



HOUSE OF LORDS

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Inquiry on

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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Questions 1 - 12

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10.40 am

Witnesses: Professor Rachel Cooper OBE, Dr Richard Simmons and Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

1. This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Members present

Baroness O’Cathain (Chairman)
 Baroness Andrews
 Lord Clement-Jones
 Baroness Finlay of Llandaff
 Lord Freeman
 Lord Inglewood
 Earl of Lytton
 Baroness Parminter
 Baroness Rawlings
 Baroness Whitaker
 Lord Woolmer of Leeds
 Baroness Young of Old Scone

Examination of Witnesses

Professor Rachel Cooper OBE, Professor of Design Management, Lancaster University, **Dr Richard Simmons**, Former Chief Executive, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 2004-11, and **Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones**, Professor of Town Planning, Newcastle University

Q1 The Chairman: Good morning and welcome. I have already welcomed two of you. I particularly welcome you, Dr Simmons, because you were not waiting outside, so to speak. It is very good of you to give up the time. It is for us an exciting opportunity and an exciting day, because it is the first of our formal witness sessions. We have still not produced the call for evidence or issued a press notice on it, because we have had all sorts of complications with this Committee, which we do not need to go into; I am very happy with the Committee we have. You have had your copy of the questions. A list of the interests of all the Members has been declared and they are in front of you. As this is our first meeting, Members who have interests to declare will also need to read them into the record—they have already been made aware of that—before they ask their question. A transcript of the meeting will be taken and published on the Committee website, and you will have the opportunity to make corrections to the transcript where necessary. Before I ask the first question, would you please introduce yourselves?

Professor Cooper: I am a professor of design management and policy at Lancaster University. My research over the last 20 years has been concerned with the built environment,

particularly design decision-making and the people who make design decisions: not just designers but planners, policymakers, developers—anybody involved in creating the urban environment and, indeed, all sorts of other products and services. I have looked at agendas such as sustainability, resilience, well-being and liveability generally in cities. At the moment I am doing a five-year study on liveable cities. I focus mainly on well-being and the physical environment. I am currently a member of the lead expert group for the Foresight programme on the future of cities. I am also a non-executive board member of the Future Cities Catapult. A lot of my work at the moment is about the future of cities. I have also done a very detailed piece of work on density and the built environment.

Dr Simmons: I am Richard Simmons. I am a chartered town planner and I am currently practising as a consultant and as visiting lecturer at the Bartlett School of Planning at UCL. Until recently I was visiting professor of city design and regeneration at the University of Greenwich, and before that I was chief executive of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment while it was a statutory body. When I speak about it, if I do later, I will refer to “statutory CABE” or “CABE”. By that I mean as it was when I ran it, as opposed to how it is now as a charity. My interests are town planning, design, master planning and the way in which the built environment can be improved.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Good morning. I am professor of town planning at Newcastle University. I am also director of Newcastle City Futures, which relates to the Foresight future of cities programme and is a collaborative arrangement between the city council, the universities, the local enterprise partnership and the private sector in Newcastle to think about the vision for Newcastle’s future. My areas of expertise are in relation to governance, politics and planning, and I have some interest in housing and economic development. I served on the Government Office for Science’s Foresight land use futures project between 2008 and 2010, and I now lead a Newcastle demonstrator project as part of the Foresight future of cities programme in Newcastle.

Q2 The Chairman: Thank you. As you are all very busy people, I thank you very much for giving up your time. I hope you did not have too difficult a journey.

I am asking the first question. What are the main built-environment challenges that we are currently facing and how might these change in the near future? How ready are we for the demographic changes, such as migration and ageing, climate changes and increasing

resource demands? You could spend two hours answering that, but I am afraid we do not have that time, so we need really good, pithy, quick answers.

Professor Cooper: In my experience over the last 20 years, and most recently on the Foresight programme, we have a lack of foresight ability at both national and local level. Thinking about the demographic change—the increasing population—is a challenge. A lot of smaller cities do not have policy units. They really do not know how to address it and often do not think in the long term; they have a small planning department that is concerned with planning today and they do not think about the future. Alongside that, we have the capacity to look at statistics and data—satellite data, land use—but the ability to access that data, use it and make intelligent decisions is quite challenging.

Dr Simmons: I would like to pick up on the question of how we get lots of new housing built in ways that are going to make places attractive to live in. At the moment we are short of both skills and the ability to think strategically about how to provide a new built environment that will be more than just a repetition—but with housing for sale—of the kinds of out-of-town estates that we used to build historically. This is both about the quality of the places where people live when they get new housing and about how we decide where to put those new houses strategically. Those are two of the really big issues.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: I am interested in the relationships between the different sectors. If we know the population is increasing and that we are going to have an ageing society, what is the implication for housing, for infrastructure and for the built environment? What are the assets—I do not mean economic alone; I mean social and resource assets as well—that can be identified in places and could perhaps be capitalised on by individual local authorities and others? Where, then, are the intelligence gaps and the data gaps? As Professor Cooper highlighted, local authority planning departments are a shadow of their former selves these days; they have been hollowed out. The question then is: where does the intelligence and data come from to inform policy-making and to create some advantage for places to shape their own future? In Newcastle, the university has stepped into that vacuum to some extent by providing the expertise and the knowledge, but there is intelligence, there is mapping and there is data, and it is essential that the public consultation—the democratic element—is there as well. At what stages are the public, citizens and businesses given an opportunity to come in and discuss those opportunities? Last and by no means least are issues to do with governance and policy. Having worked on

the land use futures project, I recall how governance and policy operates: it is through different sectors and silos. Places do not work in that way; they work the other way. That is why it is important to get those intersections on the ground: to overcome the silo issues that are apparent in policy and governance areas. At national level you can tick all the boxes and say, “Economic growth, social and environmental”, but on the ground there are trade-offs.

The Chairman: You must have a secret plan yourself.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: I wish I did have a secret plan—or at least if I did that anyone would take notice of it.

