IS THERE SPACE FOR *BETTER* PLANNING IN A NEOLIBERAL WORLD? IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PRACTICE AND THEORY

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Abstract

Planning's normative aspirations are open to criticism for their idealism and impracticality in the face of economic forces. The question underlying this paper therefore is how far space – conceptual and practical – exists for *better* planning? The argument uses empirical evidence drawn from an unremarkable planning case not as a source of explanation but to probe how events (and hence planning) might have been different and therefore could be different in the future. What choices were overlooked? What questions might have been asked? What alternative outcomes were possible?

Keywords: planning theory, planning practice, learning, synthesis, better, justice, questions, real estate

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Introduction

> ...pessimism has become something of a fashion, a kind of intellectual pose to demonstrate one's moral seriousness. The terrible experiences of [last] century have taught us that one never pays the price for being unduly gloomy, whereas naive optimists have been the object of ridicule (Fukuyama 1993, cited in Tallis 1997, 358).

There seem few grounds for suggesting that Francis Fukuyama's observation about the intellectual climate of the 1990s is any less the case today. Rather, the global economic crisis, combined with the stark implications of climate change, and the seeming frequency

of natural disasters reinforces a feeling of individual and collective insecurity and powerlessness. Such sentiments resound in popular and intellectual debates, whether the perspective is that of citizen, public official, politician or academic. The confidence of the immediate post-war years in the capacity of public policy to affect positive change has dissipated. In its place is a neoliberal discourse, which disparages the effectiveness of public intervention and celebrates the efficiency and even morality of markets (Harvey 2005, Marquand 2004, Peck 2003). This line of argument has shown enormous resilience, even in the face of the terrible upheaval wrought by the recent banking crisis (Lovering 2009, Peck et al. 2010). But, where does this leave planning (and planners)? Normatively, planning is premised on the inherently hopeful conviction that a better future is possible than would have occurred in the absence of 'planned' intervention. If, as some argue, planning is the "organisation of hope"[1], what capacity, or space – practical and conceptual – still remains for planning to change the world for the *better*? The purpose behind this paper therefore is to explore how far planning can make a positive difference, in the face of economic pressures. Must planning surrender to free market agendas or might there be ways to resist this reductionist but totalising position?

Planning, as concept and practice, is written about from the vantage points of grand narratives about public policy (for example, neoliberalism or deliberative democracy) as well as the particularities of everyday practices (for example, dull minded bureaucrats or accomplished mediators). The former provide justification for (damming) critiques or (high-minded) aspiration, the latter for variously constructing planners as villains or heroes. Planning is about all these things. But in considering the space for better, the argument presented in this paper is positioned at the interface of the connections between these narratives, more particularly the worlds of constraint and possibility.

Despite the hopefulness inherent to planning (as with other public policy domains) the intellectual and political backdrop on both the left and the right stresses the failings and inadequacies. Paradoxically, planning is criticised both for being too pro-growth and too anti-growth: for exclusionary practices which favour dominant interests, hence fostering injustice and inequality, and yet simultaneously for imposing undue constraints on the freedoms of businesses and communities. In light of such critiques, there has been an erosion of confidence in the very idea of planning to bring about positive change (Campbell 2012a): a wish to avoid idealism and what may be deemed impractical. Critical appraisal of the inadequacies of policy initiatives is of course important, and perhaps a prerequisite for progressive change. However, there are intellectual and practical dangers if failure, immutable constraints and a narrowing of aspiration become the assumed norm; as such perspectives, prompt conservatism, erode confidence and justify inaction (Sandel 2009, Squires 1993).

In everyday public policy debates across the globe the capacity of public policy interventions, such as planning, to effect positive change has rarely appeared quite so constrained (see, for example recent studies in England, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Australia (Gunn and Hillier 2012, Hrelja 2011, Mäntysalo and Saglie 2010, MacCullum and Hopkins 2011). Currently in the United Kingdom (UK), more especially England[2], planning faces stark challenges. During the last decade there has been several reforms of planning legislation and procedures by central government, even by the same Government, all premised on the need to make Britain more economically competitive (see Cullingworth and Nadin, 2014). These recent reforms follow a trajectory which goes back to the first Thatcher government of 1979. The then Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael

Heseltine, referred to planners as keeping "jobs locked up in filing cabinets"[3]. The most recent Labour Governments used similar language, with Gordon Brown (2005) for example stating: "planning, we all know has been inflexible for decades.... [O]ur reforms [will] make planning law and procedures simpler more efficient and more responsive to business and the long-term needs of the economy." Notwithstanding these statements, the rhetoric of the current Coalition Government could not be more explicit. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, said when announcing the latest relaxation of planning controls in September 2012:

> We're determined to cut through the bureaucracy that holds us back. That starts with getting planners off our backs. Getting behind the businesses that have the ambition to expand, and meeting the aspirations of families that want to buy or improve a house.

Similarly, David Cameron said in his speech to the Conservative Party's Spring Conference in March 2011:

> I can announce today that we are taking on the enemies of enterprise. The bureaucrats in government departments who concoct those ridiculous rules and regulations that make life impossible for small firms. The town hall officials who take forever to make those planning decisions that can be make or break for a business and the investment and jobs that go with it. ...enterprise is not just about markets – it's about morals too. We understand that enterprise is not just an economic good, it's a social good.

Those within the planning community may argue that such comments by politicians are merely polemical gestures. Rhetorical flourishes they may be, but the traction of such arguments is highly significant in itself, as well as for the dispiriting context they create. In

other countries the language may be slightly less stark, but it is clear that policy agendas are narrowing, and the value of public policy intervention, including planning, questioned and scrutinised. This is evident in debates even in countries with the strongest post-war welfare state traditions (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Sager 2013).

Given this context the concern of this paper is to address the extent to which planning can contribute to the realisation of outcomes that are *better* than would have occurred in the absence of planned intervention. The term 'better' is chosen to imply outcomes that seek to further the normative ideals of planning, which in the words of Paul Davidoff is "...making an urban life more beautiful, exciting, and creative, and more just" (1965, 337). Better suggests a direction of travel without being specific about the exact destination. Recently Catney and Henneberry (2012) have demonstrated how planners seem increasingly disinclined to exercise their scope for discretion, while Gunn and Hillier (2012) point to planners' reliance on policy prescription from central government over the most modest forms of invention and innovation. So, in the face of neoliberal policy agendas, which result in the narrowing of perspectives, this paper probes further the extent of the choices open to planners. The presence of choices is crucial, as choice implies that there is space, whether practical, conceptual or material, to do better.

