REGIONAL PLANNING

JOHN GLASSON AND TIM MARSHALL

Regional Planning

Regional Planning provides a comprehensive introduction to the concepts and theory of regional planning in the UK. Drawing on examples from throughout the UK, it provides students and practitioners with a descriptive and analytical foundation for understanding this rapidly changing area of planning.

The book includes four main sections covering:

- the context and history of regional planning;
- theoretical approaches;
- evolving practice;
- future prospects.

New questions and methods of theorising are explored, and new connections made with contemporary debates in geography, political science and planning theory. The elements of critical analysis allow both practitioners and more advanced students to reflect upon their activities in a contemporary context.

Regional Planning is the essential, up-to-date text for students interested in all aspects of this increasingly influential subject.

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Preface and acknowledgements

Regional planning can be found as a significant element in the planning systems of many countries worldwide, although the definitions and nature of what constitutes regional planning can vary considerably. Occupying an intermediate position in the planning hierarchy, regional planning can also sometimes find itself in an uncomfortable position – squeezed between often quite powerful national and local elements of those systems. As such, regional planning fortunes can wax and wane – but what has been remarkable over time has been the enduring nature of such activity because there are important issues which require this level of intervention. Indeed it is our contention that, with the trends and emerging issues in contemporary society, there is an even stronger need for regional planning. Economic and social tendencies foster increasing mobility, in daily/week time and in lifespan time. Spatial patterns are influenced by concentrating and dispersing flows; it no longer makes sense to consider urban and rural areas as distinct self-contained territories – they are linked to nearby and distant areas in a variety of different ways, reflecting for example the revolution in telecommunications. We are also confronted with the fundamental challenges of climate change and the drive for a much more sustainable approach to our development. The regional level may have a central role to play in the 'territorial integration' between natural and socio-economic systems, providing an appropriate basis for advancing sustainability.

Our focus in this book is on planning within regions, on what has been variously called regional/local planning, intra-regional planning, regional strategic planning and, most recently, regional spatial planning. However, this cannot be isolated from the wider context of planning between regions, and the wide array of actors involved nationally and internationally – the latter being of some significance in the context of the European Union (EU). We also note some fusion between these two perhaps over-rigid inter- and intra-regional perspectives. We focus on the UK, and indeed on England within the UK, but with some reference to the other countries in the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We also draw, in a limited way in the context of the space we have here, on experience in some other EU Member States, and discuss the emerging wider EU framework for regional planning activity. We believe this is a good time for a text on regional planning. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase

Act was passed in 2004, introducing statutory regional planning, and the new Planning Policy Statement (PPS11) was also published in the same year. In regional practice the new round of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) is well under way, and a range of other regional planning activity is progressing, in, for example, housing, transport, economy and waste.

The book is directed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, practitioners and academics, mainly in the UK, but also in Europe, and in the wider English-speaking world. Its modest goals are twofold. First, it seeks to open up questions and possibilities of theorising what is happening at the regional level, connecting with contemporary debates in, for example, geography and political science, as well as to an extent in planning theory. Second, it seeks to provide an outline of, and critical commentary on, the evolving practice and contexts. While the book is directed particularly towards planning students, it should also be of interest to those on other courses in the built and natural environment, in geography and in other areas of the social and political sciences. We hope it will also be of value to readers in practice, who already understand the system and recent developments, but may be interested to see contemporary outsider reflections on their activity.

Both authors have worked in this area for some time, and indeed have been commentators on the evolving practice over several decades. The book stems from research and practice more than from teaching, although the latter has helped in the structuring of ideas and information in a digestible and interesting form for students. We were involved in two Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) projects between 1999 and 2001, on regional planning in England. An ESRC-funded seminar series in 2000–2001 brought together practitioners and academics in this field and provided a good springboard for further work. An ESRC-funded research project concentrated on the preparation of regional planning guidance in two English regions over the five to six years before 2002. We have also kept in touch with practice in terms of recent advisory roles to regional and sub-regional planning activities in the South East and West Midlands regions of England.

The book is subdivided into four parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1 and 2) provides an introduction to the purpose and nature of regional planning. It also sets regional planning in the UK in its historical context, providing a wider array of interpretations before the narrowing to a regional spatial strategy focus for most of the rest of the text. Part 2 (Chapters 3 and 4) provides an overview, necessarily brief, of the very wide theoretical fields of relevance to regional planning, including theories on the process of regional planning and theories which seek to explain the substantive nature and the dynamics of regions.

The bulk of the text is in Part 3 (Chapters 5 to 12). This first introduces the new English regional planning system, and the evolving comparator systems in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, before providing a critical commentary on the evolving practice. This includes an explanation of the plan-making process as a whole and the search for integration, followed by four chapters which explore key components of regional planning – economy, housing, trans-

port and environment. The component chapters adopt a similar approach, exploring drivers of change; key issues, agencies and policy responses; some relevant techniques and concluding with case studies. Chapter 12 sets this practice in a political context, drawing in particular on a case study of recent regional planning experience in the South East of England region. Part 4 (Chapters 13 and 14) provides a European context, setting UK experience in the context of EU activities in regional policy and the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), and drawing on practice from Member States and their regions in the EU 'core' and 'periphery'. The final chapter seeks to identify conclusions on some of the issues touched on in the preceding chapters, asking some key questions about the future of regional planning activity which we hope will have currency not only in England and the UK.[1]

Acknowledgement is made with sincere thanks to our families, friends and colleagues who have helped us in many ways. Carol Glasson and Nando Sigona have made particularly valuable contributions in the presentation of the material, Stefan Preuss linked with us on his doctoral studies, our colleagues and students in the Department of Planning at Oxford Brookes University provide a stimulating environment, and we have benefited a great deal from the generous time and resources provided by many people in planning practice. We are also grateful for the use of much illustrative material from various sources, and to the editors and staff at Routledge for their guidance and patience.

Every effort has been made to contact and acknowledge copyright owners, but the authors and publisher would be pleased to have any errors or omissions brought to their attention so that corrections may be published at a later printing.

John Glasson and Tim Marshall
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Note

1 The future of regional planning is certainly topical! As we were waiting for the book's proofs, the government announced a proposal to transfer the regional planning strategies in England to the Regional Development Agencies, and abolish the regional assemblies, who have been charged with making them through the 2000s. If this goes ahead, it will change significantly the process of making regional strategies, from the proposed change date 2010. Some of the possible implications of the proposals are covered in notes at the end of Chapters 5 and 14.

Abbreviations

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
AONB	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BCC	Black Country Consortium
BCS	Black Country Study
BMBau	Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs
BMVB	formerly BMBau
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CGP	*Commissariat General du Plan*
CLNT	Central Lancashire New Town
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England (formerly 'Council for the Protection of Rural England')
DATAR	*Delegation a l'Amenagement du Territoire et a l'Action Regionale*
DBRW	Development Board for Rural Wales
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DfT	Department for Transport
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EAP	Environment Action Programme
EC	European Community
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIP	Examination in Public
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESF	European Social Fund
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network

ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLA	Greater London Authority
GO or GOR	Government Office for the Regions
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
GOWM	Government Office for the West Midlands
GSE	Greater South East
GVA	gross value added
HBF	Home Builders Federation
HE	Higher Education
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board
IAU	Impacts Assessment Unit
ICT	information communication technology
IDC	Industrial Development Certificate
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRF	Integrated Regional Framework
IRS	Integrated Regional Strategy
IUARIF	*Institut d'Amenagement et d'Urbanisme de la Region Ile de France*
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KIBS	knowledge-intensive business services
KVR	*Kommunalverband Ruhr*
LDF	Local Development Framework
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LQ	Location Quotient
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MEGA	metropolitan European growth area
MMS	Multi Modal Study
MNE	multi-national enterprise
MPA	Minerals Planning Authority
MPGN	Minerals Policy Guidance Note
MPS	Minerals Planning Statement
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MUA	major urban area
NGO	non governmental organisation
NIDA	Northern Ireland Development Agency
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NPF	National Planning Framework (Scotland)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Regions for Statistics
ODP	Office Development Permit
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OISD	Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development

ONS	Office of National Statistics
OREAM	*Organisme d'Etudes d'Amenagement d'Aires Metropolitaines*
PAT	*Prime d'Amenagement du Territoire*
PGS	Planning Gain Supplement
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance Note
PPP	plans, programmes and policies
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PSR	pressure–state–response
PUR	Polycentric Urban Region
PUSH	Partnership for Urban South Hampshire
RA	Regional Assembly
RAWP	Regional Aggregate Working Party
R&D	research and development
RCEO	Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RDG	Regional Development Grant
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
REP	Regional Employment Premium
RER	Regional Express Rail
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
RHB	Regional Housing Board
RPB	Regional Planning Body
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSA	Regional Selective Assistance
RSDF	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
RSL	registered social landlord
RSP	Regional Skills Partnership
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAP	standard assessment procedure
SCP	Sustainable Communities Plan
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SDC	Sustainable Development Commission
SDD	Scottish Development Department
SE	Scottish Enterprise
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly
SEP	South East Plan
SEPD	Scottish Economic Planning Development

SERPLAN	London and South East Regional Planning Conference
SPA	Special Protection Area
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SSCT	Strategically Significant Cities and Towns
SVR	*Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk*
TAN 1	Technical Advice Note 1
TBL	triple bottom line
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TEN	Trans European Network
TGV	*train à grand vitesse*
TIF	Transport Information Fund
TPP	Transport Policies and Programmes
TTWA	Travel to Work Area
UVF	*Umlandverband Frankfurt*
VRS	*Verband Region Stuttgart*
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WSP	Wales Spatial Plan
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Part 1

Context

1   Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Perhaps surprisingly in this age of neoliberal dominance, the field of regional planning is in good health, or at any rate definitely alive, in many different countries, not least in parts of Europe. Forms of regional planning are functioning in all of Scandinavia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain and France, as well as in the component parts of the UK. These plans and planning processes take many different shapes, some continuing traditions going back to the middle of the twentieth century, others more innovative in relation to emerging trends. Particularly given the rather spectacular comeback of regional planning in the UK since the 1990s, a return to a consideration of regional planning as an activity is overdue.

This chapter has in part a ground clearing role. First we discuss the varying usages of planning, regions and hence regional planning. This is followed by an examination of the purposes of regional planning and what may be behind its contemporary return to favour. Finally some 'border territories' of regional planning are considered, one with regional policy (often conceived in economic terms), and the other with the wider territory of Europe, especially as expressed in the EU.

1.2 What is planning?

In the early twenty-first century the objectives and the nature of planning are contested. The same was true throughout the previous century and we may expect this to be the case into the coming decades. Even what is meant by planning is by no means agreed, either across the globe, or across different political positions, or even within any one country. Our understanding on this meaning is clarified, before the extra complication of 'regional' is addressed.

Planning has always swung between practices restricted to more physical or land use control, or change, and a wider set of activities, or at least ambitions, intended to direct the futures of space or territory. These varied activities have been associated with different conceptualisations or theorising, and these ideas have naturally been intimately connected with the dominant clashing of ideas

in the wider intellectual and social arenas of the world. Equally these variations have been related to different professional traditions. In some countries and some periods very physically oriented professions – architects, engineers, perhaps surveyors – have led the way, at other times geographers or social scientists of differing kinds have had strong influences on both overall objective setting and on technical approaches.

1.2.1 Tendencies within planning

In the early years of the twenty-first century there was as much flux and variation as ever internationally in these respects, but a number of tendencies were detectable, at least if we restrict our view to Europe. Two are important here. The first was a limiting of the ambition of planning by government, given the widespread political ascendancy of business interests in Europe, and the major roles conceded to these interests in most policy fields in most European countries. In the broadest terms this has been described by Neil Brenner (2004) as the move *from spatial Keynesianism to territorial competitiveness*, which occurred in differing degrees and at different speeds in many developed countries in the 1980s and 1990s. For Brenner, this means not the retreat of the state, but the change of its role. For planning, it means more market and business influence.

The second tendency, and one which at first encounter looks potentially at odds with the first, was the possible move towards some common European understanding of 'spatial planning', wider than the conceptions of physical or land use planning, embracing, in principle or in rhetoric, social, economic and environmental objectives. Spatial planning was defined as 'the methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space' (CEC 1997b p. 24). This definition, from the EU compendium of spatial planning systems and policies, is developed further:

> spatial planning embraces measures to coordinate the spatial impacts of other sectoral policies, to achieve a more even distribution of economic development between regions than would otherwise be created by market forces, and to regulate the conversion of land and property uses.
>
> (ibid.)

Spatial planning is therefore taken to include regional policy as well as regional and local land use planning.

These two tendencies are considered in more depth later, in specific relation to regional planning, but here they help in presenting our understanding of planning. This understanding needs to work, for the purposes of this book, mainly in the UK and in the present period: there is no such thing as an abstract 'correct' definition of planning valid for any place or time. However, this primary focus on the UK should at the same time have something to say to those working in somewhat different traditions, particularly given the elements of international commonality mentioned in the tendencies described above.

So – planning is taken to mean here primarily an activity which is indeed *focused on the control, steering or management of land use and physical change*, but which, as much as or more than ever, has to be set within a comprehensive grasp of spatial changes in society, economy and environment. That is to say, the understanding is *limited*: neither full state planning nor social planning, nor high Keynesian goals, but something more limited, as dictated by the current era. And the understanding takes note of the *spatial* element in recent hopes for planning, especially the aspirations for effective integration. It is a planning obliged to be, normally content to be, partially subservient to the market, but it still aspires to order space in a coherent way. A continuing theme in planning is whether, or in what way the tensions in these two aspirations can be contained and managed.

1.2.2 Challenges

This relatively traditional understanding will come as no surprise to British or Irish students and practitioners (for some of its genealogy in the UK, see, for example, Abercrombie 1943, Keeble 1959, Cullingworth 1972, Taylor 1998, Rydin 2003b, to cite some strongly varying but in this respect implicitly similar authors). But it may strike some from other traditions or other academic perspectives as in need of justification. These possible alternative approaches or challenges are only treated briefly here – the field of planning theory, and its insertion within wider currents, is deep and complex (Allmendinger 2002). The first challenge is that from within *urban design*, in which the creation of new places or refashioning of old is led more by design considerations than by the wider analyses indicated above. This is a powerful current in many countries especially in recent years, and is particularly attractive in those contexts where planning is led by architects. But it carries the risk of losing the comprehensive perspective and aspirations which planning, if worth doing at all, requires. Certainly, it struggles if presented as a guide for *regional* planning. Perhaps for that reason it is popular with some architects, who often have an instinctive dislike for strategic or regional planning.

A second challenge has come from a broad camp often called *postmodernism*. This, at the extreme, doubts if planning is either possible or desirable, whether physically, socially or economically (Allmendinger 2000). Positions on this are as much matters of one's view of the world as of rational argument. The world view here is of a future which is to some degree, at any rate, steerable: the attempt to do so can be worthwhile, if a number of barriers can be overcome. Much of this book is about these barriers and ways of dealing with them in current circumstances. The value of postmodernist perspectives may be in alerting us to these barriers and the very challenging issues in overcoming them. But we do not share the wider pessimism which postmodernism often promotes and which is potentially lethal to effective planning (Goonewardena 2003).

A third, more concrete and everyday, perspective comes from the belief that *markets* do and should dictate the location of new development, the creation of

new cities, the management of the biophysical environment. This view may well be bound up with a conservative or liberal ideological position – it certainly has been in many contexts since the 1980s, especially in the USA and the UK. It has been expressed with increasing confidence by academics in the UK since the 1980s (Pennington 2002; Evans 2004), and in some US intellectual circles it is a dominant accepted wisdom. It rests on long-running arguments about liberty, equality and the values of collective and individual action, and draws on the New Right intellectual tradition centred since the 1940s on the works of Friedrich von Hayek.

This latter position may be seen as the truly serious contender and threat to planning in the early twenty-first century, and it lies behind much that is discussed in this book. This is especially the case given the credence that the New Labour government has been giving to these positions since about 2000 in the UK. There is no doubt that both weaker and stronger versions of this position transform the nature of regional planning, changing what may be aspired to, and the techniques of trying to achieve objectives. But such a position makes all planning highly problematic, and perhaps particularly regional planning, given its necessary intersection with broader tendencies which market-led development would see as its prerogative. But, given its present ascendancy, the book will clearly be dealing with the weaker versions represented by the centrality of economic competitiveness considerations.

