Directions in Planning Reform: International Perspectives & The Case of South African Metropolitan Municipalities

June 2018
Rationale for Planning Reforms Seminar

The division of powers and functions in terms of the Constitution is logical and clear. Similarly the National Development Plan is clear about the need to assign particular functions to metropolitan municipalities, yet this has not been done to date (e.g. passenger rail, housing). Even when powers and functions are clear and uncontested between spheres/entities of government, or there is an abundance of money, there is still a need to align and co-ordinate planning, budgeting and implementation for achieving outcomes (rather than outputs only). Outcomes are good if they positively make a difference to people’s daily lives. For example, health and education facilities and/or services are provided in close proximity to where people live, work and play while at the same time being affordable and of good quality. The cost of failure to plan for outcomes (and just plan for outputs) can be measured by how easy or difficult it is for people to go about their daily activities in cities. The more difficult it is for people, the higher the incidence of civil protests.

The Municipal Systems Act (MSA) and the Municipal Financial Management Act (MFMA) require alignment between planning, budgeting and reporting instruments such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and Annual report. Similarly the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) requires alignment between planning instruments such as the Municipal Spatial Development Frameworks and budgeting.

Development planning policy, legislation, processes and practice are ineffective in meeting the expected outcomes of a developmental state and developmental local government. Development planning has not achieved the delivery of more compact, productive, sustainable and inclusive cities that are better governed. Intergovernmental planning practice and processes also need to be reformed so that all of government complement each other in achieving its objectives and outcomes. However development planning, in and by itself, is unlikely to succeed in achieving the outcome of spatial transformation.

Public and Municipal Financial Management has been reformed since 1994 to be more responsive and aimed at meeting the needs of a developmental state that recognises the independence of local government within the intergovernmental system. Despite various budgetary and finance reforms over the last ten years the planning regime has remained relatively sluggish. Reporting requirements for metropolitan municipalities were based on 2 572 indicators and 18 467 data elements to be reported annually until the rationalisation effort in November 2017.

The Planning Reform Seminar on 13-14 June 2018 acknowledges that planning, budgeting and reporting reforms need to be complemented by policy and regulatory reform. The Cities Support Programme (CSP) in National Treasury addresses all of these reforms and its inter-linkages to policy and regulatory reforms in a programmatic and systematic way. The Seminar was designed to take a deep dive on planning reforms based on the experience of metropolitan municipalities over the last five years in producing their Built Environment Performance Plans (BEPPs) in line with the Built Environment Value Chain (BEVC) depicted below to contribute to spatial transformation of their cities. The experience of the metropolitan municipalities have been documented and produced as five input papers for the Seminar that were turned into 6 Final Papers that incorporates key comments and input made during the Seminar- this Paper looks at Directions in Planning Reform from an International Perspective placing the South African metropolitan experience within a global context.
Overview of the five Input Papers

The paper on Directions in Planning Reform from an International Perspective provided a background to approaches to planning in different countries and provides some insight into the reasons those approaches were chosen. This set the scene for looking at the South African metropolitan experience over the last 5 years that has been captured in five other papers as outlined below.

The identification and definition of desired integrated outcomes represents the starting point of the BEVC. One of the key shifts that is required for planning is the adoption by all of government to an outcomes-led planning approach based on one set of clearly defined outcomes established at the outset of the planning process. The Outcomes-Led Planning paper defines what is meant by outcomes-led planning and why it is important. The paper teases out the current legislative landscape and notes that there have been attempts by various agencies to better realise spatial transformation. To this end, the BEPPs have made significant progress in planning and budgeting for interventions and investments in programmes that build towards transformation through its focus on establishing a clear line of sight between setting outcomes and knowing how to measure/report them upfront.

The paper entitled Strategy-Led Budgeting draws on the successful experiences of the BEPPs to recommend the implementation of an approach to budgeting that depends on a stronger and more direct relationship between strategic planning and budgeting.

Outcomes-led planning and Strategy Led Budgeting at the metropolitan sphere should be complemented by co-ordinated public-sector planning, regulatory and investment approaches within a spatially targeted planning framework to attract and leverage private sector and household investment in spatially targeted areas. The paper on Infrastructure-led Growth through Spatially Targeted Public Investment takes a look at intergovernmental alignment in strategy, planning and infrastructure investment programming. The paper details lessons learnt by metros within the broader intergovernmental planning context.

A reflection on best practices in municipalities that have implemented the principles and methodology of aligning strategy, planning and budgeting is given in the paper on Aligning Planning & Capital Budgeting. The paper provides a guideline at an introductory level of detail together with considerations that make up the strategy led budgeting process. The paper also provides notes on lessons learnt based on experience at local government level, for consideration for further enhancement of the process.

As part of the drive to strengthen the financial link to planning and strategy and towards fostering a more evidence-based spatial planning decision making environment, the Fiscal Impact Tool was developed. The purpose of this tool is to inform better decision-making around development approvals and to identify incidence of cost over the long-term to inform negotiating cost-sharing. Despite the expressed demand by metropolitan municipalities for such a tool, the uptake in the years since its development have been less than satisfactory. The Fiscal Impact Tool paper takes a look at the Metro experiences (both successful and unsuccessful) of applying the tool and makes recommendations for refining the tool to increase uptake within municipalities.

Series of Papers from the Planning Reform Seminar

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Seminar Papers and Complementary Papers

1. Directions in Planning Reform: International Perspectives
2. Outcomes Led Planning
3. Infrastructure led growth through spatially targeted public investment
4. Fiscal Impacts Tool – the metro experience
5. Good practice: A system to align planning and budgeting frameworks
6. Strategy Led Budgeting
7. Reforming the Regulatory Environment for Urban Reform
8. Sharpening the Planning Tools from COGTA (Rationalisation Strategic Planning Frameworks)
9. MSDF Guidelines (DRDLR)
10. Rationalising Planning and Reporting, Circular 88, National Treasury
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Directions in Planning Reform: International Perspectives & The Case of South African Metropolitan Municipalities

1. Directions in Planning Reform: International Perspectives

1.1 Introduction

The idea of ‘Planning Reform’ in South Africa has been foregrounded again recently by several initiatives in national government. These include the National Treasury’s City Support Programme since 2011; MFMA Circular No.88; the proposal by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for an Integrated Planning Framework Act; and initiatives within the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to review the guidelines for the preparation of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and to significantly extend support for local planning through an Intermediate City Municipality Support Programme.

