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Spatial Economics Research Centre

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Planning, planning, planning

I seem to have spent the week so far talking and thinking about planning and development.

Monday was spent in Durham at a land market event being held as part of the [North East Independent Economic Review](#). Interesting to hear people talking about how the recession has forced a shift to 'more market focused' plans (in other words, a system that responds more to price signals). I'll reserve judgement on whether this is happening, but some of us have been arguing for that shift for quite some time.

I spent most of Tuesday writing up my think piece for the NEIER. But also find time to enjoy Tony Travers piece in the Evening Standard on the [implausible alliances emerging on either side of the green belt debate](#). I also very much enjoyed reading a post from Phil Barnes on [the politics of planning](#) arguing that planners need to increase their educational role in making the case for more housing. As part of this, I would like to see greater debate around the role for more market focused plans in delivering this housing. Interestingly, when I made the case for this at [my recent public lecture](#) (rather angry) member of the audience accused me of being a neo-liberal. I don't think this kind of response is particularly helpful (and without going in the details of my personal politics, I'd tend to place myself on left-leaning side of Travers' implausible alliance in favour of more green belt development).

Finally, on a more personal note, I've spent this morning cursing the planning application from my local surgery for a dispensing pharmacy and needle exchange (on a residential street, next to a nursery and community centre). I haven't decided yet whether to object, but just in case here's an earlier [pc justifying my 'hypocrisy'](#). More seriously, these cases serve to remind us that the planning system has an important role to play in moderating competing claims over land use. Just because I think the current system gets some aspects of that decision wrong doesn't mean I think there's no role for planning I am, after all, no neo-liberal.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, January 30, 2013](#)

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