The Report of the TCPA Inquiry into the future of planning





your place and mine

Reinventing Planning

TCPA
1899-1999

your place and mine

Reinventing Planning

Aim of the Inquiry

This Inquiry into the future of planning was established to recover the capacity to think strategically about planning in the UK and to establish a new consensus on first principles.

The aim of the Inquiry was agreed at the outset of the process. It was to develop a new strategic vision for planning; establishing the principles, purpose, function and scope of planning in a changed world, and recommending how the system should be restructured to reflect and fulfil these principles, purposes and functions.

The role of the Panel was to receive and consider evidence presented in a number of forms, and to develop conclusions and recommendations. This report has been drafted and debated by the whole Panel and, although all Panel members do not necessarily endorse all aspects, they are pleased to offer the report as a stimulus for further debate.

The Inquiry Panel is very grateful for the generous sponsorship provided for the Inquiry by the Commission for the New Towns (which has since become part of English Partnerships), Sainsbury's and Addleshaw Booth & Co.

The Panel is also most grateful for the contributions made by all those who gave evidence in person, those who provided written evidence and all those who attended and participated in Panel meetings including the special seminars on experience from Scotland and on the future of planning in the countryside. Full details of the Inquiry process are in Annex 1.

The Panel is particularly indebted to Diane Warburton, who drafted this report and acted as Secretary to the Inquiry.

The members of the Panel

Chair:

Baroness Sally Hamwee
President of TCPA; former Chair of London Planning Advisory Committee

Graeme Bell
Director of TCPA; former County Planning Officer of Lancashire; Past President, Planning Officers Society

Ian Christie
Senior Associate, Comedia and Demos; Associate Director, The Local Futures Group

Professor Stephen Crow CB
(retired from Panel, August 1998) Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University; former head of the DOE Inspectorate

Professor Peter Fidler MBE
Vice-Chancellor, University of Sunderland; Past President Royal Town Planning Institute

Professor Sir Peter Hall
Chair of TCPA 1995-1999; Professor of Planning, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London

Nigel Hugill
Developer and investor; Managing Director, Chelsfield plc

Joan Kean MBE
Community participation consultant; Newcastle Architecture Workshop

David Lock
Vice-chair of TCPA; Chair, David Lock Associates and DLA Architects; former Chief Planning Adviser to the DOE

Dr Derek Lyddon CB
Former Chief Planner, Scottish Development Department; Past President of the International Society of City and Regional Planners

Dr Susan Owens OBE
Department of Geography, University of Cambridge; Member of Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

David Pike
Formerly Interim Director of TCPA; former Director of Environment, London Borough of Camden

Trevor Phillips OBE
Broadcaster and journalist

Professor Peter Roberts
Chair of TCPA; Professor of European Strategic Planning, School of Town and Regional Planning, University of Dundee

Tony Struthers OBE
Director of Development Services and Deputy Chief Executive, City of Salford; Past President Royal Town Planning Institute

Richard Wakeford
Chief Executive, The Countryside Agency

Secretary:

Diane Warburton
Writer on participation and sustainable development

contents

Introduction

The last 50 years of town and country planning in the UK have achieved much that is positive. We have succeeded in housing many people who would once have lived in slums, have protected and enhanced many urban and rural environments, and promoted other much needed development. We have also prevented much unwanted development.

For many people, however, planning has come to mean a mix of comforting local controls on development to safeguard amenity, and threatening plans for major development to provide for housing, shopping or industry. More specifically, it has come to be a shorthand for the imposition of ugly, inappropriate buildings, roads and other developments on places, all too often without consideration for the longer-term side-effects.

'How did THEY let that happen?' is a typical reaction to so many sights (and sites) that bear testimony to the lack of connection between planners and citizens, and the failures of influence and co-ordination between planners, architects, developers and politicians. As a corollary, and for understandable reasons, local planning has often tended to become defensive and focused on preventing bad development, rather than promoting good development and positive change.

Places still matter profoundly. No matter how 'wired' our lives may become in the future, as a result of communications technologies, we will still demand quality and vitality in the streets, facilities, buildings and green spaces which surround us. The destruction of local landmarks, loved buildings and community spaces can be enormously demoralising, undermining our pride in the community, optimism about the future and our sense of belonging. The downward spiral of 'social exclusion' is propelled by the rundown of local environments, by bleak estates, general shabbiness and the sense that no-one cares for the quality of places where people live, bring up families and seek work. The look and feel of places matter deeply to our quality of life.

While the global environmental context will become increasingly important in setting constraints on potential development, it is local quality of life, and threats to it, that energise many people to protest against unwanted developments and take steps to help improve the environment. In a society where civic participation is often minimal, concern about the quality of our local environment is one of the few powerful energising and motivating forces.

For many people, the achievements of the planning system are not immediately apparent and are tempered by its failures to address many of the crucial issues facing society in the UK today, such as:

- **The flight of people and jobs from the inner cities; growing social polarisation in terms of wealth and poverty increasingly concentrated into certain neighbourhoods[1].**
- **The millions of houses unfit for human habitation and/or needing substantial repair, especially in the old industrial regions; almost a quarter of local authorities struggling with the abandonment of surplus housing.**
- **The 145 million tonnes of waste produced each year in the UK, making demands on land for landfill or the often equally unwelcome development of incinerators, while our recycling rates of 5-7% compare extremely poorly with the 30-50% recycling rates elsewhere in Europe and the USA.**
- **The increase in motor vehicle traffic by 63% between 1980 and 1996, almost all of which is car traffic; cars accounted for 82% of all road traffic by 1996, while 75% of rural parishes had only a very limited bus service.**
- **Energy production and consumption, mainly (95%) from burning fossil fuels (coal, gas, oil) produces carbon dioxide which is an important greenhouse gas contributing to global warming. Proposed targets for reducing energy consumption are seen by many as inadequate. At the same time, 4.3 million households in England are 'fuel poor', spending 10% of their income keeping warm: consuming energy to cope with living in cold damp homes with inadequate heating and poor insulation.**
- **The crisis in the legitimacy of local democracy, with around 40%, and sometimes much less, of local electors turning out at local elections, undermining the authority of local government in tackling these difficult issues.**

The complex connections between these (and other) issues are increasingly recognised as presenting a challenge to traditional planning processes.

This is the context for this Inquiry. A renewed town and country planning system has the potential to ensure that everyone has a stake in their local places and everyone can contribute to raising the quality of life in neighbourhoods, towns, cities and the countryside. We all need to feel that our voices can be heard in debating the future development of the places where we live and work, and other places that we value. The complex connections which are so difficult for professionals trapped in specific disciplines and institutions are recognised instinctively by ordinary residents. Yet the expertise and technical skills of professionals will be needed more than ever, to ensure that decisions are based on the best available evidence and that processes are open and democratically accountable.

Planning forms a fundamental part of the broader political process. We need urgently to re-energise planning and to connect it to the main currents of policy-making and civic engagement.

Tough challenges lie ahead, and solutions will demand far-sighted thinking and public consensus on the principles which will guide difficult choices about priorities for development.

- Where will we house millions of people over the next 20 years? Can we protect the character of the countryside while finding homes for those who wish to live and work in the suburbs and country? Can we find ways to make cities popular places in which more people want to live and work?
- How should we manage future investment in regeneration to tackle the complex social issues in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods? How can we ensure that future generations can avoid the inequality, exclusion and poverty that many people still experience?
- How will we protect the environment and public health from our obsession with the car? How can we develop towns and suburbs and city centres so that public transport, walking and cycling become safe and convenient choices? How can we develop viable public transport for rural areas?
- What can we do to restore the health of our natural environments in town and country? What kind of green spaces should be created in our cities? How can we protect, revive and enhance the variety of flora and fauna in the countryside?
- How can citizens become engaged in the work of planning? What kinds of processes will encourage people to take responsibility for improving and maintaining the places they care about? How should we help everyone learn about the sometimes inherent conflicts between different objectives requiring trade-offs and hard choices involved in planning for sustainable local life – and recognise those assets which can never be traded?

These questions define the new agenda for planning – and they are fundamental to our political life in the new century. Finding the answers will be vital, not only for the quality of our environment, but also in tackling social exclusion and in modernising democratic processes. The reinvention of planning is a vital element in these projects.

How planning can be renewed

We know it can be done. More and more citizens have travelled abroad and have seen places which work better and look better than similar places here. We also have many examples of superb practice in the UK to guide the design and management of towns, transport systems, villages and parks for the future. We could and should do better by the places where we live and work.

- We can create 'urban villages' within our big cities, linking people to neighbourhoods and small communities while keeping them all connected to the larger networks of the city as a whole.

We can bring new hope to the 'abandoned' communities of old industrial areas and enable the resources of housing, social and commercial facilities in such areas to be regenerated and re-used.

We can create new urban parks, forests and farms, bringing biodiversity and greenery into our towns and cities.

We can develop integrated transport systems, making it easier and more pleasant to use public transport and to link bus, train, car and bike travel together.

We can build new homes that are closely connected to public transport, shops and workplaces.

We can make new developments in rural areas on a scale which positively enhance the quality of the countryside, and which create new opportunities for work and prosperity where there is rural isolation.

We can protect and enhance the buildings, neighbourhoods and villages, open spaces and landscapes that we most value.

We can find ways to involve more people in the decisions that affect their lives, and build better citizens and stronger communities as a result.

The renewal of planning is not something that is solely of concern to planners. It is a central element in the wider renewal of our rural and urban environments, and in the regeneration of communities throughout Britain.

Your Place and Mine: the TCPA Inquiry into the future of planning

It is clear that we all need to learn, collectively, how to 'do' planning better. We must take the best practice from the last 50 years and reject the disconnected policies and practices that have discredited planning in the eyes of so many people.

This Inquiry was established to contribute to celebrations of the TCPA's own centenary by looking to the future of planning. The aim has been the development of a new philosophy and principles of planning for the 21st century.

The conclusions of the Inquiry Panel are presented in this report. We recognise the complexity of the issues we have tackled, and we have resisted the temptation to identify 'magic bullet' solutions. Indeed, many of the principles we have outlined here are not new in themselves. What is new is the integration of this specific range of principles into a framework which, we believe, provides some positive ways of turning principles into practical action.

We have tried to break through the negative and limited approach to planning of recent years, to recover a more positive and comprehensive view which allows us to tackle a much broader set of agendas.

Sustainable development is at the core of our principles but we recognise that there is no universal understanding of this complex concept. Many local authorities will already have developed Local Agenda 21s, which will provide some frameworks and priorities. However, these need to be implemented through a whole range of collaborative and democratic mainstream strategies, and progress monitored.

We are therefore committed to the view that all local authorities should be given a duty to promote sustainable development in their areas. Planning can then be the ***process*** which facilitates the debates, discussions and participation which will allow communities, from national to local levels, to establish what sustainable development means for them.

We are also seeking to ensure a completely different approach to participation. Everyone in society needs to be able to understand the implications of the choices we make as we move towards sustainable development. This will only begin to happen if many more of us are engaged at much deeper levels in the decisions which affect our lives, and we become more willing to share power, to listen, learn and change our personal and professional behaviour.

The Panel recognises that new emphasis on sustainable development and participation will require many new skills for planners. However, it will also place planners at the centre of a new movement which reflects all our aspirations for our communities and our world. This movement needs to build on the best of what we have now, together with what is needed for a changed and changing world.

This report is intended to be a contribution to the debate which has already begun in various parts of the planning profession and much more widely. Others are considering these issues from other starting points or searching for solutions to particular problems.

The members of the Panel wish to express their warmest gratitude to all those who have helped the Inquiry to date. We now pass this report on to the TCPA, as a platform for debate with others, to help create a revitalised system of planning for the 21st century.

Notes

1 See Annex 3 for full details on all these statistics

A vision for planning for the future

Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Our Common Future. The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as The Brundtland Report). 1987.

The acute pressure for widespread reconstruction which existed in 1947 does not exist in the same way in the UK in the 1990s.

PHOTO: IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

From the past

The quality of the places where we live and work, and our immediate social networks, still matter deeply to us, even in a world of globalised systems, increasingly sophisticated communications technologies and personal mobility. However, the principles governing the systems and policies we use to plan places, although radical at the time, were shaped in a specific historical context.

The current UK planning system is still based essentially on the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. This Act was a central and vital element in a series of radical measures by the national government of the time. It was the product of a powerful vision and drive for change at a time of enormous social upheaval which also created the National Health Service, extended the state education system and implemented the Beveridge report to provide welfare benefits: measures made possible by the post-war consensus which affirmed principles of social democracy and increased equality.

Planning was intended to provide the post-war engine of change through physical development: ensuring the building of new homes in an orderly manner; ridding the cities of crowded and unhealthy slums in the shadow of the polluting industries in which many people worked; protecting the countryside from urban sprawl; and controlling and directing development in the public interest.

> ‘An Act to make fresh provision for planning the development and use of land, for the grant of permission to develop land and for other powers of control over the use of land; to confer on public authorities additional powers in respect of the acquisition and development of land for planning and other purposes, and to amend the law relating to compensation in respect of the compulsory acquisition of land; to provide for payments out of central funds in respect of depreciation occasioned by planning restrictions; to secure the recovery for the benefit of the community of development charges in respect of certain new development...’

(Town and Country Planning Act 1947).

The 1947 Act outlined new purposes and functions for planning. It defined development (as ‘the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land’), and specified certain exceptions from the general controls on development, notably agriculture and forestry. Land use was clearly separated from social and economic planning, and development plans and development control were identified as the key operational mechanisms of the system. Powers for the acquisition of land and to deal with compensation and betterment (changed value of land as a result of obtaining permission to develop) were also introduced.

This was not the first legislation on town and country planning and there has been other legislation since but, although many changes have been made, the central principles of the 1947 Act remain intact and have set the framework for the entire pattern of development in the UK over the last half century.

Changing context

The context for planning has changed dramatically since 1947, in ways which were unimaginable at the time, including the following:

New concepts of place and community

New technologies of communication and transport, changing industrial development and investment, new ways of working and changed social relationships; all these have challenged conventional concepts of ‘place’ and community.

Regions, cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods have traditionally been conceptualised by many professionals, for planning purposes, as static closed systems, surrounded by rigid geographical boundaries and hierarchically ordered from local to national. However, relationships between people, and between people and places, are now seen to be constantly shifting, loose-knit and multi-tiered. Place identities and place-focused governance need to be understood as being set within boundaries which are flexible, provisional and negotiated.

There are also major and growing differences between the various parts of the UK, and a highly centralised national (UK) system of planning is not able to address problems and realise opportunities effectively. The new emphasis on subsidiarity, devolution and regionalisation will bring further political and practical challenges for planning systems.

People belong to many communities; difference and diversity are positive features.

Planning was intended to provide the engine of change through physical development.

PHOTO: CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY OF ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS

At the same time, policy-makers must recognise that people live within communities in places, not within sectors or aspects of economic activity. Planning policies and processes need to be more closely related to the particular needs, aspirations and opportunities evident in individual communities.

Some of these communities are very local, such as the city street or village, while others are metropolitan or regional, national or global in scale. Within and between these communities, people also belong to communities of interest or identity (eg religious communities), and may be linked by formal and informal networks: difference and diversity are positive features. Other people may be excluded from all these social relationships as a result of unemployment, poverty or health problems. Thus 'community' needs to be recognised as being as flexible, provisional and negotiated as 'place'.

Cultures of choice

There are now different relationships between where we live, where and how we work, different family sizes and structures and, not least, different expectations of travel, especially as a result of car ownership. The globalisation of much industry and commerce, related to new communications and transport technologies, is increasingly influencing personal choices and options in housing, work, leisure and education.

There has been a major shift to individual choice defined by market-driven options rather than acceptance of centrally planned solutions. The location and nature of the services and facilities we need, and demands for these services, have changed – as have people's expectations of the extent to which their demands should be met. Many people now expect to be able to choose where and how they live, irrespective of the wider impacts of these choices; those that cannot afford to exercise choice through free market options become excluded from mainstream society.

Reduced development pressures

The acute pressure for widespread reconstruction which existed in 1947 after a World War does not exist in the same way in the UK in the 1990s, in spite of a potentially chronic problem of housing need. As a result, the planning system's generally perceived 'presumption in favour of development' is being challenged by communities and environmentalists who oppose the extent of development generally and individual developments in particular.

Role of government

Government is no longer seen as the sole engine of change. One of the basic assumptions on which the 1947 Act was based was that local authorities would combine land use planning with their own ambitious investment and development programmes for post-war reconstruction, but government at all levels is now seen as 'enabling' rather than executive.

The freedom of any level of government to manoeuvre on policy is increasingly affected by European and wider international priorities. The largely 'closed' national system envisaged by the 1947 Act, in which national and local governments were expected to determine and implement much policy, has been superseded by more 'open', internationally determined, policy formulation, investment, spatial policy and much else. In particular, the European Union now exercises considerable influence on many planning-related areas of policy and dominates some aspects, such as environmental policy.

Reduced local government powers and resources have gone alongside a general loss of public deference towards 'experts', and of public trust in traditional political systems and public institutions. Many services provided by local and other public authorities in recent years have been transferred to other agencies or privatised, including investment in infrastructure and public services (eg water, public transport).

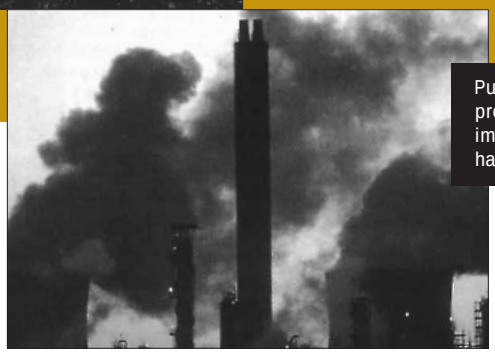
Development activity in recent years has resulted much more from market-led operations interpreting consumer demand than from planned provision. Development has been delivered primarily by the private sector and by various designated non-elected agencies, with some limited involvement from the voluntary and community sectors.

These changes have affected the ability and willingness of local and national government to plan and deliver change for the long-term future.

Environmental issues

Public attitudes to environmental protection and the quality of immediate living environments have changed fundamentally. In

Involving a wider range of stakeholders in planning and implementation improves the quality and sustainability of development.