The Chairman: This is a completely British problem at the moment, where there is silo management in everything. You are steeped in all this and you obviously care about the people who are going to be living in these places, how they are going to be living, the feel-good factor, et cetera. You must have come up with some radical views. Are you going to share them?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: “Treading carefully on eggshells” seems to be the most appropriate phrase I can use. Essentially, you have to build coalitions. There has been some advantage in being an academic and in Newcastle for only three years—I will not be an honorary Geordie for decades yet. Nevertheless, as a new kid on the block I have gone in and talked to different institutions, different groups and politicians and played a bit of naivety, to some extent, to get them to work together and think together. That is the first stage. Then it is about starting to bring the public in. There may be not only silo mentalities but an element of suspicion and mistrust on the part of different organisations working together. Get the public involved. Start with visual exercises about facing the future. The public are steeped in knowledge about the concerns of places. On the back of that, you can start to persuade hearts and minds to come on board and share some of the ideas. Only at that stage can you really put some what you might call innovative ideas on the table about how you overcome a silo mentality through social innovation and linking age into housing, into digital and so on. That is when people start to see the potential.

Professor Cooper: I totally support that. I have done the same thing. I have embedded research fellows in local authorities to look at how they behave in planning, retrospectively and prospectively. You do need these facilitators at different levels of policy-making. In local authorities there is often a lack of relationship between the transport department and the planning department and so on, and you need another role. Some cities, like Manchester,

have a policy unit and do foresighting—they think ahead—but if you are a small place, like Preston or Lancaster, the ability to do that is limited and you need that facilitator, that integrator. We have engaged with the public too. At Lancaster University we did an 18-month engagement with 3,000 people talking about the future of a part of Lancaster. You get a very detailed and thick report, but somebody then has to interpret it and make intelligent decisions that cross the whole policy domain locally and regionally and then nationally. We do not seem to have many of those sorts of people.

Dr Simmons: I want to pick up your point, or the one that you implied, about international comparisons. I did a research project with an American charity for the Government of Singapore a couple of years ago. We tend to think about ageing in terms of care and so on. The Government of Singapore wanted to benchmark the whole of Singapore against five global cities, including London, to find out if their built environment was good enough for people who are ageing, because they have an ageing population. We came up with a methodology to compare Taipei, London, Chicago and a number of other cities to find out which were best prepared for providing things like access, so you could get from your home to the shops or to the doctor's surgery. It is important to look at what people are doing internationally. It is quite hard sometimes—the translation is difficult—but that was a way of thinking about the built environment and ageing outside the silos.

The Chairman: Absolutely right. Is there any chance that we can have a copy of that, or excerpts or articles about it?

Dr Simmons: I can share the methodology. The Government of Singapore have not, as far as I know, put it in the public domain, although it did show that Singapore was way ahead of the rest of us.

The Chairman: As it is in everything, apparently. There is just one question from me before I pass to Baroness Andrews. You were talking about getting the public involved. We have done quite a lot of work here in the House of Lords about getting schoolchildren involved to tell them what we are all about. I wonder if architects, construction companies, builders or designers have ever gone in a group to schools or said to the Department for Education, “Why do you not do it?”, or, “Why do you not facilitate it?”—a lot of manufacturers do things like this, and they have an eye to the main chance—i.e. making sure that people are interested and have the skills and can join them. It is just a thought and I am not going to hog it.

Q3 Baroness Andrews: Good morning. I need to declare my interests before I ask questions. I am a vice-president, like many people, of the National Parks association; president of the Friends of Lewes, which is where I live; trustee of the Prince's Regeneration Trust; and ex-chair of English Heritage, which is not on the list.

My question has been slightly overtaken, Chair, by some of the answers that have already come. You have described the role of Foresight and its land use futures and cities programmes and so on, and the importance of getting additional intelligence. That in a way is part of the answer to the question, "Are the problems long-standing?", because these are long-standing problems that deal with intelligence, information and lack of capacity to analyse what is going wrong. I am going to turn the question around a little, because I know you have had this. Of those problems, which do you think we are least informed about and which are the least well understood? Where could the Committee look to draw out some positive recommendations? Is there a need for more information in particular areas?

A supplementary question is: are we being taken by surprise at the moment by any changes in the planning landscape or the local authority landscape that are making the systemic difficulties more intense?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: We are aware of the trends in each sector. There is a difference between whether that knowledge of the trends is then informing policy development at national level and how it is being dealt with on the ground locally. Perhaps in the absence of cross-cutting national policy or spatial visioning, that does not mean to say that nothing is happening on the ground in individual places. There is a lot of entrepreneurship on the part of local authorities where they are able to work with others in identifying the problems, overcoming them and identifying opportunities for working with others to address some of these problems. What is missing is a geographical perspective—a spatial perspective—from national policy, which would reveal where the critical geographies are, for want of a better phrase. In other words, some of these trends are more problematic in some areas of England and Wales than in others. For example, if you take parts of England where we think there is going to be a great increase in population in the next 30 years, we roughly know the areas that will receive that population. It will be an arc that will stretch all the way from the Wash down through Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire to Hampshire. That is the corridor for population growth over the next 30 years. If you then add in other sectors—this is not necessarily a popular thing to do in Whitehall, believe me—such as climate change

threat, the threat of rising sea levels or grade 1 agricultural land, you realise that you are talking about the same area. You are talking about predominantly, say, the Fens. Naturally, it is the best agricultural area because it is drained, but it is also a growth area in terms of population and therefore of housing demand. It has an incredible amount of infrastructure associated with it that might be vulnerable to rising sea levels. There is no perspective in Whitehall that puts all those different departmental sectors and policy areas together to look at specific geographies of vulnerability. That is where the geography—the spatial element—could come in. If you go to that area, there are local authorities and others that are working on some of these issues because they need to. Even if there is an absence in policy terms, they are still working on these things on the ground. So there is the geography: the spatial element.

In the future, increasingly maybe under devolution, how do you make the public an integral part of discussions about long-term change across areas that are larger than communities or individual local authorities? That is where the issues lie.

The Chairman: Is that not something that could be batted back to you as a group of professionals, like the point I made about schools and talking to the public about it?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Indeed, yes.

Baroness Andrews: It sounds as if you are regretting the loss of the regional spatial strategies. Would that make a big difference?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: My view of the regional spatial strategies is that they were an essential part that captured all these different trends in a synoptic way. Unfortunately, the plans became dominated by the housing numbers issue, and with their loss we lost a great deal of other essential intelligence work associated with them, to the point where there is now a vacuum in strategic thinking at local authority level.

