**CALL FOR PAPERS: special issue**

**Closing the policy gaps:**
from formulation to outcomes

Guest Editors: Simon Foxell & Ian Cooper

“In general, society does need to make the extra effort at prediction, even though it may entail a lot of hard work with little immediate reward – or we need to be more aware that the approximations we make come with trade-offs.”


Many aspirations are voiced and predictions and promises made about the outcomes that will be realised by implementing a particular policy or initiative, whether through regulation, the introduction of a new technology or by achieving a change in behaviour. Governments, the professions, and industry develop courses of action predicated on achieving stated objectives at a range of scales: internationally, regionally, by sector, at an urban level or even that of (large) individual projects (mentioned specifically in the 4th paragraph).

For the built environment, the evidence base for formulating policy and developing effective initiatives and interventions is notoriously fragile. This special issue will explore the following questions: What levels of accuracy can be realistically expected? Are there instances where intended outcomes have been followed up and assessed in light of actual experience? What lessons could inform better policy-making and help produce more successful initiatives? How should these be framed so their objectives reflect the uncertainty and the quality of the evidence on which they are based? Can the robustness of assumptions and the supporting evidence be evaluated? Can the processes and assumptions underpinning selection of options be made more transparent? How might the implementation of a policy or initiative be tracked and evaluated against its intended objectives? Are there worthwhile international comparisons to be drawn here?

As the social, economic and environmental performance of the built environment becomes more critical and the investment decision cycle tightens, so the need to accurately plan ahead becomes more acute. Predictions about the impact of regeneration and building programmes, as well as (large) individual projects, need to be better informed and the chances of achieving measures of success understood and properly communicated.

This special issue intends to address a variety of these questions with a focus on policies and initiatives for the built environment with an emphasis on the following sectors: urban regeneration and housing market renewal, design for education, the transition to low-energy building stocks and recent innovations in procurement practice. (NB: the special issue is not focused on case studies of post-occupancy evaluation of individual buildings.)

Possible themes could include:

- Developing and maintaining expertise within government and institutions / the use of external advice (national building research organisations, universities, consultants)

- The role of educational and professional structures in improving options selection and performance predictions

- International comparisons of policy formulation, implementation practices and outcomes
• Linkages between policy formulation, objectives setting, monitoring, evaluation, validation and feedback mechanisms
• Selection of policy testing methods: e.g. forecasting and backcasting, scenario planning, Bayesian analysis and data correlation
• Efficacy of predictive models for the built environment (e.g. route maps, energy models, BIM etc.) and their assessed accuracy
• The use of futures methods to explore the robustness of decision making in different scenarios
• The creation and ownership of evidence base(s) for decision making and evidence-based design
• Means of improving the accuracy of objectives setting (e.g. Increased availability of data sets, use of urban and building simulation models, etc.)
• Comparative success rates of different types of regulation versus incentive-based initiatives using industry, government and market driven approaches
• Harnessing new forms of evidence: big data, data mining, etc.
• The use of longitudinal studies in assessing long-term policy outcomes
• The efficacy of procurement and delivery strategies / mechanisms (PFI, DBF&O etc) in delivering project objectives and outcomes
• The record of and lessons from post-policy (built environment) studies and evaluations
• The gap between predicted and actual outcomes and the risk factors and probabilities associated with successfully achieving predicted outcomes
• Understanding the role of stakeholders and what drives them in the processes of commissioning, analysis, independent review, etc when making policy predictions and implementing strategies
• The ethical nature of predictions in policy formulation and evaluation
• Unintended consequences in policy/initiative outcomes

Briefing Note to Contributors
You are invited to submit an abstract for a journal paper in this special issue of Building Research and Information. In the first instance, please send a 500 word (maximum) abstract to the guest editor: Simon Foxell sf@architectspractice.com by MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2014. Abstracts will be reviewed by the editors to ensure a varied, yet integrated selection of papers around the topic of the special issue. Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit a full paper (of approximately 6,000 words), which will be subject to a double-blind review process.

Timetable

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<td>15 January 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for abstract submission</td>
<td>24 February 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstracts agreed with editors / authors notified</td>
<td>11 March 2014</td>
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Questions?
If you have a question, please contact the guest editors and the editor:
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