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**Developing Skills and Knowledge for Effective
Sustainable Development Appraisal and
Assessment in Planning**


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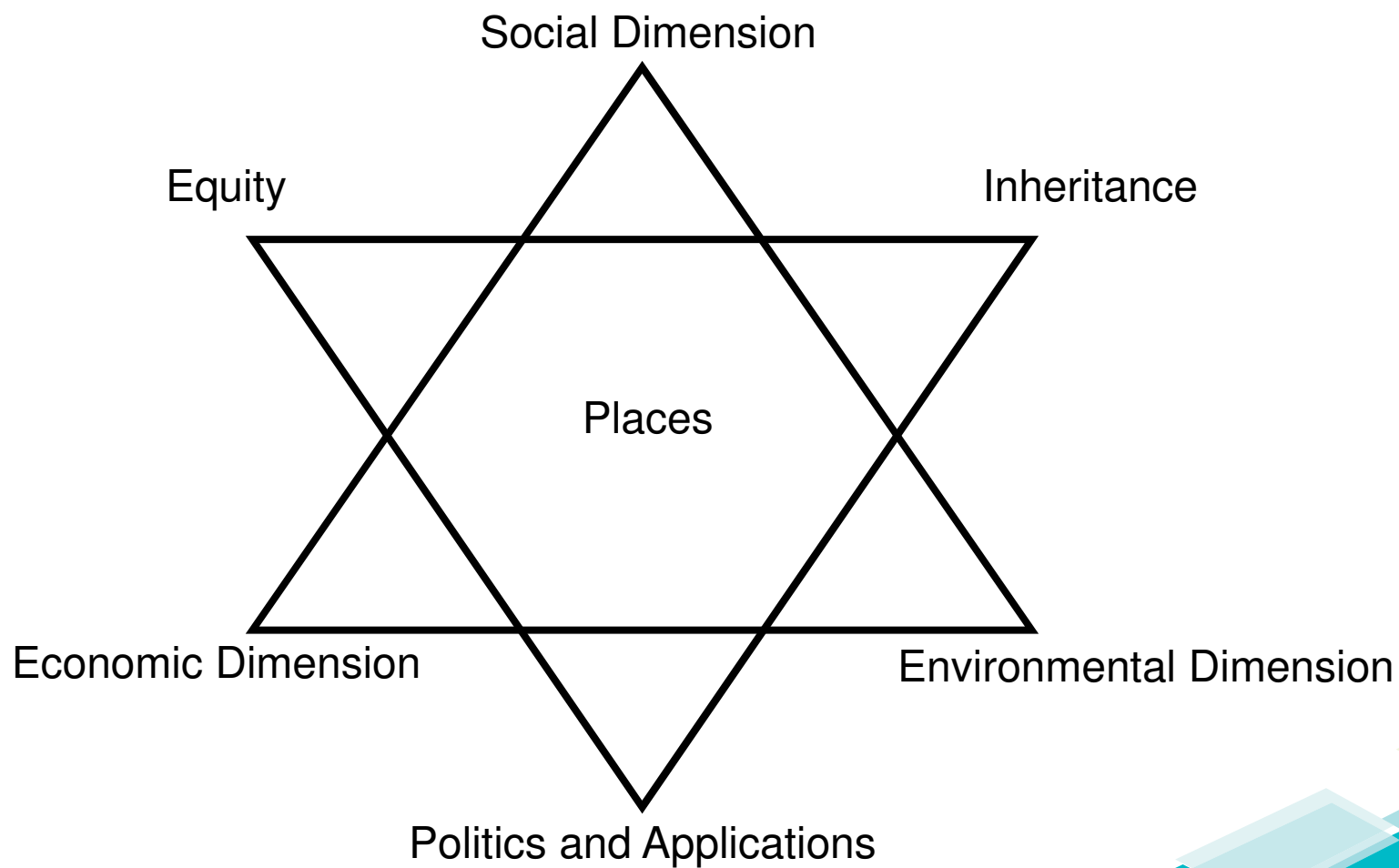
INTRODUCTION