The argument is constructed in four stages. The first identifies a framework of alternative policy frameworks. Given the current dominance of neoliberalism, the purpose is to suggest the possibility of a range of policy options. The second stage of the argument explores a reasonably typical case of a major development set in the context of the English planning system. Most academic analyses of such a case would point to the failings of planning in the face of a pro-growth (neoliberal style) policy agenda, and the way the

interests of capital crowd out the possibility of realising other public goods. We attempt to unpack this standard analytical approach in the third stage of the argument. Specifically, we seek to identify the alternative choices which were available to policy-makers. In so doing we do not shy away from the power of economic structures, but neither do we take their immutability for granted. The final step is to indicate the argument's practical and theoretical implications.

Our approach is controversial and experimental. It is inherent to empirical analysis that an account describing what happened in a particular case is equivalent to saying what must happen. This is the basis for explanation. However, our concern is rather different. Our interest is not with the usual analytical task of explaining what did happen, of what went well or badly there in the past, but rather with the more synthetic capacity of learning about what might have happened, and hence could (or should) happen in such circumstances in the future (Campbell 2012b).[4] Consequently, while the argument is situated in relation to empirical evidence, this is not essentially a traditional 'empirical' paper. The argument probes the possibilities of how research can move beyond the analytical and, based on an understanding of contextual constraints, seek out the possibilities for different forms of action, more particularly for *better* planning.

The immutability of markets is often seen as the major constraint on planning possibilities. The experiment represented in this paper does not sidestep the implications of structural constraints. Rather it takes this as the context in which to confront the possibilities of the space to do better.

Market actors are widely assumed to operate as simple profit maximisers, basing their decisions on a calculation. Yet such decisions (and calculations) involve doubt, uncertainty and interpretation. Economics and more specifically property (or real estate) markets are social constructs (Hodgson 2000, Stanfield 1999).[5] This argument is therefore understood in terms of the fragility and uncertainties inherent to both the worlds of planning and real estate. This potential uncertainty leaves open the possibility that investment and development choices can be shaped by wider public policy priorities.

So to summarise, the purpose of the paper is two-fold. First, to explore the extent of the possible choices open to planners and hence the scope to realise better outcomes; and second, the potential for empirical research not just to provide analytical evidence, which explains past events, but as a source of conceptual and practical learning as to how events might have been different and therefore could be different in the future.

Background – Is There *Conceptually* Space for Better Public Policy?

'Planning' as concept and as practices is hugely amorphous and slippery. It is about individual development decisions and the making of plans, but set against trends in public policy and politics. The sensibilities and traditions of different countries provide quite different frameworks through which the theory and practice of planning is understood. Moreover in many countries (including the UK) the work of planning, and the job title of 'planner', is not limited to those who hold professional qualifications or membership of the professional body. At its most narrow planning may be viewed as those statutory tasks undertaken by professional planners, at its widest, planning concerns any intervention or action associated with space and place, and is not restricted to the activities of 'planners', but includes policy-makers, politicians as well as civil society.[6] Even those engaged in

planning disagree as to its scope. But the position adopted has significant implications. A narrow perspective results in much being ruled as beyond the remit of planning (and planners), while a broader perspective suggests that little differentiates planning from public policy and politics. Linked to this, is a continuum of aspiration, moving from a limited concern with the maintenance of existing procedures and practices, through to an ambition that planning can contribute to wider social transformation.

In this paper we take a broad view of planning. Our concern is with *planning* in the round: as an idea made up of concepts and sets of practices, which aspire to change the world for the better, not with specific planners and their actions. It therefore follows that options and possibilities for planning should be viewed against a backdrop of developments more generally in public policy.

Politics the world over is currently dominated by the language of neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore 2005, Harvey 2005, Peck 2003). This in turn has established a policy context, across all sectors including planning, which suggests such policy solutions to be 'the only show in town'. This was not always the case. The immediate post-war period saw the ascendency of the 'welfare state model' and a focus on state intervention as the means to deliver outcomes in the public interest. Both these public policy discourses should be regarded as umbrella terms for what individually are complex groupings of theoretical ideas and policy solutions. They act as shorthand phrases, indicating a general orientation rather than precise definitions. However, given that the purpose of this paper is to probe the possibility of alternatives to these dominant narratives, the first step required in such an argument is to identify, at least in theory, the existence of such positions. In planning, normative ideas over the last decade or so have focused on two areas of possibility:

communicative or collaborative planning, and the 'just city' or just planning (Fainstein and Campbell 2012). Both approaches are premised on the assumption that better planning outcomes are achievable. The main characteristics of these four generalisations about the nature of public policy-making and planning (welfare state; neoliberal state; deliberative city or city of diversity; or just city) are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – about here

There is much that could be said about each of the generalisations, and all should be regarded as groupings of policy ideas and solutions, rather than singular positions. They each incorporate complex bodies of theoretical justification, carefully considered analysis and popular rhetoric. But as our purpose here is simply to demonstrate a range of possibilities and outline the types of rhetoric used in policy debates it is sufficient to highlight a few key features.

Proponents of neoliberal ideas advocate the benefits of releasing entrepreneurial potential from undue regulation, of freeing markets and extending property rights. Local, national and even transnational policy rhetoric assumes that not merely economic well-being, but social and even environmental well-being, are most effectively advanced through the facilitation of market interests (see for example: Commission of the European Community 1999, Communities and Local Government 2006, Her Majesty's Treasury 2007). Expectations of 'trickle down' suggest economic growth to be a pre-requisite for social, and even environmental, goods. This contrasts with the presumption of the immediate post-war years that state initiated, directed, managed and financed interventions would ensure the welfare of citizens, be that in relation to housing, transport infrastructure or employment

opportunities. Hence there have been attempts at all spatial scales to change the role of the state from that of paternalistic 'provider' to 'facilitator' or 'enabler' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Policy and political rhetoric abound with analogies to the conditions assumed necessary to create a thriving market, leading to the appearance in the everyday language of public service provision of the importance of 'competition', 'individual choice' and 'consumer satisfaction' (Carrithers and Peterson 2006).[7] With this has come a focus on the merits of 'partnership', 'the entrepreneurial city', 'responsible' citizens, deregulation, and performance management. At times, the language has a softer edge, but there is an underlying acceptance that the logic which (it is assumed) makes markets efficient, will have similar benefits in relation to public services, including the shaping of cities and hence the distribution of spatial opportunities, that is to say planning. Efficient public services it is argued are effective services, and therefore also as equitable and just as present circumstances allow (Le Grand 1991, Propper 1993, and Deakin and Mitchie 1997, and associated critiques (see, McMaster 2002) and also discussions about the changing nature of the public sector: see du Gay 2000, and Marquand 2004).

