Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) – supplementary written evidence (NER0085)

Introduction
The TCPA welcomes this opportunity to follow up our answers given orally to the Select Committee on Tuesday 7th November, in the form of a brief synopsis of our evidence related to the main issues raised.

Natural England
Although NE`s statutory role in providing advice to public bodies remains intact, its capacity to provide this has been reduced in recent years and anecdotal evidence suggests that local planning authorities, including national parks and AONB committees, have found it increasingly difficult to obtain much of such advice. This is primarily a resource issue but the weakness of the legal duty contained in the 2006 Act means that other public bodies and particularly planning authorities have, on the whole, ignored it. The duty itself does not feature in testing of plans and rarely in as factor in the determination of planning applications.

Furthermore, the demise of strategic planning with the closure of Regional Assemblies, Govt Offices for the Regions, and Regional Development Agencies has meant that there has been no structured liaison at this level. Given that Regional Strategies undertook substantial work on environmental issues, including climate change and bio-diversity, this is a major setback.

Although Local Plans have remained intact to date as core development plans, their ability to take on complex issues surrounding conservation, landscape, biodiversity, eco-services and climate change have also been severely undermined by firstly, the limited interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework, viz although the latter includes the wider environmental issues mentioned above, it fails to develop any profound meaning or guidance on `sustainable development` and focuses strongly on providing sufficient locations for housing development to meet calculated needs; and secondly, the severe depletion of planning staff in local authorities, which constrains their ability to undertake anything more than what they perceive as the highest priority tasks. The TCPA is currently conducting an end to end review of English planning and we attach as Annex 1 a summary of the initial findings.

Natural Capital
The concept of Natural Capital as an asset to be considered alongside other types of capital, such as economic and social capital, is welcome. But measuring such capital is fraught with difficulties. Who measures it, and on what basis? There is a danger that such measurements can too easily be `traded off` against measurements of other assets, such as economic gains. An asset that `experts` might value poorly, such as a scrubby piece of land near a housing estate, might be highly valued by local residents. We believe that natural capital can be a valuable part of assessing values but cannot be deployed without effective community participation to allow for expression of complex relationship people have with places and landscapes.
Rural Housing
Affordable rural housing has been provided through two main policy mechanisms in England:

1) Rural Exception Sites: this has been a successful, albeit slow and painstaking, method of delivering affordable homes on cheaper sites not allocated for housing. Recently the principle of including a small number of houses for sale, in order to make the development financially viable through an element of cross-subsidy (and for that reason only) has also been accepted, largely in response to Government reductions in social housing grants and social rent. However, exception sites depend on a firm settlement boundary, outside of which land would not normally be allocated for housing, and are not always compatible with Neighbourhood Plans, which may seek to identify sites for affordable housing more directly, sometimes by setting up community land trusts or similar community-led plans. Fundamentally, they undermine the principles of a development plan–led planning system. However, there is no doubt that they have made a major contribution to meeting local affordable housing needs in many English villages.

2) Section 106 is the other main route for delivering affordable housing, usually through a Local Plan policy that requires a certain percentage of affordable homes in the proposed development (normally in the order of 30-40%). This has also been a very successful method of delivering affordable homes, with housing associations playing a major part. However, the recent decision to exclude schemes with less than 10 units from S106 requirements has been a major blow for rural schemes, which typically are in that size bracket. Fortunately, strong lobbying from the rural housing community has managed to allow some negotiations (usually involving commuted sums rather than actual homes) in certain areas such National Parks, AONBs, and Neighbourhood Plan areas. Nevertheless, the policy to exclude schemes with less than 10 units reveals a blatant disregard for rural circumstances, a gross failure of ‘rural proofing’. Whether that failure is attributable to ignorance or the over-riding priority given to support the financial viability of housebuilders is a matter of conjecture.

The delivery of affordable rural housing has also been seriously undermined by further extensions to the Right to Buy. Fortunately, strong lobbying again has managed to secure a voluntary role for housing associations, such that they can choose whether or not they apply the Right to Buy to rural schemes. Nevertheless, the failure to ‘rural proof’ such policies is starkly evident.

