

**10 December 2012**

### **The RTPI and planning**

1. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, with over 23,000 members who work in the public, private, charitable and education sectors. It is a charity whose purpose is to develop the art and science of town planning for the benefit of the public. The RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards, and supports members through continuous education, practice advice, training and development.
2. Planning is far more than a regulatory function. Planning facilitates the co-ordination of infrastructure provision and the delivery of sustainable economic growth. British planning is an important export to some of the fastest growing economies in world, and RTPI-accredited planning schools are internationally recognised for their expertise. Planning is central to delivering the infrastructure the country needs, which will underpin sustained and sustainable economic growth.

### **No Stone Unturned**

3. The RTPI welcomes many of the recommendations contained in No Stone Unturned. In particular, we welcome the call for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to produce long term strategies and for local authorities to be involved in this process—and welcome the Chancellor's Autumn Statement to this effect. We stress that these strategies must include larger than local issues such as housing. The RTPI also believes that there is an important role for spatial (map-based) evidence in the production of these strategies.
4. However, it is disappointing however that in some respects Lord Heseltine is still singing from exactly the same hymn sheet which he picked up in 1979 by saying: "There are countless jobs tied up in the filing cabinets of the planning machine"<sup>1</sup>. Substantial progress on the administration of planning departments has been achieved in the last thirty years. This was partly due to Lord Heseltine himself raising awareness of the issue in the first place.
5. There is now a substantial body of evidence to support the assertion that **planning facilitates growth**. For more information, please refer to the RTPI's Planning Myth Campaign<sup>2</sup>, the RTPI's 3<sup>rd</sup> briefing on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill<sup>3</sup> and the CLG Select Committee inquiry into regeneration.<sup>4</sup>

#### *footnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 4.77 No Stone Unturned <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/n/12-1213-no-stone-untuned-in-pursuit-of-growth>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/core-issues/planning-myths/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1732898/growth\\_and\\_infrastructure\\_bill\\_briefing\\_number\\_3.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1732898/growth_and_infrastructure_bill_briefing_number_3.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> CLG Select Committee Inquiry into regeneration 19 October 2011, paragraph 42 "Planning has in fact brought significant benefits to regeneration, in terms of co-ordination, community involvement and town centre preservation." <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomloc/1014/101402.htm>

## A role for spatial (map-based) evidence in fostering local growth

6. Lord Heseltine argues powerfully for the case that “local economies should be more driven by local factors.”<sup>5</sup> However, local economies are affected by larger than local issues such as transport connections, housing supply and affordability, broadband connection speed and environmental constraints such as flood risk.
7. The RTPI is keen to ensure that policy-makers have access to the best possible information when making decisions and the Institute believes that it is often easier to examine policy issues spatially (using maps). The RTPI’s Map for England project is an attempt to bring existing policies and programmes together to highlight the benefits of this approach. The RTPI, in conjunction with software specialists Idox, has made it possible to see a range of existing government plans on the Map for England pilot webpage: <http://www.idoxgroup.com/mapforengland/>
8. The value of this approach has already been demonstrated at a national level in Parliament<sup>6</sup>: both the Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, Minister of State for Business and Enterprise, and Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, Labour’s Shadow Planning Minister, drew on the Map for England’s data in the RTPI’s briefing<sup>7</sup> during discussion on Clause 7 Growth and Infrastructure Bill Committee.
9. The RTPI believes that the Map for England could also prove a powerful resource for LEPs and Local Authorities when drawing up their strategic plans.
10. Whilst still a pilot and with a limited number of datasets available, the following observations can be made when the data that is available is overlapped:
  - As Figure 1 (see appendix) shows **the East of England, Lincolnshire and the East Riding have high projected household growth, yet low LEP spend.**
  - Policy-makers need to be aware of the interplay between transport spend and projected transport growth. As the RTPI said when the HS2 route was announced: “spatial planning also has the ability to unlock growth by providing businesses and local communities with the information they need to make well informed decisions.”<sup>8</sup> The inverse is also true. Figure 2 (see appendix) shows **the proposed route of HS2 overlaps with two distinct areas of projected housing growth.** Transport spend has the potential to unlock or to blight growth—the Department for Transport, Local Authorities and LEPs must work together strategically.
  - As Figure 1 and 2 ( see appendix) seem to demonstrate **there is evidence of a spatial approach in the location of the Highways Agency Pinchpoint programme in that they are often located adjacent to areas of projected household growth.**
11. These initial findings demonstrate the utility of a Map for England and the advantages of using a spatial approach when local authorities and LEPs produce their strategic plans.