Public attitudes to environmental protection and the quality of immediate living environments have changed fundamentally.

certain parts of the world, humanity has stopped worrying about how to control and exploit the natural world - there has been a shift to a new recognition that the unthinking exploitation of the environment has created many serious problems and concerns. The focus now is on controlling the damage that human activity is inflicting on the environment.

Concerns about the effects of pollution on health are still at least as strong as in 1947. However, we now also worry about threats to health and ecosystems from climate change and global warming as a result of changes in atmospheric conditions, largely unheard of 50 years ago but which are now (and increasingly) affecting decisions about the control and regulation of industrial and domestic activities.

The global scale of environmental problems has increased fear and uncertainty and the perception of risk has become both much more widespread and more individualised. New forms of protest and resistance have developed, from local direct action campaigns ('NIMBYs', protest camps, alternative communities) to international lobbying and campaigning by increasingly professional environmental bodies.

Public participation

Since the 1960s, formal planning processes have included mechanisms for public participation but, other than in exceptional cases, these have proved little used. Meanwhile, demographic and cultural changes are such that many more people are willing and able to become involved in the processes and decisions that directly affect their lives.

Involving a wider range of stakeholders in planning and implementation improves the quality and sustainability of development. Yet there are many professionals who remain sceptical as to whether such involvement can be achieved. Similarly, many individuals and communities (particularly those whose needs are greatest) consider themselves excluded and alienated from planning processes (as from the broader political system). Planning therefore makes its own unintended contribution to political and social exclusion and to the resulting cycle of economic disadvantage.

Challenges to the planning system

There is no escaping the fact that public perceptions of the planning system are now essentially negative:

- The 'predict and provide' model which used to be central to planning has been undermined by critiques of conventional approaches to research and forecasting as well as by controversial conclusions and prescriptions.
- 'Subjective' issues such as design and amenity are perceived as rarely being addressed satisfactorily.
- Environmental implications are often not considered at all, other than on major schemes and even then often inadequately and separately from the planning system. As a result, little attention is paid to materials used, the impact of development on the use of natural resources, energy efficiency and many other implications of smaller developments.
- Participatory practices have been largely weak and ineffective, having little impact on policy and implementation, and providing little satisfaction for those involved.
- Much planning policy and procedure is seen as serving the needs of prosperous regions (particularly the South East of England), rather than being relevant to the whole of the UK.

The two main operational elements of the current planning system, development plans and development control, remain powerful mechanisms in theory. In practice, they have been criticised as inefficient, weak, arbitrary and unfair, and as failing to achieve their objectives.

- **Development plans** are time-consuming to prepare and, as a result, are very often out of date even before they are formally adopted. Such plans are often seen as weak, costly and remote, having been prepared in isolation from the public and from those potentially responsible for implementation, both of which undermine their relevance, credibility and authority. Those members of the public who are involved are likely to be those who have access to a whole range of mechanisms for expressing their views; those in need are often absent and barely register in political terms.

PHOTO: ALEXIS MARYON / COURTESY OF CDS CO-OPERATIVES

More people are willing and able to become involved in the processes and decisions that directly affect their lives.

The nature of planning decision making has changed with the traditional jurisdiction of the local authority as competent planning authority potentially undermined by the involvement of national government and the courts. Even the most positive planning authorities have found difficulties in ensuring compliance with their own development plans.

- **Development control** is at the interface of pressures from those proposing development and those resisting it. To an extent, the system presents an easy target for those respectively seeking to attribute responsibility and blame either for allowing things to happen, or for stopping things from happening. Development plans are criticised as falling within the middle ground of being too detailed to provide sufficient flexibility to a confident local authority seeking to adapt to changed circumstances, and too general to provide specific direction in instances of dispute.

  In addition, many practitioners and observers bemoan the rigid application of technical planning standards (such as density, parking, overlooking, design) with little sensitivity to particular circumstances. Resources for monitoring and enforcement of development and of planning conditions are not adequate to deter bad practice or impose sanctions.

  Some believe that rights to appeal are unbalanced: there is a general right for applicants to appeal against the refusal of planning permission, but only a very limited right for the public, individuals or organisations to appeal against the granting of permission (eg Ombudsman, judicial review), even where consents go against an authority's stated policies and agreed development plan. There are also strong perceptions that there is no protection for local authorities or communities against predatory, twin or repeat planning applications. Contrary concerns are expressed as to the ease with which certain interest groups can seek to stymie applications.

In summary, the current planning system has achieved much but is based on a set of principles and objectives constructed in a specific historical context which no longer exists. In addition, the weaknesses in the operational mechanisms of planning have undermined confidence in the system as a whole, including within the planning profession and among those elected members responsible for planning matters.

There is a lack of clarity in the public mind between planning as a general concept of 'making arrangements for the future', planning as a fully integrated strategic activity, and land-use planning. Indeed, it has been suggested that there is no comprehensive planning system as such in the UK at present, but only a statutory *land-use* planning system which co-exists uneasily with the plans and strategies of other agencies.

This confusion may have contributed to unrealistic public expectations and subsequent loss of faith in planning processes and the planning system. The emphasis on land use means that planning has become something of an onlooker to the processes driving change in town and country.

A new consensus needs to be established on new principles and objectives for planning which reflect the new context. Change is inevitable and the task of managing change requires a major effort of intellectual and political will, both within the planning profession and more widely.

Regaining trust in the system

In spite of its shortcomings, the planning system has been remarkably robust overall. In many cases, and in many places, it has operated very successfully. Indeed, the overwhelming thrust of the evidence to the Inquiry has proposed extending and strengthening the current planning system to make it more participatory, broader and more powerful, so that it reflects public concerns positively and ensures that development and conservation in future meet community needs more effectively: a demand for more – but better – planning rather than less.

The failures and weaknesses of the system are certainly due in part to a lack of resources for research, investigation, consultation, dialogues, monitoring, enforcement and arbitration. However, they also result from the failure of planning professionals to relate to the public effectively, or to promote the benefits of sound planning based on a different 'quality' of growth and change more appropriate to current circumstances ('smarter growth' as it is known in the US).

> We will leave this city not less but greater, better and more beautiful than it was left to us

(part of the oath sworn by ancient Athenians)

The overall purpose of planning is to manage change, which is never a value-free process. Planning in future must seek to inform and establish explicit and agreed values so that the nature of the changes that are made to our towns and cities, and the way that those decisions are made, lead to change for the better.

Change for the better requires fundamentally questioning the nature of the world in which we now live and which will be bequeathed to future generations. This process requires a more sophisticated understanding of change and development processes. Action for conservation will also be required: change can also imply continuity.

A new vision of planning is needed, with its basic principles reinvented, in recognition of the changing context and specific problems for planning: building on the best of the past and of current practice to create a system relevant to the world today. If planning is to regain public trust and confidence, it must challenge its reputation for essentially protecting and re-creating the status quo.

Planning must be reinvented so that it is based on the new ways of conceptualising and debating change, and so that it can deliver change for the better: focusing on increasing human well-being and environmental benefits, and enabling people to participate in the decisions which affect their lives.

To the future: change for the better

The concept of sustainable development offers a potentially radical guiding philosophy for planning for the 21st century.

Sustainable development has been interpreted in many different ways. We believe that, essentially, it seeks to bind development to meet human needs and environmental conservation into a single coherent philosophy which takes both immediate impacts and long-term implications into account. This focus on development to meet human needs within environmental constraints is set within a framework of values that challenge conventional wisdom by linking responsibility towards future generations, social equity, global environmental stewardship, quality of life, biodiversity, integrated policies, public participation and empowerment.

The most widely accepted interpretation of sustainable development is that given in the Brundtland Report:

> Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Our Common Future. The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as The Brundtland Report), OUP 1987.

This was the definition accepted at the UN Earth Summit in 1992 as the basis for Agenda 21 (the Agenda for the 21st century agreed at the Summit), and since then as the basis for all subsequent work in the UK on sustainable development strategies and on Local Agenda 21 processes.

Planning for sustainable development has been understood to require a holistic approach, including the co-ordination and integration of:

- social, economic, environmental and governance issues, problems and opportunities
- policies to meet the needs, demands and aspirations of current generations, while ensuring that future generations can have access to the resources to meet their own needs
- public and private investment with political priorities for development decisions within any given geographical area

Housing, public trans
and urban regenerati
integrated into one
Rotterdam development.

- different professionals, disciplines and interests for an agreed common purpose
- public awareness and involvement in debating and setting priorities for change within democratic institutions.

Whilst such broad definitions, based on the need for co-ordination and integration, achieve wide consensus, it is increasingly apparent that interpreting sustainable development 'on the ground' is a very different matter.

Sustainable development is much more than just balancing or integrating social, economic and environmental well-being. It is a fundamental critique of how and why development can and must be carried out in future. It requires that consideration be given to values and ethics, to the needs of current and future human generations, to public awareness and involvement, to environmental limits and the use of natural resources. It challenges dominant models of demand-led mass consumerism and also challenges environmental models which argue against any further development, growth or change.

Whether development is sustainable or not must be determined partly on the grounds of scientific advice (what levels of pollution are life-threatening, for example) but substantially, and quite properly, on judgements of value (which social developments are the current priority or which aspects of the environment we most value, and why). It is not surprising, therefore, that planners in the UK, who have embraced the concept of sustainable development with enthusiasm, have struggled with interpretation and implementation.

In scenarios where no parties lose, different objectives may be seen as mutually interdependent, so that development can be rendered sustainable through the integration of different policies. However, it must be acknowledged that different objectives may, in many cases, be in conflict, as may the interests of the present and the future. It is here that interpretations of sustainability diverge.

Some argue for balance, a system of trade-offs between economic, environmental and social objectives; arguably, the planning system has been attempting to do this for many years. However, environmental, social and economic interests are not always necessarily opposed and therefore do not need to be 'balanced' but simply taken into account. More importantly, there is a growing view that some environmental assets, in the same way as certain human rights, are not for trading off. Concepts of critical and constant environmental capital are becoming increasingly influential.

Taking this approach, development can only be seen as sustainable if it increases human well-being within certain environmental constraints. Recognising and identifying constraints leads us quickly back to the issues of values, science and politics, and to a vital role for planning.

Sustainable development cannot be understood simply as an agreed or universal template to be applied by planners in different local contexts. Rather, the very process of planning must be seen as providing the forums for contesting and defining sustainable development in different communities.

Planning for sustainable development requires a fundamental shift away from a focus on rigid structures, towards a more comprehensive and organic approach which reflects the fluidity and complexities of the modern world. Planning needs to work to help all those involved to wrestle with complexity and connectivity: there is no simple end state to be achieved. At the same time, practical priorities need to be established and decisions taken about specific proposals for development which affect real people and environments.

The challenge is, therefore, to make effective use of new planning systems and processes as a means of deliberation, in order to elicit judgements of value and agree practical ways forward which benefit the community - and society - as a whole. In planning for sustainable development, the process of deliberation and agreement becomes as important as the product (ie the strategy or plan for development or conservation).

A new focus on planning for sustainable development has the breadth of vision that planning needs to re-establish a role for itself at the centre of policy decisions.

A new role for planning: beyond plans to visions

A new focus on planning for sustainable development has the breadth of vision that planning needs to re-establish a role for itself at the centre of policy decisions.

New collaborative processes will be needed. Since the Brundtland report, it has been increasingly acknowledged that sustainable development requires action, both by governments enacting legislation and by the public as citizens and consumers. Planning for sustainable development needs to provide coherent, integrated processes and systems within which values, sustainability criteria and conflicting priorities are debated (and compromises negotiated) to create shared visions of a sustainable future.

Collaboration between all relevant professionals, as well as with citizens, will be needed to help develop realistic strategies to achieve these visions. All investment for sustainable development (including conservation and protection), within given geographical (and often overlapping) areas, will need to be co-ordinated.

The scope of planning therefore needs to be extended to include, but go beyond, land-use planning. Greater emphasis on the integrated management of the full range of planning concerns and processes is needed, with the objective of achieving what has been called 'territorial quality management'. This approach includes land-use planning but also social planning, economic planning, environmental planning, design strategies and increasing local democracy, within a new set of principles and processes.

Planning for sustainable development therefore needs to consider not only land-use and location – **where** something is created, built, used or conserved – but also:

what *should* be created: the need the development is intended to meet within the strategy for the area, and what the alternatives may be

what is to be created: the form and function of the development including purpose, design and aesthetics, building standards, materials

how it is to be created: such as time-scale (of development and use), methods to be employed, consultation with the public and others

how it is to be used: such as access, management plans, target or priority users

who or what are the beneficiaries, and how will benefits accrue: including to users and local residents (current and potential), visitors, commerce and industry, wildlife and biodiversity, and for ' existence value' (ie the desire for certain things to exist even if most people never see or use them).

Market forces increasingly shape priorities for development, and planning can help ensure that any negative social, environmental or economic impacts, or conflicts with the priorities agreed by communities at all levels (local to national), can be minimised. Planning therefore needs to become much more fully integrated into the culture of governance in a mixed economy. It needs to provide a mechanism to enable a positive and productive dialogue between community visions and the market economy, between individual self interest and shared needs and demands, and between short-term opportunistic market-led initiatives and longer-term processes.

This will require a much wider understanding and acceptance of the importance and value of the common interest and of public goods.

The common interest

Narrow self-interest may sometimes need to be constrained where it reduces the ability of others to achieve their own quality of life. Even in the current culture of individualism, it is becoming recognised that people are actually interdependent in many ways.

In some places, at some times, there may be fundamental conflicts between individual and common interests. Those responsible for planning will need to continue to display a willingness and ability to take (and to explain) difficult decisions in the common interest and for the public good. At the same time, greater transparency should enable people to see that their choices may be part of the problem and that their actions can be part of the solution.

Public or social goods

Many of the consequences of planning processes will impact on shared spaces, features and activities such as environmental quality (eg clean air, pleasure in nature, access to countryside), community safety and the absence of fear of crime, and strong local communities which promote social inclusion and provide mutual support.

Collaboration between all relevant professionals, as well as with citizens, will be needed.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES FOUNDATION

New planning processes that create shared visions for the future of communities can help set initial parameters for the relative importance of different public goods at different spatial levels. These parameters will change as social values and (local, regional and national) priorities change. Other long-term mechanisms will also be needed to enable shifting common values and priorities to be articulated and pursued as the relative priority of different public goods changes over time.

Throughout the Inquiry process, therefore, the Panel has had to consider how planning processes and systems need to change to reflect these concepts, as well as reflecting the integrated thinking, the cross- and multi-disciplinary working and the need for greater public involvement which are necessary to put sustainable development into practice. Planning is essentially a political process, which often requires hard (and not always universally popular) choices to be made.

We have therefore concluded that planning for sustainable development requires a new set of principles to provide the basis on which more appropriate and effective choices can be made and explained to wider audiences.

These principles and ways forward are offered as a contribution to a crucial debate which not only affects planning but which has much wider implications. The world that future generations will inherit depends on choices we make now. The basis on which we make those choices requires much greater honesty and clarity about our values and aspirations. We hope our necessarily limited proposals contribute to that deeply challenging process.

Chapter 2 of this report outlines our seven principles for planning for sustainable development. Chapter 3 then proposes seven initial ways forward to translate the principles into practice.

Many of the consequences of planning processes will impact on shared spaces.

Principles for planning for sustainable development

2

Planning for sustainable development requires a new set of principles on which future priorities and choices can be based.

Seven principles for planning for sustainable development are outlined in this section.

The simple questions
'Do we really need, or want, that?',
'In what way is this change for the better?'
and 'What impact will it have?'
will need to be asked more often and at
much earlier stages in planning processes.

1
Planning for people as well as places

Planning must look outwards for its purpose: towards people and their world. Sustainable development provides an explicit new focus for planning activities. It offers a new direction for planning's primary task of making arrangements for the future and managing change for the better: to increase human well-being. Planning must now establish new processes, which involve people in the decisions that affect their lives, and aim for outcomes that benefit the community as a whole.

Planning for sustainable development means that certain explicit principles should underpin technical planning processes of creating plans and controlling development; primarily principles stressing the importance of:

- meeting basic human needs (such as for food, shelter, clean air and water)
- extending opportunities to satisfy human aspirations for a better life and increasing human well-being
- such improvements being made within certain environmental, social and economic constraints and limits
- much greater public participation in making decisions about, and implementing, change.

A world in which poverty and inequality are endemic will always be prone to ecological, social and other crises, so tackling poverty and inequality will always be an essential priority for sustainable development. Equally, poverty and inequality not only damage the individuals immediately affected, but also undermine social cohesion which in turn damages the quality of life of everyone in society.

However, living standards that go beyond the basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards have regard to long-term sustainability and the world's ecological means. The environmental impact of development to meet human needs will therefore always be a key factor in assessments of the acceptability of development.

At the same time, quality of life does not only depend on meeting basic needs. Development for other purposes (including industrial production, art and culture, commerce, education, amenity, leisure and recreation) will also be highly desirable in many circumstances.

Definitions of need are always controversial. Human beings have material and non-material needs, and the priorities afforded to them are subject to a wide range of values. Our needs, demands and aspirations are largely shaped by a constantly shifting cultural context. We may express some needs (eg car use) which undermine or conflict with other needs (eg for tranquil countryside or clean air). Our interests as consumers may conflict with our rights and responsibilities as citizens.

A distinction may be made between 'need' (provision for which may be essential) and 'demand' (provision for which may be acceptable or desirable). However, if individual needs are hard to quantify, community needs and priorities are equally difficult as they differ within localities, from place to place and over time.

These principles are highly complex and deeply challenging. The planning system currently operates on a general presumption in favour of development. Anyone proposing development has not usually been required to take account of the needs or desires of communities, or to demonstrate the need for their proposal, or show how it will benefit the community as a whole. This can disadvantage communities and undermine any shared sense of place.

The importance within sustainable development of giving priority to development that meets community needs, within environmental constraints, challenges some of the fundamental values and culture of the society within which planning operates.

The planning system has too often been reduced to the role of balancing 'objective' technical arguments for and against certain proposals, and resolving conflict, within an often weak plan-led framework. However, planning is not and never can be merely a technical process.

New planning systems are required which take account of all the complexities of sustainable development and the interlocking, but differing and often unequal, relationships required. These new systems must be able to integrate and reconcile sometimes conflicting community needs and priorities with other local and global constraints.

