Breaking the Mould: Research informing Policy in Higher Education

Dr Tony Strike
My story

• University Secretary

• Director of Strategy

• Chair of Russell Group Directors of Planning

• Member of national executive of HE Strategic Planners Association

• PhD in higher education management and policy from Southampton in 2009
Influencing and responding to policy
Good governance and decision making
Fun is in real influence...

Division 1

6 March 2017
5:55 pm
Division on Amendment 19

Content: 263
Not Content: 211

Amendment 19 agreed.
But do you need a PhD? Or research skills...

• A third of RG Directors of Strategy or Planning have PhDs

• Not essential but it helps....

• As I hope to show!
Reflective Practitioner/Researcher

- Go to conferences
- Read journals
- Network
- These are good habits
• Think
• Write
• Publish
• Also good habits


But influence comes from action and analysis...
But policy makers do not (largely) go to academic conferences or read academic journals...

- On topic
- Accessible
- Impactful
- Have a narrative
- Get attention
The first concern is that in the era of Big Data, noise is growing faster than the signal. If there is “an exponential increase in the amount of available information, there is likewise an exponential increase in the number of hypotheses to investigate.” With the noise growing faster than the signal, messages will become harder to find, not easier.
The Heart of Change

• “People change what they do less because they are given an analysis that shifts their thinking than because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings. The flow of see-feel-change is more powerful than analysis-think-change.”

John Kotter and Dan Cohen 2002 – The Heart of Change
Call for evidence highlighted a lack of information and awareness on credit transfer.

Amendments to the Act intended to drive change in the way providers and students consider the issue of switching university.
Should I stay, or should I go?
Student demand for credit transfer and recommendations for policy and practice