
Megaprojects and sustainable development

OMEGA lecture

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Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport

- Environmental campaigning charity
- Aims to influence transport policy so as to improve people's lives while reducing environmental impact
- Has carried out detailed research on transport spending and promoted improvements in everyday transport
- Pilots and promotes good practice and new ideas
- Running campaigns “Fair Fares Now” and “Save our Buses”
- Co-ordinates transport campaigners from different environmental groups

Key issues

- Megaprojects – the sustainable development context
- The need for a policy context
- Future proofing and appraisal
- Public involvement
- Minimising adverse impacts

Megaprojects and sustainable development context

Megaprojects have to be considered in context:

- Limits on natural resources especially oil
- Carbon and climate change
- Biodiversity: “critical natural capital”

These are hard targets or constraints that can't be traded or negotiated: megaprojects must show that they can meet targets and fit within constraints – and also that they form part of a policy package that is the best value for money in meeting these.

Climate change is real and serious...

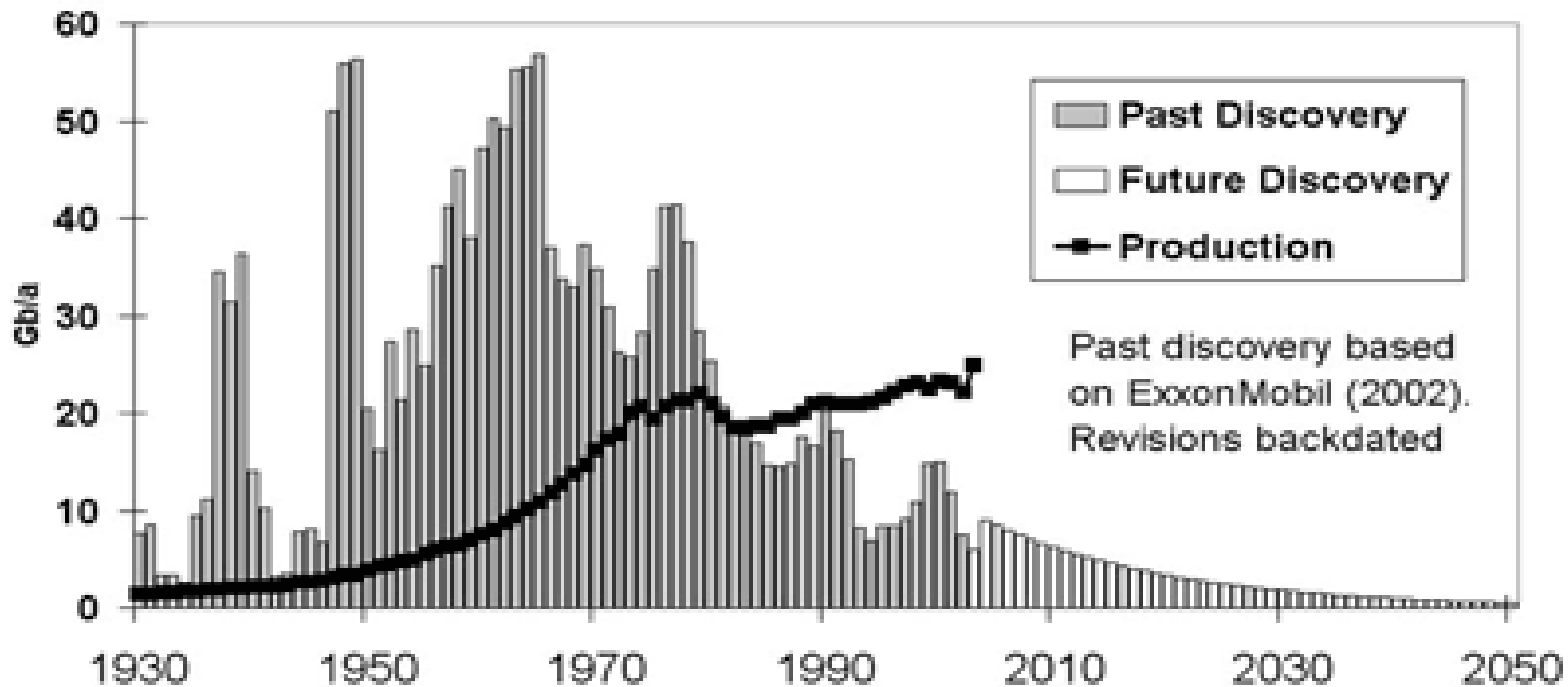
- Still a consensus among scientists that climate change is real and caused by humans
- Climate Change Act requires reductions in carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050
- Transport accounts for 26% of UK emissions and is set to rise

It's not just climate change: carbon dependency can't continue...

- We will be living in a carbon constrained world not just because of policies to tackle climate change but because of:
 - ▶ Oil insecurity and policies to tackle this by reducing reliance on imported oil from politically unstable areas
 - ▶ Rising long term real oil prices with rising demand from emerging economies and peaking in oil supply

Peak oil

THE GROWING GAP Oil Discovery and Production



The need for a policy context

High Speed 2 context:

- The use of released capacity
- Stations at parkways or city centres?
- Land use planning links
- Policies and infrastructure on other modes
- Economic development

Future proofing and appraisal

- Testing against scenarios not forecasts (oil prices for example)
- Testing against alternative options: conservation not new build, “fix it first” not new infrastructure
- Appraisal against targets not just benefit/cost ratios
- Look at all impacts, not just those that can be monetised (landscape, community amenity, heritage, habitats)
- Winners and losers

Public involvement and participation

Tension between early involvement and blight, but:

- Early discussion about principles and possible alignments
- Identifying constraints, showstoppers, local issues
- Involve people rather than impose pre-planned detail on them

Minimising adverse impacts

- Holistic design
- Look for enhancements not just accept damage
- Avoid damage first, mitigation as second best, compensation as last resort
- Make technical specification and requirements flexible not fixed to minimise impacts and maximise benefits
- Compensation should be based on long term endowments not short term payments

Conclusions

- Megaprojects must seek to work with sustainability constraints and targets not override them
- They must spell out their political, economic and other contexts – what is the policy package of which megaprojects are a part? Regulation, funding, planning, taxation etc.
- They must be appraised against alternatives and scenarios not just forecasts
- They must involve the public properly
- They must seek high quality design and prioritise avoidance of environmental impacts

For more information

Campaign for Better Transport

www.bettertransport.org.uk