The technologies of neoliberalism (Foucault 1991), inscribed in governmental structures and practices, most particularly various forms of performance management, when combined with the orthodoxy of the 'entrepreneurial city', have had the powerful effect of constraining planners' perceptions of their room-for-manoeuvre (Catney and Henneberry 2012, Gunn and Hillier 2012). The rhetoric of 'delivery' drives the need for visible signs of change, often with minimal focus on who benefits from the change and whether it is desirable. In such a culture where, quite literally, concrete signs of change are of highly symbolic political importance, the planning activity has inevitably come under close scrutiny. Local and national governments want to see (any) development. It is therefore

perhaps inevitable that we find planners commenting as follows that: "we didn't have any choice… the developer would have gone somewhere else", or, "policy dictated that the development should go ahead", while also indicative of a lack of professional confidence (Campbell 2012a).

This might seem to suggest, as the Thatcherite mantra would have us believe, that "there is no alternative" to neoliberal policy choices. However, at least conceptually within planning, this is far from the case. More particularly two key lines of normative argument have emerged, each suggesting ways to achieve better planning practices both having antecedents in prior approaches such as advocacy and equity planning (Davidoff 1965, Krumholz and Forester 1990). Communicative, or collaborative, planning starts from a position which acknowledges the diverse nature of contemporary societies. Recognition that knowledge is partial, transitory and contested leads emphasis to be placed on the need to realise more inclusive forms of deliberation (see for example: Forester 1999, Healey 1997, Innes 1995).[8] More recently there has been a (re-)emergence of interest in planning with substantive forms of justice, captured in a concern for the 'just city' (see for example: Campbell 2006, Fainstein 2000, 2010, and Marcuse et al. 2009). This body of work is most usually differentiated from the communicative turn for its emphasis on material redistribution and substantive outcomes, over deliberation and inclusive participation (Fraser and Honneth 2003). The interrelationships between just processes and just outcomes in both these theoretical positions are undoubtedly more complex and subtle than this relatively superficial distinction suggests. In relation to this paper's argument what is significant is what these groups of ideas have in common. More particularly, both sets of approaches share an underlying concern with the *normative* and a commitment to offering *alternatives,* set against a context of wider public policy discourses.

The critical challenge for the theory and practice of planning is that the conceptual development of alternative normative policy positions is of limited relevance in the absence of actual or, perhaps more importantly, perceived spaces in which to exercise choice.[9] This gets to the heart of the purpose behind our argument. We are not in this paper concerned with the merits of collaborative planning over the 'just city', but rather with the prior question of how far conceptual and practical space exists for planning practices to make a (progressive) difference in the current context.

In order to examine such possibilities it is important to focus on the experience of 'ordinary' planning practices, not of exceptional cases. An argument premised on the need for uncommonly gifted individuals or extraordinary circumstances can have little general purchase. The case through which the argument is interwoven has therefore been positively chosen for its typicality in planning and unremarkable qualities. It is therefore set in the context of local government, more particularly the case of a major redevelopment scheme for Exeter city centre.[10] The resulting redevelopment looks like many others across the UK, and probably worldwide, and included the displacement of many existing independent retailers and the ceding of control of formally public space to the developer. While it is a very major scheme in terms of its scale and the implications for Exeter, it did not attract major public disquiet. In Britain, and we suspect in many other contexts, much (perhaps most) of the development sanctioned by the state takes place in the face of some, but limited, public protest. Similarly, Exeter as the context for the development is not a city characterised by extremes. It is not a large city, having a population of 119,600 (Exeter City Council, 2006), but it does play a significant role in the largely rural South West

region. Such an 'unremarkable' setting is a highly appropriate context in which to explore the space of possibility in the entangled relationships between the market and the state.

The research from which the case is derived was undertaken as part of a British Academy grant, which enabled one of the authors to spend three months actually working as a development control officer[11] for Exeter City Council in 2007. Interviews and document analysis were undertaken prior to and following the period of work as a planner (Tait 2011).

The fieldwork consisted of two periods of active participant observation during 2007, with the researcher working as a planner, in the planning office of the local authority, totally three months. This involved observing meetings, attending forums, and conducting planning work as a means of understanding the dynamics of the planning office. During and following the periods of participant observation, thirty-five interviews were conducted between May 2007 and June 2008, with senior officers, all the planners, politicians, representatives of developers, and members of the public who had come into contact with the planning office. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition, the researcher had access to the complete public files concerning Princesshay.

The remainder of the argument is woven through a case of a major redevelopment project and is presented in two halves. The first offers a conventional analysis outlining the story of the redevelopment scheme; the second, adopts a more reflective and synthetic approach, examining how the framing of priorities impacted on perceptions of the development possibilities and hence what further choices existed.

The Redevelopment of Exeter City Centre – Is There Space for Better Planning *in Practice*?

Exeter is best known as a historic city with a twelfth century cathedral and a university. Overall, Exeter is a relatively prosperous city, with unemployment at nearly half the national average, although there are pockets of deprivation, with the Wonford ward / area being ranked in the most deprived ten per cent nationally. The city is currently governed under a two-tier local government system, with Exeter City Council responsible for many local services, including city planning and the larger Devon County Council responsible for broader scale and more strategic services (such as education and highways). This case study principally involves Exeter City Council, which has the powers to control development, as well as owning large tracts of city centre land. The City Council is divided politically and for the last decade and more no party has held overall control.