Dr Simmons: Another area where we have a gap in policy understanding is in the rapid pace of change outside the built environment and how it impacts on the built environment. Things are changing faster and faster, but the built environment moves at a fairly glacial pace, and unfortunately policy does, too. Combined with that, we have an issue about not fully understanding policy risk and reward. At the moment, we spend a very long time worrying about building airports and railways, if I can pick two random examples. I am just about to go off to Japan and there is no debate about high-speed anything there; you just

get on the Nozomi Shinkansen. We struggle to keep our built environment policies up to speed.

In terms of the regional spatial strategies, I would say that there was a benefit in bringing together something like a regional development agency and a regional planning something. I know that “regional” is not necessarily a word that people like to use, but something larger than local where you connected the economic into the spatial. There is a positive there. We need to be able to do things much faster and to change our plans more in the way software gets updated, so that rather than updating the whole operating system we update parts of it.

Professor Cooper: I would advocate not so much a strategy that is set in stone but a national vision that can be interpreted as the context demands locally or regionally. One of the other things is exactly what you were talking about, Mark: interdependency. We really do need to understand the social, economic and environmental interdependencies and all those factors at a national, regional and local level—just to sum up that answer.

Lord Inglewood: I will not declare my interests now. What you are saying is both very abstract and very complicated, but is it getting anybody anywhere? Are we just bogged down in a cat’s cradle of systems and consultations and processes controlling change, and as a result nothing much happens?

Professor Cooper: Interesting. There are lots of systems and processes. If you look at the national policy framework and the guidance, there is an enormous amount of guidance and processes that are available that a lot of people do not use, do not understand or do not integrate. Maybe we need a radical look at all those intervening factors and to change the structures in some way. For instance, lots of neighbourhoods are producing their own neighbourhood plans on a very local scale. They do very well, I would say, if they have some active residents who get involved, who are skilled enough to contribute to a plan, who can develop a survey as volunteers, and they produce a neighbourhood plan that can go into a local authority plan. Some places are really pushing forward with their neighbourhood plans without a wider regional scale and without a wider simple vision. There are all sorts of stipulations about the environment, social aspects and economic aspects, but people look at a local level and do not have a simple, straightforward vision at a national level. We may need to un-complicate the systems.

Dr Simmons: The inverse of your question would be that sometimes those systems enable difficult decisions, which are political decisions, not to be taken. There is a quid pro quo: if we had better and simpler systems—which I agree we need, and when I was at CABE I argued very strongly for simplifying both planning and building control—we would also need decisions and decisiveness. As I said in my submission, there are many wicked issues. The built environment itself is a complex cat's cradle, both of systems and of politics, so you have to find a way of addressing that.

Lord Inglewood: What you are saying is that you want politicians with guts.

Dr Simmons: And to get to decisions quicker and to take them. I recognise that that is really tough in this environment.

Professor Cooper: And the potential to take innovative approaches. We still build houses in the same way we have always built houses, but there are all sorts of methods, such as using offsite manufacture, and quicker ways of doing it.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: There is also the issue of governance. As well as systems and policies, you have a multitude of different agencies that have to work together in order for development to be delivered. That sometimes causes the delay in the system—the fragmented nature of governance between landowners, developers, local authorities, the public, utility companies and numerous transport operators, all of whom have their own strategies and their own plans. For specific projects, they have to come together and work together. This is about overcoming some of the wicked problems that Richard mentioned that relate to the institutional landscape that we find ourselves in today.

Q4 Lord Clement-Jones: My question is about understanding the policy failures of the past. Was there ever a golden age? Have we ever got it right?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: In the past things were easier, one might say, when fewer institutions were involved, but I am not advocating turning the clock back to some golden post-war era. I do not think it was golden anyway, to be honest; there were difficulties even at that stage. If you look at analysis of the evidence of the impact of policies over different time periods, you will see similar problems occurring, albeit in a different context. In the 1950s, for example, the policies of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government expected towns to prepare development plans for the future—20-year futures—on the belief that people would live and work in the same place, while the Ministry of Transport simultaneously rolled out the motorway programme, which encouraged people to work in a

different place from where they lived. One policy effectively cancelled out another policy in specific localities. It is in the nature of the land problem and of the built environment and flows over land where these things happen. We do not run away from them; we address them, but there will always be another set of issues that we have to pick up at some point in the future. What is lacking today is the policy evidence. There has been a hollowing-out of research on the impact of policy. That has gone. There are no CLG research projects any more that evaluate the impact of policy.

Lord Freeman: I am expecting a very quick answer from Professor Tewdwr-Jones. Would you encourage this Committee to look at the structure of central government and the cross-cutting responsibilities? For example, this area from the Wash down to the south coast is covered by at least five different ministries. Should we focus on that particular issue?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: At the end of the land use futures project, we suggest that this can be co-ordinated only by the Cabinet Office. It cannot be co-ordinated by different spending departments; we need a synoptic vision of the spatial impact of their different policies. From that point of view, I agree that a strategic vision, as Rachel highlighted, that was centrally located would be of benefit. It might actually save on cost later on as well.

The Chairman: Before we move on to the next question, I leave you with the wonderful picture of Coventry and of Ground Zero: the two “born out of disaster” types of issue? One is fantastic and one has to be knocked down.

Q5 Baroness Finlay of Llandaff: If I may, I will start off with my interest, which is in the health and well-being of people. That is why I have declared that I am incoming chair of the National Council for Palliative Care: because of things like hospice and hospital design and the impact on the way patients respond to illness and how families cope with dealing with it. I am also clinical lead for palliative care for Wales, and we see the long-term effects of poor housing and so on. I also have to declare that I am personally involved in a planning dispute, which is not the nice end of things.

We really wanted to ask you about the buildings that we build today that will be our future heritage and whether what we have now from the last 30 years of commercial and residential developments will have any kind of legacy value and whether it will be able to adapt to changing needs, so we particularly want to ask you about the long-term survival of buildings, energy efficiency and use, and the use to which those buildings are put and how you see that.

If I might I will just throw in that listening to the previous discussion I began to wonder whether there needs to be almost a national vision for what our built environment should be achieving in all the different areas that people are signed up to. In different areas in life in the country we have mission statements and so on, but there does not seem to be any common agreed purpose as to where our built environment is going and what we intend to leave behind.

