

HOUSING POLICY IN PRACTICE

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Housing Policy Context & Current Themes



External influences & impacts – Covid Case Study



Policy Process



Policy Drivers and campaigning



Policy in organisations



Keeping informed – Learning Styles

WHAT IS HOUSING POLICY?

“Housing policy refers to a wide range of government action. It covers any government action, legislation or economic policies that have a direct or indirect effect on housing”

(Blakemore, 2007:202)

Ref: (Blakemore. K, Griggs. E (2007) Social Policy: an Introduction; England: Open University Press)

CHAT

- What is the biggest housing policy issue facing the UK?
- Which of these have the biggest impact on your role.

Affordability & Cost of Living

Carbon reduction & Sustainability

Labour & Material shortages/Wages

Land supply and planning

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Levelling Up and/or devolution

Neighbourhoods & Gentrification

Private Rented Reform

Consumer Regulation [Reshaping consumer regulation: Our implementation plan - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reshaping-consumer-regulation)
(www.gov.uk)



HOUSING – the ‘wobbly pillar under the welfare state...’ (Torgesen 1987)

HOUSING

- (Social) provision is based on need
- State is not the main provider of housing in the UK
- A history of intervention by private, public, and voluntary sectors
- Stigma?



HEALTH AND EDUCATION

- Universal
- Free to all

WHY IS HOUSING UNIQUE IN POLICY TERMS?

- ❑ Necessity/physical need (Maslow's hierarchy of need)
- ❑ Large portion of household expenditure
- ❑ Investment *and* consumer good
- ❑ Stands between private and public sectors
- ❑ Visible – impact on landscape
- ❑ 'Inelastic' supply /scarce resources
- ❑ Immobile (in most cases)
- ❑ Regional variations – materials, markets
- ❑ Consumed individually not collectively (usually...)

**Can you think
of any reasons?**



Health	Regeneration	Taxation	Environmental health & regulation
Equality & Diversity Human Rights	Anti Social Behaviour & Crime	Industry & Business	Financial – regulations, interest rate policy
Planning Policy	Building Regulations	Welfare Benefits	Social Care & Support



International or European

National (Scotland, Wales & NI different legislation, policy and regulation for housing)

Regional (including City Regions, devolved powers in England) e.g. planning

Local (at local authority level)

Sub-regional or cross border (maybe linked to housing markets) Levelling Up?

Local – parish or town council

Neighbourhood/Community



IMPACT OF COVID 19 – 5 MINUTES IN BREAKOUT GROUPS OF 6



COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND HOUSING-

- Indoor Space for Homeworking/Homeschooling/Homework
 - Childcare/Domestic Role
 - Cost of spending more time at home for some (fuel) , unemployment
 - Space - Shared Housing Overcrowding
 - Outside Space (Tension/Exercise)
 - Unemployment – impact on ability to meet housing costs
 - Housebuilding impact – stalled sites
 - Restrictions on moves
 - Domestic Abuse/Relationship Breakdown/Family Breakdown
 - Housing Markets – exodus to suburban/rural areas
 - Reduced vigilance from less staff time on site
 - Focus on vulnerability
- Homelessness – Rough sleepers – Everyone in
 - Eviction moratorium
 - Furlough/subsidies for business
 - Hybrid Working
 - Commuting time/costs
 - Office costs/disposals/receipts
 - Partnership working e.g. food
 - Increased Tenant Insight ?



WORKED EXAMPLE



Solution?

STIGMA AND SOCIAL HOUSING

Housing Green Paper

- ‘Institutional indifference’
- Professionalism of staff
- Anti-social behaviour concerns
- Neighbourhood competitions

Potentially stigmatising activities

- Fixed term tenancies
- Starter Tenancies
- Suitability checks
- Reference and Credit checks
- Two-tier repair service ‘gold’ standard
- ‘poor doors’

Vulnerability

- *‘This is an increasingly tricky term. Survey respondents did not necessarily raise this as an issue; many clearly felt that the different support that some tenants had should be reflected and responded to by landlords. But there was a thread of responses that highlighted a problem with the idea that social housing providers and their staff in some way rescue tenants and promotes this approach in their communications including using terms like ‘turning people’s lives around’.*
- **Chartered Institute of Housing/See the Person 2020**

SOME HOUSING POLICY DRIVERS...

Media /Moral panic	Economic change	Major events or disasters (e.g. war)	Sector-led lobbying Academic research & think tanks
Complaints, failures or regulatory breaches	Political ideology (and views on level of state involvement)	Historic – policy, condition of housing stock	Campaigns & protests
Public attitude surveys/ Customers & potential customers	Social structures & value systems	Environmental concerns	Legal change (cause and effect)

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

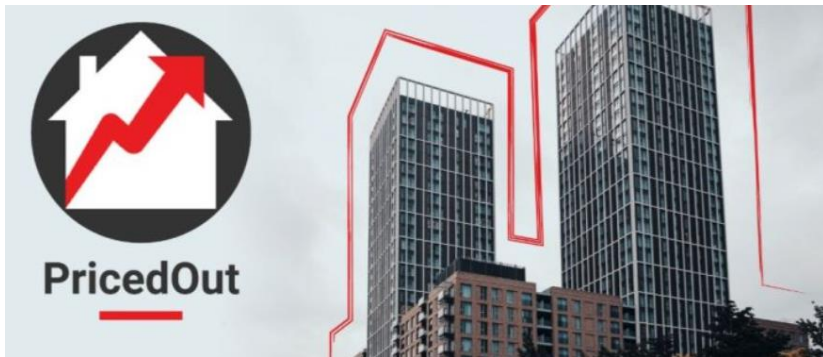
Policy Drivers e.g.
Grenfell, Climate
Change