The Commission for Rural Communities
The Commission for Rural Communities undertook a wide range of research on social and economic rural issues, and provided high quality information an analysis, notably via the annual State of the Countryside reports. It also advocated the needs and concerns of rural communities, transparently through the role of the Rural Advocate (CRC Chairman Dr Stuart Burgess) and made recommendations on rural policy. Some of these recommendations influenced policy at national and/or local levels, for example encouraging local authorities to apply Council Tax to second homes. However, it has also to be said that influencing policy across the board was not wholly successful, and that ‘rural proofing’, which the CRC did
much to define and develop, was never fully adopted across the Departments of Government. That said, the CRC provide a real ‘rural presence’, and since its demise, and the demise of its ‘successor’, the Rural Communities Policy Unit in Defra, the housing examples indicated above show that even less account of rural needs appear to be taken by government, despite the sterling efforts of independent but thinly resourced ‘rural voices’ such as the Rural Coalition and Rural England Stakeholders.

Rural Governance

Given the failure of government to take rural needs into account with any consistency or rigour, what changes might be made to improve this state of affairs in the future? From a rural policy viewpoint – embracing social, economic and environmental issues – our view is that effective rural proofing across all Departments of Government based on high quality information and evidence must be the primary aim of any reforms of governance.

To date the rural proofing duty has rested with Defra, and it has manifestly failed over many years. Arguably, the ‘Rural Affairs’ part of Defra, added on to its roles as part of a political deal, has never really developed fully. Given Defra’s major responsibilities for farming and the environment, and the serious crises such as BSE and FMD that it has had to deal with, together with the forthcoming implications of BREXIT, it could also be argued that it is not best placed to deal with wider rural policy issues such as housing, planning and service delivery, which relate more closely to other Departments, notably DCLG.

In our view there are 3 key functions that are required to ensure that rural proofing works:

1) The formulation of national rural policy, linked to wider national policies on the economy, society and the environment
2) The availability of high quality information and analysis, independently sourced.
3) The capability of all public bodies to take account of the rural implications arising from the policies and decisions that they develop

One way of achieving this would be to create a governmental Rural Policy Unit (either separately or placed within the Cabinet Office or a lead Dept such as DCLG) charged with:

1) developing national rural policy in the context of wider strategic policies on the Economy, Environment, Climate Change, Spatial Planning
2) ensuring that all Government Departments take fully into account the rural implications of policies and decisions being formulated ie they undertake ‘rural proofing’.
3) drawing information and evidence from an independent body (such as the CRC) or bodies charged with providing rural information and analysis, and responding to specific requests for information from public bodies (central and local).

An alternative model might be the creation of an independent rural body charged with developing rural policy and advising government, perhaps on the lines of the Committee on Climate Change or the Monetary Policy Committee. Such a body would still need to draw from the best independent evidence, and have the powers to monitor and enforce rural proofing.

Whichever national model is developed, it is our view that the delivery of rural policy is best placed at a sub-national level, given the finely tuned diversity of rural England, and
preferably at a coherent strategic level of planning based on rational geographical territories rooted in the environment (including landscape, watersheds etc) and on socio-economic patterns of activity. However, given that no such rational territories appear likely in the foreseeable future, it will be necessary to draw upon the highest levels of collaboration within and between the existing and developing jigsaw of sub-national bodies such as city regions, LEPs, and combined local authorities.

But to achieve the above will also call for reforms to the planning system. There is an urgent need for a national spatial policy (see 1 above) and the kind of strategic planning indicated in the paragraph above. At the local level, Neighbourhood Plans and Community Plans have demonstrated the potential to take on many rural and environmental issues, although the impending demise of Local Plans raises huge questions about who and how their current functions will be taken on. Many of these issues are being studied within the current TCPA Raynsford Review, on which a separate paper is attached.

**Conclusion**

One might be forgiven for assuming that `rural proofing` is something that government would do as a matter of course, given that 20% or so of the nation’s population live in rural areas, which occupy 80% or so of the nation’s land. The fact that there is no evidence that Government considers rural issues systematically and that there is neither a rural nor urban policy in England is a barrier to dealing with multiple challenges facing the nation. A statutory duty on Government related to those established for climate change would be a key part in changing this culture by creating an independent body which reports to parliament. What flows from this obligation would be a body capable of providing independent analysis and policy advice and oversight on the degree to which government policy is considering the rural dimension.
Introduction
This paper is designed to briefly summarise the policy progress of the review team at the end of the first six months of our work. The paper is focused on the emerging headline issues from the roundtables and submissions as well as from the secretariat’s research work reflected in the background papers. The objective of the paper is to guide the priorities of the review team and to stimulate debate about some of the difficult policy and legal issues which are emerging from our engagement strategy. The paper is intended for internal use only to enable a frank expression of some the issues the review team will need to confront. It is, of course, far too early to draw any firm conclusions from the existing submissions but there are two major issues which confront us. The first relates to the nature of the evidence we have been given and the second to the complexity of the policy and legal dilemmas which emerge from the that evidence.