The Policy Context - Entrepreneurial Exeter

The policy context for planning and hence for the redevelopment was shaped from the 1990s onwards by the City Council's promotion of Exeter as an entrepreneurial and business-friendly city, mirroring virtually word-for-word neoliberal rhetoric. The realisation of this policy agenda required senior politicians and officials, including planners, to define a problem, create new institutions and actors, and identify areas of action, which they did. During the1990s, key interests within and outside the City Council came together in defining Exeter as in danger of becoming a 'backwater', side-lined from economic growth opportunities while investment was going to Bristol, Plymouth and other cities in the South West. Furthermore the city was perceived as having weak business organisations, which in turn did not communicate effectively with the City Council. It therefore follows that new senior staff appointed in the late 1990s were amenable to, and charged with,

altering the ways the Council related to the business community. To that end, Exeter Business Forum was set up to facilitate dialogue between the Council and businesspeople. It assumed significance, not only for its role as a forum for communication but also in the establishment of the 'Vision Partnership' in 1998, which was composed of businesspeople, senior officers and local politicians. The Partnership produced 'Vision 2020', a document setting out an agenda for business growth in Exeter. As the Director of Economy and Development (essentially the Head of Planning) noted in interview, Vision 2020 '*had a strong proactive focus and basically said the city should move from being a sleepy county town to one that was an economic force to be reckoned with*.' Moreover, he characterised Exeter's current approach as: '*We are very open to debate and discussion about where we are going in business and we are listening to business all the time and where they are going*.'

The policy was cemented rhetorically in the frequently used phrase 'entrepreneurial Exeter', and operationalized by the positioning of the Vision Partnership as the leaders of this strategy. The Vision Partnership was quickly transformed into the Local Strategic Partnership[12] (LSP), placing it in the role of producing the City's Community Strategy. The Partnership drew heavily on ideals of 'lean' organisations (a description used in interview by the Chair of the Partnership) and entrepreneurial energy. It was recognised that this small partnership of business leaders, local politicians and senior officers was not representative of all sectors and interests in Exeter, but was seen as necessary to develop consensus, and more than this, an unquestioning momentum around the need for virtually any form economic development.

Central to the work of the Partnership was repositioning the policy dialogue, both generally and with respect to planning, to ensure explicit focus on the perceived needs of the 'market'. Whilst the nature of those markets was never precisely specified it is clear the Partnership was most concerned with two areas: firstly, the city centre retail market, the subsequent efforts to regenerate are described below; and secondly, a market for high-tech knowledge products. The latter was evidenced by securing the relocation of the UK Meteorological Office (Met Office) to the city in the late 1990s. Many within the Partnership regarded this as proof that Exeter had turned a corner in becoming more entrepreneurial and market-oriented.

This overall policy framework captured in the shorthand of 'entrepreneurial Exeter' was very influential, and whether or not it reflected the personal aspirations of individual planners, the planning team regarded it as largely beyond challenge or question. A policy planner explained, '*If strategists don't look like they are pulling together and going in the same direction then... we look like fools.*' It is this policy context, which provides the backdrop for the Princesshay redevelopment.

Regenerating the City Centre – The Princesshay Redevelopment

City centres are key to the identity of any place and hence in turn redevelopment of the core inevitably became central to debate over how Exeter should change. The focus for the redevelopment centred on an area known as Princesshay. This area had already undergone significant changes in the past century. Bombing in 1942 destroyed much of the existing Georgian architecture and the City Council commissioned the planner Thomas Sharp (then President of the Town Planning Institute) to produce a reconstruction plan not only for this area but the city as a whole (see, Sharp 1946). His plan recommended constructing a

shopping area anchored by a new street – Princesshay. This street of shops, the first purpose-built pedestrianized shopping street in Britain, was finished in the early-mid 1950s and consisted of brick and concrete buildings constructed in 'Festival of Britain' style. However, by the 1990s Princesshay was perceived to be run down and poorly performing. Indeed, the Partnership's 'Vision 2020' document described it as 'the worst in mundane post-war architecture' (Exeter City Council 2008, 6-7).

The Emergence of a Redevelopment Plan

The roots of the plans to redevelop Princesshay lay in the late 1980s, when Exeter received several applications for out-of-town shopping developments (Exeter City Council 2008). This stimulated reconsideration of the retail provision, and by 1993 national government guidance was emphasising the need to prioritise retail development within town centres. As a result, and because the city centre was viewed as 'under-performing', the Planning Department on behalf of the City Council commissioned consultants Hillier Parker to assess the potential for new retail development within the city centre. The report identified three sites (Mary Arches Street, the Coach Station and Princesshay) and concluded: "the Princesshay area will be likely to provide the best opportunity to accommodate the needs of modern retailers for prime shop and store floorspace" (Hillier Parker 1993, quoted in Exeter City Council 2008, 6). Nevertheless, some planners recognised that the other sites had merits. One senior planning officer commented: *'in terms of net gain, in terms of regeneration and in terms of 'can we raise a place from a lower benchmark?', the Coach Station and Mary Arches Street were more beneficial. So the business case won the argument at the end of the day'*. This reflects the emerging policy agenda of the late 1990s, but when no development took place the local authority considered additional work to be necessary to attract a developer. This priority was further emphasised by the need to

compete against other shopping destinations. The City Centre Strategy states: "Cities which diversify and change remain prosperous and vibrant; without this most of them stagnate and, at worst, decay and contract. The twin threats are competition from the region's other principal shopping destinations, and the impact of the likely growth in 'e-commerce'" (Exeter City Council 1999, 1).

In the wake of broader trends in retail development the provision of a 'competitive' shopping centre became rooted in the presumption of the need for a complete redevelopment of the city centre. The view was actively articulated by the Vision Partnership and the chosen developer, as well as most senior officers, planners and elected members. The arguments in favour of this position were widely accepted and supported, with the developer making the case that the costs of retaining the existing buildings would be prohibitively expensive, as they were incapable of providing 'modern' retail space and were unsuitable for large 'anchor' units. A planning officer noted that the developer wished to reduce the amount of public space: *'literally, the amount of space between buildings was more in the original Princesshay and Thomas Sharp scheme and the viability of this scheme depended on taking that space and making buildings higher'*. As the same planner went on to say: *'there was never amongst anybody in positions of considerable responsibility, shall I put it that way, an aspiration business-wise that they would convert or retain Princesshay'*. Thus, the aim of regeneration became heavily aligned with providing a 'modern' retail space, which was suitable for large stores. Contrary arguments, based on the quality of urban design, were expressed by a few planning officers and local citizens. The argument being that the existing layout of streets was a good example of post-war planning (see Miller 1998) and hence the 1950s architecture was worthy of retention (see Gould and

Gould 1999). However, even proponents of such arguments regarded them as marginal and as a result they never gained much traction.

