic and spatially conscious and purposeful investment in support of a wider number of flourishing second-tier city-regions, stronger local institutions, and a dedicated pursuit of sustainable urban development. Countries will prosper if the right balance of city-regions prosper; a more distributed space economy will address unsustainable social inequalities, will be good for the economy overall, and may arrest the currency enjoyed by at times regressive political populisms in the UK's left-behind communities.

The purpose of this Heseltine Institute report is to bring into conversation the recent national spatial strategies which have been pursued in Wales, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and the Republic of Ireland – so as to inform each of the others and to extract lessons for England, a nation with an unfortunate absence of consequential national spatial strategising. These plans exist within the neoliberal mainstream – albeit working in complex ways with market logics. As such, conclusions reached as to their efficacy need to be understood within context. Nevertheless, our reading of the articles which now follow has led us to identify fifteen lessons which might prove helpful for spatial planners; our list is not exhaustive. We leave it to the reader to assess the extent to which they agree with our conclusions or extract alternative conclusions of their own.

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THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING IN WALES: A RETRENCHMENT FROM SPATIAL PLANNING TO LAND-USE PLANNING

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Abstract

The Welsh Government is in the process of preparing a National Development Framework, a document that will set out a 20-year land-use framework for Wales. The Framework will replace the Wales Spatial Plan. There are important differences in these two consecutive efforts to engage in national-level planning. The most notable of these differences is a recent re-focusing on land-use planning in the Framework rather than the broader spatial planning approach reflected in the Wales Spatial Plan. This article explores the implications for the Framework of this apparent retrenchment from spatial planning to land-use planning.

Planning Wales Spatially

"Wales is passing through a period of unusually rapid social and economic change...it is right that, at this moment, we should pause to consider the whole scene and examine the economy of Wales and the environment of its people. This... is, indeed, the first occasion when Her Majesty's Government has brought together all the issues which affect the economic, social, and cultural background of life in modern Wales." (Cledwyn Hughes, Secretary of State for Wales, in the Foreword to 'Wales: The Way Ahead' (1967)).

This opening statement is taken from *Wales: The Way Ahead*, a report presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Wales during the late 1960s. The report proclaimed itself as the first attempt by government to explore and plan for Wales as a national space, although the language of the report is careful to identify and emphasise Wales simply as 'a part of the United Kingdom'. Some of the themes identified in the report are depressingly familiar today, particularly in relation to comparatively low levels of economic activity in Wales compared to other parts of the United Kingdom. Yet Wales has also changed in dramatic ways in the period of over fifty years since the report was published – the economy has undergone significant restructuring, accessibility has improved, and the environment and landscape has in many cases been enhanced. The principal reason for opening this introduction with an extract from *Wales: The Way Ahead*, however, is to highlight that not only was it the first attempt at national planning of modern Wales; it would also be the last for over 30 years and until the advent of political devolution and the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999.

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Timeline of key events and activities
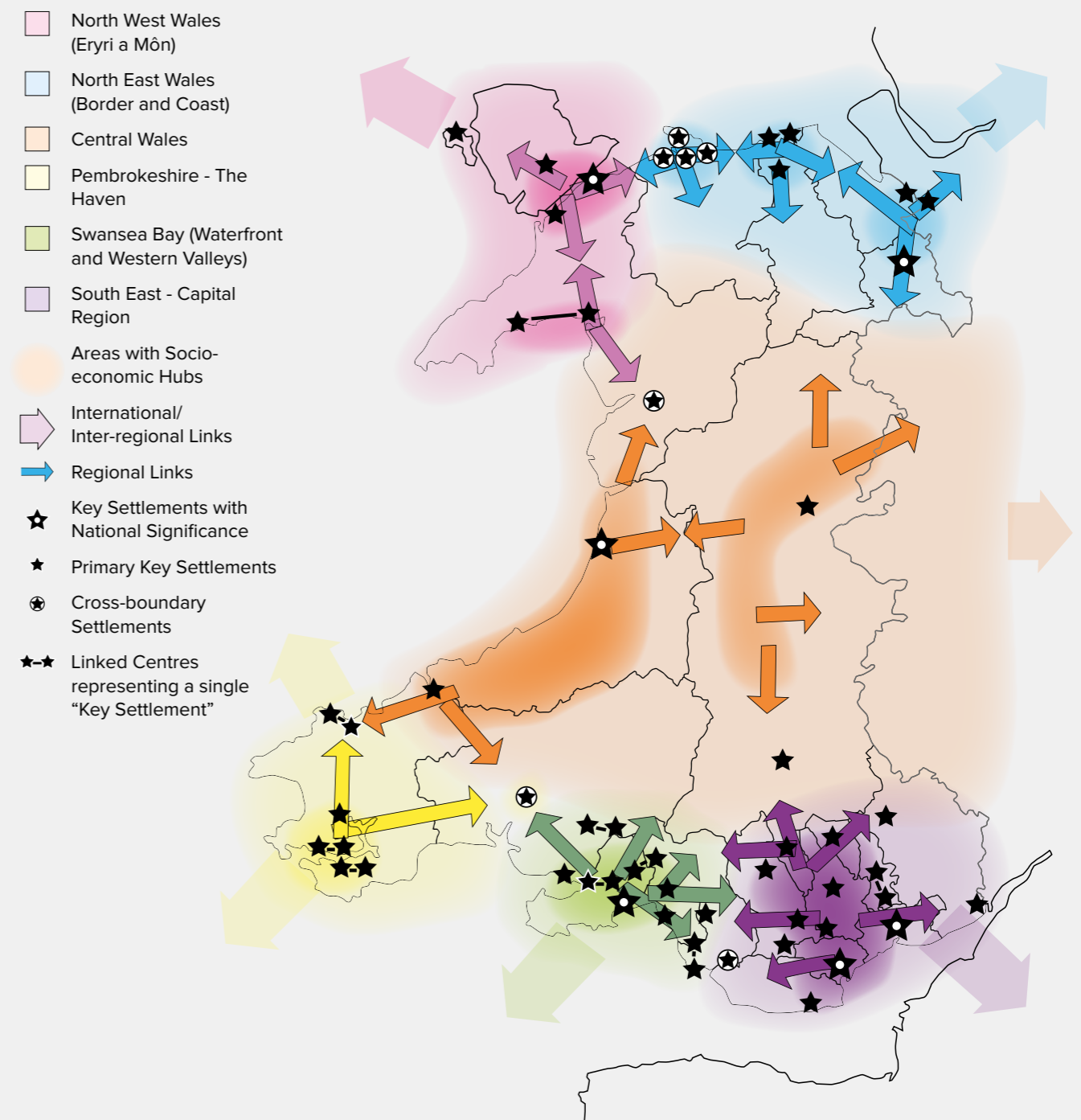
1997	Referendum result on devolution to Wales – a very small majority of voters in the referendum vote 'Yes' to devolution
1998	Government of Wales Act sets out the framework for the operation of the Assembly
1999	First elections to and establishment of the National Assembly for Wales
1999	Publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective
2000	Welsh Assembly Government commitment to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales
2001	Work begins on the spatial evidence base
2003	Consultation version of The Wales Spatial Plan
2004	The National Assembly for Wales approves the first edition of The Wales Spatial Plan
2004	The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act embeds the Wales Spatial Plan in legislation
2008	Revised version of the Wales Spatial Plan issued as an update
2011	Welsh Assembly establishes an inquiry into the planning system in Wales, and documents criticism of the Wales Spatial Plan
2012	The anticipated four-yearly revision of the Wales Spatial Plan does not come forward. The Welsh Government publishes a Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan without this being embedded in the Wales Spatial Plan
2012	An Independent Advisory Group on the planning system in Wales recommends a National Development Framework
2015	Royal Assent for The Planning (Wales) Act which sets out the powers to replace the Wales Spatial Plan with a National Development Framework for Wales. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is also published and will impact on the work of the Welsh Government and many other public bodies in Wales
2016	The Welsh Government begins preparation of a National Development Framework and highlights how stakeholders will be consulted during the process, as well as calls for evidence and projects
2018	Welsh Government consults on issues and options for the National Development Framework
2019	Consultation version of the Framework is expected
2020	Anticipated approval and publication of the National Development Framework for Wales

The formation of the Assembly in 1999 witnessed an acceleration in interest in Wales as a nation, alongside a proliferation of policies, strategies and initiatives. The Welsh Assembly Government, as it was then, became interested in exploring what has been characterised as 'spatial planning' and worked towards preparation of a national spatial plan. There are several reasons for this interest in developing a spatial plan for Wales. These include the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective at the same time as the first Assembly elections took place. The European Spatial Development Perspective offered a renewed way of thinking strategically and spatially about territories and national spaces. The act of devolution to Wales also focused attention on Wales as a political space, as a territory and as a nation. The raft of sectoral policies produced by the Welsh Assembly Government – for transport, education, culture, language, sport, recreation and so on – also created a policy environment that demanded some form of integration and understanding of how all of these came together to impact on different areas of Wales. Devolution to the National Assembly for Wales was also preceded by Wales shifting to a system of unitary local government, resulting in a loss of strategic planning capacity as local government abandoned its two-tier structure, and fragmented into 22 local authorities. A spatial plan for Wales provided an opportunity to address this loss of strategic planning. These precipitating factors were all threaded together by the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Environment, Transport and Planning, who personally drove forward the initiative to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales.

That early initiative to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales evolved in the following years into The Wales Spatial Plan. The Wales Spatial Plan was initially built on an emerging spatial evidence base, as well as extensive consultation with stakeholders in the different parts of Wales. The early initiative had been to prepare a strategic document to guide local planning authorities' preparation of local land use plans and decision-making on planning applications. The Wales Spatial Plan attracted wider ministerial interest and rapidly became a document designed to integrate and reflect the spectrum of Welsh Assembly Government policies, strategies and initiatives. This was the Plan's pinnacle in terms of political and professional relevance. The Plan itself went through two iterations, published in 2004 and 2008, preceded also by an earlier consultation version. The Plan was also embedded in planning legislation with the passing of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This placed a legislative commitment on the Welsh Assembly Government to prepare the Wales Spatial Plan, although it did not give the Plan any particular status in planning decision-making. The Plan became more refined and detailed as it went through the process of revision and amendment. One of the key developments as it progressed was the elaboration of sub-national spaces or 'areas' within Wales (see Figure 3). Indeed, one of the key functions and legacies of the Plan is its definition of areas of Wales. So, while the Plan was to be a national spatial plan, it also created a strong sense of regionalisation within Wales. The creation of, for example, the South East Wales Capital Region – an area similar but slightly more restricted in extent to 'industrial South Wales' in *Wales: The Way Ahead* – underlines the Plan's role in regionalisation and

Figure 3

The Wales Spatial Plan: A National Vision

- North West Wales (Eryri a Môn)
- North East Wales (Border and Coast)
- Central Wales
- Pembrokeshire - The Haven
- Swansea Bay (Waterfront and Western Valleys)
- South East - Capital Region
- Areas with Socio-economic Hubs
- International/ Inter-regional Links
- Regional Links
- ☆ Key Settlements with National Significance
- ★ Primary Key Settlements
- ✪ Cross-boundary Settlements
- ★–★ Linked Centres representing a single "Key Settlement"

Source Duncan G (2008) People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan (Welsh Assemby Cardiff)
https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/130701wales-spatial-plan-2008-update-en.pdf p29

strategic place-making. Some of these sub-national spaces live on in very recent activities to establish city-regions in parts of Wales.

The Wales Spatial Plan appears initially to have been a success story – a story in which national-level spatial planning was recognised as politically and professionally useful. The Plan exemplified the 'spatial planning approach' that was commended and promoted in academic circles at the time. It was a strategic plan, it integrated a wide range of different themes and topics, and it expressed them spatially. The Plan was, however, about to fall out of political favour almost as quickly as it had found political support. The second, revised version of the Wales Spatial Plan published in 2008 was, despite a planned four-yearly cycle of revision, to be the last version published. A succession of planning reviews and inquiries into the operation of the planning system unleashed a series of fundamental criticisms of the Wales Spatial Plan. The National Assembly for Wales published its own inquiry into planning in Wales in early 2011. The Inquiry's report identified a lack of clarity in the role and purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan, especially in relation to its position in the town and country planning system. The same report also cited criticisms of the Plan by the Home Builders Federation that it was 'difficult to pin down what the Wales Spatial Plan does'. The Home Builders Federation noted the Plan's 'laudable aspirations', yet found it lacked traction within the Local Development Plans prepared by local planning authorities. In other words, it was difficult to identify what the Plan meant for plans and projects 'on the ground'.

A second independent review of the planning system commissioned by the Welsh Government followed quick on the heels of the Assembly's inquiry and also concluded that the Wales Spatial Plan provided insufficient steer for local land-use planning policy and decisions. This Independent Advisory Group review recommended that the Wales Spatial Plan be replaced with a National Development Framework. The Welsh Government has accepted this recommendation and is presently working on its National Development Framework for Wales. Once completed, the National Development Framework will replace the Wales Spatial Plan. This point – the replacing of the Wales Spatial Plan – has come as a surprise to some stakeholders, given that earlier criticisms of the Plan were understood by many to have killed off the Plan entirely. The intention to prepare a National Development Framework feels like a case of 'back to the future' – a potential reinvention of a tool that has recently been abandoned. There are nevertheless some important differences between the Wales Spatial Plan and the proposed National Development Framework. The Framework, once prepared, will have 'development plan' status, meaning it has the same status in planning decision-making as the Local Development Plans prepared by local planning authorities. This difference is designed to ensure that the Framework addresses the criticism that the Wales Spatial Plan had very little influence on land use policy and decision-making. Planning decisions will now need to be made in accordance with the Framework unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Development plans at other levels of the planning system are also required to be in general conformity with the Framework. A further important difference is that the Framework has scope to identify 'developments of national significance'. If

identified in the plan, these developments will require developers to apply to the Welsh Government as the decision-maker in the first instance, rather than apply to the local planning authority in whose area the development is located. These changes together mean that the Framework will 'have teeth' within the planning system in the way that the Wales Spatial Plan did not. The Framework is, however, still a couple of years away from being in place, with a planned publication date in late 2020. Stakeholders are engaged in various stages of consultation, yet these stakeholders can still only speculate about what shape, format and level of detail the Framework will eventually take.

Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues

From spatial planning back to land-use planning

This section comments on several themes related to the National Development Framework as the latest incarnation of national spatial planning in Wales. The first theme focuses on what appears to be a retrenchment from a spatial planning approach to a more narrowly-defined land-use planning approach. The Wales Spatial Plan was emblematic of a spatial planning approach, an approach that was commonly defined as 'going beyond land use planning'. The National Development Framework deliberately narrows its perspective to one of land-use planning. This is perhaps an inevitable outcome of the criticisms made of the Wales Spatial Plan and documented in the preceding section. The demand that the Framework be capable of shaping planning policy at local level, and be relevant to decisions on developments of strategic or cross-boundary importance, may inevitably lead to a narrower and sharper focus on land use planning concerns. The planning community may consequently feel a greater sense of ownership of the Framework than they did the Wales Spatial Plan. So, positively, we might expect the National Development Framework to be more relevant and have greater traction within the planning community. Yet this relevance potentially comes at a cost. Wider stakeholders may see less relevance in a document focusing on land-use or town and country planning matters. We may see less scope for the coordination and integration of a wide range of different sectors and functions that impact on places and how they function. The spatial planning approach, for example, opened up interesting opportunities to link planning to health, social care, culture, and the Welsh language. The wide range of stakeholders that became involved in the Wales Spatial Plan testified to the adoption of a form of planning focused more broadly on spatial development. There is a risk that planners, by not adopting and maintaining a spatial planning approach, will appear less relevant in helping others to achieve their own objectives by focusing principally on policies framing a requirement for planning permission. The retrenchment to a land-use planning focus is entirely understandable in light of the call to show what the Framework does, and how it impacts on decisions on the ground. It is nevertheless regrettable that Wales, an early and keen adopter of a spatial planning approach to national-level planning, has for the moment abandoned a wider conception of planning. Planning is likely to become much more a mechanism for accommodating change, and delivering land required for

development, than a driver of change and a means of shaping places and activity.