Professor Cooper: There is a lot there. From the point of view of the housing stock, I did a study about six or seven years ago of various buildings in parts of Clerkenwell. What was revealed was that the older buildings—let us not take the sustainability and energy aspect, because that is another issue—were much more flexible for different types of families. The newer buildings were one-bedroom apartments, probably not very well built, that were not flexible if a family wanted to stay there and were probably okay for young people but not necessarily for the older generation. Developers, I have found in various other studies, tend to what I would call value-engineer out issues to do with sustainability such as social sustainability—anything that might be put in by planners or regulation that say, “Build it this way for the long term”. If costs or profit margins come into it, they tend to value-engineer those out, because they can. That is one thing about the stock that is currently being built, particularly when it is dense too—when they are building a lot in one area.

The other issue is health and well-being in communities. Local authorities now have the responsibility for public health. I am not sure they think about the relationship between their role in delivering public health and social care and the design and development of their cities. They do not connect those two. They now have to deal with the social care and public health and the funds they have for it, and they are making decisions about the walkability, the accessibility and the green spaces in their local communities without thinking about the impact on health and well-being in the long term.

Another piece of work that I am just about to start on is looking at how we think about where healthcare is provided spatially in cities. Often local authorities do not think about that. We have had this concentration of healthcare in the bigger hospitals, but then we talk about beds being blocked because there is nowhere locally for older people to go. Again, spatial thinking and planning about where we place and deliver healthcare that will not always be telecare for people in their homes but will be community hospitals for people who

are not blocking beds in acute hospitals has not been undertaken. I think that answers some of your questions.

Dr Simmons: If you move on from housing to the commercial world, a lot depends on whether you think that in, say, the next 30 to 50 years the private car and the lorry will be the dominant modes of getting around. Over the last 30 years, we have moved a very large amount of retailing out to the periphery and have put it into relatively short-life—I would imagine—tin sheds quite a lot of the time, and we have built huge distribution depots on motorway junctions, so we are now pretty dependent on that lifestyle. People who do not have access to a private car are seeing their city centres and town centres hollowed out and do not have the same access to retail opportunities unless they go online. Then we are pushing lots of vehicles back into town to deliver from these out-of-town centres. I would say as somebody who uses those services myself that they are very convenient if you have a car and a computer, but I doubt that they are really very sustainable for the long term. I also doubt their environmental sustainability. If we can move to a form of movement that does not require us to put carbon into the atmosphere, which we may do—at the moment even electric cars do that, just from a power station rather than from the car—there may be something to be said for it. But if the economy changes radically around the internet, even more so than it has done already, we may find ourselves with lots of empty or unmarketable sheds around the outside of towns as well as inside towns. If manufacturing goes to smaller locations using new technologies like 3D printing and so on, we might find ourselves with quite a lot of legacy that we do not know what to do with. That is a pessimistic scenario. There may be more optimistic ones that no doubt Mark will be able to give us.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: I was just going to comment on the health and planning relationship. Quite a lot of work has been undertaken over the last six years or so on planning for health and looking at, say, planning out obesogenic environments or how young people use public spaces and certainly public squares, and whether alcohol is involved. Quite a lot of work has been done to try to overcome some of those problems through policy development work and evidence base. I was involved with a NICE group called the Spatial Planning and Health Group, which sat from 2009 until we were abolished in 2010, and with a Department of Health/CLG-funded report on spatial planning and health that reported in 2010 as well. Unfortunately, that came out at a time when the policy backing at national level to encourage planners and health professionals to work together basically went. The

work has continued on the ground. There are some very interesting groups such as the Spatial Planning and Health Group, and there is some very innovative local authority work such as in Tower Hamlets, where the different professionals are working together on these issues, but, unfortunately, without the national policy legitimisation it is difficult in some cases to persuade practitioners on the ground to work together to address these problems.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff: Can I just follow up on that with my question to you about a national vision and whether you feel that there needs to be some very clear health-related requirement within buildings? I am horrified by the number of times in new hotels you cannot find the stairs—they are only fire escapes—whereas going up and down the stairs would be a good thing. Having been a GP in an area with high-rise blocks, I know perfectly well what happens when the lift does not work and you are trying to go up the back stairs, which are awful. I just wonder whether there are some very simple things that would be energy efficient and would switch behaviours of people without having any kind of major cost implication, really, or government involvement.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: There is a desire at national level to address place and well-being. Those are the most appropriate phrases, not “planning”. As soon as you say “planning”, people immediately think construction and development and change of use. It is about a larger perspective of the contribution of well-being and place. There might be economic development potential and there is certainly planning housing potential of doing so. On the ground, that could be addressed through changes to building regulations for example requiring certain standards, and the threshold could be raised accordingly. But you need that awareness. In Scotland, its national spatial planning framework and land-use strategy deliberately address issues like well-being, health and education, which in a narrow statutory sense are not planning issues. Technically they are not planning issues. If you address them from a spatial planning perspective, you can suddenly say, “It all relates to place, it all relates to the well-being of communities”, so it is a legitimate issue—addressing how these problems relate to the opportunities through design, planning and so on. That is a way of bringing different Ministers together around the Cabinet table.

Q6 Baroness Andrews: It is another example of the failure of integration and it picks up on the demographic point about an ageing society. It is what you said, Professor Cooper, essentially. It is a bigger picture. We need to plan for ageing, not just to solve bed blocking but to plan for a whole range of options within the housing supply system, so that houses

are flexible enough for people to age in place as well as having specialised housing for people who are frail and dependent and have different sorts of needs. We began to address this issue in CLG some years ago, but, like the health and the housing integration, it has tended to collapse. My question is: what could drive the policy changes here? We are beginning to articulate the notion of a national idea. With the well-being boards, could we incentivise local authorities to begin to have a bigger sense of place creation, particularly in relation to demography?

Professor Cooper: Yes, we should. It is about designing and planning for the life course of communities. It is a mode of thinking of interdisciplinarity, integration and planning through the life course, and enabling communities to take on foresight. Often communities think about now or tomorrow or five years and do not understand the long-term implications for them and their communities and their children. I spoke at the Cheltenham Science Festival a few weeks ago and I did something for the public—10 tips for designing a healthy city. Somebody left and said, “We are doing the marketplace in Cheltenham. I am going to take your 10 tips”. That was a member of the public. It is complex—planning regulations are complex—but you can make it easier for people to understand some of the basic principles of designing places for the long term and help people to engage in it without it feeling burdensome.