The Initial Proposal for Redevelopment

Discussion of the future of Princesshay crystallised with the submission of a planning application by a large international developer, Land Securities,[13] in 1998 for a mixed-use (but retail-dominated) scheme. The scheme envisaged wholesale demolition of the 1950s buildings and replacement with retail units, including a large glazed arcade. The development would largely be on City Council owned land, for which Land Securities would become primary leaseholder. Some opposition emerged to this scheme from a small local campaign group named 'Exeter People's Choice'. They argued that wholesale redevelopment was not necessary on a number of grounds, including scale, traffic generation, the impact on the viability of other parts of the city centre, and that Exeter was not in competition with other retail centres (see Exeter People's Choice 1999). They were also concerned that the City Council as principal landowner in the area was intending to enter into agreement with Land Securities. However, other groups active in the fields of planning and regeneration, such as Exeter Civic Society did not raise any significant opposition.

More formal opposition did come from Devon County Council, whose main objections were related to traffic generation and design, and English Heritage,[14] which objected to the scale of the development and its impact on archaeological remains. There was also some opposition from within Exeter City Council, particularly from one elected member and disquiet amongst a few planning officers. Nevertheless, the dominant position within the Council was overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal. The Council had been in discussion

with Land Securities for some time prior to submission of the planning applicati**o**n and the scheme was in turn approved. As a planning officer recounted: '*there was enormous political pressure to approve that…scheme and I must admit, in my role, I did say it was not acceptable. But that's where the business or economic development side won the day'*. This comment, which is mirrored in the observations of other planning officers, indicates a clear concern about the implications of the proposal but importantly little sense that an alternative course of action was really possible, and little willingness even to ask questions.

Despite the City Council's support for the proposal, national government decided that the scheme should be examined further at a public inquiry. The grounds for this were very specific and related to English Heritage's objections that the construction of a large underground car park would destroy archaeological remains, and, although seemingly more significant, the lesser argument of the potential impact on the wider economy of the city centre. Regardless of this Land Securities decided to withdraw the scheme before the public inquiry could commence. Interviews indicate that while the developer expressed some concerns that the scheme would not withstand scrutiny at what would prove an expensive public inquiry, more significant was changing trends in retailing, which meant that the quality of finish of the scheme would not be attractive to 'right sort' of high rental paying tenants.

The Revised Proposal for Redevelopment

Land Securities subsequently decided not to retain the same architects and appointed three new architectural practices to re-design the Princesshay development. The new scheme still involved substantial demolition of the 1950s buildings, but proposed a new layout for the retail area with open-air streets (rather than a covered mall) and an increased number of

apartments. Land Securities argued that retention of the 1950s architecture would 'limit the area's capacity for effective mixed-use living' (Exeter City Council 2008, 8), a subtle shift in argument but one which reflected newer national government policy on city-centre living. Overall, the scheme was viewed as a significant improvement by professional bodies and statutory agencies (the bodies invited to comment on planning applications), which had previously raised objections, as well as having strong support from the City Council. Nevertheless, opposition remained from Exeter People's Choice and a few planning officers continued to have misgivings, particularly regarding the scale and massing of the buildings, the loss of open, public space and the encouragement of car use by the provision of on-site car parking. However these misgivings did not prevent the planners recommending approval of the scheme, and the Planning Committee granted formal consent to develop in May 2003. The development of the area took another four years and the main part of Princesshay opened in September 2007.

The final Princesshay development is very similar to many other retail developments constructed across Britain by Land Securities. For the City Council it is the visible representation of change, more particularly of Exeter as an entrepreneurial city. This is most obviously manifest in the demolition of the 1950s buildings and layout. However, the replacement buildings change not just the appearance of the area but also its socio-economic character. The larger floorspaces of the new retail units make them attractive to a different type of retail user than previously. The scheme incorporates twelve units for 'independent' retailers but even these are targeted at national-scale, high end, niche retailers, rather than the local independent retailers, which were originally present in the area. Although, in some ways a before and after comparison of retail rental levels is misleading, as the nature of the product changed, a retailer wishing to locate at the same

address as previously would now incur far higher business occupancy costs. Similarly, the new residential property was priced at levels only affordable by the relatively wealthy.

The sense that the resulting development represented an opportunity lost is captured in the observations of an elected member, who compared the outcome of the Exeter scheme unfavourably with that completed by the same developer in another historic town, Canterbury. Such comparisons are always problematic and the elected member concerned was the only politician really to oppose the scheme, but they are suggestive of other possibilities. He said:

> *I feel it [the development] is far too Land Securities led.... I wanted to go to Canterbury because it gave the chance to see the Land Securities development there. The scale is better than ours.... The detail and finish I couldn't fault it at all in Canterbury but I have a feeling - it's only a suspicion, but I think Canterbury Council watched the scheme differently than we have. I can't imagine the developer not wanting to have done something bigger in Canterbury and I'm sure they must have been told. That is the contrast between that one and this one because it is in a similar historic city site as well on a post war development.*

A further, if more subtle, illustration of the development's implications is that control of open space in the area has largely been ceded to Land Securities. Whilst Exeter City Council owned and managed public spaces, roads and walkways before 2002, Land Securities entered a deal with the City Council to take a 200-year lease of the publicly owned land in the area. This gives Land Securities control of these spaces, which they (rather than the City Council) maintain. Some routes through the area have been formally

designated as ‘public highway’ and the public enjoy the same rights as on any other streets (though maintenance of these streets is by Land Securities). However, other routes, including the main access through the shopping area, are not designated ‘public highways’ and are effectively privately controlled. For these routes, the City Council entered into a ‘Walkways Agreement’ with Land Securities which states that they should be open twenty-four hours a day. But the Agreement also prevents the public from ‘carrying out retail activities, distributing newspapers or leaflets, playing musical instruments except when authorised, playing radios, roller skating, consuming alcoholic drinks or causing a nuisance or annoyance’ (Byrne 2008, 9). Land Securities employs its own security personnel in the area to enforce these restrictions. Local newspapers even reported that members of the public were requested not to take pictures of the new development ‘for security reasons’ (Byrne 2008).

Land Securities also exercise control in other arenas, notably in the management of the area and in the design of shop-fronts. As a result, regulatory control normally exercised through the planning process of approving the appearance of shop-fronts was largely ceded to Land Securities. The company employs their own retail design specialist to evaluate and determine retailers’ proposals for shop-front design.

As in many cases of major development, Exeter City Council was both the primary landowner in the area and also responsible for determining the planning application. A planning officer involved in the negotiations over Princesshay considered that rather than these responsibilities being complementary they were incompatible. He commented that:

> *...the other point about Princesshay is this detachment between the City Council as a corporate body and the City Council as a planning authority,*

> *and the ability of Planning Services to remain detached to an extent in the development process so that we can give clear planning advice and not have pressure or have the waters muddied by issues which are not to do with planning. I think the process was flawed in that regard because the ownership we set up did not allow essential debate on design and principles we normally have*.

