



Professor Richard Wakeford

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“The case for better use of land”

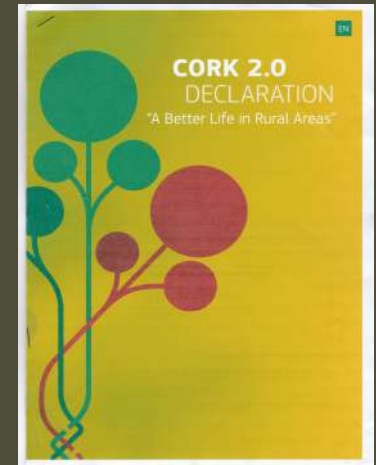
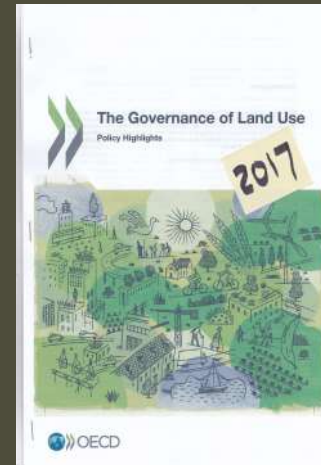
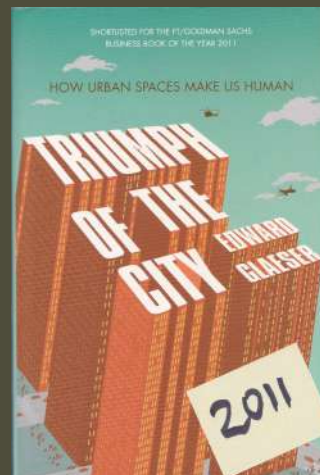
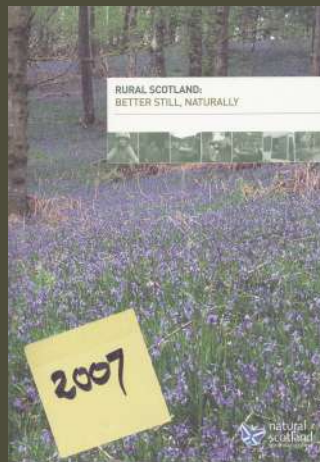
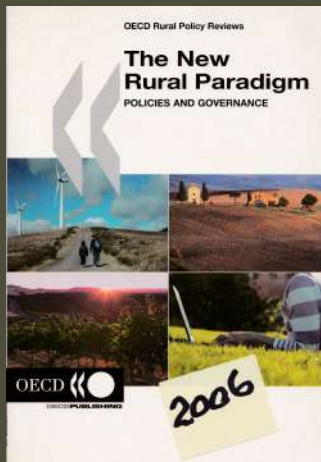
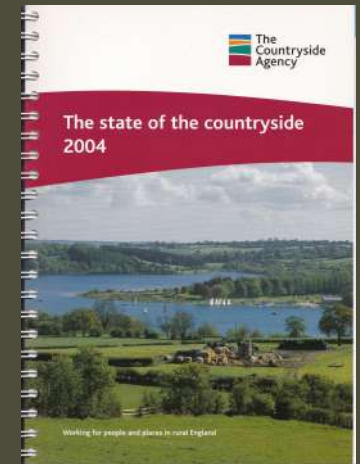
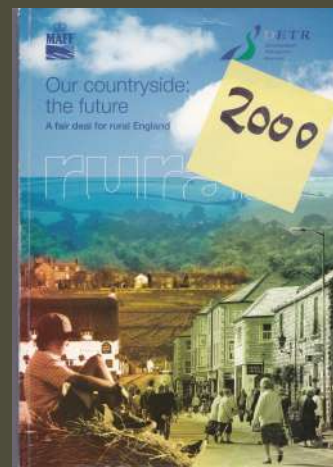
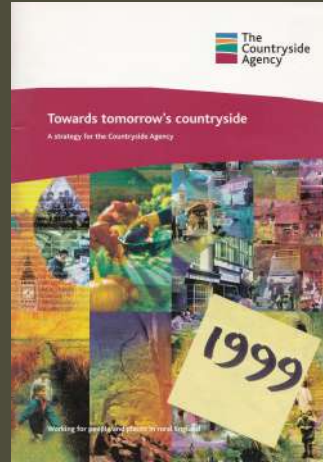
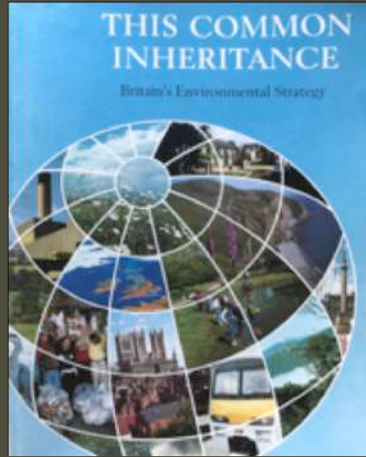
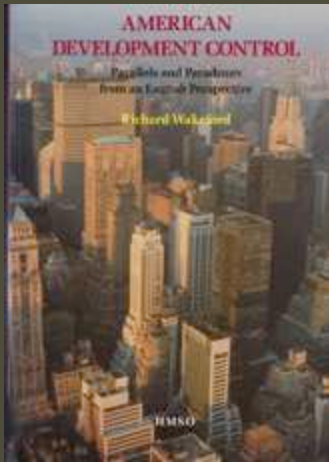
St Petersburg, October 2020