Dr Simmons: I am slightly concerned that we have not mentioned the market at all yet. The market is very important as probably the major provider of the built environment. In this context I once saw a scheme that was half housing association and half private sector. The scheme had smaller doors in the private sector part. That is because the house builder had bought a shedload of doors but the housing association specified a larger door. That is a market issue and there are only two ways to deal with that: one is by regulation and the other is by the market dealing with it. In Canada, the mortgage companies insist on certain standards before they will mortgage a property, including things like larger doors. They have their own building regulations through the mortgage companies. It seems to me that before we fall back just on regulation we should think about whether there are market mechanisms that we can use to drive change as well.

Q7 Baroness Young of Old Scone: I really just want to make things more complicated. I thought that the debate about health and the built environment and planning was very good, but then there is replication if you bring in the green environment, future-proofing

against climate change or land-use constraint. Are we at the point where this thing is now too complicated to be decided at a local level?

Professor Cooper: Some solutions work in both ways. Green spaces support health and well-being. Some recommendations will work across those complex dimensions, but again there are some competing issues. Increased density to reduce going into the green belt, and density around interchanges—train stations—in the built environment works because in some senses it reduces movement, travel, energy use, et cetera. On the other hand, if it is not designed well and built well and does not have access to green spaces and views, it affects our physical and mental health, sense of crowding, fear of crime, et cetera. We still have to understand those interdependencies and find mechanisms to do that. With visualisation and new technology we can do some of that modelling. That does not mean that it remains in the domain of the professionals who can understand the intelligent, but visualising these issues and doing them in such a way that the communities can get involved is very important.

Dr Simmons: I have experience of working with communities on these kinds of projects. I have worked, for example, in inner-city Hackney on the reconstruction of a housing estate with people who have very poor educational opportunities in the first place. Two of them got degrees at the end of the process of involving them. It is about engaging people with information. They knew why they were poor. What they lacked was agency—the ability to address that. They were also able to understand more complex issues, interestingly, than their councillors. What is needed is resource, because you cannot have that kind of conversation just by turning up and saying, “Here is a plan. What do you think of it?”. You have to sit down with people, go through all the issues they are dealing with, leave some of them at the door and deal with the ones you have to address. It requires resource, which we do not provide at the moment.

Q8 Baroness Whitaker: Still with the concept of better place-making. I declare my interests as honorary fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, president of the South Downs Society, and president of the Newhaven Historical Society close to where I live.

We have the impression that most of the professionals have place-making pretty clearly in their minds. It is certainly very evident in the Farrell review, and Professor Cooper has drawn our attention to the pros and cons of urban density. I will not read out her extremely good text on it, because we have all had it. But those who are not professionally expert in this

area perhaps have not yet come to it—and I do not exclude politicians from this. My question is really about the process of improving decision-making and the capacity of those making decisions. How can we ensure that new developments respect their surroundings and improve the area in which they are sited, and how do you foster a sense of community and place both in the residents, which is not so hard, and in those who make the official decisions?

Dr Simmons: You are right; we know a lot about making good places, and I think we have all provided some information for you on that. You are also right to point at decision-makers, because places arise as a result of a series of decisions, some of which are quite small, such as someone putting up a garden shed and it annoys their neighbour, and some of them are extremely large, such as somebody building an airport near you. Those are all decisions that affect the quality of place. As my colleagues at UCL have said, a degree of subsidiarity is required. You have to decide where you are going to make those decisions.

The first thing is to be clear about where those decisions get taken, who has the right to take them and who has the right to contribute to them. I do not think we are always clear about that. Dealing with that issue first would enable you to get an honest conversation going. Going back to my previous comment, the second thing is that everybody needs information. We now have access to masses of data and to huge numbers of case studies about how to do things well, but not everybody gets at it and not everybody gets it.

The second thing is for us to provide people with data and information. The third is to enable people to have the skills they require. That does not mean that you have to train to be an architect. If you think about it, the built environment is the one thing we all understand, probably, because we spend all our time in it—we are in it now—so we are all experts. The question is how we extract that expertise. At CABI we ran a programme called Design Review. At the end of it, I started to get my team to engage local people on the Design Review panel. They were initially resistant. They said, “Well, they are not experts”. They came back from the first review and said, “It was fantastic. They are real experts on their locality”. I said, “Yes, obviously”. It is important to be honest with people and to say, for example, “We need 3,000 new homes and we are going to have 3,000 new homes, I am afraid. I am sorry about that. Now we want you to help us to produce the best result”. Or, alternatively, “How do you feel about having 3,000 homes?”. People often ask the wrong question. My final point is: ask the right questions.

Professor Cooper: I did a study of decision-making in local authorities, retrospectively over 20 years and 10 years, and prospectively. Multiple parties get involved in decision-making, but often they do not understand where they are in the process and they do not know what the values are that they are bringing to the table. I looked at a prospective process of decision-making in Salford and nobody ever mentioned sustainability when they were starting to make decisions such as who they selected to do the strategic plan, and they did not articulate as a group at the beginning what their values were. This comes back to a national and local vision. What are your values for a place? What do you want to achieve? If you do not have that at the beginning, you cannot work out who you are choosing, what decisions you are making and why you would make those decisions. You cannot track them back. We need to have a clear understanding of the process that people are going through and when they need to articulate the values and the criteria on which they are making decisions—the politicians and what I would call the decision-makers, the decision-takers and the decision-informers. There are different groups of people making decisions: the local community, the planning officers and developers. They sometimes really do not understand their roles in that process.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: I have had experience of working in rural areas enacting innovative public participatory processes for communities. In the Brecon Beacons, 34 villages were covered with “planning for real” exercises. I have also worked in inner-city areas of Newcastle undertaking the same sort of work. It strikes me that in planning and policy-making the current terms are very much on consultation of existing strategies and existing processes. In other words, it is not a blank bit of paper. We need to move to a process of participation, so you start to enact processes that are very much on the terms of the communities, not necessarily on the terms of the experts. That is the first stage.

Then there is the issue of the translation of community desires and community voices into something more meaningful through the policy process. You need experts to be able to do that translation—the mediation. In neighbourhood planning and localism around England at the moment, a whole industry has emerged very rapidly in training to be a mediator in the translation of the community desires into a neighbourhood plan where suddenly there are constraints—legal constraints, difficulties of policy wording and statutory constraints. The mediator becomes an essential person to do that. It could be a planner, it could be someone else. It could be an architect. It could be someone who is not trained in the built

environment but who understands the policy syntax of use here. From an academic point of view, we started to look in architecture and planning at whether there is a necessity to train up place leaders—not planners, not architects, not civil engineers, not surveyors but place leaders—who have some skills in the mediation and the translation, who understand where the public are coming from, who understand businesses but who understand the wider issues to do with infrastructure, land acquisition and all the wicked problems that are associated with delivery on the ground. I am not saying that we are producing a super-professional here, but someone with a clear understanding of the difficulties and complexities. That is probably what is needed in the future, and existing professional disciplinary areas in universities, such as planning and architecture, will have to go through revised curriculum design to take account of that.