There is within this planning officer's observation a sense of the importance of separating planning decisions from the issue of land ownership, of not as it is suggested, "muddying the waters". Presumptions of what is, or is not, within the ambit of planning, and therefore open to consideration and questioning is crucially important to the way arguments were constructed in this case.

The significance of Princesshay, not only to the City Council and in relation to its land holdings, but also its perceived importance to the city as a whole meant that the principle of development (*any* development) was viewed by many (but not all) planning officers, senior officials and elected members in Exeter City Council as the over-riding objective. The redevelopment was connected to the discourse of 'entrepreneurial Exeter', and crucially even those that privately harboured concerns perceived that asking questions or presenting counter arguments was inappropriate or pointless.

Planning and the Development Industry – *Could* There be Space for Better?

Thus far, the story of the Princesshay redevelopment mirrors many other studies of contemporary planning. A 'modern retail' development became in many ways the embodiment of the neoliberal discourse of the 'entrepreneurial city'. The city's economic well-being was inextricably associated with a particular form of city centre redevelopment.

Alternative arguments, in terms of principle, although more especially matters of detail, were presented by policy officials including planners and some local groups, but were not accorded much significance.

However, it is at this point we want to step aside from standard analysis, to probe more deeply into the lessons which can be drawn from the case study, not about the dominance of neoliberal discourses, but about the choices that were overlooked and the questions which were not asked or perceived would not be heard. There are many aspects of this development which could be explored. However, the main justification for not considering policy options inspired by more idealistic normative conceptions of planning are the needs of market actors. Hence, it is this, the most intractable constraint on the possibility for choice which has been selected for further scrutiny. The purpose is to extend the existing planning literature, by getting beyond the empirical analysis of what happened, to consider what could have happened.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the case is the silences. The sense of futility amongst the planners (and for that matter politicians and senior officials) that the trajectory of the development should be questioned. Even those who did venture to raise issues limited themselves to matters of detail. Exeter's interactions with the development sector largely became an end in itself, rather than a means to secure other collective goods. There are three arenas of interaction between the state and the market illustrated by this case. These concern: the role of land ownership; the selection of the developer, and related to this, awareness of the diversity within the development industry; and the role of policy agendas in shaping the market-place. The fundamental question therefore is how far the perceptions of Exeter's planners about the nature, and most tellingly limits, of planning, significantly

constrained their room-for-manoeuvre? How far the needs of the market, as understood by politicians and senior officers, required planners to act in particular ways and how far their understandings and even misconceptions of the development industry lead to a particular development outcome? Each of the areas of interaction between the state and the market are examined below.

It is striking how easily the City Council was prepared to cede control of their land to the developer. This course of action reflects a view that the public sector should be involved in land disposal, often at discounts, in order to promote commercial development. However by agreeing to a (very) long lease they ceded control of both the retail project and the surrounding public spaces. Yet, the Council's ownership of most of the land to be developed provided them with an excellent means of exercising control over the nature and direction of the project. This was recognised in part by the planner quoted above, but only in the sense that 'planning' practices should not be distorted by the land ownership issue. This wish to detach planning judgements from issues of land ownership and property finance is ingrained within British professional planning traditions (Adams and Tiesdell 2010, Campbell and Henneberry 2005). Yet this position simultaneously handicaps planners, limiting their understanding of the economics of development and hence the scope of questions, which can be asked, and of possible alternatives.

More significantly but less obviously, local policy-makers (including planners) in their haste to be seen to be facilitating competition failed to promote the kind of market competition which would generate wider and collectively better outcomes. The conceptualisation of property markets in one-dimensional terms is perhaps what advocates of neoliberal agendas desire. But for critics and state actors to take such a view is deeply

disempowering, as it leaves the parameters for dialogue to be set by market actors. Planning as an activity, as with the planners in Exeter, may have traditionally placed property economics outside its remit, but without even a basic understanding of the workings of commercial real estate markets, the basis on which to generate alternative propositions is reduced (Adams and Tiesdell 2010). As the case study illustrates very few of the arguments put forward by the planners were framed through an understanding of the property industry.

In the absence of a well-grounded understanding of the property industry, there is tendency to under-estimate its heterogeneity. There are numerous types of developers, which have quite different attitudes towards risk. Larger investor-developers such as Land Securities are now structured as Real Estate Investment Trusts and are very conservative. They engage in development activity with a view to holding the property as a financial asset for a relatively long time period or with a view to selling to an institutional investor. These developers are subject to considerable scrutiny from their equity investors and are risk averse. Their focus is generally on highly transparent, prime commercial property markets. This conservatism is reinforced by the behaviour of property fund managers, the large developers' main 'customers'. These fund managers control a substantial proportion of investment capital in global commercial real estate markets and operate in an environment where their performance is assessed against an industry benchmark. This encourages asset managers to follow the rest of the market (Henneberry and Roberts 2008). Although investors seek to hold geographically diversified portfolios, they are concerned about being able to liquidate their assets quickly and this limits the types of schemes they are interested in financing in 'thin' provincial markets such as Exeter. Developers by necessity bring forward schemes that exhibit the qualities sought after by these large financial institutions.

In contrast many smaller developers seek to operate within particular localities. They actively capitalise on local knowledge and networks, and generally adopt more 'entrepreneurial' business models (Charney 2007). These developers have a far better track record of developing schemes in areas most in need of urban regeneration (Adair et al. 1999), but there are limits to the scale of project they might tackle. It is private investors, rather than major financial institutions, that tend to provide the finance and funding for the more 'entrepreneurial' commercial developments undertaken in disadvantaged areas and in provincial markets (Key and Law 2005). The divergent behaviours of different types of developers and investors are reflected in local variations in development activity, in the levels of development pressure and in the finance and funding models used for commercial schemes. Moreover, the financial returns on development by locally based developers are more likely to stay local.

A greater appreciation of the diverse working practices of developers would enable planners to achieve a wider variety of development outcomes. In the Exeter case by breaking up the re-development into a number of smaller schemes the Council could have secured an outcome which would have been better for the local economy, with the attendant socio-economic benefits, as well as being more environmentally and aesthetically sensitive. But this would have required a different understanding of the nature of planning and the role of planners than is exemplified, and as a consequence such options were never considered.