Contestation and challenge

The second theme follows on from the retrenchment to a narrower series of land-use planning concerns. The Framework, due to its narrower focus and increased specificity, is likely to lead to increased contestation, with stakeholders and interests more likely to challenge its content. The Wales Spatial Plan, if stakeholders did indeed find it hard to identify what it actually did, probably did not constrain stakeholders' actions to any great extent. The consensual, objectives-led approach to the Wales Spatial Plan meant that sometimes difficult choices over conflicting issues were side-stepped or left unresolved. The general means by which the Wales Spatial Plan was applied and operationalised also created space for different stakeholders to avoid coming into conflict or contest with one another. We have yet to see the level of detail and specificity that the National Development Framework will include, although Welsh Government states that the Framework will include a regional, policy-based household projection for each of its regions. The Wales Spatial Plan avoided any reference to such figures and stayed on the comparatively safe ground of generalised housing objectives. The Framework and its anticipated different approach to addressing housing issues will likely attract greater scrutiny from stakeholders. The housebuilding industry will keep a close eye on any housing-related data included in the Framework, as will local planning authorities whose own housing deliberations in their plans will be more sharply impacted upon by the content of the Framework. The enhanced status of the Framework when compared with the earlier Wales Spatial Plan – with the Framework's 'development plan' status in particular – will also lead to greater scrutiny, contestation, and challenge.

Assembly scrutiny and review

The third theme focuses on the process for preparing and testing the National Development Framework. The Framework's 'development plan' status, as well as the prospect of it being subject to greater challenge than its predecessor, demands that we also explore the process by which the Framework will be prepared. Local Development Plans – plans which share the same status as the proposed Framework – are subject to detailed regulations setting out how they are prepared, how evidence is to be scrutinised and how disputes over evidence and content are to be examined and resolved. Stakeholders might expect a national-level planning framework to be subject to similarly robust and stringent processes of examination. The Framework will instead involve relatively light touch processes for scrutiny and review, particularly in terms of how robust the evidence base is that underpins the framework. The Framework will be laid before the Assembly for a period of scrutiny. The Framework is not subject to any real independent, external examination process. The relatively light touch process for challenging the Framework may risk undermining its legitimacy, especially when it sits alongside other development plans that go through a more robust examination process.

Centralisation

The final theme focuses on centralisation of plan-making and decision-making. The changes being made to the legislative framework for planning in Wales afford greater powers and influence to the Welsh Government. The enhanced status in planning decision-making of the National Development Framework, plus the ability of the Framework to identify developments as 'developments of national significance' and thereby ensure these are decided by the Welsh Government itself, are critical differences with the earlier Wales Spatial Plan. These changes appear to have been implemented without any great consternation or concern. Yet there is no denying that there is a centralising tendency to these changes, a concentration of power and influence in the hands of the Welsh Government. Some may argue that this is simply appropriate to the challenges faced and the need to create an enhanced framework for national-level planning. We will only see with the finalisation of the Framework, and its operationalisation, whether this is the case.

Making it all work

Wales has clearly been a key player in the practical application of the spatial planning approach over the past decade and a half. Wales has stood alongside other examples of spatial planning in the Celtic periphery, and has to some extent emulated and learned from the experiences of others. The experimentation with spatial planning tools in the devolved administrations has progressed in the absence of any spatial planning framework at United Kingdom level, and this does not initially appear to have been problematic. Yet the Welsh Government's approach has evolved in recent years and the National Development Framework for Wales aligns itself more closely with the planning system than its predecessor. I now explore what may be needed to make this revised approach work.

The first point recalls the earlier juxtaposition of a spatial planning and land-use planning approach. The retrenchment to a sharper and more explicit land-use dimension to national-level planning is understandable, yet we can challenge the idea that what is possible is one approach or the other. National-level planning in Wales could embrace both approaches simultaneously. A spatial vision of Wales, an integration of the various national-level strategies and a characterisation of Wales and its component areas could go hand in hand with a clearer articulation of land-use matters. It was arguably the latter that was missing, or was never reached, in the preparation of the Wales Spatial Plan. If the Welsh Government can deliver such a hybrid document then it may be able to deliver what land use planning audiences demand, while also keeping planning central to public policy more generally, and injecting spatial considerations into all policy spheres of Government.

The second demand for the future of national-level planning in Wales is that it be supported by the resources and expertise that it takes to deliver a development plan status document for all of Wales. The National Development Framework, like the Wales Spatial Plan before it, is being prepared with limited resources and drawing on the existing professional expertise within Welsh Government. The scale and importance of the task of preparing

a national-level spatial plan calls for a dedicated unit, with assembled expertise and sufficient resources to commission studies, analyses and technical input. We see in a variety of historical examples how teams drawn together to address a specific challenge can deliver ambitious plans. We do not yet know, of course, how ambitious a plan the Welsh Government will deliver. It is also difficult to know 'what the Framework will look like' – to what extent in the final analysis will it differ in style, content and approach to the Wales Spatial Plan? We already know from consultation documents that it will include a suite of policies in the format of a more conventional development plan. We are nevertheless left to speculate about its eventual style and shape.

The third demand is to clarify how the National Development Framework will address the 'in-between' spaces that sit between the national and local scale. We have seen in the past how sensitive it has been to speak of 'regions' in a Welsh context, using terms like 'areas' to skirt around the issue. The National Development Framework could create regions 'from above' to address strategic, sub-national and supra-local issues. There are now also powers to build regions – or strategic planning areas – 'from below'. One of the key issues to be addressed in preparing the Framework is whether it will have a regional component, what those regions may be and how they should be defined. The Wales Spatial Plan had its own regionalisation, although there is no requirement that the Framework closely follow these. The Welsh Government has indicated recently that the Framework's regions will reflect the existing economic regions of Wales – a step that fails to reflect the wider issues beyond the economy that influence the design of regions, and potentially a missed opportunity to think afresh about regionalisation.

The fourth demand is that Welsh Government revisit whether the processes they have designed for testing and examining the Framework are sufficiently robust, especially considering the Framework has the distinction of being a 'development plan' status document. There has been a 'call for evidence' by the Welsh Government to inform preparation of the Framework, although it is not especially clear what the Welsh Government makes of that evidence, whether it is robust, and how it informs the next stage of preparing the Framework. Documents at other scales and of comparable status are typically subject to independent professional examination or assessment. There will be political scrutiny within the Assembly of the Framework and there are many stakeholders involved in the preparation and consultation process, which will provide some form of challenge to and testing of the plan. The critical question is whether that will be sufficient for the Framework to command the authority it should within the planning community.

Wider Implications of the Welsh Case

- National-level spatial planning frameworks need to be able to demonstrate to stakeholders what impact and influence they have. A failure to do this means political support dissipates and the frameworks simply become 'documents sitting on a shelf'. Political support, interest and momentum need to be sustained – frameworks can rise and decline in relevance within short timescales and with changes in political representation.

- There is a trade-off between the wide-ranging, visionary character of a 'spatial planning' approach and the detailed, narrower 'land use planning' or 'town and country' planning approach. The former can be a high-level shaper of change and engage a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors, yet risks not having much to show 'on the ground'. The latter can show more tangible impacts on developments and actions on the ground, yet risks accommodating rather than shaping change.

- The process through which a framework is prepared – and, if appropriate, examined – needs to reflect the style of document and the uses made of it. Some styles of national-level planning demand strong and rigorous processes for independent examination if the resulting framework is to be legitimate, especially if it is to shape and influence documents at other scales. Less formal frameworks may be subject to informal processes of engagement and review.

- National-level planning frameworks are rarely an end product in themselves – they are usually a framework for activity and planning at other scales. These may be regions, cities or localities. A national-level framework needs to be clear about which of these scales and forums it is trying to influence. This may require intermediary scales or tiers between the national and the local, depending on the 'distance' between these two scales.

- National-level spatial planning frameworks only emerge and succeed when the political, social and economic conditions are supportive. We see historically in Wales that there are often extensive periods between efforts to plan national spaces. We also see that governments in the United Kingdom have ignored repeated professional calls for some form of national-level spatial planning in England. The case for national-level spatial planning needs to be made strongly, yet this case will not be heard if the wider conditions are not supportive of national spatial planning.

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NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING IN FRANCE: FROM NOSTALGIA TO REINVENTION?

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Abstract

The unequal development of France's regions has always been a major political and social preoccupation. Until about 2000, it was common to contrast Paris with the rest of France. Since then, it has become standard practice to contrast "metropolitan areas" with "peripheral France" or "small town and countryside France". The State's capacity to drive the inter-regional rebalancing of development has clearly diminished given both the devolution of power to France's local authorities (*décentralisation*) and greater openness to international trade. The nostalgia of the heyday of "aménagement du territoire" is still alive. But what notions and tools would be fit to efficiently tackle the current territorial challenges?

Planning France Spatially

The policy of deliberately re-balancing development across French regions emerged in the late 1940s. I will outline the key aspects of this policy to help show more clearly how it was scrapped subsequently (Desjardins, 2017).

In 1950, Eugène Claudius-Petit, the Minister of Reconstruction and Urban Planning, set out the case "For a National Plan for Regional Development" (*Pour un plan national d'aménagement du territoire*) to France's Council of Ministers (roughly equivalent to the British Cabinet). A national plan has never been elaborated since that period. Nevertheless, National Planning Policy emerged in the 1950's. In 1955, initial measures were created to limit the development and location of firms in the Paris region. Cultural decentralisation was pursued by creating national theatre centres across the country. This was strengthened in the 1960s by the creation of cultural centres (Maisons de la Culture) by André Malraux, General de Gaulle's Minister of Culture.

In 1963, the Delegation for Regional Development Planning and Action (Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale or DATAR) was created. The "great era" of development was marked by this institution, which was directly supervised by the Prime Minister's office. It was a small mission-focused administration of a hundred persons. Its purpose was to influence the actions of the various ministries so that their policies were compatible with more balanced territorial development. The DATAR was directed by iconic personalities: Olivier Guichard between 1963 and 1968 and Jérôme Monod from 1968 to 1975. It became the symbol of France's national ambition for regional planning. Many great development operations were launched in the 1960s, including: the creation of new towns around Paris, Lille and Lyon; the creation of large industrial-port areas in Fos-sur-Mer and Dunkirk; the "Racine" plan for developing tourism along the Languedoc coast; industrial decentralization; the creation of France's first national parks; and the policy of nurturing "metropolitan areas for equilibrium" around big provincial cities, to offset the weight of Paris.

At the time, there were three principal types of State intervention in regional development: the orientation of company investments, the support of growth clusters (pôles de croissance), and large economic modernisation programmes.

The notion of growth clusters marked spatial planning. This idea had been proposed by the French economist François Perroux in 1955. Perroux's position was simple: polarisation in the industrial

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sphere is due to the presence of dynamic firms. Industrial policy-makers had to be careful not to disperse resources available, otherwise they would be useless. They needed to choose a strategic sector, a place suitable to the sector, and attract (or create) a powerful firm which could then "pull" the economy of the entire sector.

The second idea is to direct companies' investments to lagging regions. This idea was notably implemented in France by limiting the development of firms in the Paris Region. Official approval for investments was adopted in 1955, whereby projects for the creation or extension of factories or offices in the Paris region had to pass a preliminary examination. Assistance was offered to companies that decided to settle in rural areas. This policy had significant results. In particular, it helped to industrialise the peripheral regions of the Paris Basin. They were the main beneficiaries of the industrial redeployment of industries, especially automobiles and electronics. Why did it succeed? Because the policy accompanied trends in "Fordist" industries which led to the geographical dissociation between the places of decision and design (engineering, marketing, advertising, etc.) and manufacturing sites.

The third form of territorial economic interventionism concerned large industrial or agricultural projects that reshaped territories. The choice to strongly modernize agriculture, stated as early as the 1950s and confirmed as of 1962 within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy on a European level, had a considerable territorial impact through the massive reduction in the number of farmers. Other major "modernisation" programmes were industrial. These projects also concerned France's military-industrial complex (including de Gaulle's nuclear weapons programme), energy (the decision to develop nuclear energy in the 1970s), and transport (the emblematic launching of the High-Speed Train). In all cases, the impulse of the public authorities was massive and the "territorial dimension" of these programmes was clearly expected.

During the 1980s, the conclusion was drawn that France had to give up or recognize that it was no longer possible to use these three levers. As restrictions on foreign trade were gradually lifted, the desire to direct the location of manufacturing units no longer made much sense. Factories relocated massively to Asia: the territorial division of production processes by companies moved rapidly from a national to an international scale. At the same time, "industrial Colbertism" seemed increasingly obsolete (though no clear assessment of its limits has ever actually been made). It also shifted to a European level for France's aircraft and aerospace programmes. Lastly, the growth clusters turned out to be a clear failure. For all these reasons – ideological, economic and political – economic intervention became increasingly "indirect".

There was a shift from orienting and constraining towards encouraging. Exceptions aside, the government progressively decided to intervene, no longer directly in company operations, instead they tried to concentrate on orienting their practices. Starting in 1980, rebalancing policies no longer intervened directly in corporate strategies, but aimed more simply to make regions more attractive. The three main policies are successively presented.

Support for regions facing economic recession

In France, policies to support regions marked by major job losses have been numerous. Since 2002, a French law has obliged companies with more than 1,000 employees to engage in industrial rejuvenation activities when they implement collective redundancies which by their size affect the equilibrium of one or several employment catchment areas in which they are operating. These emergency policies are therefore often accompanied by longer-term programmes aimed at transforming the living conditions of a territory more generally. To this end, the government set up "conversion centres" in 1984, for 15 areas that suffered from the economic recession, including port areas (Fos-sur-Mer, Dunkerque-Calais), steel-producing regions (Lorraine), metalworking areas (Caen), or mining territories (Albi-Carmaux, Valenciennes, etc.). Other policies followed, often related to incentives for businesses to settle in these territories. The results were often not negligible, but remained disappointing because such aid frequently had windfall effects, while the mortality rate of new companies has often been higher than average.

Support for local development

The notion of "local development" has had certain success since the 1980s. This notion comes from academia. Scientists, spatial economists, geographers, interdisciplinary specialists of regional studies (then brand new) all put forward hypotheses for "local development". Based on solid case studies from many countries, they formulated notions relating to "innovative environments" or "local productive systems".

As far as territorial actors are concerned, this new theory was rapidly integrated into public policies. Indeed, since nothing seemed to be coming "from above", it was necessary to organize things "from below", in order to find routes to robust development. In Brittany and Lorraine (around the Pompey basin), as well as in various rural and mountainous regions, pioneers launched local development projects. They were rapidly supported by the State, which created "countries" (or pays) in 1995. The Voynet Law of 1999 was the heyday of this type of development, generalising such pays by establishing about 400 in France. They had one goal: designing development projects which addressed economic and social issues, but also educational and cultural ones within areas that were not constrained by existing administrative limits. These projects were meant to be set up on the basis of involving civil society, unions, company directors, teachers and even representatives of local associations and charities. The State promised financial aid, financing local initiatives via contracts. Activities were not directly carried out by the pays, which were more supervisory organisations, but by the various partners present within a pays (especially local government and associations). Momentum ran a bit out of steam afterwards and state involvement was cut back. Since 2014, the pays have a new, highly technocratic name, and are called "clusters of territorial and rural equilibrium" (pôle d'équilibre territorial et rural). That said, the idea of designing development strategies based on local

issues, which are highly inclusive of socio-economic actors, is now very commonplace and a sign of success.

Paris and large cities, engines of France?

Since 2000, national spatial planning policies have been marked by a significant strategic change compared to the 1950s: the aim now is to support "what works", in terms of business sectors and territories.

As of 2004, the policy pursued by the DATAR concerning "competitiveness clusters" was less focused on "specific zones" than on sectors. The aim was to concentrate public monies on a few clusters, managed by professionals, in order to increase cooperation between companies as well as between companies and research organisations. The final goal in this case was to achieve strong competitiveness in given sectors, derived from obtaining significant market shares in Europe and the world. Industries in this case are presented as having a fundamental role in terms of their capacity for leading the rest of the French economy. However, France is operating in sectors that are very exposed to competition from emerging countries, while it faces the challenge of developing technological industries generating high value added. The cluster policy was launched in 2004, with a call for tenders for projects that led to the selection and labelling of 71 applications during an initial phase (2004-2008). Today, a third phase is in progress, running from 2013 to present.

A second major bifurcation of development planning has been the proclamation of Paris as the national "engine" of development (Desjardins 2018). During the post-war boom, policy was not anti-Paris. The moving of factories away from Paris was also part of a policy for concentrating finance, research, culture and even armaments around Paris. In short, Paris's competitiveness was also strengthened. But since 2005-2010, the development of greater Paris has been supported explicitly and without limit. Support for Paris is once again evident with the "Grand Paris" public transport project. This project was initiated by President Nicolas Sarkozy. From the regional planning point of view, the aim is to boost the economy of Île-de-France by improving its public transport network, particularly in favour of the region's access points, such as its airports and its main economic clusters: especially the La Défense business district to the west of inner Paris and the Plateau de Saclay research cluster (about 25 km to the south west of central Paris).

