**Framing the future: On local planning cultures and legacies**

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**Abstract**

This paper considers the influence of established local planning cultures and legacies on the trajectory of contemporary local development policies. Local and sub-regional planning cultures are interpreted as overall 'developmental frames' which set the context for local planning approaches both through more concrete territorial, developmental and policy forms and through cognitive structures, assumptions and values. These frames then exert significant influence on how planning policy is conceived and enacted, with potentially major implications for local development outcomes. Three illustrative case studies are presented from sub-regional growth areas in the South East of England.

**Introduction: Local Planning Cultures and Legacies**

The definition of 'planning cultures' and their implications for planning practice and planning outcomes have long been a focus of disciplinary interest. As Othengrafen and Reimer (2013, p. 1271) note, authors such as Burke (1967), Bolan (1973), Dror (1973) and Friedmann (1967a; 1967b) emphasised the importance of planning cultures in writings over 40 years ago. Yet this is not to suggest any settled understanding of how planning cultures might be defined or analysed. For Booth (2011, p.16) planning culture "is a culture of decision-making, and the ways in which that culture is expressed in the institutions of the state and the legal system, that shapes the way in which planning is understood and put into effect". Friedmann (2005, p.184), meanwhile, has described a planning culture as "the ways, both formal and informal, that spatial planning in a given multi-national region, country or city is conceived, institutionalised and enacted" (Friedmann, 2005: p.184). For Dühr et al (2010), planning cultures are a summation of different aspects of national and local planning systems, expressing the norms, values and principles that underlie planning practice. These latter formulations perhaps underpin the approach of Othengrafen and Reimer who define planning culture as:

> "collective intelligible social practice", referring to a number of incorporated and (implicit) routinised "recurrent regularities" about how to behave and act in specific situations… It consists of beliefs, attitudes, ideas, norms, values, and behaviours that are "obviously valid" for members of the culture and guides the actions of members belonging to a specific culture. (2013, p.1272-1273)

Despite some intimation towards sub-national spaces, discussions of planning culture have primarily adopted the same methodological nationalism apparent in the comparative literature on planning systems (e.g. Newman and Thornley, 1996). At this national level planning culture might reference "'the collective ethos and dominant attitudes of planners regarding the

appropriate role of the state, market forces, and civil society in influencing social outcomes" (Sanyal, 2005: xxi; Faludi, 2005, pp.285-286), or even the wider value-system in which planning is situated (for example the respective importance placed on urban and rural landscapes). Yet clearly there are variable development pressures and styles of planning within nations. In Britain, for example, Brindley et al (1996) identified six different planning styles across localities reflecting particular mixes of policy goals, working methods and planning identities, namely: 'regulative', 'trend', 'popular', 'leverage', 'public investment' and 'private management'. Such local planning 'styles' have become firmly established in Britain over the post-war period since the establishment of the modern town and country planning system in 1947.

Recent contributions have therefore emphasised the need to move beyond a reductionist comparison of planning systems based on national legal and administrative arrangements to examine distinct local planning rationalities or cultures (Othengrafen and Reimer, 2013; Reimer, Getimis and Blotevogel, 2014). This is partly because planning practice adapts to the context in which it operates, or as Booth describes it (admittedly speaking to different national planning systems in this context): "Town planning, both as a discipline and as an administrative practice, has a curiously chameleon-like quality whose colours depend inherently on the particular social, political, and cultural context in which it is found" (Booth, 1986, p.1). Also, though, local planning cultures may inhere in specific planning policies, particular sites and even specific documents such as plans or other materials around which accepted understandings of development potential may emerge (Beauregard, 2015). Booth (2011, p.20) further notes, for example: "If we are to take on board the extent to which spatial planning and urban policy are indeed culturally embedded … we are bound to consider the historical evolution of both place and process". To date, however, this focus has been under-developed at local and sub-regional scales, as Othengrafen and Reimer (2013, p.1281) note:

> At present, most of the comparative studies on planning systems and cultures try to identify 'national' planning cultures, emphasising cultural characteristics on a national scale. We completely agree on the importance of (national) societal backgrounds in shaping specific planning cultures […]. But it is also necessary to recognise the local variations of planning cultures which differ from context to context. More research is needed here to explain the multiple trajectories of change and the diversity of local and regional planning cultures below the national scale.

In taking this forward research on local planning cultures will evidently focus on more programmatic levels, in contrast to the ideological and over-arching political-economic orientation of research on national planning cultures. Rather, local planning cultures and legacies emphasise specific place histories, development trajectories, locational boundaries and strategic orientations to which the various institutions shaping the development process are contextually sensitized (Healey and Barrett, 1990; Healey and Williams, 1993) and which are the key reference points and resources for planners as actors within the development process (Adams and Tiesdell, 2010). These levels relate to categories adopted by Knieling and Othengrafen (2015) and Othengrafen and Reimer (2013), namely: "planning artefacts" or "'perceivable territorial structures as well as visible policy solutions proposed by planners and policy-makers, including urban and regional plans and concepts, written justifications of plan proposals, strategies or projects"; and "planning environments", or "assumptions, frames and values of urban and regional planners that are learned... culturally and locally determined cognitive structures, systems of meaning or "world views" that structure the behaviour and the actions of the involved planners and other built environment professionals" (see Knieling and Othengrafen, 2015, pp.5-6). Table 1 identifies these categories of local planning culture as respectively 'local planning artefacts' and the 'local planning environment'.

Table 1: Categorising local planning cultures

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|---|---|
| 'Local planning artefacts'<br><br>Visible local planning products; structures and processes | Visible forms – Physical characteristics and land use<br><br>Characteristics of local planning systems – planning policy evolution; planning and governance institutions.<br><br>Features of planning products – form of local plans, local and regional development strategies; planning instruments and procedures; statistical data; decision-making processes, communication and participation. |
| 'Local planning environment'<br><br>Assumptions, values and cognitive frames that are developed and adopted by local planning actors.<br><br>(As less visible features these assumptions, values and frames may be revealed amongst, *inter alia*: stated policy objectives; associated rationale and patterns of argumentation; inter-relations and possible discrepancies between policy spheres and at different scales; primary and secondary research evidence; critical academic commentary; local media coverage; and local political, cultural and historical writings) | Local planning objectives – core values and principles; formal policy objectives; degree of consensus, conflict.<br><br>Policy frames and policy-making – scope and range of local planning; political relations and strategic action.<br><br>Local understanding of and approach to planning – planning semiotics and semantics; traditions and history of spatial planning; formal and informal layers of norms and rules; political, administrative, economic and organisational modes of operation |

