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The forthcoming Planning White Paper: What can we expect?

Josef Cannon and Emma Dring

Please click [here](#) to access a recording of the webinar

What are we going to cover?



Josef Cannon

- Reforms
- Housing supply, delivery, demand



Emma Dring

- Moving towards zoning
- Design
- Impact of Covid-19



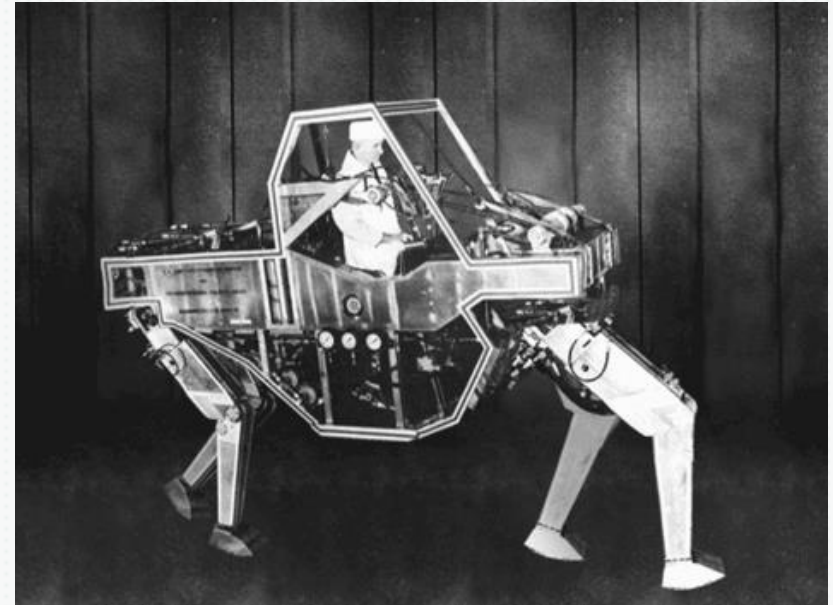
REFORM COMING?

The Context



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Planning for the Future

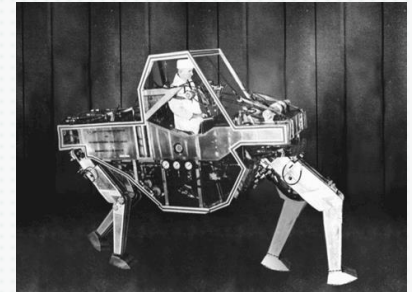


6. Technology, the way we work and live and our understanding of the value of the environment have been transformed since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The planning process has failed to keep pace. It is now complex, out-of-date and fails to deliver enough homes where they are needed. We will act to change this.

Improving the system



- ‘*Speed up the planning system*’:
 - New fees structure
 - ‘*ensure LPAs are properly resourced*’
 - Linked to performance framework



BUT...

Improving the system



BUT...

- Rebate of fees if success on appeal!



What about housing?



What about housing?



A: Increasing supply

B: Increasing delivery

C: Increasing demand



What about housing?



A: Increasing supply

B: Increasing delivery

C: Increasing demand



What about housing?



A: Increasing supply



- Promised review of Standard Method: a '*new approach*':
 - Greater building within and near urban areas
 - Ensure planning for 300k homes a year

What about housing?



A: Increasing supply



- Warm words for self-build and for the Ox-Cam Arc

What about housing?



A: Increasing supply



- New emphasis on brownfield land:
 - £400 million pledged
 - National Brownfield Map
 - Building above stations

What about housing?



“DENSIFY”



What about housing?



“DENSIFY”

- Building above stations
- Call for proposals
- New PD rights:
 - 2 new storeys on residential blocks
 - Delivering ‘new and bigger homes’
 - Demolish vacant blocks & build new residential schemes



What about housing?



A: Increasing supply

B: Increasing delivery

C: Increasing demand



What about housing?