More recently, the government has embarked on a policy of strengthening metropolitan areas (Behar, 2010). This policy has resulted in the creation of a new type of public institution for inter-communal cooperation intended to organize metropolitan areas. Also, and perhaps most importantly, this strategy involves State investments in several public services centered on France's largest agglomerations, especially universities. A map of investment in universities since 2008 clearly shows a concentration of endowments in large cities, whereas the 1990s had been marked by a desire to extend university coverage to medium-sized cities.

Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues

The decline of state involvement in explicit spatial planning policies and the growing importance of the welfare state to rebalance regional developments

So, what remains of the ambitions of development planning policies for the least developed territories? Some aid mechanisms still exist for rural or some peripheral areas, but the monies are really becoming very marginal. The State's "spatial planning" budget now only represents 0.2% of GDP. Nevertheless, France's national budget does redistribute massively across territories through mechanisms that are not very visible, namely through the policies of its welfare state.

Economists, notably Laurent Davezies (2008) and Magali Talandier (2014), have used the theory of "the base" to analyze these phenomena. According to this approach, the development of a territory depends on two factors. The first is its ability to expand its income – known as the "economic base" – coming from the rest of the world. The second is the intensity of the internal circulation of money: i.e., the propensity of households to consume locally. Development involves employment, income and population growth in a territory. The "basic sector" is the sector that brings all kinds of income captured outside the territory. The "domestic sector" includes activities that produce goods and services sold locally (bakers, doctors, shopkeepers, housekeepers, etc.). The vitality of this sector depends on local demand and local income, which are themselves determined by the base and the propensity of the inhabitants to consume locally. Thus there are two economic sectors: one exposed to competition with other territories, the other protected from competition and relatively insensitive to cyclical shocks.

The economic base of territories is today therefore very heavily dependent on the redistribution systems operated by the State and France's social security system. State taxes and the social security system collect revenues and contributions which have no territorial intent. They are levied roughly proportionately to household incomes and hence territories' incomes. These sums are then redistributed in roughly equal amounts per capita. This mechanism allows the transfer of tens of billions of euros from "rich" territories to "poor" ones. Laurent Davezies estimates that Île-de-France redistributes about 10% of its GDP (some €50 billion) to the provinces, via the State budget and the social security system. Private transfers supplement these public transfers. The fact that Île-de-France loses one-third of its retirees through relocation to the provinces causes the region to lose a significant part of its income. Daily mobility (long-distance commuting), weekly or annual travel (to second homes and holiday resorts) or residential relocation (for example, on retirement) have all led to a clear dissociation between the "geography of production" and the "geography of income".

Magali Talandier has shown that, on average, residential income accounted for nearly half of the basic income of settled areas in

France in 2005. Revenues from "exported" activities represented barely 20% of the revenues collected from outside a territory. This was equivalent to all transfer revenues. The public base (salaries of public employees) represented 9% of residential revenue. For settled rural areas alone, basic residential incomes play a more important role, since these incomes account for two-thirds of the base economy in rural areas (compared to half for all settled areas). This difference is explained by retirees, tourists and commuters. This income-generating mechanism, whereby revenue is not created locally through productive activities, makes it possible to understand how spaces devoid of metropolitan assets have been able, over the last decades, to see employment progress, the income of their populations improve, and see newcomers arrive to live in them, etc.

The development strategies of rural areas therefore overwhelmingly rest on the capacity of these areas to capture these revenues. The enhancement of local heritage, support for cultural life or animation by markets, fêtes or sporting events are thus important levers to capture "mobile" inhabitants and with them, their income. Therefore, at least at the local level and for less productive areas, environmental and cultural considerations are not opposed to development. However, there is a threat to these mechanisms for capturing external revenues given the level of public spending. It represented 57% of GDP in France in 2016 and in 2017. This is a historical record, and one of the highest levels in the world. Any reduction in the level of public spending will impact territories unevenly: those areas that are least exposed to international competition and the least productive will likely feel spending cuts most painfully.

The State's capacity to drive the inter-regional rebalancing of development has clearly diminished given both the devolution of power to France's local authorities (décentralisation) and greater openness to international trade. So now the State has only two levers of action: the mechanisms of the welfare state to balance income, and aid for the creation of a "framework" which is attractive for investments. However, it must be asked whether initiatives are enough. Of course not. Local development can only be one of the levers of an economic development policy. Bernard Pecqueur, a leading expert of local development, noted in 2000 that such initiatives can coexist with the logic of "sites set up by transnational companies which are nomadic, and not well-anchored in an area, and which are forever, systematically searching for the lowest costs possible". Much of the future of the territories is beyond the control of people who live in them. To reinvent a new national planning policies, two questions have to be discussed: the nature of the current territorial inequalities and the tools and notions that have to be used (Vanier and Desjardins, 2017).

What are the territorial inequalities?
The political debate today on "territorial inequalities" is structured strongly by the contrast between "metropolitan areas" and "non-metropolitan areas". As we have seen, national policies are now quite favourable to the largest cities in terms of investment in universities or transport. But the actual dynamics of territorial development does not show such a clear opposition between

"strata". Some metropolitan areas are not faring very well (notably Rouen, Lille or Metz). On the other hand, many rural areas show obvious signs of vitality, especially in western France. This debate over "strata" masks very strong inter-regional development gaps, particularly between north-eastern France and the Paris basin, as well as the rest of the national territory (see Figure 4). The GDP of the south and west of France is 3.5 % higher than this of the north-east in 2003: in 2015, it is nearly 10 % higher. These regions are suffering from the decline of the old industry and of the Fordist industry. The example of Nord-Pas-de-Calais is striking. The mining basin of Nord-Pas-de-Calais has gone through several decades of rejuvenation development strategies. The results are indisputable, many large companies have set up plants there: Renault in Douai and Maubeuge, La Française de Mécanique in Drouin then Toyota in Valenciennes, in the 1990s. Railway construction is developing in Valenciennes. In terms of industrial brownfield sites, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Public Corporation (l'établissement public du Nord-Pas-de-Calais) has developed ambitious reconversion activities on part of the 10,000 hectares of industrial wastelands identified at the beginning of the 1980s. Investments in cultural activities have been important. The Louvre-Lens Museum which opened in 2012 is a symbol of this ambition. Transport networks have been greatly improved, notably thanks to the opening of the high-speed rail node near Lille, where lines link Paris to London and Brussels. However, some indicators are still very alarming today. In 2015, the unemployment rates in the Lens-Liévin and Valenciennes job catchment areas were respectively 16.9% and 15.5%, compared to an average of 10.5% for mainland France. Also, life expectancy for men is more than two years shorter than the national average for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region as a whole. "Firefighter" development policies have often reduced difficulties. Some industrial regions have been redeveloped by such policies. However, at the national level, France's old mining, iron and steel regions of the North and the East still face the most social, economic and health problems. Much is made publicly about the contrast between "cities" and "the countryside", and this discourse is deliberately retrograde. But we need to ask whether it is in fact not masking the accentuation of other, more disturbing imbalances, requiring more rigorous political solutions than just slogans.

National spatial planning policies need reinvention, not nostalgia
Because of the increasing concerns over territorial inequalities, many are dreaming of the rebirth of the "aménagement du territoire" as known in the 1960s. DATAR is like a myth. For example, many regional councils have named "DATAR" their department in charge of spatial policies. But this nostalgia is not a good driver for the reinvention of national planning policy. The three levers used in the 1960s are as relevant today as then.

The country is now well equipped. With mobility facilitated for many, we can short-circuit the nearest city to have access to a resource (retail, university, leisure, and so on). The hierarchical distribution of investments in function of the cities' size was relevant when the state had control over them, which is no longer the case. In short, national spatial planning must aim at the complementarity of services offered between cities, define the functions to be attributed to each territory according to its relations to others

Figure 4

Changing Fortunes of French Regions

EMPLOYMENT

Average annual percentage growth rate of employment
by departement, between 2009 and 2014

- 1.9
- 0.5
- 0.3
- -0.1
- -0.3
- -0.5
- -0.7
- -1
- -1.3

ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE REGIONS

Average annual percentage growth of the regional GDP
by region, between 2000 and 2014

- 7.5
- 2
- 1.5
- 1
- 0

Regional GDP in absolute value in 2014

- 600,000
- 200,000
- 36,000
- 2,000

Source Insee Rp, Admin Express Cog Communes 2016, Insee, 2000-2014, Base 2010 - Estimations D'emploi, Cget, Cnrs Geographie-Cites Commissariat Général à l'égalité des territoires, 2018

and thus think system and reciprocity rather than hierarchy and autonomy. Moreover, national spatial planning cannot be that great a redistributive mechanism that it claims to continue to be. Redistribution is much more powerful when it passes through global mechanisms, without territorial discrimination (we receive the same pensions everywhere in France, we access the same public service, we have the same social rights whatever the regions, etc.), and that household mobility reallocates this income in space through residential choices. The true mission of regional planning is not compensation, it is the transaction between all territories, their communities and their actors, which enable them to create a territorial solidarity.

Wider Implications of the French Case

- The acceptance of social inequalities seems to be growing in European societies (*Esprit, L'imaginaire des inégalités, septembre 2018*). The fight for "social justice" or "against social inequalities" has progressively disappeared from the social scene as has concepts such as "equality of chance" or "social equity". The "egalitarian project" is also less audible. But the territorial prism continues to be one of the last arenas where such a project still seems acceptable.

- The debate on the nature of regional inequalities in France is complicated, for two main reasons. The first one is that this issue is blurred by ideological bias (for example, reactionary anti-urban discourse is rejuvenated each time it seems possible to criticize the "metropolisation") and political tactics (lobbies of elected peoples or actors from mountains, low-density areas, poor urban districts and so on are competing to be the "true" forgotten and badly-funded part of the territory). The second factor is there is no clear and shared criteria to define spatial inequalities: is levels of unemployment sufficient? Chances to follow higher education programs? GDP per capita? Health inequalities? Moreover, it is often difficult to determine if the territorial inequalities are due to the local context (for example due to a lack of public amenities) or to the social characteristics of the inhabitants. In this context, it seems important to have a "reset" of the national discourse on territorial inequalities: too simple or too confused, it seems unable to combine a shared description of territorial inequalities and an understandable definition of levers to address them.

- Because of the importance of the state in the birth of "aménagement du territoire" in France, it is still the central government that seems to be the "natural" level to reduce territorial inequalities. But, as we have seen, its role has progressively declined, due to the increasing capacity of the European Union on one side, and of the local authorities on the other side. Moreover, because of the development of the infrastructure and the growing public expenditure, the state is less able to reduce the territorial inequalities by territorial differentiation of public expenditure. In this context, the reduction of territorial inequality depends less on "vertical redistribution" (from the state to the local) than on "horizontal transaction" (thanks to reciprocity between localities). This reciprocity between territories (to foster "win-win exchanges" in agricultural, energy, leisure, culture, education and so on) is not immanent in the context of devolution. In many countries, like in France, the decentralization has often led to create "mini-states" jealous of their "fiscal bases" and competing with the others. Could it be a new role for the state to foster "reciprocity" between territories to reduce territorial inequalities (and foster a circular economy), not only between contiguous territories (like the "metropoles" or the "intermunicipal cooperation") but sometimes between distant but complementary local authorities? It is a new challenge for the central government, not only to try to reduce territorial inequalities with its own levers, but also to create incentives and tools to facilitate and stimulate "horizontal transactions".

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THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY NORTHERN IRELAND: INEQUALITY AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

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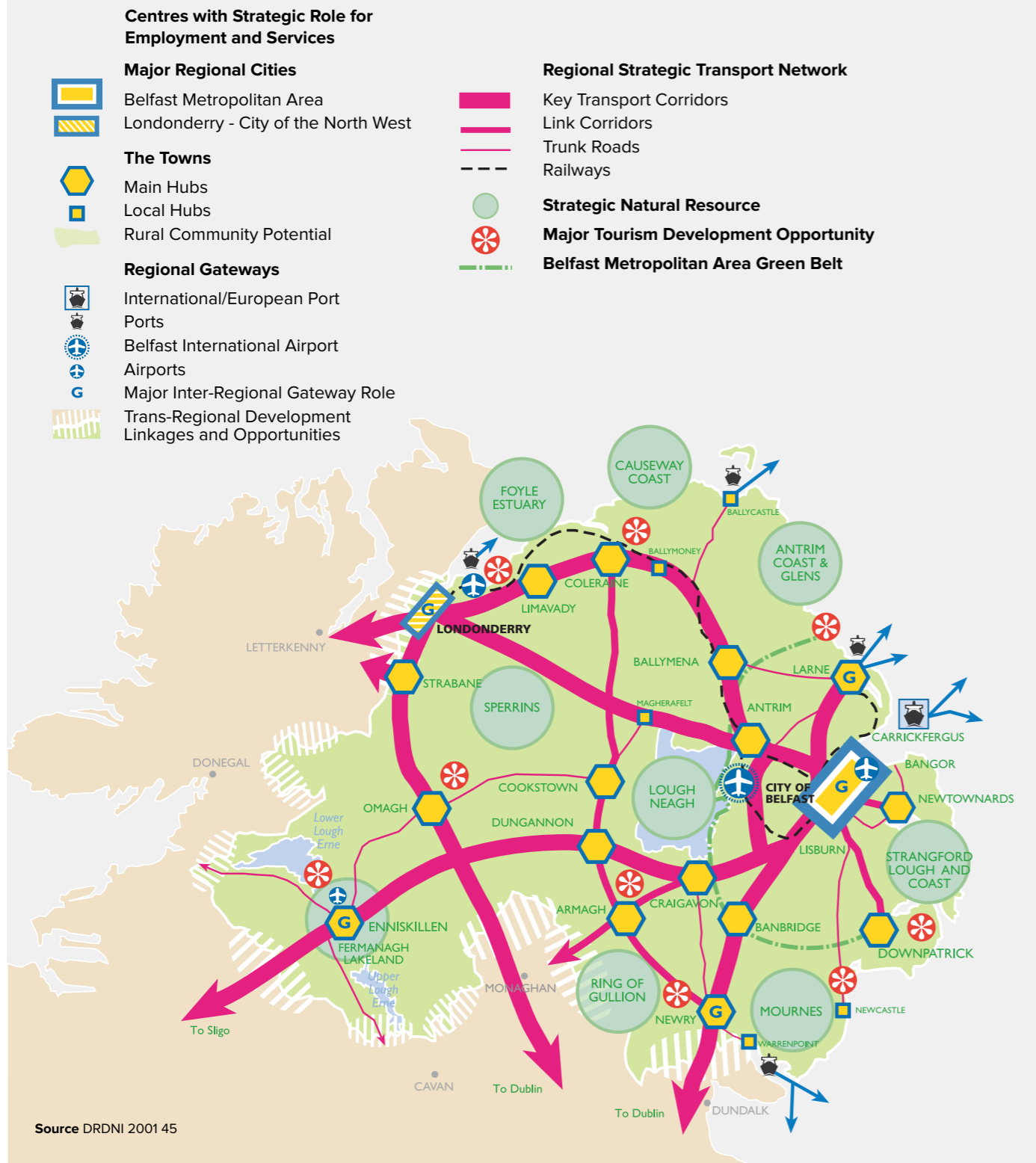
Abstract

Preparation of the new Regional Development Strategy 2025 for Northern Ireland (DRDNI 2001) began just three years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement 1998 and in many ways, it embodied a more collaborative, balanced and hopeful identity for the region. A decade later, the revised strategy (DRDNI 2010) kept the commitment to balanced growth but stripped out many of the more progressive policies around segregation, poverty and balanced development. This paper highlights the importance of spatial planning in the context of Brexit, a renewed interest in polycentric development and the need to promote an inclusive social, ecological and economic future for the region.

Planning Northern Ireland Spatially

The very idea of 'planning Northern Ireland' is problematic, not least because the identity of the region is itself deeply contested. Resource allocation decisions, infrastructure investment and the presence of a disputed land border invariably produces winners and losers in a highly segregated and still territorialised region. The Good Friday Agreement 1998, an effective end to violence and a degree of political accommodation ushered in new ways of thinking in which ideas of spatial planning had strong appeal, especially in the commitment to a more participatory, integrated and collaborative approach. As Haughton et al. (2010) noted, spatial planning was firmly embedded within the new territorial management practices of devolution but in Northern Ireland, it was precisely the style of policy making that fitted the socio-political and post-conflict zeitgeist. The first Regional Development Strategy (RDS 2025) (DRDNI, 2001), was based on an extensive consultation with key stakeholders including 477 submissions from community and voluntary groups, deployed a less adversarial Examination in Public (EiP) format and produced a broadly based strategy that acknowledged: the spatial effects of violence and segregation; poverty and social exclusion in the inner-city; the unique dispersed rural settlement character; uneven development between the east and west; and the need to modernise infrastructure. Within the RDS, the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS, see figure 5) emphasised the need to rebalance growth by strengthening hubs, corridors and gateways and a separate but integrated Regional Transport Strategy identified the key road, rail, port and airport priorities for enhanced connectivity internally and externally, between the north and south, as well as with Great Britain.