1 The Evidence so far
One important caveat about the nature of the ‘conversations’ surrounding the roundtable events is the clear gap between what stakeholders will say publicly and what they care to tell us informally and off the record. For example, interviews with public sector planners reinforce a desire not to be seen to talk down planning in their own authority and so not to express their private conclusions about how challenging planning practice is. Likewise, some developers have publicly reflected on the value of plan led system while they recognised privately that land speculation ‘off plan’ has been a highly lucrative part of their business model. The danger for the review team is that there is a lack of quality and impartial evidence on many of these issues and as result a risk that we become mired in competing waves of what is essentially hearsay based on the understandable corporate priorities of the differing sectors.

2 The key policy issues
The nature of the evidence we have seen so far including the policy reviews contained in the background papers is complex and diverse but in general is marked by profound disagreement between land owners, developers, NGO’s, professional bodies, communities and Government about almost every aspect of the spatial planning system. So far as there is any agreement is surrounds shared criticism of the current state of planning practice. Ironically both communities and parts of the private sector are equally frustrated by uncertainty and confusion in the system. Often for very different reasons. The key areas of concern and disagreement surround:

1. The purpose and objectives of the system
2. The degree to which the current system is delivering on its objectives
3. How much power spatial planning should have. (Positive and negative)
4. How the balance of planning powers should be distributed between central and local government.
5. The right spatial structure for planning including Local government structure and boundaries.
6. The degree to which communities should have meaningful control over their own local environment and the nature of community rights.
7. The issues of betterment and fair Land Taxation

In addition to these principle policy questions there have been a range of other related issues consistently raised in the evidence:

- Concern about skills of planners and the content of planning education
- The poor morale of the planning service about confusion about the role of the town planner
- The widespread confusion about key policy and practice changes including, for example, the viability test, the legal weight of the development plan, the impact of devolution, the duty to cooperate, the significant change to status of green belt.
- The failure of planning to adequately ensure the coordination of a wider investment in a wider range of social, transport and utilities infrastructure
- The funding of the planning service

It is significant that the resourcing of the planning service to enable a positive and informed response to users was by far the most significant issue raised by private sector. Solving this problem would undoubtedly contribute more in the short term to the concerns around delivery than any other single measure.

One positive outcome of our work so far is that these issues fit well with our terms of reference suggesting that the review is broadly focused on the right issues. Less reassuring is the complexity and controversy which surround many of these problems. In some cases, they have remained unresolved for decades precisely because acceptable political solutions have been so hard to find. In this context, it is useful to briefly set out the dimensions of each of these 7 emerging policy themes.

1 The Purpose and Objectives of the planning system

There is broadly a division between those stakeholders who support a view of planning as being designed to uphold public interest outcomes with the objective of achieving sustainable development (SD)\(^1\) and those, including successive Governments since 2010, who see the objective of planning to support private sector housing delivery in support of the wider economic growth. Background paper 2 pointed out there has been much longer debate about the role of state in the land question and balance between private property rights and the public interest. However, it appears that in recent years that argument has been settled in favour of system focused on production of the quantum of housing by empowering private property interests and has largely ignored the many other dimensions of planning for place. Part of this change has been the assumption that the allocation of housing units for private sector providers equates directly with the public interest. (One participant concluded that the public and private interest are the same).

There is no doubt the overwhelming feedback from public sector planners was that SD was no longer an operational principle of planning and the allocation of housing was now often taking place on sites that were clearly judged to be unsustainable before the adoption of the NPPF. It may be obvious that SD is no longer important to planning decisions and indeed we can evidence the way the NPPF marginalised the idea as an operational principle. The

\(^1\) This view is best summarised a support the definition of planning expressed in PPS1 which was revoked by the NPPF in 2012
The degree to which unsustainable outcomes are being produced is harder to quantify without further detailed research.