B: Increasing delivery

- LAs to have up to date plan by 2023
 - ‘Intervention’ if not
- HDT: threshold to 75% by November 2020
 - If tilted balance, then already in TPs to NPPF
 - If re 20% buffer (unlikely), presently 85%

What about housing?



B: Increasing delivery

- New Homes Bonus reform
- Infrastructure delivery - £1.1billion for key schemes and £10billion fund
- “Wider options” re delivery:
 - **Ensure land for housing is built out** – we will act to make it clearer who owns land by requiring greater transparency on land options. We will explore wider options to encourage planning permissions to be built out more quickly.

What about housing?



A: Increasing supply

B: Increasing delivery

C: Increasing demand



What about housing?



C: Stoking demand

- First Homes scheme?

homes by a third, creating a new generation of homeowners. This will lower the cost of buying a home by an average of £70,000 for eligible first time buyers, improving the prospects for people who find the market unaffordable. The discount will be locked

- National Shared Ownership Scheme:

helped onto the housing ladder. Our new national model for shared ownership will be more consumer friendly, fairer and more accessible.



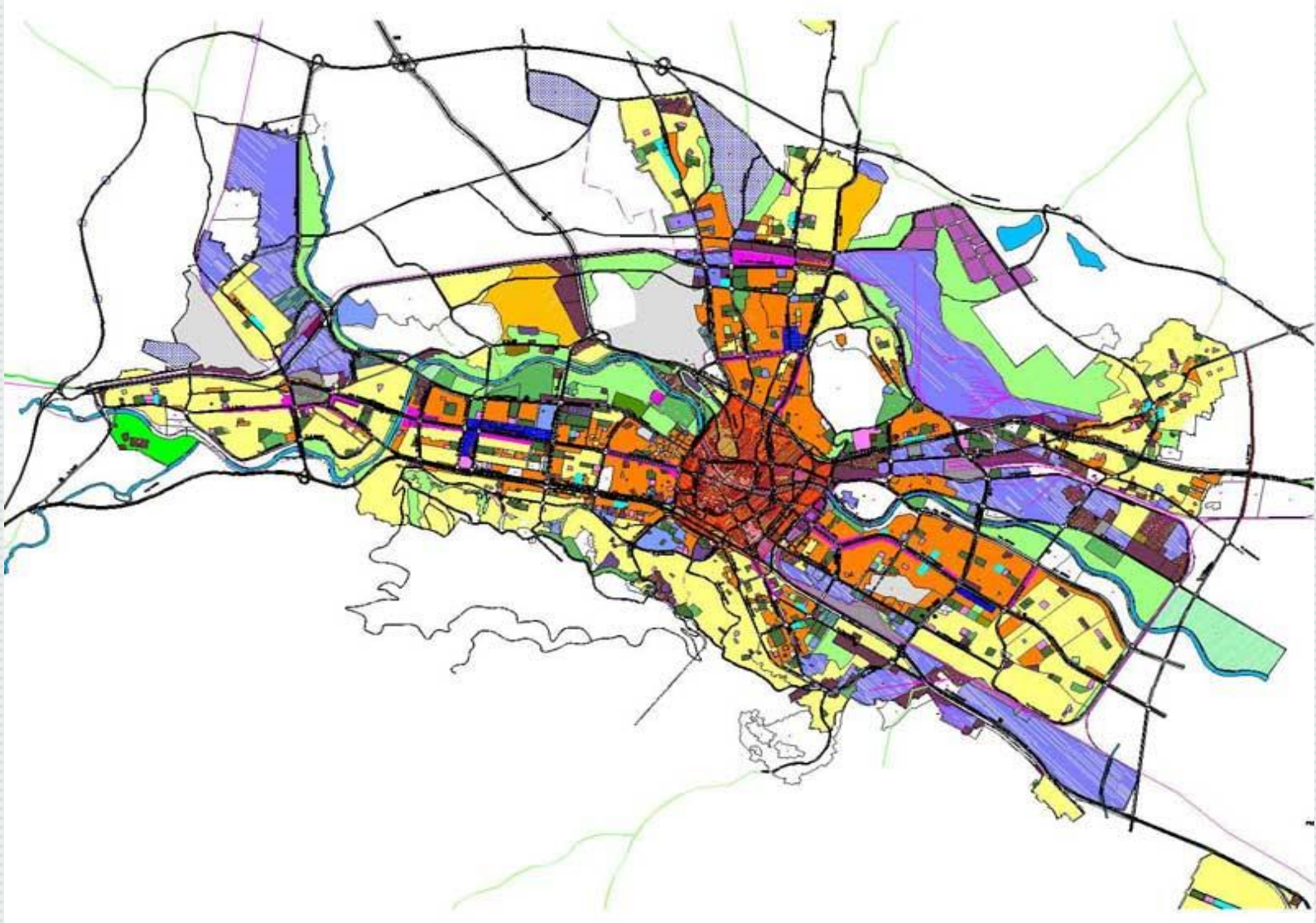
MOVING TOWARDS ZONING?



