



Review

The future of housing and homes[☆]

Nick Gallent*

UCL Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, Wates House, 22 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0QB, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 August 2009

Accepted 25 August 2009

Keywords:

Residential development
Drivers
Distribution patterns
Planning
England

ABSTRACT

This review looks at patterns of land use for housing over the next 50 years. Both established development patterns and the way government understands and responds to 'growth' are explored as the basis for future provision. This dual focus is taken forward in four sections, excluding this introduction and some concluding remarks.

- First, how the future 'demand for housing' is understood, and how this understanding is translated into action is explored in the opening section, which examines what I have called 'established certainties'.
- Second, a recent challenge to these certainties – and to planning based purely on long-term demographic trends – has precipitated a new approach to planning for housing. What this approach is, its treatment of 'market signals' as a trigger of land-use change and how it might influence future development patterns are explored.
- Third, the drivers of change at the beginning of the 21st century are scrutinised and linked to a series of speculations on the future distribution of housing in England: an attempt is made to tie new drivers to new patterns and to consider the resource implications of these patterns.
- The fourth section reflects on critical uncertainties, the big questions of our time – economic crisis, environmental risk, social-cultural shifts and the internationalisation of housing markets and population movement – that may drive change in unforeseen directions.

© 2009 Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Contents

Introduction: re-examining the 'established certainties'	S93
New planning approaches	S95
New drivers, new patterns	S96
New drivers	S96
Demographic drivers	S96
Economic drivers	S97
Socio-cultural drivers	S98
Policy-induced change	S98
Resource constraints and environmental risk	S98
New patterns	S99
Critical uncertainties	S101
Conclusions and likely advances	S101
References	S102

Introduction: re-examining the 'established certainties'

The evolving pattern of residential development observed in the UK today is in large part the product of the planning process. This process has been underpinned by a specific means of understanding growth, which itself is derived from trend-based population

[☆] While the Government Office for Science commissioned this review, the views are those of the author(s), are independent of Government, and do not constitute Government policy.

* Tel.: +44 0207 679 4841; fax: +44 0207 679 7502.

E-mail address: n.gallent@ucl.ac.uk.

projections. Because the projections build upon the current population distribution (and therefore use the prevailing distribution of physical development as a spatial reference), they invariably reinforce existing patterns of concentration and reflect the spatial fixity of past development. The biggest *in situ* growth is always in those regions – especially the South East or the West Midlands – which are already built up or which will be the potential recipients of overspill, including London's regional neighbours.

The key references for these trend-based projections are long-term, established patterns of population change which are deemed to provide a reliable basis for future planning. Less credence is given to short-term patterns. This trend-based approach to projecting future change fits well with the broad rationale for planning that evolved during the 20th century. Existing urban areas are viewed as the most suitable recipients of future development, whilst development in rural areas is seen as broadly undesirable.

Urban intensification, combined with overspill to official new towns and unofficial growth satellites, has been the defining feature of residential development for several decades. Few attempts have been made to track spatial development patterns over this period, though work by the University of Sheffield for the Countryside Agency has examined land-use change for a five-year period between 1998 and 2003, and between 2000 and 2004 for DCLG. This study confirmed 'a strong tendency for development between 1998 and 2003 to be concentrated within the urban areas', adding that 'substantial green field development [mainly comprising residential development] has occurred near (though not necessarily abutting) many urban areas (with the marked exception of London and Birmingham). Significant policy-driven green field development occurred at key growth points, but also in former coalfield belts. This latter growth seems to reflect complex settlement structures rather than representing physical expansion of the principal towns' (University of Sheffield, 2006a, p. 7). This confirms the general pattern of intensification plus near-urban overspill. However, the overall picture presented in this work is complex and not easily summarised.

