



# Exit and Voice: IA for Accountability & Sustainability

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# Historical reflections.....

## ▶ Purposes

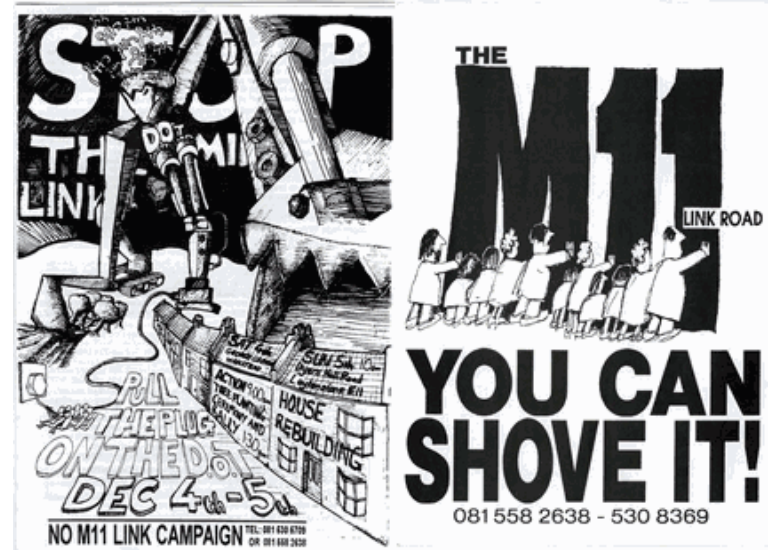
- What is EA for....?
  - Rationalist
  - Constructivist/deliberative
  - Pragmatist
- Has it changed?

## ▶ Paradigms

- Changing discourses and policy context over time

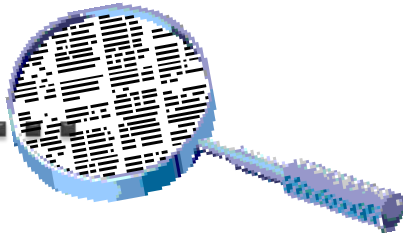
## ▶ Pressure groups

- What role for NGOs and other advocates for the environment in EA legislation and implementation?





# Accountability...



- ▶ To hold to account or to take responsibility for one's actions
  - cf. legitimacy



- ▶ Democratic
  - Political
  - Bureaucratic
- ▶ Corporate
- ▶ Professional

- ▶ 'Exit'
- ▶ 'Voice'



1980s/90s...



Rejected nuclear waste site in Cumbria  
back on list of potential locations



THE WHITEHAVEN NEWS



## The Northern Echo

Pylon inquiry sparks call  
to go underground

 **INDEPENDENT**  
Inquiry may expose secret  
nuclear dumps  
Protesters could force Nirex to bring plans into  
the open.