It is clearly impossible (as well as probably undesirable) to make generalisations about the needs and priorities of any community, or to rely on purely technocratic approaches to their identification.

Planning ***with*** as well as ***for*** people must be at the centre of planning processes for sustainable development.

PHOTO: ALEXIS MARYON / COURTESY OF CDS CO-OPERATIVES

There are no absolutes or technical fixes which can be adopted and set down in neat, precise plans.

Planning for people as well as places must therefore focus on new planning *processes* which provide forums to enable people to engage in positive debates about meeting needs and taking up opportunities which may result in changes to the places where they live. We must be given the chance to interrogate assumptions and statements about needs and priorities, alongside a consideration of the impact of the changes deemed necessary. The simple questions 'Do we really need, or want, that?', 'In what way is this change for the better?' and 'What impact will it have?' will need to be asked more often and at much earlier stages in planning processes. In addition, processes will need to be much more sensitive, flexible and continuous to ensure that realistic and appropriate responses, which can be widely understood, can be made to changing circumstances.

A new concept of place is needed but also what could be described as a new 'ethics of place' which puts people at the centre of planning processes for sustainable development. Through involvement in these processes, people can develop a sense of ownership of, and responsibility towards, the changes that our places can face.

Planning should take the central role in managing these new processes. Some innovative practice throughout the UK shows how successful this role for planning can be. Such processes can create opportunities for people to articulate and prioritise their own local needs, and demands. They can help people to identify the ways in which these needs and demands can be met, according to local strengths and requirements, and within national and international policies and regulations. They can provide opportunities for reaching consensus on many controversial changes, which may otherwise end in unresolved conflict and bitterness.

A wide range of people from a variety of communities will need to be engaged in these new planning activities. Local assets, features and characteristics, which are precious and non-negotiable, can be identified and protected, as can basic environmental standards. An integrated system for strategic environmental assessment will therefore also be essential to ensure early recognition, prevention and/or mitigation of potentially undesirable environmental impacts.

The location of planning within a democratic local government structure should ensure that fully accountable political choices are made where fundamental conflicts cannot be resolved by consensus.

Planning can provide the forums within which these issues are debated and resolved, and can provide mechanisms for ensuring that agreed ways forward are implemented. In addition, techniques which focus people's attention on how they want their places to be in, say, 20 years' time can help overcome immediate conflicts and entrenched positions. The process of creating shared visions for the future will therefore be a vital element of this new approach, as will practical strategies for investment and implementation.

A planning system that delivers change for the better will take time to design and establish. The overall aim must be to ensure that all development should help achieve change for the better. However, the first step is to engage 'ordinary' people in dialogues about the places we share: planning with as well as for people. Planning can provide the forums in which those dialogues can happen.

Planning cannot do everything, but it can facilitate, co-ordinate and integrate sustainable development on a broad scale.

2
Positive planning for sustainable development

While planning has aimed (since the 1947 Act) to encourage positive change, in recent years it has taken an increasingly restrictive, controlling approach in many places. It has even been suggested that the problem with the planning system is that it only really has the power to say 'no'. The focus has been on preventing bad development rather than promoting good development and positive change.

Planning cannot do everything, but the planning function can facilitate, co-ordinate and integrate sustainable development on a broad scale. It can ensure that the appropriate frameworks, processes, structures, guidance, support and resources are established to develop agreed values, principles, criteria and priorities. Realistic implementation options can then be developed in collaboration with a wide range of public, private, voluntary and community institutions and agencies, and individuals, which have access to the resources needed to invest in and implement initiatives.

These new processes will take time and each community will need to establish its own clear vision of what is desired and what can be achieved.

Positive planning needs collaborative investment-based approaches, strong institutional frameworks, a shift from adversarial to deliberative approaches, and a general shift to policy and process-led planning. These are all outlined below. It also needs new operational mechanisms for creating shared visions, linked to practical strategies for implementation and for monitoring and evaluating progress and achievements. These are described in more detail in the Ways Forward section.

Such planning policies and procedures need to be integrated with both project-based environmental (social and economic) assessment, and strategic assessment, in order to test proposed policies, programmes, plans and projects – and to consider alternatives.

Collaborative investment-based approaches

A collaborative investment-based approach to policies and priorities, rather than a narrow land-use basis, would allow for the co-ordination of all the investment programmes in the private, public and voluntary sectors which have a bearing on the quality of places and the life in them. Such an approach would enable the integration of the strategies of Regional Development Agencies (including Single Regeneration Budgets), Local Transport Plans and so on.

The process is an enabling rather than a controlling approach (which the relevant agencies would not accept). The way the policies of Local Transport Plans are incorporated in Local Plans (development plans) via additional statements indicate one way in which planning can adapt to this new approach.

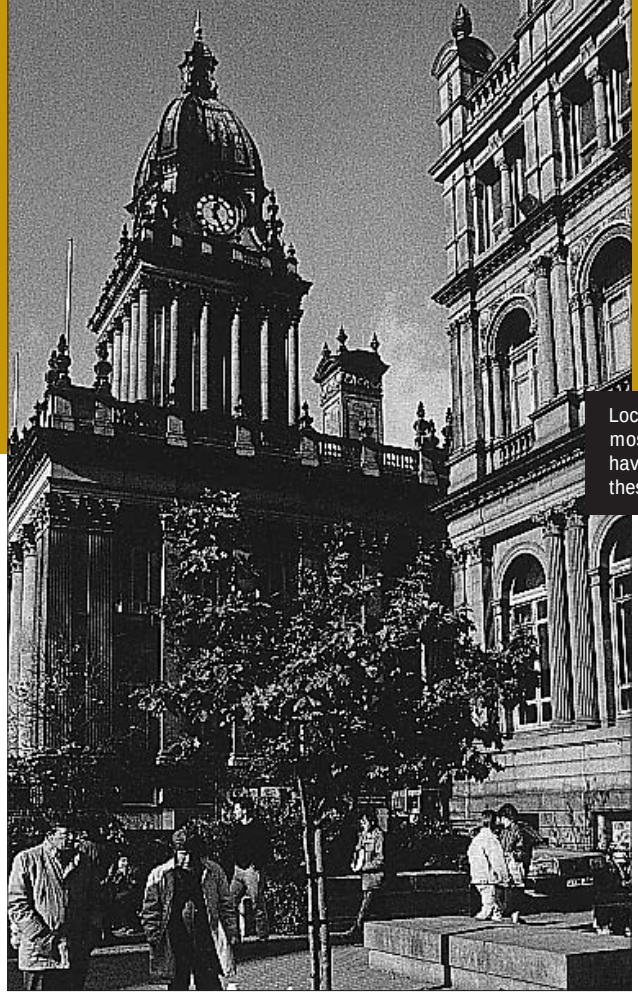
Market forces also need to be harnessed and directed to promote sustainable development. This could take place through economic and fiscal instruments where shifts in individual or collective behaviour may be sought in the common interest. Charges, taxes, subsidies and other financial incentives may be called upon, alongside strategic policy and regulation. Mechanisms would also be required to stimulate private sector investment more generally.

Institutional frameworks

Local government remains the most appropriate institution to have overall responsibility for managing these new visioning and strategic processes because of its clear democratic accountability and role in community leadership. However, local authorities will need to establish new processes and relationships. Local levels of planning will need to have strong links to regional, sub-regional, national and international guidance and regulations, agencies and institutions, with new frameworks to ensure democratic accountability. The guiding principle, however, is that bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum: positive planning requires big visions and small systems.

Institutions working at different levels (national, regional and local) and in different locations will have different problems, priorities, needs and values. New cross-sectoral partnerships and other alliances may therefore be required to ensure that all stakeholders have opportunities for full involvement, with particular emphasis being given to those groups and individuals who are usually excluded from such processes.

These new planning processes will require not only new spatial and democratic perspectives, but also new time-scales which recognise



Local government remains the most appropriate institution to have overall responsibility for these processes.

PHOTO: ADRIAN ROWLAND

that some strategic visions will have a long-term focus (say 25 years) and some will have a much shorter time-scale (say five years) within which change will be implemented.

From adversarial to deliberative approaches

The current adversarial approach to resolving conflict over potential development, based on the wider system of British law, does not contribute to positive planning. A fundamental shift towards processes which are less adversarial and more inquisitorial, deliberative and which are much more open, transparent and democratically accountable, is likely to be beneficial.

However, any new system needs to ensure that the strengths of the current system are not lost (for example, that objections can be heard), that alternative options can be presented and considered and that public debate can take place on major national issues (such as nuclear power and transport infrastructure). To some extent, the use of public inquiries and similar mechanisms to address major development proposals has happened by default as the policy debate on national and wider priorities has not taken place prior to proposals for specific locations.

This anomaly needs to be resolved by making political choices at national level on the need for developments in the national interest, including clearly establishing the criteria to be used in locating them. Specific proposals are made elsewhere in this report for a UK sustainable development strategy that would deal with such issues on a national basis. Equally, if more investment is made in the earlier stages of the planning processes (to establish agreed visions, criteria and sustainability tests), far fewer projects should require these final arbitration processes.

A key element here is the introduction of a formal system of integrated assessment that goes beyond the present restricted system of Environmental Assessment and which involves the strategic review and assessment of policies, programmes, plans and projects across the full range of environmental, social and economic factors and impacts.

Any such system would need to incorporate the ability to consider alternatives to proposals, both in terms of different ways of achieving an objective and alternative locations. By adopting such an approach, undesirable projects would be filtered out at an early stage, resulting in a reduction in delay and cost.

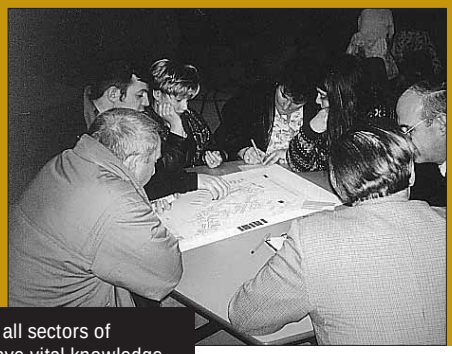
Policy and process-led planning

Positive planning in these terms would, therefore, be more policy-led than plan-led, and be based on agreed principles and clear criteria. It would provide an equivalent to development plans and a tough development control system based on rigorous sustainability tests and robust processes of negotiation within those criteria. However, the emphasis and investment would be 'upstream' in the creation of agreed visions and positive strategies for sustainable development, and in the design and management of new processes.

These new processes must be much more open, transparent, collaborative, participatory and accountable than present mechanisms, to help rebuild public trust in the system. Agreed priorities would be communicated and promoted so that the wider public, as well as developers from all sectors, are made aware of the opportunities and constraints in any geographical area.

These new collaborative processes should be designed to ensure that development in future meets agreed needs, involves all relevant professionals, public and other stakeholders, co-ordinates all appropriate investment, is an improvement to existing quality of life and creates a better world to bequeath to the next generations.

Planning thus becomes a creative and positive process with a focus on enabling and supporting the right sort of development to be achieved in the right place, according to agreed sustainability criteria, in addition to preventing the wrong sort of development in the wrong place.



People in all sectors of society have vital knowledge which they can contribute.

Involvement breeds involvement, and trust breeds trust.

3 Participation in positive planning

The proposed new planning processes require a much more powerful new emphasis on public and other stakeholder participation, in collaboration with planners and other professionals.

Participation is needed because:

- Planning, in common with all activities of governance, cannot operate effectively without public trust, credibility and support, which needs to be rebuilt through new opportunities for real public involvement. At the same time, an increasingly active, confident and knowledgeable public is demanding that their aspirations and concerns are taken seriously in the decisions which affect their lives.
- Experts cannot know everything and people in all sectors of society have vital knowledge, which they can contribute. The benefits to the quality and sustainability of development resulting from greater involvement are increasingly understood.
- Sustainable development cannot be put into practice without public involvement because it requires fundamental changes in attitudes and behaviour, which are only likely when people recognise the benefits to their own lives (or negative impacts from failing to change). Such understanding is only likely to grow through deeper involvement in decisions so people can see the consequences and implications of those decisions.

  The rights to make individual choices can then be linked in people's minds to a greater sense of responsibility for the impacts of choices, and a greater understanding of the need for collective action to improve those things we all share. Experience from studies to test new deliberative mechanisms for public involvement suggests that the greater the responsibility given to people (backed up with appropriate technical information and advice), the more responsible they are likely to be in managing conflict and taking difficult decisions for the benefit of the whole community (eg citizens' juries considering housing developments).

  Participation can thus be seen as an educational process in the widest sense: educating all stakeholders together (including professionals) through the experience of working together in a positive democratic exercise to shape a common future. New mechanisms for developing mutual learning for participation are outlined under Ways Forward.
- Sustainable development, particularly the environmental aspects, offers one of the very few credible opportunities for increasing active citizenship and strengthening democracy because many people already care about these issues and are actively involved in a wide variety of groups and organisations.

Involvement breeds involvement, and trust breeds trust. If people see that their involvement has had positive results, including real resources being directed into real initiatives involving real change, they will do more of it and gain in confidence and ambition. Planning for sustainable development is a political as well as a technical professional process and participation is not just a means to a better end-product. More and better participation needs to be recognised as a desirable outcome alongside better decisions.

A new system of planning, using new mechanisms for involvement to create visions, strategies and reviews, would be able to provide the leadership necessary to develop the participatory democracy which is a central element of sustainable development.

A completely new approach to participation in planning for sustainable development will be required including the following.

New attitudes and new processes

A fundamental change of culture and attitudes from planners and others will be needed to open up processes, listen to others, learn from best practice and be willing to change as a result.

Participation needs to be an integral part of all planning and implementation processes. It is not an optional extra and should not be just a box in a flow diagram. Good participation can result in better projects as well as better informed and more deeply engaged communities at all levels.

New empowerment models and mechanisms for deliberative democracy (such as citizens' juries, visioning, planning for real, round tables, joint projects) are needed to increase collective and individual motivation, responsibility and self help. New timetables need to be set in recognition that involvement takes time and effort.

However, new methods are not enough on their own. They need to be embedded in a new culture which reflects a willingness by professionals and politicians to change attitudes as well as

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS

Existing voluntary and community associations can offer new ways of reaching out to people.

processes and systems: to ensure that public involvement is positively sought, positively valued and positively used to improve the quality of people's lives.

A climate of receptivity needs to be developed within public institutions so that participation leads to real change in the way decisions are made as well as in the substance of decisions and their implementation.

Public access to information

Much greater freedom of information is needed, at no or low cost to the public, to enable participatory mechanisms to operate effectively. New technologies in reproducing and communicating data can overcome many of the costs and other difficulties of traditional methods of making information available to the public, and these can and should be used much more extensively.

However, simply converting technical planning data for new media is only one side of the problem. Producing information specifically to inform public debates which encourage and enhance public participation programmes will also be increasingly important.

Democratic links

Participatory programmes require strong links to existing democratic institutions which can help ensure that agreed visions and strategies are delivered. The role of elected members remains crucial, and participatory methods should enhance their role and help increase their achievements. Political leadership will also be required to help define the appropriate levels at which decisions should be made – such as district or neighbourhood level – and to be able to represent specific wards or the whole area where appropriate.

All stakeholders

Participatory planning processes must involve all stakeholders in drawing up visions and plans, devising programmes for implementation, taking action, and monitoring achievements.

Stakeholders will include local communities, but also others whether they are near or distant, residents or visitors, or who may simply have an interest in the existence of particular features, activities and places: that is, all those who are likely to be affected by and/or who may affect the process and the outcomes.

Planning processes are enriched by the widest possible involvement from all sectors of society and special efforts and extra investment may be required to encourage and support participation by those who are less confident, mobile or who may feel excluded for other reasons.

In addition, new patterns of cultural connection have created new networks which operate 'below the radar' of conventional political structures and which may be more related to identity, gender, lifestyle and leisure; networks which can help to create and sustain vibrant communities, develop social capital and increase social cohesion.

The design of participatory planning mechanisms must take into account these new social values and structures within society, and build on existing voluntary and community associations to establish new ways of reaching out to people.

Early participation

Participation must be established at the earliest stages of developing projects or programmes to be most effective (including in terms of costs). Early participation helps avoid costly conflicts and delays at later stages where changes to proposals can create major problems.

Feedback

Participants should always be kept informed of the progress of decision-making within agreed time-scales. The reasons for particular courses of action or inaction should always be clearly explained. This is particularly important if the results from participatory processes are incorporated into policy decisions taken elsewhere. Participatory exercises which lack good feedback will soon lose credibility.

Investment

Participation requires investment at all levels. Resources are needed:

- to enable professional staff to have the time to experiment with and learn new approaches and have access to training in the relevant skills (where appropriate)
- to establish new arenas in which people can participate, which may involve changing or adding to conventional political decision-making structures

It is no longer appropriate to assume that a single national policy or procedure is able to meet the different needs of the various regions and localities.

- to cover expenses of specific processes including independent facilitators, costs of publicity, venues and, if necessary, expenses for participants (eg for transport, child care)
- to cover costs of training and learning materials for all participants, where appropriate.

Participation is not a panacea. Nor is it easy, especially for those who have relied for many years on their own and professional colleagues' expertise, and are not used to dialogue with the public or with other stakeholders.

However, the new skills can be relatively easily learned if there is a genuine willingness to do things in a different way. If it is to become a reality, the rhetoric of participation in planning for sustainable development needs, above all, political will and adequate investment of resources.

European and wider international policies now deeply affect UK planning.

PHOTO: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

4
Decision-making at appropriate levels

The Inquiry Panel recognises that European and wider international policies and programmes will affect UK planning imminently and in future, on issues ranging from global policies on climate change and pollution control, to the European Spatial Development Perspective, Agenda 2000, the Common Agricultural Policy and numerous structural fund programmes.

Planning can therefore no longer conceptualise places as closed systems which can be planned for in isolation or in simply hierarchical spatial terms (eg national to local). In addition, it is no longer appropriate to assume that a single national policy or procedure is able to meet the different needs of the various regions and localities.

Devolution and the regional dimension are also increasingly important to all spatial planning in the UK and throughout Europe, with stronger national and regional identities and regional agencies developing policies and strategies. At the same time, where people do feel some attachment to place (in an increasingly fluid and globalised society), it is usually at the most local level: the neighbourhood or village.