These new developments are, in fact, a further extension of a long process of adaptive reforms in post-apartheid South Africa which have included, for example: the introduction of the IDP as the primary instrument for local planning; the incorporation of the Spatial Development Framework within the IDP; the passing of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 2013 (SPLUMA) after a landmark judgement of the Constitutional Court; and the introduction of a National System of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in 2009. These reforms have also included the creation of the National Planning Commission in 2010 and the adoption of a National Development Plan in 2012; the introduction of a City Support Programme by National Treasury, and a requirement from 2014 that metropolitan municipalities prepare Built Environment Performance Plans (BEPPs) as an eligibility requirement for access to national grants; the adoption of an Integrated Urban Development Framework with its Implementation Plan in 2016; and, various replicated initiatives in provincial governments. In addition, of course, there have been parallel developments in related fields including Human Settlements, Industrial Policy, Environmental Management and Transportation.

In all of these there has been a complex conjoining of international trends and thinking with national or local histories, contexts and influences. The purpose of this paper is to explore the international influences which have shaped – and are still shaping – South African responses. International circulations of ideas and practices bring to bear on a local context a vast repertoire of innovation, experience and understanding. However, they may also bring the ‘baggage’ of their historical or ideological origins. There is also always the risk of the translation of these international ideas and practices inappropriately into a local context. It is necessary therefore to remain judiciously aware of the origins of international circulations and their possibilities and risks for South Africa.

Since the 1990s planning globally has, arguably, seen significant changes, albeit in an incremental and adaptive way. The key trends we identify and discuss in this background report are the shifts towards: planning as an instrument of integrated governance; performance-based orientations; greater use of spatial targeting; multi-level planning systems; evidence-based planning; and, capability-based approaches. There is, of course, a lot of variation in the way in which these trends play out in different contexts1, and there are also counter-trends, and emergent trends that may eventually establish different directions.

An overarching context globally is the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) which represents a near global consensus

2. Outcomes-led planning Definition and Purpose

2.1 What is Outcomes-Led Planning?

As stated in the Introduction above “Outcomes planning means planning backwards from the outcome we need to achieve to work out best to achieve it. It starts with identifying what outcome must be achieved to improve lives and then working out what outputs will ensure we achieve it, what activities we must do to achieve the outputs and what resources are needed to achieve the activities (DPME, 2010, pg.10).

The primary source documents for this overview of Outcomes-Led Planning are:-

• The Guide to the Outcomes Approach (DPME Outcomes Approach 2010),
• The Guidance Note: Framework for the formulation of BEPPs, 2017 (referred to as Core Guidance Note BEPP 2017 in the rest of this paper), and
• The MFMA Circular No. 88 on Rationalisation of Planning and Reporting Requirements, 2017 (referred to as MFMA Circular No. 88 2017 in the rest of this paper).

1The trends are also localised within very different political and bureaucratic systems ranging, for example, from the decentralised federative arrangements of democratic Brazil to the high complex, multi-scalar processes in the European Union to the hierarchical but devolved governance of China.
1.2 Key elements of planning reform internationally

1.2.1 Planning as an instrument of integrated governance
Planning has, arguably, always been an instrument to coordinate and direct development. In the Western and colonial traditions of planning this has been focussed mainly on land-use management and physical development. Since the 1990s, planning has been increasingly recast as an instrument for coordination and integration, including for: aligning across different policies, strategies and programmes; connecting policy and action through linking planning with budgets, for example; integration across scales; linking across time-scales; and, facilitating connections between multiple actors. Planning has thus emerged as a form of meta-governance (meaning the ‘governance of governance’) (see Healey, 2006; Vigar, 2009; Rode, 2015).

This shift in planning must be located within a broader political and ideological shift towards ‘integrated governance’. In the 1980s, under the influence of a radical neo-liberalism (associated with the leadership of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan), governance became increasingly atomised. This happened through processes such as the privatisation, corporatisation and devolution of public functions. In the 1990s there was a partial ideological shift with the rise of the so-called Third Way (associated, for example, with Bill Clinton in the USA and Tony Blair in the UK). Third Way leaders did not reverse the market-based reforms of the previous decade. Instead of calling for the shrinking of government as their predecessors had done, they argued that government should become more effective in the delivery of public services through greater coherence and integration. In the UK, New Labour called this ‘joined-up governance’, responding to the perceived inefficiencies and failures of fragmented governance. It was in this context that planning was re-legitimised in emerging as an instrument of integrated governance².

The shift to integration happened at about the same time as the rise of a new environmentalism, and of the cohering concept of ‘sustainability’. In a number of countries, the stated purpose of integrated governance was to support ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable communities’. Sustainability was a cross-cutting concept that required coordinated interventions across a range of sectors and policy or programmatic domains. One of the instruments of strategic coordination that emerged in the European Union was strategic spatial planning, which uses action-oriented visions, narratives of the future, and broad indications of future infrastructural and settlement growth as a means of aligning action across agencies and sectors (Healey, 2006).

In post-Socialist contexts, the trajectory towards integrated planning came from a rather different direction. In the previous Soviet Union, and its East European satellites, the 1990s were marked by the radical dismantling of the controls of the planned economy. In the 2000s, there has been reaction to the ‘chaos’ of the 1990s, with moves to restore a degree of national coherence, including the development of new instruments of integrated planning. In China there was a more incremental and experimental loosening of central direction. Significantly, while China has retained its system of Five Year Plans, the mode of planning has shifted in part from directive master planning to indicative planning that provides a broad instrument of national coordination.³

In South Africa, too, there was a shift towards ‘integrated planning’ from the mid-1990s, with a formal requirement for municipalities to prepare IDPs. This planning reform was informed by two contexts. On the one hand, there was certainly the influence of the dominating international discourse of the time, with South African government officials part of Third Way networks. On the other hand, there was the contextual requirement of responding to the legacies of a political regime that had deliberately fragmented space society along racial lines (Harrison, 2006).