The tension between a public interest system focused on SD and market led objectives for planning reinforces the current reality of a system whose purpose is, at best, confused. This problem is reinforced by the remnants of the wider public interest agenda in planning including mechanisms for assessment of SD. Neither has the legal duty to uphold SD in planning legislation had any mediating impact because it’s entirely based on a definition made in policy in the NPPF. In moving forward, the review team will need to consider:
- What the purpose of new planning system might be
- How that purpose can be given long term and meaningful expression
- How agreement could be reached on such a purpose so that clarity can brought to the practice of planning.

This brief summary leaves out the call from some respondents for a refocusing of much more positive and ‘people centred’ planning system. Since this is a TCPA objective care is need not to over emphasis the significance of this call. It is a view which tended to be expressed by some politicians, younger participants, some NGOs and by some community organisations. A further view which was significant in some conservation and amenity groups as well as some politicians was an essentially traditional and conservative model based on a notion of stewardship of the land framed by meeting local needs and emphasising broad pattern of continuity. There was some welcome agreement on the case for planning as rational tool for the coordination of public and private investment and in particular the role of plans in supporting asset values.

2 Is the current system ‘successful’?

The degree to which the current system is a success depends entirely the objective which it has been set. If we accept the government’s claim that the purpose of planning is to increases the allocation of housing units then the system is plainly delivering with 270,000 housing units granted in 2016 bringing the total to an estimated 500,000 and an unrecorded additional number of units allocated in adopted and draft local plans. Permissions alone are now running in advance of demographic need and have been since 2014. In fact, the government’s own test of ‘success’ is more nuanced, focusing on homes completed and here the record is less impressive. In 2015/16 139,000 new homes were built. By adding the number created by conversion the figure reached a total 190,000 housing units completed. While quality and sustainability have not been policy priorities for government affordability has and here the record is extremely poor particularly on tenures such as social rent.

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2 Research for the LGA in January 2016 indicated there were 475,000 un implemented permissions. Our estimate crudely projects a conservative view that we adding around 0,000 to this figure every year (i.e. the gap between 270,000 consented and 160,000 completed.

3 The last research we can find was by the LGA in 2016 and estimated that there were 475,000 un implemented planning permission in 2016. Permissions continue to run in advance of completion by around 80,000 PA which suggest we should have exceeded 500,000 un implemented permissions BUT there remains dispute about the precise figure

4 They have to reach the level approved in w2008 under a very different planning system.

5 DCLG Live tables 209 and 120.
The Governments’ other indicators of success present a mixed picture. Neighbourhood planning must be judged as success in terms of the number of plans being prepared (2000 now under preparation). The preparation of local plans is also moving forward although the deadline for plan preparation of X the level of adopted post NPPF plans remains around 50%

Development management has been subject to review and reform and the performance on planning applications is impressive. For major housing schemes in 2005 66% were approved. In 16/17 that figure had increased to 80%. In 16/17 84% of major housing applications were agreed within the 13-week deadline or an agreed deadline with the applicant. Issues of delay and service quality are emerging strongly from applicants and the tension between speed and quality remains a shared concern across the sectors.

It is hard to conclude that the system is not producing enough consents or that planning consent is subject to a general problem of delay (although there is obviously frustration on individual schemes). However, it is also hard to conclude even when tested against the residualised policy ambitions of the NPPF that current system can be judged to be wholly ‘successful’. Given the level of intensive reform devoted to the system in the last 7 years the results on the overwhelming government priority of housing delivery are unimpressive. Reform has been intensive but also piecemeal adding to a sense which some respondents described as ‘bewilderment’ as to the overall objective of government. So far as there had been a narrative, respondents felt it was about getting planning ‘out of the way’. Some respondents felt this was quite right but others believed it added to general sense of demoralisation in planning practice. One emerging paradox about this reform is that while it deregulated some aspects of planning it has added a great deal of procedural complexity illustrated by the labyrinthine amendments of planning legislation and perhaps most obviously in complex new mechanisms such as Permission in Principle. There remains an important question about whether any of this new complexity has been worthwhile.

The adoption of broader test for the planning system based on the kinds of objectives reflected in traditional notions of spatial planning and sustainable development provides and even more challenging picture. The broad concern surrounds an abandonment of notions of holistic place making and respondents raised a range of concerns including:

- A lack of affordable and social housing
- The exclusion of communities from key planning decisions on housing and energy
- Private sector frustration with an ever-changing system and poor service
- Poor build and design quality
- Lack of sustainable transport infrastructure
- A lack basic social infrastructure
- Complex and regressive taxation measures through section 106 agreements and CiL

Our problem is that many of these alleged problems are not verified or quantified by any reliable research. So while its possible to identify a host of poor quality design outcomes we cannot be sure how significant these problems are or if the quality of delivery is significantly worse than it was before 2010.