Planning in future will need to be structured differently to enable local needs and global priorities to be reconciled. This requires new and more flexible relationships so that 'vertical planning' (where specific national or international policies on specific issues are designed to be enacted at other levels, eg locally) is linked more effectively with 'horizontal planning' (where all issues in a specific geographical area are co-ordinated).

The new structure for planning therefore needs to provide a balance between the following broad principles:

- A new model of community planning, based on an understanding that everyone is a member of various communities of various types and at all levels. The concept of community planning recognises that the issues which affect people and places (social, economic, environmental and others) are interconnected and must be dealt with together.

  People are members of many communities, most obviously at grass-roots level, but also at many other levels, from local neighbourhoods through to metropolitan, regional, national and even global communities. We are also members of

Good design can make a major contribution to sustainability through choice of materials and energy saving features.

PHOTO: HARLEQUIN STUDIOS / COURTESY OF ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS

communities of interest (such as work, or cultural, political or sporting affiliations) and identity (such as religious communities). Stakeholder involvement from all communities will be an essential element in these processes to ensure that difference and diversity are recognised as positive features.

- The principle of subsidiarity, so that planning and decision-making are devolved as much as possible, to the most appropriate level, within wider regulatory frameworks.
- Stronger links between national policy (which will necessarily be responsive to national and international policy priorities and regulations), regional and sub-regional strategies, and local action.
- Levels of competence for appropriate levels of decision and activity, based on a realistic assessment of what is possible in terms of organisational abilities to influence, act, communicate and comprehend. Decisions can then be taken at each level and by each community with greater confidence in their own capabilities and greater knowledge of the roles and activities of others.

The complexities of these relationships require greatly improved two-way communications between local and national levels, and beyond. This will help ensure that the overarching principles, priorities and regulations to promote sustainable development, developed at national levels and above, are based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of practical experience at local level. It also requires that the national government withdraws from some of the detailed policy formulation which can safely be left for local determination.

Some proposals for how these principles may be put into practice through national, regional and local planning processes are outlined in the Ways Forward section of this report.

5
Design and public amenity

Design and public amenity are central to the ways in which stakeholders value (positively or negatively) buildings, spaces and facilities, and therefore to the extent to which they feel any sense of ownership of – or responsibility for – places. Public involvement in exercises to debate design and amenity issues can therefore empower local communities and energise a wide variety of community activities.

Good design integrates function and appearance, addressing human needs, local distinctiveness, environmental impact and aesthetics: the integration of beauty with utility can greatly improve quality of life.

The benefits of good design go beyond style and appearance. Well-designed settlements are good places to live in, easy to travel in, healthy, and with opportunities for social life, work and education. Well-designed shops, factories, leisure and community facilities are easier and more pleasant to use, and satisfy the needs of those who work in them, use them and experience them in their wider urban or rural landscape. Well-designed development, generally, is more likely to be acceptable to local planning authorities, and more attractive to those who may wish to invest in it.

Equally, good design can make a major contribution to sustainability by incorporating appropriate materials and features (eg energy conservation) which have low impacts on the environment and landscape. Certain design solutions can also enable greater participation by those groups which are often excluded and have limited options for meeting their own needs (eg Walter Segal self-build systems for housing). Good design and layout can also enhance the use and efficiency of services such as public transport.

The wider concept of amenity links social institutions and networks, facilities, design and architecture, geographical and other special characteristics (eg locally distinctive features). Amenity values are related to the character and identity of a neighbourhood, village or town, including the buildings, trees, access to countryside, access to and use of social and recreational facilities, libraries, parks, museums, the arts and cultural activities: all the features which make a place distinctive and contribute to quality of life.

Amenity values are among the strongest ties that bind people into communities through familiarity, sense of place and connection.

In spite of the importance of design and amenity to local communities and to investors, the planning system has often been unable to do more than impose rigid design standards rather than

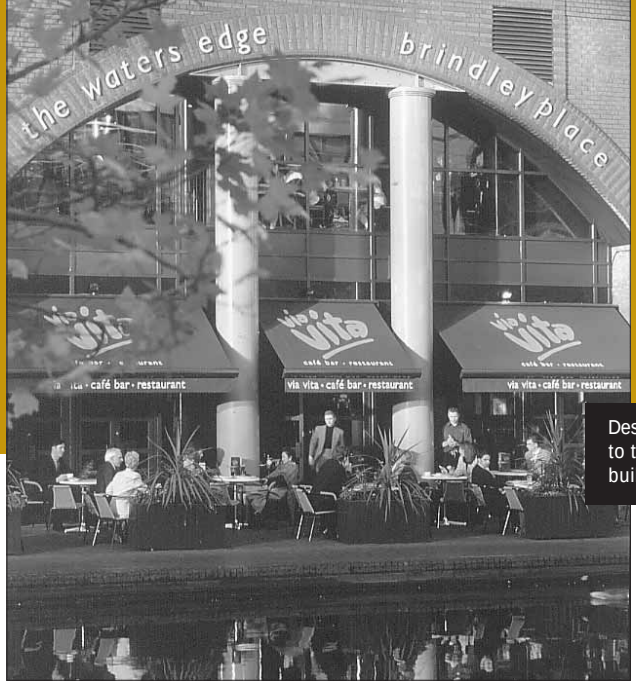


PHOTO: COURTESY OF BRINDLEY PLACE

Design and amenity are central to the ways stakeholders value buildings, spaces and facilities.

develop the skills and processes which would allow for a more appropriate and flexible design sensitivity.

The Inquiry has concluded that new ways need to be found to re-incorporate, much more strongly, design and public amenity issues into the planning system, including:

- Development briefs should incorporate design and public amenity values as well as sustainability criteria. Briefs should be drafted with full public consultation, so that the implications for any loss or gain of amenity can be fully debated.
- Urban and rural design, local distinctiveness and communal facilities should be incorporated into sustainable development visions and strategies. The Countryside Agency's experimental work on participatory village design statements could be used more widely as models (including for urban areas), particularly the potential for incorporating conclusions into supplementary planning guidance.
- Area development frameworks (sometimes called 'master planning') should be incorporated into wider planning processes to ensure that priority is given to the quality of the public domain. Planning rather than architectural methods should be used to avoid a focus on buildings alone (or 'architecture writ large').
- Planning processes should ensure that design options from professional architects and designers can be fully considered and debated by those affected, including local residents, businesses and others.
- Planners should have sufficient training to be able to:
  - assess the quality of design proposals; the basic principles of design can be applied even though design is always partly a matter of taste and will therefore depend to some extent on testing options and constraints with the public
  - debate design proposals with other professionals and the public and find ways of avoiding either a focus on minor technical details or 'all or nothing' ultimata from design professionals
  - communicate design conclusions and decisions, and any implications for public amenity, to the wider public
  - understand the positive and negative economic implications of promoting high quality design in development, and the potential for quality design to encourage private and other investment.

6
Development impacts and betterment

Among the most contentious aspects of the planning system are specific instances of planning authorities refusing or giving planning permission, and in particular the process of negotiating planning obligations with developers (still often known as planning gain), which can be perceived to be 'selling' planning permission. Perceived conflicts of interest, where planning authorities grant planning permission relating to the development of their own property, have also caused public concern.

The Third Report of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life drew particular attention to these two issues. It is also well understood by the public that huge sums of money are often involved in the granting of planning permission and they perceive the processes as secretive and open to abuse. The implications of increased land values as a result of gaining permission to develop has also contributed to public distrust and cynicism in relation to the operation of the planning system as a whole.

Decisions on planning permission are often (rightly) affected by a whole range of subjective, political and cultural factors, as well as shifting parameters (for technological as well as social, political and economic reasons). Granting or refusing planning permission is very rarely a technocratic process operated within given parameters, and where it is interpreted as such, it can result in development which is mediocre at best. Unfortunately, where officers and councillors engage in creative negotiations over specific developments to achieve a better result for the whole community, they are currently open to accusations of impropriety, or of exercising personal whims.

Distrust of the system has led some planning authorities to adopt procedures (such as restricting contact between applicants for planning permission and councillors) which have been designed to protect councillors and officers from accusations of malpractice and to reassure the public, but which can have the effect of precluding negotiations without reassuring the public.

In addition to these planning-specific matters, it is also important to acknowledge that such issues are now the subject of debate in relation to the general consideration of the desirability of introducing further environmental taxes, charges and subsidies. It would appear logical and desirable, and would also further safeguard the accountability of the planning system, for any

Action is needed to deal with the planning principles related to giving or refusing planning permission in order to rebuild public trust.

2

consideration of planning matters to be framed within this general debate.

The Inquiry Panel believes that impropriety and bad practice actually occur very rarely. However, planning, like all mechanisms of governance, requires public trust and credibility to operate and it is not sufficient simply to point to the very small number of cases of malpractice. Changes to the planning system itself are needed.

The Panel accepts the Nolan Committee's general principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) and proposals for a new ethical framework including codes of conduct for councillors and Standards Committees within local authorities.

More specifically, the Panel has concluded that action is needed to deal with the planning principles which lie behind these problems, particularly the right to develop, planning-authority consent for development of its own property, and planning gain and betterment, as outlined below.

Democratic control of the right to develop.

The Panel has concluded, firstly, that overall public control of development rights, through democratically elected governments, should be retained.

However, the financial benefits that can flow from this approach need to be (and be seen to be) managed better. Much greater openness and transparency are needed to restore public confidence; to eliminate unnecessary uncertainty and costs for the public purse and for developers; to simplify and improve procedures; and to ensure that the essential arrangements for capturing betterment are of genuine benefit to the whole community at the appropriate level.

Compensation and betterment.

The 1947 Act introduced concepts of 'compensation' and 'betterment' to address the impacts of development and to capture the rise in values from the granting of permission to develop. However, circumstances have now changed. The direct and indirect impacts of large-scale development are now understood to affect environments and communities well beyond the specific site. At the same time, development impacts have become tangled with the rise in value of land and buildings, so that compensation for impacts have become associated with expected profits from development.

The Inquiry Panel has concluded that consideration of the harmful impact of a development (which could be called 'worsenment') and the unearned rise in land value as a result of permission to develop (betterment) should be clearly separated. Specific proposals are outlined later in this report but the principles on which any changes should be implemented will include the following.

Impacts of development

- Society in general, and individual local communities, must decide whether a development is acceptable or not based on criteria for sustainable development (including need, design, appropriateness and quality), and on whether any negative impacts can be fully addressed, and *not* on the potential compensation available.

  Communities will decide that some developments are necessary or desirable, even if public assets (such as open space, landscape features or local facilities) are lost or reduced as a result. The values (not necessarily economic values) ascribed to these assets will vary from community to community and at different times.

  Some assets will remain non-negotiable, and these should be identified in open, democratic processes as well as in accordance with wider guidance and regulations (eg on biodiversity or protected areas).

- If a public asset is permanently lost (or reduced) as a result of an agreed decision to allow a development, open and transparent negotiations on arrangements need to ensure mitigation, reinstatement or replacement for that asset, if that is appropriate. This new type of cross-compliance should be clearer and less open to possible abuse than current arrangements.

- Rigorous sustainability tests based on agreed principles and criteria should be applied to all development, and mediation mechanisms established to resolve conflicts where necessary.

Positive planning for sustainable development will require a significant investment in learning for all those involved.

The proposed policy-led system (ie visions and strategies) should establish and widely communicate agreed general principles and criteria for sustainable development so that they can be clearly understood by the public and by potential developers.

Betterment

- There is a case for continuing to make some charge for the public purse on the unearned rise in the value of property which results from giving permission for development. Whichever system is used to calculate, collect and disburse these charges, as a general principle they should be:
  - calculated only on the residual value after development impacts have been fully addressed
  - open and transparent, to ensure that the system is seen to be operating on principles of financial and ethical integrity
  - flexible enough to ensure the continued release of land for development, where needed
  - disbursed according to agreed principles and for agreed priorities, established through debates on visions and strategies.

None of the measures outlined above will solve the central dilemma of decisions on planning permission which often (although not always) result in winners and losers. However, this new approach should ensure that more conflicts of principle are resolved earlier in the process, and that more conflicts of detail are resolved through open negotiations on small scale developments, or consensus building on larger scale initiatives. There should therefore be fewer instances where the system is undermined by decisions that are not understood and therefore risk being suspected of corruption.

7
Learning through experience

Positive planning for sustainable development will require a significant investment in learning for all those involved, including through monitoring performance and progress, developing good practice, and establishing a new professional paradigm and training.

Reviewing performance and progress

Much more powerful monitoring, review and evaluation mechanisms will be needed to test progress towards objectives, reveal good practice and to identify problems and enable corrective action to be taken or enforced. These mechanisms need to be established at the earliest possible stage in designing processes, and then fully implemented. Findings should then be fed back into assessing outcomes and improving systems and processes. This would enable strategies and plans to be rolled forward in a continuous and seamless manner. These new mechanisms would complement existing economic evaluations of local authority services and products, which are now widely recognised as only one element of assessing effectiveness alongside social and environmental considerations.

New review measures are needed to assess the quality of planning processes and products, moving beyond assessing administrative practices and focusing much more on the effectiveness of:

- *processes* used, such as public participation and stakeholder involvement mechanisms, communication techniques, research methods for intelligence and data gathering etc
- the *outputs* of these processes, such as vision statements, plans, strategies, programmes etc
- the *outcomes* of these processes, such as improved quality of life, well-designed popular buildings, better environmental quality, social inclusion etc

Criteria for assessing performance need to be set and to operate at different levels (national to local) to reflect different objectives and priorities. Local and regional criteria in particular should be set through the participatory visioning processes already outlined to ensure they are understood by the public, and to allow progress and good practice to be easily demonstrated and understood.

Sharing good practice and developing a new planning professionalism can be supported through investment in learning.

Criteria may include:

- For processes:
  - meets objectives for processes set out in vision
  - the extent and quality of public involvement in decisions (scale, effectiveness)
  - the extent and quality of public feedback and access
  - innovation and creativity in process and outcomes
  - efficiency and effectiveness in delivery
  - public satisfaction in outcomes.
- For outcomes:
  - meets objectives for outcomes set out in vision
  - improved quality of life (however defined) for people, in social and economic terms
  - improved environment eg air quality etc
  - 'appropriate' development, according to agreed measures
  - aesthetics (eg urban design, building design)
  - increased vitality as well as viability
  - cost effectiveness and value for money
  - public satisfaction with outcomes.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators to show progress in relation to these criteria will also be needed. There is considerable research evidence to suggest that meaningful directional (rather than absolute) indicators set through participatory processes can be valuable in gaining public understanding, support and involvement in measuring progress towards sustainable development.

Good practice in planning

Recognising and sharing good practice is essential to improving standards. There has been substantial good practice in planning processes and in controlling development, but such achievements are rarely celebrated and the lessons are inadequately shared within the profession, with politicians, other professionals or the public.

Planning for sustainable development needs to build on good practice in a variety of ways, which may include:

- The development of models and examples of good practice in planning processes, outputs and outcomes through greater sharing of experience through professional and other initiatives. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), and the Scottish and Welsh planning departments, should promote good practice with the appropriate institutions and associations through award schemes and seminars. While several award schemes already exist, they could be better co-ordinated and publicised.
- Greater support from government, professional and academic institutions for innovation and experimentation in planning. For example, many of the proposals in this report will need to be tested in real situations before final conclusions can be drawn and major changes made to the planning system overall.
- Much greater incorporation of successful pilot and experimental schemes into mainstream programmes and the setting of budget priorities, at local authority, regional and national levels. At present successful innovation is too often ignored.
- Stronger links between evaluation and good practice and the initial and continuing education and training for planners.
- Investment in people, including professional staff, politicians and other stakeholders. Learning or 'capacity building' for participation (for professionals and the public), the development of skills, the building of confidence and experience, support for innovation and creativity and knowledge about new techniques will all be required.

New skills and attitudes

A new planning professionalism needs to be developed to reflect the new paradigm based on managing change for sustainable development. Planners from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds, with a good understanding of social, economic and environmental issues, will be needed.

They will also require new attitudes including:

- A commitment to working collaboratively with, and a greater respect for, the contribution of the general public and other stakeholders (including other professionals), alongside an understanding of the need to develop new skills in this area.

  Since planning is primarily for people, ensuring their positive contribution will be vital to the success of the new approaches being proposed.
- A new focus on communication (listening as well as disseminating information).
- A willingness to facilitate processes that are wider than those involving land use, and which potentially involve a range of different stakeholders.
- An understanding of and commitment to socially inclusive processes which may require special efforts to reach out and involve certain groups that may otherwise be excluded.
- An understanding of the necessary balance between their own expertise (in land use) and their role in co-ordinating wider planning processes.
- A commitment to learning as a continuing aspect of professional activity, as techniques and understanding of participatory practices and sustainable development grow.

Planners will therefore need to use all their existing expertise in land-use allocation and management, intelligence gathering, co-ordination and integration, alongside initial and continuing training in new skills including:

- Project management and brokerage to devise practical projects, gain public, political and technical support and obtain the necessary resources.
- Management of processes to establish shared visions and practical strategies including independent facilitation and negotiation. Conflicts of interest where planners are stakeholders as well as facilitators need to be openly recognised and taken into account, possibly by bringing in external facilitators in these circumstances.
- Co-ordination and harmonisation of different professions, disciplines, expertise, institutions and knowledges.
- The ability to work with others to debate, assess and come to decisions on proposals for development including:
  - architectural, design and amenity elements of individual buildings, open spaces, countryside, groups of buildings, villages, neighbourhoods
  - environmental consequences, such as traffic growth, biodiversity, climate change, pollution, landscape protection and enhancement
  - social factors, such as the desirability of creating and/or maintaining mixed communities, promoting social inclusion and social balance, the provision of facilities (schools, community centres, health facilities, sports facilities, libraries)
  - economic factors, such as the need to balance market-led commercial housing development with the need for affordable housing for sale or rent by social and private developers and landlords.
- The ability to ensure maximum public involvement and citizen engagement in planning processes, the implementation of the agreed plans and the monitoring of achievement.
- Monitoring and evaluating sustainable development including establishing criteria for success, reviewing progress towards objectives and celebrating achievement.