# Pressure groups: a role for NIMBYs?

NIMBY Protests Threaten  
Germany's Energy Revolution

**SPIEGEL** ONLINE

**OXFORD  
MAIL**

'We're not being a bunch of  
nimbys' say HS2 opponents

**Mail**online

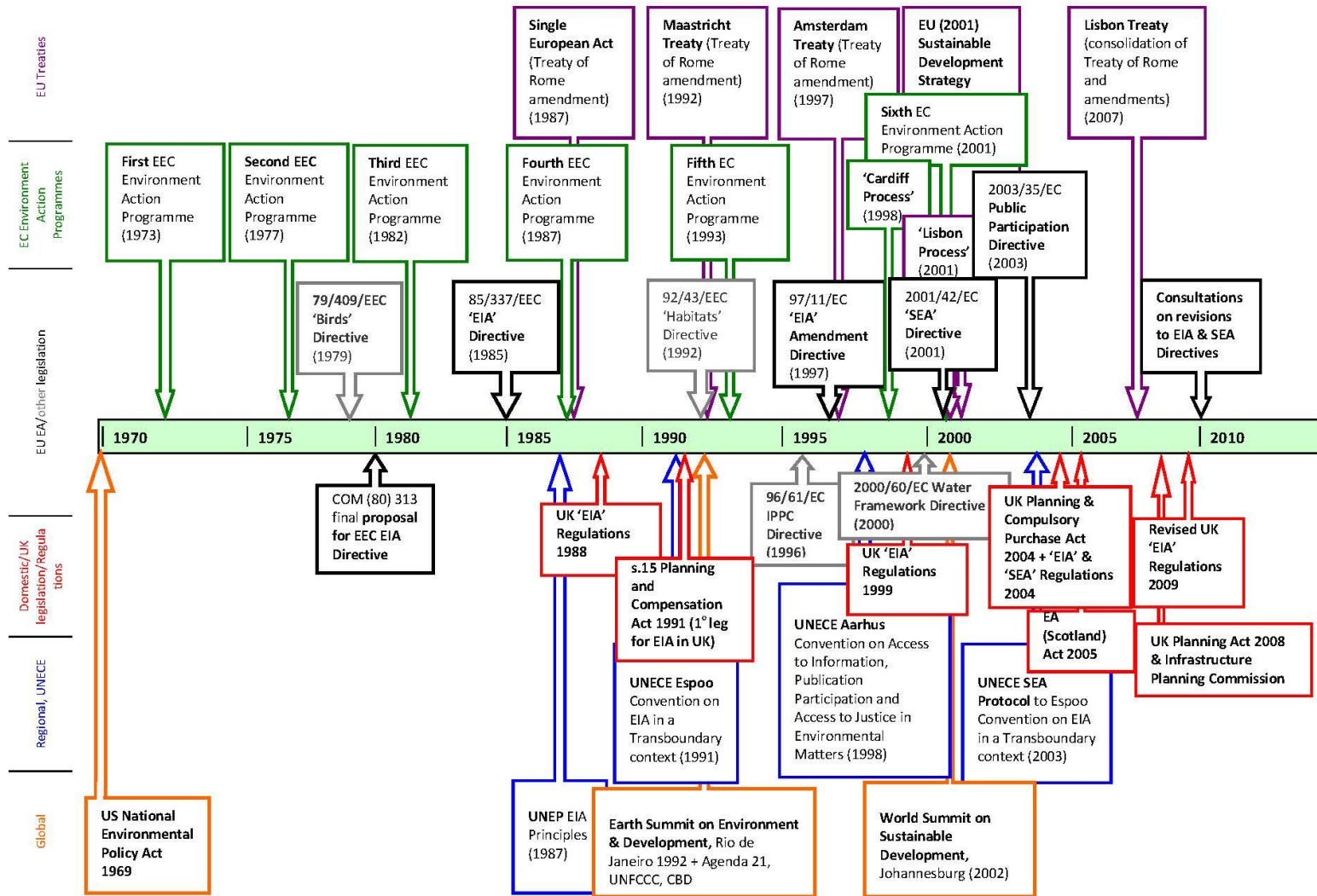
Stop these Nimby rail battle insults  
over HS2, Ministers are warned