1.3 Towards regional planning

The twentieth century began with the formation of a school of regional geography, based on the work of Vidal de la Blache and other French geographers (Livingstone 1992). As the decades passed new ingredients were thrown into the conceptual pot, including regional planning itself (Geddes 1915; MacKaye 1928; Mumford 1928; Weaver 1984), regional administration or government (Cole 1921; Fawcett 1919), regional economics (Perroux, Alonso and a large etcetera from particularly the USA and western Europe between the 1950s and 1970s, surveyed in Glasson 1974), and regional politics (Keating 1998, Loughlin 2001). (The absence of regional sociology is striking; urban sociology occupied the non-national niche in that discipline.) Hall (1988) surveyed many of these developments. Each of these conceptual approaches had their own understandings of what a 'region' might be. This could be as large as a continent, or as small as a city and its immediate surroundings, or a relatively small area of countryside. The historical and spatial context is completely determinant of what a region is seen to consist of, and therefore regional planning as a concept is highly elastic. Because the focus here is mainly on recent UK experience, there is no difficulty in identifying what regions are being used, and therefore what regional planning consists of. In exploring other contexts in Europe, it will be immediately evident that the size and nature of the region will be different, as will the scope and ambitions of planning. Christopher Harvie's 1994 classic on European regions in history illuminates the almost infinite variety.

Within social theory more widely, the concepts of region, locale, locality, and so on has been the focus of much work by sociologists and geographers since the 1980s (Giddens 1984; Allen *et al.* 1998, among many others). A common theme in this theorising is a conception of the *relational nature of space* (Graham and Marvin 2001; Healey 2007; Massey 2005). This argues that space should not be seen as a neatly nested hierarchy, with small areas within larger ones up to the region, nation and continent. The contrasting vision is of a more complex cross-cutting articulation of scales or spaces, giving a much greater fuzzyness to borders, boundaries and more traditional bounded spaces. Various metaphors are used – splintering, the geological ideas of warps, folds and layering.

Though widely promulgated as a more realistic conception of contemporary geographies, there have been to date only the beginnings of work on the implications for a more relational planning base, or process. What would a 'non-territorially-based region' look like? The question may be the wrong one, but for anyone engaged in an exercise for a particular territory, it is one that comes to mind. What are the 'non-territorial' aspects that regional planning needs to tackle? This book will largely remain with more conventional under-standings, in part because of the underdeveloped nature, in most respects, of the alternative, and in part because it may be wise to maintain a degree of scepti-cism towards the significance of these claims for spatial planning. The tend-encies towards blurring and splintering may be accepted, but doubtless much is still functioning as it did during the twentieth century – spaces which are indeed nested for many everyday purposes, territories working in a quite recog-nisable materially based manner, however strung out and interfused many power, matter, waste and energy relations undoubtedly are.

Much thinking about regions has been framed since the mid 1990s in terms of the 'new regionalism'. This emerged mainly from the work of economic geo-graphers, who argued that very strong forces of economic change were giving greater prominence to regions (Scott 1998; Storper 1997). With the breaking down of barriers between states associated with globalisation, governments were seen as less able to guide their economies. Some powers were seen as moving up to the international level, with bodies such as the EU, the World Trade Organi-sation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) setting economic norms. But many argued also that local and regional agents were pressed to be more active in asserting their attractiveness to international capital. They were then, in turn, in some states, given more powers or leeway to be effective in this way – Jessop (2002) is a leading explorer of this 'hollowing out of the state'.

This thesis was strongly contested, with some arguing that the hollowing out was much more limited than it appeared. The national states were seen as retaining very considerable steering and spending powers, even though most analysts conceded that both international and local and regional actors were gaining influence (McLeod 2001). The argument is of some importance for dis-cussion of regional planning, especially at the highest level of generality. In more concrete terms, it is always necessary to examine what is happening in each country, how that country's planning and urbanism tradition affects

trajectories of change, what political variations influence the taking up of the competitiveness agenda, and which levels are offered protagonism in that agenda.

In particular, there is considerable variation in whether more local levels are boosted within this process (hence pushing rather a 'new localism'), or whether the larger regions (at whatever scale in each country) are given more prominence. In England in the 2000s, the arguments have gone back and forth precisely over this issue, whether city regions should take the lead, or more funds given to the eight English regions. Under these varying pressures, the 'new regionalists' tended to become less visible in debates, though the arguments about the importance of regions have certainly not gone away.

The elasticity in the meaning of the region described above is not in practice absolutely without limit. It is certainly the norm that in planning the concept refers to sub-national territories, that is to say that it mostly refers to a scale below the nation state, and virtually always to a scale above the municipal or communal government jurisdiction. Because of variation in forms of states, however (unitary versus federal, and hybrid types), and of local governments, this still leaves much scope for differences. The European compendium of spatial planning systems put together in the 1990s and dealing with the 15 members of the EU before 2004 met this challenge and revealed the variety within these countries, as shown in Table 1.1 (CEC 1997b). Where planning practitioners or academics meet internationally, this variation has always led to some degree of confusion as each tradition struggles to come to terms with the different size of the territory being planned. Neither local nor national level planning suffer from this indeterminacy to the same degree, making comparative work perhaps marginally easier in these fields (Booth 1996; Alterman 2001, for two good examples of what can be done for these levels).

The clear implication of this reality is the need for *extreme care in comparative work*, beyond all the normal strictures (see Williams 1996; Ward 2000 on some dimensions of comparison, and the examination of learning and transfer). Nevertheless the conclusions on the potential value of comparative work (Masser and Williams 1986), even in regional planning, still apply, and hence justify the inclusion here of some non-UK material, and the judgement that those from other countries may benefit from a view of the UK experience. Past studies of regional planning which covered several countries (Balchin *et al.* 1999; Wannop 1995) have already shown the value that such work can have.

1.4 Alternative delimitations of regions

Notwithstanding such variation, it will be useful to remind ourselves explicitly what bases of regionalisation have been typically identified. The three most straightforward are biophysical, political and social/economic.

At various times geographers and others have defined regions on *biophysical* or *ecological* grounds with some confidence. Normally they have used more or less obvious physical features, including river catchments, or boundaries such as

Table 1.1 The main strategic planning instruments in the EU (15 members, mid 1990s, Table B6 from CEC (1997b))

Member State	Main strategic/regional instrument	Total number of areas which may be covered
Belgique-België	Plan de Développement Régional/Gewestelijk Ontwikkelingsplan	Brussels region
	Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen[1]	Flemish region
	Plan Régional d'Aménagement du Territoire[2,3]	Walloon region
Danmark	Regionplaner	14 county councils
Deutschland	Landesentwicklungspläne and/or Landesentwicklungsprogramme	13 areas – Länder
	Regionalpläne/Gebietsentwicklungspläne/Raumordnungspläne	32 Regierungsbezirke
Ellas	Chorotaxiko Schedio	13 regions
	Rythmistiko Schedio	Athens and Thessaloniki
España	Planes directores territoriales de coordinación (or its equivalent in Regional Laws)	17 regions (or part)
France	Plan de la région	25 regions (including overseas) and Corsica
	Contrat de plan Etat-région	
	Schéma directeur de la région	Ile de France
	Schéma d'aménagement	Corsica
Ireland-Éire	Regional reports	8 regions
Italia	Piano territoriale di coordinamento and Piano Territoriale Paesistico	20 regions (or part)
		5 regioni autonomi
Luxembourg	Plan d'aménagement global	Parts of the country
	Plan d'aménagement partiel	Parts of the country
Nederland	Streekplan	12 provinces (or part)
	Structuurplan[4]	7 "city regions"[1]
Österreich	Landesraumordnungsprogramm	9 Länder
	Regionale Raumordnungsprogramm	One or more districts
Portugal	Plano Regional de Ordenamento do Território (PROT)	5 whole or part regions, Azores and Madeira
Suomi-Finland	Seutukaava	19 regional councils and Åland
	Seutusuunnitelma	
Sverige	Läns strategy	24 county administrative boards
UK	Regional and strategic guidance	11 regions
	Structure plans and unitary development plans part one	56 counties in England, Scotland and Wales

Notes
1 In preparation, but no legal basis yet.
2 In preparation.
3 The Gewestplan/Plan de Secteur (W) which cover large parts of the region are detailed zoning plans and are not strategic.
4 This is being prepared for city-wide regions but is also used for municipal areas.

rivers, seas, mountains or changes in soils and hence farming practices. From the 1970s such thinking was sometimes expressed under the formula of 'bio-regions' (Sale 1985; Brunckhorst 2000), and presented as the ideal basis for planning territories across the planet in a comprehensive and ecologically sensitive way.

However, all such attempts have come up against difficulties. First, and most fundamentally, it has become increasingly accepted that the biophysical is never in any extensive sense 'natural', separate or freestanding (Haila and Levins 1992; Harvey 1996). However remote a place may seem, it is now and has long been tied into much wider forces. Mike Davis's recovery of the complexity of the making of late nineteenth-century famines across the globe (2001), analysed as eminently combined creations of physical, political and economic forces, is a perfect reminder of this reality. No apparently physically demarcated region is really an island, analytically speaking.

A second problem is at any one time less serious, but still critical. This is that biophysical features are in continuous flux in their real meaning and impact (an aspect again emphasised in Haila and Levins (1992)). The idea is not that rivers or mountains move (though Chinese experience may say they do), but their significance indeed can and does change. So what makes an apparently ideally delimited region in 2000 may be quite off beam in 2010 – even weather or climate changes could bite in such timescales, but evidently so could economic and political change (consider certainly fast changing countries such as China, Russia and much of central and eastern Europe). And given that regional planning is in part a long run activity, this matters.

A third difficulty is one explored at greater length later, as it applies strongly to all factors: this is that it is unusual for all scales of the biophysical to coincide at all tidily. What works for energy or food may not work at all for water or waste. Nature is rarely neat in its boundary making.

It might be thought that, given that planning is an activity typically led by government, *political or governmental* boundaries are the obvious bases of making regions. This is indeed in many circumstances so, but it by no means solves all problems. An analyst may choose the British counties, or the government statistical areas, as the regions, as has been variously the case in England during the last 50 years, but the areas chosen may not catch all the factors of interaction which interest us, such as land use – transport interactions. Furthermore, the areas may have little suitability for effective decision making, either because they are not equipped by government with competences or resources, or because they are politically and culturally weak, with no identification by their populations.

One or both of these factors may mean that there are arguments in favour of constructing new regional shapings, or at least instituting sophisticated joint or cooperative mechanisms to pursue planning. The history of regional planning in the UK and across the world is littered with examples of both approaches. The French struggles with regionalising since the 1980s is a particularly fascinating example, as a previously centralised unitary state moved to adjust competences, finance and boundaries. All sorts of complex agglomeration and

cooperative arrangements were invented, and the concept of the 'pays' made a comeback in the 1990s, straddling communal and departmental boundaries, well below the official large 'regions' given democratic form in the 1980s (see Chapter 13). At the same time the Belgians became perhaps world champions of regional governmental complexity, with two regionalisation structures in the state running in parallel, one mainly for education and culture, the other for most other governmental tasks (including planning, as recounted by Albrechts 1999).

As enclosing the basic purposes of human life, it might be thought that *the society and the economy* would, separately, or in combination, form the obvious basis for regional planning. Together socio-economic processes constitute the raw material for what is to be planned in a space – activities on areas of land, living spaces, transport channels on, under and above the land surface (to evoke the systems approach of the 1960s and 1970s; McLoughlin 1969; Chadwick 1971). Traditionally this was indeed the first and main foundation for regional planning exercises in the twentieth century, with the typical focus being on labour market and travel to work areas.

Generally the social and the economic are seen as so intertwined that they are best treated together. This degree of intertwining is a critical issue, as becomes clear in any examination of current UK planning exercises. These exercises sometimes see the more purely economic (if such a distinction can be maintained) given greater weight: aiming for a certain economic growth rate in the South East of England for example. Elsewhere, or in the hands of other interests, we may see 'liveability', social, factors given more prominence: the need to make housing accessible to more social strata, or the need to maintain or enhance some idea of quality of life. Given different emphases of this kind, the nature of appropriate regionalisation may vary very much. Different emphases may indeed challenge the need for any regional level planning at all, as has been clear in the English debates recently on planning system reform, where some champion the regional level of planning, while others prefer more localist or more centralist formulas.

A common argument hangs around the intensity and density of interaction, brought by the new transport forms of the twentieth century, making much larger functional regions, and therefore counselling for much larger regional planning units. However, such arguments, though often forceful and perhaps increasingly victorious across a range of European states, are not unopposed. The opposite position sees a strong social attachment to quite local areas and the need to democratise planning at all levels, and particularly to maintain real powers at the relatively local or small region level.

It is clear that there have been problems with all these bases for deciding what unit to plan for. Is this because, as perhaps might have been suspected all along, it is necessary to take in all such factors together? No doubt this may be so, but it brings its own dilemmas. *The three bases may be conflicting,* and in any concrete case pull in different directions. Then the only way to decide which to give more weight to will be by referring to the point of the whole exercise – the

basic objectives of regional planning. This then brings the analysis back to the start, a reminder of how much planning, including regional planning, is a contested activity. The weight given to regional level planning, and the choice of regions, depends in part on purposes. What is our understanding of the desirable futures, and so the paths to getting there? This needs to be tackled next, and at greater length in Chapters 3 and 4.

1.5 The purposes of regional planning

It is clear then that regional planning depends in large measure on the political and economic contexts within which it is undertaken. In relation to the dimension of control, the difference between a fully socialised economy (as in some Communist states) or a fully government directed one (as in some wartime conditions), and an economy where government or social direction was minimal, would be critical in enabling or excluding forms of regional planning. The purposes of interest here are those relevant to a political economy of the kind normal to Europe now, and to, in varying degrees, most other developed countries.

The primary purpose is deciding on the general distribution of new activities and developments. This is necessarily indicated on some map base, but the scale of regional planning and other considerations will dictate the level of detail given in showing, for example, new settlements, areas of commercial and economic development, placing of linear or other major infrastructure. The time scale planned for may also vary considerably, although at this scale a minimum of ten years from the expected date of completion of the plan is normal. In recent years this has often been extended by ten or even 20 years. An example of such spatial guidance on a map base is given in Figure 1.1, showing the key diagram of the Flanders Structure Plan, which was finalised in 1997.

This main purpose is complemented by a number of other purposes or considerations which are present in current exercises. These are effectively *conditioning objectives* which together set the main lines of the primary purpose. In the UK at present these are normally phrased in terms of *achieving economic, social and environmental goals*. Alongside furthering economic success, however defined (often at present as 'competitiveness'), the plan will normally also claim to be guided by certain social objectives (such as providing housing for all social strata), and by environmental goals (whether in a generalised mode of achieving 'sustainable development', or in relation to the preservation of valued landscapes, the management of wastes and so on).

Both the nature and ambition of the primary purpose and the balance between the conditioning considerations are in part set by the political and economic context. At times, and in places, where the government is pressed to exercise only a light touch on future planning, leaving much to market forces, the regional plan, if one is made at all, will be of a rather general form. It will set the overall parameters for development (perhaps by making estimates of expected population, and by indicating minimal areas to be protected), but
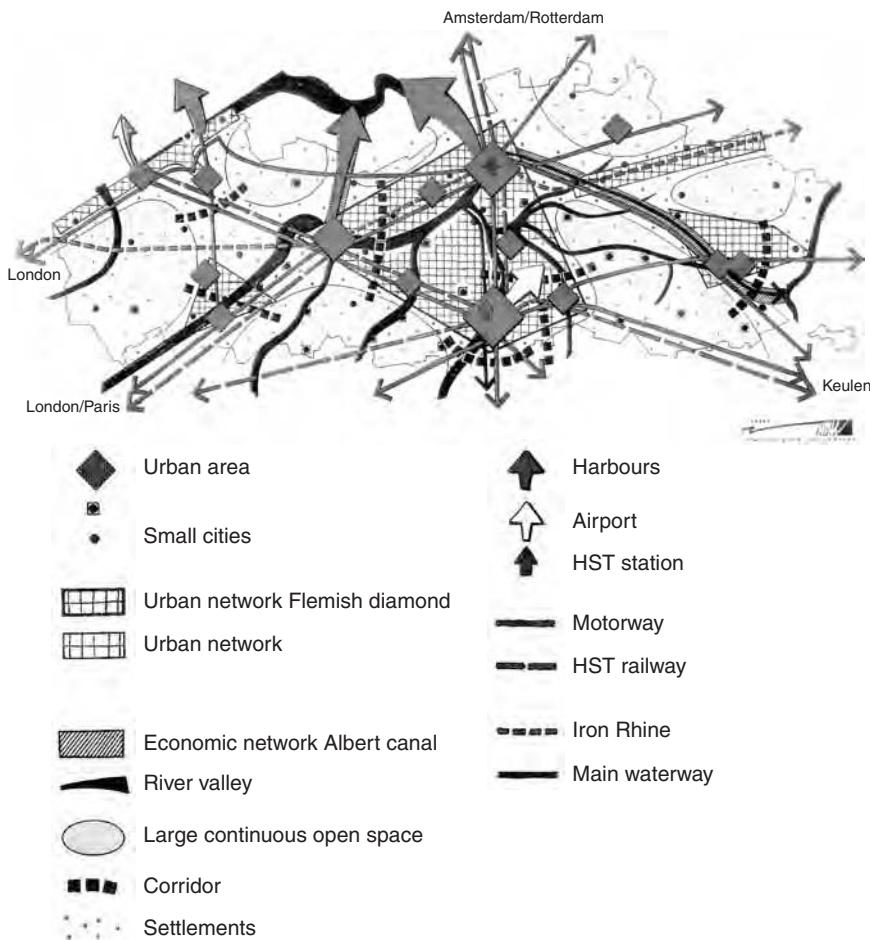
Figure 1.1 The Flanders Structure Plan. (Figure B9 from CEC (2000c).)

leave much to developers to promote over the coming years. The UK current regional planning exercises are seeking to do much more than this, selecting specific areas for growth over the next 20 or 25 years. They are aspiring to balance the objectives of securing competitiveness, some elements of social equity, and responding to environmental challenges such as climate change.