All these new learning processes will need initial investment and continuing resources to ensure time is available for everyone to learn new skills and adapt to new approaches and working methods.

Ways forward

3

Planning needs to be reinvented to focus on sustainable development, with creative new mechanisms for developing visions and practical implementation strategies which involve all stakeholders.

Seven ways forward are outlined in this section as possible first steps towards reinventing planning.

Visions of the future can capture the aspirations of local communities, as well as identifying practical opportunities.

1
A duty to promote sustainable development

The complexity of sustainable development has already been noted and it may therefore seem contradictory to propose that a formal duty to promote sustainable development should be imposed.

However, one of the strengths of sustainable development as a concept is that it is not an absolute. As it is permanently provisional, and requires constant updating and agreement through negotiation, it must be set within processes which are flexible enough to cope with the much faster pace of change in the modern world. Fixed and absolute concepts would be constantly undermined as they would not contain within them the flexibility to adapt to new circumstances.

Therefore, the pursuit of sustainable development must be understood as a journey: a *process* as well as an *endpoint*. It is about a new way of doing things, as well as a new target for achievement. In order to reach the target of sustainable development, the process of sustainable development needs to start immediately. Through collaborative processes of review and evaluation, both the targets and the process can then be refined over time.

Local government has a central role to play in the implementation of sustainable development.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Many local authorities will already have developed Local Agenda 21s, which may provide some frameworks and priorities. However, mechanisms are now needed which will allow for Local Agenda 21s, and any associated plans, to be implemented through a whole range of mainstream democratic and collaborative strategies.

Planning offers a realistic focus for these processes as it can create the appropriate mechanisms for continuing debates, ensuring agreements and devising strategies for implementation. Immediate practical steps to bring this about include:

- A new statutory duty to promote sustainable development is needed for all authorities and agencies responsible for planning, implementing or investing in public services, infrastructure and development. This new duty should become the core of a new and more integrated approach to community policy-making and planning for communities at all levels, national to local. All other policies, plans, strategies and programmes should be set within this framework.
- Local government is the institution providing leadership to communities at the local level which is where people most easily engage. Local government therefore has a central role to play in the implementation of sustainable development.
- The duty for sustainable development should carry an obligation to produce a vision and a strategy which set out how this duty is to be discharged (see **Visions and strategies for sustainable development** below). Implementation will require action by local authorities and a wide range of other public, private, voluntary and community agencies at all levels, individually and in partnerships.
- Full stakeholder involvement in the preparation, implementation and review of visions and strategies will be required. The duty of sustainable development would thus influence the rights and responsibilities of all participants in the planning process, from national government to local groups and individuals.

A formal duty on local authorities and other agencies will enable government at other levels, and local citizens, to help ensure that sustainable development moves into the mainstream of local politics and development. Authorities and agencies can then be held formally accountable for promoting sustainable development in all their own programmes, and in all programmes of investment in the areas for which they are responsible.

Moving beyond plans to visions and practical strategies.

2
Visions and strategies for sustainable development

Sustainable development aims to meet human needs and improve quality of life through development undertaken within environmental, social and economic constraints. The role of planning is to create effective forums for discussing and agreeing community needs and priorities within wider policy and regulatory frameworks, and to provide the mechanisms for translating the results of these discussions into strategies for action.

New mechanisms are outlined below which aim to enable communities to:

- create their own visions and priorities
- agree strategies for investment and implementation
- establish powerful new systems for monitoring and evaluation, and
- establish flexible responsive mechanisms, enabling them to make decisions in between visioning and review processes.

Creating visions and strategies

Planning needs to move beyond producing physical plans and policies. New techniques are needed which enable visions for the future of places, communities and activities to be articulated at various levels (neighbourhood to UK national), linked to agreement on practical and realistic strategies that can be implemented.

Visions of the future, and the processes of creating them, need to be capable of capturing the aspirations, values and knowledges of all stakeholders. Local citizens will be central to this process, as will a range of other professional and lay individuals and institutions. The strength and credibility of these visions will depend on the extent to which stakeholders have helped create, understand and subscribe to them, and on the extent to which they focus on the feasible as well as the ambitious.

These visions should provide a broad common framework within which the plans, strategies and investment programmes of all public agencies, the private sector, voluntary and community bodies, and individuals, can be integrated and implemented. Local visions will need to be set within wider policy frameworks (for example, on environmental regulation and other national policy priorities) and will therefore need to relate local priorities and opportunities to global constraints.

Every community's needs and opportunities will change over time, and these will be different in different places: for example, some areas may urgently need affordable or subsidised housing, others may need industrial or commercial development to provide jobs and economic activity, while some may need to make the reversal of environmental degradation or environmental enhancement their priority.

Visioning processes can help clarify local objectives and priorities in a global context by allowing participants to articulate and confront the potential underlying conflicts which are often inherent in sustainable development (eg emissions from a local factory and the cars of its workforce on global climate change; local impacts from airports). Agreement can then be reached on those assets or activities which may be changed or developed and those which are non-negotiable. Criteria to enable communities to respond to changing circumstances will need to be agreed (see below under Monitoring and Evaluation).

Visioning can also provide a product (such as a report or strategy) which can be used to communicate principles and priorities to other stakeholders and potential investors and developers. Communication will be a vital element of these processes.

Visioning processes have already been piloted in a variety of locations throughout the UK, and some good practice already exists on which to build, including through the use of Local Agenda 21 processes. However, much more experimentation and learning will be required, particularly in finding new ways of capturing and communicating visions beyond those immediately involved in creating them, and in ensuring that visions lead on to practical strategies for investment, implementation and change.

Monitoring and evaluation

The success of visions and strategies will depend upon monitoring and evaluation systems designed to ensure that progress towards objectives is assessed, criteria are met, principles are upheld and success is celebrated. Regular monitoring and evaluation also provides the basis for the continuous rolling forward of strategies and plans.

Sophisticated review and assessment procedures will need to be established at the earliest possible stage in planning processes.

The creation of agreed criteria will be an essential element in visioning processes.

The development of new shared criteria and indicators, as part of the initial visioning processes, alongside criteria required by national and international policies and regulation, will provide the basis for an assessment of changing priorities and unforeseen proposals. Negotiable and non-negotiable natural and constructed assets would need to be specified, where practicable.

Measuring progress towards objectives, and identifying outcomes (achievements and failures), in this positive and participatory way creates not only involvement but also a measurable sense of positive change. Planning can then not only contribute to articulating aspirations but also help move towards a much wider knowledge and understanding about sustainable development.

Between visions and reviews

New flexible and creative planning mechanisms are needed which can respond to major proposals of development or needs or principles which were unforeseen during visioning and strategic development processes and which require decisions to be made. These may even be outside any broad sustainability criteria established.

These mechanisms must be designed to enable positive debate and consensus building to ensure public involvement and the achievement of rational and broadly understood conclusions. It will be essential to adhere to the same principles of participation in transparent decision-making and democratic accountability in these circumstances as elsewhere in planning processes, or the entire framework will be undermined.

Priorities

Planning clearly has a central role in creating and managing inclusive collaborative and deliberative processes to identify and define community needs and priorities through the production of visions and strategies for sustainable development. These processes should allow local needs, and desires, to be articulated and prioritised up front and set within wider frameworks of policy and regulation.

Overall objectives and priorities will vary in different places and at different times, but at present might well include initiatives to achieve social inclusion and mixed communities, more affordable housing, better traffic and transport management, more protection and conservation of environmentally vulnerable areas, resource management and sustainable economic development.

A particular priority may be given to investment in social and cultural institutions and activities, which can strengthen communities' formal and informal networks, and increase political and social inclusion. Such investment can support major conventional regeneration programmes, helping to build social capital and social justice, tackle social exclusion and reduce the impacts of poverty and inequality. Support and resources for voluntary, community and self-help initiatives (such as self-build housing projects, community businesses, arts and education schemes) can be particularly effective alongside major investment to improve housing, infrastructure and economic development.

As importantly, a shift to social investment of this sort can begin to signal a new priority being given to development to meet people's needs, and will help to build the social institutions (often in the voluntary sector) which can support social development. Many such institutions already exist at local and national level but are often excluded from mainstream investment decision-and policy-making. New planning processes need to ensure that such existing institutions and networks, and new ones where needed, move from innovative pilots and experimental status to influencing mainstream programmes.

PHOTO: DAVID WILCOX

A new planning structure must help ensure that decisions are made at appropriate levels - from UK strategies to local programmes.

3
Community planning at all levels

Community planning, following ground-breaking work in Scotland, has come to mean processes which embrace all investment in identified geographical communities covering all issues which affect those communities (eg housing, education, health, social welfare, industry, transport). Planning has a vital role to play in helping to articulate a vision of how communities wish to live in future and how the many policy elements could interlock.

These new inter-relationships need to be reflected in a new structure which enables decisions to be made at the appropriate levels, much greater public involvement, and much closer links between planning and action.

Principles of subsidiarity will need to be operated alongside a recognition of the global impacts of decisions made at the most local level, within a fully democratised and open framework at different levels. It is also important to ensure that environmental, social and economic assessment procedures become part of the planning processes at all levels. This will help to ensure that unsuitable policies are 'filtered out' before they are developed further into programmes, plans or projects.

The Inquiry therefore proposes the following basic structure for planning for sustainable development:

- A UK spatial development strategy for sustainable development
- Regional (and sub-regional where appropriate) strategies for sustainable development
- Local programmes for sustainable development
- Neighbourhood action plans (where appropriate)
- Development control.

All these strategies, programmes and action plans should have statutory force. Extended and strengthened democratic frameworks proposed at all levels would require all participants to recognise their rights and responsibilities to act on behalf of the whole community. Equally, all these strategies would need to include mechanisms for dealing with unforeseen needs or initiatives, primarily by articulating clear principles and criteria on which the changes can be assessed and by establishing processes which ensure that decision-making is always participatory, transparent and fully democratically accountable.

The change of terminology is central to the new structure, emphasising the shift from 'plans' to active, flexible and creative processes, programmes and strategies for action.

A UK spatial development strategy for sustainable development

An over-arching strategy is needed which strengthens the constituent parts of the UK in the context of democratic renewal and devolution, and ensures that all parts of the country play an integrated role in securing an overall improvement in quality of life.

The objective of the strategy would be to produce a concise document, which would provide the link to all other international policies and regulations that would need to be taken into account in all development and change at other levels. It would require rigorous and detailed supporting material to justify the priorities identified, and to support the choice or rejection of particular policies and actions.

Such a framework would provide a basis for achieving greater coherence between the various UK sectoral policies (environment, transport, industrial policy, health, housing, etc) and the increasingly detailed individual national, regional and sub-regional strategies. It will also be necessary to link these planning processes to wider questions of public expenditure and sustainable development.

The UK strategy would both draw down from and inform the European Spatial Development Plan in an iterative process; it would be expected that the development of a UK strategy would strengthen and consolidate the UK lobbying position in the ESDP context.

The UK strategy would cover only broad aspects such as the character and patterns of development, and identify broad areas where the Government wishes to see investment throughout the country. Much of the detail covered in current planning policy guidance notes (PPGs in England, NPPGs in Scotland) could be delegated to regional and local authorities. It would also give a lead on major policy choices such as infrastructure (such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, airport policy, Trans-European Networks). These highly political choices will need to be made following extensive public debate, in which alternatives and environmental impact must be considered, as well as assumptions about need

The process of devolution which has now been initiated should be accelerated and encouraged.

In some areas, more fine-grained neighbourhood action plans may be required.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES FOUNDATION

being rigorously interrogated, if the strategy is to command public support.

Parliament should have the major role in ensuring democratic accountability, providing improved Parliamentary scrutiny. A select committee holding an examination in public may be an appropriate mechanism. The strategy would also need to be kept under permanent review and be subject to powerful public scrutiny and accountability.

Regional strategies for sustainable development

In the spirit of subsidiarity, and in recognition of the need for greater detail and clarity at sub-national level in both policy and the means of implementation, a higher degree of devolution of planning policy and procedures is needed.

The UK planning framework has been the most centralised of the major member states of the European Union and the process of devolution which has now been initiated should be accelerated and encouraged. The past lack of delegation has led to an absence of appropriate policies and procedures at regional or sub-regional level. Many national planning policies and procedures currently serve to hinder rather than support the best overall use of national resources and the development of the individual territories that comprise the nation state, and many matters could and should be devolved to regional level.

In England, new style regional strategies for sustainable development should be drawn up for each region by local and other authorities (probably through regional chambers pending the creation of regional assemblies) with substantial input from government regional offices and the regional development agencies as well as other stakeholders. Similar regional arrangements and procedures should be introduced in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Where appropriate, sub-regional and cross-regional strategies should also be prepared as part of such regional strategies. These would recognise that, in practice, needs and opportunities do not always coincide with administrative boundaries. In England, regional chambers/assemblies would be encouraged to act jointly to draw up guidance where areas straddle regional boundaries, and similar collaborative arrangements would be introduced in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Such an approach at sub-regional level would build on the many informal collaborative arrangements that already exist, would allow for the elaboration of the regional strategy and provide strategic coherence at local level. The strategies would embrace all operational agencies – public, private and other – in the area.

In the short term, the existing statutory structure plan could be used as the instrument for the preparation of sub-regional strategies. For example, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan arrangements, with enhanced stakeholder involvement and democratic accountability, may provide a possible model. In time, as these new regional and sub-regional strategies gain statutory force, it should be possible to replace structure plans as currently constructed.

Each regional strategy would need to be fully tested in public examination, and approved by the appropriate secretary of state or minister. Strategies would have statutory force and local authorities would be required to have regard to them when managing the creation of local visions and programmes.

All these processes will require an extended democratic framework, which is currently missing at regional level, although in England the emerging regional assemblies and chambers might provide the basis for such a framework. This would enable the regional and sub-regional strategies to develop and incorporate mechanisms for public scrutiny, accountability and involvement, which would be essential for successful development and implementation.

Local programmes for sustainable development

Local programmes for sustainable development would be designed to create collaborative community visions and then translate them into practical policies and programmes which can be implemented fully, alongside participatory mechanisms for dealing with unforeseen proposals and needs.

These programmes would eventually replace existing unitary development plans (UDPs) and local plans and would be devised at district or borough level and led by local authorities.

These local programmes should cover all investment, services and development carried out at district, borough or unitary level – including health, public transport, housing, education – while recognising that some services are provided by others (eg county

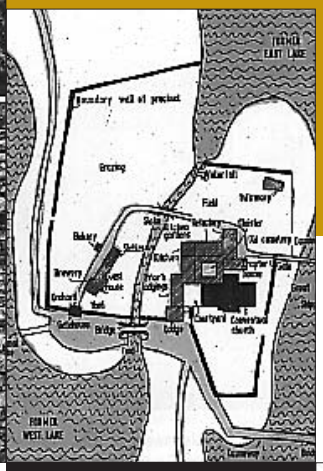
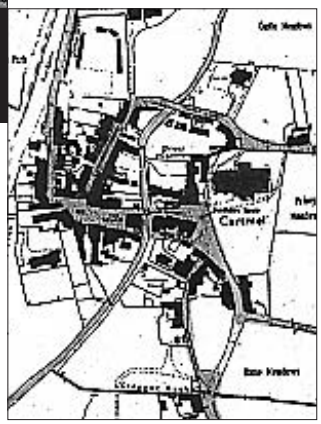


PHOTO AND MAPS: COURTESY OF CARTMEL VILLAGE SOCIETY ©

Village design statements provide a potential model for linking neighbourhood plans to statutory planning programmes.



councils and other public and private agencies). They should be formulated according to all the principles of public and stakeholder involvement and democratic accountability outlined throughout this report, and within the wider planning and environmental regulatory frameworks established at national and international levels. Links should be made, wherever possible, to other local initiatives including Local Agenda 21 structures and processes and regeneration programmes.

In terms of formal structure, these programmes could be based on the current unitary development plans (UDPs), excluding Part 1 which would be redundant as a result of the local visioning exercises and regional and sub-regional strategic guidance. The current Part 2 of UDPs could be used as a model for the strategy but would need to be extended to cover all investment and services locally. Local planning authorities will co-ordinate these planning processes on behalf of, and with the involvement of, all stakeholders, many of whom will be directly responsible for implementation.

Neighbourhood action plans

In some areas with particular needs or opportunities, more fine-grained neighbourhood action plans (NAPs) may be required and should be encouraged where appropriate. The creation of such very local action plans would enable much more extensive public involvement and control of the process, and could inform the wider sustainable development strategies that councils would be required to adopt. This would enable subsidiarity and devolution to be driven down to neighbourhood level.

NAPs should involve local authorities (without them necessarily taking a leading role) and should be linked to a major devolution of decision-making on certain issues to neighbourhood level. This would enable responsibilities for decisions to be linked to rights to involvement.

The same principles of transparency, public scrutiny and accountability will apply to NAPs as to the construction of plans and strategies at other levels.

Where NAPs are prepared, they should be formally integrated with the wider statutory strategy processes: the village design statements pioneered by The Countryside Agency, where adopted as supplementary planning guidance, provide a potential model for this link to statutory planning programmes. They should also be closely linked to any specific regeneration and other initiatives including Local Agenda 21 structures and processes.

The positive energy often generated by these very local planning processes will contribute more than innovative ideas to wider processes. They should also help engender community ownership for, and responsibility towards, the quality of the areas, now and in future.

In some areas, external support may be required to facilitate these processes. Elsewhere, all the necessary skills may be available locally. In either case, NAPs will require appropriate resources and budgets to be made available to cover costs of processes, outputs (reports etc) and implementation.

Development control

Within the new structure of strategies and programmes at different levels, permission will still be required for all new physical development that affects others.

Development control must be seen as enacting and enforcing the principles and priorities established through the processes of constructing visions, programmes and strategies for sustainable development.

Decisions on development control need to be taken at the appropriate level, so that, for example, national level decisions (eg on airports) are taken (and seen to be taken) at national level. In addition, decision-making and development control need to be

A development trust in London has developed 23 acres under the Westway motorway for community benefit ...

PHOTO: HULTON GETTY

linked much more closely to the process of enhanced environmental, social and economic assessment advocated above.

Equally, additional changes are needed to ensure that the development control system is no longer overwhelmed by small scale, non-controversial developments. However, an agglomeration of small scale but inappropriate development can become a serious problem, and therefore a clear plan needs to be in place, enabling predictable and quick decisions on minor matters, and more time for big decisions.