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- **Expand the use of zoning tools to support development**

Zoning: what is it?



Pros and cons



Pros

- Certainty
- Speed of decisions, potentially lower costs and fewer appeals
- Tends to fix value of land - limited scope for 'hope' value.

Cons

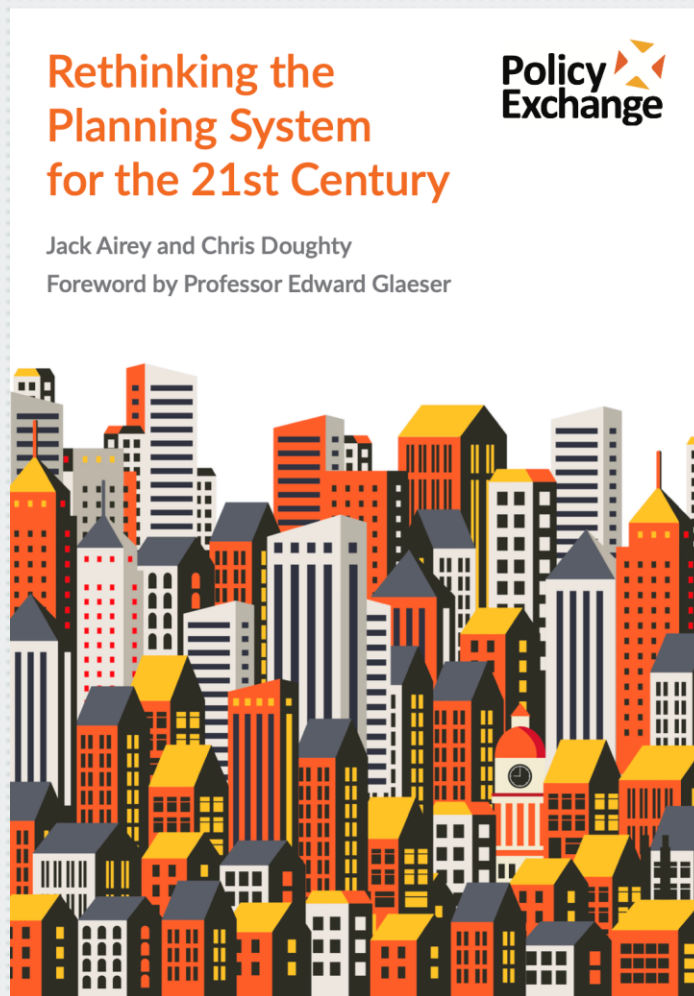
- Inflexible
- Can entrench social problems or bad planning
- Complexity of the system

To what extent has the UK adopted zoning?



- Not a feature of our system.
- Some planning tools bear similarities:
 - Site allocations
 - Local Development Orders and Neighbourhood Development Orders;
 - Permission in principle.

Policy Exchange paper





- End principle of allocating land based on projections of need.
- Zone all land as ‘development land’ or ‘non-development land’ (based on its characteristics)
- No restriction on use of private land plots.
- Redefine purpose of local plan - simple set of rules defining the form of development.
- Local councillors should not decide applications – a purely administrative process.