Development has not been entirely confined to existing footprints (that is, to PDL or 'previously developed land') or to existing urban areas over recent years. The existence of extensive areas of green field development has already been noted. London's green belt has restricted such development around the capital, and green belt has had a similar effect around Birmingham (see above). But bands of green field development are identifiable between West Yorkshire and the West Midlands, within the Mersey Belt and in the North East. That said, considerable development pressure remained concentrated in existing built up areas, including London, though 'significant areas of housing development' emerged (or consolidated) during this period, including concentrations to the north-east of Southampton, near Bristol, York, Bournemouth and Poole, and around Telford (University of Sheffield, 2006a, p. 11). Fig. 1 shows the overall distribution of residential development in England, and is presented to show its intensity. Reworked data revealing the urban, peri-urban and rural split in residential development between 1998 and 2003 is also shown (Fig. 2).

The rural–urban divide in Fig. 2 does not equate with the more established division now used by Defra (in the 2004 classification of rural areas) and the Commission for Rural Communities. But these data confirm the broad split evident in recent development patterns: close to 90 per cent of all residential development is concentrated in urban or near-urban areas.

Projections have tended to affirm and support this clear urban–rural divide. However, projections do not simply reveal the location of future growth, but constrain that growth, as they are unable to track the complexity of population movement or reflect the aspirations of a population driven by changing attitudes and

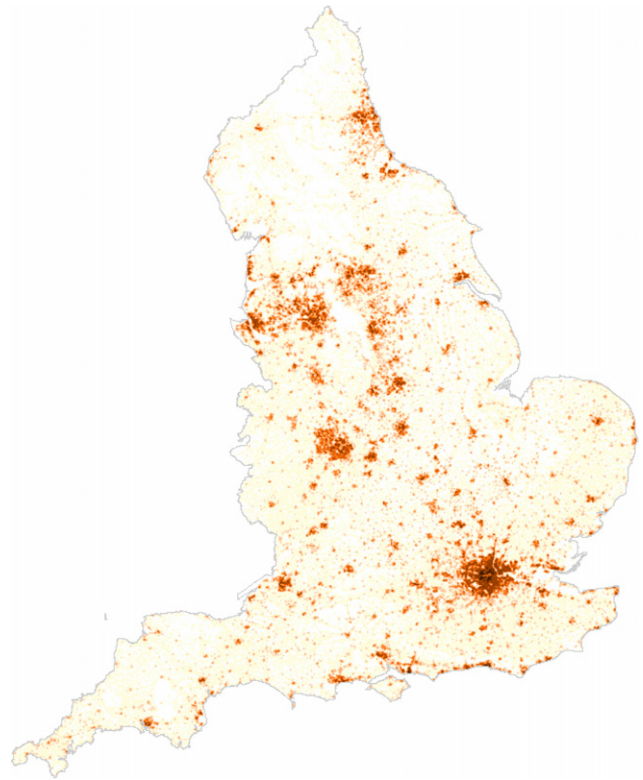


Fig. 1. Dwellings in England, by Post Code Address File (PAF) 2000; University of Sheffield, 2006b. Note: Key omitted as the map is intended to show only the broad distribution of development.

tastes towards urban living and towards the countryside. Critics of the projections argue that greater credence should be given to local assessments, as the collective desires of individuals to commute from, retire to, or work in a particular location are reflected in property prices.

Debate surrounding the utility of the projections approach really began in the mid-1990s. This debate focused on the formation of smaller households, but with some commentators questioning confidence in this trend. Today, the defining issue is international migration: how much there will be and what size of households will ultimately form from the immigrant population? The picture at the present time seems muddled and complex. New patterns of international migration – especially since the expansion of the EU in 2004 – have only recently emerged. They are generally rejected as a basis of future planning as they are not 'established trends'. But many commentators believe that once the current uncertainties dissipate, the UK will become an important recipient of settled foreign labour.

The demographic dimension is perhaps the first established certainty that needs to be questioned: the shape of future growth now seems much more fluid. But the complexities of global connectivity are not solely confined to the labour market and demographics. The global financial crisis of 2008 provides additional evidence of global interconnectedness and points to further uncertainty in the years ahead. The inherent financial and demographic uncertainties of the future should figure more prominently in our understanding of growth and the need for housing.

Planning for housing is already adjusting. Whilst Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply (HM Treasury, 2004) predated the current financial crisis, it devoted considerable attention to the interconnectedness of economic and housing systems. The headline message emerging from that review was that planning – at a

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/93765>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/93765>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)