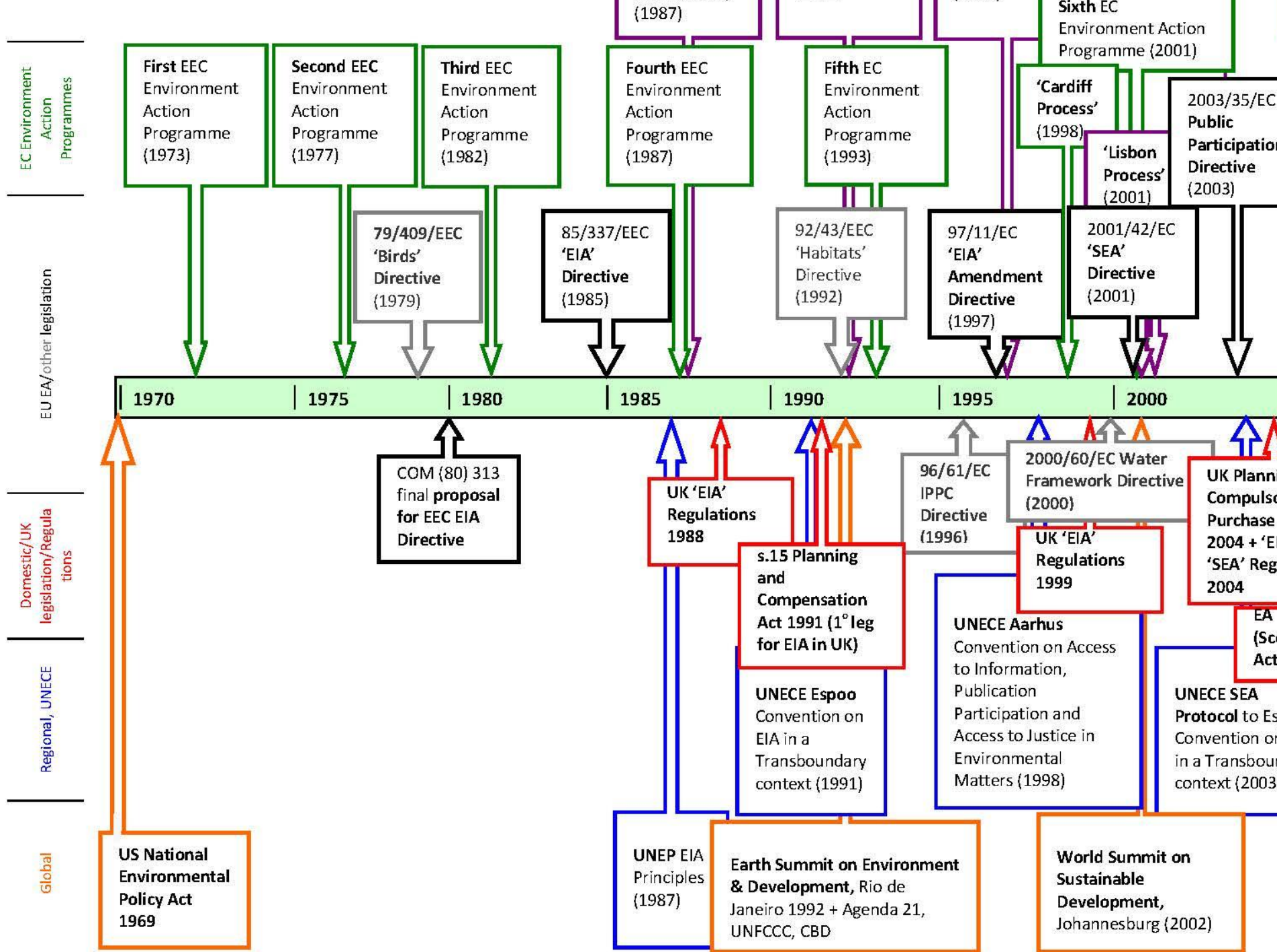
Rail link: Don't call us 'HS2 nimbys'