Regional planning purposes may be set in various ways, depending on institutional arrangements made in each country. In any case, they will normally be affected strongly by guidance by central government (this will be less the case in federal or semi-federal states such as Germany or Spain), and more detailed allocations will generally be left to more local planning exercises.

The purposes may also be incarnated in differing manners. The norm is certainly the creation of a document called a plan, which will include map or

map-like diagrammatic representations of the main proposals, along with, generally, a considerable amount of specific policies, with supporting text which justifies the plan's decisions. However, it is not absolutely essential that a regional planning function should be accompanied by any document of this kind. It is quite possible to imagine a more minimalist or continuing approach which had authority to intervene in actions of developers of all kinds, or the ability to advise sectoral or lower level planning authorities on their plans. In countries where regional plans do not exist, this role may be undertaken, more or less consciously and explicitly, by some central government body. To a certain extent, the emphasis in recent academic debates on relational space and blurring geographies might point away from formal regional plan making, and towards these more unstructured approaches. Certainly, one response from a postmodernist perspective or advocates of a strongly market-led planning could also be to press this abandonment of plans, but maintenance of some form of *loose regional planning process*. As this situation is not the case in the UK at present, this possible route will not be emphasised here, but it is important to bear it in mind as an ever present option. In the UK in the 1980s, for example, regional plans scarcely existed except in Scotland, and whatever implicit regional planning was done came from central government, making somewhat veiled judgements through deciding on lower level plans, on planning appeals or on major infrastructure investment.

1.6 Why is regional planning popular now?

This question is now considered directly, though it was implicit in some earlier sections. If planning in the form of its 'outer shell' is the same as through much of the twentieth century, why has there recently been new-found support for regional planning, specifically? The question stimulates speculation not certainty, given the relatively recent nature of this return or reinvigoration, but three answers may be considered. One is that the complex *stretching of spatial relations* in recent decades, with changes in transport patterns (dominance of the car and lorry, power of airport locations and capacities), and the widening reach of economic relations, generate a demand for a planning on wider scales. This does not need to be seen as elbowing aside the importance of local planning, or that of national or even continental frameworks (both of which have likely been boosted by the same push). The 'powers that be' might sense a need to reinforce or revive intermediate scales, possibly both city, regional/metropolitan and larger regional.

A second reason could be the shift in the *pattern of state activity*, with a more constrained budget but one used with a more varied assortment of regulatory powers over the now largely privatised infrastructural and productive landscape. Less state funds but different powers of control might give incentives for a higher scale of intervention, which was previously guided more directly by state or semi state investments. A significant drive in this shift could be, in many countries, the ratcheting up of environmental regulation and related strategis-

ing. In a sense this could be a discovery that deregulation and marketisation had 'gone too far': one of the things that such measures did not solve, and rather tended to worsen, was the efficient organisation of space. By efficiency was meant just as much simple business efficiency as any wider societal efficiency, but both were emerging as issues.

Both of the above reasons come down to changes derived from the changed political economy. A third reason would be rather more indirect, related to *changes in 'governability' and democracy*. In European countries the local and national levels have been subject to significant democratic pressures, through elections, publicity and so on. The same applies to the state level in federal states. Regions are often less in the limelight, and may well be becoming attractive to governments in some places precisely for this reason (England is one case we are thinking of, but we suspect there are others). There is a significant current of thought (Crouch 2004) which sees the democracy common in the twentieth century as threatened – at least in the form which it traditionally took – by the conjugation of local and national decision making normal through much of the period. Those now in state power may see localist sentiments as too limited, to be reined in by essentially national controls (channelled through non-elected regions), which can be more sensitive to real long-term needs. They may see the newcomers of the democratic system since the 1970s, the new social movements and especially the environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as too good at manipulating the local level. How cynically this third possible reason is presented depends on a judgement of the present political moment, particularly whether the present form of neoliberal globalisation is seen as compatible with democracy as it was created since the late eighteenth century. But this reason should be considered alongside the more economic reasons presented above.

It is important to bear in mind the possible 'mixed motives' of those promoting regional planning, so that a critical attitude is maintained towards it. The same applies to planning as a whole: not to be seen as an undiluted good or bad, but depending on the evaluation of its purposes.

1.7 Regional planning and regional policy

Up to now the emphasis has been primarily on the regional dimensions of planning. But historically many advanced capitalist states have pursued also, or in many cases to a much greater degree, regional policies. These have in the past been called the 'national-regional' policy field (Alden and Morgan 1974), or 'inter-regional planning' (Glasson 1974), to distinguish them from respectively 'regional-local' and 'intra-regional planning'. These policies are normally directed by the national government, sometimes in association with federal states, and are designed to maintain 'equal conditions of life' in all parts of the country, as the German practice phrased it from the 1950s to the 1990s.

At the time the above distinctions were formulated, there was a clearer split between economic policies which were applied inter-regionally, and physical

policies which were rather more directed at the local or sub-regional levels. It can be argued that this division is no longer so valid, given that economic policies have, increasingly since the 1980s, been formulated locally, and since 1998 in England have been the preserve largely of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs; for two decades earlier this was the case in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). Furthermore, spatial (and very physical) planning is now frequently referring to cross regional decisions (in transport, energy and so on), not just more local ones.

Nevertheless there remains some truth in the distinction, which splits off bigger economic framing from more detailed decisions. The differentiation from planning is blurred: it is clear that each has strong implications for the other. If government aid is given to businesses to set up in poorer regions, as has been the case in most European countries in one form or another for over 50 years, then this affects physical planning too in different regions. The same applies if preference is given to funding infrastructure of different kinds in weaker regions. Even if another policy direction is chosen, as has been increasingly the case since the early 1990s, the impact on regional planning remains. Brenner (2004) has chronicled the shift during this period away from Keynesian redistributive policies towards supporting already successful 'winning regions', which are expected to win on the international stage. This is occurring to some degree within the UK during this period, and especially since about 2000, and also in France and Germany. This often somewhat hidden regional policy agenda is affecting deeply the regional planning strategies for southern England, now seen as the UK's economic powerhouse and therefore not to be held back in any respect by government policies (as we will see in Chapters 8 and 9).

To an extent regional policies of this kind have been the preserve of different arguments and actors, often dominated by economists. The EU has had a big role here, both in providing funds and in restricting what governments are allowed to do to help regions. Given the mutual implication of the two areas, it will be necessary often to refer to regional policies and sketch in their importance for planning.

1.8 Regional planning in the UK and wider influences

There are some who see recent UK planning, including that at the regional level, much affected by external influences, and others who emphasise much more internal developments (Tewdwr-Jones and Williams 2001; Davies *et al.* 1994). There are three possible channels of influence that may have been operating for the last 20 years or more. The first is the *general context* within which planning is set – the internal market above all, which has served to internationalise business organisation in Europe, the forces of *deregulation and liberalisation associated with the EU*, especially since the early 1990s, processes of environmental regulation and to a much lesser extent social regulation. These EU led or supported movements have tended to support the competitiveness agenda within each country, including the UK, as well as boost, to an extent, some

aspects of environmental protection, such as the promotion of environmental assessment of projects and strategies. Without doubt these effects on the general form of possible planning have been of major significance, though it can be argued that they still leave wide scope for manoeuvre within each country – as indicated by the varying responses to EU processes in each state.

The second channel is the specific one of *regional policy and funding*, which since its initiation in the mid 1970s has offered significant support for regional level projects, as agreed according to EU set criteria. In the UK these funds and guidelines have been of real significance in many parts of the country, offering alternative emphases to those of the central government and particularly lending support to institutionalisation at regional level. That level has been interpreted, throughout the period, as the territories of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and the standard English regions (normally there have been nine of these – see Figure 1.2). The fact that funding has had to be bid for within these regional entities has meant that actors within each region have had to organise themselves for this purpose. No doubt this helped to boost the call, from the 1980s on, for more solid regional institutions, as then realised in the 1990s. At the same time there was a need for justification for funding, encouraging more systematic thinking about regions and their possible futures.

The third channel is the least clear one, emerging from the work encapsulated in the *European Spatial Development Perspective*, published by the European Commission as an advisory document in 1997. The ESDP process had begun at the end of the 1980s, and promoted a more integrated approach to the planning of European spatial change (Faludi and Waterhout 2002). The process helped to steer the development of a number of European funding streams, especially INTERREG, and had a role in generalising certain concepts or policy approaches (spatial planning, polycentricity) (Jensen and Richardson 2004). Macro region planning exercises, such as for the North Sea area, or the Capital Cities region, were also pursued through the 1990s. It is far from clear what impact this has had so far on planning in the UK, and particularly on regional planning. The New Labour government elected in 1997 was keen on promoting the EU's planning initiatives, unlike its Conservative predecessor, and adopted gradually some of the terminology of the ESDP, including spatial planning. Regional planning has since that time made reference to the ESDP and to polycentricity, and this is especially the case in Scotland and Wales. But the substantive and procedural cores of regional planning throughout the UK have been generated mainly internally up to now.

There is therefore a mixed picture, with considerable general influence from the UK's membership of the EU, some impact of regional policies, but less effect so far from more precisely planning related initiatives. This is doubtless not surprising, given the absence of formal competences of the EU in planning, as against its often formidable powers in many areas of economic and regulatory policy. The same argument would apply even more in a discussion of influences of similar kinds (though without the institutional presence of the EU) in the wider world: the many facets of current globalisation would need extended

Figure 1.2 Regions and nations in the UK.

treatment, but wider planning innovations from other continents have doubt-less had relatively little influence in recent years.

1.9 Conclusions

This chapter has presented planning in a relatively traditional way, as the guiding of the distribution of development and activities in space. The regional level has been seen as very blurred and fluid, always depending on many contex-

tual circumstances. This means that there is never a 'real region' in some abstract sense. Regions are culturally and institutionally constructed. For regional planning this means that they will vary with the purposes intended to be achieved by planning, and in relation to the niches taken over by planning at other levels, whether internationally, nationally or locally.

This fluidity is present in other ways, as in the relationship with wider 'regional policy', which has tended in the twentieth century in Western Europe to have had, primarily, economic goals. Regional planning is strongly influenced by such regional policies, for example, in approaches towards infrastructural provision, which may be boosted to help regions in economic difficulty.

The 'new regionalism' was examined, and it is clear that in the UK and elsewhere this understanding of the increased importance of regions as a level of governance has boosted the position of regional planning. However, we argued for caution in assessing the importance of this current of change, when there are signs too of other tendencies, towards greater localism, centralisation and internationalisation. It is safer to see regionalism as just one part of such a multi-scalar restructuring, rather than an especially dominant partner.

Partly because of this fluidity, complexity and links to other policy fields, we have argued for a critical stance towards regional planning, rather than one that sees it as a necessary good, or for that matter a necessary bad. Regional planning can just as easily be used to support one value set as another. Thus in the 1970s in several European countries it was one instrument in the spatial Keynesian project of supporting equal conditions of life in different localities, while in the 2000s a more common aim is in supporting regional competitiveness, with, very likely, quite different social effects. The technical arguments in favour of regional planning may on occasion be very convincing, but it is always important to be aware of contextual and framing conditions, as in all planning.

It is appropriate then that the next chapter gives an overview of regional policy and planning through the last century in the UK. We then move to explore some theoretical frameworks which can help to make sense of recent regional planning, both in process terms and substantively. The core of the book then presents a detailed treatment of current UK practice, first with broad descriptions of the systems in each part of the UK, then by means of study of the main components of planning, and the challenges of integrating these. A final chapter in this middle part of the book assesses the role of process and politics in regional planning, by means of discussion of recent English experience. The last section of the book reviews experience at European level, and presents short case studies in four European countries, before a concluding chapter which picks out some critical questions and issues facing regional planning in the future.

2   A short history of UK regional planning

2.1 Introduction

We now move directly into regional planning in the UK by first examining its roots and history. This short history of UK regional planning covers quite a long period – dating back almost a century from the time of writing of this book. As such, in many respects regional planning has been an enduring feature of the UK planning scene. However, the history also reveals regional planning as a contested area. What has been seen as regional planning over the years varies considerably, and this chapter shows a variety of levels and types of UK regional planning. At times regional planning has also been an uncomfortable bedfellow in the UK planning system and support has varied to the extent that it has sometimes been a very marginal activity. But it has endured because regional issues have endured and require intervention at the regional level. This introduction briefly sets out the perceived need for regional planning, succinctly summed up over a decade ago by Wannop (1995) as the regional imperative, before noting some of the key criteria which we might consider in judging the performance of the history of regional planning in practice.

   Regional planning can be seen as a response to contemporary regional issues – such as metropolitan growth, rural/industrial decline or underdevelopment and regional imbalance. In the UK, as in many other countries, the two dominant drivers have been the problems of urban/metropolitan regions arising from population and household growth, increasing urbanisation and increasing standards of living and personal mobility; and the problems of industrial and rural regions suffering from various degrees of economic depression. This distinction in origins is an important explanation of a dichotomy through much of the history of UK regional planning, between a regional/local or intra-regional planning approach, and a national/regional or inter-regional planning approach; this distinction will be explored in this chapter.

   The issue of the congested urban/metropolitan region became a particular cause for concern in the late nineteenth century. It resulted in a form of planning intervention which was largely physical or environmental in nature. Its original motivations were to reduce the hazards of living in polluted cities compared with the delights of garden suburbs or new towns. In essence it was a land

use planning approach, although more recent strategies have adopted a wider approach. In contrast, the depressed region issue resulted in a form of regional planning that has been primarily economic. It germinated in the depression years of the 1920s/1930s, came to the fore in the 1960s and subsequently has been sustained from the mid 1970s by the requirements and funding of the European Union. Derived from social welfare and political concerns, it seeks to find solutions to economic inequalities between regions.

Important though these two drivers are, it may however have been the existence of separate regional cultures and political identities that produced the necessary pressure for action, with regional planning being a response to regionalism and nationalism. Over time some of the separate countries that constitute the UK – Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland – have pushed for and gained varying degrees of devolved autonomy in decision making. This regionalism issue is also a phenomenon in many other countries; for example, in Spain in Europe, in Canada in North America – and in extremis can lead to the break up of states, as, for example, in the former Yugoslavia. A regional initiative may also be a response to the problems of administering certain services by local or central agencies. Thus in the search for administrative efficiency, departments of central government may devolve responsibilities to regional tiers, and some former local authority functions may also be switched to a regional level. In the UK examples include the (now privatised) Regional Water Authorities and the Regional Development Agencies created in 1999. Regional planning can also be seen as a supportive device for adjacent levels of planning, providing an input to inter-regional allocations of resources at the national level, and a framework for city regions at the local level.

Of course the climate of need for regional planning is evolving and ongoing. In the UK it has changed from, for example, strong support in the 1940s, decline in the 1950s, a revival in the 1960s/1970s, a major decline almost to the point of extinction in some forms in the 1980s, followed by a slow and then more rapid advance in the 1990s/2000s as noted in Chapter 1. There have also been significant changes in the institutional environment and in the overall philosophy of planning intervention. Key institutional changes have been the impact of the EU and devolved authorities in Scotland and Wales. A key philosophical driver has been the rise and rise of the underlying principle and evolving practice of sustainable development.

UK regional planning has not been without its successes, in relation to both the containment and management of metropolitan growth and to the prevention of even more serious problems in the depressed regions. But the activity has been fraught with many problems throughout its history. It has often been seen as the 'cuckoo in the nest' between local and national levels. It often lacks the power base and legitimacy of an underpinning level of government, and may be more politically dependent than most forms of planning. It can also suffer from conflict between physical/land use planning and economic development planning, between intra-regional and inter-regional planning, and between the many regional planning and development stakeholders. Many regional planning

exercises have also placed too much emphasis on analysis and strategy formulation and not enough on how to implement the plan/strategy. To be successful regional planning needs to cross the formulation–implementation gap. It needs continuity, co-ordination (to integrate a wide array of agencies and activities), and control (the power to make things happen). This short history should be seen against such criteria.