Figure 5

The Spatial Development Strategy In The RDS 2025

Centres with Strategic Role for Employment and Services

Major Regional Cities

Belfast Metropolitan Area
Londonderry - City of the North West

The Towns

Main Hubs
Local Hubs
Rural Community Potential

Regional Gateways

International/European Port
Ports
Belfast International Airport
Airports
G Major Inter-Regional Gateway Role
Trans-Regional Development Linkages and Opportunities

Regional Strategic Transport Network

Key Transport Corridors
Link Corridors
Trunk Roads
Railways

Strategic Natural Resource
Major Tourism Development Opportunity
Belfast Metropolitan Area Green Belt

CAUSEWAY COAST
FOYLE ESTUARY
BALLYCASTLE
ANTRIM COAST & GLENS
BALLYMONEY
COLERAINE
LIMAVADY
LONDONDERRY
LETTERKENNY
BALLYMENA
LARNE
STRABANE
MAGHERAFELT
ANTRIM
SPERRINS
CARRICKFERGUS
BANGOR
DONEGAL
COOKSTOWN
LOUGH NEAGH
CITY OF BELFAST
NEWTOWNARDS
OMAGH
Lower Lough Erne
DUNGANNON
LISBURN
STRANGFORD LOUGH AND COAST
ARMAGH
CRAIGAVON
BANBRIDGE
DOWNPATRICK
ENNISKILLEN
FERMANAGH LAKELAND
Upper Lough Erne
MONAGHAN
RING OF GULLION
NEWRY
MOURNES
NEWCASTLE
WARRENPOINT
To Sligo
CAVAN
To Dublin
To Dublin
DUNDALK

Source DRDNI 2001 45

It also produced some imaginative proposals in the form of Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPG) policies that informed the preparation of area plans, sector specific advice (retail, housing, environmental protection and so on) and priorities for related programmes in urban regeneration, tourism and rural development. SPG 3 dealt with Strengthening Regional Cohesion (SPG-SRC 3) and aimed 'to foster development which contributes to better community relations, recognises cultural diversity, and reduces socio-economic differentials within Northern Ireland'. In pursuit of this aim, it set out an ambitious programme to deal with Northern Ireland's past including the need to encourage integrated neighbourhoods where people wish to live together; and to facilitate the removal of physical barriers between communities, subject to local agreement (DRDNI 2001 34-35). The approach reflected a remarkable repositioning of planning at the centre of the region's post-conflict transition and in particular, in dealing with the explicit spatial effects of segregation, peace lines and opportunities to create shared space. It also stressed the need for employment sites to be accessible to both communities and that public transport should strengthen connectivity across divided labour markets.

Summary of plans and legislation

Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland (DfINI) (2015) *Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: Planning for Sustainable Development (SPPS)*, Belfast, DfINI.

Department for Regional Development NI (DRDNI) (2001) *Shaping Our Future: Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025*, Belfast, DRDNI.

Department for Regional Development NI (DRDNI) (2010) *Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building A Better Future*, Belfast, DRDNI.

Department for Regional Development NI (DRDNI) and Department for the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) (2013) *Framework for Co-operation Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*, DRD and DECLG, Belfast and Dublin.

Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (2011 Planning Act) (which devolved operational planning policy to 11 new local authorities across the region).

GLOSSARY

Community Planning identifies long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of local authorities and the people who live there.

Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) is an overarching strategic planning framework, with supporting Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) to guide the future development of Northern Ireland.

Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) and Planning Guidelines (PGs) provide long-term policy directions for the RDS in the form of strategic objectives, set out by topics, each with an accompanying range of measures.

Well before the financial crash in 2008, key elements of the strategy looked hopelessly optimistic. The sheer number of regional hubs, gateways and connecting corridors satisfied multiple regional, sectoral and political interests but proved almost impossible to deliver in practice. Some quite small settlements in the planning hierarchy simply lacked the size, economic capacity and centrality to form fully fledged growth centres and the aspirational corridors and cross-border connections had little control over investment decisions. A lack of buy-in from key departments, the failure to align capital investment (especially transport) to the SDS and a disconnect between physical and economic planning all undermined the creditability of the RDS (McKay and Murray 2017). Although local development plans were to be in conformity with the RDS and no particular SPG should be privileged over others, Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) dominated central-local relations. Another EiP recalibrated the HGIs in response to demographic shifts (especially migration) but for the most part, the concern of local authorities was to increase their allocation of the regional share. There was little real evidence than any development plan (or related policies in urban regeneration, housing or rural development) addressed SPG-SRC 3 or even understood how to interpret its provisions in land use strategies and delivery programmes.

Figure 6 shows that the revised RDS (DRDNI 2010) kept faith with the Spatial Development Strategy and again each sub-region was recognised in a range of designations including main hubs, local hubs, clusters, gateways and link corridors. The borderlands are not signalled out for particular attention but cross-border clusters (Newry-Dundalk and Derry/Londonderry-Letterkenny) are identified as networks where cooperation can strengthen viability and eliminate service duplication. The fuzzy spaces that characterise much of the spatial policy narrative helped legitimise the approach, but there is little empirical evidence that settlements are functionally clustered or interdependent or on how the settlement hierarchy is determined, other than by a function of population.

The revised RDS also stripped out a large number of the SPGs, with SPG-SRC 3 disappearing altogether and others rationalised or combined in a much thinner substantive document. It highlighted the role of the RDS in giving a spatial dimension to the newly agreed Programme for Government but emphasised economic concerns over social and environmental priorities. A new Regional Guidance policy, RG6, aimed to 'Strengthen community cohesion' but encouraged mixed communities with diverse backgrounds, house sizes and people, without specifying more obvious ethno-religious dimensions. A better community spirit, sense of place, especially by promoting a 'village concept' and shared use of facilities were all part of a more expansive definition of place cohesiveness (DRDNI 2010 38).

The regional planning authorities in the North and South did create a joint policy framework for cross-border cooperation and produced a map showing where and how the respective spatial strategies join within the border region (DRDNI and DECLG, 2013). This map shows how facing gateways along the border relate to each other, the importance of natural resources, principally

Figure 6

Hubs And Clusters Of Hubs In The RDS 2035

■ Principal Cities

● Main Hubs

• Local Hubs

↔ Clusters of Main Cities/Towns

Source DRDNI 2010 71
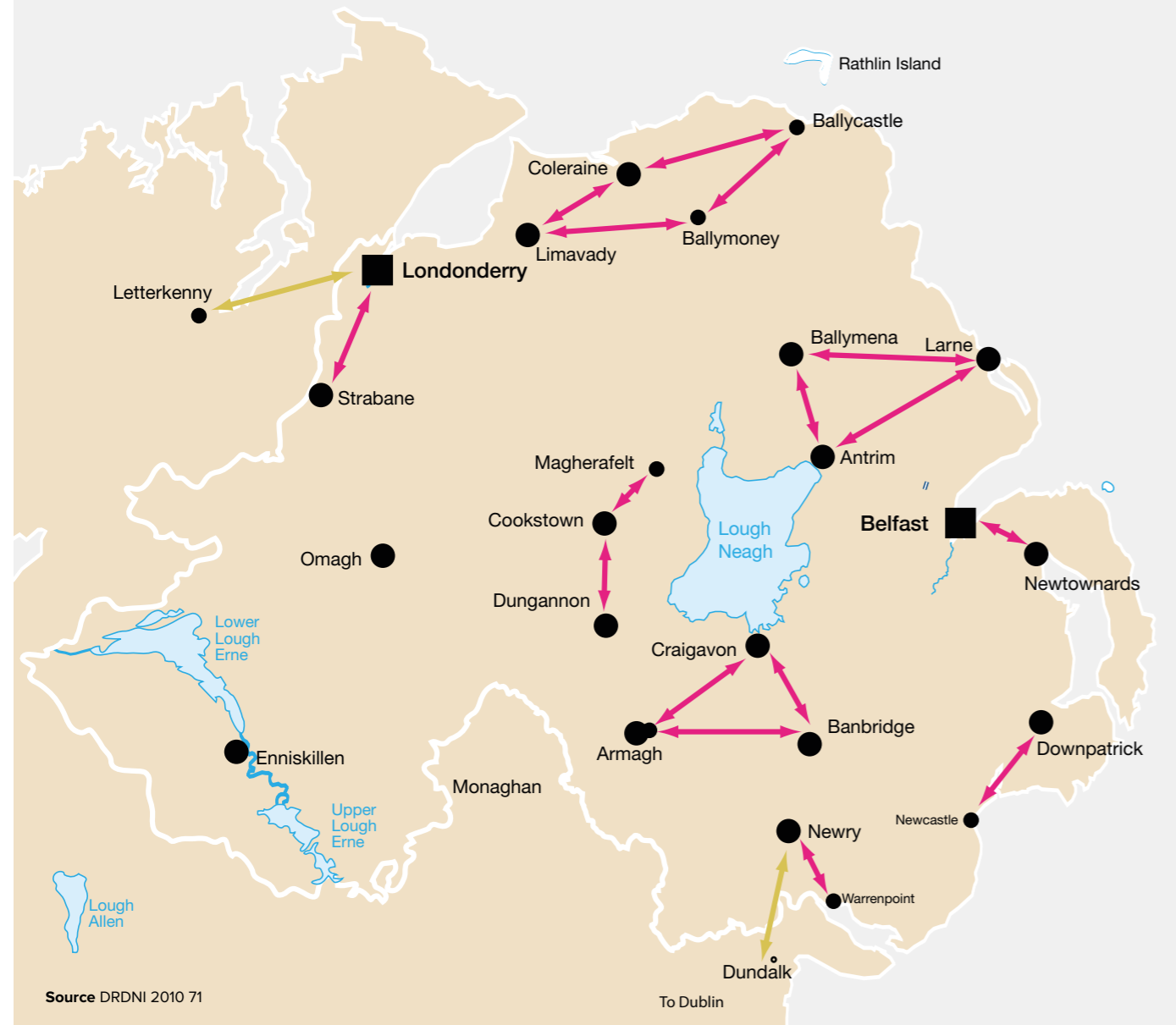
the Lakelands in the southwest and the Mournes in the east and how transport corridors work within and across the border space. This Framework for Co-operation Spatial Strategies highlighted island-wide commitments in the respective plans including the importance of the Belfast-Dublin corridor, the challenges of peripherality in the northwest, the planning implications of the integrated energy market and cooperation in strategic transport. The strategy also highlighted the importance of local authority connections and the need to reflect the respective spatial strategies in new development plans   under the transfer of planning powers to Councils in 2015.

On the 1st April 2015 a new two-tier planning system came into effect via the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, with local authorities taking on operational planning responsibilities (development plan, development management, enforcement and so on) from the then Department for Regional Development (DRDNI, now the Department for Infrastructure, DfINI) (NIA 2016). The number of local authorities were reduced from 26 to 11 to enable a more strategic approach, which included the introduction of cross-cutting Community Plans, based largely on the Scottish model. Local policies must be in general conformity with the RDS and the preparation of development plans and development schemes must 'take account' of the RDS. Development plans now consist of a plan strategy and a local policies plan which DfINI evaluate to test their 'soundness', including the extent to which they have complied with relevant guidance in the RDS.

The DfINI retains responsibility for regionally significant and 'called-in' applications; planning legislation; the RDS; strategic guidance; oversight of Council planning functions; and performance management (NIA 2016). As part of this process, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs dealing with, for example, retailing, town centres and enforcement) are being (gradually) consolidated within a single Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) (DfINI 2015). The SPPS sits within the RDS 2035 and provides the basis for Councils to develop their own planning policies through the development plans process. A number of local development plans have been prepared by Councils, but in practice, have not offered a radical departure from the previous generation of area plans. Commitments to deal with the spatial legacy of the conflict, poverty and exclusion or mixed communities, even in a broad sense, are weak at best. The emerging strategies along the border do seem to make an attempt to deal with north-south linkages especially around transport, access to specific ports and priorities for infrastructure investment.

The architecture of the new planning system is therefore evolving, especially in terms of central-local relations, operating systems and a new generation of development plans under political control for the first time since 1971. It is hard to understate the impact of Brexit on the island of Ireland and border communities in particular. But, spatial planning has been mobilised at the local rather than the official level, with places and interests most affected by Brexit (usually along the border) developing their own analysis, data, coalitions and ideas about space, place and governance.

Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues

The ability to bring political, economic, community and environmental interests together to create and re-produce a regional plan since 2001 is an important achievement in its own right. But its value is more than performative in building the type of collaborative politics that have, despite disruption, created a broadly agreed vision for the future of the region. We now have a regional framework that interprets the explicit political agreements in the Programme for Government in a spatial form, creates the context for local development and recognises the importance of both north-south and east-west relationships.   It is far from perfect in directing investment or local priorities but its analytical rigour, stability over time and collaborative qualities demonstrate the capacity of the region to deliver a new style of post-conflict policy making and politics.

However, the broadly based and socially inclusive style of RDS 2025 has been hardened in the more economic, pro-growth focus of RDS 2035. The progressive commitments to addressing segregation and poverty were removed in favour of a strategy aimed at competitiveness, connectivity and inward investment. It is hard to disagree with Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) that, as it rolled out, spatial planning tended to incorporate objection, marginalise equity and ecological goals and naturalise and ultimately reproduce power relations that privileged neoliberal economic interests.

> But where early rounds of neoliberal policy scripted a narrowing of planning's remit to a regulatory land-use function, spatial planning has implicated planning within the wider legitimating tactics for achieving high levels of economic growth through its capacity to incorporate alternative visions within its remit. (Allmendinger and Haughton 2010 808)

But this is only part of the explanation. The failure to progress SPG-SRC 3 also relates to a lack of skills, explicit and achievable guidance and a clearer understanding the limits of planning to deal with a structural (even ancient) socio-territorial processes. Calls for planning to restructure sectarian space, simply because it is a spatial policy function, were always too simplistic.

Johnston and Heery (2016) also questioned the extent to which physical and economic planning has delivered a more competitive economy, with growth rates struggling well behind averages in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland. They evaluate the Index of Competitiveness, which measures a range of attributes from 1 (being the best) to 10 (being the least competitive) between 2009 and 2014. The Index does not change at all for environmental sustainability (6.5), quality of life (5.3), the business environment (4.8) or innovation, and research and development (6.4). There was modest improvement in physical infrastructure from 6.3 to 5.9 but at the same time, education and skills declined from 5.4 to 5.9. Much of the impact on infrastructure has been on the availability of superfast broadband (1.0) but traffic congestion (10.0), energy import dependency (10.0) and airport connections (10.0) remain

stubbornly high. They also note that Northern Ireland lags significantly behind Europe, the UK and the Republic on energy generation from renewable resources (3.4%), municipal waste in landfill (49%) and dependency on oil and gas (60%). Finally, they note that the proportion of the population at risk of poverty (after housing costs) is the highest of all UK regions at 20% compared with a national average of 15%.

Brownlow (2017) concludes that the Northern Ireland Executive's strategy to reduce Corporation Tax is misplaced and unlikely to have a significant effect, given deficiencies in infrastructure, weak skills in high-growth sectors and poor external connectivity. Moreover, the imbalance between the east and the west and the looming crisis in the border region are significant drags on the capacity of Northern Ireland to compete on a global stage. Since the Referendum, an alliance of local authorities in the north and south have begun to think of the border space as a distinct region that requires a new planning imagination, evidence and arguments and a governance regime to better manage the impact of Brexit. The East Border Region (EBR 2017) carried out extensive research on conditions in the border as a separate place from that presented in the RDS 2035 or the Republic's National Planning Framework 2040. In particular, they set out a range of economic forecasts that illustrate the shock to local authorities, especially in Northern Ireland. They suggest, in the lower-case scenario, that the border counties could lose 4,000 jobs by 2026, which is significantly higher than the rest of Northern Ireland or in neighbouring counties in the Republic (EBR 2017 39). They also propose a distinct governance regime to coordinate and ensure the delivery of an integrated investment programme in infrastructure, agri-food supply chains and indigenous businesses. This is a region where cooperatives and social enterprises have developed, especially through farm diversification initiatives, tourism and intermediary labour markets. The idea that a different type of economy, one better suited to local capacities and assets, might be supported by spatial planning processes is an important one for lagging regions with different resources and potentials. Whilst knowledge intensive, high-growth and competitive strategies might suit conditions in the eastern seaboard, alternative economic trajectories and logics that recognise rural traditions and aspirations, highlight the need for more flexible spatial planning responses. Jones and MacLeod recognise this distinction in their analysis of 'regional spaces' and 'spaces of regionalism', in which the latter 'features the (re)assertion of regional and natural claims to citizenship, insurgent forms of political mobilisation, democratic participation and cultural expression alongside analogous shifts in territorial government' (Jones and MacLeod 2004 435).