- All planning activities require sustainable development appraisal / assessment
 - The various forms of sustainable development appraisal and assessment (SEA, EIA, etc) have common requirements and share a contextual skills set
 - Despite the growing sophistication of many of the models and methods, certain fundamental difficulties persist
 - Chief among these difficulties is the question of definition – this can be a serious barrier to understanding and application
 - Equally important is to understand the wider planning and associated policy system and field of action for sustainable development appraisal and assessment – PPS emphasises this.
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Direct questions, but difficult answers:
 - * Why don't people understand what it is?
 - * Do they understand, but choose to be confused?
 - * Confusion – is it an excuse for silo thinking and vested interests?
 - Sustainable development offers a sound foundation for planning practice – the Brundtland definition is generally accepted
 - But in practice it is also essential to acknowledge the importance of space and place – otherwise you cannot 'locate' actions and plan in an effective manner
 - Equally, it is essential to think of sustainable development as a 'journey' rather than a single 'destination' – implies long-term strategic thinking and planning.
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



SPACE, PLACE AND TIME

- Sustainable development offers guidance and support in terms of providing internationally agreed principles and goals
 - But the elaboration and implementation of strategies and methods of delivery varies spatially – planning activities and actions provide a means of delivering sustainable spatial development
 - It is also clear that a place-based approach offers the potential for integration of the various strands of sustainable development – the role of planning is central to delivering sustainable places
 - And that it is essential to think about the long-term
 - ‘Whole of place’ and ‘whole of life’ approach
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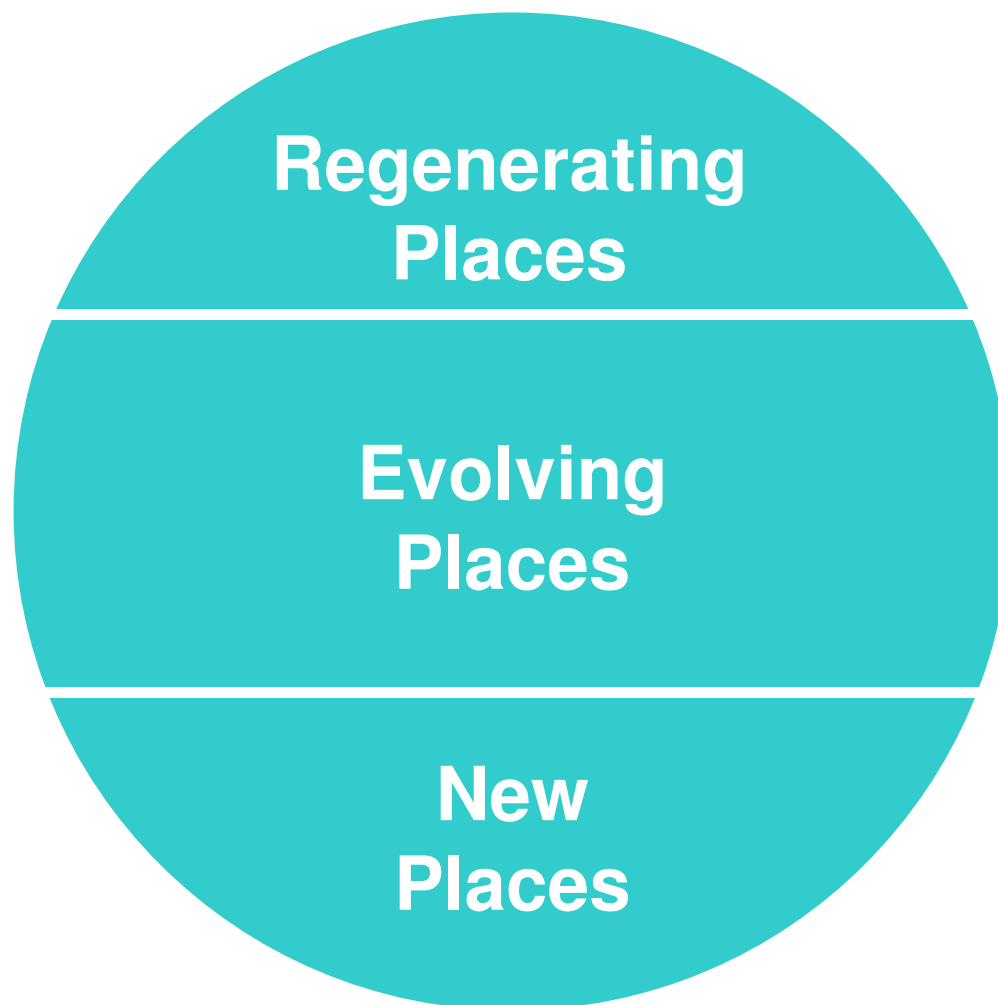
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