2.2 The range of regional planning activity

Figure 2.1 provides a simple and schematic overview of the various 'levels' of activity which at various times have had a role in the history of regional planning in the UK and EU. Levels 1 and 2 can be seen as examples of regional policy/inter-regional planning – with a primary focus on reducing differences in relative economic prosperity between regions. Levels 3 and 4 can be seen as examples of regional strategic planning/intra-regional planning, where the focus has been more on the distribution of land uses/activities at the regional and sub-regional levels. Each is briefly introduced, before a fuller discussion in the following sections.

Level 2, UK inter-regional planning/regional policy, is discussed before the EU (level 1) because historically it pre-dates it by several decades and can be seen as a driver for the EU level of activity. It is multi-objective, drawing on national goals of economic growth, full employment and social equity, and giving them a spatial dimension. In the UK it developed in the 1920s/1930s largely as a response to economic depression and to the problems of economic imbalance *between regions* resulting from the changing locational preferences of industry. As such the term 'regional balance' is often linked to the achievement of the objectives here. In the UK, the term was first used by the Barlow Com-

1 EU level spatial planning
  (e.g. ESDP; Regional Policy)
2 UK inter-regional planning
  (e.g. Assisted Areas Policy)
3 UK intra-regional planning
  (e.g. South East RPG; and RSS)
4 Sub-regional planning
  (e.g. Milton-Keynes Sub-Regional Plan)
5 Structure planning
  (e.g. Oxfordshire Structure Plan)
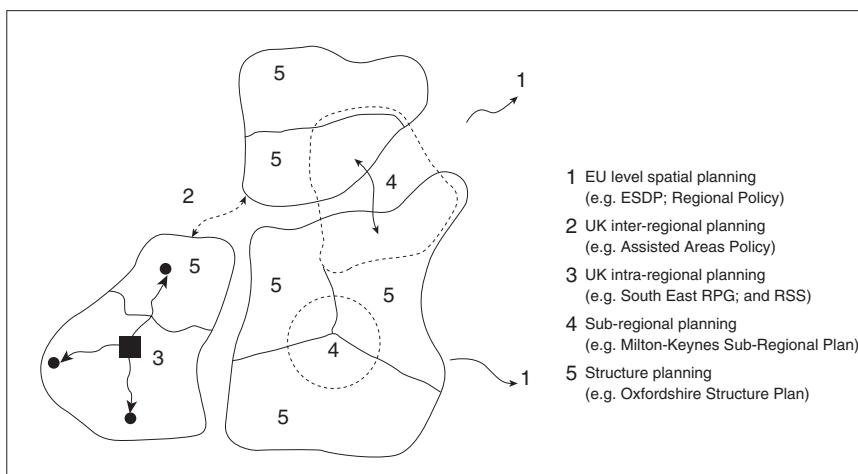
Figure 2.1 An overview of the various levels of UK/EU regional planning activity.

mission in 1940 (HMSO 1940), but since the Commission failed to define it adequately it has since been, as Hall put it, 'flung around as an all-purpose phrase in lieu of thought' (Hall 1968). It could mean, for example, equal growth rates, or equal industrial structures, or equal population densities or similar. But a more acceptable and realistic interpretation is that of equality of opportunity of each region to redress demographic, economic, social and environmental weaknesses and to achieve its full potential, thus ensuring that the quality of life is not a function of the area of the country in which people happen to live and work. The regional policy response has been largely top-down, and over time the UK central government has invested billions of pounds in policy measures, with a focus primarily on attracting firms and their associated jobs to designated 'assisted areas/development areas' mainly in the north and west of the country. However, since the 1970s/1980s there has been a shift away from a UK-based intervention and towards an EU regional policy.

The EU regional policy (*level 1* in Figure 2.1) has grown rapidly in significance over the years and now accounts for almost half of the spending of the whole of the EU budget across its current 27 Member States. The policy is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, and especially in Chapter 13, but a few key characteristics are noted now. The EU has also seen the reduction in the imbalance in the 'Regions of Europe' (CEC 1973) as a key policy objective and indeed essential for the very survival and advance of the Union. EU regional policy also seeks to target assistance to a set of designated regions, using support for industry, infrastructure and people, via the EU Structural Funds. In parallel with this economic-focused regional policy, over the last decade the EU has also taken some tentative steps in spatial planning, with the production of the indicative ESDP with its ideas for planning in macro regions across borders and with innovative planning concepts such as polycentricity in regional planning (CEC 2004, 1999).

Levels 3 and 4 from Figure 2.1 represent the intra-regional planning approach, at the scale of the region or the sub-region. Level 3 relates to large regions such as the South East, or North West of England; and the plan outputs are variously referred to as regional strategic plans, regional plans, regional strategies, regional planning guidance and, most recently, regional economic strategies (RESs) and regional spatial strategies (RSSs). Level 4 relates to smaller sub-regions which may straddle local authority areas within regions – perhaps related to an issue such as a designated growth area. Here the plan output may be a sub-regional plan, study, strategy etc. Intra-regional planning is concerned with resource allocation *within regions/sub-regions*, for various policy fields such as economic development, housing, social, environmental and transport. Its aim is to achieve a satisfactory relationship between people, jobs and the environment within the region. More specifically, social objectives concerned with the provision of housing, social, cultural and recreational facilities; economic objectives concerned for example with the location of new investment; and environmental objectives related to the quality of the physical environment, can be identified. With such multiple objectives, there may inevitably be

conflict, for example, between the socially desirable distribution of housing and the conservation of areas of attractive landscape, and a ranking of priorities and trade-offs may be necessary.

The content of intra-regional planning varies between regions and sub-regions. For growing urban/metropolitan areas, the focus may be on controlling the location of population and employment, that is accommodating growth. For a depressed industrial region, measures may be more related to the stimulation of industrial development; that is, generating growth. These two issues, and their policy responses of urban containment and urban regeneration, have dominated the history of intra-regional planning in the UK. Examples of intra-regional planning date back to the 'garden cities' movement around the turn of the 1900s, which sought to deal with the problems of the congested city. There were some noticeable bursts of activity in the 1940s and 1960s/1970s, before a serious demise until an important revival in the late 1990s/2000s, partly associated with some important institutional innovations, including the advent of Regional Assemblies (RAs) and Regional Development Agencies.

The balance between the strands of regional planning varies between countries and also over time. In Western Europe, the inter-regional strand has been most apparent in those countries which had large regional imbalances, such as Italy and Spain. Germany provides an interesting example of the shift in the emphasis of regional planning over time. While the former West Germany did initially have a strong inter-regional equalisation regime, the focus shifted over time, towards more intra-regional planning. However, the united Germany must give a higher priority to the imbalances in prosperity between the western and eastern Lander. The strands of regional planning are of course interrelated in many ways. They may be complementary – in the UK the 1940 Barlow Report and the 'growth area' philosophy (of the 1960s) represented occasions when they did come together. They may also conflict, and the South East England accommodating growth policy has often been seen to be in conflict with a policy to generate development in the less economically buoyant regions – a conflict which persists through to the present day.

2.3 UK regional policy, in an EU context

In the UK, the origins of regional policy/inter-regional planning date back to the depression years of the 1920s and 1930s, when there was government intervention to aid a few particularly depressed areas. Over the next 40 years the scope and content of the UK policy widened until the 1970s when it was paralleled and then to a large extent replaced by the rapid evolution of the supranational EU regional policy. This brief examination of UK regional policy starts from a discussion of the nature of UK problem regions, and the goals and overriding strategy of the policy to help them. This is followed by a review of the range of operational measures to implement the strategy. The UK discussion concludes with an appraisal of policy performance, before an outline of the EU regional policy context.

2.3.1 Problem regions and the goals and strategy of UK regional policy

Regional variations are found in all countries. Many of these, such as culture and language, can be a source of strength and regional identity, but others may be indicators of deep-seated problems. Traditionally in the UK, and in many other countries in Europe and beyond, it has been possible to identify a range of problem region types including:

- *Underdeveloped regions:* such as the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and the Massif Central in France, which are sparsely populated, heavily dependent on primary activities (farming, fishing, forestry, mining and quarrying), with poor accessibility and services. They normally suffer from high unemployment rates and out-migration of the young and skilled.
- *Depressed industrial regions:* such as South Wales, Merseyside, Central Scotland and Tyneside. From this initial listing it can be seen that such regions have been/are widespread in the UK. They suffer from the decline of key industries, such as coal-mining, shipbuilding, textiles and iron and steel and the lack of new growth industries. The poor industrial structure is often associated with a poor physical environment. As a result the regional economic base is unable to utilise regional resources to the full, and the regions suffer from the usual symptoms of high rates of unemployment and out-migration, and low activity rates, growth rates and levels of income.
- *Pressured/congested regions* are in many respects the reverse of the other problem regions. While they have low unemployment rates, high income levels and attract in-migrants, they also face some of the costs of success. These include environmental problems, commuting and congestion costs and high factor costs, including land, housing and labour, all of which may lead to a declining quality of life. The Barlow Commission recognised the existence of these problems in the South East of England as early as 1940.

There are of course other taxonomies of problem regions. From a North American perspective Jane Jacobs (1984), for example, identified seven regional types (including transplant regions, supply regions, etc.). Klaassen (1965) employed a more dynamic approach, using a criterion such as changes in relative rate of regional income, to divide regions into those moving up and those moving down. In the UK the rate of unemployment has been a particularly significant and often emotive indicator of regional problems over many decades. It was rates as high as 20 per cent to 30 per cent in some of the old traditional industrial areas, and as high as 10–15 per cent in the prosperous South East, which triggered action in the depression years. Table 2.1 provides a mid-period summary of a set of interdependent indicators, which suggests that the UK can be divided into a set of prosperous central regions surrounded by a set of problem regions. Yet such a broad division hides many variations, and even the most prosperous regions have problem pockets, and vice versa.

Table 2.1 Some indicators of UK problem regions – mid 1960s

Region	Average total weekly household income (67–68) as a percentage of UK	Activity rates (male and female) (June 1968)	Percentage change in employment (61–66)		Unemployment average annual percentage (65–71)	Net migration average annual flow (000s) (61–66)
			Total	Male		
Northern Ireland	85	48.9	+1	-2	7.0	-6.9
Scotland	96	56.4	+3	-1	3.9	-38.8
Wales	90	47.1	+2	-1	3.8	+1.9
North	91	51.8	+3	-1	4.1	-7.1
Yorkshire and Humberside	88	56.1	+1	+2	2.3	-1.0
North West	96	58.1	+6	0	2.6	-5.7
South West	96	47.0	+4	+4	2.5	+24.8
UK	**100 (£29.1)**	**56.2**	**+4**	**+2**	**2.3**	**+15.7**
West Midlands	105	60.2	+6	+5	2.0	+7.1
East Midlands	97	56.3	+6	+4	1.9	+8.7
East Anglia	97	48.5	+13	+11	2.0	+11.9
South East	112	59.7	+5	+4	1.5	+20.8

The identification of problem regions may not in itself justify the case for policy intervention. If the variations in prosperity prove self-righting over a short period of time, there might be little cause for intervention, although there could still be considerable distress in the intervening period. However, regional differences are often deep-seated, as has been the case in the UK, and there have been strong manifest economic and social reasons, and more latent political reasons, for intervention. Economic reasons relate to the under-utilisation of scarce resources in the depressed industrial and underdeveloped regions and the over-utilisation in the pressured regions; social reasons include a contribution to a goal of social equity of opportunity and quality of life. However, the political goal can be particularly persuasive. If neglected for some time, depressed areas may vote against the government and, in more extreme cases, may develop nationalist/separatist tendencies.

Regional differences in prosperity, particularly as reflected in the supply and demand for labour, can be addressed in two main ways – by 'taking the work to the workers' through an industrial location policy, or by 'taking the workers to the work' through a labour migration policy. For various social and political, but also economic, reasons the policy of industrial location has been dominant in the history of UK inter-regional planning and in most other countries. The social and political reasons are clear – migration can drain the very lifeblood of a community and generate strong political feelings. But migration may also bring costs to the migrant in terms of the cost of living in the prosperous region, and to that region in terms of providing the necessary infrastructure. There will also inevitably be a 'hard core' of unemployed who, for various family/personal/ skill reasons, will not migrate. This does not mean that the alternative strategies are mutually exclusive and indeed, throughout the history of the UK industrial location policy, there have invariably been some small but significant measures to encourage labour migration – reflecting the fact that there are some areas where the costs of moving in industry may be just too high – although for political reasons the fact is not much emphasised.

2.3.2 The operational measures to implement UK regional policy

UK regional policy grew out of the untold misery and hardship of life in the problem regions in the 1920s and 1930s. It was during this inter-war period that the strategy emphasis was initially more on moving the workers to the work. In the immediate post-war years (1945–1951), the new Labour Government introduced many of the long-standing elements of the industrial location/assisted areas policy. Some measures fell into abeyance during the Conservative Government period of the 1950s but, reflecting the political nature of this policy area, came to the fore again in the 1960s with the return of a Labour Government. The 1960s were in many respects the heyday of UK regional policy – with support also from the Conservatives.

From the mid 1970s onwards, the UK policy began to provide more of the backcloth to the increasingly well-resourced EU policy, rather than the driving

policy in its own right. The Thatcher Conservative Government of the 1980s/1990s was also the period of dismantling and privatisation of previously government-based activities in the UK. Some of the main operational measures of UK regional policy are now briefly discussed – including the delineation of assisted areas, measures to encourage industry to move to these areas, measures directed at the mobility of labour, and other general measures.

The delineation of assisted areas

The Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act, 1934, was the first UK legislative measure affecting the distribution of industry. Four quite limited spatial areas – Clydeside, West Cumberland, the North East coast of England and South Wales – were designated to receive assistance to help to attract expanding industries. However, the symptoms of the regional problems disappeared during the Second World War, but the deep-seated problems remained. The Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (HMSO 1940) produced a visionary report showing, inter alia, the connections between the problems of congested conurbations and the depressed regions. It also paved the way for an expansion of regional policy. Under the Distribution of Industry Act, 1945, the Special Areas were expanded and renamed Development Areas. Following further tinkering of legislation in the 1950s, the Development Areas in 1960, delineated almost exclusively by the criterion of unemployment, covered slightly less than 20 per cent of the UK area, with a population of about seven million. By 1972, this simple 'blanket approach' had been replaced by a more sophisticated hierarchy of Special Development Areas, Development Areas and Intermediate Areas, based on multiple criteria including unemployment, and covering more than 50 per cent of the country and including a population of approximately 25 million. Special Development Areas were those areas suffering from the worst problems of industrial decline – many as a result of a decline in the coal-mining industry.

The start of the Thatcher Years in 1979 signalled an end to the advance of the map of regional aid. The Assisted Areas coverage was rolled back from 40 per cent of the working population in 1979 to 25 per cent in 1982, and in 1984 the three-tier system became two-tier, with just Development Areas and Intermediate Areas. The two-tier system continued through into the Blair Years of the 1990s/2000s, with 'tier 1' assisted areas covering about five million people in Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Cornwall and West Wales and the Welsh Valleys, and 'tier 2' assisted areas covering a further 11.5 million people mainly in northern industrial areas. Figure 2.2 illustrates the changes over time in the map of UK assisted areas.

Measures to encourage industry to move to the assisted areas

The Barlow Report, and the legislation of the 1940s, pioneered a 'carrot and stick' approach to encourage the movement of industry. The stick approach
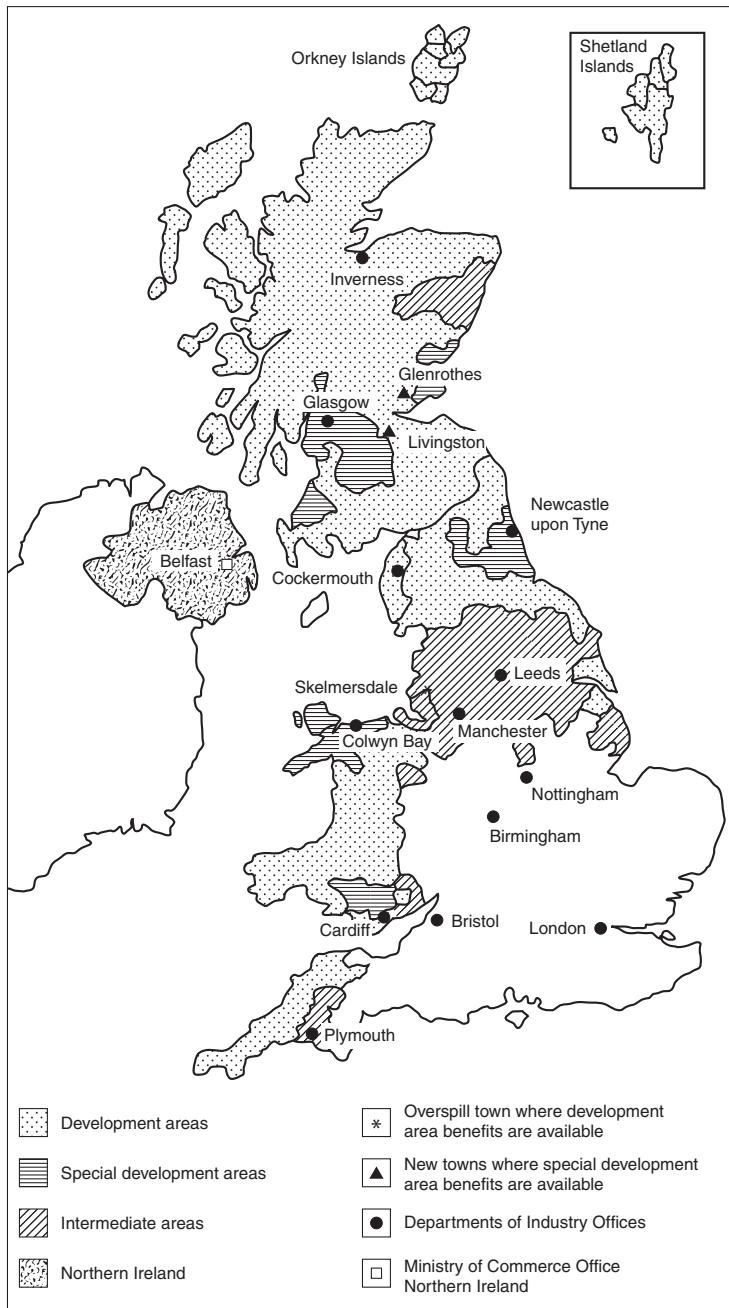
Figure 2.2 The changing map of UK assisted areas (1978 and 2007). (a) Assisted Areas in 1978.