Source: Adapted from Othengrafen and Reimer (2013: 1275) and Knieling and Othengrafen (2015)

Developing this at a theoretical level, we adopt the idea of cognitive frames as important in emphasising enduring perspectives that can inform planning practice over a considerable time in a particular place (Schön and Rein, 1994). Framing here concerns: "the ways in which social actors use competing or convergent frames to (re)construct a specific cultural orientation which favours and justifies their own policy positions" (Triandafyllidou and Fotiou, 1998, paragraph 2.11). As Triandafyllidou and Fotiou suggest, a focus on framing may contribute in understanding policy-making processes by illustrating how actors emphasise specific policy matters and offer a particular interpretation of events, and "how competing interpretations and

perspectives may lead to dramatically different policy designs" (Triandafyllidou and Fotiou, 1998, *op cit*). From this actor-centred institutionalist vantage point the emphasis is on the sphere of strategic action at the level of the individual actor (individual or organisation), where actors seek to bring about a desired state in relation to one or more other actors by choosing a strategic model through which to interpret a given situation, and where a calculation is made of the success of achieving the desired end from the reactions of other actors. In terms of Othengrafen and Reimer's (2013) and Booth's (2011) emphasis on place and process an emphasis on framing highlights both the inertia and change that can characterise path dependency in planning cultures, an important topic of contemporary historical institutionalist writing in planning (see Sorensen, 2018; 2015). Planning cultures reveal themselves at several temporal registers (Abram, 2014) including the short-term of day-to-day decision making and planning practice, to materials or artefacts durable over the medium-term such as specific planning policies, documents, plans or other materials around which accepted understandings of development potential may emerge (Beauregard, 2015), to planning policy frames durable over decades that underlie the former. It seems clear that research on local planning cultures would need to focus on those temporalities of planning, the artefacts and frames, lying between the quotidian and the deeper long term ideological and political-economic orientations inhering in national planning cultures. Here, then, we seek to interrogate how certain 'cultural orientations' or *developmental frames* have emerged from such strategic action and come to dominate planning policy in respective sub-regional spaces.

The paper is presented in three further sections. The following methodological note briefly outlines the methods and the case-study focus, highlighting in particular the range of approaches adopted to tease out the nature of local developmental frames. The respective case-studies are then reported in three sub-sections which show how specific policy matters are emphasised in each case, leading to diverse patterns of consonance, dissonance and differentiation in planning

policy, with significant implications for respective development contexts. These are briefly summarised in the final section, which also offers overall conclusions and further reflections.

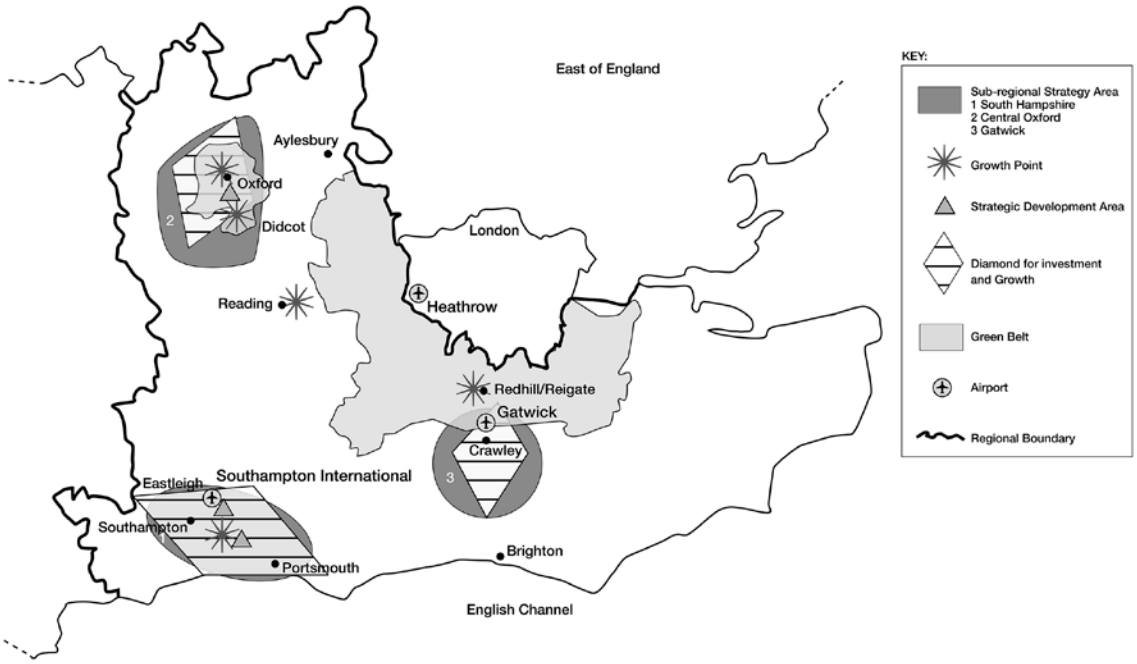
**Methodological Note**

The study reported here was directed at three sub-regions within the South-East of England outside of London (see Figure 1), a region that might reasonably be assumed to exhibit some broad level of comparability in terms of overall development pressures. Moreover, a relatively strong environmental rationality (Murdoch and Abram, 2002) provided one over-arching continuity in the face of planning for significant economic growth and development. Our research therefore reveals planning cultures at a more localised level in the context of broadly comparable development pressures. Here, while the limits of the distinct settlement pattern of the South East of England – with its London focus, absence of counterweight large city-regions and numerous market towns – emerge as something of a common theme, the manner in which growth pressures have been negotiated in relation to these existing settlement patterns has formed part of the respective sub-regional planning cultures.