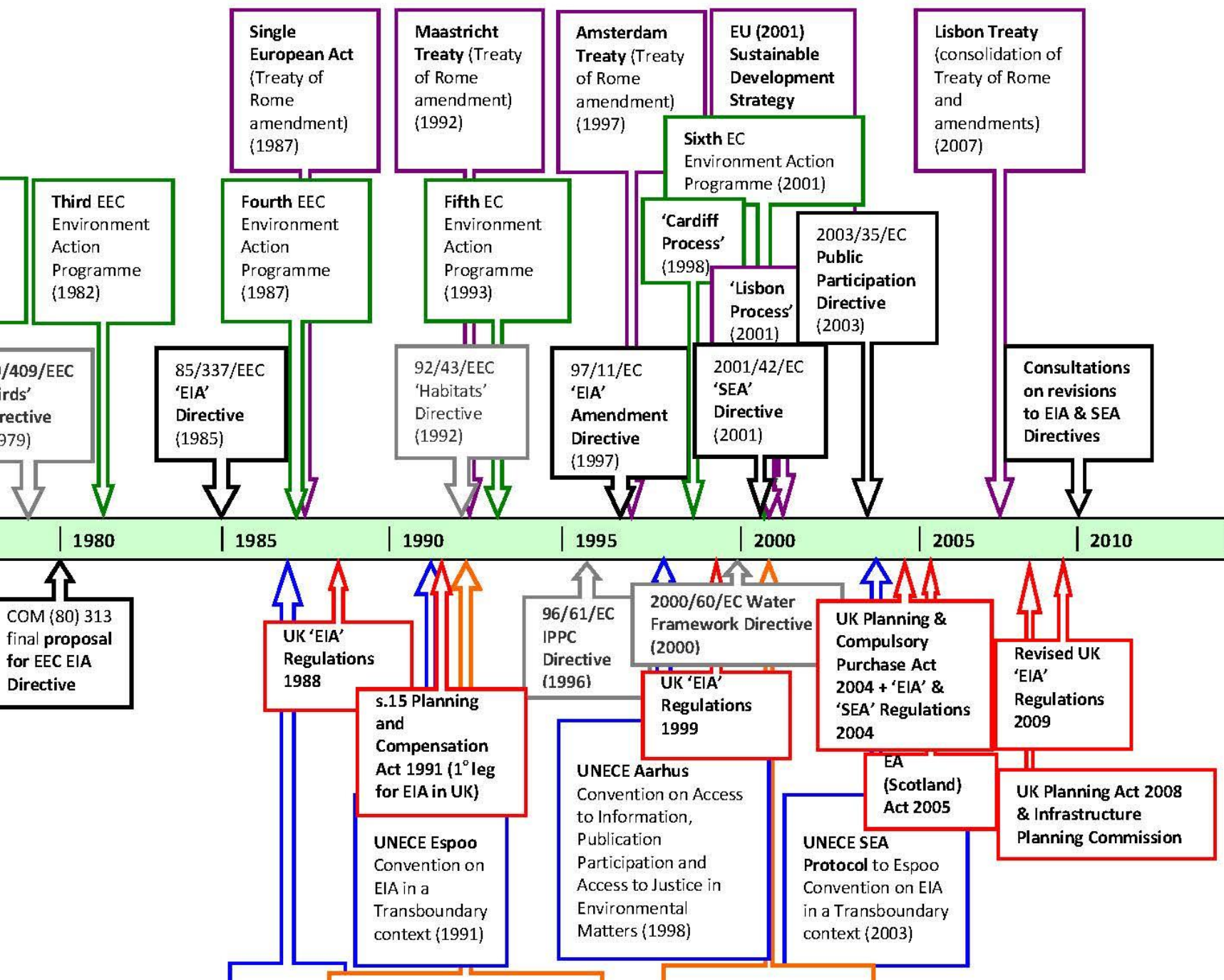


# Shifting paradigms.....











# Historic EIA cases



North Yorkshire Powerlines (1990s)



Nirex Rock Characterisation Facility, Sellafield (1997)

# Contemporary SEA cases

## ▶ Ecotowns (2008)



## ▶ High Speed 2 (HS2) (2011–)

- Phase 1 (Hybrid Bill)



## ▶ National Policy Statements (2009–)

- Energy
- Ports
- Others



## ▶ NPF2, Scotland

- inc. Hunterston power station (Scotland) (2009–)



Programmes?

National plans?



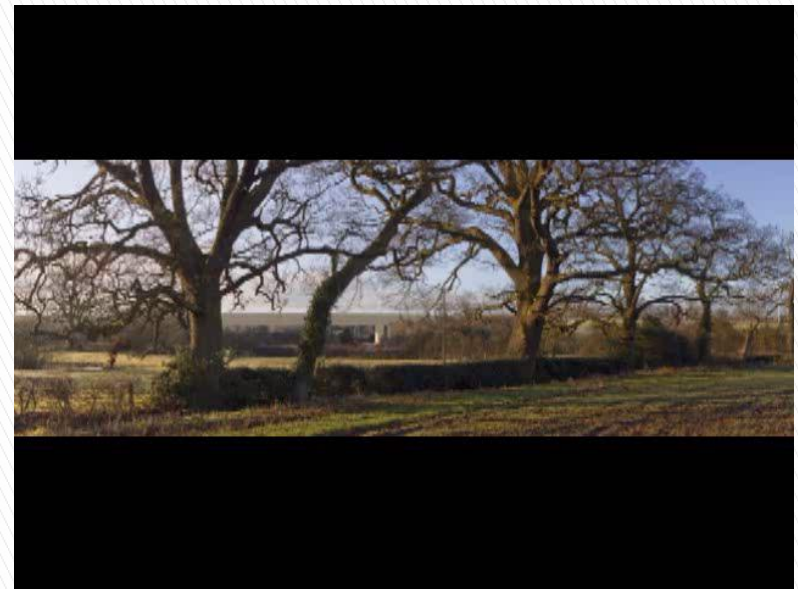
# High Speed 2



- ▶ A 'plan' or 'programme' under SEA Directive?
  - High speed rail strategy February 2011 consultation
  - Required?