### footnotes

<sup>5</sup> Lords Hansard 6 Dec 2012 : Column 827

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/121206-0002.htm#12120659000763>

<sup>6</sup> [Page 336 of the Ninth Sitting of the Growth and Infrastructure Public Bill Committee](#) and [Page 352 of the Tenth Sitting of the Growth and Infrastructure Public Bill Committee](#)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1688774/rtpi\\_briefing\\_for\\_clause\\_7\\_of\\_growth\\_and\\_infrastructure\\_bill\\_committee\\_s\\_tage.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1688774/rtpi_briefing_for_clause_7_of_growth_and_infrastructure_bill_committee_s_tage.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2012/january/hs2-spatial-planning-has-the-ability-to-unlock-growth/>

## The Map for England project

12. Despite the generally recognised and accepted need to ensure a joined up approach to planning, infrastructure and services, there is no single place to view this information.
13. The RTPI commissioned a study as part of their Map for England campaign which showed that there are many benefits to joining up different sources of policy information. However it is not easy to compare these different maps, so the RTPI in conjunction with software specialists Idox, has put together the Map for England to help organisations visualise the impact of some existing policies and programmes.
14. The project currently has a number of layers of data including Local Authority boundaries, National Parks, projected household growth, Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, the proposed HS2 route, broadband coverage, the worst 20% areas on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010), Highways Agency Pinchpoint Programme and LEP Growing Places Funding per head.
15. The RTPI believes that in addition to assisting local and nation level policy-makers to make better informed decisions, a Map for England would have the following benefits:
  - **Helping to boost growth.** Housing, industry and business would be able to make quicker and better informed investment decisions which were more closely aligned to public sector infrastructure funding plans.
  - **Being much more transparent.** Local communities would be able to find out about how government plans affected their area and to influence them.
  - **Saving time and money.** When writing new strategies, Government departments could see the existing plans for different parts of the country and relate their new strategies to them. Datasets drive innovation.
  - **Helping to coordinate infrastructure** across borders with Scotland and Wales.

## Appendix

It is easier to see the following examples on the Map for England website:  
<http://www.idoxgroup.com/mapforengland/>

Figure 1

Figure 1 shows that the East of England, Lincolnshire and the East Riding have high projected household growth, yet low LEP spend. The Highways Agency Pinchpoint programme is also shown.

