Futures in government: Why and How?

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Cardiff
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“Any statement that is perfectly true is not useful and any statement that is useful is not perfectly true”

Adair Turner

Source: How does government listen to scientists? Palgrave (2018)
Claire Craig
“Any statement that is perfectly true is not useful and any statement that is useful is not perfectly true”

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“Evidence is about the past, decisions are about the future”

Source: How does government listen to scientists? Palgrave (2018)

Claire Craig
Foresight flooding scenarios 2080

Base case

With mitigation measures in place

Change in risk
(Expected economic annual damage)

- Decrease
- Negligible change
- Low increase
- Medium increase
- High increase
- Very high increase

Source: Foresight Future Flooding Project, 2004
Foresight Future Flooding: Outcomes

- Budget for flood defence up by £300m
- Supported the case for statutory carbon budgets
- Adopted in Shanghai and USA
- Simulation game used in local decision-making
- Graphics still in use during Somerset Levels flooding
Foresight Tackling Obesities: engaging with complexity

7 major sub-systems

- Societal influences
- Individual psychology
- Individual activity
- Activity environment
- Food Production
- Food Consumption
- Biology
Inhabiting the future: emotional as well as cognitive engagement
Game over!

Public Opinion < 30%
Foresight Future of Cities: multiple methods……

Speculative design

Data analytics and modelling

Review of evidence

Future projections

Major city empowerment

London-centric

Baseline 2037

Smaller cities focus

“What-if” scenarios
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<tr>
<th>Adjust strategies</th>
<th>Strengthening funding bids</th>
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<td><strong>Liverpool</strong> 2065 trends study led to major housing provider refocusing spatial strategy towards developing the connecting Manchester corridor</td>
<td>Newcastle’s foresight project contributed to securing £40m funding for a National Institute of Ageing Science and Innovation, aligning city council policy</td>
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<th>Civic engagement</th>
<th>Narratives to challenge status quo</th>
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<td>Competition engaged <strong>Lancaster</strong> schoolchildren in either drawing or describing what the future of the city might be. A Youth Chamber has consequently been set up to provide a continuing forum for engaging young people on local policy issues</td>
<td>Long-term thinking highlighted <strong>Rochdale’s</strong> potential as a differentiated manufacturing and logistics economy with quality living offer, challenging existing constraining external perceptions of the city as primarily a distribution pit-stop for Greater Manchester area</td>
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Thinking about the future shapes the future
Thinking about the future (sometimes) shapes the future

Source: Nick Dunn et al, Foresight Future of Cities
SPARE SLIDES FOLLOW
Boyle’s “to do” list

The Prolongation of Life.
The Recovery of Youth, or at least some of my Marks of it, as new Teeth, new Hair coloured as in youth.
The Art of Flying.
The Art of continuing long under Water, and exercising functions freely there.
The Cure of Wounds at a Distance.
The Cure of Diseases at a Distance or at least by Transplantation.
The Attaining Gigantic Dimensions.
The Emulating of Fish without Engines by Customs & Education only.
Computer based trading: futures as risk management