

# Future Planning Research

*What does the spatial planning agenda need?*

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# Spatial planning – an idea whose time has come

- RTPI *New Vision* [2001] and Education Commission [2003]
- PPS1 [2005]
- *Strong and Prosperous Communities* [2006]
- Integrative; inclusive; outcomes-focused
- Complex and different
- Needs strong evidence base
- Analysis, speculative, normative



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# Who owns spatial planning?

- Not just the RTPI
- Not just the Planning Directorate of DCLG
- Not just the DCLG
- Not even the Treasury [go for it, Kate!]
- Not just the government
- ... a societal activity, a governance function



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# What sort of research?

- Evidence-based policy not policy-based evidence
- One standard of evidence and argument
- No distinction between 'pure' and 'applied'
- International and comparative
- If you want to prove something, hire a consultant



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# Research for whom?

- Massive disconnect between research and practice communities
- Not bridged by linear research-policy-practice route
- ... but practice needs to believe more that research does inform policy
- Practice community [public, private, voluntary] needs to be more involved in identifying research needs
- Practice community needs to be more involved in dissemination of research outcomes



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# Role of the RTPI?

- A profession with a degree of disciplinary autonomy
- So learned society responsibilities
- Need to play a large[r] role in identifying practice trends, practice needs pointing to research – and evidence availability
- ... and a large[r] role in dissemination
- ... and in bridging the academic-practice divide  
[Planning and Education Research Network]



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## So where next?

- This is really very simple ...
- ... if we can only frame the right questions
- But we can only frame the right questions ...
- ... if we all work together



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