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6 DCLG Live Table P120A
3 The powers of the existing system

There was a clear consensus that the planning system is significantly less powerful than it was in 2010 or indeed at any time since 1947. On this issue, there is clear evidence in terms of the changes to permitted development and the prior approval process. Care is needed not to describe these routes to consent as not requiring any form of permission. Prior approval does require a consent but the core issue is the fundamental limitation on the kinds of issues LPA are allowed to think about. As well as the tangible reduction in legal powers of the system there are other indicators of a system no longer functions as positive framework for decisions. The very high level of successful appeals for major housing is one signal, the related legal and policy weakness of the development plan is another. These issues were picked up in provocations paper 1 and while the majority of feedback from all sectors is that plans now carry less weight in relation to housing there was a view that a fully update plan meeting all the NPPF tests could still determine decisions. The problem is that achieving this position is extremely difficult so that in most places most of the time the plan is easily overturned.

It is significant that while other positive instruments of the planning system such as new towns powers which were designed to deal with rapid housing growth as still available, central government has, so far, made no attempt to use them.

There may also be dangers in focusing too much on the recent reduction in power of the existing system and ignoring longer term questions about the scope of the spatial planning system and the case for expansion of powers over land uses important to issues such as climate change and bio diversity. There remains a positive opportunity to reflect how a new spatial planning approach might engage with wider land use change.

4 The balance of power between central and local Government

It is perhaps inevitable that respondents from local government felt a strong sense of disempowerment in relation to many aspects of planning. The compliant about too much central government interference in detailed policy was particularly acute amongst local councillors. This is another issue defined by complexity and confusion. For example, central government has always had extensive reserve powers over local planning and differing administrations have chosen to exercise them more or less extensively. There is clear evidence in the content of policy that central government is exercising very tight control over some key planning issues such as energy and housing. The deadline and sanctions over local plan preparation is another indication of this trend. It seems likely that the current period reflects a high-water mark in this centralising tendency.

Because there has never been a clear constitutional settlement of powers between central and local government which is a feature of many other EU nations it hard to make a judgement about what the right balance of power should be. This problem is exacerbated because central government no longer plays a role in regional or national planning on key planning challenges such as housing delivery. In the absence of national programs for new towns for example, the full weight of delivery must fall upon local plans. In this context national government is also inevitably going to involve itself closely in the outcomes. Many of the current reforms are driven by central frustration at what ministers regard as the poor
performance of LPAs. The problem is that such involvement raises serious questions about point of local democracy and leads to tensions which are themselves a barrier to outcomes.

5 The English spatial planning framework

Background paper 2 made clear that the structure of the English planning system had been bound up with complex history of local government reform. Respondents suggested that the secretariat re-examine the Redcliffe-Maud report into local government in England published in 1969 which remains the last time Government sought a comprehensive reassessment of the principles and structures of local government. The conclusions of Redcliffe-Maud remain insightful particularly in relation to the number of planning authorities and the differing tiers of strategic and local plans. The implementation of the report would have meant, amongst many other things, a reduction in the number of planning authorities and greater fit between the administrative and functional geography of England. The reasons the report was not implement have been discussed at length many times but in retrospect it was the failure of Royal Commission to match their understanding of economic geography with grasp of political reality. Subsequent changes to local Government created the confused legacy we now have. The only serious attempt to deal with the strategic regional question came with proposals for elected English regions in 2004. The rejection of such an option in the North East ended the regional governance debate and while the reasons for the failure were complex the result was that administrative logic was defeated by the aspirations and loyalties of communities. We should of course recognise that the rest of UK has achieved a very great deal in relation to devolution and that London remains a powerful exemplar of regional government.

The core problem for the review team is that little of no progress can be made in developing sensible planning structure for England unless a parallel process of local government reform is undertaken. Powerful constituencies of interest, such as the District Councils, would need a compelling incentive to give up their planning powers to more rationale strategic bodies. The review team will need to create a ‘picture’ of how planning structures from national to neighbourhood might work and what kind of governance might give the political legitimacy.