- ▶ Only of London–West Midlands
  - Not whole plan
  - No alternative options/routes, only mitigation along route



High Speed Strategy

Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS)

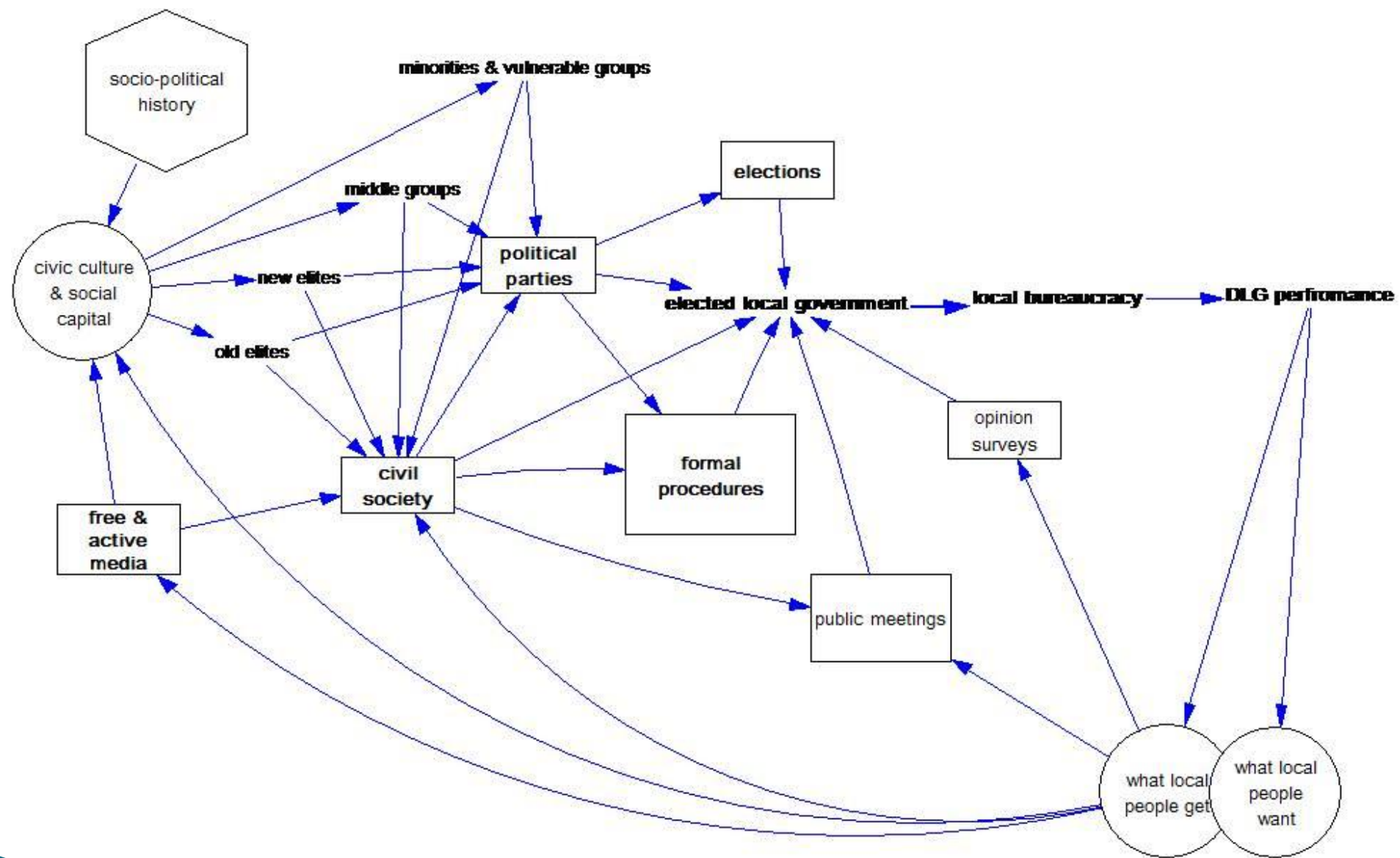
# Common threads – EIA and SEA

- ▶ Need
- ▶ Alternatives
- ▶ Quality of assessment
  - E.g. Cumulative effects
- ▶ Fundamental elements of EIA/SEA seemingly circumvented – why?
  - Projects dictating plans
- ▶ Levers for environmental advocates to seek accountability

