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Planning. Design. Economics.



Where next for Planning?

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Structure

- Diagnosis
 - Medicine
 - Touchstones for making this work
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- Viewed through prism of plan-making and housing – useful barometer for debate

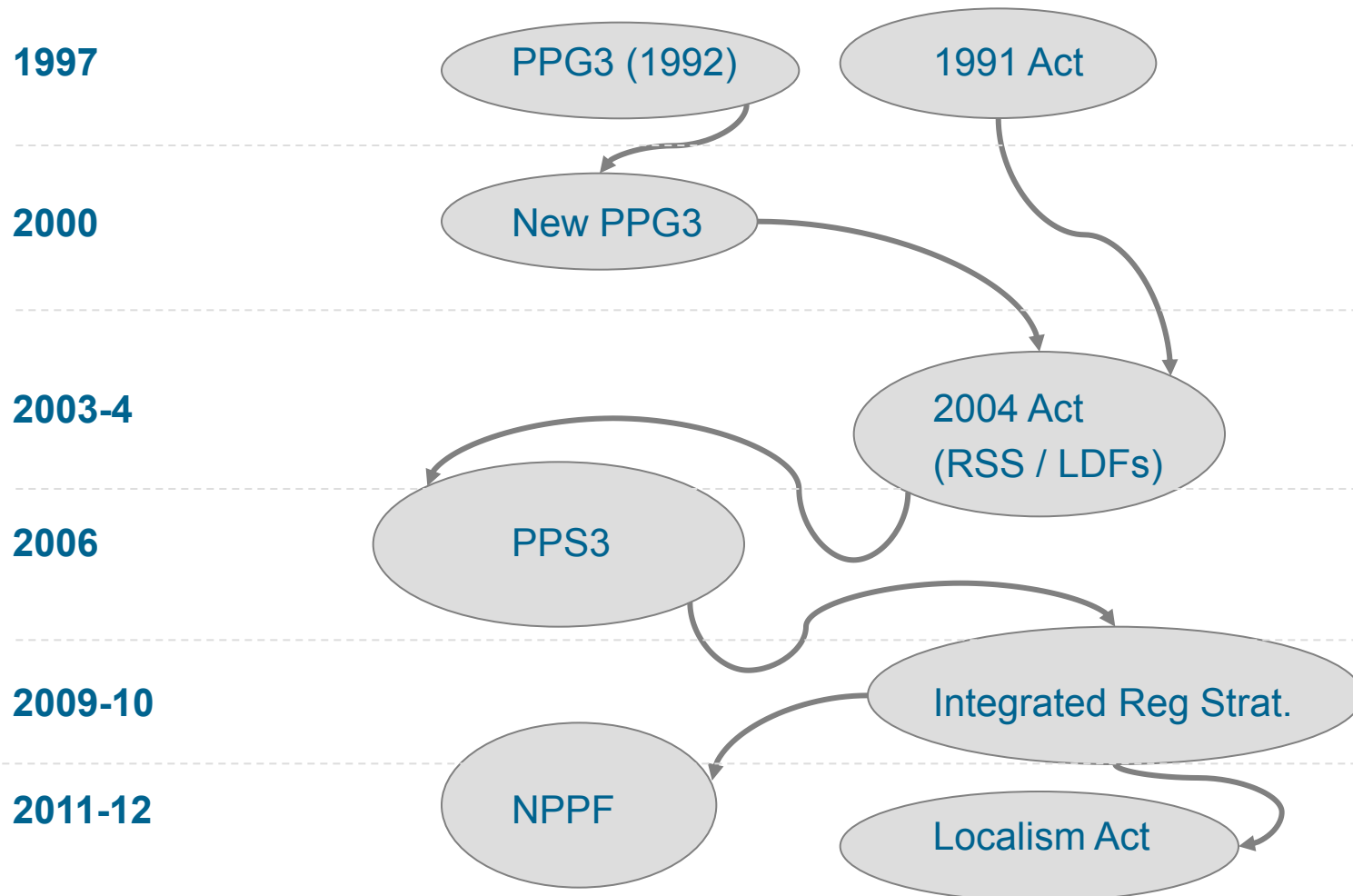
Diagnosis – planning in the eye of the storm

- Many positives that planning can and should be proud of.