Baroness Whitaker: That is a very interesting suggestion. I have come across organisations that do that, but we ought to develop that. I have a two-part supplementary, if I may. It would be helpful to us—and if you have one on the stocks already, maybe you could send it in; if not, maybe the secretariat will be able to help—to have a map of decision-making as it works now, not as it has happened in the past but what it is really like. We also would find it extremely useful if you have any good and bad examples of, say, density in urban areas: places where the decisions have worked well, places where the community—perhaps New Islington in Manchester—have really come in. It would be very helpful to us to be able to explain our points to our audience later on.

Lord Inglewood: Professor Tewdwr-Jones, you were talking about developing community thinking and community ideas and then you suddenly dropped in the need for the mediator because of the conflict between policy and community. That is crucial, because policy is top-down and community is bottom-up. If you happen to be a community in a nice village somewhere, for example, where they are proposing to build a new town, that community is going to get rolled over. It is a nice idea, but is it realistic?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: There has to be a meeting of minds.

Lord Inglewood: But in most of the world there is no meeting of minds.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Of course. You are dealing with land and you are dealing with a scarce resource. Land is either a resource or a commodity, depending on which side you look at it. Those issues will never go away when 90% of the land is owned by 10% of the people of the UK. I am not advocating a change in that, incidentally, but there will always be the need

for mediation. When Stevenage new town was designated in 1946 there was enormous opposition to it from the locals, not surprisingly, who did not want to see concrete put down near them. That has never gone away. Your Lordships will probably know about nimbyism. I am sure you know about BANANA—“build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone”—as a mantra, increasingly so these days. People will give their opinions about development irrespective of whether they live near a development these days as well. It is a democratic right, you could argue, but there has to be a meeting of minds. Planners are currently performing the role of mediator, but they are caught as well in having to take account of national policy requirements, local core strategy policy requirements, and infrastructure and land-ownership constraints, along with the desires of the public. That is not to say that we should not do that. We should acknowledge and be honest with the community about where there is discretion and where there are limits to what can be done. So, there are issues of principles, there are issues of design and there are issues of delivery. The public can be involved with any one of those stages, but let us not pretend that the public have *carte blanche* over all those areas; there will have to be some constraints.

Q9 Baroness Rawlings: Good morning and thank you for your clear explanations. My declaration of interest is that I am a trustee of Chevening in Kent. I have been listening very carefully to what you have been saying. The word “sustainability” seems to keep cropping up. Professor Tewdwr-Jones, you have written that you prefer to use “resilience”, yet Dr Simmons is using “lasting”. I wondered perhaps if we could clarify “sustainability”, and I wondered who you thought would be responsible for making certain that the standards are sufficiently high on all this. I will, if I may, include the integration of recreation areas in this, rather than coming back with a supplementary. We have not really mentioned trees, greenery and areas that unfortunately are so littered nowadays in places. I wondered where volunteers came into this. Sorry, that question is a bit muddled and all over the place.

Dr Simmons: I suppose we could go back to Vitruvius, the Roman author and architect, who came up with “firmness, commodity and delight”, as it was translated in the 17th century. There are a number of dimensions to resilience. I quite like the term “resilience”, but it tends to be seen as quite technical. Whenever there is an emergency in London, London resilience rolls out and that is how you deal with terrorism. The language can get quite confusing. I would like to talk about how we make buildings and places that last for the long term that people love and that go on providing what I have called built environment services over a

long period of time. Not everything can be lasting. Some stuff for the Olympics, which I was involved in, was just temporary, so we are not saying that everything has to last, but even that was reusable. It is really about creating things that go on being useful for us over time. That is how I see it in simple terms.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Spot the academic, moving from one “ism” to another. I have tried to move away from “sustainability” because to some extent, in my personal view, it has been politically appropriated. If a Minister stands up and says, “Sustainable development is defined as job creation”, for me that is no longer sustainable development. That was why I moved away from “sustainability” to look at “resilience”. It relates to land use futures. How do you take account of a series of wicked problems? How do you bounce back from shocks to the system, whether extreme weather events or economic shocks to the system? Resilience is about how you bounce back, keep on going, keep calm in the process and think about policy in that way. I acknowledge that there are sustainability elements and they are enduring—

Baroness Rawlings: They are lasting elements.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Absolutely, and possibly embedded in forms that we can take forward. I would think that there were sustainable processes in how the Olympics was done that could be long-lasting—not just the developments, but the means by which everyone collaborated institutionally—and that should serve as lessons for all of us.

Dr Simmons: That is the point about who owns this. No particular person owns it. The investor should own it, coming back to the market, and we are seeing some of the big investors starting to look at the question of whether things will last and be suitable for their tenants or their investments over the long term. That is a really good thing. Some of the banks take that perspective and they will no longer invest in stuff that is only for the short term.

The Chairman: Can I interrupt just for a moment? I was wondering whether we would make the full hour before anybody mentioned finance, money or bankers, and we have not.

Dr Simmons: No. They are very important.

The Chairman: They are.

Dr Simmons: I mentioned them earlier as well. The market has a role to play. The customer also needs to be better informed. I do not just mean people buying houses, I mean people such as Marks & Spencer, with their plan A. There is no Plan B. They are now quite

demanding tenants on issues of environmental sustainability and energy, for example. It is a shared responsibility. The Government need to create, if you like, the playing field and set out where the corner flags are, but then it requires others to engage, as you say, in a collaborative way.

Professor Cooper: I did a four-year project on sustainable cities. There are 300 or more dimensions of measuring sustainability—I have just done a study of well-being—and 1,000 different individual items that you could think about that contribute to well-being. It is impossible. But making a place liveable for today and the future and understanding the context-specific criteria and values for each place become important. There is a high-level national vision of a liveable nation and the cities in it. Then there are local visions that are specific to a place. This is what I meant about decision-makers knowing what the vision is and what the values are for that place and using those as criteria when they make decisions.