In this respect, the border and its self-management reflects the importance of 'soft spaces' and 'fuzzy governance' in local responses to threats and opportunities within an explicit spatial planning frame. The Centre for Cross Border Studies supported a participatory research project that worked with a range of stakeholders, including local authorities, to test out spatial scenarios for the future of the region (McDonagh 2013). This again offers an alternative, disruptive reading of the border space than the official narratives around peripherality, the need for structural

adjustment and vulnerable infrastructure. The official discourse stresses deficits, dependency and the need to catch-up rather than the innate qualities and assets that all places possess. The first scenario rejects the idea of the border as a single coherent entity but also that development should concentrate on the two main urban axes (Derry/Londonderry-Letterkenny and Newry-Dundalk). Instead, they favour a three-pronged Border Development Zone, that recognises the significance of urban centres, but which also focuses on the vulnerable rural hinterland between these two clusters. Here, agri-food supply chains and cooperative networks are deeply embedded in communitarian economics, but which also expose the middle zone to the worst effects of a hard border.

In this context, the idea of the 'hyper-border serves to expose the contingent, malleable and pragmatic nature of identity under the quotidian realities of fluctuating state-authority' (Richardson 2016 212). In his work on borders, Richardson points out that it is everyday practices that energise and organise dissident spatial imaginations, no matter how 'hard' space or governmentality is defined. The problem for the Irish border is that these imaginations are too soft, there are too many of them and they enable very different and contradictory interpretations of regionalism. Dundalk and Newry have created the idea of a Twin-City axis (ICLRD 2009); the official state Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the North West Issues Paper in the Republic has defined Derry/Londonderry-Strabane-Letterkenny as a city region (a concept not recognised in the North) (NWRA 2017); and Derry and Donegal Councils have recently advocated a Cross-Border Free Trade Zone, which would eliminate the need for customs checks and tariff controls (UUEPC 2017).

There is, however, renewed interest in functional integration, the importance of formal and informal governance arrangements and the need for a more complex interdependent understanding of settlements along the border (Walsh 2015). The problem here is that there is very little evidence that these settlements are actually interdependent, rather than competitive, not least, as competition is itself, subject to changes in fiscal policy (especially in highly taxed items such as fuel and alcohol), increasingly volatile exchange rates and investor decisions made well outside the border region. ESPON has recently developed a range of resources and toolkits to support a rearticulated polycentric concept, which 'encourages regions and cities, working with neighbouring territories, to explore common strengths and promote more functional links and interactions among places' (ESPON, 2018, p.2). However, few of the advocacy studies and campaigning documents on the Irish border show how these strategies can build a critical mass, more functional urban-rural linkages or sub-regional balanced development. A far more convincing evidence base is needed to make capital out of productive soft spaces and related governance networks, resisting the punitive effects of Brexit or offering alternatives to imposed ideas of regional growth.

Wider Implications of the Northern Ireland Case

- The experience of spatial planning in Northern Ireland has its own unique social, cultural and place challenges but also raises important implications for regional planning in the UK more broadly. First, formulating, reviewing and realigning high-level plans for a region confronting the complexity and confusion of a post-Brexit world is an important political act in its own right. The participatory and inclusive quality of the Northern Ireland approach, the extent of debate, the room for alternative expressions of place and the idea that there is a corporate framework to work to (in incomplete and often imperfect ways) is something to value and protect. Of course, people will be left out, more powerful interests will attempt to get their way and there is a reductive feature to such strategies as they attempt to satisfy multiple interests. But the process of understanding contemporary regions and relationships between spatial scales, reinforces the importance of planning as a political, social and community project. The Northern Ireland case also stresses the need to anchor such a project in a sense of redistributive practice and ideas about the reformist potential of planning as a discipline and a process.

- Second and related to this, multiple stakeholders and alliances have used the technologies of spatial planning to understand their place and the threats they face, especially along the Irish border. These 'soft' plans and places and related 'thick' networks are constitutive of a progressive post-referendum politics and an open, responsive form of spatial planning. Their ideas, analysis and arguments should be respected as part of plan-making and building a better understanding of the complexity of place management. They are valuable in their own right as local collectives (Councils, community groups and businesses) and have used this knowledge base to advocate directly with Europe, Dublin and Westminster. But the soft world of spatial planning has its own limitations and contradictions. There is competition between the northwest and the east border regions and the rural middle is well aware of its potential to be squeezed in competition from any UK-EU settlement. More importantly, it is the 'hard' world of public expenditure, resource allocation, fiscal policy and infrastructure that the future of places are likely to be decided. For national spatial planning to be relevant, legitimate and ultimately effective, it needs to accommodate and reconcile these readings of place in formal planning processes and most of all, the investments they direct.

- Third, part of the problem with both soft and hard renderings of regional space is their abstracted (and at times fictive) quality. Polycentric clustering is a case in point. It is well used in the RDS and in local alternatives along the border but is accompanied by scant empiricism about how settlements are actually interdependent. Derry/Londonderry-Strabane-Letterkenny is presented as a 'city-region' in official spatial plans in the Republic as well as in recent advocacy documents by local authorities in the northwest. But there is little evidence

of labour market, supply chain or functional synergies; that education markets are in any way integrated; or that planning can discriminate between uses in one area over another to protect or enhance interdependence. ESPON (2018) has developed guidance on polycentric clustering and in particular, how formalised governance arrangements can open up meaningful collaboration, but there is a fundamental knowledge gap in the nature of inter-settlement networks that needs to be addressed in rolling out these concepts in the UK more broadly.

- Fourth and related to this, the RDS, especially in its first version, is replete with progressive and ambitious social objectives that proved difficult to implement in practice. The strategy placed planning at the forefront of post-conflict reconstruction but there was little in the way of practical guidance about how planners, urban managers or housing officials would remove interfaces, expand sharing space or create mixed religious communities. Gaffikin et al. (2016) offer ideas, case studies and policies for 'spatial sharing' in order to guide planning practice in contested and divided cities. However, we lack the skills, knowledge and methods to translate important social objectives into operation and to understand the limitations of planning in the context of local community, political and security conditions. Similarly, the economy of the border is different than the economy of the Belfast metropolitan area and spatial planning needs to recognise and support these variations and give space for social enterprises, cooperatives and community businesses, which are often vital components of the most vulnerable, peripheral economies.

- Finally, the RDS did not anticipate Brexit but its capacity to think strategically about the future and the risks and opportunities we face as a region are valuable for a national 'scanning' processes. There are significant challenges in ageing, obesity and of course, climate change that will profoundly affect where we live, the type of future we want, what sustainable economies mean for planetary resources and how these long-term ideas relate to short-term planning decisions. Northern Ireland is performing badly on environmental sustainability, and regional planning has not had the hoped-for impact on renewable energy, oil dependence or waste management. Setting strategic objectives and targets; helping to translate these and guide practice at the local level; and monitoring, even enforcing change is precisely why spatial planning is critical environmentally, socially and politically. As with Northern Ireland, the priority is to provide the technical detail to 'drop-down' high level commitments into decision making processes, investment planning and evaluations at the local level.

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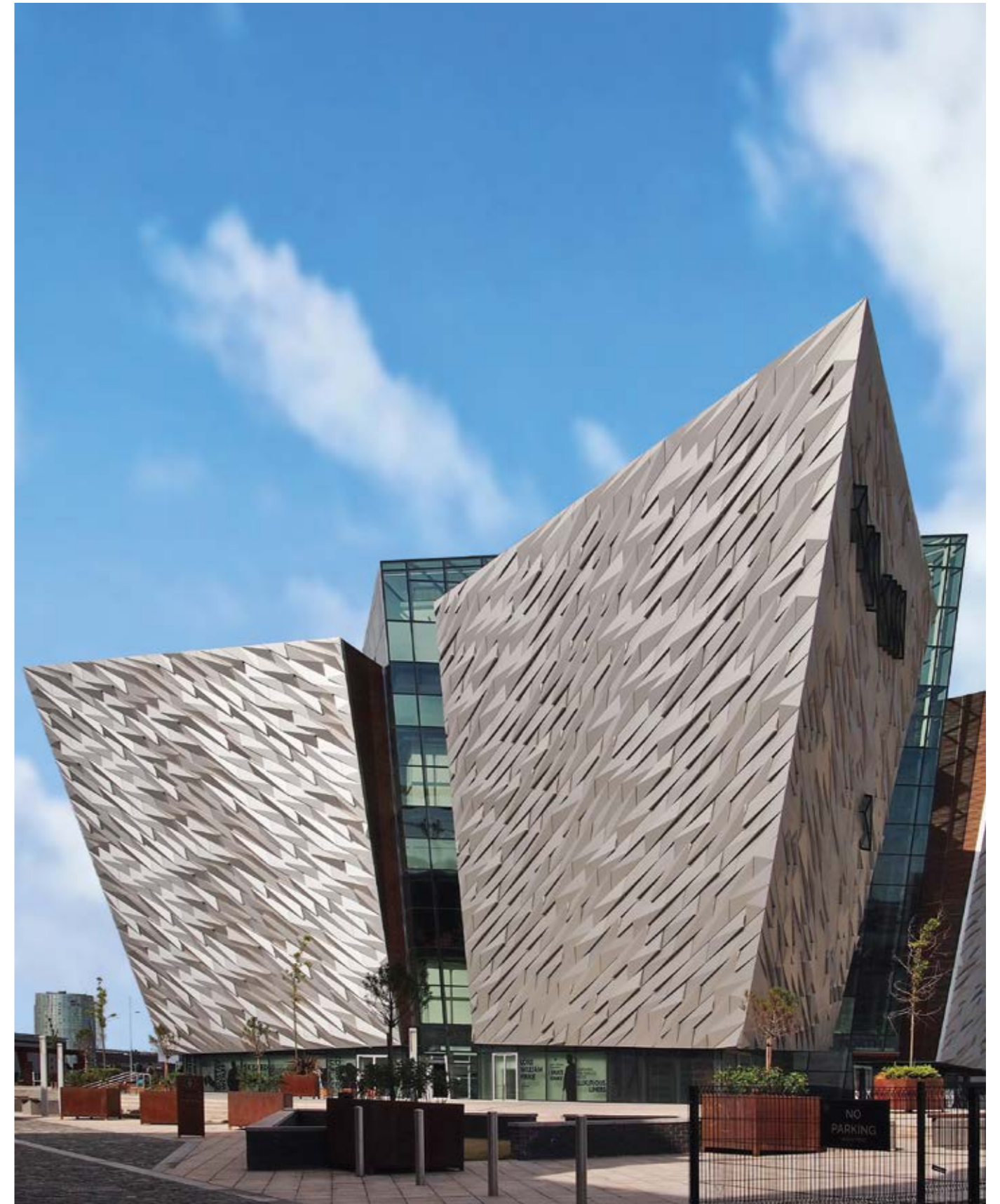
NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SCOTLAND: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SCOTLAND: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Abstract

Scotland has a long and acknowledged tradition of strategic planning practice – a consequence of its economy, geography and urban-rural relations – and this is reflected in a number of innovative strategic planning measures. These have included city-regional planning, regional development institutional arrangements, national planning guidelines, regional reports and the current National Planning Framework model. As a consequence of changing economic and governance arrangements, the permeation of neoliberal ideological metrics and a public economy austerity that tradition is being degraded, diluted and dissolved. A new understanding is required which captures and celebrates prior experiential learning and which in the light of so doing devises and safeguards an appropriate strategic planning tradition into the future.

Planning Scotland Spatially

In its various forms, national strategic planning in Scotland emerged as a consequence of the scale of planning issues, the agendas associated with uneven economic geographies, the restructuring of post-industrial cities, oil related growth management agendas, the challenges of sparsely populated areas, associated urban – rural-island relations, landownership patterns, issues around accessibility and the necessary provision of infrastructure.

For the purposes of this article the thinking and practice associated with national strategic planning may be traced to the earlier post-war period. Perhaps the first wave of engagement was the active interest in devising arrangements for effective city-regionalism as in West Central Scotland and Tayside (Wannop 1986). In the Clyde Valley, for example, the initial strategic planning interventions laid down a template for successive city-regional planning exercises. The Tay Plan (1950) addressed the complex strategic relationships between Dundee and its functional city regional hinterland (McCarthy 2007). The essence of strategic planning in these instances acknowledged the scales involved, the urban and rural changes taking place and the need to devise a co-ordinated framework to secure economic and social regeneration.

Subsequently, and as a response to entrenched regional economic contraction in the north-east of Scotland, there was an organic turn to strategic thinking. The broad regional economy which included Aberdeen was severely disadvantaged by the structural changes taking place in the urban economies of the city and smaller towns and the surrounding rural hinterland. The region was also disadvantaged being relatively isolated. The then fragmented system of local government also inhibited individual action yet a strategic response came through the setting up of the North-East Scotland Joint Planning Advisory Committee (NESJPAC) in the late 1960s. The coalition of local authorities adopted a strategic and holistic analysis of the prevailing problems, identified the economic potential and devised a deliberate set of priorities for securing economic recovery. The NESJPAC plan clearly established a discriminatory framework across the region. The advent of North-Sea oil and gas offshore petroleum resources in the early 1970s then subsequently provided the economic stimulus for the region and the NESJPAC Plan provided the strategic basis for the required growth management planning in the region (Harris et al 1988).

The emphasis on strategic planning continued with a turn to the national canvas. Economic restructuring and the attendant uncertainties for localities across Scotland prompted strategic planning innovations. Three inter-related dimensions may be identified. First, the philosophy of national strategic planning was illustrated by the advocacy of the Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland in 1970 which asserted "There is a need to prepare an indicative plan for Scotland on a national scale which will show how it is intended to utilise the land for urban, industrial and recreational purposes. To prepare such a policy plan it will be necessary to take into account the views of planning authorities, industrialists, trade unions and many other interested parties. The structure plans of the new regional planning authorities must conform to the national indicative plan". The proposal did not take this specific form but it did influence subsequent planning as circumstances changed following the economic stimulus of North-Sea oil and gas developments.

Second, in the mid-1970s, the new strategic governance arrangements emerged – the creation of 12 Regional Councils with constituent District Councils. Regional Reports were published in 1976 – within 12 months of the new regional authorities being instituted to establish strategic planning agendas for the new structure plans (Lloyd 1997). Furthermore, when taken together the 12 Regional Reports created a Scottish wide perspective which demonstrated the new economic geography from industrial restructuring and contraction in Glasgow and Dundee, the issues around rural sparsely populated areas in the Borders and Highlands and Islands, and oil related growth in Aberdeen.

Third, a real advance in the execution of national strategic planning came in the context of the onshore developments associated with the exploration for, development of, and exploitation of North-Sea oil and gas. The offshore industry required a significant onshore based infrastructure – including oil construction yards, pipeline landfall sites and the construction of natural gas reception terminals. Such developments were clearly in the national interest yet had the potential to impose local costs and environmental impacts. Building on the advocacy of the Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland a national strategic planning framework was put into effect - National Planning Guidelines. The 1974 Coastal Planning Guidelines established a pan-Scotland set of strategic planning priorities by defining zones for preferred development uses and preferred conservation uses. In this instance, the National Planning Guidelines asserted the strategic need to promote economic development and investment (in this case associated with the offshore petroleum industry) whilst protecting Scotland's high quality coastal environmental resources (Elliot et al 1987).

At the present time, national strategic planning in Scotland has developed further. Here it is important to consider the spirit and purpose of the National Planning Framework which may be considered a further innovation in Scotland's planning practice. Devolution in 1999 provided an impetus to build on national strategic planning practice in Scotland (Purves and Lloyd 2008). The gradually maturing neoliberal political ideology with its attendant economic policy (albeit in the New Labour

Third Way phase) in the 1990s had weakened the support for national strategic planning in Scotland. Indeed, there was an acknowledgement of a strategic planning deficit and this was the clear rationale to put into effect a modernisation of the planning system to meet Scotland's devolved needs.