Tier 1

Tier 1 (see Note)

Tier 2

Note - Highlands & Islands will have
coverage until 31 December 2010,
at which point this status will be
reviewed by the European Commission
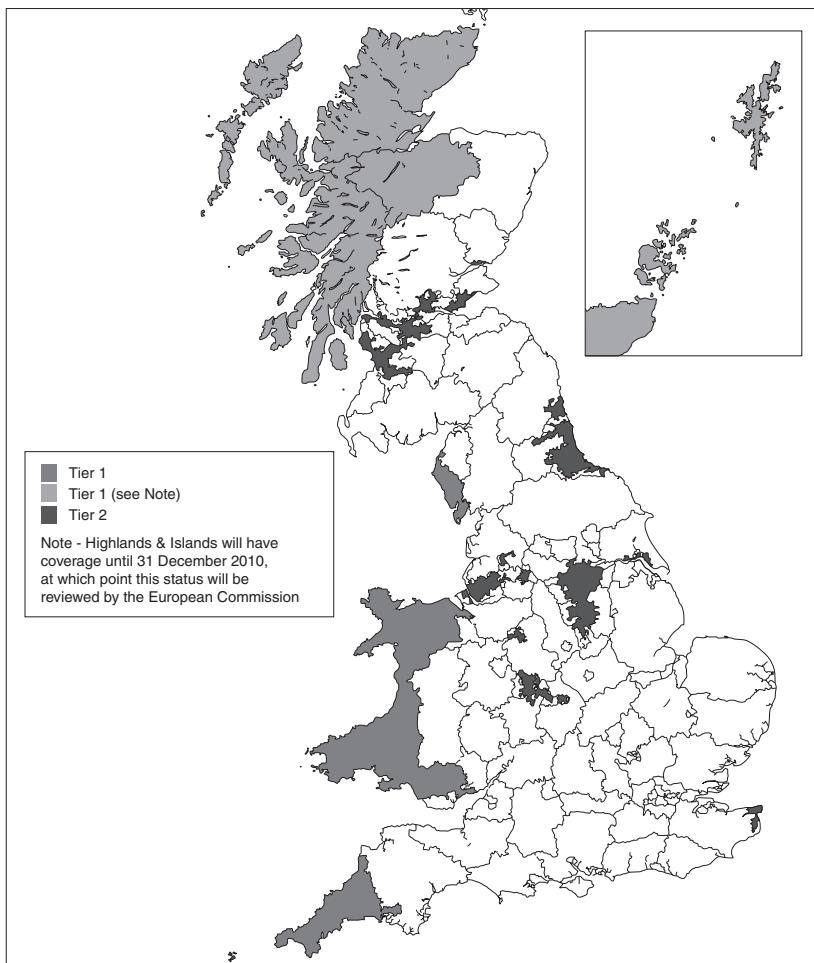
Figure 2.2 (b) Proposed Assisted Areas in 2007–2013. (*Source:* DTI (2007).)

involved the use of controls on the location of both manufacturing and office
development. Industrial Development Certificates (IDCs), introduced in1947,
required a certificate for any application for a manufacturing development in
excess of a certain size. By granting or refusing the certificate in pressured
regions, governments sought to channel development to problem areas. The
IDC size level varied from as low as 1000 square feet in the South East and
other pressured regions under Labour in the 1960s to over 50,000 square feet
and almost irrelevance in the 1980s/1990s. Office Development Permits
(ODPs) were the equivalent for the much more growth significant office devel-

opment sector. These were introduced in 1965 to seek to divert office growth from the South East and from some parts of the English Midlands. Again the controls varied in strength of application according to government policies, and again were eroded during the 1980s/1990s.

The carrot element of regional policy has been a more consistent element continuing, albeit in a much reduced fashion, through to the present day. It has involved the use of positive financial incentives to attract industrialists to the scheduled areas. The expenditure on such incentives averaged more than £1 billion a year from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s, and peaked at more than £2 billion in the mid 1970s (all figures at early 2000 prices) but by the early 2000s was down to no more than £400 million. The main type of assistance was in the form of subsidies (grants, loans and tax allowances) to a firm's capital costs. Regional Development Grants (RDGs) were particularly important through much of the period, in that they provided clear grants to firms moving to the assisted areas, for expenditure on new buildings and machinery, at standard rates (e.g. at 22 per cent in Special Development Areas). In addition, discretionary assistance, in the form of loans and various other grants, was available from the 1970s in the form of Regional Selective Assistance (RSA). It is the latter which has survived through to the 2000s. In addition to this capital cost support, there have also been examples of subsidies to labour costs, for example, through the Regional Employment Premium (REP) introduced in 1967, which provided per capita subsidies towards labour costs in the Development Areas and Special Development Areas.

Measures directed at labour mobility, and other more general measures

Through much of the history of UK regional policy, Government grants have been available for re-training of workers in the assisted areas, and for transfer to the more prosperous areas – with key worker/resettlement schemes providing grants towards such costs as moving home and settling in. The focus on the skill base in the problem regions has grown over time with some shift in the nature of regional policy towards a more supply-side emphasis (Regional Studies Association 2001). This recognises the importance of renewing both the physical and human capital in the weaker regional economies.

There have been initiatives over time to seek to improve the inferior economic capital (e.g. roads, industrial sites) and social capital (e.g. hospitals and schools) of assisted areas. A more recent structural initiative to partly co-ordinate such initiatives at the regional level was the introduction of the nine RDAs in England in 1999. This followed some success with earlier development agency initiatives in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see Chapter 6). Their responsibilities were assembled from various activities of central government – the regional operations of English Partnerships (which can trace its lineage back to the 1930s), the regional operations of the Rural Development Commission, and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The combined budget of the RDAs was £1.7 billion in 2003–2004, with a per

capita skew in funding towards the RDAs covering the North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humberside. With these resources, the RDAs represent an important regionally-based approach to regeneration and economic development for each English region. (They are discussed further in Chapters 4, 5 and 8.)

2.3.3 *An appraisal of policy performance*

The comprehensive aim of regional policy has been to right the regional imbalance, yet after almost 80 years of intervention we still have major differences in regional prosperity. Indeed the Blair Government has a current Public Services Agreement target (PSA 2) to make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all regions by 2008, and over the long term reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between regions (initially over the period 2003–2012, against a baseline of the period 1990–2002). This relates in particular to the gap in Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita between the Greater South East (GSE) regions (East, London and South East) and the remaining English regions. However, such a summary hides more than it reveals, and the appraisal of performance demands more digging. As regional policy has had no specific end date, performance must be assessed on the basis of trends in various indicators, such as unemployment, migration, income, public and private investment, and the number of jobs created. The first and last of these indicators are taken as indirect and direct measures of policy effectiveness.

The trend in unemployment is still a very popular indicator. The severity of differences in regional employment has varied according to the nature of the national economy and to structural shifts in that economy. The collapse of much of the UK manufacturing employment in the early 1980s widened the North–South divide; but the recession of the early 1990s which hit the services sector more, and the boom years of the early 2000s, tended to narrow the unemployment divide. Regional differences in claimant unemployment have narrowed, but much of the fall in unemployment has been due less to the unemployed moving into work and more to their movement into inactivity – with the numbers claiming sickness-related benefits far outstripping those claiming unemployment-related benefits. This shift into inactivity has been proportionally greatest in the traditionally high unemployment regions (Martin and Sunley 1999; Fothergill 2001). Hidden unemployment is thus a major issue. Trends in employment also reveal an uneven pattern across the country. Figure 2.3 shows that the south and east of the country have led the growth process.

Overall there has been a long-running scepticism about the effectiveness of traditional regional policy; but it would be unfair to say that regional policy has failed. Measuring the direct impact of policy on jobs created is complex, but some of the key exponents of measurement (e.g. Moore *et al.* 1986; Taylor and Wren 1997) indicate that the carrot and stick measures of the 1960s/1970s may have created over 600,000 jobs in the assisted areas of the North, Scotland,
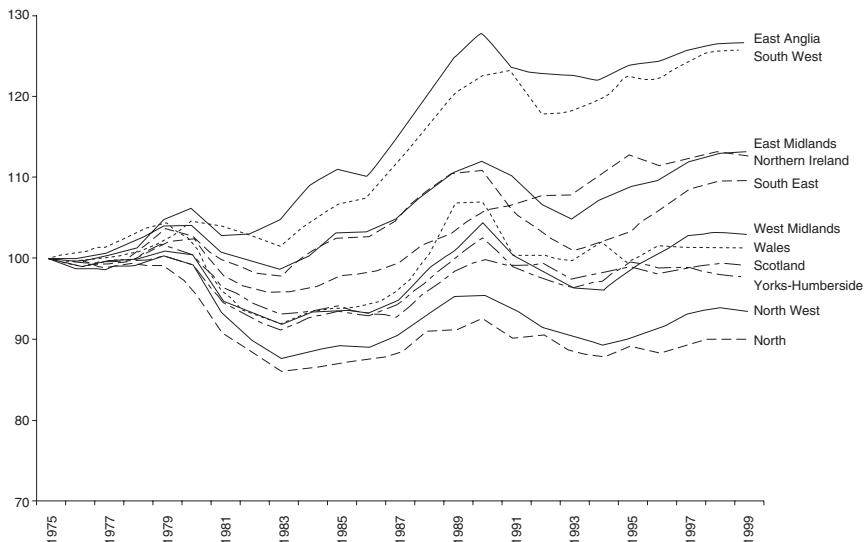
Figure 2.3 Divergent regional employment evolutions: 1975–1999 (1975 = 100). (*Source:* RSA (2001).)

Wales and Northern Ireland. However, there has been recognition of the need for change and to attune policy to intra-regional as much as inter-regional variations, to the evolving knowledge economy and to a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches. UK regional policy must also be seen in the wider EU regional policy context.

2.3.4 The EU regional policy context

Chapter 13 provides a fuller discussion of contemporary EU regional policy than the brief historical note here. Suffice to say, at this stage, that EU regional policy is a very important policy area, which now accounts for almost 50 per cent of the EU budget spend. The aims are similar to those for national regional policies, as noted in the communiqué on the key 1972 Common Market Summit – 'The Heads of State or Government agreed that a high priority should be given to the aim of correcting in the Community, the structural and regional imbalances which might affect the realisation of Economic and Monetary Union.' EU regional policy has grown in strength over the last 30 years, partly as a counter to the centripetal economic market forces flowing from the move to a Single European Market. Regional differences in prosperity in the EU have far outstripped those in the UK, and can be as great as 6:1 for indicators such as Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) per capita.

Besides providing a wealth of documentation on EU regional issues, and seeking to co-ordinate a disparate set of national regional policies in the Member States, the EU, through the EC Regional Policy Directorate, seeks to substantially

add to the regional policy efforts of individual countries through the use of its Structural Funds. The latter have included in particular, grants from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), plus several others, and loans from institutions such as the European Investment Bank (EIB). Aid is substantial; for Britain for the 2000–2006 spending round it was almost £1 billion a year. The EU policy supported areas map on to UK policy areas, with EU Objective 1 areas being those targeted by the top level of UK RSA. However, whereas RSA goes largely to firms, EU funding is mainly for infrastructure investment (e.g. transport and energy projects) and for training and business advice. INTERREG funding is particularly significant for the fostering of trans-national co-operation, for example, between Kent and Nord Pas de Calais, and between Donegal and Derry in Ireland.

2.4 Regional strategic planning

The evolution of regional strategic planning/intra-regional planning in the UK has followed a course somewhat similar to that for regional policy/inter-regional planning. Although the original impetus can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, it was not until the inter-war years that planners became concerned about the conurbations and inter-urban development. This section briefly examines the key stages in UK regional strategic planning from the early pioneers, through the major initiatives at regional and sub-regional levels in the 1960s/1970s, the hibernation in the Thatcher years, and the 1990s/2000s revival. It concludes with an overview of some of the enduring features of this level of planning and of issues which have confronted regional strategic planning throughout its 100-year history.

2.4.1 The early pioneers

The sprawl of cities in the late 1800s/early 1900s in Europe and North America produced some visionary responses on both sides of the Atlantic. Key American visionaries included, for example, Perry and Stein (see Stein 1951) and elsewhere in Europe architects such as Le Corbusier and Tony Garnier; but the focus here is on key UK visionaries. Ebeneezer Howard, in his *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (see Howard 1946) proposed the establishment of a cluster of new towns linked to a central city to deal with the problems of the sprawling nineteenth century cities such as London and Glasgow. These multi-centred regional clusters were to be separated from their cities by greenbelts, and were to contain both jobs and homes. However, apart from the early garden cities such as Letchworth and Welwyn, there was little immediate development of Howard's ideas and parochial in-fighting between local authorities limited attempts to co-ordinate the growth and interaction of towns.

   A major impetus came in the early 1940s. The Barlow Report (HMSO 1940) realised the advantages of regional planning and the Scott Report on issues in rural areas (HMSO 1942) also advocated a regional approach. Out of this back-

ground emerged a series of advisory regional and sub-regional plans, many pro-
duced by Professor Patrick Abercrombie. Indeed Abercrombie had been active for
many years prior to the Barlow Report developing an approach to the production
of predominantly sub-regional plans for many areas of the country (e.g. for Bath
and Bristol, Doncaster, Cumbria, North Wales, Sheffield and District). However,
of particular note are the Greater London Plan 1944 and the Clyde Valley
Regional Plan 1946. These urban regional plans were documents of considerable
vision, but they were primarily physical planning documents, and they were advi-
sory. Nevertheless they did have considerable influence, and it is from this period
that much key planning legislation stems – including the New Towns Act
(1946), and the Town and Country Planning Act (1947). Several new towns
were designated around London and in Central Scotland. Unfortunately, but
understandably, the 1947 Act gave the local planning powers to the existing local
authorities rather than to larger and more functional urban regions as advocated
by another of the early visionaries, Patrick Geddes. This led to a number of 'over-
spill controversies' under the Conservative Government in the 1950s – a period
of waning enthusiasm for regional planning, and indeed for planning in general.

2.4.2 Major initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s

The stimulus for renewed regional planning activity in the 1960s came from
several sources. The deepening economic problems of the distressed regions pro-
voked a government response which involved growth area programmes for North
East England and for Central Scotland (HMSO 1963a, 1963b). These infrastruc-
ture oriented programmes represented an interesting and important fusion
between the economic and physical aspects of inter- and intra-regional planning.
There was also renewed interest in the urban conurbations, which were facing
greater than anticipated population growth. In addition a change in government
and attitude to planning led to important institutional changes, including the
establishment in 1965/1966 of a series of Regional Economic Planning Councils
and Boards for eight English planning regions and for Scotland, Wales and North-
ern Ireland. Out of this background came a rich array of studies, reports, plans and
strategies, which can be broadly divided into regional and sub-regional categories.

Regional plans

The regional plans related to the new large regions and were primarily spon-
sored by departments of central government. The early outputs from the new
regional planning bodies, such as the *North West Study* (DEA 1965a) and the
West Midlands Study (DEA 1965b) were largely regional stocktaking documents
seeking to clarify problems rather than to put forward policies. Later documents,
such as the *Strategic Plan for the South East* (SEJPT 1970), the *Strategic Plan for
the North West* (NWJPT 1974) and the *Strategic Plan for the Northern Region*
(NRST 1977) were more innovative. Their production involved a tripartite
approach, with joint sponsorship by central government, and by the relevant

Regional Economic Planning Council and local authorities. They were strategies rather than studies, and the emphasis had shifted from the regional plan as a long-run spatial blue-print for 2001, to the regional plan as a wide-ranging short-run, regularly updated, corporate framework for decision making.