Development control processes should be based on best current practice including transparency, openness, public participation and democratic accountability:

- Applicants for permission to develop would be asked to show, broadly:
  - why the development is being proposed
  - the manner in which it accords with sustainability objectives
  - the appearance of the development, and how it would affect and fit in with its surroundings
  - the materials and the methods to be used
  - public consultation carried out, where appropriate
- Small-scale development which accords with (or at least does not contravene) the local programme for sustainable development and its sustainability criteria would be dealt with by officers through delegated powers, except where
  - there are any objections
  - any councillor wants it to be dealt with in public.
- Where there is a demand for a public hearing, applicants, councillors and objectors should be allowed to speak for and against the proposal at that hearing.
- Reasons for giving permission would be attached to the permission in the same way as reasons for refusal are currently given.
- Appeals against refusal of permission need to be dealt with speedily.
- Appeals against the granting of planning permission may need to be considered in some cases, such as where approvals for development are given in contravention of the local programme for sustainable development.

The Inquiry Panel recognises that linking development control with strategic planning has sometimes resulted in planning being seen as a negative influence on development. This has encouraged some authorities to divide the planning function by splitting policy, regulation and scrutiny.

However, this has major implications for a holistic approach in which planning and implementation are seen as part of the same process. The policy framework set through the strategy development process needs to be integrated with implementation which may involve land assembly, public/private partnerships, community involvement and development control – a highly complex process.

Divorcing development control from the policy function would lose continuity and development control would no longer be a creative function which is seeking the best and promoting better development: it would be confined to a narrow regulatory regime set with rules and procedures.

We have therefore concluded that current best practice suggests that all planning functions should be integrated, ensuring that creativity flourishes and a positive approach is taken. An important feature of future development control is that it must be based on up-to-date development strategies and plans, which in turn suggests the need to roll forward plans on a regular basis.

... including these gardens, being toured by a group from the Open Age Project.

PHOTO: DAVY JONES / COURTESY OF NORTH KENSINGTON AMENITY TRUST©

4
Partnership trusts

In general, implementation will be carried out, within agreed strategies, by a wide range of public, private, voluntary and other agencies, companies and individuals, together or separately. These interests will often have been involved in establishing visions, agreeing strategies, priorities and programmes.

In some areas with particular problems or opportunities, special efforts and new initiatives may be required to push forward sustainable development to meet community needs. These areas may be identified in regional, sub-regional or local strategies as needing large-scale regeneration, new development or conservation. There may be the potential in these special areas for a new type of 'partnership trust' to take on these special responsibilites.

Partnership trusts should build on the experience of existing development and community development trusts, and learn from the experience of the development corporations that have been operating in the UK over the past 50 years and have produced significant planning and development achievements. Single Regeneration Budget and City Challenge companies also provide potentially useful examples of organisational structures. However, partnership trusts would need to be structured to ensure full democratic accountability and detailed monitoring and evaluation processes, open to public scrutiny, would also be essential to ensure that outputs are delivered in accordance with agreed principles and values.

Partnership trusts would be independent and autonomous and managed by a board of trustees, which is likely to include representatives of the local authorities, the private sector and other stakeholders. Formal voluntary and community sector involvement in the management of the trusts would enhance the trusts' potential value, recognising that development is more than bricks and mortar.

The trust model could operate at city, county, district or neighbourhood level and would aim to secure development, regeneration and/or conservation consistent with local community needs and aspirations. The trusts would work with and support voluntary and community organisations and other grass roots initiatives, the better to generate self help and local activity for community benefit. They would also need to ensure better integration with health, education and other services.

Funding may be raised from a variety of sources including from Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), although trusts may also expect to lever substantial private sector and other investment into regeneration programmes.

5
Developer obligations

All development will have impacts, and these may be perceived as positive or negative depending not just on the development itself, but on the process of deciding on the development, and on the arrangements agreed for dealing with any negative impact.

The strategies at different levels, already outlined, will identify which public assets are non-negotiable at any time. Within the sphere of assets that are negotiable, new mechanisms are needed to deal with the impacts and to make clear to developers how offsetting or substitution measures will be funded and delivered.

These new arrangements could be termed 'developer obligations', and would apply to the things a development must supply to deal with its impact on the community and the environment where it takes place, and its wider impacts. These obligations would build on the basic principles behind the existing 'planning obligations'. However, the aim of developer obligations would be to make the whole process, particularly the formal obligation of the developer, much *clearer* to the public and other stakeholders, and more *comprehensive*, covering all social and environmental impacts.

A scheme of developer obligations needs four interlinked components to work:

- **National policies** to require the inclusion of developer obligations in the relevant development strategy. These are essential to give the approach legitimacy with the public, developers and the appropriate secretary of state or minister. If they have been debated and approved, after a public inquiry (or equivalent process), then developers can incorporate them in the price paid for land, and the secretary of state or minister and their inspectors/reporters can rely on them at appeals. Without this framework, contributions from developers will be seen as opportunistic (as they often are now).
- **Legal measures** to enable and enforce the use of developer obligations. Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 already provides the legal backing; further policy backing could be built on to it to give local planning authorities the confidence to use it in this way by a simple revision of the relevant circular.
- **A method of calculating the obligations.** The techniques pioneered for assessing environmental capital (for The Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Environment

A more formalised and transparent process is needed to manage the implications of the impact on the value of land and buildings of granting planning permission.

Agency) provide one model for how this could be done. Calculations would be needed of the amenity, social and other benefits from the existing environment (broadly defined) which matter to people, and how these benefits might be substituted satisfactorily if a development affects them.

However, whichever method is identified, it must be flexible; set within the framework provided by the general move towards the greater use of environmental taxes, charges and subsidies; cannot be seen as buying or selling permission; and, most importantly, must *reward* developments with few, or no, undesirable impacts, and *penalise* those with many.

- **Open, transparent, explicit, democratically accountable processes** for calculating, imposing and enforcing developer obligations. These processes must be clearly set within the agreed regional strategies and local programmes for sustainable development to ensure the system operates with full public trust and credibility. Decisions can then be made which are reasonable and related to particular circumstances and the nature of the proposed development.

  Many of these decisions are likely to be required at a regional (and possibly cross-regional) level, as impacts and benefits may be spread across a wide area and numerous communities. In the case of some developments, (eg quarries, major transport infrastructure, large industrial plant) it may be necessary to ensure ongoing payments to a local community

6
Increases in land value

Even with a more sophisticated system of developer obligations which will charge all the costs of addressing the impacts of a development, the simple act of granting planning permission can have an enormous impact on the value of land and buildings. This creates issues of to whom this additional value should accrue and, if at least part of it accrues to the public purse, how that should be collected and distributed.

This report has already noted the key objectives of managing the rise in land values: open and transparent processes, flexibility to ensure release of land where required, and disbursement according to agreed principles and priorities. Present arrangements clearly do not adequately meet these requirements and there is a great deal of public unease and distrust of a system which, in some areas, is generating such large sums of money with relatively few safeguards.

Clearly, a more formalised and transparent process is needed to ensure that what has been described as a 'development lottery' is more effectively managed.

Previous legislative attempts to deal with this issue have all failed, and the Inquiry Panel fully recognises the technical complexity and political difficulties which surround this issue. At this stage, therefore, we have concluded only that the basis for a new solution should be a balance between the original owner receiving some proportion of the increased value to encourage the release of land and buildings as required, and some proportion being allocated to the community at an appropriate level.

Options for dealing with the proportion going to the public purse include:

- a general land development tax
- a hypothecated land tax to be used, for example, for affordable housing or infrastructure investment
- waiving charges, or using charges to cross-subsidise, on development which is agreed to be required to meet needs or opportunities identified in strategies or programmes for sustainable development (eg environmentally beneficial development or housing for priority groups)
- a charge collected by the new partnership trusts proposed earlier and used for regeneration or conservation

PHOTO: EDWARD WALKER ARCHITECTS / COURTESY OF ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS

Everyone involved in the new planning processes needs to learn how to work together.

- a charge collected by local authorities and placed in community chests and used for projects generated by the local community.

These mechanisms could operate jointly between or within national, regional or local levels. Links may also be made to wider measures to develop environmental taxation to contribute to sustainable development through economic instruments.

A full debate is needed to consider these options, as well as the extent to which decisions about collection and disbursement may be taken at different levels. However, whichever process or mechanism is chosen, the principles of openness and transparency, and ensuring public accountability and financial integrity will be paramount.

7
Mutual learning for participation

Learning for participation and citizenship will be a priority for all participants in the new planning processes. Everyone involved (professionals and public) needs to acquire new skills and knowledge to work together to make decisions and take action with confidence, understanding and sensitivity.

This learning process is not about passing on a body of knowledge. Rather, it is a process of mutual learning which aims to raise awareness, increase knowledge and understanding, develop critical skills, help formulate values and attitudes – and lead on to concern, acceptance of responsibility, participation in decision-making and ultimately action. Practical information on environmental, social and economic issues, and an understanding of why and how change has happened will also help to develop insights and learning so that all those involved can become active agents of change.

Learning *for* participation comes from experience *of* participation, and from sharing with others the rights and responsibilities of being involved in changing things for the better. 'Capacity building' is a particular form of learning which is often aimed at disadvantaged communities as a precursor to participation. However, capacity already exists in many such communities and individuals: the missing ingredients are sufficient opportunities, resources (to cover actual costs and needs for specific training and information identified by participants) and a willingness on the part of decision-makers to share power and allow the outcomes of participatory processes to create new solutions.

Learning, capacity building and education for citizenship should therefore not be seen as prerequisites to participation, but rather as the results of good processes which encourage reflection and understanding alongside action.

Capacity building can be developed most effectively through 'mutual learning', a two-way process improving communication between lay people and professionals, across professional boundaries, and across sectoral divides between business, NGOs and public agencies:

- Local residents can learn about working in partnership with each other and with top-down expert cultures
- People from the private sector can learn about community organisations and skills as well as public sector constraints and opportunities

- Professionals, including planners, architects, environmental managers, housing experts and others can learn to work better together and as co-designers of the local environment with community representatives.
- All participants can learn about the implications of sustainable development, and the policies and strategies being developed to work towards it.

Practical ways of developing these processes of mutual learning include the following.

Learning resource centres.

Existing or new local or regional centres (such as for technical aid, community education and urban studies) could offer a wide range of support and educational opportunities in the widest sense. These centres could provide access to a wide range of people, potentially enriching the base of recruitment for local governance (including serving as local councillors).

Learning programmes established alongside participatory opportunities could be designed to collect and transmit best practice in regeneration, partnership development, participatory processes and techniques (eg Planning for Real, visioning and citizens' juries).

Training for councillors and professional staff in working with the public and other stakeholders could be provided. Changes in attitudes and new working practices will be needed as well as skills in facilitation and in making various professionalisms available to other stakeholders.

Education for citizenship.

Building on the Crick Report, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, London 1998), a focus on planning for sustainable development may offer many positive opportunities for education for citizenship. Many areas of the curriculum are likely to be covered, from environmental science, citizenship, history and geography, art and design to spiritual and moral education. The existing experience of urban studies and some environmental education programmes shows how pupils can progress from observing and recording the local environment to assessing priorities for action and participating in practical projects.

Current professional training for teachers may not have equipped them to tackle some of the problems and opportunities that present themselves in such activities. It may be beneficial to increase practical collaboration between schools and planners and other professionals, perhaps through inter professional working groups, building on existing models from successful projects.

New 'arenas' for involvement.

New arenas and forums need to be created to provide new opportunities for public and other participation in debates, decision-making and action for sustainable development so that all participants can negotiate and learn to compromise on the issues which impact on their lives.

Both short- and long-term mechanisms will be required to involve stakeholders in partnership initiatives, on specific projects and more generally. There could be a role for a new institution at local authority level to provide regular checks and balances to other processes. Such an institution could provide a more long-term focus for public engagement and link directly to local government structures.

Early investment in these processes will develop capabilities and social capital, and should be able to reduce other more substantial expenditure from public and private sectors on fire-fighting when conflicts arise or on dealing with purely oppositional campaigning. Over time, these new processes may be able to use resources diverted from conflict resolution, which may have reduced as a result of participation earlier in process timetables. There is already much experience and past initiatives to learn from.

In conclusion

4

The importance of sustainable development in improving quality of life and preserving vital natural resources for people now and in future is now widely recognised, but the right practical frameworks to apply the broad principles are still lacking. Planning can and should be at the heart of these frameworks.

This Inquiry has grappled with the ways in which these complex and deeply challenging concepts could be put into practice. The fundamental philosophical and political challenge offered by sustainable development has forced consideration of the most basic principles on which current planning practices are based. The specific criticisms of the planning system, and the less commented upon but widely recognised strengths, have pointed to some new directions.

Planning for sustainable development will require nothing less than a complete change of culture for planning and planners, and for those proposing development or conservation. There will be difficult dilemmas ahead as the new principles begin to be introduced into a world more used to decisions seemingly made on purely technical grounds, but which actually reflect a very different set of principles.

Planning for sustainable development will require substantial cross-boundary working involving collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders including public, private, voluntary and community agencies working at different spatial levels, based in different locations and with different priorities.

Time-scales for different strategies will vary, requiring extensive new review and monitoring procedures to ensure objectives are achieved within specific sustainability criteria and agreed deadlines.

These complex new processes involving multi-lateral relationships and previously quite separate issues and policy arenas will have profound implications for the profession and for the professional education of planners. Many of the skills required have already been developed by some successful planners during their own careers. However, many planners will need new initial and continuing professional training to develop new skills and approaches. Specific land-use management expertise will still be required, alongside new skills for creating visions and practical strategies and for project development and implementation.

The Panel's own breadth of experience of planning – in planning practice, politics, academia, community advice and policy formulation – has brought together a range of views and expertise. Using the extremely valuable input from other leading thinkers and practitioners, provided in person to our meetings and in writing, we have attempted in this report to provide realistic principles and achievable steps forward.

We offer this report as a contribution to the debate and programme of implementation, which must now follow. The aim is simple but fundamental: to enable planning to contribute more effectively to ensuring that the world we bequeath to future generations will be changed for the better, for the benefit of society as a whole.

Executive summary

A vision for planning for the future

The quality of the places where we live and work, and our immediate social networks, still matter deeply to us, even in a world of increasingly sophisticated communications, mobility and globalised systems. Planning is at the heart of shaping that quality.

The principles governing the systems and policies we currently use to plan were developed in the late 1940s. Although those principles were radical at the time, the context for town and country planning is now very different and we need to find a new approach that recognises our changed circumstances.

In many ways, the planning system has been very robust, but it is being increasingly challenged, both in terms of the solutions which emerge and the ways in which decisions are arrived at.

The overall purpose of planning is to manage change, and change is never a value-free process. We must *reinvent* planning so that its principles and systems reflect contemporary values, rather than those of the past. It must seek to inform and establish explicit and agreed values - so that the nature of the changes that are made, and the way that decisions are made, lead to change for the better. Change and development can also imply continuity; change for the better may require action for conservation.

This new vision of planning should build both on the radical past and on the best of current practice, to create a new philosophy and principles that are based on different and more sophisticated ways of understanding and debating change. This philosophy and these principles should underpin a system that is able to deliver change for the better for the benefit of the whole community.

The concept of sustainable development offers a potentially radical philosophy for planning in the 21st century. Sustainable development demands that development should focus on meeting human needs within environmental constraints. It provides a framework of values which challenge conventional wisdom by linking responsibility towards future generations, social equity, global environmental stewardship, quality of life, biodiversity, integrated policies, and public participation and empowerment.

In operational terms, development can only be judged to be sustainable if it increases human well-being within certain environmental constraints, and enables people to participate more fully in the decisions which affect their lives. This begins to make explicit a new focus on human well-being as the primary objective for development; an acceptance of constraints, particularly the importance of environmental, social and economic impacts of development; and a recognition that planning is a profoundly political process which requires wide civic engagement.

Planners in the UK have embraced sustainable development with enthusiasm already, including through the use of Local Agenda 21 processes. However, many have struggled with interpretation and implementation. Complexities and contradictions abound between conflicting objectives and priorities. Some environmental assets, in the same way as some human rights, should be deemed non-negotiable.

Sustainable development therefore cannot be understood simply as a template to be applied in different local contexts. Rather, the very process of planning must be seen as providing the forums for contesting and defining sustainable development in different communities.

The challenge for planning is to make effective use of planning systems and processes in order to elicit judgements of value, and agree practical ways forward, which will differ in different places. The process of deliberation and agreement becomes as important as the product (the strategy or plan for sustainable development).

Planning for sustainable development requires that the traditional scope of planning should be extended beyond land-use planning. In future, planning should address the broad sustainable development agenda of social, economic and environmental well-being and quality of life. It must consider all investment and development in a given area for the benefit of the whole community. Planning processes therefore need to move beyond their current focus on *where* development takes place and also consider why, what and how development takes place, who does it, who benefits from it and what the short- and long-term impacts will be.

The planning system needs to move beyond a focus on plans. New participatory processes to create visions and strategies are needed. A greater emphasis on protecting and enhancing the common interest and public goods is needed, within an understanding of the cultural context in the UK which prioritises individual choice and market forces. This will require that planners develop new principles, attitudes and skills that allow them to manage and engage in much wider debates and collaborative processes.

This report outlines seven principles for planning for sustainable development, and seven initial ways forward to turn these principles into practice.

Principles for planning for sustainable development

1 Planning for people as well as places

Planning must look outwards for its purpose: towards citizens and their world. Sustainable development provides an explicit new focus on managing change for the better: to increase human well-being. New processes will be needed which involve people in the decisions that affect their lives and which aim for outcomes that benefit the community as a whole.

Tackling poverty and inequality will always be a priority for sustainable development. However, living standards that go beyond the basic minimum need to have regard to long-term sustainability and the world's ecological means. Definitions of need are always controversial – whether they are individual or community needs – and different 'needs' and 'demands' may conflict (eg car use and clean air). At the same time, quality of life does not just depend on meeting basic needs. Development for industrial production, art and culture, commerce, education, amenity, leisure and recreation will also be highly desirable in many places. Equally, the style as well as the content of planning processes will need to change to be more sensitive, flexible and continuous.