While integration remains a central rationale for planning internationally, some of the more recent assessments are more diffident or cautious than before. There is a concern, for example, with the effects on democratic practice of ‘totalising strategies’ of integration and of the feasibility of

²During the 1980s, planning had been de-legitimised in many Western countries through its association with bureaucracy, regulations and control.
³These trends towards a more integrative conception of governance are, admittedly, framed mainly by a Western experience. In post-Socialist contexts, for example, there was a shift away from the primacy of planning as an instrument of direction and co-ordination towards more diffuse practices. In the Russian Federation there was a radical ‘loosening’ of planning, although this has been countered in recent times by a reassertion of central state control. In China there was a more incremental and experimental loosening of central direction. Significantly, while China has retained an elaborate system of Five Year Planning, the mode of planning has shifted at least partially from direction to guidance and coordination.
comprehensive attempts at integration. Rode (2015) is concerned, for example, that integration may provide the justification for centralising tendencies which make governments more hierarchical, and less equipped to deal with wicked problems by undermining energies and capacities at local level. As we are reminded in an OECD report, “governing in a democratic political system necessarily involves a degree of incoherence” (OECD, 2010, p. 273).

Rode (2015, p.15) writes that the result of an overblown conception of integrated governance may be “an overwhelming and potentially paralysing recognition of integrated policy making that ‘everything is connected with everything’”. In other words, the more integrated governance is, the more complex it may be. Rode also refers to the costs associated with integration (e.g. management and staff time, and other transactional costs of engagement). While Rode and others argue that overblown conceptions of integration may be actively disabling, they do not reject the need for a more sensibly coherent approach to governance.

While Rode (2015) argues that it is both undesirable and impossible to achieve comprehensive integration, he argues for “privileged integration”. This means strategically identifying critical junctures where better integration would make an obvious meaningful difference. In spatial policy this may mean, for example, prioritising the integration of land-use and transportation. Similarly, a critical point of integration may be linking spatial frameworks more effectively with infrastructural capacities and requirements.

To achieve success even in the more limited terms of “privileged integration” is a complex matter, but Rode (2018) suggests a number of supporting factors. These include: reviewing system boundaries; building networks of trust and mutual interest; developing collaboratively-produced strategic visions and strategic plans; effectively using information and communication technologies; and, importantly, drawing on the knowledge, experience and collaborative cultures of leaders. OECD (2010, p. 274) indicates that “paramount tool of coherence is informed decision-making”.

### 1.2.2. The shift to performance-based approaches

In a performance-based approach it is the outcomes of planning that matter rather than compliance to rules and regulations. It is about ‘performing’ rather than ‘conforming’ (Steele, 2009). The rationale for a performance-based approach includes: the space it gives creative application; its focus on results; and its flexibility. It is an approach that seems intuitively sensible, but we do need to be mindful of its history, and its pitfalls as well as its strengths.

Performance-based planning has dual origins. The first is in land-use management and the second is far more broadly in the shift to integrated governance from the 1990s in the context of ‘Third Way’ politics. In land use management, performance-based approaches were a response to the perceived inflexibility and rigidities of land use zoning. In 1947, the UK shifted towards a more discretionary form of land use management with authorities guided in their decision making by a Development Plan rather than by the prescriptions of zoning. In the USA, zoning was criticised from the 1950s for being an outmoded approach designed for industrial economies managed along Fordist lines rather than for complex, post-industrial economies that required flexible and mixed land use arrangements. The apparent alternative was a performance-based approach in which development applications were assessed against desired spatial objectives rather than in terms of conformance to a zoning code. From the 1970s, a handful of cities, including Houston, abandoned zoning for the new approach.

The next wave of performance-based land use management came from New Zealand and Australia. New Zealand’s Resource Management Act, 1991, engineered a radical transformation of the planning system, removing rule-based planning and requiring decision-making authorities to make “balanced judgements” against the principles of sustainable development. In Australia, Queensland’s Integrated Planning Act, 1997, adopted similar provisions, including a clause requiring a “prohibition on prohibitions”. In the UK, also, there was a further move towards a performance-based approach with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, which replaced Local Plans with Development Frameworks, which provided only very broad guidance for decision-making, requiring authorities to apply their discretion on how to achieve the overarching objective of ‘building sustainable communities’.

The broader shift towards performance-based approaches happened with the modernizing agendas of Third Way leadership in the 1990s. There were early antecedents, especially the budgetary reforms in the USA from the time of Lyndon Johnson’s administration in the late 1960s (Output-Based Budgeting; Zero-Based Budgeting; Planning, Programming and Budgeting Systems) and also new approaches in management such as Management by Objectives.

Footnote: Fordism means the mass production of standardised goods.
The major shift however came in the 1990s as “Third Way” political leadership introduced measures to make government more effective in the delivery of public services. During Clinton’s administration, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act, 1993 (GPRA) which required all federal agencies to set goals, measure results, and report annually on progress. Through the GPRA Modernization Act, 2010, the Obama administration required this reporting to be consistent with the requirements of open-access digital governance.

In the UK, New Labour’s election manifesto declared that “what matters is what works”. When Tony Blair took office as Prime Minister in 1997, he introduced a number of performance-based measures, including a Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for all ministries and the creation of the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit in 2001 to monitor progress against the PSAs. Local government was required to adopt systems of Outcomes-Based Accountability and Outcomes-Based Budgeting. Performance-based approaches spread quickly to New Zealand, Australia and the Nordic countries, and then diffused almost globally.

Global organizational advocates for the approach included the World Bank, IMF, OECD and UN agencies. In 1997, for example, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that the UN should adopt Results-Based Management (RBM), refocussing its attention in its oversight role from how things are done in the UN bureaucracy to what is actually accomplished (UN Habitat, 2017). UN agencies are now actively propagating RBM as an approach, with RBM now one of the five core principles applied by UN teams in developing country-based programming (Ibid).

Latin American countries were quick to adopt national Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems. Colombia, in fact, set up its first M&E structures in 1994, although it extended the system in 2002 when it gave emphasis to mechanisms for social accountability (IEG, 2007). Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico followed from the late 1990s, although Brazil’s system was unusual for its highly decentralised nature. In East Asia, Vietnam, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia introduced M&E systems in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Singapore, for example, adopted 6 strategic outcomes for national development, with annual reporting against targets for each Ministry. Japan adopted the Government Policy Evaluations Act, 2001, which set up the system, and then mandated the Japan International Cooperation Agency to champion performance-management approaches through its international aid programmes. Malaysia introduced a comprehensive performance management system after a drop in electoral support for the ruling party in 2009. The electoral slogan of the party was “Malaysia’s People First, Performance Now” and “Big Results Fast” (DPME, 2011). China has grafted a performance-orientation onto its system of Five Year Planning. With the adoption of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2006-2010), the State Council introduced a comprehensive M&E framework based on 22 indicators, of which meeting eight of them was stated as obligatory. In China, ‘performance’ has become the basis of state legitimacy, replacing the mass ideological mobilisation characteristic of the Maoist era (Jing et al., 2015).

In South Asia, India has gradually moved towards M&E in response to growing concerns around the poor quality of public services. India’s National Planning Commission has recently created an Independent Evaluation Office while the Ministry of Finance is now requiring Outcomes-Based Budgeting (Mehrotra, 2013).

Africa, too, has followed the trend. South Africa set up its national M&E system in 2009, with the creation of the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) early in 2010 (see the discussion in Goldman, et al., 2012). Many other countries on the continent have set up M&E systems with varying degrees of comprehensiveness (e.g. Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Nigeria, Morocco, Tanzania, Benin, Senegal and Ethiopia).

M&E is, in fact, an excellent example of the international transfer of practice, but there are some national differences in the form it takes. Many systems are centralised nationally (e.g. South Africa, Malaysia, China) but a few are quite decentralised.

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5This followed on from the reforms of the radical neo-liberal leadership in the 1980s (e.g. Reagan, Thatcher). While both the neo-liberal and Third Way leadership emphasised the use of business strategy and methods, the former aimed to reduce the size of government by outsourcing the delivery of public services to the private sector, while the latter aimed to make the public sector work more effectively.

6Each agency was required to prepare Five Year Strategic Plans which would include their mission statements and key objectives and then prepare Annual Performance Plans for each fiscal year, with publicly accessed Annual Performance Reports detailing progress against these plans.

7While national objectives were established through various policy documents, M&E was undertaken within a number of agencies.
with agreed national targets but multiple agencies involved in monitoring (e.g. Brazil). Most systems are quite technocratic and formal, but there are a few where civil society plays a role in the evaluation process (e.g. Colombia) (Epstein et al., 2006).

The popularity of performance-management approaches does point to probable impact in terms of levels of efficiency and accountability in public governance. It is sensible to direct government action towards results, and to ensure that government is accountable for its actions through evaluation and reporting. There are however limitations and risks that we must take into account.

In land use management, the transition to performance-based approaches has been less successful than anticipated, and has brought a number of unexpected consequences. In many cases, the reforms actually increased the costs, complexity and time in dealing with development applications. Even in contexts such as the UK, New Zealand and Australia, local government struggled with implementation, with the system requirements far ahead of the available skills. Performance management approaches were associated with far higher levels of uncertainty and inconsistency in decision-making than rule-based approaches, and this was a concern for both developers and communities (Baker et al., 2006; Steele, 2009). Some developers were however able to effectively use the uncertainty and discretionary space. England and McInerney (2017, p.238) call performance-management a “slippery slope” – open to the whim of decision-takers and the manipulation of well-resourced developers. Frew et al. (2016, p.240) conclude that some form of “spatial regulation” or “predictive certainty” is unavoidable, and that while we need not return to the inflexibility of a rules-based approach, we need to find the appropriate balance between ‘certainty’ and “flexibility”.

In the broader terrain of performance-based management across government, recent scholarship has also raised reasons for caution. There is a concern, for example, that a preoccupation with targets, performance standards and measurement may introduce new rigidities into governance. One observer writes that “it is ironic that a system which was trying so hard to be outcome focussed has resulted in more criticism than ever that planning and planners are process driven, box-tickers” (BuckleVann, 2016, p.8). The system easily becomes overly technocratic, driven by prescription and detail, rather than the framework for an intelligent consideration of what is required to achieve outcomes in a complex, changing world. One way to avoid overly technocratic approach is to build in accountability mechanisms that involve active participation of civil society.

Some writers also point to the opportunities that the system offers for political manipulation. Jing et al. (2015) advise in relation to China that “a top-down designed and credibly operated PM system not only clarifies priority development goals of higher level governments, but also affords new tools of hierarchical control and political manipulation”. Instead of being neutral, performance management serves political interests and so should be critically evaluated. In South Africa, a well-designed performance management system was arguably undermined by the rise of patronage politics in governance. An honest, effective performance management system requires a maturity of leadership and a tolerance for real information disclosure. M&E, for example, soon loses credibility when it becomes associated with obfuscation by government.

In addition to these risks, there are technical concerns with implementing performance-based approaches, which mainly have to do with: the quality and availability of data for performance measurements, the available skills base, and the capacity to manage complex processes. Jing et al. (2015) refer to the dangers of “garbage in, garbage out” in measurement processes while Wang et al. (2007) advised the Chinese government not to rush into a complex performance management system that overwhelms capabilities for data resourcing and evaluation. They argued that China should begin with a “basic, workable M&E framework” that could evolve over time.

Despite the pitfalls indicated above, performance-based governance is now a reality across the globe, and the challenge is now, arguably, to make it work as an instrument to increase the effectiveness and accountability of government. Importantly, the SDGs are framed as performance indicators, and the

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8 The Smart Growth approaches in the USA may represent some form of productive hybridity – they are driven by a concern with performance in the built environment (land use mix, containment of growth, accessibility, density) but also recognise that regulation/prescription plays a role in achieving this. Performance management is also been used quite successfully in hybridised forms in transportation planning with National Performance Goals set in terms of the federal Transportation Act for safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and so forth, with regulations for key performance but discretion where appropriate (Transportation for America, 2010; National Center for Sustainable Transportation, 2016).
requirement is that national government localise this framework with their individual contexts. Paragraph 74 of the UN’s 2030 Agenda directs national government to institute review processes at all levels that “will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable, and disaggregated…”.

1.2.3 Spatial targeting
There has been a gradual shift over the past four or so decades from functional approaches, in which policies and programmes are applied generally across administrative jurisdictions, towards spatially targeted approaches, where interventions are concentrated in delineated areas. These may also be referred to as area-based or spatial development initiatives (SDIs). The argument for spatial targeting is that this crowding-in of resources creates agglomeration economies, supports linkages, and allows for more efficient and coordinated governance.

Spatial targeting has been most obviously successful in terms of economic growth although this success has not been universal. An early form of spatial targeting for economic purposes was the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) where special exemptions were granted to investors. These, however, gained a degree of notoriety for the effects of exemption on labour and environmental regulations. The next generation of spatial targeting was referred to as Special Economic Zones (SEZs). While some continued with the practices of EPZs, others focussed on providing good quality environments (sound infrastructure, an effective regulatory environment and the attraction of skills) to support long-term sustainable development and the value-added upgrade of economic enterprise. The race-to-the-bottom in terms of standards, wages and costs is ultimately self-destructive (Reed, 2017).

China famously designated four SEZs in 1980 in a spatially selective experiment with a market economy and opening to global investment and trade. The Shenzhen SEZ was spectacularly successful and the experiments pioneered there were eventually adopted nationwide. China went on to develop a multi-layered approach to spatial targeting, with multiple zones of specialised activity in a hierarchy of status from national to local recognition. Apart from Shenzhen, the greatest success was with the Pudong New District, which catalysed the renewed growth of Shanghai from the early 1990s.

There are many other examples of apparently successful SEZs, including in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai), Vietnam, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Uruguay (Zonamerica), The Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Honduras. There are, however, also many examples of failures, with only a fraction of the more than 4300 SEZs globally emerging as leading nodes of economic activity.

SEZs are however not the only form of spatial targeting for economic growth. There are, for example, industrial parks, science parks, cluster support programmes, and economic corridors. The ‘technopoles’ attempt to replicate the organic success of the Silicon Valley in the USA, while cluster support is often modelled on the competitive networks of small- and medium-sized enterprise in the north-eastern regions of Italy (the so-called Third Italy) (Reed, 2017).

Economic corridors have rapidly become a common form of spatial targeting across all spatial scales, and mainly involve the clustering of economic activities along the backbone of major transport infrastructures. Corridor-type development generally involves investments in transport and logistics infrastructure, various forms of industrial support for selected industries, and special institutional frameworks and processes such as PPPs (Beeg, 2017). Malaysia, for example, developed an ambitious programme of corridor development to support national competitiveness. This included regional-scale corridors such as the Sabah Development Corridor, and the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy but also the metropolitan-scale Multimedia Super Corridor with its two “intelligent cities” and overall aim to grow into a global digital hub (Bunnell, 2002).

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9These are referred to as area-based approaches or spatial development initiatives (SDIs).
10The first modern EPZ was set up in Shannon in Ireland in 1959. Other countries followed including Mauritius, India, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rica, Taiwan (China), India, Mexico, and Malaysia.
11SEZs are zones designed to attract investment that have special regulatory regimes, access to a range of incentives and support measures for business not available elsewhere, and are characterised by better quality infrastructure than elsewhere.
12In 1986, the ILO reported on 176 SEZs in 47 countries but this increased to 3500 in 130 countries by 2006 (Reed, 2017). This increased to around 4300 by 2015 (The Economist, 4 April, 2015).
13Recent reports suggest that the grand vision of creating Malaysia’s Silicon Valley has failed but that there are still prospects for locally appropriate forms of development. http://www.wired.co.uk/article/malaysia-cyberjaya-silicon-valley-smart-cities
regional-scale corridors as an economy strategy. There is, for example, the Delhi-Mumbai Corridor into which is crowded nine industrial zones, a high-speed rail freight line, three ports, six airports, a six-lane (intersection-free) expressway, industrial estates and clusters, and other infrastructure” (Hope and Cox, 2015, p. 7).

With the mix of success and failure with economically-oriented initiatives, there is increasing attention to what makes spatial targeting work. Reed (2017) points to “mounting evidence” that it is difficult to get spatial targeting right while Rios (2016) warns that while there is some spectacular success “many SEZs originally designed with good intentions ended up promoting enclave economies where investment flows with a race-to-the-bottom fiscal and wage logic, and employment is created under the claim that a low-paid-job is better than no job at all”. Success factors include good location, consistently maintained hard infrastructure, effective regulatory regimes, viable local institutions, market size, linkages with the wider economy, and the quality of incentives offered. In Africa, many of the SEZs and corridors are associated with stagnant or declining employment, and a failure to upgrade from low wage to higher value-added industry (Reed, 2017). One of the problems is the small size of local economies which means that local sourcing is limited. For sustainability, policies are required that facilitate technology and knowledge transfer, and often this is lacking (Ibid).

While spatial targeting for economic purposes does offer prospects of success, with all the caveats indicated above, the prospects of spatial targeting for social objectives is less certain. There is, for example, a long history of using spatial targeting for balancing uneven development through focussing investment in lagging regions with little evident success. Where spatial targeting has been associated with spatial convergence (reduced spatial inequality) this is mainly because other forces have shifted economic activity away the economic core (Rogerson and Nel, 2015; Beeg, 2017). This experience suggests that the most feasible approach is to use spatial targeting in alignment with other forces that may synergise with the broader objectives of government.

Significantly, however, Mexico has recently enacted a law to create SEZs in its four poorest regions, to reduce levels of unequal developers. Observers suggest that the odds are against success but this move has provoked a debate around what it may take to ensure spatially inclusionary regional development. Rios (2016) advises, for example, that: SEZ administration should fall under socially responsible administrators; success should be defined as local development and not foreign investment; industries that reinforce competitiveness via low-wage jobs should be avoided; the anchor firms should be complex providing opportunities for skills and technology transfer; and, the numbers of SEZs should be constrained to avoid competitive failure.

There are other ways in which spatial targeting may assist in poverty reduction, beyond the ambitious schemes of rebalancing the space economy. New spatial mapping technologies and multidimensional definitions of poverty are producing poverty maps that are increasing disaggregated spatially, and sensitive to different forms of poverty. This arguably allows for more carefully targeted anti-poverty programmes. In Honduras, for example, there is a spatially targeted food stamp programme instead of a general food subsidy. China is now ambitiously implementing a ‘poverty alleviation and development programme’ targeting 592 identified national poverty counties (Li et al, 2016). There are debates around this approach however with concerns that spatial targeting will leave out a considerable portion of the poor population (in the case of China, the poor living in urban areas) and result in high financial leakage as many non-poor households live in targeted areas (Bigman and Fofack, 2000).

Another form of spatial targeting is intra-urban, with the designation of zones or districts for purposes including programme coordination, urban renewal, employment creation, and specialist support for different activities. Some of these may be creations of local government but others may be designated and assisted by higher levels. During the Clinton administration in the USA, federal government created and support local Empowerment Zones (EZs) aimed at community development, increased employment and better amenities. There was a

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14 Reed (2017) refers to the failure of SEZs in remote mountain regions of Lesotho, and in the less central parts of Nigeria. The only successful zone in Ghana is near Accra.

15 A danger of spatial targeting is the creation of ‘enclave economies’.

16 Incentives should focus on producing a high quality, facilitating environment, rather than simply reducing input costs.

17 Cost pressures in large metropolitan regions (e.g. wages and land) have resulted at times in the dispersal of activities.

18 Greenbaum and Bondonio (2010) warn of the strong political pressures to expand the reach of spatial targeting which invariably reduces effectiveness.

19 The more spatially specific and detailed the targeting, the lower the level of leakage there will be (Bigman and Fofack, 2000).
measure of success here but also concerns with the displacement effect, with jobs, for example, moving from other areas into the EZs. Currently, the Treasury Department in the USA is proposing the federal designation of local Opportunity Zones but there is some fear that the tax incentives provided in these areas could result in increased land values and the displacement of the poor (Capps, 2018).

The now popular practice of transit-oriented development (TOD) is also a form of spatial targeting. The linking of public transit infrastructure and mixed use development has met the objectives of public authorities and developers, and the approach has spread globally quite rapidly. Its basis is the crowding in of both infrastructural spending and support to developers. The success of TOD in addressing equity objectives is less certain. In some cases, support has been given to inclusionary housing processes and job creation but rising land prices along transit routes may have exclusionary effects. Also, the reliance on private developers for TOD means that it is unlikely that the very poorest can be accommodated.

Finally, it should be noted that South Africa has a diverse experience with spatial targeting from the apartheid and post-apartheid eras, and there is a need to draw lessons from this experience, as well as from the international cases discussed above. Todes (2013) concludes on the South African cases that:

Most post-apartheid spatial targeting policies have been relatively short-term, so the impacts may be more limited than might otherwise have been possible. The indirect spatial consequences of mainstream policies have also been insufficiently recognised. The study shows the importance of strong institutions and institutional integration for spatial targeting; the need to develop appropriate packages of support well designed for the context and policy objective; and the need for a strong understanding of economic contexts and dynamics. It also points to the importance of sustained support to a few carefully chosen places, but recognises that policy objectives may vary affecting the types of places chosen and the length of support. The paper shows the risks and difficulties associated with spatial targeting, including, inter alia, wasteful expenditure; corruption; subsidization of inefficiency; unproductive proliferation of places supported; and the uncertainties associated with targeting.

1.2.4 Multi-level planning
For a long time we have been caught in the binary of top-down and bottom-up planning. The arguments for top-down approaches include greater efficiency, more coherence, and universal spread of benefits but the criticisms have included increased bureaucracry, low levels of local motivation, authoritarian tendencies, and a lack of local responsiveness. Bottom-up approaches are said to address the failures of the top-down by deepening local democracies, allowing for greater agility, and mobilising local energies, assets and knowledge. Kaiser (2012) points out that “top-down approaches are not always synonymous with failure, nor are bottom-up approaches always successful.”

There has been a gradual recognition that we have been faced with a ‘false choice’ and that a more complex view is necessary. Kaiser writes that:

we need to use both top-down and bottom-up approaches to promote interaction and dialogue among all levels. National consensus, strategic direction, facilitation, coordination, providing framework and tools for local initiatives, mobilising natural resources and capacity building can be achieved by the top-down approaches while bottom-up approaches are crucial for specifying poverty, ensuring ownership and commitment, mobilising local assets and knowledge, and promoting local innovation in order to achieve holistic development.

This recognition has come together with the idea of ‘multi-level governance’ which recognises that complex problems cannot be solved through action at any one level. The idea has been articulated most explicitly in the context of the European Union responding to the complexity of governing across continental, national, sub-national and local scales. Gary Marks introduced the term in the early 1990s defining multi-level governance as “a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers” (Marks, 1993). In this conception, multi-level governance structures require interacting structures across levels of authority. In the context of the EU, multi-level governance involves the structures of the EU, the

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20 Post-apartheid examples of spatial targeting include Spatial Development Initiatives (e.g. the Maputo Development Corridor), Industrial Development Zones, Special Economic Zones, Special Integrated Development Corridors, and the additional categories included under the National Development Plan 2011-2016 (NDP).

21 Top-down approaches have achieved economic success in East Asian contexts such as China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, but when applied in Africa through Structural Adjustment Programmes, for instance, have largely failed.
The establishment of multi-level governance has evolved gradually with the establishment of a Committee of Regions in 1994, giving subnational government a direct role in the overall governance structure, with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 further strengthening the recognition and involvement of local and regional authorities, and the 2009 White Paper on Multilevel Governance.

Responding to climate change has reinforced the idea of multi-level governance. Reaching multi-lateral agreements on climate change between nation states is clearly necessary but is also immensely complex, uncertain and time consuming. Since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, there has been increasing awareness of the interacting roles of global, national, subnational and local actors in responding to climate change. Dirix et al. (2013, p.363) writes that we must “strengthen bottom-up and top-down climate governance”.

Ideas of multi-level governance – also expressed as ‘inter-governmental relations’ – have also emerged from countries where constitutional arrangements are complex, requiring careful attention to governmental interactions across scales. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the concept of Bundestreu (the ‘federal spirit’) requires the different levels of government to act in good faith and mutual trust, and support each other on matters of common concern. South Africa’s 1996 constitution introduced the idea of ‘co-operative governance’, recognising three distinctive and inter-dependent spheres of government with mutual obligations (Edwards, 2008). In Brazil, the states and municipalities have considerable autonomy but multi-level governance has emerged with the creation of intergovernmental councils (Segatto and Abrucio, n/d). With the possible exception of Germany, the emerging forms of multi-level governance have yet to evolve into meaningful systems of multi-level planning.

Multi-level governance is essentially a dimension of ‘integrated governance’ and has many of its pitfalls including the burden of complexity. With its blurred lines of authority, it may also obfuscate accountability (Peters and Pierre, 2004). However, a modest approach to multi-level governance, which gradually builds the capabilities for interaction across levels may offer a feasible way forward.

1.2.5 Intergovernmental fiscal transfers

One of the possible mechanisms for a meaningful practice of multi-level governance and planning is the productive use of intergovernmental fiscal transfers. Traditionally, intergovernmental transfers are divided between the general transfers or block grants and input-based transfers. The former have no strings attached, and therefore support local autonomy, but do nothing to promote multi-level policy and planning coherence. The latter are restrictive and directive, undermining local autonomy, but allowing national government to achieve specific objectives. The new approach of output-based grants arguably achieves a balance, allowing national government to promote coherent national objectives while giving local authorities considerable discretion in terms of their activities. Also, by rewarding local authorities for their success in meeting objectives, it promotes efficiency, accountability and local innovation (Shah, 2006).

The approach originated within the health sector, in countries such as Canada and Brazil, where subnational governments which meet targets of effectiveness, equity and quality in health care are fiscally rewarded. In Brazil this is referred to as ‘results-based financing’ (La Forgia, n/d). Indonesia has piloted cross-sectoral output-based performance grants that have had “reasonably positive outcomes” in improving the efficiency of spending (Lewis, 2014, p.432). In Rwanda, a District Incentive Fund has been established the rewards well-performing subnational governments for effective use of national funding (Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg, 2012). In South Africa, the Built Environment Performance Plans (BEPPS) prepared by city governments but submitted to National Treasury link the reporting of the achievements of local planning to access to national grants. This is arguably a pioneering approach allowing national government to influence local approaches to planning while ensuring results-based accountability, preserving local discretion in spending, and encouraging innovation.

The challenges for output-based transfers include independent verification in contexts of unreliable data; the ongoing tensions between national objectives and local autonomy; and, political manipulation. However, transparent processes of target setting and verification, including greater citizen involvement, reduce the opportunities for manipulation (Shah, 2006).

1.2.6 Evidence-based planning approaches

The underlying assumption with evidence-based planning is that public policy making would be based on “rigorously established objective evidence” (Smith, 2013). This approach was popularised under the ‘Third Way’ leadership of Tony Blair in the UK from

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22 The establishment of multi-level governance has evolved gradually with the establishment of a Committee of Regions in 1994, giving subnational government a direct role in the overall governance structure, with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 further strengthening the recognition and involvement of local and regional authorities, and the 2009 White Paper on Multilevel Governance

23 In India, for example, funding through Prime Minister Modi’s Smart City Programme was suspected of political motivations. However, a more transparent process of designating target cities has mitigated the criticism. See http://smartcities.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Detailed%20Note%20on%20the%20program.pdf
the late 1990s, and gained currency globally, offering an apparent antidote to problems in policy-making such as sectional interests, arbitrariness and mistaken assumptions (Ibid). The direct inspiration for this approach was the medical field where public policy was underpinned by rigorous evidence-based requirements for more than five decades. From the 1990s, there were attempts to extend this approach to social policy, education, crime prevention, and poverty reduction, amongst other fields (Ibid).

Davoudi (2006) advises however that much of the enthusiasm is based on a mistaken assumption that there is in fact a direct relationship between information and policy-making. Faludi and Waterhout (2006) referred to the tension that emerged from the 1990s between the ‘communicative turn’ in planning, with its emphasis on policy-making through dialogue and open deliberation, and the ‘evidence-based turn’ with its technocratic focus on the use of science and data. Krizek et al. (2009, p.459) remind us that “much of planning practice is a reflective craft where skills of mediation, negotiation, listening, and framing are prominent” although they do accept that “there is a valuable role for research-generated evidence to inform decision making” (Ibid).

The danger, in fact, is that evidence-based approaches may de-politicise the policy making process, and therefore undermine democratic process. Ultimately, policy-making must be primarily responsive to the desires, needs and will of the public, as refracted through an imperfect political system, and not to the judgements of technocrats, however informed they may be by factual evidence. The question perhaps is ‘How do we ensure that politically-directed processes are informed as objectively as possible by rigorously tested knowledge?’

One way to do to address the tension is to institutionally separate the data collection and analysis function from the actual policy-making process, although interconnections are clearly required. Faludi and Waterhout (2006) report that in The Netherlands, the Dutch National Planning Agency, which combined research and policy-making roles, was split into two, with an independent National Spatial Research Institute and a separate Directorate-General for Spatial Policy. There was a similar process in France where the Observatoire des territoires was separated from the Dacit (or policy think tank). In the EU, the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON) provides the evidence base which informs the territorial strategy and planning of the European Commission (Ibid). In Gauteng, South Africa, the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) provides a rigorous, independent evidence base to the planners who work under political guidance in the provincial government24. While there can never be a clear differentiation between ‘facts’ on the one hand, and ‘values’ and ‘politics’ on the other25, this separation may offer a way of ensuring the best possible evidence-based advice while retaining the political leadership over policy-making.

OECD (2010, p.274) argues that the real benefit of an evidence-based approach is to ensure that a politically-driven approach to policy-making is as informed as possible by rigorously tested knowledge:

*The paramount tool of coherence is informed decision-making. Policy makers need to know what their realistic options are, what inconsistencies might result from their decisions, how the costs of these inconsistencies can be mitigated, and how the trade-offs they have had to make can be explained. In an environment characterised by complexity, change and the availability of vast quantities of information, a high premium is put on developing information systems and analytical capacities that allow decision makers to govern as coherently as possible.*

Whether evidence-based planning is practiced in its technocratic form or as a hybrid with a more deliberative and politically-directed approach, there are requirements for success which include: credible data sources; skills in data analysis; and, most importantly, political support for using the evidence base in policy making (Smith, 2013).

1.2.7 Capability-based planning approaches

The capabilities approach is widely associated with the work of Amartya Sen in welfareeconomics. In this approach poverty is a capability-deprivation and the focus of anti-poverty strategies should be to expand the range of capabilities possessed by individuals (i.e. the freedoms, opportunities, material resources, non material attributes, skills etc.). The capabilities approach has significantly informed the content of development strategies including South Africa’s National Development Plan. There is however a “capability-based approach” that has come from a very different source, and which offers new methodologies for planning.

The source is, in fact, the American military which has enormous resources for developing more effective approaches to strategizing for battle (Caudle, 2005).

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26 Chapter Eight of the National Development Plan in South Africa proposed a National Observatory, of the sort deployed in France, to provide the evidence base for national spatial planning.

27 Faludi and Waterhout (2006, p.10) remind us, for example, that ‘that what is accepted as decisive evidence is a matter of choice, and as such is value-laden and political’, and also that what evidence is required is a political choice.
Like strategic planning approaches in the 1970s, capability-based planning has gradually transferred into civilian settings. Laasonen and Kolehmainen (2017, p.1673) argue for a capability-based approach for regional development. They write that “Innovation policy should be viewed as a means to mobilize, renew, build and acquire new resources and capabilities in a region and should aim to build and stimulate regional networklevel capabilities for economic renewal.”

Capability-based planning involves, firstly, an assessment of the ability of an institution to achieve declared goals (in terms, for example, of finances, technologies, human resources, skills, and organisational processes)\textsuperscript{26}. The outcome of the assessment is the identification of a capabilities gap.\textsuperscript{27} With this knowledge planners will either propose actions to increase capabilities or to adjust the objectives to the constraints of capability (or a combination of both). Finally, it also involves constant assessment and risk management in relation to the capability-objective interface.

With its iterative approach, and notwithstanding its origins, the capability-based approach may offer a usefully adaptive approach to planning, requiring continual alignment between what is proposed and what is possible. However, capability-planning has its pitfalls. There is a backlash within the American military, for example, where expensive technologies and programmes have been developed because there is a capability even though there is no obvious threat that warrants these efforts (Ricks, 2015). There is a risk also that the close alignment between planning and existing capabilities will perpetuate the status quo. What is needed is an approach that recognises the limits of feasibility but actively builds capabilities to expand these limits. This brings us again to Amartya Sen’s approach. It also suggests that capabilities-based planning should be grafted on to other planning approaches, rather than being framed as a dominant approach in its own right.

### 1.3 Conclusions

The first point is very simply that the ends of planning must remain firmly in mind. Often, initiatives towards planning reform become quickly technocratised, and debates are narrowly reduced to questions of system, technique and procedure. In the South African case we clearly need to keep firmly in mind international agreements around the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda; and, the imperative to respond to legacies of colonial and apartheid rule. We must remember that planning systems and instruments are simply tools that can serve a variety of ends and that technical reforms must come together with public debate, dialogue and deliberation over the ends and means of planning.

However, technical consideration is necessary. To achieve the desired ends, planning systems must be feasible and efficient, able to actually achieve the ends. While there is a danger in following fashion and vogue, the international trends and approaches we have reviewed are intuitively sensible in principle, although there are pitfalls in practice. A critical review requires us to understand the trends in terms of their origins, histories and outcomes. With this in mind our broad conclusions are: We do need to address ‘governance gaps’ through integration but do so strategically without overly-centralising and becoming paralysed with complexity;

- In our approach to performance-based planning we need to maintain an intelligent response to the requirement for achieving outcomes rather than being caught up in the prescriptions and details of targets, indicators and measurements;
- We need to target spatially where appropriate but be continually aware of what it actually takes to achieve success, and be mindful of distributional consequences of targeting;
- Wicked problems do need to be addressed across scales, requiring an evolving system of multi-level planning (including strategic use of inter-governmental financial transfers) but this needs to be done strategically to avoid overly complex arrangements;
- Policy making should be based on good quality information but not at the expense of its political dimension – fortunately, there are models which show how this may be done; and,
- Capability-based approaches may offer a useful basis for adaptive means-end iteration, but should be grafted onto other approaches.

Finally, despite everything we may do, we will never get it right. Ongoing adaptive responses to planning reform in particular contexts are always required.

### 1.4 References


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\textsuperscript{26} This may be referred to as ‘resource mapping’

\textsuperscript{27} Capability has been described as the ‘wire between strategy and operations’
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