For example, the *Strategic Plan for the South East: 1976 Review* (SEJPT 1976) was seen as a contingent strategy for a five-year period, although within more long-run development parameters. The emphasis on implementation also increased, with planning teams stressing that their recommendations had to be practicable. The strategic plans for the North West and the North East were particularly concerned with proposals for financing their programmes, and for a 'fair deal' from public expenditure. The substantive content of the strategies varied according to the nature of the region and its problems. The *Strategic Plan for the South East* identified major growth areas, such as Milton Keynes and South Hampshire, as counter magnets to London (Figure 2.4). In addition the scope of content widened with a fuller coverage of both physical and economic aspects. The *Strategic Plan for the North West* also adopted the fashionable 'growth points' approach – including the development of Central Lancashire New Town (CLNT).
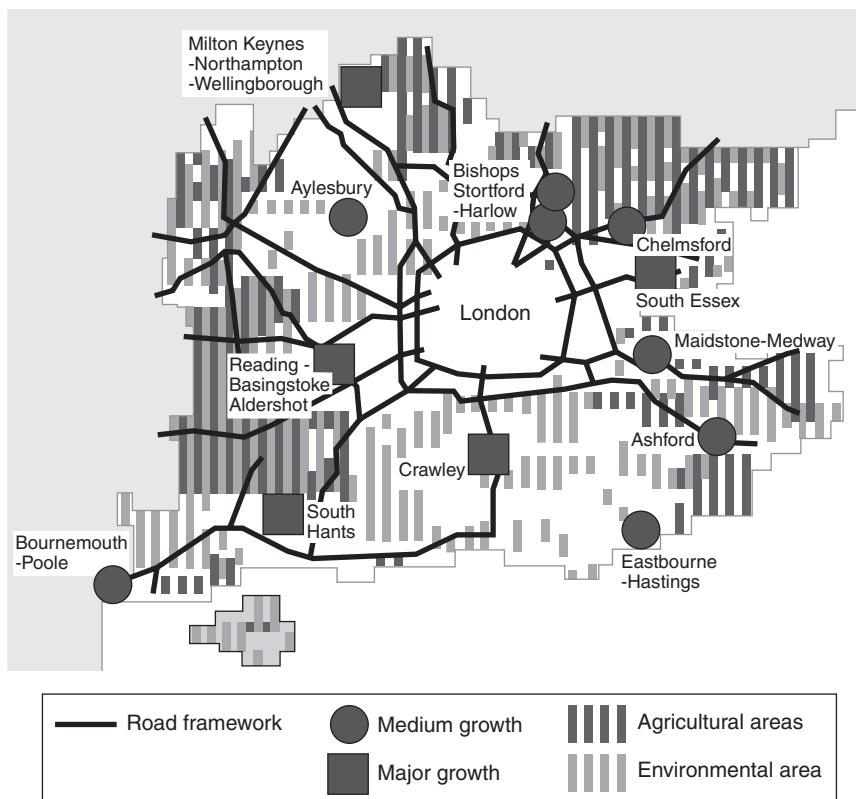
Figure 2.4 Preferred strategy of Strategic Plan for the South East (1970). (*Source:* SEJPT (1970).)

Sub-regional plans

Compared to regional plans, sub-regional plans related to smaller areas and their production was more in the sphere of local authorities. One type of sub-regional study was carried out for local planning authorities, normally by an independent planning team, to co-ordinate the future natural growth or inter-action of large towns and cities. A key impetus for such studies came in 1965 from Richard Crossman, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, whose aim was, in advance of local government reform, 'to persuade the authorities in a small number of selected areas to come together and set up ad-hoc teams to prepare long-term "broadbrush" plans for land uses and transportation' (Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council 1969). The resultant outputs included sub-regional plans for Leicester and Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, North Gloucestershire, Coventry – Warwickshire – Solihull, and for Reading – Wokingham–Aldershot–Basingstoke. The latter was a study for a major growth area designated in the Strategic Plan for the South East. This sub-regional activity coincided with the 'systems approach' to planning (McLoughlin 1969), and introduced many technical innovations into the planning process.

The other type of sub-regional activity was the outcome of central government concern to explore the feasibility of large-scale planned expansion in selected areas of the country, as a result of expectations of population increase of 20 million by the end of the century. Key studies in this category were for the English estuaries of South Hampshire, Humberside and Severnside, and for Tayside in Scotland. *Humberside: A Feasibility Study* (CUEP 1969), for example, was produced by a government Central Unit for Environmental Planning, and investigated the possibilities and prospects for accommodating population growth of 300,000–750,000. In the event, the anticipated growth forecasts were greatly over-estimated!

2.4.3 From peak to trough – just hibernating?

The pioneering *Strategic Plan for the South East* (SEJPT 1970) ran to six large volumes and, while size is only one criterion, in little over a decade, the Secretary of State for the Environment saw fit to summarise the strategic guidance for the South East in only two pages. The Regional Economic Planning machinery was dismantled in 1979, and another major loss for strategic planning was the abolition of the Greater London Council and six English Metropolitan Councils in 1986, thereby removing the strategic level of planning from most of the major metropolitan cities in the UK. Only ten years after a peak in regional planning activity Breheny and Hall (1984) were writing of 'the strange death of strategic planning' and the victory of the 'know-nothing school'. In practice, during the Thatcher years, the whole locus of planning shifted dramatically down the hierarchy towards the local level, and the outlook for regional planning was poor:

> To be an advocate of strategic planning in the UK just three or four years ago seemed to be a rather exotic role to adopt; one felt something of an

outsider or dissident. Occasionally a few fellow travellers would meet and bemoan the mainstream obsession with the immediate and the local, with 'getting things done', to use a professional slogan of the time.

(Breheny 1991 p. 232)

Fortunately it was a case of hibernation rather than death, and there was subsequently a gradual then, following the election of a Labour Government in 1997, a rapid revival of regional activity in the 1990s and beyond to the present day.

2.4.4 The regional revival

Institutional change

Institutional change was a significant element in the revival. For example, the Labour Government introduced Assemblies for Scotland and Wales, with responsibility for planning among their activities. Under the 1998 Regional Development Agencies Act, each of the eight English regions (Table 1.1 in Chapter 1) has an RDA charged with the task of promoting sustainable economic development of its region. As already noted, the RDAs have substantial budgets, and provide new resource levers for policy and plan implementation at the regional level. Regional Government Offices (GOs) were also introduced to co-ordinate the functions of central government in the English regions. The latter did not, and still do not, have elected assemblies as in Scotland and Wales, but appointed Regional Assemblies (RAs), also introduced under the Regional Development Agencies Act (1998), became operational in 1999 and have become a more significant player, especially in regional planning.

From RPGs to RSSs

The regional revival also had a procedural/methodological dimension. Following Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG12), *Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance* (DoE 1992), activity in the 1990s was based around the production of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for each English region. Early examples had quite a narrow land use planning format and were stronger on analysis and strategy formulation than on implementation. Later examples adopted a wider brief. For example, the *Regional Guidance for the Spatial Development of the East Midlands* (EMRLGA 1998) saw its role as:

> to set out an integrated spatial development strategy which encompasses proposals for the development of the region's economy, its infrastructure, its housing and other land use needs, and proposals for the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural environment for the benefit of all the region's citizens; to incorporate the key elements of the Regional Transport Strategy; to set the spatial development strategy within the context of moving towards more environmentally sustainable living patterns; to involve

all the region's stakeholders in a debate about the future direction of the region; to provide a framework (for other plans and programmes).

Further national PPG on regional planning (PPG11; DETR 2000a) advanced the changing nature of the content and process of regional planning. The widening content included issues such as health and energy; other aims for revised RPG included more focus on policy integration, within and between policy fields, and between policy levels, and policy innovation. But resource constraints continued to be apparent in most regions with regional planning operating on a shoestring, plus goodwill from adjacent levels of planning and from other relevant agencies.

A further change in the evolution of regional planning came out of a major review of the planning system, encapsulated in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (Great Britain 2004). This provided for RSSs to replace RPGs. The key differences between the two are:

- holistic approach: RSSs will cover even wider topic areas than the traditional land use and transport, including, for example, health, education, skills and training, crime, social inclusion and climate change;
- greater integration: covering regional and sub-regional priorities and stronger links between plans;
- statutory status: RPG was guidance; RSSs will be statutory documents; and
- greater engagement: with an emphasis on broader engagement, and on including groups not previously engaged in the process.

RSS activity is now well under way, with evolving outputs for regions such as the East of England and the South East, and also for sub-regions such as the Black Country in the West Midlands (EERA 2004a; SEERA 2006a; BCC 2006a).

Sustainable regional planning

During the 1990s there was also a growing interest in building sustainable development into the regional planning process. A key UK government document, *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the UK* (DETR 1999a) specified four key objectives for sustainable development: social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. It stated that sustainable development would have a place in all strategic documents produced by public bodies at the regional level. The government also wished to see high level sustainable development frameworks for each English region. A further publication (DETR 1999b), produced a set of indicators for a strategy for sustainable development; another (DETR 2000b) provided guidance on preparing regional sustainable development frameworks. These were built into subsequent regional planning activity; see, for example, *A better quality of life in the South East – the*

regional sustainable development framework (SEERA 2001). More recently, RSS activity requires Sustainability Appraisals/Strategic Environmental Assessments (ODPM 2005b, 2005c), which are discussed in Chapter 11.

2.5 Conclusions – a necessary but contested area

The enduring nature of UK regional planning, over almost a century, and through the trials and tribulations of dramatic shifts in the economic and political contexts, has been remarkable. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, there are important regional issues which require intervention at the regional level, and the UK has developed a range of regional planning responses. Indeed, with the trends in contemporary society, an increasingly mobile society, and with major infrastructure projects and programmes, the case for the regional scale of intervention grows even stronger. As such it can be argued that there has been some *continuity* in regional planning, particularly in the economic regional policy field, although there have been major shifts in support over the life of the assisted areas' policies. However, it is strategic regional planning which has had a particularly roller-coaster ride.

But what of the influence of the range of regional planning activity discussed in this chapter – has it had an impact? The verdict on regional policy is mixed. There has been a mix of variable central government and growing EU support, but there are still major regional imbalances in prosperity. Yet they may have been substantially worse without the policy, and there is evidence of impact on job creation. Assessing the impact of strategic regional planning is also difficult. Without many of the levers of *control* for most of its history, including a statutory base, an institutional home, and appropriate funding, this form of intervention has had to be an exercise in persuasion working through other agencies and adjacent levels of institutions with the power to act. Yet some regional planning strategies have been influential, especially in terms of policies of 'decentralised concentration' to manage the spread of major conurbations, for example, around London and Birmingham.

The third criterion noted at the beginning was that of *co-ordination*. From the diversity of UK regional planning activity, it could be argued that there has been more fragmentation than co-ordination with the range of regional planning activities. But though separate, there has been much interdependence between them and at times in history, there has been evidence of an integrated approach between the primarily economic oriented regional policy and the more physically oriented regional strategic planning. Examples include the Barlow Report in the 1940s, the initiatives of the 'growth areas' in the 1960s and the recent RSS/RES initiatives of the 2000s. Indeed the recent developments represent an interesting fusing of approaches, with a more 'bottom-up' approach to economic development potentially providing more integration with a widening approach to strategic regional planning, and some of the tools to deliver positive intervention. As noted elsewhere, this regional strategic planning approach is the focus of this book and of the chapters to follow.

Part 2

Theorising regional planning

3   Theorising regional planning
Processes

3.1 Introduction: an underdeveloped field

The history just examined connects directly to thinking about regional plan-
ning. Not surprisingly, the times of most real activity have been the times of
most publication, most strikingly the 1970s and the 1990s/2000s. So, 30 years
ago saw a major burst of British writing on regional planning. At that stage
consideration of the *process* of doing regional planning took a relatively sec-
ondary position. There was some discussion of appropriate or normal organisa-
tional forms, and Alden and Morgan (1974) did devote a chapter to the topic.
But more normally it was assumed that a mix of 'standard' technical and polit-
ical procedures would deliver the relevant plan. The problem was seen as much
more what techniques to use, on the basis of what substantive theorising or
understanding of the region being planned. Those matters are clearly very much
still at the core of any discussion of regional planning. But now this question of
how, of procedure and process, and of politics mixed up with this, is also a key
part of any introduction to current practice and thinking.

   This change is partly the result of currents within planning theory during
this period. These have tended to emphasise *procedural dimensions of planning*,
with leading thinkers such as Andreas Faludi (e.g. 1973) and Patsy Healey (e.g.
1997) being identified with these currents. That is to say, such writers have
tended to say that if a planning process is carried out in the right way (fairly,
justly, openly), there will be a better chance that good planning will result. This
has had strong resonances down into planning practice, in a number of coun-
tries, probably first of all at the more local level, but playing across to regional
planning by the later 1990s.

   A second cause of this greater process emphasis has been doubtless related to
the first, in the *shifting attitudes to politics and legitimation* in these decades.
Broadly speaking, standard political legitimacy, based on victories in elections,
has lost ground in giving full justification to public policies. Open discussion
and consultation has been seen increasingly, though quite variably between
countries, as essential to support many public policy fields. Planning has been in
the forefront of this shift, which has been especially strong in the UK since the
1990s. At first this was seen as applying most to the local level, up and to and

including county structure plans. But by the time of the institution of regional planning guidance after 1990, some degree of public discussion was already seen as a requirement. This requirement has been ratcheted up considerably since then.

This emphasis on more complex and open processes, and therefore on the need to think through this element more carefully, has been more pronounced in the UK, and especially in England, than in some other European countries, where this higher level of planning may still be largely entrusted to the inter-action of elected politicians, technical experts and pressure group processes. But certainly, the UK is not alone in this tendency, which may be on the rise generally. It is, therefore, important to devote a chapter to regional planning processes here.

A corollary of this emergence is that the field of discussion of these processes is relatively new – or at least has progressed very slowly since Alden and Morgan's tentative discussion of the early 1970s. What can be said here will have a distinctly provisional air. The first section looks at some broad lines of variation, in the ways the field may be understood. This deals with the aspects of *rationality*, *overall process control* and whether we can treat regional planning as a *policy cycle*. Then we look at the specifics of process management, including an examination of forms of *vertical and horizontal co-ordination*, and the roles which a variety of stakeholders may have. The role of individual planning pro-fessionals within this process management will be discussed briefly. We will then widen out again to some more fundamental issues, of *power and democracy*. In a sense these should come first, but there will be more purchase on them after discussion of the more concrete aspects.

3.2 Two approaches to understanding regional planning

3.2.1 Rationality in (regional) planning

For many years, certainly from the 1950s to the 1980s, a debate bubbled along in the English-speaking planning world as to the role of rationality in planning (Allmendinger 2002; Breheny and Hooper 1985; Faludi 1986). The common position is that planning and rationality are inseparable. But this was met by the equally frequent observation that real planning did not work rationally. The best that could be aspired to, went a whole gamut of arguments, was a 'bounded rationality' (Simon 1957), perhaps as bad as a 'disjointed incrementalism' or a 'muddling through' (Braybrooke and Lindblom 1963) which crept crabwise to its objectives, if it ever reached them. Within these varied camps were those maintaining more 'technical' positions, bolstering the claims to professional expertise of the planner, and those more ready to admit the centrality of politics and power.

It cannot be said that these debates were finally resolved. They effectively metamorphosed into different discussions in the 1990s, in forms examined below. But it is important to be aware of this 'elephant' still in the rooms of

planning, including of regional planning, even if its presence can normally be disregarded. Both the forms and limits of rationality remain at issue, as big questions 'behind' any regional planning exercise. The conclusion may be that there is no *general* answer to the forms and limits possible, as these are framed by a whole range of circumstances, especially the political economy in which planners work. For example, it can be argued that regional planning now must operate within a highly bounded rationality, because of the high fragmentation of powers across public and private sectors. There is no realistic prospect of a public corporate planning of a comprehensive rational form, given the powerful divergent pulls contained in economic, social and political steers. Perhaps in the 1960s or 1970s, during the height of spatial Keynesianism, a more extended rationality was at least thinkable, even if various institutional and political framings limited it seriously, even then. Nevertheless, the regional planning exposed and explored here has in some form a rational base, or so it will be assumed. But it is important to be aware always of the boundedness of this rationality.