It is clearly impossible (as well as probably undesirable) to make generalisations about the needs and priorities of any community, or to rely on purely technocratic approaches to their identification. There are no absolutes or technical fixes which can be adopted and set down in neat, precise plans.

Planning for people as well as for places must therefore focus on new planning processes. These should provide forums that enable people to engage in positive but rigorous debates about meeting needs and responding to opportunities that may result in changes to the places where they live. These processes will be required before, during and after any formal creation of plans, strategies and programmes for sustainable development.

Planning should take the central role in managing these new processes, including providing mechanisms for ensuring that agreed ways forward are implemented. A new 'ethics of place' is needed that puts people at the centre of these planning processes within, but in addition to, fully accountable democratic government structures.

A planning system that delivers change for the better will take time to design and establish. The first step is to engage people in dialogues about the future of their places. Planning can provide the forums in which those dialogues can happen.

2 Positive planning for sustainable development

At its best, planning is a creative and positive process which encourages and supports good development and positive change: supporting the right sort of development in the right place as well as preventing the wrong sort of development in the wrong place.

Planning cannot do everything, but the planning function should establish the frameworks and processes for facilitating, co-ordinating and monitoring sustainable development on a broad scale. New structures and processes will be needed which create community visions and agree strategies for sustainable development, and monitor and evaluate progress towards objectives. This will require the following:

- **Collaborative investment-based approaches.** Planning processes need to change to ensure that greater emphasis is given to collaborative implementation and investment strategies. Planning can then become a broad strategic activity which develops realistic implementation options in partnership with a wide range of interests, with the appropriate resources for delivery. Without this, planning is likely to become increasingly sterile and negative.
- **Institutional frameworks.** Local government remains the most appropriate institution to have overall responsibility for managing these visioning and strategic development processes because of its role in providing democratically accountable local community leadership. Links to regional, national and wider policies, strategies and democratic institutions will also be essential.
- **From adversarial to deliberative approaches.** Planning systems need to move away from the current adversarial approaches to resolving conflict towards processes that are more inquisitorial and deliberative. However, any such changes would need to ensure that the strengths of the current system are not lost (eg ensuring that objections can be heard) and that alternatives can be discussed.
- **Policy and process-led planning.** An equivalent to development plans and tough development control systems will be needed, based on rigorous sustainability tests and robust processes of negotiation within clear sustainability criteria. However, most emphasis and investment will be 'upstream' in the development of visions and strategies for sustainable development, within agreed principles and criteria, and in the design and management of new processes which are much more open, transparent, collaborative, participatory and accountable.

3 Participation in positive planning

The proposed planning processes require a powerful new emphasis on public and other stakeholder participation in creating visions, agreeing strategies and implementing initiatives. Participation is needed to restore public trust and confidence in the planning system; to draw on knowledges beyond conventional professional expertise; and to build understanding of the consequences of choices that affect sustainable development.

Development and the environment are issues of major public concern and activity. Positive responses to demands for involvement from an increasingly active and knowledgeable public may help to increase citizen involvement and strengthen democracy more generally. Involvement breeds involvement and trust breeds trust: establishing greater rights and opportunities to participate in decisions can help people develop a wider sense of ownership and responsibility for collective solutions to those problems which affect us all.

Thus, planning can provide the leadership necessary to help develop participatory democracy for sustainable development by establishing more and better appropriate structures for participation and collaboration.

More effective participation cannot just be added on to existing processes. It requires:

- **New attitudes and processes:** a fundamental change of culture and attitudes from planners and others to open up processes, listen to others and be willing to change as a result; new techniques alone will not be sufficient: new processes and cultures are needed in which appropriate techniques can be used
- **Public access to information:** greater freedom of information at no or low cost to the public, in a form which will assist debate
- **Democratic links:** participation needs to be powerfully grounded in democratic institutions; new processes should support and help build democracy, not establish a separate set of institutions
- **Involvement of all stakeholders,** including making particular efforts to combat exclusion by reaching out to all sectors of society
- **Early participation:** the right timing is needed so that there is more participation at this point in history, and at the earliest stage in all planning processes
- **Feedback:** participants need to know what is happening, when, and how their input has changed decisions
- **Investment:** in structures which support participation (existing and new), in training for all concerned, and in covering simple practical costs such as meeting rooms, telephone calls and copying.

4 Decision-making at appropriate levels

Global policies and programmes, devolution and regionalisation are increasingly affecting the places where we live and work, and our social networks. Planning can therefore no longer conceptualise places as closed systems which can be planned for in isolation, nor in simply hierarchical spatial terms (national to local). Nor can it assume that a particular policy or means of implementation is appropriate everywhere. New structures are needed to enable local needs and global priorities to be actively reconciled, including:

- Community planning at all levels. The concept of community planning recognises that the issues that affect people and places (social, economic, environmental) are interconnected and must be dealt with together. Community planning also needs to reflect the communities that exist at all levels from (and within) neighbourhoods to national and international. We are also all members of other communities of interest and identity. Difference and diversity need to be recognised as positive features.
- The principle of subsidiarity must be applied so that decisions are taken at the most appropriate, and generally most local, level.
- Stronger links and better communications are needed between national policy (drawing on EU and wider policies and regulations), regional strategies and local action.
- Levels of competence need to be established so that decisions can be taken at the appropriate levels.

5 Design and public amenity

Design and public amenity are vital to the extent to which people value, and therefore feel any sense of ownership of – and responsibility for – places. Choices of materials, energy conservation measures, the creation of facilities for communal activities and recreation can contribute directly to sustainable development and to building stronger communities.

A new approach is needed to re-integrate design and amenity issues within planning processes, including:

- Development briefs should incorporate design and amenity aspects as well as sustainability criteria, and be drafted with full public consultation.
- Urban and rural design, local distinctiveness and communal facilities should be incorporated into sustainable development visions and strategies.
- Area development frameworks ('master planning') should follow planning methods and be incorporated into wider planning processes, to ensure that priority is given to the public domain.
- Planners should have sufficient training to be able to assess the quality of design proposals, and impacts on amenity. They should be able to debate these with interested parties and clearly communicate conclusions to wide audiences.

6 Development impacts and betterment

Increased land values as a result of giving permission to develop, 'planning gain' processes, and authorities granting permission for development of their own property, have contributed to public distrust of the planning system. The public recognises that huge sums of money are involved, and perceives processes as secretive and open to abuse.

Although in reality we believe there is a very small amount of bad practice, the perception of the problems exists. New measures to re-establish public trust are needed, including:

- Much better and more open management of the continuing (and essential) democratic control of the right to develop.
- Compensation (for impacts of development) and betterment (increase in land values as a result of granting permission) need to be separated and dealt with as follows:

Impacts of development

- Decisions on development need to be based on whether a development is acceptable or not according to agreed sustainability criteria, not on potential compensation.
- Where developments with negative impacts are approved, mitigation and/or replacement of lost assets need to be openly agreed. Some assets will remain non-negotiable.
- A strong policy-led system is needed to establish and publicise general principles, sustainability criteria and priorities. Mediation mechanisms will be required to resolve conflicts in some cases.

Betterment

- The public purse has a justifiable claim on the unearned rise in property values resulting from granting permission to develop.
- The system for calculating, collecting and disbursing these charges should be:
  - calculated on residual values, after development impacts have been fully addressed

- open and transparent
- flexible enough to ensure continued release of land for development
- disbursed according to principles and priorities established in processes for creating sustainability strategies for the area.

7 Learning through experience

Planning for sustainable development will require new learning for all those involved:

- Reviewing performance and progress. Much more powerful monitoring, review and evaluation processes are needed to test progress towards objectives, reveal good practice, identify problems and enable corrective action to be taken or enforced.

New criteria will be needed for assessing performance, as will indicators of progress towards objectives. Indicators need to go beyond assessing administrative practices and focus instead on the effectiveness of processes, and on outputs and outcomes.

- **Good practice in planning.** A greater emphasis on good practice should celebrate achievement; should support and build on innovation and pilot schemes and integrate these into mainstream practice; and should invest in learning and capacity building at all levels.
- **New attitudes and skills.** In addition to planners' existing expertise in technical land use issues and co-ordination and integration, they will need to develop new attitudes and skills including:
  - Commitment to working collaboratively with others to debate and decide on design, environmental, social and economic factors of development
  - Greater respect for the vital contribution of the public and other stakeholders to planning processes
  - Commitment to socially inclusive processes
  - Communication, enabling and facilitation skills
  - The ability to balance their own technical specialisms in land use management with new skills in co-ordinating wider planning processes
  - Commitment to continual learning as knowledge about participatory practices and sustainable development grows
  - Skills in project management and brokerage, process management, co-ordination of different professionals, institutions and knowledge.
- **Resources.** All these new learning processes will need initial investment and continuing resources to ensure time is available for everyone to adapt to new approaches and working methods.

Ways forward

Some immediate first steps are needed to enable these principles to be put into action.

1 A duty to promote sustainable development

A new statutory duty to promote sustainable development is needed for all authorities and agencies responsible for planning, implementing or investing in public services, infrastructure and development. This duty would become the driving force for a new and more integrated approach to community planning at all levels.

The duty to promote sustainable development should carry an obligation to produce a vision and a strategy for the area, in collaboration with all stakeholders, which set out how the duty is to be discharged.

2 Visions and strategies for sustainable development

Sustainable development aims to meet human needs and improve quality of life through development undertaken within environmental, social and economic constraints. The role of planning is in creating and managing the collaborative and deliberative processes required to identify particular community needs and opportunities in specific areas, and provide the mechanisms for translating the results of these processes into strategies for action.

Visions, strategies and plans will therefore be required at various levels to capture and communicate these decisions and ways forward, covering design, social, economic and environmental factors. This will require appropriate resources and skills to enable:

- The creation of community visions and agreement on strategies for sustainable development through collaborative and inclusive processes, particularly at the level of local authorities and communities but also at regional, national and international levels. These visions and strategies for implementation will be important not only for identifying particular community needs and priorities, but also for communicating these conclusions more widely.
- The development of powerful new monitoring and evaluation systems which review and assess progress towards objectives.
- Between visions and reviews, flexible and creative planning mechanisms will be needed which can respond to major proposals of development or unforeseen needs. Mechanisms will need to enable positive debate and consensus building within the principles of participation and democratic accountability already outlined.

Needs and opportunities will vary in different places, at different times and in different political contexts. At present, priorities might include initiatives to achieve social inclusion and mixed communities, more affordable housing, better traffic and transport management, more protection and conservation of environmentally vulnerable areas, resource management and sustainable economic development. Particular emphasis may be given to investment in social and cultural institutions and activities, including voluntary and community organisations, which can help strengthen communities and widen inclusion in planning processes and the implementation of sustainable development.

3 Community planning at all levels

A new structure is needed which enables political choices to be made at the appropriate levels and more closely linked to plans for implementation. The structure must be based on principles of democracy and subsidiarity and a recognition of the global impacts of decisions made at the most local level (and vice versa), rather than continuing to assume that 'one size fits all'.

It is therefore proposed that a new structure of statutory strategies and action plans is established as outlined below. The change of terminology is central to the new structure, emphasising the shift from 'plans' to active, flexible and creative processes, programmes and strategies for action.

A UK spatial sustainable development strategy.
A concise but over-arching strategy prepared by the UK government is needed to provide greater coherence between various national sectoral policies (eg transport, industry, health, housing), detailed regional and sub-regional strategies and local programmes. It would also give a lead on major policy choices on issues such as infrastructure. This strategy would only cover broad aspects, such as character and patterns of development, and identify where government wishes to see investment throughout the country.

Public scrutiny should be through improved Parliamentary mechanisms, such as an examination in public by a select committee, and the strategy would need to be kept under permanent review.

Regional strategies for sustainable development.
Regional strategies should be drawn up by local and other authorities at regional level. In England, this should probably be done through regional chambers (pending the creation of regional assemblies), with substantial input from government regional offices and other stakeholders. The aim would be to make best overall use of national resources and develop the individual territories that comprise the nation state. Where appropriate, sub-regional and cross-regional strategies may also be prepared, building on existing informal collaborative arrangements.

The strategies should be tested in public examination and approved by the appropriate secretary of state or minister. Appropriate scrutiny, accountability and involvement will be essential, and steps will be needed to remedy the current lack of a democratic framework at regional level.

Local programmes for sustainable development.
Mechanisms are needed to create collaborative community visions and translate them into practical policies and programmes which can be fully implemented. These new mechanisms would replace existing unitary development plans but could be based on Part 2 of the existing English unitary development plan (UDP) structure, with greatly extended public and other stakeholder involvement.

These local programmes would be devised at district or borough level and led by local authorities, but would be set within wider planning and environmental regulatory frameworks established at local, regional, national and international levels. Links should also be made wherever possible to other relevant initiatives including Local Agenda 21 and regeneration programmes.

Local programmes for sustainable development would cover all investment, services and development including health, public transport, housing and education. Full democratic accountability, and open and transparent processes, will be essential.

Neighbourhood action plans.
Some areas with particular needs or opportunities may benefit from very local planning processes. These neighbourhood-level action plans (NAPs) should involve local authorities but should focus on developing greater public involvement in decision-making and responsibility. Where prepared, these plans should be formally linked to wider statutory processes such as being adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

Development control.
Permission will still be required for most new development, and decisions should be taken (and seen to be taken) at the appropriate level (ie national, regional or local). Development control should be seen as reinforcing the principles and priorities established through the strategies and programmes for sustainable development.

At local level, processes need to be formally introduced based on existing best practice which will allow decisions to be made quickly and easily. Decision-making processes need to be open, transparent, participatory and democratically accountable, with all development fitting within sustainability criteria.

4 Partnership trusts

In general, implementation will be carried out, within agreed strategies, by a wide range of public, private, voluntary and other agencies, companies and individuals, together or separately. These interests will often have been involved in establishing visions, agreeing strategies, priorities and programmes.

In some areas with particular problems or opportunities, such as for regeneration or conservation, special efforts and new initiatives may be required to push forward sustainable development to meet community needs. Here, there may be potential for a new type of 'partnership trust'. These trusts could use a similar structure to existing regeneration companies, and should learn from the experience of existing development and community development trusts, and from development corporations. They will require extensive public scrutiny and democratic accountability.

The trusts would be independent and would be managed by a board of trustees which is likely to include representatives of local (and possibly regional) authorities, private and voluntary sectors, with formal mechanisms for public scrutiny and democratic accountability. Funding could be raised from a variety of sources.

5 Developer obligations

New mechanisms are needed to compensate for any impacts of development. These arrangements could be termed 'developer obligations' and would apply to the things which a development must supply to deal with any impact on the community and the environment where it takes place, and its wider impacts.

A system of developer obligations would require:

- National policies to ensure the inclusion of developer obligations within the relevant sustainable development strategy (national, regional or local).

- Legal measures to enable and enforce the use of developer obligations.
- A flexible method of calculating the obligations which *reward* developments with few, or no, undesirable impacts, and *penalise* those with many (eg techniques for assessing environmental capital).
- Processes of calculating, imposing and enforcing developer obligations to be open, transparent, explicit, democratically accountable and set within agreed strategies and programmes for sustainable development, to ensure that the system operates with full public trust and credibility.

6 Increases in land value

A more transparent and formalised process is required to capture, for the public purse, the increase in the value of property as a result of granting planning permission. The Panel considered various options for the collection and disbursement of these funds. Further work is needed on this complex area but, in principle, a solution is needed which balances adequate value being received by the owner to ensure the continued release of land, and some proportion being allocated to the community at the appropriate level.

7 Mutual learning for participation

Better processes of mutual education between planners, the public and other stakeholders are needed to strengthen and build effective participation through practical experience. Ways forward include:

- Learning resource centres (new or existing) established to offer support and educational opportunities associated with participatory processes, including collecting and sharing best practice in partnership development, regeneration, neighbourhood management, participatory processes and techniques.
- Education for citizenship in schools, building on the recommendations of the Crick Report, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (QCA, London 1998), covering curriculum development in all subjects and practical experience of participatory projects for sustainable development. Changes to conventional training for teachers and other professionals may be needed.
- New arenas for involvement to provide new opportunities for participation in debates, decision-making and action for sustainable development. Short- and long-term mechanisms for stakeholder participation will be needed which allow for experience and confidence to develop over time.

In conclusion

The importance of sustainable development in improving quality of life and preserving vital natural resources for citizens today and in future is now widely recognised, but the right practical frameworks and processes to apply the broad principles are still lacking. Planning can and should be at the heart of these frameworks and can design and manage the collaborative processes required.

As an Inquiry Panel, we have grappled with the ways in which these complex and deeply challenging concepts could be put into practice and concluded that planning for sustainable development will require nothing less than a complete change of culture for planning and planners.

This stage of the Inquiry is now complete, but this is just the beginning of a wider process.

The Inquiry's focus on basic principles means that a great deal of development work is still needed to test the Panel's conclusions and turn them into detailed workable proposals for a revitalised system of planning for the 21st century.

The TCPA will now take this process forward by launching a debate among all those involved or affected by planning. The Panel would therefore like to invite all those who have contributed to the Inquiry already, and others, to comment on this document and contribute to the next stage of the debate.

This report is offered as a contribution to that debate and the programme of implementation which must now follow. The aim is simple but fundamental: to enable planning to contribute more effectively to ensuring that the world we bequeath to future generations will be changed for the better, for the benefit of society as a whole.

Annex 1 The Inquiry process

Aim and approach

This Inquiry into the future of planning was established to recover the capacity to think strategically about planning in the UK and to establish a new consensus on first principles. It was formally launched, as an independent initiative, in June 1998 with a view to celebrations for the Town and Country Planning Association's centenary.

The aim of the Inquiry was agreed at the outset of the process. It was:

> to develop a new strategic vision for planning: establishing the principles, purpose, function and scope of planning in a changed world, and recommending how the system should be re-structured to reflect and fulfil these principles, purposes and functions.

The Inquiry was not designed to undertake a detailed review of the planning system. The intention was, rather, to concentrate on re-defining the key issues on which planning should focus on in future, what sort of planning system that implied and, therefore, how the existing system needed to change. It was agreed that any proposals for change would necessarily be broad brush rather than detailed.