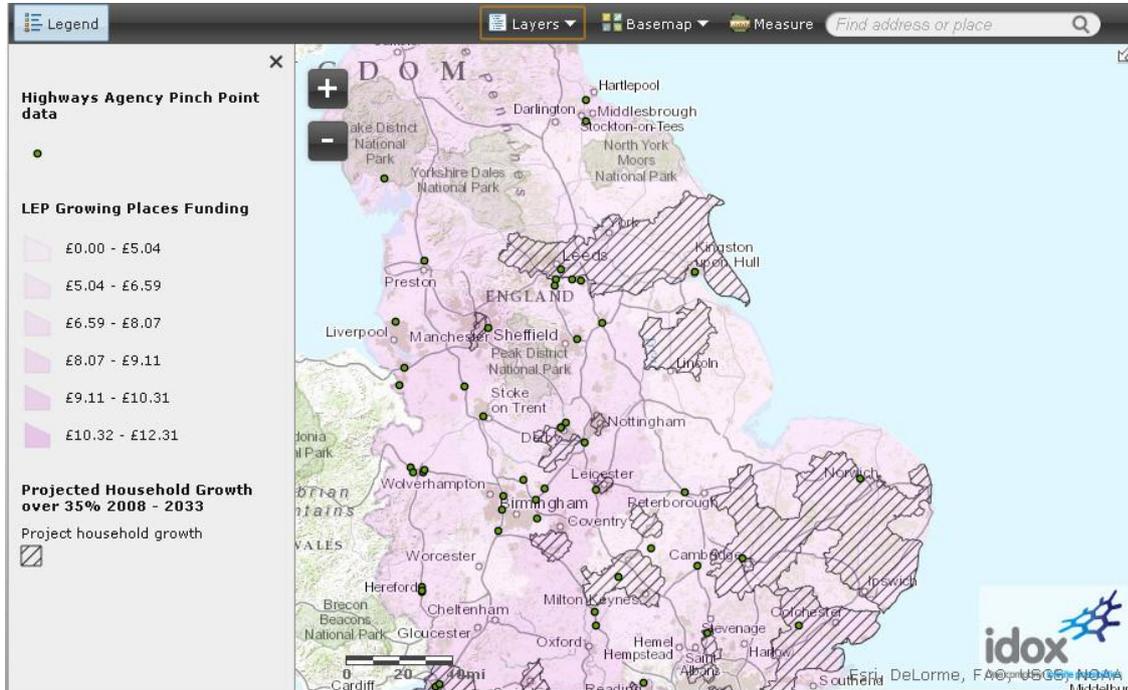
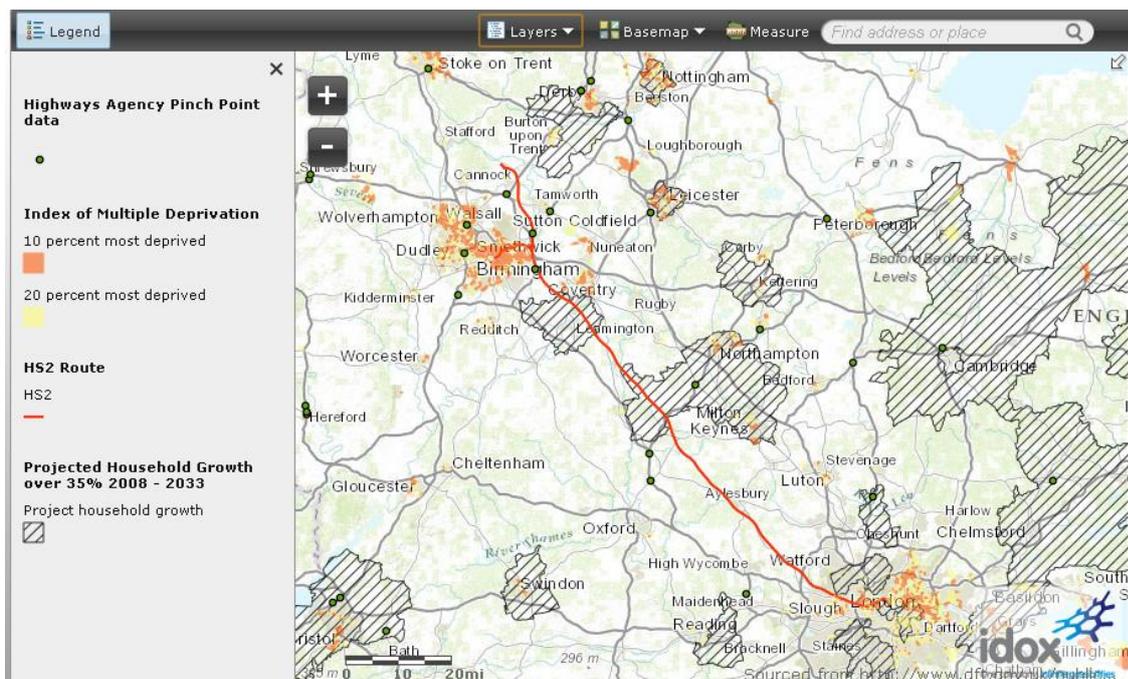


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the proposed HS2 route, the index of multiple deprivation, projected household growth and the Highways Agency Pinchpoint programme.



## Contact the RTPI

If you require more detailed information please contact the RTPI. For more information about the Map for England website, please visit

[www.mapforengland.co.uk](http://www.mapforengland.co.uk)

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