Spatial Planning, Future challenges

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• Its important to remember the spatial plan process forms part of a much bigger picture:

- The wider range of tools we have been discussing today
- The creation of the Auckland Council
- The CCOs and their relationship with the Council – strong management required?
Where did the SP come from?

• Why a spatial plan?

• What was wrong with the RPS and the district plans, why couldn't they do the job?

• Are we just ‘caught up’ with making ever newer plans, without thinking about implementation and evaluation?

• Implementation gap
Royal Commission

- The Royal Commission (RC) found that Auckland’s governance was weak and fragmented; as a result failing to address growth and infrastructure problems.

- We should note: RC basically concurred with urban limits and ‘densification’ around nodes and corridors ‘ala’ the RGS; criticism was more about making it happen.
• The RC noted there was no strategic vision for Auckland to coordinate implementation, so suggested a strategic spatial plan and a single statutory plan (unitary plan) to address this concern

• Does this mean that one plan would solve all our problems?
• So was the RC suggesting that the existing urban planning approaches were not working?

• If so, why?

• What does this say about the current state of urban planning practice in Auckland and our ability to implement plans?
The Spatial Plan

• What is a spatial plan is in the NZ context?

• Need to avoid the prospect that it becomes for all without delivering anything for anyone

• Overseas examples may some guidance?
• But do they have the same urban planning mandate and funding mechanisms?

• If not, how relevant are they to the NZ context, especially in terms of funding and implementation?

• Section 79 (LG(AC)AA 2010) provides a detailed level of guidance (maybe too detailed?)
• Can they actually be met in such a short timeframe (by June 2010)

• Do we have the funding arrangements in place and do we have central government’s buy in to the process?
New wine in old bottles

- Spatial planning should be about integrating and prioritising decision making
- Taking and using all the tools and using them to achieve the desired urban planning outcomes
- Needs to provide a clear long term vision linked to real shorter-term action; the bigger picture, but also engage with the detail
- Is as much a social process as a technical one
• Needs to explain how, in different circumstances, competing objectives can be resolved and prioritised.
• How do we hold CCOs’ to account and serve appropriate objectives wider than just their own financial imperatives?
• We need to move well beyond the rhetoric of integration; it has to become a way of working to solve problems across the organisations.
Issues

- I would argue (supported by current research) that we have a poor track record of implementing and evaluating plans in NZ

- Who knows whether their policy approaches actually worked on the ground?
• So, we appear to be more interested in constructing plans than implementing them.
• Is making them happen some else's problem?
• Catkins (1979) – Plan fatigue is not new
• How do we address the implementation gap?
Relationships

• What is the relationship between the RPS and the district plan with the spatial plan?
• This is especially relevant in the period between the delivery of the spatial plan and new unitary plan (I think three years maybe optimistic)
• More importantly how can a non-statutory plan with limited community engagement which has not faced the statutory process effectively influence a statutory plan?
• E.g., in terms of resources consents, is this going to be a s104(1)(c) issue?

• If so, how does this lead to integrated decision making?
commitment

- Do we have the commitment (including resources) to give effect to the spatial plan?
- Internationally you find higher levels of either state or central government; or other funding mechanisms (sales taxes) to fund their spatial plan outcomes
- The spatial plan will not work without serious commitment from all levels of government, especially central government
Conclusions

• Still clarifying what a spatial plan is in the NZ context
• Will the spatial plan be a significant improvement, or there is a risk it becomes another box we tick to remain in the ‘globally important city’ club?
• Are the time frames too tight, should the first spatial plan be like a draft, a test run to get it right?
• There are many challenges ahead in delivering this plan

• Are we up to it?

• Is there sufficient capacity & commitment to deliver a meaningful plan capable of effective implementation that will make a real difference in the medium term?
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