Research for the present project represented the culmination of work in three sub-regions, namely – Oxfordshire, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and the 'Gatwick Diamond' area – over a period of six years. Firstly here, separate research activities undertaken by the respective authors in PUSH and Oxfordshire incorporated over 100 interviews during the period 2010-14, alongside detailed review of published documents relating to spatial planning and economic development across the relevant local government and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. Secondly, as part of an initial coordinated project on planning and governance issues related to 'delivering growth' across all three sub-regions a further 25 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with officers and elected politicians from local government planning and economic development departments, LEPs, and business, civic and

environmental organisations between June 2013 to January 2014. This extended the geographical reach of the research and introduced a distinctive history of central government direction in the Gatwick Diamond case, adding further sensitivity to the analysis. Thirdly, beyond the substantial body of previous research the current project also incorporated three focus group meetings in each of the case study areas, undertaken in 2015. These groups facilitated a constructive dialogue between very experienced (in some cases retired) and early career planners in the local government sector and also across the public-private sector divide, with attendees at all career stages invited to reflect this emphasis. The discussion was based around four objectives in each case: (i) To revisit historic planning arguments and decisions that have been made with regard to a limited number of key planning challenges; (ii) To identify enduring planning principles and policies that appear to impact on current planning practice, and the processes through which such impacts are created; (iii) To consider whether these historic planning principles and policies could be said to constitute distinct local planning cultures; and (iv) To reflect on the lessons to be drawn from this understanding in terms of planning policy and effective governance. Altogether then, while the three research projects differed in their detailed objectives, when brought into dialogue they have allowed the authors to generate a comprehensive review of planning stances in each sub-region. In particular they have facilitated reflection not only on the history of development in each area but the ways in which this has been conditioned by distinct cultures of planning that reach down to specific policies, sites and materials. In the following section we move on to summarise the 'developmental frames' as they have emerged in the respective cases, approaching variously the deep-seated cultural values and planning principles at play, the historical evolution of influential policy frameworks, and key aspects of planning artefacts and local planning environments. We also reflect on the ongoing influence of these cultural forms in contemporary policy-making and debate.

Figure 1: Selected sub-regions in South East Plan key diagram: Central Oxfordshire, South Hampshire and the Gatwick Diamond (Derived from SEERA, 2009)




## Case Studies

### *Oxford/Oxfordshire – A dissonant local planning environment*[1]

The principles and underlying values of planning in Oxfordshire reflect certain foundational characteristics, in particular its position as a free-standing city set in a largely rural hinterland, and its history of 'closed' settlements dominated by individual landowners including members of the aristocracy and peerage, the landed gentry, Oxford University and its constituent Colleges. These landowning interests acted to prevent or minimise residential development in ‘closed’ rural communities or parishes, while ‘open’ communities owned by multiple freeholders of both agricultural and non-agricultural land allowed an *ad hoc* pattern of residential development. Hence, as Spencer (1997, p.83) points out, the post-war planning system inherited a spatial template of development constraints in Oxfordshire rather than a blank canvas upon which planning policies could be negotiated. In the formative years of planning in the County landed agricultural capital was extremely well-represented in the decision-making processes of the

County Planning Committee, a position buttressed by the opinions of powerful local residents who feared that the smaller rural communities might become suburbanised. County planning policy through the 1950s and 1960s thus preserved the status quo in 'closed' communities where landowner power and influence prevailed (Spencer, 1997, p.84), with opposition to village enlargement ostensibly justified in terms of the costs of improving infrastructure in the small rural villages, but more emphatically reflecting the entrenched power of private estate proprietors and their supporters. And as Spencer further argues, "subsequent structure and local plans also made no attempt to fracture this legacy of landowner control" (1997, p.84), which was effectively reinforced by designation of the Oxford greenbelt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. John Minnett (1980, p.81) summarises the rural detachment that characterised planning in Oxfordshire throughout the postwar era:

> The sign 'Oxfordshire' by the side of the road seems to mean more than just another county. It marks the end of 'London' – the end of commuter land, of Green Line buses and parades of neo-Georgian shops. It is the beginning of the 'other England'… part of the great swathe of rural England which appears so often on pictorial calendars. Oxfordshire in many ways depicts an ideal of England: at its heart a cathedral city, market town and ancient university with surrounding acolytes of small ancient towns and villages, set in a varied and often beautiful countryside… The history of planning in Oxfordshire is primarily concerned with preserving that character – even if it is now little more than a mask for many of the most recent aspects of 20$^{th}$ century technology

Against this background the local planning environment in Oxfordshire has been marked by an historical policy dilemma regarding the growth and physical expansion of Oxford city, with critical implications for planning policy in the county and for the growth prospects of the city and the sub-region. The roots of this dilemma are deep, reaching back at least to greenbelt

designation around the city in 1955 and particularly to the conservationist stance of Oxfordshire County Council (OxonCC) planning policy in the 'Structure Plan' era from the late 1970s[2]. Eight versions of the Structure Plan, a key planning artefact, were produced between 1979 and 2005, maintaining an emphasis on general growth restraint in the County and a commitment to direct growth pressures towards the so-called 'country towns' of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney, well beyond the Oxford greenbelt. This was allied with specific policies on employment locations and housing which reinforced the focus on the country towns and the policy of general restraint elsewhere, including in Oxford city. Indeed, despite a gradual acknowledgement of the city's primary function in the sub-region, the final version of the Structure Plan in 2005 clearly reflects the planning objectives and frames established by the country-towns strategy:

> 2.7 The Plan reflects Oxford's central role in the life of the County. The County Council wants to see Oxford thrive as a first class vibrant city, modern in outlook with a diverse economy. The Plan promotes Oxford's role as a sub-regional centre for shopping, leisure and cultural activities. Oxford will continue to build on its strengths – education, health and related research and development activities…
>
> 2.8 This does not mean that Oxford should grow unchecked, so as to damage its heritage and landscape setting and increase pressure on transport and other services. Because of the substantial imbalance between jobs and workforce in Oxford, the overall growth of employment in the city will continue to be limited. Land is available within the city to support the development of employment sectors that need to be located there. Other activities will be encouraged to continue to locate outside Oxford. (Oxfordshire County Council 2005)

However, in spite of the clear policy stance set out in the Structure Plan, Oxford City Council (OCC) had long opposed the country-towns strategy, arguing in favour of an alternative 'central

Oxfordshire' focus directed towards the planned expansion of the city. This would provide the basis for more sustainable forms of development, it was argued, by reducing high levels of in-commuting, underpinning well established public transport networks, further extending employment opportunities, and reinforcing social infrastructure.