3.2.2 Interpretative approaches in planning

Since the 1990s one of the directions taken by planning thinking has been towards a (in a sense) less strong rationality. Another way of putting this has been to identify competing or complementary rationalities or logics. In addition to 'simple' or instrumental rationality, communicative rationality has been seen as important. Much of this work emphasises the importance of the interpretative acts of planners and other actors (Fischer 2003; Yanow 1996). This is partly because policies may be understood in different ways, and can accrue meaning over time. The main objective of a regional strategy may be clear to the planner who wrote it, but be interpreted differently by other actors – possibly including legal interpretation, in due course. This is related to the developing emphasis on policy framing (Hajer 2003). Beliefs, perceptions and appreciations underly the ways that 'policymakers employ frames to perceive problems, manage preferences, formulate solutions, settle disputes, and come to compromises' (Schoen and Rein 1994; summarised by Fischer 2003 p. 144). These lines of thinking have not been applied much up to now in the realm of regional planning, and we will not be taking much from the 'interpretative turn' in this book. But there are important fresh understandings here which may be used in the future to sensitise practitioners and analysts to what they are doing.

3.3 Two broad tendencies in control of the process

The control of regional planning can be seen as, in the simplest terms, either confined to relatively few core actors, or as in a much more open and consultative mode. Within each of these there can be strong variations of emphasis. At the risk of providing misleading signposts straight away, these will be called the

elite and the participatory models. Their practical dimensions are considered now, the theoretical ones later.

3.3.1 Elite regional planning

Some experienced regional planners of the last half century might be surprised to hear their work described in this way, as a process confined to small numbers of technical and political actors. Others though might say straightaway that that was the nature of the beast, a four-legged one perhaps, but never a centipede, with all joining in. The interesting question, they might say, would be which four legs are in the process, and who gets to decide what. Certainly a planner like Abercrombie implicitly acted as if his knowledge and recommendations should weigh a very great deal in the result of any regional planning process he directed.

   The argument for why elitism is desirable, inevitable, or both, is simple enough. A region is normally taken to be a large supra-local entity, containing perhaps several million people, and covering a wide geographical area. Two sorts of social processes may be used to comprehend this area, one being that formed by electoral or similar (perhaps plebiscitary) democratic mechanisms, and the other by study of some kind, by technical experts of a range of types. A third sort is seen as much less equipped to participate – more or less disconnected individuals scattered across the region. This still leaves a wide range of possibilities, ranging from the norm in many exercises in the 1960s or 1970s, when technical teams presented their proposals to governments, with little wider involvement, to the regional planning in England in the 1990s, when local authorities and a wide range of pressure groups were involved in the preparation of draft guidance. The trend has been towards this much wider spectrum of participation, but these forms can still be best described as limited essentially to informed groups, to elites.

   Within this mode, the tendency has been to identify a shift to a different way of working together among elites, described often as 'governance'. In effect this means giving more strength to non-state or non-government actors, within normally public–private partnerships of some kind or other. The private element is generally made up of profit-making businesses, but may on occasions be local or wider interests in more or less formal organisations.

3.3.2 Participatory regional planning

Even if regional planning is the final responsibility of an elected regional government, planners may still want to make every effort to open up discussion on future spatial options to the widest possible audience. If the deciding body is not elected, there may be stronger grounds for such efforts, to give some degree of democratic legitimacy, if the representation via groups, as in the first model, is not seen as sufficient. This opening up may be done by a variety of means, including opinion polling, publicity in different media (press, television, inter-

net etc.) and various public discussion forums. We will observe some of these forms in action in Chapter 12.

Which of these two tendencies is more beneficial? For now this is not something that can be answered in any final way. But opening up this question of control stresses the centrality of politics. We know from our teaching experience over the years that for many planners a gulf remains between themselves and politics. Many planners resist the suggestion that planning is political, against all evidence to the contrary, in part for fear that this devalues their technical abilities. The more reasonable position, that a core task for planning is managing and understanding politics where it deals with planning (as argued, for example, by Kitchen 1997), has hardly become the accepted wisdom it should be. In regional planning we have seen above the different potential configurations of the process and how this is all eminently political: about whose values are going to count when and on what. Later sections of this chapter, on power and democracy, will look at this political character from a more abstract perspective, while later chapters will give concrete examples. For now, regional planning is and will surely remain a vigorous mix of technique and politics. The question for practitioners and politicians alike is how to best manage this mix.

3.4 Regional planning as a policy cycle

A final general issue of some importance is whether regional planning should be seen in terms of a 'policy cycle'. This was for many years an accepted way of thinking about policy and administration, and despite the efforts of a school of academic students of policy since the 1980s, it is still ingrained in most people's ways of thinking. Policy is seen as having a kind of life cycle, with an agenda setting stage, followed by policy formulation, and leading on to implementation. Government advice quite explicitly adopts this model, with the preparation of an RSS, for example, shown as having just these stages: first a phase when all are consulted on the issues to be dealt with, followed by the generation of options to choose between and the choice of a preferred one, followed by a period when the strategy is to be implemented. The detail of the process will be presented in Chapter 5; Figures 5.1 and 5.2 reveal the actual steps envisaged in PPS11 (ODPM 2004a).

The attack on this model (Barrett and Fudge 1981; Hill 2005) argued that these stages were not only not discrete, and overlapped, but actually in many policy fields and at many times were not separated at all. Most planners would have some sympathy with this position, given that they are aware that individual planning decisions may often not follow directly from plans or wider policy statements. Their sympathy is likely to wear out if it is suggested that this is always the case, as forward policy making and plan making becomes pointless if this is so. This applies as much in regional planning as more locally. It therefore seems that some conception of a stages model is unavoidable, and we will refer separately to the formulation of policy in RSSs or other plans, and to implementation. However, it is important to remember that the link is always

problematic. It can never be assumed that because a regional plan has been produced, it will be implemented. Precisely the difficulty in this respect has raised major challenges for regional planning and has been one driver behind government reforms in England.

3.5 Management of the regional planning process

A major issue, perhaps the central one, in a process as complex as most regional planning exercises, is *coordination*, or *integration*. Clearly, this is strongly related to the wider issue of control: the two permeate each other, as shown in the last chapter. But it is useful to look at the specifics of the management of exercises separately. Such management has been theorised in various ways since the 1960s, of which four are presented here. Perhaps the most extensive consideration was that by the 'strategic choice' group (Friend *et al.* 1974 being a comprehensive treatment). John Friend and his colleagues argued that planners should aim to reduce uncertainty by adopting the role of 'reticulating' practitioners, or 'reticulists'. These were network formers or catalysts. Such planners were to bring in all actors with influence and resources, whether in the planning or the implementation of an area's development. This required a conscious design of the process, working out whom to include when, and who would have influence over strategic choices or decisions. This formed a complete approach to planning, and although not widely followed, it has had some influence in the UK in recent years, in lending support to the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to strategic planning, as promoted by Wenban-Smith (2002) and recommended for about five years by the British government (in PPG3, DETR 2000a).

The strategic choice approach has some similarities to a second approach, that emphasises *networks and governance*, as expounded by political scientists in particular in the 1990s (Rhodes 1997). Here the idea is that governments, and professionals employed by them, no longer have any monopoly on planning processes, and must work with a wide range of interests, thus forming a more horizontal network structure, where governing is shared, often with no clear leading decision maker. The result may be more governance than government, it is argued, involving in a real way far more social and economic actors.

A third approach, again overlapping with that of networking, and developed at the same time, embraces *collaborative and communicative perspectives*. This includes various understandings, that developed by Patsy Healey (Healey 1997, 2003; Vigar *et al.* 2000) being quite comprehensive, others such as the work on communicative approaches (Forester 1999; Innes 1996) not necessarily seeking to present a whole model for planners to operate with. These perspectives advocate the careful construction of shared arenas for dialogue, leading to the making of concerted storylines for areas, which can then form the basis for durable shared strategies. The importance of as open and honest communication between interests as possible is stressed, drawing on the political philosophy of Juergen Habermas, especially his theory of communicative action (Habermas 1987).

There is some cross-link from the collaborative school (if it is one) to *discourse based* approaches (Hajer 1995; Rydin 2003a). Rydin argues for an analysis which recognises the interweaving of the discourses developed in any policy area with the institutions which may activate and realise these discourses. Different rationalities may inform these discourses and be variably embedded in institutions. Rydin analyses scientific, economic and communicative rationalities, and discusses whether some combination of these might support a 'sustainable development rationality'. She is not optimistic about the scope for collaborative planning in the sense of a fairly achieved consensus, preferring to stress the common role of conflict.

All of these approaches stress, if to varying degrees, the importance of making clear links to all relevant actors, and specifying the roles that different interests, groups or individuals may have in any planning exercise. They have different emphases, in part reflecting the time of their development. All draw primarily on English language discussions, although they have had influence on planning thinking more widely, particularly in northern Europe. The tendency in the UK has been to draw the insights from these approaches together, fairly eclectically, giving a sense of some sort of conventional wisdom in the early 2000s, as to the sort of characteristics a planning process might have. This has doubtless influenced to some degree the legislation produced in these years, and the tone of guidance written by planning ministry officials, particularly the emphasis on consultation.

However open or inclusive a process may be, the same questions will arise as to the nature of coordination. Two dimensions are important, vertical and horizontal co-ordination (Table 3.1).

3.5.1 Vertical co-ordination

Vertical co-ordination between the different planning authorities or agencies is critical. How the regional planners relate to those in the central government will condition much of the content of the plan, given that in most countries, to an extent even in federal states, overall planning system regulation and most major infrastructure funding are the prerogative of central government. In any policy field there is a centralisation/localisation dynamic, so this relationship changes, in planning as elsewhere, with shifts over the years (Hill 2005 Ch. 7).

The links may be simply up to the planning ministry, or planning section within some ministry, or it may be important to connect with a wide range of sections of government. The process is normally very much one way, with the centre constraining the region, at least in the UK. But pure coercion will work less well than at least a semblance of collaboration. Regional practitioners are clearly seeking to bend programmes or policies to the advantage of their region, and this may well be possible on occasions. Any examination of the agendas of the English Regional Assemblies (from about 2001, the designated Regional Planning Bodies) in the early 2000s shows a continuous process of commenting on central government initiatives and lobbying for resources. As will appear in

later chapters, these relationships have become institutionalised in various ways in England since the 1990s, affecting the range of matters which are up for discussion, and the expected degrees of manoeuvre opened up. The effect has been to create *a richer and more active process of vertical coordination*, made necessary by central government's increasing involvement in local and regional planning matters. Two examples may be given of institutional innovations for vertical linking from the last few years. One is the Examination in Public (EIP) for regional guidance/strategies, before a panel appointed by government, where strategies are fine tuned, largely with government priorities in mind, but on the basis of drafts made by Regional Assemblies. A second is the Regional Funding Allocation exercise of 2005–2006, which will be discussed in Chapter 10. Here regional agencies join with central government in prioritising some areas of future capital spending in each region, sharing the 'hard choices' with central ministries.

Table 3.1 Vertical and horizontal coordination in English regional planning

A. Vertical			
Central	Central government departments and agencies – all with different powers, agendas and interests	Government Offices for the Regions and Regional Development Agencies – both part central, part regional bodies	Pressure groups for business, environment etc. In England mainly nationally organised, but have local particularities and life in some cases (e.g. CBI, CPRE, Chambers of Commerce, TCPA, House Builders Federation)
Regional	Regional assemblies and Greater London Authority/Mayor of London		
Local	Local authorities		

B. Horizontal			
Regional	Core triumvirate in regions	Inner circle of interests ('policy community')	Outer circle of interests
	Government Offices for the Regions, Regional Development Agencies, regional assemblies and GLA	Business and environmental interest groups in assemblies and acting independently	Smaller associations, businesses and individuals acting occasionally on particular issues or small areas of the regions

3.5.2 *Horizontal co-ordination*

Vertical co-ordination should also logically include relationships with bodies below the regional level. The relationship with local authorities is particularly important, but it takes a different character, depending on the nature of the regional level. Where the regional steering body is a separate level of government, as in Germany, France or Spain, or in Scotland and Wales, then the relationship is indeed a vertical one, with the region (or nation in the case of Scotland and Wales) having certain powers to direct or manage the local authorities. Depending on a range of factors (party political control, degree of autonomous resourcing of local authorities and so on), the relationship may be more or less one of equals, more or less co-operative.

However, in the current English arrangements, the relationship to local authorities cannot so easily be called a vertical one, because representatives of the local authorities make up the majority of members of the Regional Assembly. This institutional arrangement generates significant tensions, but it means that the relationship is more internalised, and is best treated as a form of horizontal co-ordination. It is one of several forms which the regional planning body has to become adept at juggling.

Perhaps the dominant way of discussing this kind of relationship now is by referring to a *network of 'stakeholders'*. This phrasing became prominent in the UK in the late 1990s, following the tendency then to blur the criteria for involvement in any public policy, and identify a more horizontal governance model. This became institutionalised in the Regional Assemblies set up in 1999, in which representatives of economic, environmental and social pressure groups became members of the assemblies. It became equally institutionalised in planning practice from the mid 1990s, by which time places were normally reserved on the steering groups of regional planning exercises for these interests. They thus came to have an 'inside track' within the planning process. But a wider range of actors would generally be included within the concept of stakeholders, and these were increasingly seen as having a presence by right within the process – as evidenced most clearly by the list of those who must be consulted which was included in PPS11 (ODPM 2004a).

A *multi-layered process*

Horizontal co-ordination therefore, became in the English regional planning process a multi-layered process. On the top level was the *trio of key regional partners*: the assembly, the regional development agency and the regional office of the government, all institutions who could have some degree of veto over any regional plan. Links between these bodies were continuous and insistent, in that without understanding between them, the process could well break down. We will examine this relationship in more detail in Chapter 7.

On the second level was the close working between the *inner circle* made up of assembly members and steering group members – from local authorities (especially the largest ones – Birmingham, Manchester and so on), key pressure

groups (the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Home Builders Federation (HBF), the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)) and, perhaps to a more variable extent, the sectoral agencies of government such as the Environment Agency or the Highways Agency. All these bodies employed professional planners, and kept a continuous eye on the development of regional strategies (we will see the range of these strategies in Chapter 5). All could exert certain kinds of pressure at certain moments of the process, and developed skills to maximise this pressure. The central planning team therefore devoted significant efforts to keeping this set of bodies 'on board', as the plan was developed. In the policy analysis language of such political scientists as Rhodes (1997), this, with the first trio, was the 'policy community' running this policy field.

The third strand of linking up was a much looser 'issue network', made up of those who got involved in the planning exercise in relation to either a particular sectoral issue or a particular locality. They were normally also groupings, but could include on occasions active individuals able to devote time and energy to a regional planning level which was generally well beyond the radar of most ordinary citizens. They were not necessarily professional planners, though house building companies did employ consultants to intervene at key moments of planning exercises. Their actions were therefore, likely to be less continuous and to a degree less expertly informed. They might seek to act through intermediaries – councillors or one of the large groups included above in the 'inner circle', but might distrust such channels and feel impelled to act themselves. The planning team would be less worried about concerting the development of the plan with these relative outsiders. However, this wider world then merges in with the active consultation processes referred to above in the participatory model, in that these processes were intended precisely to open the door of the exercise to those less well connected or less well informed.

Implicit in presenting this process as having several layers is the ranking of their influence. However, implicit in government advice in England from around 2000 onwards was that the best regional planning exercise was one in which the greatest numbers of interests and people were able to participate, and presumably, exercise influence over the plan. There is clearly scope for tensions here. Will consultation or involvement or engagement (all terms in general regional planning use in these years) bring real collaboration or effective communication? Whose agendas set the dominant storylines and discourses, which then become the grounds on which the more detailed arguments are played out? Are the implied horizontalness of networks, or the idea of open give and take which underlies conceptions of governance, fair representations of the contemporary process, or rather mystifications?

Provisional answers to these questions will become clearer after looking at the state of play in the UK in Part 3 of the book. It is enough here to point out the large scope for tensions in the regional planning model created for England in recent years, in relation to how the process is managed and controlled. These tensions are relevant to the short discussion of the role of individual professionals, which follows, and to the return to some wider issues of power and democracy which completes this chapter.

3.6 Planning professionals in regional planning

One of the fascinating questions in the UK is: who does regional planning now? In the absence of any detailed survey, the answer is, no one knows exactly at present. It would seem that most of those leading regional planning teams are planners who were involved in strategic planning, often county structure planning, since the 1970s or 1980s. In most regions the senior planners in larger local authorities, who have similar backgrounds, also play an important role in the process. Other planners involved, whether in regional development agencies, government offices, pressure groups or consultancies, are less likely to have this background, although as in all planning, they will have been learning by being inside the process during the recent intense years of regional planning in England.

These leading planners are supported by a range of technical experts, working on issues such as demography, economy, transport, waste and so on. In some regions some of these experts are employed within the regional planning team (the case of the South East and London), elsewhere they may mostly work for local authorities. Increasingly, the support may be bought in from consultancies. Since about 2000 expertise has been built up in half a dozen or more consultancies specialising in these topics at regional level, often working for several of the main regional institutions.