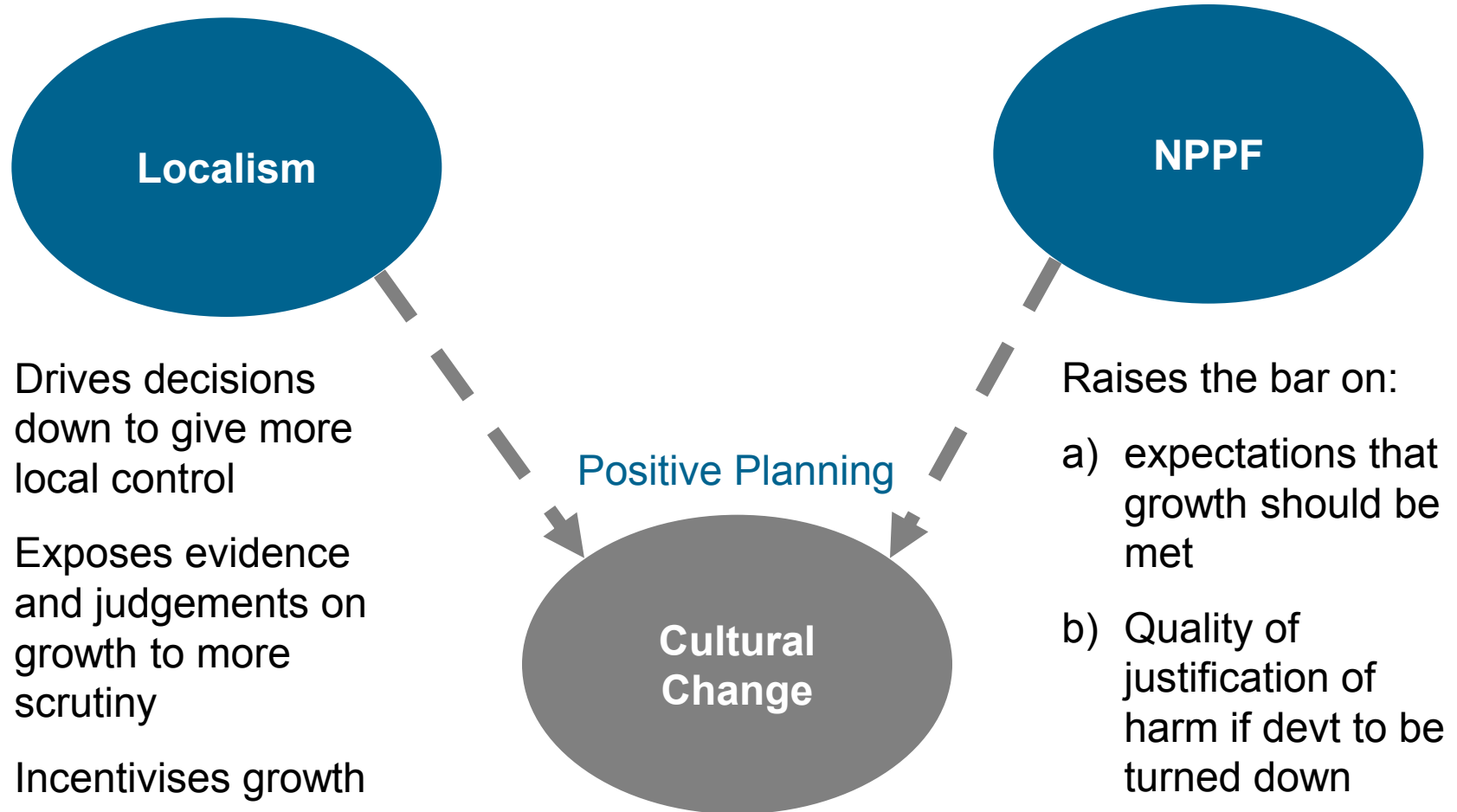
But

- Many parts of the UK are not delivering on the development they need and weren't doing so before the recession
- In many higher demand areas, not enough land has been released over a consistent period to allow the local competition that will drive-up (in particular, housing) output
- In some of our areas of greatest potential, we rarely seek the scale of economic and infrastructure development that is achieved elsewhere in Europe
- Regional Planning was not always rational and often meant lowest common denominator outputs