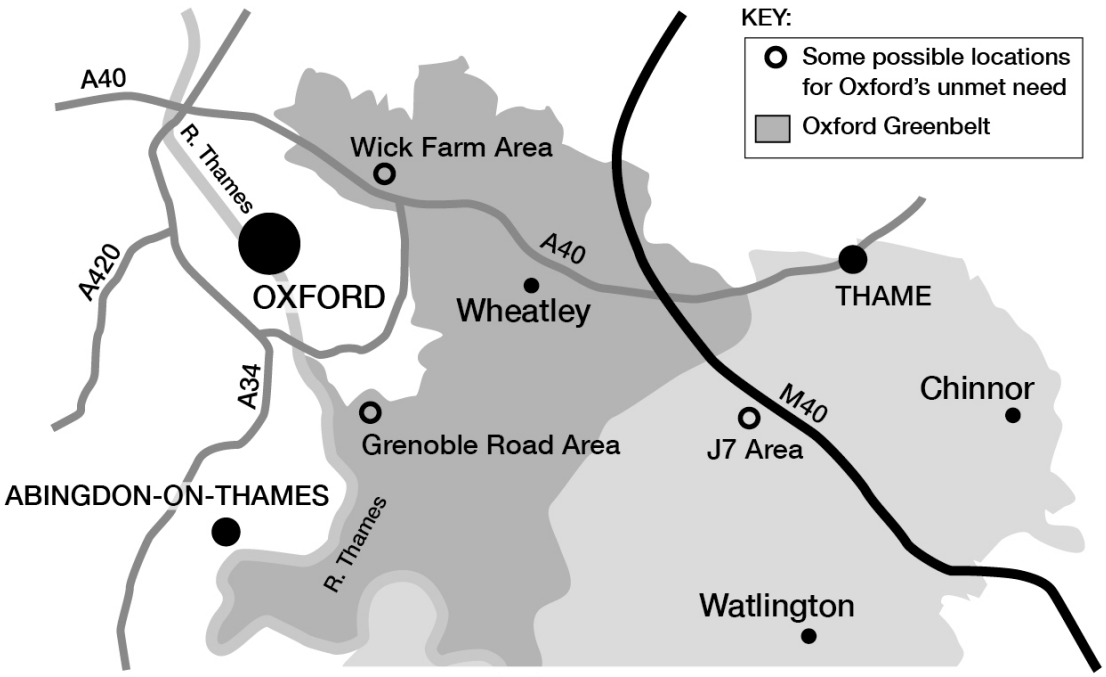
The contrasting sets of beliefs, attitudes and ideas which underpinned these competing developmental frames persisted despite the fact that the UK Labour Government's Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 brought to an end the structure plan era, to be replaced by regional planning and an emerging regional spatial strategy – the South East Plan (SEP) – developed by the South East England Regional Assembly, which was subsequently adopted in 2009 (SEERA, 2009). This adopted the alternative 'central Oxfordshire' focus and called for sustainable urban extensions to a number of county urban areas including Oxford, as well as a selective review of the Oxford Green Belt. It was absolutely explicit in setting this new policy direction, stating in Paragraph 22.5 that:

> The settlement pattern of the sub-region *will change* over the Plan period. Oxford itself will be allowed to grow physically and economically in order to accommodate its own needs, contribute to those in the wider region and help maintain its world-class status (SEERA, 2009; *emphasis added*)

However, in the event the 2009 SEP was very quickly removed when regional strategies were revoked by the incoming Coalition Government from 2010, to be replaced by district-level Local Plans under the rubric of 'localism'. The nascent settlement over city expansion that might have followed the adoption of the SEP was effectively undermined.

Within this contradictory local planning environment a clear example of the difficulties associated with such divergent policy frames is the case of housing development on the south-east fringe of Oxford city (see Figure 2). The area 'south of Grenoble Road' is owned by the City Council and Magdalen College (one of the constituent colleges of the University of Oxford) and has been identified by OCC for many years as a potential urban extension to meet the urgent requirement for housing and employment land, accommodating possibly in excess of 4,000 homes. Development here has been framed explicitly by the City Council in terms of a response to the city's housing crisis, based on sustainable development principles. However, the site is located within neighbouring South Oxfordshire District Council's administrative boundary, which has consistently opposed the principle of development at the site, which is designated green belt. When the regional plan was published in May 2009, including multiple references to the proposed development at Grenoble Road, it was subsequently legally challenged by South Oxfordshire DC, resulting in the withdrawal of the site from the regional plan. However, the issue has continued to cause controversy. The City Council's Economic Growth Strategy (Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2012) and an 'Oxfordshire Innovation Engine' report (SQW, 2013) both identified Grenoble Road as a location to meet the city's chronic need for housing and employment growth, for example. Subsequently, the publication of a new Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn, 2014) identified a need for some 30,000 new homes for the city in the period to 2031, while the existing capacity within the city boundary was assessed at around 7-8,000 homes. South Oxfordshire DC's stance on Grenoble Road has remained substantially unchanged, however, while the City Council continues to promote the Grenoble Road site for development and to argue in favour of overall green belt review in light of the strategic planning context.

Figure 2: Grenoble Road area (Based on South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Refined options Stage 2, February, SODC, 2015: 43)




The experience at Grenoble Road is redolent with an established culture of 'urban political dissonance' (for detailed exposition see Phelps and Valler, 2018 ). The conflict between the City Council and neighbouring South Oxfordshire DC over the future of this site reflects clearly contradictory development frames and a straightforward inability to find compromise or workable resolution over a sustained period of time. Most pertinently, for our purposes here, the question of urban extension has been framed in wholly contrasting terms by the city and the district councils as respectively a response to structural housing crisis or as protection of the greenbelt. These conflicting frames have become part of the orthodoxy of planning policy in the County, relating more widely to the housing-greenbelt tension around the city, and learned and adopted by planning officers and council members amongst the respective councils. Such learning is cultivated over time in more or less explicit fashion, through various episodes and debates over the general direction of economic growth and more site-specific developments, and enshrined in numerous visible planning artefacts including strategic and statutory planning

documents, as well as non-statutory policy papers. The result in this case is that a legacy of opposition to the physical expansion of the city of Oxford has effectively dominated planning policy in the County, despite the temporary adoption of the SEP in 2009-10. The hegemonic developmental frame is reinforced by an institutional context in which the Labour-led City Council is surrounded by four district councils and a County Council substantially opposed to city expansion and largely dominated by Conservative Party leadership. The outcome, perhaps unsurprisingly, is a local planning environment characterised by a palpable sense of tension and political strain regarding the potential expansion of the city, a situation often reflected in the local press. A corollary is the limited sense of any serious and convincing engagement with the housing affordability crisis that is clearly evident.