+ Policy, practice, analysis ...



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After thirty years of analysis; are we making best use of the land?





Plans for £3.5bn theme park on Kent marsh dismay conservationists

London Resort planned for Swanscombe Peninsula, despite site being home to rare species such as distinguished jumping spider





From “The Guardian” – national daily newspaper, 21st October 2020



“Ambitious £3.5bn plans for the biggest theme park in Britain beside the Thames threaten what conservationists say is the best site in the country for rare invertebrates.

“Swanscombe Peninsula in Kent is earmarked for the London Resort, a theme park with rides inspired by shows from BBC Studios, ITV Studios and Paramount Pictures, alongside hotels, restaurants and a conference centre.

“But the site, a mix of local nature reserves, marshes, pasture and a former concrete works, is currently home to 1,992 species of invertebrates including 250 of conservation concern – more than any known site in the country, according to the charity Buglife.

“The London Resort was the first commercial venture to be designated as a “nationally significant infrastructure project” by the government, which means the developers can go straight to the secretary of state for housing, communities and local government to seek consent for the project, which they claim will create 30,000 jobs.



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“UK Town and Country Planning”



- Post war UK Labour Government – rebuilding after a period of global disruption, comprehensive legislation
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1947 – guiding rebuilding and new development
 - Agriculture Act 1947 – securing efficient agricultural production and proper agricultural conditions
 - National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 – nature reserves etc
- National government law and guidance -> local government plans -> local government decisions on development applications -> national government can overturn local refusals or “call in” major applications
- Major infrastructure, strategic nature conservation, energy strategy planned separately! **How to use the land resource to achieve sustainable development and action against climate change?**



UK Foresight Land Use Futures Project (UK Gov't Office for Science 2010)



- A broad and overarching look at the future of UK land use over “the next 50 years”
- A strong case to develop a much more strategic approach to:
 - guide incremental land use change
 - incentivise sustainable behaviours
 - Unlock value from land
- Major challenges:
 - Managing the demands on land for housing, recreation, transport, water, food and energy
 - Climate mitigation and the transition to a low carbon economy
 - Reconciling conflicting public attitudes – short term actions for long term benefits



Green Infrastructure Partnership reports reminded us that ...