6 The Power of local communities

One of the major challenges of the review is to reach out beyond the ‘insiders’ in the planning system to communities and individuals who are the ultimate consumers of the system. The feedback from the community sector so far has been very strong and mostly very negative about planning practice. So far this mainly from established groups who might be expected to have the resources to engage more effectivity. So far respondents have raised a variety of issues which they feel act as barriers to participation. These issues include:

- The power of developers to exploit the system
- Complex language and procedures
- The lack of support in responding to planning applications
- Anger at unequal rights and developers appealing decisions
- Confusion at why elected members can support them

7 Including the minority reports
• Difficulty in engaging with plan preparation processes and anger that consultation responses are not taken seriously
• Anger the neighbourhood plans can be overturned
• Anger at the ‘purchase of planning permission’ through section 106 agreements

All of these contribute to sense of grievance that planning does not reflect community needs. Some may stem from a lack of knowledge of what planning is trying achieve and this is most obvious in relation to green belt development but also relates to a disconnect between the values and practice of planning and the communities they serve.

There has been an intense debate during the roundtables about the merits of neighbourhood planning with conflicting views about whether this should form the core of the planning framework in England. On the whole the feedback was positive about the potential role of NPs but there are challenges and lessons which cannot be ignored including the legal relationship with other strategic plans and the lack of any requirements for NP’s to take responsibility for key measures on issues such as human health and climate resilience.

7 The collection of betterment values though fair land taxes.
The issue of land tax and betterment has featured in many of the engagement events both as a matter of principle and in relation to the opportunity to provide vital infrastructure. While there is tremendous policy ‘noise’ around the issue and a good deal of interest from government there is a yet no consensus about how land values might be captured. Of all the issues in front of the review the issue of land value capture is probably the most difficult because it directly impacts on the interests of land owners. There is now a separate and detailed provocation paper on these issues and this framed a useful seminar which revealed starkly differing views about how to proceed in a way which meets the requirements for transparency and progressive taxation outcomes.

Conclusion
Overall the review is making good progress but there are clear research gaps which need to be filled. These are particularly important in those areas where respondents have provided us with conflicting views. One positive view of the evidence we have had so far is that it confirms the need for change and the value of asking fundamental questions about what the system is meant to be for. Less reassuring is the complexity and controversy which surround many of these problems. In some cases, they have remained unresolved for decades precisely because acceptable political solutions have been so hard to find.

We are now moving from evidence gathering to analysis but we do need to begin to consider the broad scope of solutions we might want to consider in the interim report in April 2018. Here the dilemma is between the logical and politically acceptable. For example, no planning reform can take place without a final and lasting settlement to local government structures in England based on some relationship with functional geography. The current system is simply illogical and confused. The same might apply to betterment taxation and to clarifying the plan led system and host of other issues where there is no difficulty in finding technical solutions. But of course, all these solutions require a logic and rationality absent for our current debate on the future of England. There is inevitably a tendency to dwell on the negatives during this early stage of evidence gathering but over
the next few months we need to move rapidly to creative, logical and practical solutions to these problems.

**Policy questions emerging from the Terms of Reference**

To examine the performance of the English planning system in relation to the key challenges facing the nation. To identify key areas of underperformance and to offer positive recommendations for reform. Specifically, the review will:

Examine the objectives of the planning system in relation to delivering Sustainable Development in the long term public interest and reflect on how SD should be manifest in the key objectives in local and national policy. In particular, to examine how the application of the NPPF has affected the outcomes of the planning system and how effective changes can be made.

Examine the extent of the application of the land use planning system and case for comprehensive long term approach. In essence this reflects both the original question asked in 1947 and the RCEP reports of 2002 as to whether land use control should apply to all land uses. This is particularly relevant for flood risk. It would also pick up the widespread extension of PD rights which have significantly reduced the scope of planning.

To examine the structures of the planning system in relation to its application to the national, sub-regional, local and neighbourhood scales. This theme picks up the devolution and national planning debate a swell the case for a role for the News Towns legislation. The dilemma is defining a narrative and an effective relationship between the spatial scales.

To consider the appropriate governance structures of the system in relation to democratic accountability and citizen rights. (This now will be substantially dealt with the Labour review of People and Planning)

To consider how the substantial values which arise from land use regulation can be effectively captured and distributed in the public interest. This is the key betterment question and relates to section 106 and CIL and to the wider question of land value capture

To consider the key delivery issues which can aid effective implementation. This theme will include how the planning services can be resourced and the appropriate skills and expertise of planners and what this implies for planning education.

24 November 2017