***South Hampshire – Reconciling with growth***

In contrast to the predominantly rural and resistant character of the Oxfordshire case, the county of Hampshire attracted industry and population throughout the 20th century, particularly from the rest of the South East region and Greater London. Large-scale development along the coastal conurbation based on Portsmouth and Southampton extended these established centres of defence and trade, while in north-east Hampshire the growth of London and of surrounding military establishments also prompted significant urban and suburban growth (Fairclough et al, 2002, p.74). Hampshire is large and disparate, however; in between these areas of established urban growth, Mid-Hampshire is a broad, largely rural band with areas of high agricultural and landscape value, while South-West Hampshire mainly comprises the New Forest, an area of unenclosed pasture, heathland and forest of international importance (subsequently designated as a national park in 2005).

From its foundations in the early 1950s, therefore, planning in Hampshire was based on a settlement hierarchy within a linked urban-rural support system (Harper, 1987, p.285), with

major expansion in the late 1950s and early 1960s channelled into existing residential zones. The scale and diversity of the County was, in turn, reflected in the development through the 1970s of four separate structure plans across the distinct areas, with concomitant commitments to growth and restraint (Brown and Barrett, 1982). Within this overall context growth management was the primary issue in the planning of South Hampshire as the County Council faced up to the reality of post-war employment growth and associated urban development along the coast, and the likelihood of further expansion. In terms of planning principles and underlying assumptions there is also a sense here of institutional obligation as the County grappled with uncertainty at the time over central government's policies for the South-East of England as a whole and the various roles Hampshire would play within this. This is reinforced by an ingrained attitude of conscientiousness intimated by Brown and Barrett (1982, p.200):

> Structure plans… for Hampshire have evolved from a complex and long history of deep-seated feelings of pride in the County's heritage, unrecognised economic growth, attempts at formulating a regional policy, studies of problems as they were seen to arise, and commitments which could not be evaded.

In this context the key developmental frame to emerge in South Hampshire underpins a remarkable degree of *consonance* across a large number of local authorities in what is a complex part of the country – in terms of urban, rural and suburban settings, county and city interests, disparate political standpoints, and a distinctive coastal topography. Despite the different complexions of the 12 local authorities across the PUSH area, a relatively strong measure of cooperation and joint working is an important continuity of the local planning environment, particularly amongst planning officers in the respective organisations. The development of this cooperative context may be traced through an extensive history.

Accommodating population growth and the associated planning for housing and employment in South Hampshire has, from the onset of post-war economic recovery, been framed locally as Hampshire 'doing its bit' for the nation. A strong measure of coordination and cooperation across South Hampshire authorities can be traced to at least the 1960s and the pressure local authorities in the area were then facing to accommodate significant population growth, including overspill from London. Proposals by central government in 1964 had suggested south Hampshire was suitable for a substantial new town north-east of Southampton at Horton Heath (MHLG, 1964) while a South Hampshire Study of 1966 by Colin Buchanan and Partners suggested rather more growth could be accommodated if the sub-region were planned as a comprehensive whole (Colin Buchanan and Partners, 1966). The latter study in particular was felt to encourage too great a population increase, however, and a measure of cooperation was forged out of fending off these perceived excesses, as well as the threat to existing city and county authorities posed by a new town corporation or a single metropolitan authority (see Phelps 2012). Nevertheless, the population and employment growth that these proposals sought to accommodate were taken forward into the emerging structure planning process from the late 1960s onwards. In fact so strong were the growth pressures at that time that interim land allocations were hastily brought forward in two slim 'South Hampshire Interim Planning Policy' (SHIPP) documents in 1970 ahead of the structure plan which was not adopted until 1977. These SHIPP documents (and indeed the structure plan that was to follow) were predominantly technical responses, reflecting conditions such as existing sewerage capacity across the sub-region, for example. However, as key planning artefacts they reflect a pragmatic orientation towards growth, making provision for a characteristic sprawling suburban housing stock which itself became a factor fuelling further development in the sub-region.

Focus group discussions suggested that the prevailing ethos of cooperation on strategic planning established through the 1970s also generated a greater level of spatial detail in land allocations

and associated housing numbers than was typically the case in other county authorities. This procedure has persisted under the PUSH banner from 2003-4 as local authorities came together to plan for housing and employment growth under the South East Plan process up to 2010. Indeed, despite the subsequent revocation of regional plans in 2010 the broad contours of the initial growth agenda mapped out by PUSH remained in place, and were then reconfirmed in a subsequent update. They have also acted as a benchmark for demonstrating present requirements under a new 'duty to cooperate' introduced in 2011 to support inter-authority working after the demise of the regional planning arrangements. As in the 1960s, one of the main forces prompting this measure of cooperation amongst both officers and elected representatives was the desire to pre-empt any central government attempt to dictate housing numbers or the format of provision.

'Doing our bit' as a developmental frame contained contradictions however, as witnessed throughout the period. The growth targets carried forward from the 1960s into the structure planning years brought something of an anti-growth backlash, eroding the status and regard for planners and planning among elected politicians, civic and environmental groups and to some extent the public. This could be traced to the level of population and employment growth catered to, and the top-down planning approach of the structure planning years. Subsequently, this sentiment has persisted among political leaders across the PUSH authorities, prompting an underlying sense of unease among several local authority members of PUSH and a sense of fragility to the whole enterprise. While the traditional desire for South Hampshire to 'do its bit' resurfaced under PUSH there was also some reluctance on the part of the authorities involved to plan positively for population and employment growth in the sub-region. Notwithstanding the highly commendable performance of individual authorities in preparing plans quickly in the PUSH era, the approach across South Hampshire as a whole was described in one focus group as 'walking as slowly as possible towards growth' (former Senior Planning Officer, South Hampshire Focus Group, 18 March 2015).