- HM Treasury has a history of asking eminent economists to investigate the links between the environment and the economy
- Prof Nicholas Stern's report, 'The Economics of Climate Change', was published in 2006
- Prof Dieter Helm was asked (2012) to set up the Natural Capital Committee, whose reports inspired a 25 Year Environment Plan
- Prof Partha Dasgupta has published (2020) his interim report for HM Treasury about biodiversity and economic prosperity
- In essence, they all say the same thing: long-term prosperity is dependent on a thriving natural environment; the natural environment is declining; government must act now; the cost of acting now is far less than doing nothing”

+ Land as a Resource



“By 2020, EU policies will take into account their direct and indirect impact on land use in the EU (and globally), and the rate of land take is to be on track with an aim to achieve no net land take by 2050” (European Commission) – 2011

The Rio+20 conference recognised that land and soil degradation are a global problem, and proposed to strive for a “land degradation neutral world” in the context of sustainable development

What progress since 2011? Do we even have a vision of what success would look like?

+ VOLANTE: EU Landscapes Future; researched visions (2015)



+ VOLANTE: EU funded research on land use in Europe



Policymakers – political and administrative require:

- A clear land management paradigm
- Clear outcome goals (“Visions”)
- Potential routes and measures to deliver them (“Pathways”)
- Examination of the trade-offs associated with following each of the different route options, testing the feasibility both of the desired outcomes and of the measures needed to achieve them

Professor Bas Pedroli – Wageningen University (2015)



Food security and the impact on environment



What government policies will ensure that land can continue supplying important goods and services – including an **increasing demand** for food - in the face of a **changing climate**?

- **Land management** to:
 - lock up carbon in soil;
 - manage use of water; and
 - reduce risk of city flooding downstream?
- **Timber production** as part of an adaptation strategy to lock up carbon
- Biodiversity goals which require **habitat for wildlife**
- Action to cope with **sea level rise** on the coast; managed retreat and coastal plains no longer available for food production

What do these goals mean for human consumption habits, food retailer marketing, food processors and farmers? ... and energy, transport etc



What food to grow?

“Food security” and type 2 diabetes

- Healthier eating half the solution; less sugar, less carbohydrates (potatoes, cereal etc), more fish, meat, dairy products?
- Are improved health outcomes relevant to food security; and to the food chain as a whole? ... and to economic progress
- Should the increasing cost of health services across Europe and globally be a cross cutting driver of EU funded research (ie big and strategic, rather than fragmented, compartmentalised calls?)
- Emerging new advice to type 2 diabetes sufferers:
 - Cut carbohydrates; focus diet on protein rich and full fat products
 - “Butter is one of the most natural fats you can buy. It is just churned cream from a cow. Ideally, opt for grass-fed butter; it has a greater nutrient profile and a better omega 3-6 ratio.”
- New approaches to pork production in China: shift from backyard pigs to mass production, fed on imported maize...





So, how will nations' land use plans, regulations and incentives deliver:

- healthier human populations;
 - action against climate change;
 - a halt to biodiversity loss?
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- A clear vision of a stabilised world – science/evidence based
 - Compelling policy guidance from the OECD, following up earlier work by the Territorial Development Policy Committee
 - An international approach among all world governments (eg starting with COP26 in Glasgow – November 2021?)
 - Strategic legislation and economic incentives (more informed/constructive attitudes from political leaders)
 - Buy-in from every individual (education and practical action)



+ Post-COVID

- People's lives have changed dramatically – lock downs and health challenges
- Reduce vulnerability through changes in diet – reflected in land use?
- Reduced climate change emissions through less need to travel (eg less aviation)? Will the world go back to “normal” afterwards?
- Already, academics are starting to assess the challenge: eg Penn State Uni “The current pandemic has exposed many weaknesses and shortcomings of zoning ...” – both at the local and US national levels
- ... **but this must run alongside global government and business action, in the face of climate change, to manage land resources for *sustainable development***