Diagnosis: Most coherent systems are plan-led, but rely on stability: perpetual revolution has been undermining



Govt Medicine: New structure + policy that must be allowed to bed in. It equals changes in culture + practice



**Five touchstones for
making this work**

1. Use Localism and the NPPF as an opportunity for a positive local 'planning conversation'

- A culture of positive planning – vision + proportionate control
- Focused and proportionate local evidence can raise the quality of debate and senior-level engagement, e.g:
 - Impact of demographic change
 - Economic and other benefits of development
 - Where and why we say 'no' to devt.
- Better consultation: look beyond the vocal minority
 - Opinion polling
 - Smoke out the silent majority + victims of 'generational theft'

2. Find a new maturity for discussion of Green Belt

- High brand recognition gives the policy disproportionate profile
- It is a choice not a mantra
- Has purpose,
- But unaltered, has and will give rise to perverse outcomes
- Beyond London it is a relatively recent innovation (70s/80s)
- We need to work with politicians to steer the debate to a more sensible place

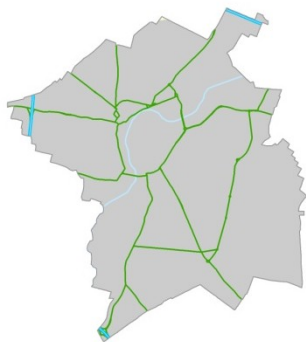
3. Get to grips with Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal

- So far: often a tick box, disproportionate, time consuming sideshow.
- More of a legal man trap. Rarely shaping plan-making decisions
- Often myopic and poor in evidencing social and economic implications
- NPPF focus on Sustainable Development gives us an opportunity to embrace and better integrate with planning processes

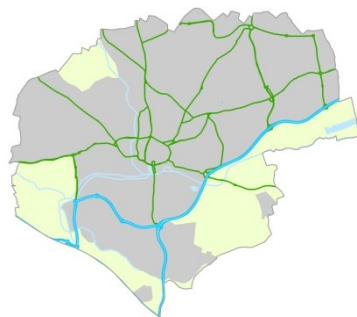
4. Inspectors need to ensure consistency on plan 'soundness'

- Planning Inspectors are recognising that the NPPF policy is different
- Concluding that many Local Plans will not meet needs and are likely to be 'unsound'
- But, the desire to get **any** plan in place = pressure to compromise on key principles subject to a commitment to early review (ie 3+ years)
- This would undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the reforms

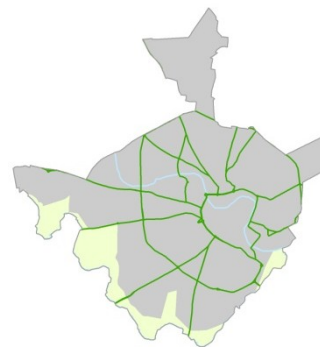
5. Effective localism needs coherent local government boundaries and better balance of costs/benefits



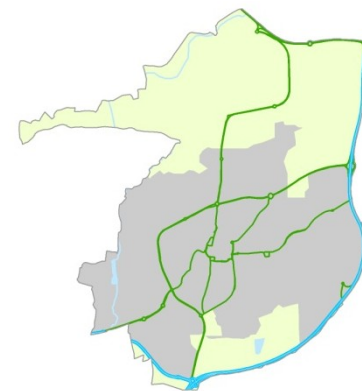
Cambridge



Northampton



Norwich



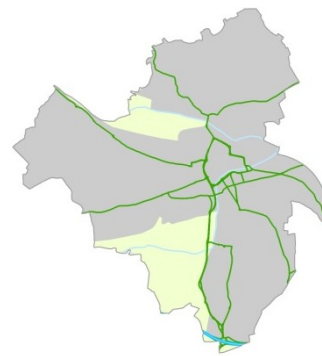
Crawley



Southampton



Oxford



Reading



Luton

Summary

- Planning has always been subject to polemic debate
 - We should accept and embrace it
 - Be positive in how we inform it
- We have a 're-booted' plan-led system
- Further structural or national policy change will kill effective delivery, so we should aim to make it work
- Broadly, it captures what we should expect from a planning system, but it does require cultural and practical changes



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