UK Group:

Questions and comments regarding the Spanish draft

General Comment

We very-much enjoyed reading the paper and were interested by the ideas proposed. In general terms, the problems and responses were explained in detail. We think, however, that it would be helpful to have a summary at the start which clearly identifies the specific problems created by decreased funding and how the proposed reforms would address these. This is because the link between reduced funds, impact and response is unclear with regard to some suggestions which appear to be positive planning policies irrespective of the recent economic changes. That aside, it provides a very interesting and well-supported paper.

General Questions

1. You mention that “change must be born in the city . . . [but not] only because so many people live there or citizens protest”. Who do you therefore expect to drive the change?

2. You refer to “the city as a system”. To what extent does focussing on the neighbourhood level (and allowing greater autonomy for communities) undermine the ability of planners to take a strategic and systematic approach?

3. You cite The Right to the City (2008), which views cities through a Marxist framework. To what extent do you think that the neo-liberal agenda has created the current problems and what would a Marxist response be?

4. What would the economic impacts be of closing the city cycle at the national level? Do you risk rich areas becoming richer and poor areas becoming poorer?
Specific Questions:

1. What is the food-growing capacity of underutilised land in Spain?

2. Who would fund the “the protection and enhancement of rural land” and what would the economic consequences of consolidation be?

3. Why is the “market garden” approach a more efficient model for the city than the villages?

4. With so many homes and green land, why are you focussing on urban growth and not on encouraging rural repopulation?

5. You mention that “economic returns are not related to the social objective of each of the actions undertaken in the city”. To what extent can you rely on this for securing improvement?

6. The report emphasises change on the local/neighbourhood level:
   - To what extent are these supported at the city-level?
   - Who would implement these strategies?
   - How would these be co-ordinated across the city?

7. In London, cities have found local/neighbourhood planning to place further demands on stretched public sector resources:
   - How would your proposals represent a cost-saving for local government?
   - Who would fund this new neighbourhood planning (i.e state, city or individuals)?

8. The ‘periurban’ area is fought over both ideologically and in practical terms – for which reason the report recommendations would require wide consensus:
   - How far does the current policy approach of deregulation detach the Government (at varying levels) from responsibility on periurban matters?
   - How likely are those in vulnerable communities to mobilise and pool required resources?