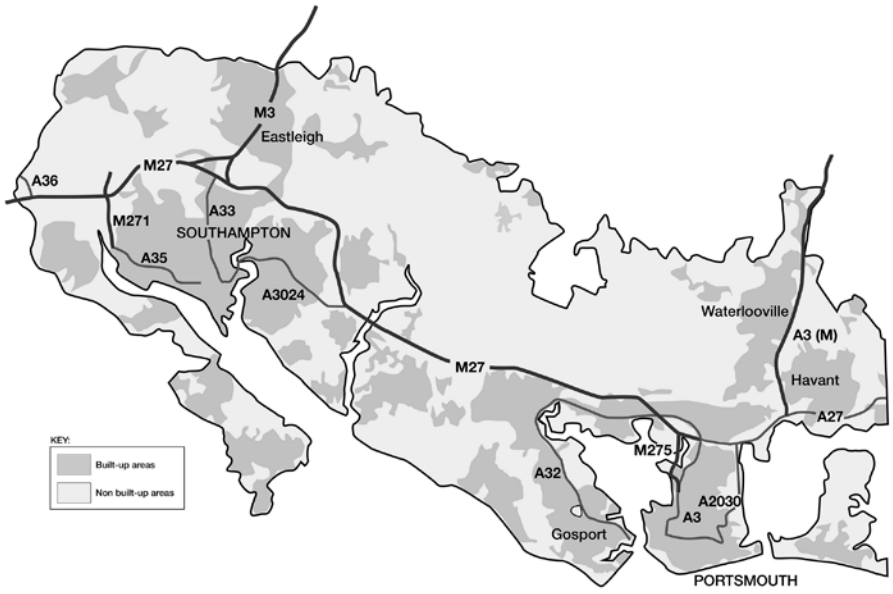
Beyond the generalities of coordination among local authorities there are strong continuities in the development frame regarding the form and location of housing and employment development. The approach here was from the start forged in the expediency of urgent allocations of land for housing and employment by the end of the 1960s in the SHIPP1 and SHIPP2 documents. These were little more than lists of the location and scale of sites allocated for housing and employment uses, and represented rather ad-hoc allocations, subsequently rationalised in the 1977 Structure Plan as a 'growth sector' strategy. The preferred strategy avoided a single new town (already effectively discounted some time earlier) but also was not directed to the idea of concentrating development in the existing cities of Portsmouth and Southampton or even a mixture of extensions to the cities and other existing urban centres. The SHIPP documents and their rationalisation under the structure plan have since established significant legacies for planning policy across the sub-region and for some of the local authorities, in a number of senses.

First, at the sub-regional level, the growth sectors typically involved housing land allocations for 10-20,000 population located adjacent to junctions along the M27/M3 and A3(M) motorways built during the 1970s. This distinctive inter-urban pattern has promoted commuting across the sub-region and has undermined the employment and skills bases of the urban cores. It also underpinned a major dispersal of retail activities as planning controls were relaxed during the 1980s and 1990s, further damaging the retail offer of the two cities and also smaller towns such as Eastleigh.

Second, the various allocations have come on and off the planning agenda as growth pressures have waxed and waned and as political expediency dictated in relation to popular anti-growth sentiments. Additional uncertainty in the form of long-term resistance from significant

landowners in at least two of the growth sectors and the unpredictable release of ‘windfall’ (notably Ministry of Defence) sites has meant that many of these growth sectors have not been planned as coherently as they might have been, lacking positive planning for development and integration with existing settlements. This has persisted through a number of growth sectors, most recently at 'Welborne', a new strategic development area of 6000 houses and associated uses to the north of Fareham, proposed as part of PUSH’s spatial plans. The intention has been to plan Welborne as a new, if rather undefined, kind of community with a measure of self-containment. Yet in other respects Welborne seems little different to the growth sectors approach of the structure plan era. Indeed, the planning of Welborne presents a microcosm of a familiar South Hampshire-wide reluctance to plan as positively as possible for growth. Despite the desire to create a new type of settlement, many of the same concerns regarding the experience of growth sectors along the M27 are raised, including: its ability to deliver the relevant local infrastructure; its likely lack of self-containment; its further impact on the economic and social wellbeing of the two cities; and a politics of local gaps being fought for example between the planned Welborne and a neighbouring historic village (Wickham).

Figure 3: Context map of South Hampshire illustrating strategic gaps (Based on Hampshire County Council, LTP3, 2011



Third, here, are local and strategic gaps policies which have formed an entrenched and largely unquestioned part of the planning culture in South Hampshire (see Figure 3 for illustration). A Hampshire greenbelt was proposed in the 1960s but never materialised as events were overtaken by central government's desire for the area to accommodate population and employment growth. As a result, strategic local and gaps policies emerged under the structure planning era as a reaction to the political effects of the growth already accommodated in South Hampshire by the 1980s. Though the more recent designation of the New Forest and South Downs National Parks (respectively in 2005 and 2010) has fulfilled much of the original intention of 'bounding' urban South Hampshire originally proposed in the greenbelt, the strategic and local gaps policies gained significant weight in the local planning imagination and have been serially re-emphasised, as a focus group attendee explained:

> 'We as planners think we have got to stop villages, towns and cities merging into one another. Now whether by accident you were lucky enough to get a greenbelt which is now completely a sacred cow, or if you weren't lucky enough to get a sacred cow you have got to invent something that imitates it – which is a green gap or wedge or whatever. Green gaps came along to fulfil exactly the same function, in the politicians' and the planners' mind, as greenbelts did. Yet again it is emerging through the new south Hampshire strategy, people are saying if we are going to take significant growth … we have got to have green gaps, green wedges to prevent the formal coalescence between towns (Planning Officer, South Hampshire Focus Group, 18 March 2015)

The comment here is striking for the parallels with the 1960s situation. Indeed, the initial studies by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Colin Buchanan and Partners present

notable similarities with regard to the current situation, underlining the continuities apparent in planning culture at sub-regional level.

***Gatwick-Diamond – Searching for Cohesion***

Policy framing in the Gatwick Diamond reflects the fact that its core locations stand out from the remainder of the area. In this local planning environment Gatwick Airport and Crawley new-town have been the twin engines of economic and housing growth throughout the post-war era. Both of these have been the result of national planning decisions, with their own particular development processes and logics, and therefore significantly detached from local planning principles and values.

Crawley was designated a new town in 1947, one of eight original post-war new towns around London.[3] A development corporation was appointed to take on the planning and construction of the town, with plans and activities subject only to ministerial approval. By 1962 the town had achieved its original target population of 60,000 located across nine distinct neighbourhoods, and the assets of the development corporation were handed over to the incoming Commission for the New Towns. Crawley continued to grow rapidly, however, rising to a current population of nearly 110,000 and 13 residential neighbourhoods across a significantly expanded land area, making it the largest inland town in West Sussex.

