

Forward looking policy making

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What is/why forward looking policy making?

- Not (necessarily) about predicting the future
- Understanding what possible futures might look like
- Shaping the future
- Matching long-term strategic goals, short-term (political) pressures and other influences

What is/why forward looking policy making?

- Links with other aspects of 'modern policy making'
- Not new
- Given impetus by policy failures, New Labour's approach to policy making, concerns over risk, attempts to understand and manage a complex world...
- Uses many approaches
- Challenging

Where is it going?

- Continuing demand for forward looking policy making
- Greatest use at present
 - ‘scientific’ areas?
 - other fields where (‘good quality’) quantitative information is available?
- Spreading across government – but not always well integrated
- Need for rigour

Public Administration Committee, (2006/7) *Governing the Future*

Consideration of the future must be built into decision-making today, but thinking about the future may mean abandoning assumptions which underlie current policy. Future and strategic thinking are particular disciplines, but they should be intimately connected to the policy-making process (p. 5)

Questions and issues for the social sciences and for social research

- What about application to social fields?
- Relative roles/challenges of projections and judgemental techniques?
- Which stakeholders?
- Need to be clear of reasons for and limitations of FLPM
- Need to consider future evidence needs and appropriate types of evidence