Change in
organisational
strategy

Reallocation of
budgets to
priority policy
areas
(sustainability,
building safety,
damp and mould)

New
appointments
(specialist roles)
New processes
and procedures

CAMPAIGNS & PROTESTS



TYPES OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policy innovation	Something entirely new – rare in modern times	Right to buy
Policy succession	New policy replaces old, consolidation or splitting into a programme	Regulatory frameworks, funding regimes
Policy maintenance	Tinkering...adapting policy to keep on track	Building regulations
Policy termination	Hasn't worked try something else!- or because of expenditure cuts	Housing market renewal, MIRAs, RTB in Scotland

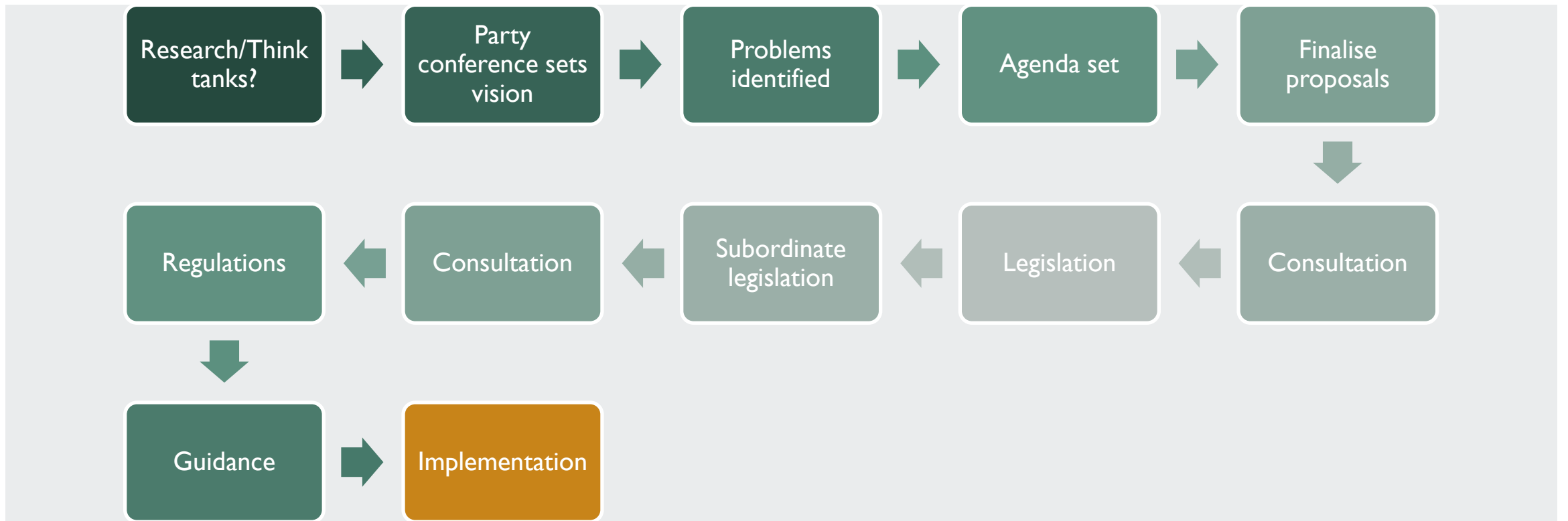
PROBLEM DEFINITION IS EVERYTHING...

If a problem is not properly defined it can lead to the wrong policy.

- There is not always agreement on the issue e.g. rough sleeping: is the problem one of homelessness or vagrancy and is the solution housing, or criminal?

EXAMPLE: Empty homes: A policy of marketing or refurbishment not suitable if homes are obsolete (of the wrong type, or in the wrong place)

THE 'PERFECT' POLICY ?



POLICY INTO PRACTICE: THE 'STREET-LEVEL' BUREAUCRAT?

Lipsky (1980)

'The essence of street level bureaucracies is that they require people to make decisions about other people. Street-level bureaucrats have discretion because the nature of service provision calls for human judgement that cannot be programmed and for which machines cannot substitute.'



Possible controls

- Equality Analysis
- Performance management (targets*, case file audits, call monitoring)

but in turn can lead to perverse outcomes

Complaints or Legal Challenge	Events/Disasters	Internal Audit Recommendations	Policy vacuum!
New Corporate Priorities	Value for Money or budget considerations	Staff feedback	Poor performance or customer satisfaction
New Business/ Commissioner/Bid Requirements	Local initiatives/ Context including local media	Technology/Digital	Changing customer base/aspirations

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POLICY IN ORGANISATIONS – SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- ❑ Interdependencies – e.g. allocations/debt/ASB
- ❑ Policy Ownership/accountability/Governance & Approval routes
- ❑ Implementation (training, procedures, communications to tenants and staff)
- ❑ Impact/measures/learning from complaints
- ❑ Review frequency
- ❑ Publication

KEEPING INFORMED

- CIH – free events for members, weekly policy summary, UK housing review
- Northern Housing Consortium
- National Housing Federation/Association for Retained Council Housing
- Thinkhouse (curated reviewed reports)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Broader social policy)- annual poverty report
- Podcasts – Yorkshire Housing,
- Parliamentary broadcasts – e.g. select committees, APPG Housing
- Internal policy briefings/updates
- Access to board performance/strategy progress reports
- Council housing strategies/reports
- Data and benchmarking
- Use your mentor?





QUESTIONS?

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