Alongside the external management of the town, certain other characteristics reinforced the distinctiveness of Crawley. Firstly, in line with the general approach of New Towns it was conceived as a self-contained community with a balance of jobs and housing, and notably an industrial culture. The industries would be mainly situated on a separate site known originally as the 'Industrial Area', detached from residential neighbourhoods but with ready access. Secondly, the residential areas would be predominantly for people moving out of substandard housing in

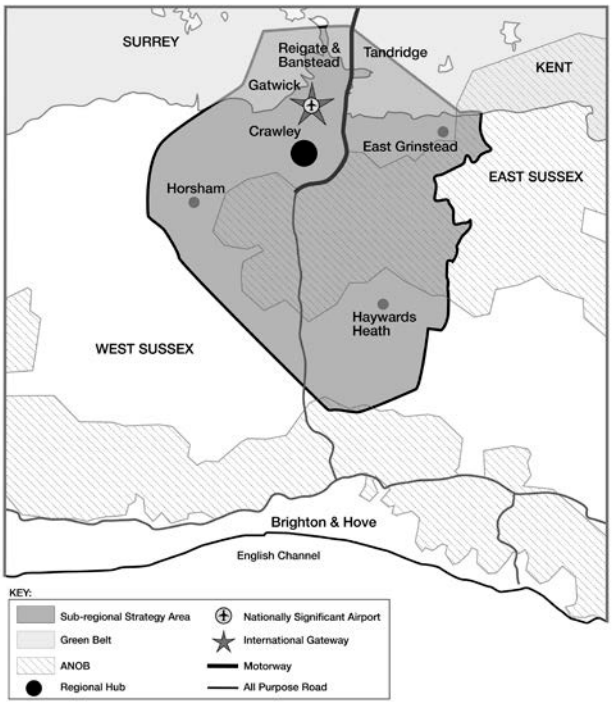
London. The Corporation succeeded in this aim; by 1966, when the population was about 60,000, 73% of residents had moved from the city in the preceding 20 years. The main qualification for a Crawley Development Corporation house was proof of employment in Crawley, so the Corporation's provision of housing was closely linked with its early and rapid development of what became the Manor Royal industrial estate. As a result local people who had longstanding links with the Crawley area were disappointed with the Corporation's inability to build houses for them, a problem which continued throughout the Corporation's existence. Thirdly, as a new town planned to accommodate people relocating from the congested areas of South London, Crawley had a very distinct demographic profile and pattern of social development, marking it out from the surrounding village areas. In various ways, therefore, Crawley is characterised by patterns of local development and local social relations which differ from other localities within the sub-region.

Turning to Gatwick, the decisions to develop Gatwick Airport as initially a bad weather alternate to Heathrow and subsequently as a second main civil airport for London were taken by the Cabinet in the early 1950s (Sewill, 2012). However, “the political history of Gatwick, especially in the decade after the war, provides a fascinating study in uncertainty” (King and Tait, 1980). It operated initially with a single main runway and a single terminal, but came under increasing growth pressures in the 1960s and 1970s not least because of the difficulties of locating a third London airport. The original (now South) terminal was subsequently improved and expanded, and the British Airports Authority (BAA) sought permission for a new North Terminal from 1979. The expansion of the airport had generated considerable local opposition, however, and West Sussex County Council sought assurances from BAA that it would not pursue a second runway. A legal agreement was then signed by BAA on 14th August 1979 that prohibited any new runway for 40 years.

The inter-relationship between Gatwick and Crawley has been an integral aspect of the developmental frame in the sub-region. A Crawley Borough Council guide stated, for example: 'Maintaining the balance between a successful independent town and the world's second busiest airport has been fundamental to the mutual success of both centres. A large part of the reason for that success has been Gatwick's reputation as "the airport in the County" (Crawley Borough Council, n.d.) emphasising its local role. The South East Plan (SEERA, 2009) noted the primacy of Gatwick Airport in the sub-regional economy, stating that:

> Gatwick Airport is the single most important element of the area's economy and is of significant economic importance to the Region as a whole. The airport has helped to foster clusters of employment in the chemicals and pharmaceutical industries, in financial services and there are a number of aviation-related industries in Crawley (Paragraph 24.1)

Figure 4: Policy for the Gatwick Sub-regional Strategy Area (Derived from The South East Plan, SEERA, 2009)



Yet the distinctiveness of the airport from the surrounding area is also apparent. Brian Sewill, a well-known critic of Gatwick expansion, highlights, for example:

> Because Surrey [County Council] and Mole Valley [District Council] have applied ultra-strict planning policies, Gatwick is still bordered by open countryside on its northern and western sides. Unlike Heathrow, the airport has not become surrounded by warehouses, factories, hotels and other airport tat (Sewill, 2012, p.37)

This sits in fascinating contrast with the response of Crawley, however, which reflected its very different historical position and political perspective:

> As a Labour-dominated New Town, Crawley was in favour of airport expansion, wanted more industry, had little care for the countryside or for preserving the heritage, and was already casting covetous eyes on the green fields around the airport for future housing sites (Sewill, 2012, p.36)

Additionally, Policy GAT1 of the South East Plan (SEERA, 2009), setting the core strategy for the Gatwick sub-regional strategy area, was directed towards "maximising the potential for sustainable economic growth in the sub-region while maintaining and enhancing its character, distinctiveness, sense of place and important features." Four objectives were outlined, which clearly reflect the relative position of Crawley-Gatwick within the broader context of the Gatwick Diamond:

> i. sustaining and enhancing the pivotal role played by Crawley-Gatwick in the sub-regional and wider economy

ii. recognising and sustaining the sub-region's interrelationships with London and the South Coast and the international gateway role of Gatwick Airport

iii. protecting and enhancing the sub-region's distinctive environmental assets, in particular the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

iv. maintaining the broad extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt within the sub-region.