The process of review and modernisation culminated in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 which set out an unabashed strategic dimension to planning practice (Peel and Lloyd 2006). Central to this was the concept of a National Planning Framework. This was intended to serve the guiding context to the preparation of Strategic Development Plans – based on the 4 city-regions of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. There was also a turn to a deliberate culture change in planning and development practice and a fresh understanding of the new relations required to enhance civic formation in the devolved Scotland (Peel and Lloyd 2007). Since 2006, the Framework has not remained a static concept (Lloyd and Peel, 2010). It has matured to its current articulation – the National Planning Framework 3 which was published in 2014.

Second, since the 1980s, these conditions have been accompanied by the relentless ascendancy of neoliberal thinking (Fine and Milonakis 2008). This ideology is antagonistic to intervention at large and planning in particular and the impact of the economic and financial crisis together with austerity have combined to weaken the tradition of national strategic planning in Scotland. Arguably, neoliberal ideas have permeated the more traditional social democratic value system in Scotland. The National Planning Framework which may be interpreted as the apotheosis of the strategic planning provenance in Scotland has operated, and continues to do so, in a hostile ideological context. In effect it cannot fulfil its full potential.

The account set out above would suggest that the idea of national strategic planning in Scotland has continued to mature as a consequence of changing circumstances and experiential learning and has remained relatively robust in the face of neoliberal metrics. Yet this is not an accurate understanding. Context is important. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 which brought both a strategic planning philosophy and various strategic planning measures into effect came into force with the financial crisis in 2007. In effect, the economic crisis and the neoliberal infused political response from Westminster – an approach centred on de-regulation and which combined with austerity served to shackle the new planning arrangements. As time progressed and the crisis did not alleviate criticism of the new planning system began to be expressed. Scotland did not have the monopoly on this but negative critiques of the perceived adverse effects of planning processes and regulations on any economic recovery escalated. Thinktanks, business organisations, politicians and the property development sectors questioned the efficacy of the land use planning system.

This has resulted in the dilution of the national strategic planning identity. A root and branch review of the planning system was carried out in 2016. This resulted in the publication of the Planning (Scotland) Bill 2017 which underwent formal scrutiny

by the Scottish Parliament in 2018. Whilst the national Planning Framework remains, other proposed changes devalue the national strategic spirit of Scottish planning. This is evident in the abolition of strategic development plans – a move away from city regional planning – the introduction of simplified development zones; the introduction of local place plans – in effect parallel local planning measures; and the alignment of land use planning and community planning.

Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues

The evidence and historical experience would suggest that Scotland moved to a national strategic planning philosophy and format as a direct response to its economic conditions, geographical variations, social and community contrasts and environmental challenges. Essentially the conventional statutory land use planning arrangements were strengthened by operating in a context that set out priorities in an open manner. In the Scottish context, national strategic planning may be understood as a different model of intervention from statutory land use planning (which is regulatory based with respect to land use and its development) and spatial planning (which promotes connectivity). The concept of national strategic planning may be considered in terms of a philosophy, a statement of intent and a quiver of specific instruments. It embodies different characteristics – (following Bruton and Nicholson, 1985) in providing hierarchy and contingency to guide decision-making and implementation; matching context and method of intervention; engaging at the appropriate scale and seeking to secure strategic ambition; it is political (alert to power and influence, and the trade-offs involved in enabling development in the public interest), appropriately resourced and holistic in form; and demonstrating leadership and risk bearing.

Scotland's national strategic planning reflects the history and experience of its spaces and places and has tended to be a composite of factor-based planning, sector planning, integrated thinking, longer term delivery and a turn to reticulism. Moreover, it has been based over time on different yet appropriate institutional and organisational characteristics – investments, regulations and interventions (Dembski and Salet 2010) – in responding to changing structural conditions and locational relations. National strategic planning has assumed different forms and scales in Scotland. The early emphasis on regional scales – city-regions – which inevitably carried with them a national interest laid the foundations for a more formal national focus. This was viewed as important in reconciling the different dimensions of change and development.

Here, the potential of the National Planning Guideline model in providing an opportunity to consider national and local interests, to establish appropriate policy priorities, to identify specific development zones and to ensure environmental and landscape protection was acknowledged as an innovative planning tool (Diamond 1979). The deliberate reticulist stance in defining priorities with supporting planning intelligence on the underling rationale

and advice to planning authorities on appropriate procedural steps attracted critical attention. It prompted the publication of additional National Planning Guidelines dealing with a diverse range of planning topics – including the development of upland skiing areas, agricultural land resources and out of town retailing centres (Lloyd 1996). The Nuffield Foundation (1986), for example, in its inquiry into the UK planning system suggested the model be exported to England, Wales and Scotland. This, of course, took place – with variations on the nomenclature. At this stage, it is evident that Scotland had innovated, nurtured and articulated national strategic planning as the bedrock of its statutory planning system. The National Planning Guideline has endured although the move to redesign the instrument as a single statement of policy across the individual parts of the devolved UK is suggestive of an attempt to simplify the mechanism. Arguably, strategic thinking needs to be reflective of and sensitive to the complex dimensions of change involved in land use and development. Reductionism in this way works against that ambition.

A distinctive feature of the National Planning Guideline model was that the statement of policy priorities was supported (and strengthened) by two documents. The Planning Advice Note (PAN) provided directions to local planning authorities, developers, landowners and communities as how best to address issues associated with the specific policy in hand. The Planning Information Note (PIN) provided the statistical and other intelligence which provided a statement of the evidence which justified the policy framework. The significance of the PAN and PIN may be understood as a way of promoting greater understanding and communication about the planning policy and issue being considered. The trio of documents then set the context in which land use planning procedures could take place. An ambition here was securing greater efficiency and effectiveness as well as enhancing greater openness in planning decision-making.

At the present time, the most recent articulation of the national strategic planning tradition is the National Planning Framework model. Its spirit and purpose deserve some further comment. First, the idea to innovate around a National Planning Framework was to provide a backbone to statutory land use planning. The Framework set out the national perspective for regulating and securing appropriate development. It articulated a vision for Scotland to which other public policy plans and programmes would connect. This reciprocity and conformity with the economic strategy for Scotland is important to the concept of national spatial strategic planning in Scotland. In this respect the National Planning Framework presented a perspective – reflecting the influence of European spatial planning – and was intended to guide public policy at large and to inform land use planning practice by local authorities. The modernised planning system set out a new development hierarchy, which was to comprise different scales of perceived national, major, local or minor significance. This was intended to stress competency in decision making, and to better reallocate the planning service accordingly. The national level was the locus of the National Planning Framework, and the major, local and minor scales of development were characterised in terms of an appropriate arrangements relating to decision-maker, decision route and appeals.

Second, the National Planning Framework was intended to provide a means of integrating wider economic considerations, social aspects, community planning activities and environmental values. It asserted national planning priorities with respect to strategic development plans for the city-regions, updating of development plans, changes to development management, and strengthening of enforcement. The National Planning Framework was promoted in status, following the formal scrutiny by Scottish Parliament committees to a material consideration in the statutory regulatory processes of the land use planning system. Third, it is totemic in that it represents a distinctively Scottish interpretation of the spatial planning tradition which emerged from Europe and which has proved highly influential elsewhere. Scotland however brought its history and traditions to assert its own brand – national strategic planning – as an interpretation of the broader spatial planning agenda.

The challenges to Scotland's distinctive national strategic planning traditions and architecture rest on the general economic context, the associated power relations under globalisation and emerging geopolitical domains, the implications for land, labour and capital markets, the social consequences in terms of exclusion and disparities and the environmental agendas. Neoliberalism, in particular poses considerable challenges due to its belief in economic freedom, minimal government controls and regulations and denial of history (Pirie, 2017). This suggests that the effects of diluting national strategic planning in Scotland is not cognisant of its achievements in the past or the ways in which it has evolved. The danger for any renaissance of national strategic planning comes in part from the normalisation of the neoliberal metrics (Mirowski 2013), the parallel programmes of austerity (Blyth 2013) and the implications for societal and community structures. In effect, strategic planning now operates in a new moral economy (Marquand 2004 2014). The future for executing Scotland's strategic planning frameworks is seriously constrained by these systemic features – and it is ironic that it is in this very context that national strategic planning is needed.

Prescriptions The Scottish experience with national strategic planning has been generally a positive one in setting out appropriate institutional arrangements to address specific planning problems. The philosophical basis of national strategic planning was forged in response to complex and inter-related issues around economic change and development, differential geographies of change, social impacts and environmental vulnerabilities. The reconciliation of contested dimensions of change, negative and positive, sit alongside higher-level discussions around the nature of the public interest and the relationship to private interests. The complexity of the planning problems facing Scotland over time have included addressing the localised effects of economic restructuring and contraction in the major cities, managing growth in Edinburgh and the oil induced economic expansion in Aberdeen, together with issues of rural sparsely populated areas.

What is remarkable is that the concept of national strategic planning continued to mature as the ideological environment changed. Thus, whilst the early ideas and forms of national strategic planning

took place into the 1970s, the exogenous context was influenced by social democratic values. The shift to neoliberal political values from the 1980s onwards, gathering momentum to the present day witnessed the concept of the National Planning Framework. This was a remarkable achievement particularly as it formed a new bedrock for a modernised land use planning system. Indeed, the National Planning Framework triggered a parallel set of national planning initiatives, including a Land Use Strategy and the Scottish Land Commission; National Performance Framework – 2007, 2011, 2016; Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; Scotland's Economic Strategy 2015. The economic crisis in 2007 imperilled the new modern planning legislation and the effects of austerity brought new questions to bear on the efficiency and effectiveness of national strategic planning. The root and branch review subsequently followed a neoliberal line of reasoning and devalued and diluted the strategic dimensions to planning.

There is a major caveat which further clouds what is taking place. Infrastructure remains an issue in Scotland. A report conducted for the Scottish Government (Rydens 2015) took a holistic perspective of the role of infrastructure. In supporting land and property development. Significantly it argued that infrastructure is multi-faceted including transport, education and services and these have to be reconciled with developments across a spectrum of markets, land uses, sizes and phases. It correctly points to the tension between the short-term market imperative to recoup and the need to plan for and programme long term infrastructure investment over decades. Planning fills the gap – in seeking to align these interests yet this represents a major challenge given the complex layering of interests, property rights and expectations involved. The research showed that development plan policies for infrastructure provision are inconsistent in their format and the level of detail. It describes the planning system as a "choreographer" of other agencies' plans and actions to help enable development to happen. This insight suggests that the provision of infrastructure needs radical review so that it can nest with a national strategic planning framework.

There is a need for national strategic planning to be re-invigorated and given the appropriate resource base. The National Planning Framework is a form of indicative planning and requires an investment and spending schedule to marshal the strategic development of national projects. Here priorities have to be dovetailed with infrastructure and devised within a national context. Development in time and space is not an even processes and national strategic planning can provide a longer term approach to securing environmental robustness, and economic and social justice across Scotland.

Wider Lessons From the Scottish Case

- The Scottish experience of strategic planning suggests that planning is a long game – it must draw on its provenance and history, its experiential learning and be longer term and holistic in meeting future challenges. Scotland's strategic perspective was born of its economic, social and environmental circumstances. A corporate philosophy encouraged an integrated, longer term perspective. That is the core of strategic planning. It involves imaginative thinking, leadership and political bravery. It also rests on partnership thinking in theory and practice – coalition building is all important to secure complex outcomes which are systemic in character. Strategic planning can therefore contribute to more effective interventions at times of resource contraction – it can enable duplication, overlap and underlap between different facets of national, regional and local governance. Scotland's maturation of strategic planning demonstrated the benefits to private and public interests of enabling greater consistency in policy execution. Sadly, the tsunami of neoliberal thinking, allied to austerity and the political priorities around private solutions has weakened the strategic planning contribution in Scotland.

- The lessons for England are blunt. A national strategic perspective which is devised in the light of the reality of economic inefficiencies, social injustices and geographical diversities is required. A national indicative planning framework has to take the difficult decisions, and act as a strong reticulist in reconciling different interests at different times in different places. Thus, for England, strategic planning has to be about vocal conversations with local communities across the wide geographical landscapes of work, investment, and infrastructure. Strategic planning offers the potential to challenge the economic, social and enviro-geographical biases in policy and decision making. The most important lesson for England is that whilst a national strategic approach implies a rigid hierarchy of policy options and priorities it has to be devised from communities upwards. It must reflect social and community, business and government perspectives and needs. That is the real legitimacy of a strategic planning methodology.

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PROJECT IRELAND 2040: BUSINESS AS USUAL OR A NEW DAWN?

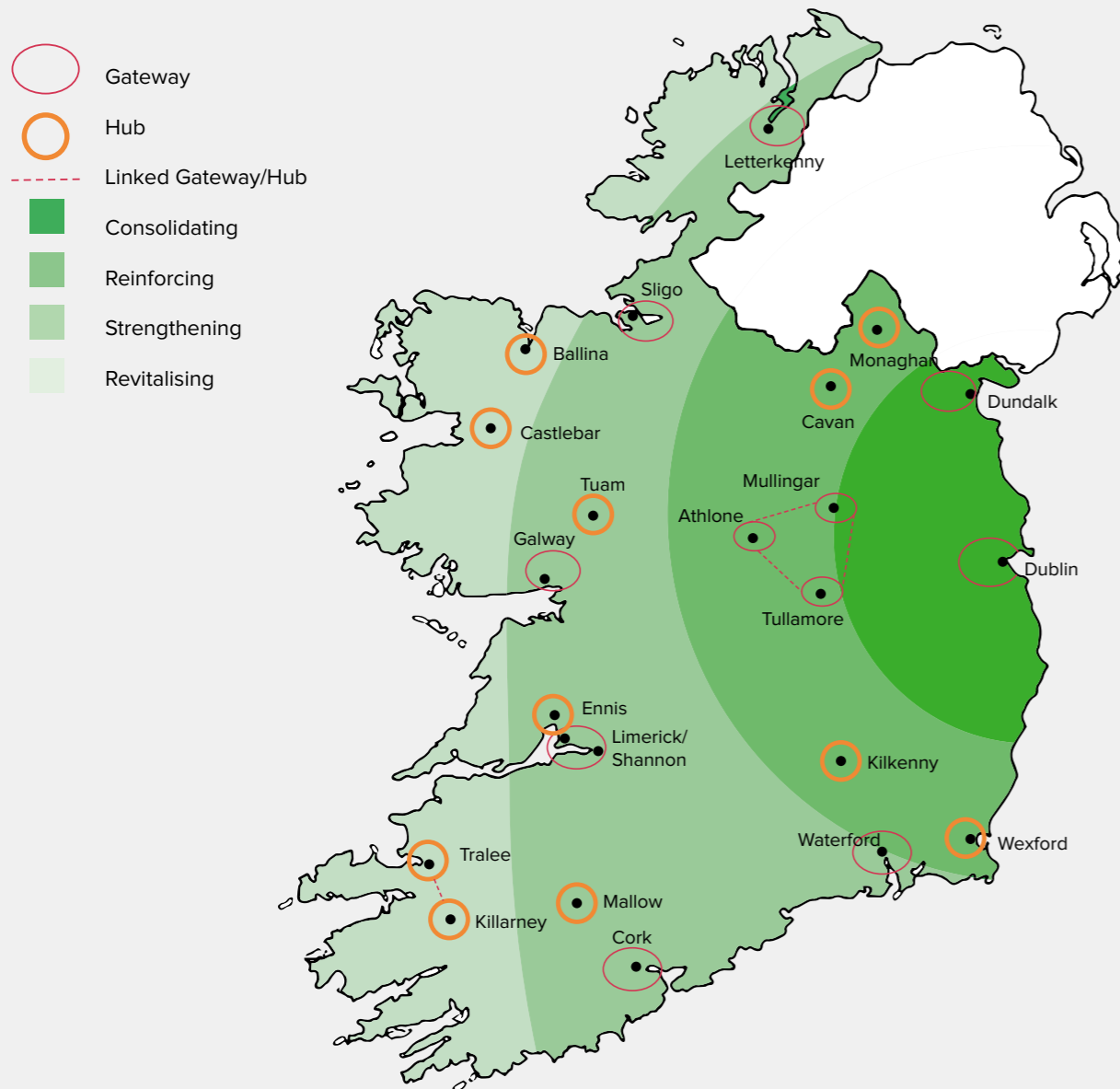**Niamh Moore-Cherry,** University College Dublin

Abstract

The National Planning Framework published in February 2018 marks a new departure for planning in an Irish context. It is ambitious in scope and aims to integrate public policy horizontally and vertically across government departments and at multiple scales. The regional tier of government is empowered, and new regional policy tools in the form of the RSES and MASP have been introduced. For the first time capital investment is being closely aligned with spatial planning. Nonetheless, despite attempts at central government level to 'de-politicise' the policy development phase, implementation at the local level faces a number of significant challenges.