One of the most forceful messages from the Exeter case was the extent to which even detailed questioning of the merits of the scheme were ruled inappropriate by all concerned, in the face of the perceived needs of the market. The policy community, at local and

national scales, tends to overlook how far the practices and values of the property industry can be altered. Yet markets are not immutable; they are 'made' economic (Callon 1998, Smith *et al*. 2006). As a result choices exist and development outcomes can be 'made' better. There is considerable evidence at the meta-level that the property industry will respond to a changing political climate. For example, institutional investors in the UK have changed the nature of their retail developments to reflect Government policies, so as to contribute to the 'vitality and vibrancy' of cities through mixed use developments. Real estate investors' objectives are now articulated in a language that is quite different from that used in the industry a decade ago, following the policy agendas of national and local governments (see Jackson and Watkins 2008). There is, of course, a financial rationale for this. But the financial motives have followed changes in governmental policies and the needs and preferences of real estate users. The economic has been 'authored' by social and political processes. Property markets do respond to the 'climate of opinion'. Witness, for example, the rapid emergence of socially responsible investment strategies and the way this has subtly altered developer responses to the green agenda (Eicholtz et al. 2009). Developers tend to respond relatively quickly to changes in investor preferences. The withdrawal of the original application by Land Securities demonstrates the combined influence the demands of potential tenants and the regulatory process can have on developers, as does the nature of their developments elsewhere.

Despite these general trends, the Princesshay scheme suggests there can be a lack of boldness in planning, particularly when it comes to interactions with developers at the level of individual projects. Institutional investors and developers are willing to invest significant resources in building informal relationships in the hope of maximising the medium and long term returns to their assets. This is driven by an appreciation that they may receive

preferential treatment in relation to future decisions and, in particular, in limiting the scope for competitors to enter certain markets. This presents planning with significant opportunities but at present the benefits appear largely to flow in the direction of the developers. Politicians and planners all too rarely use these relationships to achieve greater goods. Moreover they often also fail to harness the economic competitiveness rhetoric effectively. Despite the rhetorical claims of business interest groups, the real estate industry does not find competition attractive. Consequently, there are opportunities for the public sector to be more proactive in promoting competition between developers within local markets. In too many cases, including the Exeter redevelopment, there is fear of territorial competition, exacerbated by the widespread conviction of the spatial mobility of investment capital. These pressures in turn act to limit the willingness of many planners to ask questions within the institutional contexts in which they work, and hence press developers to produce schemes which incorporate longer term public benefits.

Conclusions: Making – *Practical and Conceptual* – Space for Better

At the outset of this paper it was suggested that current policy debate is characterised by a sense of pessimism about the possibilities of securing better planning outcomes. However, while critical analysis of current practices is undoubtedly important, critique on its own is dispiriting and arguably also disempowering (Storper 2001, Tallis 1997). In this paper we have attempted to go further than standard analyses, to explore not only what did happen in a particular case, but what might have happened, what further choices and options were available and hence the possibility for *better* outcomes. In doing this the power of market forces has not been ignored; rather existing presumptions have been interrogated to explore how far they might have been understood differently and hence created the space – practical and conceptual – to make a difference.

The view of real estate markets in much critical analysis is very one-dimensional, assuming an inevitability about the nature of development outcomes. The findings of this paper challenge this premise. One reading of the Exeter redevelopment scheme presents a conventional story of policy-makers in the thrall of neoliberal rhetoric. Yet a simplistic model of the real estate industry limits possibilities. Within planning, uncertainty and complexity are often viewed as problematic and challenging (Christensen 1985) but understanding complexity, uncertainty and diversity also opens up opportunities and the potential for agendas to be moulded and something 'better' to be delivered. However, this requires planning (both practitioners and researchers) to develop a much more sophisticated understanding of the pressures and priorities of developers and their investors. Development outcomes are not entirely immutable and inevitable: they are shaped by socio-political forces which have the potential to be moulded to achieve a variety of ends, admittedly, for better and worse. But understanding alone is not enough. It is the perception that the resulting questions such knowledge opens up are worth asking, and can be asked, which is crucial.

There are several dimensions to the implications of these findings. We start with the more specific and practical and move to the more general and conceptual.

The Exeter case study suggests that the 'state' could have used its regulatory controls, land ownership and even market competition to achieve more, if only policy-makers and planners had had a greater sense of what was possible. The state has considerable economic assets at its disposal, which can be used to exert leverage. A greater capacity and willingness by such planners to capitalise on state ownership, and the resulting control of

large quantities of valuable (in all senses of the term) development land, would produce different outcomes. It seems so obvious that the point should not need to be made, but if developers are to make money from new development they need land, and certainly in most contexts for major schemes, the permission of the state to develop that land. These mechanisms of leverage and influence need to be harnessed effectively and intelligently.

There can be no doubt that market forces impose major structural constraints, but the extent and nature of the constraint is open to influence and, yes, manipulation by astute planners and politicians. This requires creativity in networking with real estate investors and developers and in using policy levers to shape market behaviours. Responses to the following questions would assist in the process of framing appropriate strategies:

- Who are the key development actors?
- What are the motivations of these actors?
- What pressures are they responding to?
- What impact might additional competition have on behaviours?

One of the most telling aspects of the case study is the power that asking questions can exert, or in this case, how far questioning was circumscribed to a relatively limited set of issues. The availability of alternative choices is directly linked to a capacity to ask questions, including at the level of a particular scheme, the sorts of questions identified above. This in turn is underpinned by the need for a clear underlying vision of the sort of places which ought to be created and a sense of what form better and worse outcomes should take. In relation to the Exeter case if there had been more of a sense of a broader (and different) vision and purpose a different outcome was possible. However, silence and hence the absence of alternatives, allowed a pretty typical neoliberal policy agenda to fill

the void, making the furtherance of market interests an undefined end in itself, rather than a means to be exploited to achieve greater goods.

Our argument also has broader implications; firstly, in relation to the approach adopted for the examination of the empirical evidence; and secondly, for planning theory. It is inherent to empirical studies that they are analytical in nature and seek to provide explanation of why certain events or outcomes took place. This must inevitably be a retrospective process and tends to assume that what did take place, for whatever reasons, had to take place and that in similar contexts such outcomes might be expected in the future. The purpose of this paper has been rather different, to explore whether empirical research could be used not as the basis for explanation but rather as the basis for conceiving of alternative possibilities and most importantly for learning. Much more detailed work needs to be done to develop further this synthetic approach, but the findings at least suggest it has potential to provide forward looking practical, action-oriented as well as critical analytical insights.

