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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Old planning and new governance: the changing nature of residential development

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Example citation: Field, M., Colenutt, B. and Cochrane, A. (2014) Old planning and new governance: the changing nature of residential development. Invited Presentation presented to: *Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2014: Sustainable Recovery? Rebalancing, Growth, and the Space Economy, Bloomsbury, London, 27-28 November 2014.*

Version: Presented version

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/7375/>



Old Planning and New Governance : the changing nature of residential development

Presentation to Regional Studies Association
Winter Conference 27 November 2014



Theme : Post-suburbia and the governance of metropolitan areas

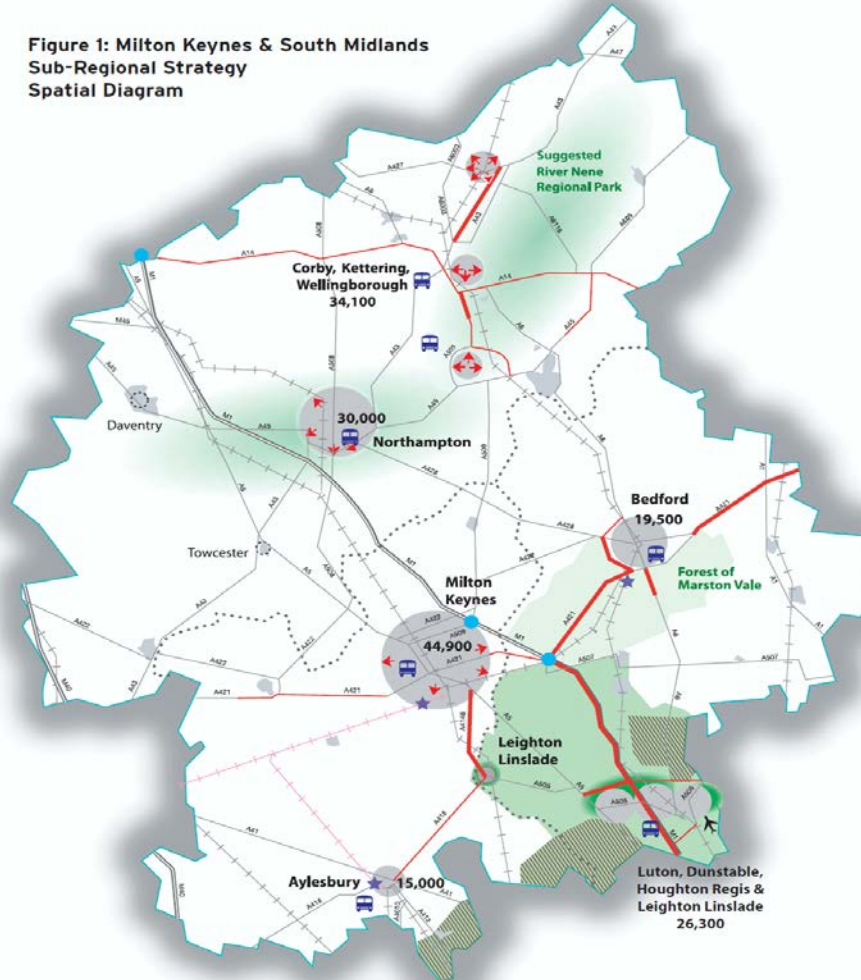
- Imperatives for new residential supply
- ESRC research findings
- Subverting 'contemporary' governance
- Will 'governance' deliver sustainability?

Imperatives for new residential supply

- Political will for wholesale 'step change'
- SCP challenge of 'growth' **and** sustainability
- Plans across the South-East and Central England
- Subsequent focus on *quantity* not quality....

Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area (2005) as context of ESRC research

Figure 1: Milton Keynes & South Midlands
Sub-Regional Strategy
Spatial Diagram



ESRC research findings

- The primacy of the private sector– no ‘Plan B’
- Inconsequential roles to public –private governance frameworks
- Monopolies of sites and rates of delivery
- No different models post-2008

The subversion of 'contemporary' governance

Intentions

Local Plans

Planning polices

Transparent Localism

Raised quality

Actualities

NPPF 5-year land targets

Financial Viabilities

Commercial confidentiality

Raised costs

Will 'governance' deliver sustainability?

- The exciting problem remains : what does it mean to deliver 'sustainable housing growth'?
- Where are the new ideas for the governance of the 'sustainable expansion' areas?
- How can private sector 'business models' be managed from the outside?



Concluding remarks

Submitted Abstract

Theme : Post-suburbia and governance of metropolitan areas

Title : “Old Planning and New Governance : the changing nature of residential development”

Proposed Abstract

The planning of ‘growth areas’ within metropolitan regions remains a constant focus of attention, at least in the UK, reflecting aspirations for creating enough new housing to accommodate a growing population, as well as being a spatial stimulus to assist wider economic recovery and consolidation. Recent UK governments of all political hues have supported calls for substantial new development to address ‘unmet’ housing need and to underpin a strong economy, although the key levers used to facilitate those ends have differed between political administrations. Since 2008 there has been a consistent political imperative to recharge the national economic batteries by whatever means, with a consequent readiness to focus on the *quantity* of new residential development ahead of its *quality*. In practice this has generated a significant challenge to any policy aspirations for such ‘growth’ areas to be ‘sustainable’ in both form and function, with a steady retreat into a position that endorses whatever the development sector will provide, in the context of a policy shift in which the notion of ‘sustainability’ is replaced with that of ‘viability’.

This paper draws from research into the evolution of plans to create significant new ‘sustainable’ residential development in the south-central sub-region of England and examines the ambiguous and uncertain ways in which attempts were made to translate original policy intentions to generate ‘sustainable communities’ into practice. It notes the stated Government ambitions to manage a wholesale change in national and local housing provision, and explores attempts to foster a model of sub-regional governance that could oversee local ‘growth’, raising questions about the extent to which the model adopted was ill-equipped, naive or simply ill-conceived.

In particular the paper considers the role given to the private sector as the primary delivery agent of new residential growth, and the extent to which that sector’s effective control of new suburban and post-suburban development has resulted in original policy aspirations being displaced by business decisions barely informed by the quasi-public sector governance that had been put in place, and which since 2010 has been given added weight in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Issues of governance stretch beyond the development process and the paper finally considers what plans or principles are discernible for the governance of large new urban and metropolitan areas once they are built, and explores the extent of meaningful local ‘governance’ within the overall promotion of ‘sustainability’ and ‘localism’.



- Website :

<http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/tensionandprospects/>

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