Planning the Republic of Ireland Spatially

The publication of the National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020) was heralded as the first formal attempt at spatial planning in Ireland, but broader regional planning had been on the agenda for many decades since the publication of *Regional Studies in Ireland*, commonly known as the 'Buchanan Report' in 1969 which advocated a hierarchy of growth centres approach to regional development. Considered politically unpalatable, the report was reviewed by government but largely ignored and a policy of dispersal of economic activity was supported through the 1970s until the late 1990s. Arising out of a booming economy, a changed political environment in Northern Ireland, and heavily influenced by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) published in 1999, government attention at the turn of the millennium turned to how to better balance spatial development across the island. Responding to a call in the *National Development Plan 2000-2006* for a spatial strategy, the NSS was published in 2002 and, in the spirit of Buchanan adopted a growth centre type approach. Nine gateway cities and towns were identified to act as key drivers of regional growth and a series of connected 'hubs' would connect to rural areas and 'other towns' (Figure 7). However the Decentralisation Programme for the Civil Service, announced in 2003, undermined the NSS at a very early stage. Decisions on locations for decentralisation were purely political and ignored to a significant extent the designated gateways and hubs. Although Regional Planning Guidelines were produced by the regional authorities in 2004 and revised in 2010 in the wake of the crash, to aid the translation of the NSS objectives to the local level, these were largely ineffective as they had no statutory basis. While some finance was put in place to support the NSS through the National Development Plan (2007-2013) and the Gateway Innovation Fund (2008), the recession, crisis, party politics and sectoral interests largely undermined implementation. Although not formally replaced until February 2018, the NSS as a guiding strategy for planning in Ireland was essentially abandoned when a scoping group for a successor plan was established in August 2013 and the eight regional authorities that had responsibility for translating the strategy were dissolved in June 2014.

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Figure 7

National Spatial Strategy for the Republic of Ireland

Legend:
- ⬭ Gateway
- ◯ Hub
- - - - Linked Gateway/Hub
- ▉ Consolidating
- ▉ Reinforcing
- ▉ Strengthening
- ▢ Revitalising

Source Author

The Irish National Planning Framework

Over the last fifteen years, Ireland has experienced an unprecedented economic boom that resulted in particular in the uncontrolled growth of Dublin into surrounding counties, followed by a dramatic downturn and crisis that resulted in extreme austerity (see Heffernan et al. 2018). This brought into sharp focus dramatic spatial and social divides across the country: economically as measured by unemployment for example; socially in terms of access to housing and emigration, particularly from western seaboard counties; and physically in terms of abandoned unfinished developments and quality of life. One measure of the scale of divergence is population change and from 1991-2016 the mid-Eastern area (broadly defined as the counties surrounding Dublin) had almost doubled in population while in the same period the population of the northwest had shrunk to 67% of their 1991 values. Despite plans for a successor

to the National Spatial Strategy being mooted since 2014, the new National Planning Framework was only formally launched in February 2018. The premise of the new plan is that continuing to facilitate a 'Business as Usual' scenario in Ireland is not an option given growing regional divergence and projections that population will grow by approximately 1 million people up to 2040 and that 550,000 extra homes will be needed.

Unlike previous attempts at spatial or regional planning in Ireland, unprecedented emphasis was placed in the NPF process on creating opportunities for debate around the shape of the plan to build 'buy-in' and legitimacy ultimately for the implementation stage. During the consultation phase, public town-hall style meetings attended by the relevant Minister and senior officials were held across the regions, in third level institutions, and through stakeholder roundtable fora. Following 18 months of extensive consultation the new National Planning Framework was launched together with a National Investment Plan, as part of a wider public policy initiative entitled Project Ireland 2040. The purpose of the National Planning Framework is to enable strategic choices to be made about the future and to provide a general framework within which sectoral investment and other priorities can be decided upon. As its name suggests, rather than being entirely prescriptive the new document outlines the general principles and framework within which the entire planning system and investment decision-making will be realigned. The core concepts relate to achieving regional balance, optimising investment through concentration in a smaller number of growth centres, achieving compact growth within urban centres, and alignment with capital investment and infrastructure delivery. Critically, the regional scale is identified as being a crucial driver to achieve the range of national strategic objectives, which marks a significant shift in thinking.

One of the marked features of previous attempts at national scale planning in Ireland was the absence of meaningful power and institutions at the meso-scale. The National Planning Framework identifies the regional level as critical to mediate between the overarching principles of the national plan and the realities of implementation and alignment at the local level. In January 2015, three new regional assemblies were established (Figure 8) and each of them have now been tasked as a priority with developing Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES).

The RSES are required under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to address employment, retail, housing, transport, water services, energy and communications, waste management, education, health, sports and community facilities, environment and heritage, landscape, sustainable development and climate change. Preparation of these plans commenced in October 2017 and each regional assembly produced an 'issues paper' outlining the business as usual approach and making the case for thinking more strategically to optimise the potential of the region. Evidence-based, they raise key questions about how the region will look in 2030 and how growth should be directed and managed. The plans went on public consultation until 16th February 2018, interim drafts were produced, with final publication in Spring 2019. For the first time, the RSES will require interaction with and between national sectoral plans and for the 5 cities

Key plans and legislation related to Ireland

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Abbreviations

MASP	Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
NRDA	National Regeneration and Development Agency
NSS	National Spatial Strategy
RDS	Regional Development Strategy, Northern Ireland
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

(Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford) Metropolitan Area Spatial Plans will also have to be developed.

Once the RSES and MASP process is complete, a process of alignment with city and county development plans, local economic and community plans and sectoral plans such as the NTA Transport Strategy for Dublin 2016-2035 and the Retail Strategy for Dublin will commence or recommence.

Commentary: Efficacy and Key Issues

The NPF in context

The NPF is a significant departure from previous attempts at national planning through its emphasis on equitable growth, strengthened regional governance structures, statutory underpinning and its foregrounding of 'plan-led' development. Since its publication, significant attention has been placed from the highest level of government in the form of the Taoiseach (prime Minister) on raising public awareness of the plan and a mass marketing campaign was undertaken to ultimately prepare the ground for the strategic decision-making that will need to happen. Among policymakers, the emphasis has already shifted to how the new policy tools of the RSES and MASPs can operationalise the broad principles of the NPF at a local level and regional assemblies are working to tight deadlines for implementation. Given the current housing crisis and previous scandals around planning corruption, there is particular public and media interest in the new Office of Planning Regulator, provided for in the NPF as a new independent institution to provide oversight of all local and regional forward planning and zoning decisions.

Figure 8

Configuration of the regional assemblies in Ireland

Source www.emra.ie

A major conceptual departure from previous attempts at regional or national planning, has been the emphasis on balanced growth. Although first mooted in the Buchanan report of the late 1960s, the discourse over the last four decades was on achieving balanced regional development through dispersal which resulted in sub-optimal outcomes. The National Spatial Strategy (2002) tried to address this by identifying gateways and hubs to focus development but the number of them, for the scale of the country, meant that dispersal predominated. The NPF is now focused on balanced growth with the 'core' strategy targeting 50% of growth in the Eastern Midland region with 50% to be achieved in the other two regions combined. There is also a significant emphasis placed on the role of cities in delivering the objectives and this urban emphasis is a significant cultural and policy shift. For the first time, metropolitan spatial planning is being embedded within the plan as a key tool.

Unlike in other European jurisdictions such as Manchester, Barcelona or Paris, where planning has been accompanied by institutional reform at the metropolitan scale, there are no immediate plans to re-align or create new institutional structures. Rather the governance framework is predicated on enhancing the role of the region and the oversight functions of the regional assembly and planning regulator. The NPF does make provision for governance reform to be considered at a later stage but this would be at the discretion of central government. The most fundamental change however between the NPF, its predecessor and earlier attempts at regional scale planning has been the cross-government commitment to the plan. In aligning the NPF with the €116 billion National Development Plan as *Project Ireland 2040*, the financial backing required to deliver on the promise has been put in place. A number of new funds including a recently

announced €3bn urban and rural regeneration fund will provide the investment to deliver relatively quickly on some proposals and enhance the credibility of the plan at local level. A new National Regeneration and Development Agency will strategically manage public and state lands for future affordable housing, an important institutional underpinning for the ambitious national strategic outcomes identified in the NPF.

Towards implementation of the National Planning Framework

The NPF has the potential to radically transform the spatial and economic development patterns of the Republic of Ireland, enhance quality of life and aid progress towards environmental sustainability. It is ambitious, evidence-based and coherent but also challenges regional and local government, the spatial planning system, and sectoral planning and policymakers. One of the first challenges facing the regional assemblies is how they align the new RSES approach with a well-established tradition of sectoral planning and policymaking that has characterised Irish public policy.

Policy integration at the regional scale One of the key tenets of the NPF is that it promotes vertical alignment in a multi-level governance context from central through to local plans and that it supports horizontal, cross-sectoral alignment by adopting a spatial focus. However given the plethora of state agencies and quasi-state agencies operating across a variety of sectors, identifying all the key actors and aligning them as part of the development of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies is an important challenge. This has already been evident in the context of Dublin where across one sector – transport –an estimated 62 agencies/organisations have been identified as potential stakeholders to be consulted about one large-scale redevelopment proposal in the city centre. However the direct link that has been made between the NPF, and ultimately the RSES for each region, and capital investment should be the necessary 'carrot' to encourage cross-

sectoral cooperation. This was clearly articulated by the Minister responsible for the plan, at the launch event:
"By aligning our spatial planning with our investment decisions – by aligning the National Planning Framework with the ten-year National Development Plan – we will for the first time have a meaningful planning framework that people can have confidence will deliver for their communities" (Eoghan Murphy, TD; Minister for Housing and Planning).

This alignment of the National Investment Plan with the NPF should ensure that future infrastructure investment will be more strategically deployed by central government, thus acting as an incentive not just for cross-sectoral cooperation across central government departments but through various regional and local structures. The potential of the RSES, backed by this funding and new oversight arrangements, to frame the plans and policies of local authorities, state agencies and private sector investment in the medium-term should ensure that future development is plan-led rather than developer-driven as has happened in the past.

Cities as strategic regional growth centres Given the traditional rural emphasis in Irish spatial policy, the new emphasis in the NPF on the role of the urban is an important recognition of the reality of contemporary Ireland but also exceptionally challenging politically. The framework recognises the strategic role of Dublin as a capital city, and a gateway to the global economy, and acknowledges that growth will continue and that public policy should sustain the city. However achieving the kind of equitable growth envisaged in the plan can only happen if a balance is achieved between the growth of Dublin and the four other cities. Ambitious growth targets have been set as illustrated in Figure 9 for the cities outside of Dublin. However even if these are met, the exceptional dominance of Dublin within the urban system will remain unchallenged.

Figure 9

Targeted pattern of population growth in Ireland's cities

City	Population 2016	Population Growth to 2040		Minimum Target Population 2040
		% Range	People	
Dublin - City and Suburbs	1,173,000	20-25%	235,000 - 293,000	1,408,000
Cork - City and Suburbs	209,000	50-60%	105,000 - 125,000	314,000
Limerick - City and Suburbs	94,000	50-60%	47,000 - 56,000	141,000
Galway - City and Suburbs	80,000	50-60%	40,000 - 48,000	120,000
Waterford - City and Suburbs	54,000	50-60%	27,000 - 32,000	81,000

Source National Planning Framework, 2018, 62

Along with the emphasis on growing cities, National Policy Objective 67 within the NPF requires the production of 12-year Metropolitan Area Spatial Plans (MASPs) in tandem with, and as part of, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES). This new policy tool recognises for the first time the reality of city-regionalism in Ireland and MASPs have been given statutory underpinning. The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide critical funding for the realisation of the MASPs and urban development generally in large urban centres beyond the five cities. While the MASPs are strategically important, their development and subsequent implementation is not straight forward. At regional assembly level significant urban/rural cleavages, stronger than party political divides, are beginning to emerge. For assemblies that are dominated by rural based representatives, it will be a major challenge to both develop and implement the MASP approach particularly in the context of upcoming local elections in Spring/Summer 2019. The National Planning Framework as an overarching vision has achieved cross-party support in the Dáil (national parliament). However given the inherently political nature of planning as a process - involving strategic choice-making about distribution of investment and services - it would be impossible to de-politicise the process despite what central government ministers might argue.

The politics of planning in Ireland The National Planning Framework has many obvious attributes and transformational ambitions, but implementation and its ultimate success will depend on learning from the lessons of previous attempts at national spatial planning. While central government departments and policy appear to be aligning in a way not heretofore seen, how the newly empowered regional assemblies, policy tools, and offices/agencies will be embedded or aligned within existing institutional structures is critical and potentially fraught with tension. The new National Regeneration and Development Agency (NRDA) has a remit to: "drive the renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential, (e.g. through CPO and other incentives) from cities and larger towns to opportunities at a smaller scale in rural towns and villages" yet how this intersects with regional and local government has not been established. One might assume that the NRDA role will be to operationalise the RSES and MASPs but this is not yet clear. In some ways this emphasis on the national and regional level runs contrary to the principles of the Urban Agenda of the European Union (2016) which suggests that urban authorities as the level of government often closest to citizens have the key role to play. However the Local Government Reform Act (2014) abolished urban district councils so the county council is the smallest unit of administration meaning that for some cities and towns, rural-based politicians are making key decisions.

For the NPF to deliver on its full potential within a multi-level governance framework clear functional demarcation is essential. Yet elements of the plan seem to blur functions and boundaries between different arms of government. One example relates to the coordination of development in towns that may cross administrative boundaries. The NPF (p. 136) states that in such circumstances "[central] government will work with the relevant local authorities in developing preparation of joint urban/local area plans, utilising current Local Area Plan (LAP) legislation",

thus calling into question the role and place of the regional level of governance. This is just one of a number of places where implementation of the NPF, despite the best intentions, may fall foul of politics but it also potentially indicates increased centralisation of power in an already highly centralised polity.

A related issue is the effectiveness of the regional tier in Ireland. Given the new powers and responsibilities that now sit at the regional level, are the make-up and structure of the regional assemblies fit for purpose? The assemblies are a nominee-based regional layer of governance with each constituent local authority sending a stated number of representatives to the assembly. While theoretically councillors leave their local authority identities at the door of the assembly chamber, the reality is that local councillors will have the best interests of their county or district in mind when decision-making is taking place. The NPF suggests that growth within the regions should be redirected within and close to cities/urban centres rather than on their fringe but rural-based councillors face tremendous political difficulty in supporting this kind of strategic change. While the relationship between the national plan in its long-term and statutory based framework and the electoral cycle has been broken, the same cannot be said for decision-making at the regional and local level. Even the identification of boundaries for the MASPs is highly contentious. Whether the structures of regional assemblies require realignment to include some nominees from local authorities with other stakeholders, or indeed directly elected regional representatives, may be worth considering to ensure effective implementation and promote strategic choice-making.

Future development of national spatial planning in Ireland Although *The National Planning Framework* is in its infancy, early indications suggest that the ambition shown in its development is being continued through the implementation phase. A Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board was established and first met in May 2018 to agree a set of initial priorities and a detailed implementation roadmap was circulated by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to key stakeholders in July 2018. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 which gives statutory footing to the framework was enacted and signed into law in July 2018 enabling key offices and agencies to be established and ensuring all County Development Plan reviews and Local Area Plan reviews can be rendered consistent with the RSES. Recognising that all level of plans require updated population projections and new systems and approaches need time to become embedded, a period of transition up to 2026/27 is envisaged for implementation. While pragmatic, the danger of operating such a long window of transition is that old practices remain in place and careful monitoring and oversight will be needed to ensure that transformation is already underway during the transition phase.

One of the key concepts introduced in the NPF is the need for a strategic and effective urban settlement hierarchy for Ireland. This advocates particular types of services that would be available at four tiers through the settlement system: cities, large towns, smaller towns and villages, and smaller settlements/rural areas. While a strong and admirable principle and an effective

mechanism for prioritising service provision, critical infrastructure and strategic investment, how this is translated through the RSES, MASPs, county and local area plans will be of interest. In recent years, local public protests about post office, bank and hospital rationalisation have been very strong and the politics of service provision has become a critical aspect of recent general election campaigns and delivered a large number of independent TDs (MPs) to the national parliament.