The importance of an underlying vision in shaping and creating the conceptual and practical capacity to do better raises challenges about the boundaries delimiting the construction of planning debates and the nature of the outcomes planning practices seek to realise. If boundaries are drawn tightly either by choice and conviction, or understandings as to the nature of the system and expectations of one's seniors, then the scope of possibility will be highly circumscribed. It follows from this that the transformative potential of planning reflects and depends upon the way boundaries are constructed.

Concern with the outcomes of planning inevitably leads to a focus on the normative. Engagement with matters of a normative nature can be problematic and discomforting. A

concern with what 'ought to be', involves making choices, which will be to the benefit some but not all. However, not engaging with such matters does not make them disappear (O'Neill 2000, Squires 1993). Rather other discourses fill the vacuum, and one of neoliberalism's great successes is precisely this, while simultaneously espousing an anti-ideological and pragmatic position. Arguably, given the premise underlying planning and much public policy, that intervention results in better outcomes than would otherwise have been the case, one of the great practical and intellectual challenges is to understand and articulate more clearly what state regulation is good for. The vast majority of political rhetoric and critical analysis highlights the failings of state intervention. While acknowledging that a return to welfare state type policies would be neither desirable nor practical, greater understanding of the enabling capacity of the state and governments in a contemporary context is merited, perhaps fundamental to the development of space in which to ask genuinely constructive questions. Moreover, such an enabling capacity is also vital for the effective functioning of civil society and social movements.

There are, of course, dangers in asserting a normative position or providing a framework for a vision of the future. Visions must necessarily exclude, in that they suggest some things are more important than others. The challenge for planners lies in being able to move between abstract concepts, such as justice, equity or beauty, and apply them to specific planning problems in particular places (Campbell 2006, Healey 2012). It is the iteration between the universal principles and local particularities, and local particularities and universal principles, which avoids decisions becoming piecemeal and random, or contextually insensitive.

A concern with the normative is not about the assertion of a rigid utopian ideal, but nor is it without a sense of purpose and direction (Levitas 2007). Amartya Sen (2009) in his recent book about justice suggests that the quest to find an ideal form of justice – if you like, 'the best' – has tended to discourage and even obscure the ability to seek out better. This seems to have resonance for our approach to planning. Planning practices will always be flawed and produce imperfect results, but this should not dissuade the planning community from the search to do better. The 'best', as the goal for planning practices, will not just fail to be realised, but, because it is so problematic to conceptualise and challenging to achieve, has the tendency to foster inertia and discourage creativity. A focus on 'better' in contrast opens up a space of possibilities – a range of *betters* – and crucially the potential for constructive achievement. In this messiness Bish Sanyal (2001) encourages planners (both theorists and practitioners) to understand more about the nature of a *good* compromise.[15] What are the qualities of a wise compromise, and when does a compromise become a hollow shell in which what really matters has been lost? Most, perhaps all, planning decisions involve compromise, but good compromises are not unprincipled, and therefore require an understanding of the nature of better, of ethical enquiry.

The findings of this paper suggest that the planning community should be hopeful, that there is space for better. It is in the silences that planning (and planners) betray the limits of its (our) aspirations. In contrast, it is in the questions which are asked that willingness and commitment to push the boundaries of what seemed possible are demonstrated: a concern to achieve *better*.

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Generalized models	Conception of interests	How interests are discovered	Emphasis of just urban policy
Welfare state: paternalistic city	Public interest - based on an undifferentiated public.	Representative democracy plus technical professional expertise	Redistribution
Neoliberal state: entrepreneurial city	Individualistic wants (private utility) - based on interests of capital and consumers.	Consumption through markets or quasi-markets	Competition/pluralism
Politics of difference: city of diversity	Communal interests based on shared identity	Deliberative democracy and inclusive participation	Recognition leading to redistribution
Equitable distribution: just city	Collective needs - individual as an end but within a context based on interdependency	Representative democracy, supported by deliberation, practical judgment, and equity-oriented expertise	Redistribution and recognition

Source: Campbell and Fainstein 2012

Table 1: Dominant traditions in public policy

[1] John Forester has often used this term to describe planning. It was more recently adopted as a title of book by Howell Baum.

[2] National government continue to have responsibility for planning in England, while in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland planning is the responsibility of the various devolved administrations.

[3] This phrase, first used by Michael Heseltine in 1978, continues to be widely cited today. (See Simmie 2004: 131)

[4] See Campbell 2012b for discussion of the qualities of analysis and synthesis in relation to planning.

[5] See Giddens' (1984) work on structuration and its implications for social theory and the recent revival of interest in the long standing work on institutional economics (Stanfield 1999, Hodgson 2000).

[6] Patsy Healey (1997) adopts this wider sense in her definition of planning as 'spatial governance', and the Royal Town Planning Institute's Education Commission reflects this pereception in defining planning as 'critical thinking about space and place as the basis for action or intervention' (2003, para. 4.17).
[7] Here is evidence of the power of mainstream economic analysis to offer a complete ethical system that links analysis to action and policy prescription (Carrithers and Peterson 2006).
[8] However, it should be noted that this is not a singular set of ideas.
[9] Elisabeth Howe's (1994) work exploring the ethical values of planners in the 1980s, particularly in the United States, highlights the variability in the ways planners construct their scope and capacity for action.
[10] The redevelopment area totalled 565,000 square feet (Exeter City Council, 2008) with a complete floorspace, including shops, apartments, cafes, restaurants and the civic square) of 530,000 square feet (Land Securities, 2008).
[11] A development control officer in the UK, an activity now sometimes referred to as 'development management', undertakes a similar range of activities to planners who process zoning permits or review proposals in other contexts.
[12] A Local Strategic Partnership is a partnership between public, private, voluntary and community sectors within a local authority area. Their key task (as defined under the Local Government Act 2000) is to produce a 'Community Strategy' which sets priorities for change within the area. There is no statutory stipulation as to membership or leadership, though guidance strongly advocates the active role of local politicians.
[13] Land Securities is one of the world's five largest investor-developers by asset value. Although it is based in London and its activities are UK dominated it holds substantial international investment portfolios. Land Securities concentrates on commercial property development and has extensive experience of undertaking city centre retail redevelopment schemes, including recently in the UK in Bristol, Birmingham and Portsmouth.
[14] English Heritage is the national Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment.
[15] See also Gutmann and Thompson's (2012) recent book, considering compromise more generally within politics and governing.