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Focus on LDOs:

- “Further support for local areas to simplify the process of granting planning permission”
- “Templates for drafting LDOs and other zonal tools to create simpler models”
- “Financial incentives to support more effective use”.

Comment



- There is scope for increased awareness and use of LDOs.
- Author of PX report now a SPAD – influencing govt policy. Increasing use of LDOs may therefore be a ‘testing ground’.
- PFF emphasises changing planning rules “in urban areas” - that may be the focus for any moves towards a zoning approach.





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Planning for the Future

Creating beautiful, sustainable places

The government will take action to encourage more beautiful design and to ensure local authorities have the support they need to demand higher standards.

“Building Better, Building Beautiful”



- Commission set up end of 2018, chaired by Sir Roger Scruton
- Purpose: “tackle the challenge of poor quality design and build of homes and places ... help ensure as we build for the future, we do so with popular consent ... develop practical policy solutions”
- Interim report published July 2019
- Final report “Living with Beauty” published January 2020.



- 45 recommendations in total, split into 8 themes
- 10 recommendations under the theme of “Planning: creating a level playing field”
 - NPPF changes
 - Design codes
 - ‘Upstreaming’



NPPF changes



- Beef up NPPF - add more references to placemaking and the creation of beautiful places
- Remove loophole for isolated homes in the countryside where design is either truly outstanding or innovative.
- Currently NPPF sets general aspirations, but para 130 only mandates refusal for “poor design” – change to “not well-designed”

Design codes



- Support for National Design Guide.
- LPAs to develop more detailed design codes to reflect local ideas of beauty.
- Support for form-based codes or ‘pattern books’ as a basis for considering applications.
- Make exercise of PD rights contingent on compliance with design policy/code.

‘Upstreaming’



- Setting out clearer expectations on design at earlier stages in the planning process.
- More detail on design requirements in local plan policies, especially for strategic sites. A set of design principles or criteria.
- A ‘fast track for beauty’ – LPAs should be encouraged to put in place LDOs or PiP where a robust design policy is in place.

How does Planning for the Future respond?



- **Revise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to embed the principles of good design and placemaking** – this will make clear that high-quality buildings and places must be considered throughout the planning process. The framework will
- **Give local authorities the ability to ensure that new homes conform to local residents' ideas of beauty through the planning system** – using the National Model Design Code we will set out clear parameters for promoting the design and style of homes and neighbourhoods local people want to see. We will ask local places to produce their own design guides and codes, informed by listening to local people
- **Respond to the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's report** – we will look to take forward many of the Commission's recommendations, which include calling for urban tree planting and giving communities a greater opportunity to influence design standards in their area. This will put tree lined streets at the centre of future plans, so that they become the norm not the exception.



- Focus remains on delivering more homes as a central aim.
- Proposals to allow more building-upwards under PD rights do not reflect BBBB – indiscriminate



IMPACT OF COVID-19



Timing



- “A comprehensive review of what does and does not work currently”, to involve various stakeholders, “over the spring and summer”.
- That work will “inform our new Planning White Paper ... to be published alongside the Spending Review”
- Spending review due to be completed in July but now delayed - to Autumn budget (November)?
- A question of priorities.



- “As set out in the Budget yesterday, these planning changes will be underpinned by an additional £10.9 billion of funding.”
 - £1.1bn to fund key local infrastructure schemes
 - £10bn single housing infrastructure fund (“to provide the roads, schools and GP surgeries needed to support new homes”)
 - Plus various smaller measures.



Govt. budget deficit:

- Around 10% of GDP in 2009 (accompanied by fall in GDP of -4.2%)
- Down to 1.8% of GDP prior to coronavirus = £39.4bn
- OBR estimate 3 month shutdown would:
 - add approx. £220bn to the budget deficit
 - Lead to fall in GDP of -12.8% during 2020



Questions & Answers



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