- The early development of these policies, methods and procedures reflected concerns during the 1960s and early 1970s about environmental resource, social and economic issues – often at a site-specific level
- But it soon became obvious that the focus on a site avoided or obscured the really important strategic questions.
- It is evident that the lessons from early practice have been influential:
 - * Policy – programme – plan – project – product hierarchy
 - * Life cycle approach
 - * Total costing and mass balance assessment
- It is also clear that sustainable development appraisal and assessment is fundamental in creating and maintaining sustainable communities


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- Much of the sustainable communities agenda will be familiar – it draws on research and best practice from many aspects of sustainable development theory and practice, and it challenges ‘silo’ thinking.
- Formal definition: sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future – town and city centres are such places.
- Place-shaping and sustainable communities policy and practice are about making places for people in regenerating, evolving and new communities – management of place is as important as creating places.
- Sustainable communities principles will not be applied automatically – generic skills including leadership and partnership-building are essential.
- Equally, these generic skills also include substantial elements of appraisal and assessment.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- Eight Key Component Elements:
 - active, inclusive and safe – fair, tolerant, cohesive
 - well run – effective and inclusive participation
 - environmentally sensitive – caring for environment and resources
 - well designed and built – quality environment
 - well connected – good services, access and links
 - thriving – flourishing and diverse economy and jobs
 - well served – good public, private and voluntary services
 - fair for everyone – just and equitable
 - And an extra essential component which brings the eight basic components together – this equals place-shaping and the delivery of effective planning and management.
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KEY COMPONENTS




SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Neglect of skills and knowledge – the assumption was made that demand would drive provision – in the case of ‘public goods’ this often didn’t happen
- Alternative attractions, an absence of education and training opportunities and the poor image of many sustainable development / communities professions harmed supply
- Skills and knowledge capacity needs to be rebuilt and embedded in a wide range of disciplines and professions at all levels – pre-degree, degree, CPD.
- The skills required are both generic and specialist – the latter often emphasised at the expense of the former
- Equally, effective knowledge capture, management and transfer is essential – don’t reinvent the wheel.

KEY GENERIC SKILLS INCLUDE:

- ❖ visioning, strategy building and innovative thinking
 - ❖ partnership, team working, inclusion
 - ❖ analysis, appraisal, decision making, assessment and evaluation
 - ❖ leadership and supporting delivery
 - ❖ programme and project design and management
 - ❖ process management and enabling change
 - ❖ stakeholder management and conflict resolution
 - ❖ communication
 - ❖ and new generic skills such as climate change management, environmental assessment, cohesion auditing
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EDUCATING AND TRAINING PROFESSIONALS

- Ensuring planning and other professionals have adequate generic and specialist skills is essential, but they also need to be trained to work as team members.
 - There are three stages or opportunities to ensure a sufficient supply of skilled and knowledgeable professionals: before initial education and training, initial education and training, continuing professional development.
 - Team working is about capacity, attitude and opportunity – all require attention.
 - Engagement with non-professionals is about the need for resource mobilisation and direction, the creation of trust and competence, and the creation of local ownership.
 - In all of these activities partnership and leadership are essential
 - These requirements also suggest the need for professionals to be able to call on a wide range of knowledge resources.
 - These activities define the agenda for the Homes and Communities Agency and the HCA Academy.
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FROM WALLPAPER TO SPREADSHEETS – BACK TO THE FUTURE?

- Despite advances in methods and techniques, common problems still confront both sustainable development appraisal and assessment and planning and associated professions
 - Chief amongst these are the need for a total and integrated approach that offers ‘whole of place’ and ‘whole of life’ capability – current planning policy seeks to operate such an approach
 - Also essential to ensure that policy and practice is proactive and strategic – leading not following and seeking best overall outcome
 - Irrespective of the specific issues involved, the need for team working and shared understanding has increased in-line with the complexity of programmes and projects.
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