The patchwork character of the local planning environment is thus associated with diverse planning policy responses within an overall developmental frame. Indeed, in combination with significant differences of complexion among urban, suburban and rural local authorities, and combining 2 county councils, it is not wholly surprising that the Gatwick Diamond was seen by some of our respondents as an artificial construct. There is clear recognition that the sub-region contains a mix of different local authorities that contribute to sub-regional spatial planning efforts to different degrees and in different ways. As one focus group attendee highlighted:

> I think on the part of the GD grouping there has been an acceptance that Gatwick Airport and Crawley can provide the focus for economic activity – they are the drivers. And also that different parts of the GD will provide different functions. … As officers we certainly accepted that there are parts of the GD that provide an attractive environment for managers and the like who might want to run a business in Crawley but live somewhere with a very high quality of life and a very high standard of living. There is an acceptance that we don't all have to be the same, even though we are all operating within the 'diamond'. (Senior Planning Officer, Gatwick Diamond Focus Group 15 April 2018)

Certainly, the apparent predisposition in favour of growth reflects sentiment in those parts of the sub-region which have been the least constrained and most accessible areas and remain the logical locations for larger housing and employment land allocations. Additionally, the town of

Horsham has had historically an entrepreneurial style of urban planning dating back to the early 1900s which was reignited by a local economic slowdown in the 1980s and has since accommodated significant new housing development and business relocations. Beyond these central areas, however, there is a significant culture of constraint in surrounding rural authorities, not dissimilar to our other case study areas:

> There is a culture in this area that these are very constrained places. They are very rural districts on the whole, albeit with some market towns and other towns that have potential for growth, but on the whole the initial knee-jerk reaction you get is 'thanks, but no thanks'. There is a lot of historical constraint here, like the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the National Park and the greenbelt. In my view they have purpose, but that purpose never really seems to be reviewed very often. We also have the Ashdown Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest etc etc… my experience is that that's the kind of culture – they are very rural places (former Senior Planner, Gatwick Diamond Focus Group 15 April 2018)

However, one consequence of accepting such differentiation across the sub-region has been an historical lack of coordinated planning at the sub-regional scale. Indeed, the presence of a new town in the area which has provided for an orderly accommodation of much of the population increase over time has effectively obviated long-term planning discussion among neighbouring authorities regarding how to accommodate growth. Additionally, there has been tension between the growth-oriented areas and the more rural districts which perceive the challenges of growth in very different ways. In broad terms, therefore, the Gatwick Diamond as a sub-regional planning entity has had to grapple with historical and political conditions which do not lend a natural harmony to the area and which do not provide a foundation for coordinated planning. Latterly this patchwork developmental frame has been reinforced by the shift to localism under the

Coalition Government in May 2010 with the abolition of the South East Plan and its detailed housing commitments for the area . The outcome is a reassertion of local distinctiveness and priorities set against uneven progress on local plans amongst local planning authorities, thereby reinforcing the fragmentary nature of planning across the Gatwick Diamond.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Reading across the three cases presented here demonstrates the influence of long established local planning cultures on current planning and development policy. In Oxfordshire the historic separation between urban and 'closed' rural areas was a formative influence on the landscape, underpinning the designation of the Oxford greenbelt and other protected areas. It was also effectively written into the Oxfordshire structure plan, a key planning artefact directing growth away from Oxford city towards more distant 'country towns'. The resulting local planning environment has been the foundation for ongoing conflict over the expansion of the city, with contradictory development frames reinforcing a form of urban political dissonance. In south Hampshire the response to economic and housing growth has historically been more accommodating, albeit at times with some reluctance, and directed towards a sprawling, suburban development form which has presented subsequent challenges. A culture of acquiescence and collaborative working has emerged around a persistent development frame accepting growth and new settlements, but also emphasising the importance of green spaces in between. This established format is reflected in contemporary major development schemes, which in turn reflect some familiar shortcomings. Finally, in the Gatwick Diamond area the initial central state commitments around new towns development in the 1940s and airport development in the 1950s established the Crawley-Gatwick nexus which decades later remains central to sub-regional development ambitions. While growth is consistently directed towards this central area, however, the overall development frame effectively reflects the separateness of

the core, reinforcing the patchwork character of the sub-region and the lack of coordination and cohesion in planning at sub-regional scale.

These respective assessments of development frames and local planning cultures are broad characterisations, clearly abstracting from the complexities and day-to-day detail of planning activity. Yet over the longer-term they exert significant influence on the development of spatial strategies and associated economic and housing development. Indeed, as we have seen, local planning cultures and the legacies of previous planning policies and decisions can be highly instrumental in setting the context for contemporary debates, in particular through a process of 'framing' as respective actors emphasise particular policy matters and interpretations of events, against an evolving background of constraints and opportunities. Such frames may be the source of significant rigidities in understandings of spatial planning challenges and accompanying imaginaries, policies and practices when set against planning theory's calls for new, looser, 'collaborative', 'deliberative' and 'communicative' practices and spatial imaginaries (Phelps and Valler, 2018). At a theoretical level then there is a need to take more seriously the notion of local planning cultures and how these inhere in long-standing policies or understandings related to particular sites and planning materials. The current paper offers some limited examination of this in selected cases, though further research could certainly consider the conditions under which developmental frames endure or are disrupted, and associated patterns of action on the part of planning practitioners and local politicians. There are clear links to be made here with an historical institutionalist emphasis on issues of *inter alia* path dependency, critical junctures of institutional formation, processes of incremental institutional change, and patterns of co-evolution among institutions (Sorensen, 2018, p.23), though interestingly, in parallel to discussions of planning culture, historical institutionalist approaches in political science have also tended to focus on national policy arenas. Thus there is significant potential amongst these

related standpoints to inform further research at urban and sub-regional scales and to focus on associated processes of structuration.

With regard to practical implications, the experiences presented in this paper suggest that breaking out of established planning policy frames in places means appealing to new spatial imaginaries and broader constituencies, rather than focusing more heavily on process-oriented and fragmentary planning reform. As Julie-Anne Boudreau (2007) describes in examining the creation of Toronto as a competitive global city-region, for example, the strategic production of new political spaces "depends on the mobilization of existing spatial imaginaries and the creation of new ones that resonate with residents and users of the city-region" (2007, p.2597). This in turn implies altering "deeply held beliefs, fantasies, and desires in the long term". Yet as our research illuminates, achieving these sorts of shifts presents really significant challenges, and there are powerful tendencies towards incrementalism and sclerosis once local planning environments are established. Indeed, the headwinds faced by, for example, future city-regional growth around Oxford, integrated post-suburban development in south Hampshire and infrastructure-led expansion in the Gatwick Diamond begin to indicate the scale of such a task. In this context questions of territory, scale, governance, political mobilization and leadership come to the fore in the search for new planning imaginaries.

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[1] Section 3 incorporates an abridged and substantially adapted version of the Oxford-Oxfordshire case presented in more detail in (*reference removed*)

[2] The structure and local plan system was introduced in the early 1970s, with a formal requirement for district wide local plans from 1991. In 'shire' (non-metropolitan) counties the development plan consisted of the county structure plan together with district-wide local plans (and local plans for minerals and waste, either separately or combined)

[3] The others were: Basildon, Bracknell, Harlow, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, Stevenage, and Welwyn Garden City