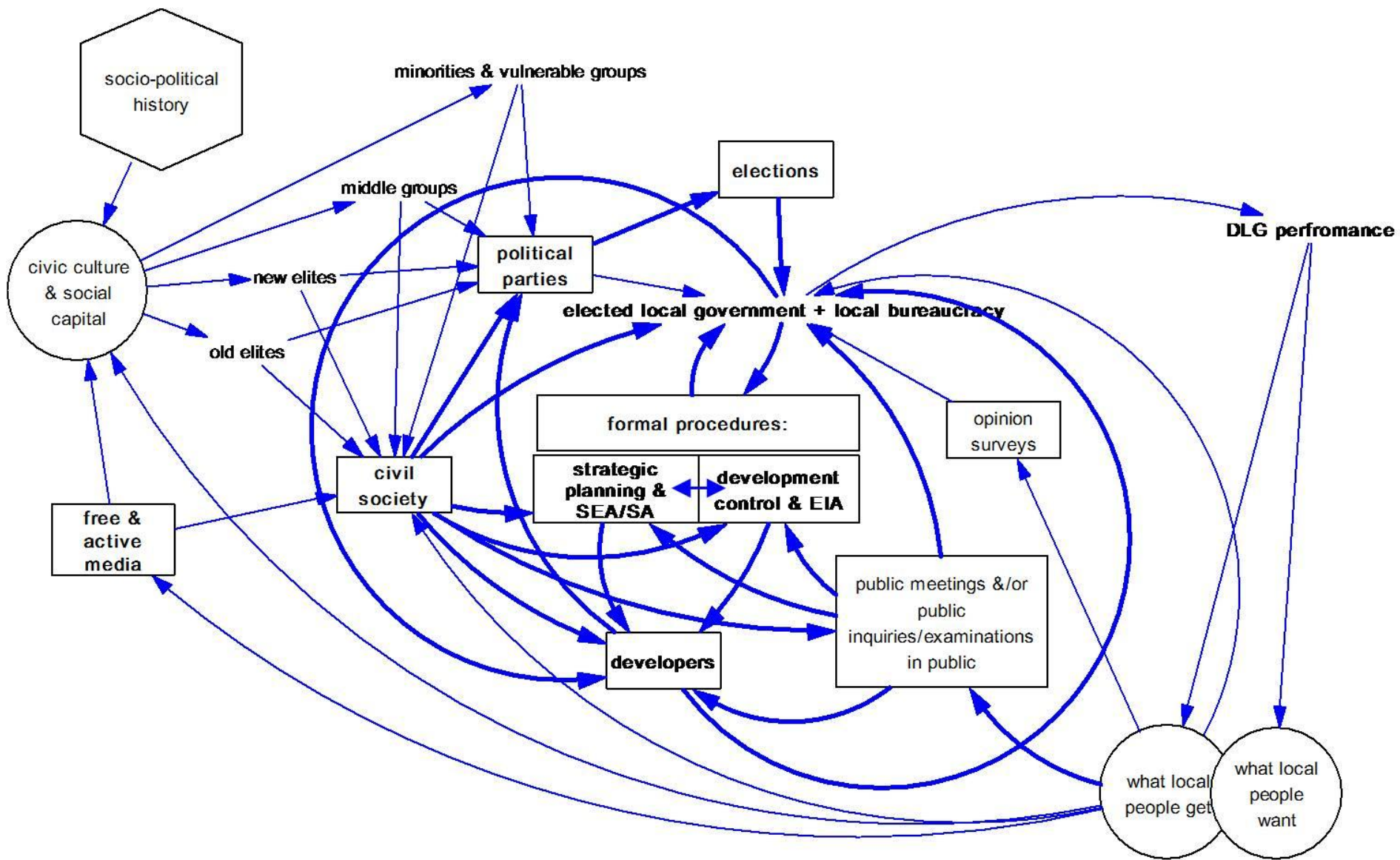


*“[Hunterston’s] inclusion in the National Planning Framework is fundamentally undemocratic. Any debate about the merits of any proposals needs to consider whether it is actually required or not. But this opportunity has been removed in this case.”*