Baroness Andrews: Would you agree with me that we have probably lost this argument? We argued passionately in this House that the principle that should underlay the national planning policy framework should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development, instead of which we got a presumption in favour of development. Does that not articulate the conflicts of interest between growth, development and sustainability?

The Chairman: Thank you. Good point.

Baroness Rawlings: I am just wondering about the integration. We have not really talked about trees, greenery and litter and volunteers all in one package.

Professor Cooper: That is what I was going to add to my comments about values, vision and knowing. I come from Manchester. Every time I go down Oxford Road, there is an empty site where the BBC was that is a car park at the moment. Manchester has very little green space in the centre of its city. We can use technology—we can use satellites—to understand the provision of green space. Green space is essential for people's well-being, particularly in dense places, and we need some simple, clear policy about the provision of green spaces: spaces for children—not just manicured parks and swings, but places that they can take risks, and water and so on—and spaces that are accessible for older generations. We need to think about green space through the life course in liveable places. I am not in the planning area so I do not know about regulation, but I do think that Manchester could consider that the BBC area should be a park rather than a car park or another development.

The Chairman: We will see what we can do.

Dr Simmons: I try to avoid special pleading, given my former role at CABI, because it sounds like whingeing, but one of the things that did not survive the closure of statutory CABI was CABI Space. It was a fantastic resource and nothing has replaced it, I am afraid. It made exactly the kinds of advocacy points but also helping people develop skills in a very tough environment for green space, and encouraging volunteering, which is probably the only way we can keep our green spaces to the standards we would like, given what has happened to public expenditure. If I was going to rekindle anything of statutory CABI, I would start with CABI Space.

Q10 Lord Freeman: May I first declare an indirect interest? My wife is involved in the field of necessary preservation and renovation of historic buildings. Can I also say as a former Minister for the Cabinet Office that I shall certainly follow up Professor Tewdwr-Jones's comments? My question is: how effective are we at rejuvenating existing housing developments and communities, and what lessons have been learnt?

Dr Simmons: I have done some of it in the past. We are quite good at it when we do it. There are different levels of doing it. There is sweeping away the disasters of the past and replacing them. When we have engaged the communities concerned in the process of rebuilding places, we have done some really quite good work. We have done some good stuff in Brixton and in the Stonebridge estate, if I think of London examples, and in Hulme in Manchester. I worked on Holly Street in Hackney and I went back after 10 years and said, "What is it like?". They said, "We got exactly what we wanted. We are just an ordinary Hackney street now, not an estate with a postcode any more". We have some brilliant successes. When it comes to things like retrofitting, which I know may come up later on, smaller-scale refurbishments and so on, we have lost some of that. We used to have housing action areas, which I worked on as a young lad, and general improvement areas. Some of that has faded to some extent, so we are perhaps less good at those kinds of large-scale refurbishments. When it comes to environmental work, such as large-scale insulation projects, we are perhaps less strategic than we used to be. We rely a lot more on the energy companies through their obligation, for example. We have lost some of the strategic tools that we used to have, but when we do it, we do it pretty well.

Baroness Whitaker: Some of the rejuvenation involves getting rid of crime that estates have fallen into. Do you have some good advice about that?

Professor Cooper: Hulme was a 1960s disaster that was knocked down because it was full of crime and redeveloped. They redeveloped the park and thought very carefully about all the principles of what we call “designing out crime”: eyes on the street, being able to see across the whole park, and areas that enabled youths to hang out without it destroying the place. There are principles, particularly on designing against crime.

Baroness Whitaker: Have they been effective?

Professor Cooper: They have.

Baroness Whitaker: Before and after research would be helpful to us, too.

Professor Cooper: Yes.

Lord Clement-Jones: One of the aspects of retrofitting that is on the increase, as far as I can see, is the switch from office buildings to residential. I just wondered what the implications of that were.

Professor Cooper: That brings in issues not just of retrofitting office buildings into apartments, which you probably get in London, but of whether mixed-use space works or not. Again, we did a study in 2005 and 2008 and looked at various parts of London, and mixed-use—there is a view that it creates a community—does not necessarily work. Choosing the right buildings to retrofit into apartments and the use of mixed-use has to be thought about much more carefully and, again, context-specifically.

Lord Clement-Jones: Often it is just land values.

Professor Cooper: Exactly.

Dr Simmons: Often you are not retrofitting a whole community, so you are building homes but there is no school to serve them, for example. You have to think about some of the strategic implications.

Q11 Lord Woolmer of Leeds: I have no interests to declare in relation to this inquiry, you will be delighted to know. An awful lot of people would think that we were talking about airy-fairy things. There is a huge shortage of housing and it is now very acute. House prices and rents have shot up. Why have we failed to build sufficient houses? Not merely not sufficient, but vastly under provided for. Is this to a degree a matter of public policy? Secondly, if we are somehow to improve on that, will that bring about problems in place? In other words, in the haste to get something done—private buildings or otherwise—will they just get the things built?

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: There are a variety of reasons why we are in the current housing predicament. It was popular for a while to suggest that planning, not just the lack of housing, was to blame for everything, but it is not quite that simple. Yes, there are delays in the planning process, but that is because, as I said earlier, of the fragmented institutional landscape, the need for consultation; sometimes overwhelming public opposition to schemes against professional advice—which might suggest approval, and delays between outline permission and detailed permission. There are also issues to do with land supply and the appropriate location that the market is interested in—mismatches between where local authority planners might suggest that land could be available and where the market would prefer to build. Housebuilders do not build major developments in one go; they phase schemes as well, so there may be land with permission but it is not yet implemented, and market reasons as well as physical constraints why that is the case. Also, there is a tendency to view new housing almost as a lifestyle choice, certainly in the way it is advertised, so I question whether even an increase in housing supply will make any difference to affordability unless it is vast. We have done it well in the past. The loss of state housing did not help matters—the loss of local authorities being able to build for all sections of society—and maybe the figures demonstrate that the private sector cannot do it alone and that there needs to be a mix, or at least that we need, certainly for our cities, to begin to realise that mixes of tenure are more appropriate than chasing owner-occupation as a desirable goal. All these issues are very relevant. Some attempt is now being made to release public land to get that developed quickly, but I share your concerns that if we build too fast we might see history—what happened in the 50s and 60s when we built too fast—repeating itself: namely, that we will have to replace very shortly because the housing is not of good standard.