But perhaps the biggest challenge facing the NPF and its immediate and longer-term effectiveness is the uncertainty associated with Brexit. The National Spatial Strategy (2002) was developed to closely align with the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and the NPF has an entire chapter dedicated to Ireland's relationship with Northern Ireland and the broader United Kingdom. While the framework recognises the opportunities of Brexit for the Republic of Ireland – it will become the principal English-speaking country in the EU – there will also be significant challenges in terms of harnessing the potential of an all-island economy and a coordinated approach to key environmental, economic and social issues. National Policy Objective 43 states that the Irish government will "work with the relevant Departments in Northern Ireland for mutual advantage in areas such as spatial planning, economic development and promotion, co-ordination of social and physical infrastructure provision and environmental protection and management." (NPF, 109). In the context of a non-functioning devolved administration in Northern Ireland, this is particularly problematic and an impediment to coordinated cross-border planning. How this evolves in the coming years will very much depend on the type of Brexit that is eventually negotiated.

Wider lessons from the Irish case

- A critical feature of effective national spatial planning is alignment with capital and infrastructure investment planning.

- To ensure 'buy-in' and create the optimum conditions for implementation, the plan and its sub-components must be given a statutory footing with support from across government departments and across sectors.

- Recognising that planning is an inherently political process, 'de-politicisation' is not possible but it is important to break, as much as possible, the linkage between plan development and implementation and the political cycle.

- Institutions must be sufficiently empowered and resourced to fulfil their role within the system and functional demarcation must be clearly articulated.

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A NEW AGENDA FOR ENGLAND:
THE MISSING PIECES IN THE JIGSAW

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Abstract

Any discussion about the need for and shape of a national spatial plan for England has to start with a recognition that there already exists a *de facto* plan expressed in the cumulative spatial impact of national investment decisions. That the spatial ramifications of this de facto plan are not articulated explicitly, publicly or consciously is a challenge given that it often works to reinforce regional inequalities and the privileged position of London and the South East in the nation's economy. This article reports upon an initiative which is working to heighten awareness of the spatial impacts of spatially blind national investment strategies and to promote the virtues of developing an explicitly spatial strategy for England.

Context

England is characterised by deep disparities in wealth and income between and within its regions and cities. Infact the difference in prosperity between its most and least productive regions is one of the largest in the OECD and does not seem to be narrowing (Gal and Egeland 2018). Inequalities reflect and in turn contribute to: low productivity, affecting national economic growth; failing housing markets; overloaded and underfunded infrastructure; underused and undervalued asset, and; inefficient use of resources.

Spatially blind national investment strategies (for example in Science and Transport) are wittingly and unwittingly reproducing existing inequalities, and reinforcing the preeminence of London and the South East in the nation's economy. Those affected by inequalities often feel excluded from having a voice. There is a need to develop an explicitly spatial framework for England which is sensitive to and cognisant of the impacts of inequalities on communities at all levels and for all places, and which has been debated and agreed.

National Spatial Planning in England National spatial planning is not a new concept within England. The 1940 Barlow Plan for example played a key role in shaping the distribution of population and development across the country, not least with respect to its vision for new towns. But this plan was top down and embodied ideas and approaches which are no longer appropriate. The need for light touch national spatial economic policies has been recognised in one form or another for some time in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

An unpublished report in 1995 by the RTPI Policy Committee set out its policy in support of national spatial planning including for England. Subsequently, the case for a national planning framework for England - either as part of a UK wide plan or for itself – has been made in a number of subsequent clarion calls, most notably in a 2006 report titled 'Uniting Britain' (Wong et al. 2006). With the further emergence of spatial frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it has become evident that the absence of a national spatial planning framework for England represents a gap that needs to be filled. This is also reflected in the findings of the 2006 Hetherington Report by the TCPA 'ConnectingEngland'. More recently Sir John Armitt called for a national plan which sets how regions relate to each other.

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This need is not however met by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England. Neither the original 2012 version nor the revised 2018 NPPF update provide the required spatial framework or vision. However desirable it is in its own right, the NPPF has paid no attention or certainly insufficient attention to spatiality. It is essentially a framework for planning practice setting out policies to be applied consistently in England in the preparation of local plans and in the determination of planning applications. It is not a framework which sets out a vision for the future distribution of population, housing and development across England. In fact, it arguably has had unintended and unfortunate development and policy consequences by in effect reinforcing past trends. For example, the population forecasts to be used in local planning incorporate assumptions of an ongoing migration shift from the north to the south of England.

This conclusion was also reached in the 2012 report by Wong et al. titled a 'Map for England'. This report not only identified a wide range of policies for England that had explicit or implicit spatial implications for the development of the country. In addition, it highlighted the inconsistencies and sometimes conflicts which exist between various policies being pursued.

The Challenge Of Fragmented Decision Making

Tackling regional disparities in England is made especially difficult because of the fragmented nature of decision making. This arises from three factors: fragmented geography, fragmented responsibilities and fragmented analytical frameworks.

The administrative regions used for decision making are unrelated to the functional geography of the nation in terms of labour markets, supply chains, housing markets and natural ecosystems. The new West Midlands Combined Authority area, for example, cuts across three different Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. As a result, decisions are not taken for coherent areas, inter-relationships are not taken into account and Nimby-ism has become institutionalised. This not only applies to local decisions but also to the consideration of strategic issues.
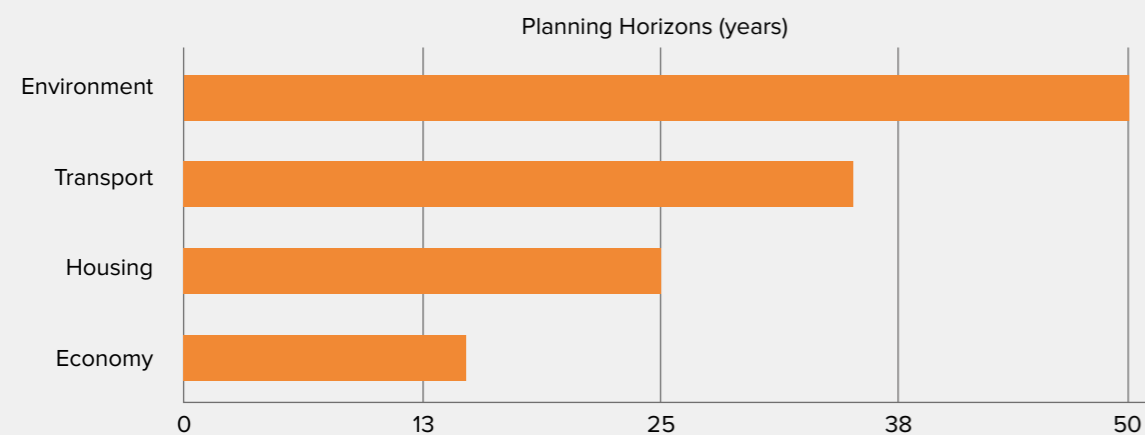
Notable recent examples include the methodology used by DHCLG to providing guidance on housing need. This fails to take account of the framework of HMAs that it itself has previously published. The methodology also appears to have policy impacts which are out of step with the wider governmental objectives of regional re-balancing (for example the Northern Powerhouse initiative). It seeks an increase in the scale of housing development in the South-East of the country overall by a quarter of a million units over a 10-year period. The proposed methodology runs the risk of reinforcing the trend for population movement to the South-East and a loss of population from northern regions. The additional demand is in fact focused on London with limited overall adjustment to account for the contribution from the South-East region.

These example highlights the need for any sectoral methodology to be set within a clear framework of national spatial priorities. The assessment of housing needs requires a national view on the strategic distribution of new housing development related to the wider government agenda for sustainable development, the industrial strategy and social equity and cohesion.

This need is reinforced by the structure and workings of central government departments. These are critical because of their importance and the highly centralised nature of the English governmental arrangements. Even though there has been a distinct movement to decentralise to and to empower cities in particular, the nation will remain very centrally controlled with most finance being raised and distributed centrally. However departmental governance arrangements mean that policies are prepared within different technical frameworks with different policy assumptions, in particular different planning horizons (see Figure 10). For example, the longer-term inter and intra regional assumptions which underlie the CaMKOx policies for future development have not been fed back into to (and as a result modify) the housing assumptions for the area itself nor for the areas from which the additional population is drawn. These initiatives have no long term policy nor institutional underpinning to give a secure longer-term commitment.

Currently, therefore, strategic policy decisions for England are missing any sense of a spatial imagination. The spatial implications of national policies need to be made more explicit and linked. Housing demand, levels of immigration, infrastructure capacity and patterns of movement or spending are derived demands of the economy. Therefore, national targets for policy priories such as housing need to be more directly linked to the assumptions and aspirations of the spatial impact of the industrial strategy decisions (as well as other specific national initiatives such as the Midlands Engine, CAMKOX, HS2); and they need to be set within an explicit and consistent set of assumptions about the future of the country as expected or desired.

Implications for Future Proofing the Nation

The perspectives currently used to frame national policy are therefore generally myopic, tunnel-visioned and often backward-looking. Policy debate needs to face up to the challenge of future uncertainties. We currently suffer from poor vision when scanning the road ahead and often blindly follow ever changing route maps or are driven by historic *predict and provide* agenda. Future proofing and scenario building are hampered by the need for a wide perspective across a range of possible routes, drawing on an understanding of spatial and temporal relationships between the drivers of change from conventional and unconventional sources.

This is particularly significant in view of the uncertain future road ahead. The future of the UK and England is inextricably tied up with longer-term large-scale shifts in the geo-political tectonic plates, which are accelerating uncertainty for national forecasting and governance This is demonstrated by the following illustrative issues with "inconvenient tipping points" waiting to happen:

• Climate change implications for settlement and infrastructure in Britain and Europe, and likely effects on investment and insurance markets.

• Post peak-oil scenarios for global manufacturing activity and transport.

• Potential implications of demographic shifts across Africa and Europe as a second-order economic consequence of labour shortages in Europe.

• Global water and food shortage scenarios for countries such as China and India; even in the USA 30% of US counties already have a water shortage.

It is also necessary to be responsive to the accelerating rate of change in information technology. This will change the context for decision making (e.g. the impact of AI) and also the capacity to manage change. In particular, there is a whole new tool box of opportunities to understand and tackle problems at all scales, as highlighted by the work of the **Urban Big Data Centre** and **Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis.** They are not a panacea but could be a way of challenging what is becoming a world overloaded by data.

Tackling such challenges requires a structured approach at a national level that can allow the ***spatial-proofing*** of public policy in terms of:

• Analytical frameworks integrating analyses spatially in terms of social, economic and environmental systems. At present these tend still to be treated in a sectoral way, with impact assessments based on flawed spatial constructs, with environmental impacts, for example, internalised to the plan or programme area.

• Institutional mapping addressing the democratic deficits in society posed by the mismatch of power and responsibilities which arise from a geography of administrative arrangements which does not relate to the areas within which people search for homes, jobs or recreation.

• Technical capacity to cut through the emerging overload of data and the need to integrate 'lay' knowledge in decision making and political responses.

The implications of these wider future challenges to public policy are that change is needed:

• To support the development of fundamental research questions about spatial futures.

• To identify and sponsor specific future research needs, and to be a centre for the co-ordination and dissemination of research.

• To look at the institutional aspects of how physical and social sciences are applied to spatial futures, and to help identify ways of improving this.

• To have regard to how physical and social research and science is generated, communicated and applied in relation to the definition of problems in spatial futures, and to their possible solutions.

• To develop scenarios and forecasts illustrating spatial futures and their implications so that policy is not simply driven by past trends.

Professional Response

Regional and local inequalities in England are unacceptable, unnecessary and too long-standing. The question for the planning community as a whole is who should lead the debate in identifying the nature of the problems and the potential solutions. As set out

Figure 10

Planning horizons in years for different sectors

Planning Horizons (years)

Environment, Transport, Housing, Economy — 0, 13, 25, 38, 50

Source Author

by Murray and Goodstadt (2014) in their RTPI Centenary article 'Who Leads Planning? (see also Goodstadt and Murray 2017):*"The major successes have generally been where:*

- *Planning policies have set out proactive development priorities upstream and not merely a set of reactive control criteria.*

- *Implementation 'partners' have been integral to plan making from the outset, and not treated as mere consultees or annexed to the plan.*

- *The plan has been linked to public sector expenditure programmes, effecting the delivery of a common vision.*

Behind all celebrated and award winning planning successes has been the presence of strong political and professional leadership. The great achievements in planning over the last 100 years have been led by planners and politicians of vision. In the words of RTPI Gold Medallist Sir Robert Grieve they had a vision of "a better, more socially equitable, more beautiful future than is now the fashion or expectation".

Towards a Spatial Strategy for the UK and England

It is in this context that the *Common Futures Network* (an informal network comprising key stakeholders and concerned citizens) was set up in 2016 in part to compile a **Prospectus** for 'A New Vision for England and the UK' (Common Futures Network 2017). This set out not only the case for a national spatial planning framework but also its scope and components. These are encapsulated in eight propositions based around four core purposes of a national spatial framework i.e. those matters which can only be or are best defined at a national level.

The four core purposes are:

- To set out National Output Requirements, for example, in terms of longer-term economic and demographic change to provide a systematic and consistent basis for sectoral programmes of investment.

- To resolve inter-regional balances for example in terms of the relative role of regions in the Industrial Strategy's priority sectors.

- To require cross-boundary action in the national interest, for example in terms of metropolitan regions and along key regional development corridors.

- To identify 'National Projects' which are critical to the restructuring of the nation and the opening up of opportunities of national significance (e.g. core infrastructure or flagship developments).

It is also noted that from experience other national frameworks cover a range of sectoral interests which also need to have a national perspective. These include flooding, sea defences, conservation priorities, climate change targets and inclusion priorities. Their inclusion in a spatial strategy may be optional

but they do provide relevant context for such a strategy and will be impacted by it.

The eight propositions are:

Proposition 1 sets out the core policy content of a national spatial framework for England and the UK. These include the following:

- The global role of the UK, and what is required to sustain the unique status of London as a trading centre

- A new regional development programme post-Brexit when the UK will no longer be eligible for ERDF/ESF Funding or from the European Investment Bank

- An urban agenda which sets out the relative role of the major cities, and support for 'left over' places

- A new rural agenda in the light, for example, of the changing politics of food production and the loss of CAP arrangements

- A National Green-Blue Network to set out the green infrastructure that supports the ecosystem services upon which we are dependent nationally

- An integrated infrastructure strategy that supports the common infrastructure that serves all cities, towns and regions

- State of the Nation Reporting (OBR-style body) to provide a basis for forward planning and monitoring

Proposition 2 calls for a place-based Industrial Strategy to: harness the agglomerative capacity of the UK, and England in particular (as a global mega-region); refresh regional development programme aimed at reducing peripherality; identify areas of industrial specialisation; link research and development, and set priorities and goals for underperforming parts of the country.

Proposition 3 seeks to integrate infrastructure, to move the agenda beyond re-engineering the nation to rebalancing opportunities within England, and to open up new development areas required to meet an estimated additional 9m population by 2040.

Proposition 4 aspires to building a networked systems of cities, understanding and maximising functional linkages between cities, building upon, but not confined to, the three existing trans-regional priorities (Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, and the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor), and other nationally significant opportunities (e.g. Heathrow-Swindon-Bristol), as well as the HS2 corridors.

Proposition 5 works to secure the global role of London, ensuring that action throughout the London capital region supports the commercial, labour and housing markets upon which the future of London as a global city depends, through a high level non-statutory public-private forum, and also strengthening London's relationships with other major UK cities.

Proposition 6 calls for more Devolution, reinforcing the potential created by the emerging framework of Combined Authorities through a more structured and incentivised basis for collaborative action, whilst retaining a safety net for vulnerable towns.

Proposition 7 identifies the components of a Framework based on these propositions identifying the key issues that must be decided at a national level for England in terms of the National Economic Hubs, Corridors and Networks in support of the National Flagship Projects and the national priorities for collaborative action.

Proposition 8 links Devolved National Frameworks through the British Irish Council's Working Group to provide a common context for cross-border cooperation, creating synergies and identifying cross-boundary and external relationships and nation-wide approaches to increasing self-sufficiency in food, raw materials and energy.

In response to the challenges set out in the **Prospectus** an independent **UK2070 Commission** has been set up, chaired by Lord Kerslake which amongst other things will test these propositions (see http://uk2070.org.uk/). It has therefore set out the following goals:

- Illuminate the imbalances in the nature of economic activity,

- Illustrate the potential a national spatial economic framework

- Identify the range of policy interventions required to deliver change.

This Commission will report by the end of 2019. This initiative is seen as practical implementation of UN HABITAT the 'New Urban Agenda' agreed at Quito in 2018 and the UK Government was a signatory. This makes clear that:

"At this critical juncture in human history, rethinking the way we plan, build, and manage our urban spaces is not an option but an imperative. Our work to realize this vision begins now... We commit ourselves to .. integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational spatial framework"

The time is right for action; as Lord Kerslake said in his address to the 2018 RTPI Convention *watch this space!*

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Copies of the report can be accessed at:

www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute