

# MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE – PLANNING APPROACHES

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# PRIMARY QUESTIONS FOR UK

- The system was reformed 2008-2011: is there scope or need for any further reform in the near/medium future?
- If there is a need, what sort of headline approaches might make sense?
- Would any of these draw on ideas or examples from elsewhere (particularly western Europe), or should they grow directly from UK challenges and experiences?

# NEED FOR REFORM

- The need will have to be clear and somewhat urgent to convince parties of scope for another reform.
- This might be because the present system shows itself as incapable of giving consents, whether for a low carbon agenda, or an economic growth at all costs agenda.
- That might lead to calls for the creation of a more deliberative and less top down system.
- But this will all depend on the developments around key consent areas, not on any outside or academic or professional thinking.

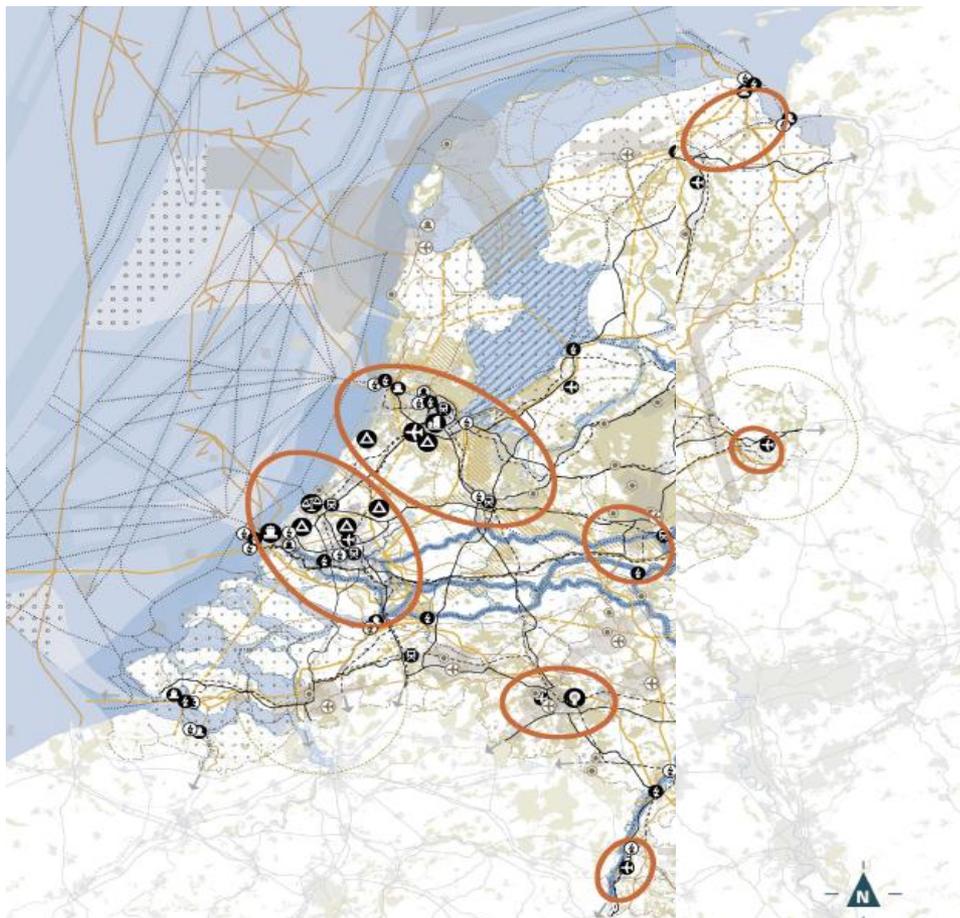
# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 1

- To suggest that we need in fact very little new infrastructure – switch to massive demand management and retrofitting / micro drive. More or less moratorium on all major infrastructure development.
- NPSs would need rewriting to this effect, NID would be slimmed down, and policy in the key departments (DECC, DEFRA and DfT) would move to the new priorities.

# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 2

- To propose a planning approach – examples in Netherlands and Scotland. Long term, national, comprehensive.
- From a planning perspective has major gains, but always resisted since 1970s in UK.
- To have full value, needs to be linked to certain shapes of national economic framework...
- Would need to be built around a new idea of long term futures, likely to be too threatening to all major parties.

# DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY STRATEGY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPATIAL PLANNING (NPS-ISP 2011)



National Spatial Structure map

Enhance the competitiveness of the Netherlands by strengthening its spatial and economic infrastructure

- Urban regions with top economic sectors
- Schiphol Mainport
- Rotterdam Mainport
- Southeast Netherlands Brakeport
- Greengport
- Zuidoost
- City of International Justice, peace and security
- High speed rail network station
- Other airports of national importance
- Seaport of national importance
- Inland port of national importance
- Power station with capacity > 600 megawatts
- Possible location for new power stations
- Potential area for wind farm
- Area designated for wind farm
- Energy supply network
- Pipeline and related buffer zone
- Potential development area for sustainable offshore energy supply after 2020

Improve, preserve and physically guarantee mobility, putting users first

- International and national main road network
- International and national main rail network
- International and national navigable waterways

Guarantee a safe environment in which it is pleasant to live, and in which unique natural and cultural heritage values are preserved

- Unique UNESCO World Heritage Site
- National nature network\* (the map will indicate revised national ecological networks)
- Coastal foundation to be preserved
- Fresh water supply
- Dykes, sluices and locks
- Zone with military restrictions
- Military airfield
- Naval port
- Large military training area and/or firing range
- Simplified topography

\*The selected areas indicated are in fact potential locations for large scale wind farms, included as an illustration.

# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 3

- To propose a more limited version of above, just reforming the NPSs to be proper spatially coherent and integrated policy strategies.
- This is clearly antagonistic to the political economic preferences of recent governments. It could only be part of a new way of approaching government, but it would be less radical than alternative 2.
- For example, under this model, the NPSs for rail, road, ports and airports would have to be prepared as one exercise, and spatial choices indicated.
- Energy NPSs might incorporate low carbon and hence spatial thinking.

# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 4

- To propose a much more strategic and integrated version of the National Infrastructure Plan,
- This might really link planning in with finance and regulation in relation to overall government goals.
- No doubt would need to move the making from the Treasury and Infrastructure UK, where the NIP risks being an appendage of Public Private Partnerships thinking, with little strategic capacity.
- Strong spatialising CLG input would be needed, alongside the infrastructural sectoral departments, to get more than a projects shopping list NIP.

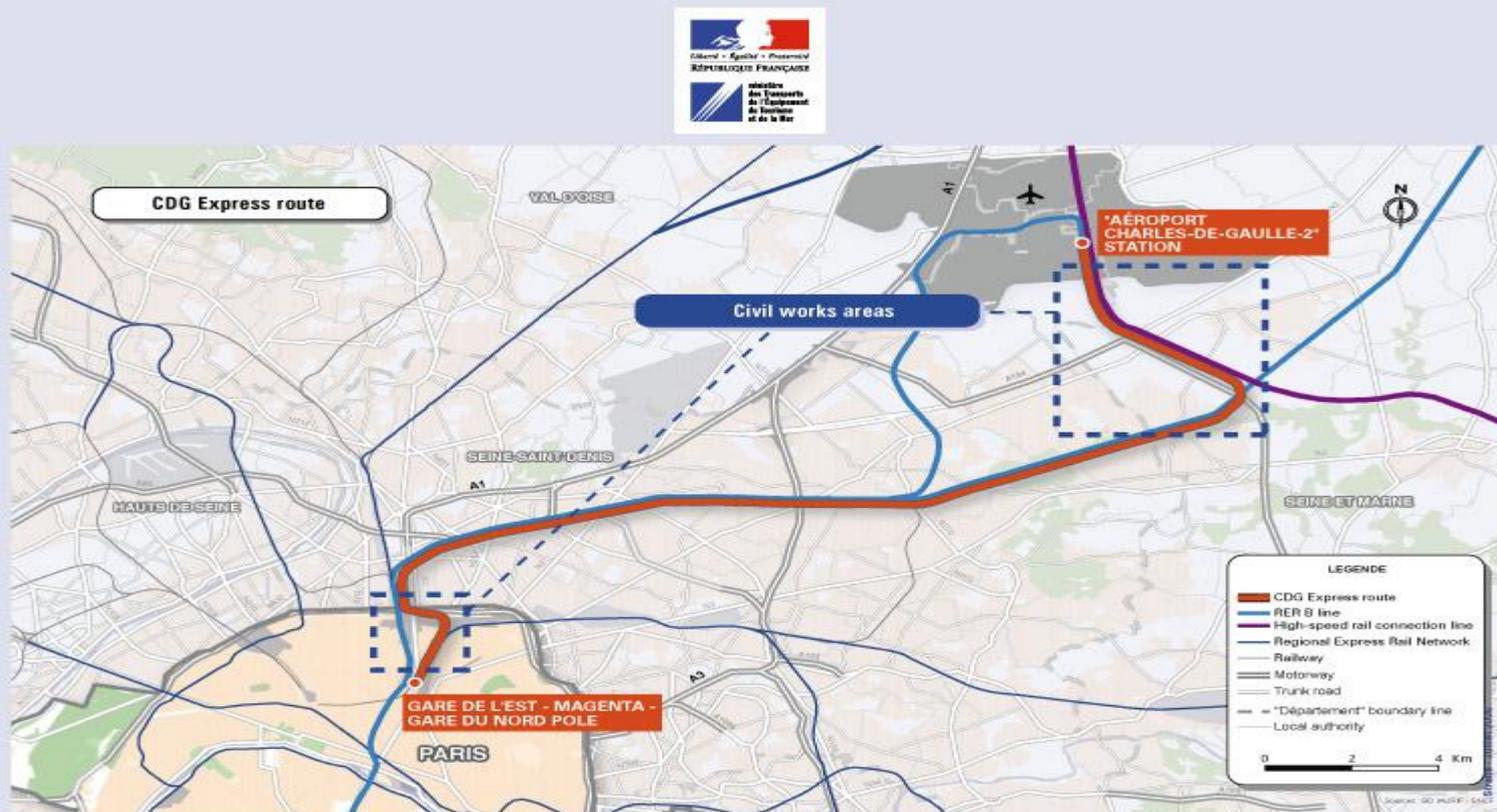
# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 5

- As a long term ingredient, seek to build up the territorial articulation of England (already occurring with rest of UK), so that decisions automatically take account of regional preferences.
- Regional government the obvious way to do this, as in most European countries.
- But other mechanisms might be invented, if likely to have less solidity.
- Most major infrastructure matters are effectively decided this way by territorial horse trading, in France, Spain and in different modes in Germany (as a federal country).
- A valuable second best to other approaches.

# POSSIBLE HEADLINE ALTERNATIVE 6

- To introduce new deliberative, public debate stages into the process of consideration of major projects.
- This could copy the French Commission Nationale du Debat Public, which looks at projects early in their development and has no decision making status.
- This might be linked to a new Key Planning Decisions process (as in the Netherlands), if NPSs are not reformed to be made adequate. However the NID process might be reformed to be made more articulated with territorial and other responsive elements.

# CDG EXPRESS (CNDP CASE)



# CONCLUSIONS ON PLANNING MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Until the system created under the 2008/2011 Acts has had some use, hard to propose this as an urgent area for legislative change.
- But, like the rest of the Localism Act content, the system is likely to work poorly for the most important objectives, so reform desirable sooner or later.
- We should make more widely known the approaches in the Netherlands and France.
- We should note the weak knowledge base on which any wider thinking might be based. Government must (re)build an intelligence arm for its operations in this field. Now there is only the scattering of lobby group statements on various sides.
- But - only a massive change in the state project will create space for really valuable reform.

Views very welcome, please write to  
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