There is also an issue about the size of housing, going back to density. In the 50s and 60s, houses and apartments had much better densities and layouts than they do today. I do not want to point the finger of blame at any one problem; there is a range of issues. What could be done? Certainly I advocate building new settlements and garden cities as one solution. It is going to take that sort of Herculean effort to be able to address the backlog, let alone future demand from population increases, but you are looking at areas that are under considerable pressure, and that means looking at the south-east of England, and we know there are political and public sensitivities with that.

Dr Simmons: We do have a real challenge. I agree that the planning system is not necessarily the only problem, but we have a problem now with the so-called duty to co-operate. As you will be aware from what has been happening with the London Plan and the Bedford 51, the local authorities around London all got together to say that they did not want to take any housing to serve London, even though the south-east of England has been London's dormitory for over 100 years. There are issues with somebody having to say, "Sorry, but a strategic decision is required here". It is also a very complex market. I agree that there are risks. The risks in creating places would be less if garden cities were addressed as garden cities as opposed to a solution to the housing problem—in other words, if we were talking about creating genuine multifunctional cities. Very often, people see them as an opportunity to use a good brand, because garden cities are a great brand, to popularise new housing. What we should be doing is looking at creating places that function and that have sufficient housing for their needs and recognising that some places, like London, are bigger than the artificial boundary created by local government.

Professor Cooper: There also needs to be some creative thinking about how we design and build homes and whether we can do them quicker, using off-site manufacture, and make them faster but better-designed and to last longer and to be flexible. We really need to think about what sort of homes we want, whether they will work though the life course, how they can be designed quicker and how they can be implemented on the ground quicker.

Lord Woolmer of Leeds: Would all the good ideas that we have heard today about place and improving things, and the need for new systems and to do things differently, slow down achieving better house-build even further?

Dr Simmons: I do not think so. We already know what needs to be done. When I was at CABE, housebuilders at a DCLG seminar I was at said that they preferred brick construction to off-site manufacturing because they felt that it was something they understood and they had the people who could do it. This is a question that we do not have time to answer today, really, but there are all sorts of structural issues in the industry that need to change as well. We have all the components; it is assembling them in the right order that is the issue here.

Q12 Baroness Young of Old Scone: I am going to put a thesis to you and I want you just to say yes or no. Is it true that the resistance from local authorities to the housing targets would not have existed if we still had the same scale of public housing development by local authorities that we had in the 1940s and the 1950s?

The Chairman: There is no yes or no answer.

Professor Cooper: Possibly.

Dr Simmons: It would be easier to do it if we had that.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Yes.

Dr Simmons: But not everywhere.

Baroness Young of Old Scone: I just want to make the point that we have not built affordable housing on a sufficient scale since we stopped local authorities doing it themselves.

Professor Tewdwr-Jones: Yes.

Dr Simmons: Yes.

Baroness Young of Old Scone: I rest my case.

The Chairman: I am afraid that my time-management skills have failed me totally on this one. I had no idea that it was going to be so riveting. I really feel very sorry for Lord Clement-Jones and Lord Inglewood, who had good questions too, and, indeed, Baroness Young. Would it be really dreadful of me to ask you if you could look at those questions and just do a few lines? I do not want great sheaves of paper from you. I apologise. I shall just say mea culpa.

Lord Clement-Jones: On Question 9, Lord Chairman, you have woven criticism of the planning system into what you have had to say to some degree, have you not?

Lord Inglewood: A lot of what I was going to ask has been covered.

Lord Clement-Jones: Even if I am not asking a question, perhaps I ought to make a declaration.

The Chairman: Yes, you should.

Lord Clement-Jones: I am London Managing Partner of DLA Piper UK, the law firm, and a member of council of UCL.

Lord Inglewood: Chairman, while they disappear, can I make my declaration, as it is still in public, even though nobody is listening? I am a non-practising chartered surveyor. I own Hutton-in-the-Forest, a grade 1-listed building open to the public. I have agricultural and residential property in Cumbria. I am a trustee of the Elton Estate, Raby Estates and Thoresby Estate. I am a political adviser—unpaid, I fear—to the Estates Business Group. I am a director of the Historic Houses Association and a trustee and on its parliamentary and tax committee. I am chairman of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership. I am a member of the

advisory council of the Friends of the Lake District. I am president of the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, patron of the Lakeland Housing Trust and, like Lady Andrews—I have missed it out—I am a vice-president of the National Parks association.

Lord Clement-Jones: And a jolly good fellow.

The Chairman: That is exactly what I was going to say. Now, the Earl of Lytton, please, likewise.

Earl of Lytton: I am in the thick of this. The simple ones: I have a house in west Sussex. I have tenants and a lodger. I am a co-owner with my wife of rural estates in Somerset and Sussex and I have various residual interests as lord of the manor of manors in Surrey, west Sussex and Somerset. I was until recently a director and sole principal of my own chartered surveying company, John Lytton & Co Ltd, now finished trading. I am now a part-time employee with a firm of chartered quantity surveyors, Lawrence Foote & Partners (London) Ltd. I am a director of a farming estate that also runs sporting interests. I am a previous commissioner of the RICS Land and Society Commission, which looked at localism and community ownership. I am current chairman of the industry consultative committee of the University of West London, which brings together industry and students and the academic side, and chairman of the Rights of Way Review Committee, which deals with public rights of way. I am a trustee of the South of England Agricultural Society, which runs the South of England Show. I am a vice-president of the National Association of Local Councils and of the Local Government Association. I am a current sponsor of a private Bill aimed at determining property boundaries more simply. I am a member of innumerable professional bodies: the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation; the Chartered Association of Building Engineers; the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators; and RICS. I am also a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Private Rented Sector and—it is not here—of the APPG for the Built Environment. You will understand why I have remained relatively silent.

The Chairman: Just finally, Baroness Parminter, who has only just joined us.

Baroness Parminter: Apologies for being late. I am a very dull bear in comparison to my colleagues. I just declare that I am the spokesperson for Defra matters in the House of Lords for the Lib Dems.

The Chairman: And I have nothing to declare. That is why I am doing the job I am doing. It is all in the past. I do not think I have anything, other than that I have been a householder for

many years. The biggest investment people make in their lives is their houses, and the one they are most disappointed with is their houses.

Witnesses, thank you very much indeed. It has been extremely kind of you and you have been battered by our questions, but you have been more than useful.