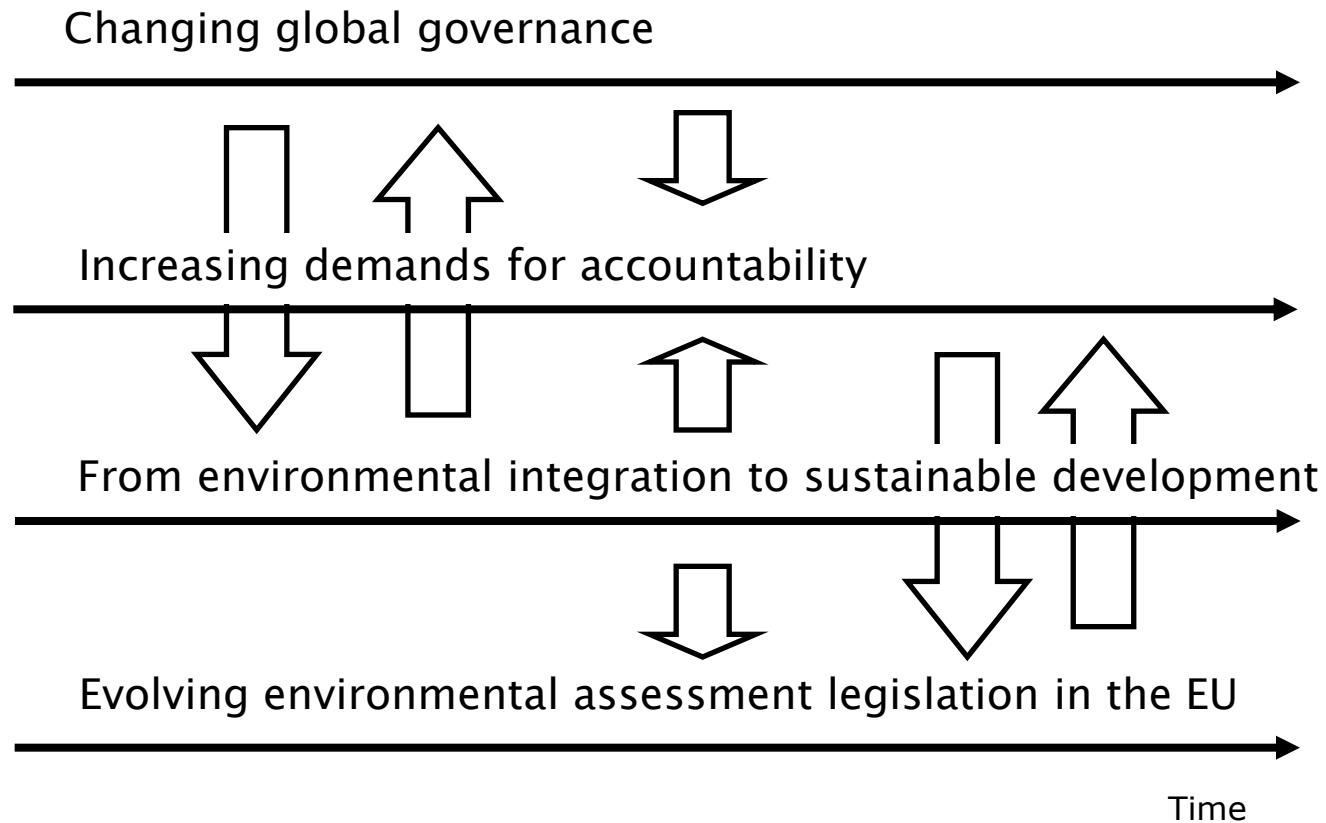
Source: Blair (2000)



Source: Sheate (2012),  
modified after Blair (2000)



# Changing paradigms, changing purposes ..... and the future?



# Framing EA through accountability....?



- ▶ Information taken into account
  - *Informs decision maker*
- ▶ Impact assessment:
  - can help make better decisions
  - doesn't make the decision for you
- ▶ Effective if more sustainable decisions?
- ▶ Platform for
  - *Transparency and openness*
  - Accountability and legitimacy
    - Voice
- ▶ Supported by other drivers
  - May conflict with speeding up planning.....
- ▶ **But**, even poor EA can promote accountability

For information  
provision

For accountability

# Conclusions: the practical challenges

- ▶ Speeding up decision making destined to fail:
  - Ignores the purpose of the process
  - Controversial schemes take a long time because they are controversial
- ▶ Quality of process/assessment
  - Tiering of SEA and EIA
- ▶ Openness to other knowledge
  - EA could open up strategic debates, e.g. role of high speed rail; mix of energy technologies etc.
- ▶ New research agenda







Thank you