The Inquiry Panel aimed to establish a process which would ensure that they could draw on the widest possible range of evidence, oral and written. This required an extensive programme of publicity, meetings and seminars over one year. There were meetings in London, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds and Cheltenham, held in public and in private, at which evidence was taken in person from a series of invited witnesses as well as comments and questions from audiences. Written evidence was also invited and received from a wide range of organisations and individuals.

The very broad agenda for the Inquiry, allied to a tight time-scale, required that strict limits had to be set for evidence given in person to the Panel. The Panel wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed, in person and in writing, and to apologise to all those who wished to contribute more but were unable to do so because of the timetable. The contributions the Inquiry has received have been extremely valuable and have added greatly to the quality of the process as well as to the Panel's conclusions.

Publicity, access and consultation

The Panel aimed for the widest possible involvement in the Inquiry process. Following the public launch of the Inquiry in June 1998, invitations to participate were circulated to a very wide range of press, institutional and individual contacts, both within planning but also in many other professional disciplines and interest groups.

Contributors were invited to make submissions in a number of ways:

- Attendance at the two Panel meetings which were held in public, in Leeds and in Bristol.
- Two special seminars in Cheltenham and Glasgow.
- Submissions in writing. A full list of those who submitted written evidence is given below.
- Through the Inquiry website, which was launched in August 1998.

Details of the Panel's programme, and the individuals and organisations involved, are given below.

Formal Panel meetings

The programme of meetings of the Inquiry Panel was the main focus for the Inquiry's activities during the year. The role of the Panel was to receive and consider evidence presented in a number of forms, and to develop conclusions and recommendations. This report has been drafted and debated by the whole Panel and, although all Panel members do not necessarily endorse all aspects, they are pleased to offer the report as a stimulus for further debate.

The Panel members themselves (see the front of this report) were drawn from a variety of backgrounds and different parts of the country, with different experiences of planning including as academics, civil servants, practitioners in local authorities, developers and politicians. They all participated as individuals, on the basis of their personal knowledge and experience, and not as representatives of any organisation.

The Panel met regularly during the year to take evidence from a wide range of eminent and expert witnesses including:

- Tom Bloxham MBE, Chairman of Urban Splash
- Dermot Cox, Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (HACAN)
- Professor Tony Crook, University of Sheffield
- Robin Grove-White, Director of the Centre for Social and Economic Change at the University of Lancaster and Chair of the Board of Greenpeace UK
- Professor Patsy Healey OBE, University of Newcastle
- Charles Landry, Comedia
- Derek Osborn, Chair of UNED-UK (United Nations UK Committee on Environment and Development), and Chair of the European Environment Agency
- Sara Parkin, Forum for the Future
- Neil Sinden, head of planning at the Council for the Protection of Rural England
- Professor John Stewart, University of Birmingham
- Robert Upton, Secretary General of the Royal Town Planning Institute
- John Walker, Chief Executive of the Commission for the New Towns
- John Zetter, Head of International Planning at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Notes of the evidence presented at Panel meetings are available on the Inquiry website: www.tcpa.org.uk.

A special sub-group meeting was also held with the Local Government Association (Nicky Gavron, Mike Ashley and Sam Richards).

The Panel is enormously grateful to all these contributors.

The Panel is particularly indebted to Diane Warburton, who drafted the Panel's report and acted as Secretary to the Inquiry.

Panel meetings in public

Two meetings of the Panel were held before audiences in Leeds and Bristol.

Invitations to attend were extended to a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout the region around these locations. Three expert witnesses presented evidence at each meeting and the audience was invited to participate in the debate following these presentations.

The first Panel meeting to be held in public took place in November 1998 in Leeds, generously hosted by Addleshaw Booth & Co, one of the Inquiry's sponsors. All three sponsors of the Inquiry (Addleshaws, the Commission for the New Towns and Sainsbury's) joined the audience for this meeting. The second Panel meeting in public took place in at the offices of Ove Arup in central Bristol. In both locations the audience

Annex 1

included individuals from planning and other local authority departments, civic societies and other voluntary organisations, companies, professional bodies and universities, independent professional planners, architects and others.

Seminars

In addition to the main programme of Panel meetings, two special seminars were held were held.

The first was held in Glasgow in November 1998, to consider the lessons for the future of planning in the UK from the specific experience of planning in Scotland. This meeting was organised in association with TCPA Scotland and hosted by the University of Strathclyde Department of Environmental Planning, and the Panel is particularly grateful to Paul Filipek, Secretary of TCPA Scotland and Professor Keith Hayton, Strathclyde University for their help in organising this event.

The seminar was chaired by Baroness Hamwee, as Chair of the main Inquiry Panel, and attended by other Panel members with special knowledge of planning in Scotland: Dr Derek Lyddon, former Chief Planner of Scotland, and Peter Roberts, Professor of Planning at Dundee University. The debate was introduced by a series of presentations by Professor Urlan Wannop; David Jarman, Head of Strategic Planning and Transportation at West Lothian Council; Professor Keith Hayton, Strathclyde University; and Neil Collar, Head of Planning and Environmental Law at Brodies WS.

The second was held in Cheltenham in March 1999 to consider the future of planning for the countryside. The meeting was organised in association with the Countryside and Community Research Unit, Cheltenham and Gloucester College and the Panel is very grateful to Professor Nigel Curry for his help in planning the event.

This meeting was chaired by Richard Wakeford, Chief Executive of the Countryside Agency and member of the Inquiry Panel. Here, the debate was introduced by presentations from Phil Allies, Forum for the Future; Professor Stephen Owen, Faculty of Environment and Leisure, Cheltenham and Gloucester College; Professor Nigel Curry, Countryside and Community Research Unit, Cheltenham and Gloucester College; and Jeff Bishop, BDOR.

A detailed report of the discussions and conclusions from each of these seminars was made to the full Inquiry Panel, and contributed to its overall deliberations.

Written submissions

The Inquiry Panel is very grateful for the written contributions submitted by a wide range of organisations and individuals. Evidence was received from:

- Tricia Allen, Friends of the Earth
- Maurice Ash
- George Barker, English Nature
- Jim Birse, British Biogen
- Jeff Bishop, BDOR
- Bob Chalk, Head of Planning, Waveney District Council
- Adrian Colwell, COSLA
- Professor John Delafons CB, University of Reading
- Chris Dent
- Jonathan Dudding, Institute for Cultural Affairs
- Simon Fairlie, Chapter 7 (the Planning Office of The Land is Ours)
- Dr Nicholas Falk, URBED
- Andrew W. Gilg, Reader in Countryside Planning, University of Exeter
- Professor David Hall MBE
- Nick Hall
- Annabel Hands, Rotherhithe St Mary's Associations
- Hugh Harris, The Other News from England
- Richard Harwood, Planning and Environmental Law Reform Working Group, Society for Advanced Legal Studies
- David Henshaw, A to B magazine
- Jerry Hicks MBE, Bristol Civic Society
- Edward Hill, Greenwich Sustainable Millennium Network
- Mayer Hillman, Senior Fellow Emeritus, Policy Studies Institute
- John Holliday
- Michael Kelly, Deputy Director of Planning, North Devon District Council
- Dr Stephen King, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Paul Latham, The Regeneration Practice
- Mrs S C Lawrence, Friends of Canbury Gardens
- Michael Maude, Chair, Wiltshire Rural Housing Association
- George Nicholson, Communities and Homes in Central London (CHiCL)
- Ann Petherick, Living Over The Shop
- David Rudlin, URBED
- Richard Phelps CBE
- Sophie and Roger Scruton, Town and Country Forum
- Jonathan Sear, Co-ordinator, North Lancs Friends of the Earth
- Dr Jeffrey J Segall and Elizabeth Segall
- Self build consortium: Anna McGettigan, Community Self Build Agency; Robert Chalmers, Community Self Build Scotland; Mike Daligan, Walter Segal Self Build Trust; Kenneth Claxton, Young Builders Trust
- Mrs Gill Shell, Director, Wiltshire Rural Housing Association
- Merron Simpson, Policy Officer, Chartered Institute of Housing
- Lesley Smith, Devon Association of Parish Councils
- Andy Spracklen, Planning Department, Winchester City Council
- Steve Staines and Susan Alexander, Friends, Families and Travellers
- Dave Sutton
- Marianne Talbot, National Forum for Values in Education and the Community
- Judith Thompson, Wellingborough Civic Society
- Colin Ward
- Nick Wates, writer and consultant

All the evidence submitted is held at the TCPA offices, where it is available for inspection by appointment.

Annex 2 Original questions for the Inquiry

In order to structure the programme for the Inquiry, and provide guidance for those presenting evidence, the Panel identified a series of questions structured around the following themes:

- The philosophy, purpose and function of planning
- The structures and processes of planning
- Vision and regulation
- The market and economics
- The spatial dimensions of planning (strategic and regional planning).

Details of the original questions within these themes are given below.

The philosophy, purpose and function of planning

- Should the primary purpose of planning be to secure sustainable and equitable development?
- Should the function of planning be to enable society to establish and achieve a 'shared vision for the future', rather than 'predict and provide'? How does this relate to other current initiatives to create local visions such as Local Agenda 21 and community visioning? Should planning define and express the environmental, social and economic limits within which the various groups in society live?
- To what extent should the scope of planning continue to be focused on land use? How much consideration should be given to other social, economic, environmental, aesthetic and expenditure factors and processes?
- What should the role of planning be in rural and urban regeneration, transport, energy, employment, climate change, health, community development, security, biodiversity, etc: controlling, guiding and enabling, or delivering?
- f the vision includes better design, aesthetics, the arts and local distinctiveness, how should planning help achieve these?
- What are the limits to the scope and autonomy of planning?

The structures and processes of planning

- How do we ensure that planning is openly and publicly accountable and accessible to all members of society: a planning system which is inclusive and equitable? Should planning apply proactive processes of participation?
- How should planning contribute to representative or participatory democracy? To what extent can planning for sustainability help to energise local democracy?
- Is the research and statistical basis for planning adequate, appropriate or necessary?
- What is the future role of professional planners: facilitators, leaders, public servants, advocates, technical specialists?

Vision and regulation

- Should planning facilitate change creatively? If so, how: through regulation and enforcement and/or other approaches? How can bureaucracy be minimised when moving from vision to rigorous practical policies and strategies?
- To what extent should planning seek to guide the use of all land for the benefit of the community, and should the detail of regulation vary according to circumstance?
- How far should regulation be minimal and positive but balanced by a system of enforcement?

The market and economics

- How can planning be implemented in a market economy?
- How can planning controls relate to other regulatory mechanisms such as taxation and other fiscal control measures?
- Should planning attempt to integrate and co-ordinate investment and action, both public and private, and should this be done to reflect the interests of the various stakeholders, while striking the proper balance between certainty and flexibility, efficiency and justice?
- To what extent can or should the planning system seek to exercise control over land and property, including the control and use of land for community benefit in a market economy?
- Should the planning system help the community harness some speculative increases in value, and assist property owners in some negative situations?
- What is the role of planning in relation to community and public ownership of land?
- Should planning promote planning gain, impact fees or similar mechanisms, for community benefit?
- What are the implications for planning of different funding structures of local government generally and planning authorities specifically?
- How should planning relate to alternative concepts of value identified in environmental economics and 'new economics'?
- What is the role of planning in the commercial development of housing, industrial and other developments? To what extent can planning affect the development pressures created by institutional investment and international finance?

The spatial dimensions of planning (strategic and regional planning)

- Should the spatial basis of planning be integrated and interactive, and should different styles and systems of planning be developed and applied to different geographical levels including European and national, regions and city, local communities and neighbourhoods?
- How does planning ensure that strategic vision is not lost in detailed local policies, and that community visions are incorporated in strategic planning?
- What will be the impacts on planning of devolution and associated new democratic mechanisms?

Annex 3 References for statistics

- Since 1981, there has been a net loss of 500,000 jobs in the 20 biggest cities, compared to a net gain of 1.7 million jobs elsewhere in the UK. The core districts of major conurbations, especially Clydeside, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, have been worst affected. In outer Manchester, jobs expanded by 4%.
  The jobs gap in Britain's cities: Employment loss and labour market consequences, by Ivan Turok and Nicola Edge. The Policy Press, Bristol 1999.

- Since 1961, inner London and the six other metropolitan counties have lost 1.5 million people, a fall in population of over 20%. People have moved from the centre of cities to the edge, usually still within the metropolitan county.
  Tomorrow. A peaceful path to urban reform, by David Rudlin, URBED. Friends of the Earth, 1998.

- The number of households in two specific neighbourhoods each in Manchester and Newcastle grew by 3% and 6% respectively, in spite of overall population losses.
  The Slow Death of Great Cities. Urban abandonment or urban renaissance, by Anne Power and Katherine Mumford. JRF, York 1999.

- Average incomes grew by about 40% between 1979 and 1994-5. For the richest tenth, growth was about 60-68%. For the poorest tenth it was a fall of 8% (after housing costs were taken into account). Overall income inequality was greater in the 1990s than at any time since the 1940s.
  Income and wealth: the latest evidence, by John Hills. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), York 1998.

- The proportion of children growing up in households with below half the average income grew from 10% in 1979 to 32% in 1994-5.
  Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Social Exclusion Unit, 1998.

- In 1988, 94% of respondents (in a JRF-funded survey) classed their jobs as permanent; by 1995 this had declined to 85%.
  Search, Winter 1997. JRF, York.

- For most of the 1970s and early 1980s, around 3-4% of low paid individuals lived in household poverty; by the early 1990s, the proportion reached 13%.
  Search, Winter 1997. JRF, York.

- 1.6 million homes are unfit for human habitation: one in 14 homes. In Wales, it is one in eight homes. Almost one in five English homes need urgent repairs costing £1,000 or more. In Scotland, repairs of £3,000 or more are needed in a tenth of homes. Almost 5% of homes built in the past 30 years are unfit or ir disrepair.
  Search, Spring 1997. JRF, York.

- In a five year period in the 1990s, some 350,000 homes were repossessed, affecting one million people. Almost 60% of these were picked up by social housing.
  Search, Spring 1997. JRF, York.

- The UK produces, on average, 10 tonnes or carbon dioxide per person per year.
  A Better Quality of Life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK. DETR, 1999

- Over 4.3 million households in England are 'fuel poor' spending 10% or more of their income on keeping warm. Nearly 800,000 of these people spend 20% or more.
  A Better Quality of Life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK. DETR, 1999

- More than 95% of the energy used by humankind is obtained by burning fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal), which produces carbon dioxide...carbon dioxide is responsible for about two-thirds of the enhanced greenhouse effect to date...If no constraints are introduced, emissions of carbon dioxide could rise from the current 7 billion tonnes to 20 billion tonnes by the year 2100, which could mean the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere would approximately double from the current level. This is likely to raise the global mean temperature by between 1.5^{0}C and 3.5^{0}C: between the middle of an ice age and warm periods between ice ages the temperature only changes about 5-6^{0}C, so these predictions are dramatic and are likely to create rises in sea levels, changes in rainfall and temperature extremes resulting in loss of land, flooding, and drought elsewhere, affecting water supplies, health, agriculture and food production.
  Town and Country Planning, October 1998, p290 - 291, 293.

- Average turnout at local elections in Britain was around 40% and sometimes much less, compared to 80% in Denmark, 72% in Germany and 68% in France, none of which have compulsory voting.
  Modern Local Government. In Touch with the People. DETR, July 1998

- In England in 1991, 90% lived in urban areas. Urban areas provide 91% of the total economic output and 89% of the jobs. Within cities, there are major disparities. Unemployment in inner city areas was 9.5%, compared to an average of 3.9% in other areas.
  Towards an Urban Renaissance. Final Report of the Urban Task Force. DETR, 1999.

- Households, commerce and industry in the UK produce about 145 million tonnes of waste per year. British towns and cities recycled 5-7% of their household waste, compared to 30-50% across Europe and the USA.
  Towards an Urban Renaissance. Final Report of the Urban Task Force. DETR, 1999.

- The 44 areas with the highest concentrations of deprivation in England have
  - nearly two thirds more unemployment
  - more than twice as many nursery/primary and more than five times as many secondary schools on special measures
  - one and a half times the levels of vacant housing
  - two to three times the levels of poor housing, vandalism and dereliction

  Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Social Exclusion Unit, 1998.

- The poorest areas are not just neighbourhoods of social housing. Outside London, poor areas are likely to include more privately rented and owner occupied homes.
  Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Social Exclusion Unit, 1998.

- Almost of quarter of local authorities are struggling with areas of surplus housing, and with actual and potential abandonment, including in Coventry, Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle. In one Salford area, owner occupiers have abandoned properties that are virtually worthless. In London and the South East of England, housing demand remains high.
  Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Social Exclusion Unit, 1998.

- Over the past 25 years, fuel use for road transport in England has risen by nearly 90%. There has been a 63% increase in motor vehicle traffic between 1980 and 1996. Almost all of this was car traffic, which made up 83% of all road traffic in 1996.
  Towards an Urban Renaissance. Final Report of the Urban Task Force. DETR, 1999.

- In England, 75% of rural parishes have a limited bus service.
  A Better Quality of Life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK. DETR, 1999.

Front cover photos:
Extreme left, Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation
Centre, Creative Photography / Courtesy of English Partnerships
Extreme right, Brindley Place

Designed by Graphic Detail

Printed by Andus Print Ltd

The Report of the TCPA Inquiry into the future of planning

your place and mine

Reinventing Planning

This Inquiry was established to develop a new strategic vision for planning. The Panel aimed to establish the principles, purpose, function and scope of planning in a changed world, and recommend how the system should be restructured to reflect and fulfil these principles, purposes and functions.

This report marks the completion of this Inquiry, but it is just the beginning of a wider debate about the future of planning which has already begun in various parts of the planning profession and more widely.

This report is offered by the Inquiry Panel as a contribution to that debate and the programme of implementation which must follow. The aim is simple but fundamental: to enable planning to contribute more effectively to ensuring that the world we bequeath to future generations will be changed for the better, for the benefit of society as a whole.

TCPA 1899-1999

Town and Country
Planning Association
17 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AS

Tel: 0171 930 8903

Fax: 0171 930 3280

E Mail: tcpa@tcpa.org.uk

Website: www.tcpa.org.uk

Price £7.50

ISBN 0 902797 33 6

October 1999

Sainsbury's