Beyond the regional planning core teams and local authorities, not all these professionals may be planners. A tendency is probably emerging in which a more generic figure used to managing public sector contracts may take the lead, probably with a background in some related field. Planners have noted in England for example the prominent position of the Treasury in planning matters since about 2000, and the increased presence of economists which this has implied, as witnessed especially by the Barker Reviews on housing supply (HM Treasury/ODPM 2004) and on planning (HM Treasury 2006a). Consultancies with expertise on the economy such as Experian and Roger Tym Associates have, therefore, been much involved in work for regional development agencies and Regional Assemblies.

Professional planners have, therefore, become skilled in managing complex processes of research and strategy creation, very much in the mode foreshadowed by the strategic choice theorists, as 'reticulists'. This may well be a tendency implicit in much regional planning, as evidenced by similar collaborative arrangements used during the regional planning exercises of the 1960s and 1970s, and in other European countries. Up to the present the signs are that the community of UK planners as a whole have had the skills and experience to manage this process. There must be a question mark however as to whether the current training of planners in the UK is adequate for this particular task, and whether further training would not be desirable. An alternative is that other professionals may come to take over this role, leaving those coming out of planning schools now to run the lower levels of local planning and development control.

Whoever may be doing the regional planning job, the evidence at present is that they will need to have very thick skins, to support the tensions created in the current process in England. The discussion of the tasks of coordination and

involvement of stakeholders alluded to these tensions, but perhaps needs reinforcement. One aspect of the process has been the very heavy time pressure exerted by government on assemblies, as well as strong micro guidance on both substantive policy and process. One piece of anecdotal evidence of stress for leading team members has been the level of serious illness affecting these professionals recently. The process created by the 2004 Planning Act is one that requires very demanding regional level work, particularly, through the key part of the process, by the regional planning team. The government have been aware of this, and provided from about 2000 onwards significant funding for regional planning. However, it has been clear to most observers that this has not been enough to deal with the pressures coming through from the new system.

3.7 Major issues in power and democracy

Perhaps the two major process questions in any regional planning context are: (1) Who now *really* makes the key decisions? and (2) Who *should* take these decisions for the process to be recognised as democratic and fair? There are no easy answers to these questions, but any student or practitioner needs to give them some thought. The first is a factual one, but as any student of political science will know, an extraordinarily hard one to research and to claim a sure answer. The second question is normative, and is aided by some understanding of democratic theorising. The questions are clearly related to the division made above between elite and participatory forms of regional planning, though they may also go beyond that division. Some of the issues are introduced here, to return to these in the final chapter with an overview of where regional planning seems to be going.

3.7.1 *Power in planning*

Particularly since the mid 1990s planning theorists have been debating the question of power in planning (key references are Flyvbjerg 1998; Healey 2003; Hillier 2002; Huxley 2000; Ploger 2001; Rydin 2003a). The debate has not been a fully coherent one in the sense that participants have been coming at the issue from widely differing theoretical starting points. The twist given here will be directed to the questions at hand. One essential line of disagreement has been what *scope for choice* is present in planning, particularly for those doing planning at a local or strategic level. Some scholars emphasise the *space for creativity and innovation*, because they see power structures or pressures as enabling as much as constraining. Others stress the *force of limits*, whether coming from dominant discourses, institutional configurations, or the power of greater or lesser resourcing. These may be described as the 'deep structure' of power, the 'third face of power', or 'context-shaping power', in three different formulations summarised by Hill (2005 p. 49).

A particularly valuable set of reflections on power comes from Louis Albrechts, the Belgian planning academic, who led the making of the Flanders Structure Plan in the late 1990s (e.g. Albrechts 1999). He makes a conscious

effort to bring together the sides of the above disagreement (in a sense combining two of the leading social theorists who have influenced planning thought since the 1980s, Michel Foucault and Juergen Habermas). He opts for an approach which seeks radical change, within something like a collaborative and communicative planning approach. But he chronicles clearly how this was not possible in the Flanders case. All sorts of pragmatic decisions were needed to make an adequate plan, bringing out graphically the interactions with the political process, the role of relevant ministers, the need to embed the regional plan within main line planning, to get allegiance to its proposals, among much else. In other words, Albrechts reveals the constant compromises with real power, alongside the real scope for creativity and repeated innovation – here, perhaps especially the latter given the novelty of regional planning in Belgium.

The *two differing perspectives (enabling, limiting)* seem to be grounded partly in personal or temperamental differences, or possibly in experience of change in different countries. They also relate to different conceptions of the workings of power. Those of a more conventional hue see power as operating with particular force in particular directions, for example in governments or armies or in corporations largely from the top down, and that these macro structures have more effect than smaller phenomena. Followers of Michel Foucault see power as much more dispersed, operating everywhere at all times, and as continually reinforced by all actors, however powerless they might be conventionally seen to be. This may or may not be seen as giving more scope for change (depending on whether micro forces are seen as potentially open to change or not). But it does tend to stress the importance of individual actors, and of the creating and maintaining of discourses.

Partly, this is a matter of how the state is understood. Political scientists have tried to reconceptualise the nature of contemporary states. One split is seen in Table 3.2. The creators of this division in the end reject the hypothesis that we have moved to a more 'postmodern' state. They argue that the state has not been hollowed out, but reconstituted, in a strong form with a strong central executive. But they admit that there have been some changes from the more

Table 3.2 The traditional versus the postmodern state

Weberian bureaucratic state	*A postmodern state*
Government	Governance
Hierarchy (Weberian)	Heterarchy (networks etc.)
Power (1): zero-sum game	Power (1): positive-sum game
Power (2): concentrated	Power (2): diffuse
Elitist	Pluralist
Unitary, centralised, monolithic state	Decentralised, fragmented, hollowed state
Strong, central executive	Segmented executive
Clear lines of accountability	Blurred/fuzzy lines of accountability
State central control	State central steering
Single homogeneous public service ethos	Heterogeneous service culture

Source: Richards and Smith (2002 p. 36, Table 2.2). By permission of Oxford University Press.

traditional form of state (Richards and Smith 2002). These changes are partly in the direction of 'governance', with a different form of collaboration between state and private corporations, the goals of the state being more subordinated to those of business. On that basis government may be seen as a modified form of corporatism, and within that frame, regional planning may be seen as a region-alised corporatism to serve this national goal. The term 'corporatism' means a systematic tendency by government to include selected interests in privileged positions in decision making, hence excluding the rest.

This can be tackled from another direction. *Power in regional planning in the UK might be seen as, at the extreme, either extraordinarily constrained, or as radically dispersed.* Those seeing *wide open scope and dispersion* might argue that the consti-tutional or institutional reforms since the 1990s have created new opportunities to make fresh balances of the trajectory of each nation or region. This may be seen as particularly true in the cases of Scotland, Wales and (potentially if not quite yet) Northern Ireland, where constitutional reform has handed significant powers to newly legitimate governments, who can in principle come to a new settlement of their territories, stressing whatever priorities they may wish, within the all UK and EU framework. Optimists will argue that spatial planning work since 2000 gives evidence of the creation of such planning space (Chapter 6 will consider that perspective). In the English regions it may be argued, in a slightly different way, that the cumulative effects of change from 1990 onwards have created an instrument, the RSS, adequate to the spatial realities of the English regions. It is then up to regional actors to grasp this opportunity, which is necessarily wider open than that facing local authorities in the past, because of the wider canvas and the more extensive involvement of all regional interests. Any sense of disempowerment will be merely self-confirming, when the need is for regions to be proactive and assert their interests.

The opposite argument is that the constraints through a whole range of conventional power structures are real and growing. The apparent gift of regional or national autonomy, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is so hedged about by a range of factors (economic, party political, by extensive legislation which applies across the UK) that the real range of strategic choices is much reduced. The most powerful baseline is seen as that of a neoliberalising and globalising capital-ism, fully supported by the UK government, whereby every spatial level is called to compete for private investment and for public (UK government) resources. In the English regions more specific impediments may be seen as having been created, including the micro specification of PPSs, the institutional architecture and resourcing of the regions (especially the government decision not to create English elected regional government, but to form regional development agencies controlled from the centre, alongside an extensive central government adminis-tration and agency network), and the continuous weakening of one of the tradi-tional bases of autonomous planning, local government. The real winner in English 'regionalisation' is then seen as the Government Offices for the Regions (GORs) – the arms of central government (Musson *et al.* 2006).

These arguments are presented in Table 3.3. By addressing explicitly the

Table 3.3 Power and regional planning in the UK – two perspectives

Dimension of context	Regional planning as enabled	Regional planning as constrained
New institutions	New bodies in Scotland, Wales and England all offer good chances for innovative strategising, in varying degrees	Regional institutions, at least in England outside London, are too weak to be able to innovate effectively, and so are dependent on central government when major decisions have to be made
Political economy of ownership and control	By involving all stakeholders, especially the private sector, planners can make plans which are capable of implementation	Private developers, and some pressure groups, now have much greater influence, especially over implementation, than representatives of public interests
Public resourcing	Far more resources are available for regional planning activity than ever in the UK	Resources for planning activity still meagre, given very heavy new demands, and for implementation of strategies resources are only a small proportion of real needs
Changed powers of lower jurisdictions	Weakening of local authorities in England and to degrees in other parts of UK give fresh chance for wider vision of the real areas to be planned	Local authorities gave a base independent of government, which now can impose its agenda relatively easily
Central guidance	Faith is placed for the first time in regional planning to develop regionally specific options, if adequate arguments are developed	Guidance from the UK planning ministry, and to a certain extent from the equivalent ministries in the other countries, constrain radically what can be done regionally, making English RSSs little more than regional application of central formulas

power dimensions in the UK context, the wider contours of planning can be seen more clearly. This by no means delivers an answer as to whether the constraining or dispersed view of power in planning is more true in any one context. It may be hoped that there is much strength in the enabling position, as this would give support for regionally specific innovation. But there seems little doubt that a combination of state and wider globalising forces are tending to narrow the planning agenda, whether locally or regionally, not just in the UK. To shift that, new discourses and imaginations may be needed, to start with.

3.7.2 Planning and democracy

Another perspective on many of the same issues comes from the question of how to make public policy making more democratic. Of course this may not be an objective of planning. Greater overall wealth, or economic efficiency, or ecological sustainability, may be values placed above this. But in the UK and elsewhere many arguments about regional government and by extension regional planning have been phrased partly in democratic terms (Keating 1998). Democracy has been one pole in debates taking place in the UK recently (Beetham 2005; Beetham *et al.* 2002; Sampson 2004). The reform of the planning system has also been contentious in this respect, with the Conservative Party committed at the time of writing to abolishing Labour's regionalisation (including RAs) and to returning planning powers to local authorities (David Cameron, Conservative Party Leader speech, 30 March 2006). So a consideration of the democratic-ness of current planning, including the regional dimension, can make a useful contribution to thinking about the regional planning process.

As Chapter 5 will show in detail, powers in planning in England (where the democratic issue is at its sharpest) are concentrated at three levels. Two of these are elected, the central government and the local authorities, while the regions in the middle are not, and are not likely to be in the foreseeable future. The legitimacy of the three levels may be seen as differing in form. Central government depends on its elected status, plus a commitment to consult on new legislation and guidance, in which it responds to the concerns of interest groups. Local government and regional governing bodies are seen to depend much more heavily on consultation processes, a core part of the new planning system, although councils retain some legitimacy from being elected.

Under these circumstances it is by no means clear where a 'neutral' democrat would want to locate most planning power. In the past it can be argued that at least a significant quotient lay at the local (county or district) level, even though always since the 1940s with clear constraints from central government. Now, and particularly since about 2000, it can be argued that the emphasis has shifted to central government, which has taken the lead in a whole range of ways, centrally, regionally, sub-regionally and locally, to influence planning policy. This shift is contested by some local and environmental interests. It

connects to a particular view of the appropriate economic trajectories for these areas, and thus relates to a more or less explicit regional policy, to boost all parts of England economically. Where we stand as to the most appropriate democratic arrangement of planning depends on our conception of democracy, so it is necessary to examine this.

Recent discussions of democracy have stressed the multiplicity of dimensions that need to be taken into account in looking at any particular situation (Beetham 2005; Dryzek 2000; Saward 2003; Weale 1999). Saward emphasises the range of devices that can be combined to make different forms of democratic practice. By devices he means any separable element, such as a referendum, proportional voting, responding to interest groups, a citizens' jury and so on (see Table 3.4). He then discusses how these may be phased or sequenced to make up a coherent democratic storyline or mechanism. This conception is rather neutral as to what general arrangements are more democratic. It gives us no model or template against which to evaluate our regional planning practice. It says rather: look at the *overall devices set* – and feel the quality, in some way. This may not be the simplest advice to institutional designers, and clearly needs development. However, it may be nearer the answer than external prescription.

In regional planning this can be seen in practice in the sequence laid out in PPS11, although it would be necessary to extend that to include antecedents and subsequent revision, to see the whole run of regional planning process. It would then be seen that a number of devices are included – a somewhat representative

Table 3.4 Possible devices that might be used in regional planning, giving different balances of democratic control to different interests

General form of democratic device	Electoral	Corporatist	Deliberative
Examples of devices	Elections at national level for central government Elections at local level for local authorities Elections for regional authorities (not existing in England) Referenda at any level (All may be carried out more or less proportionally)	Interest group activity at all levels Interest group representation in regional assemblies	Public meetings Focus groups Citizens' juries Examination in public of RSS Opinion polling (may have deliberative element, if linked to group discussions; may be carried out by differernt interests, with different slants), TV, radio, press Internet based information and exchanges

assembly as regional planning body, a process of interest group involvement, opinion polling, focus group organising, public examination, decisions and guidance throughout by an elected central government (or its officials) and so on. Although the English approach to regional planning has not yet been described in detail, it will be seen that a complex set of democratic or partially democratic devices is being included; equally others are excluded. No elected regional government is there to integrate and legitimise actions, no referendum is present for elements of the plan or for the whole plan, vetoes are not available to potentially excluded groups – to mention some paths not taken.

How the pros and cons of democratic surplus and democratic deficit are balanced up is going to remain in part subjective and in part related to our substantive goals – in shorthand, political. A large company wishing to get ahead in the European market will in principle prefer a submissive and permissive planning mechanism, subject to few localist or critical voices and forces. People concerned about environmental conditions or about the prospects for weaker interests, may opt for a more open process, more locally controlled. These links of process and substance cannot be avoided. The argument here is not at all for some pure relativism, that it simply depends what your interest is. But *it is essential to specify the interests at play, explicitly and consciously, to come to some view on degrees of democracy.*

3.8 Conclusions

Thinking about the regional planning process needs to do two things. One is to lay out ways of approaching process which may spark ideas of how to analyse and develop present techniques. This has been the main track taken in this chapter. The other task is a more practical one which might suggest the best ways to organise regional planning to achieve relevant objectives and values. This has not been attempted, at least not explicitly. In part this has been because of the weakly developed analysis of regional planning process at the present, and in part because in England a very detailed process is already laid out very firmly for regions, and until this is fully understood, little, in terms of the remaining choices, can be presented. Later it will be possible to comment on these choices, which do revolve, in part, around how elite or participatory it is reasonable to strive to make regional planning in current circumstances.

For now let us summarise, in two points. First, the decision of who to seek to involve or who to exclude is a *politically charged* one, affecting control of decisions. Recent planning thinking has laid the foundations for a general sense of best practice, which is for an open and participatory process. But practitioners are aware of the large barriers in making this really work. 'Really working' would mean that in some way interests would have an equal chance to influence the regional plan and its implementation. In a very unequally resourced institutional and socio-economic landscape, this is a tall order. Moving to a genuinely open and participatory process would need many measures which have not yet been contemplated by government.

Second, the regional planning process presents a *formidable management challenge*, to take on board the vertical and horizontal pressures of a wide range of governmental agents and societal stakeholders. Management skills of the highest order are needed to make the process work, on almost any definition of working, whether completing the process to the government's timetable (or something like it), or securing a sustainable plan for the long-term future of the region. This applies very much more within the English model, than in the far more manageable situations of the rest of the UK (or of London, more like Wales or Scotland institutionally speaking). To meet this challenge we are probably witnessing the creation of a very novel formula: a regional planning process led strongly by central government, incorporating in an institutionally complex and ventriloquised discourse a very wide range of stakeholders, but generating significant exclusions. How durable a statutory planning landscape this will create within the first five years or so of the 2004 Act system, remains to be seen, and will be explored further in Chapter 12. But next it is necessary to examine areas of substantive theory which can help understanding of contemporary regional planning.

4 Theorising regional planning
Substantive

4.1 Introduction

We now move from theoretical explanations of the process of regional planning to explanations of the substantive nature of regions. How do we explain the prosperity of some regions and the decline of others? What determines the spatial structure of regions, and what are the determinants of sustainable regional development? The determinants of regional development are many and complex and, as noted by Hilhorst (1971) many years ago, their explanation presents a daunting task. The contributions to regional substantive theory, the explanations of the nature and condition of regions, stem from a wide variety of sources – as a glance through the volumes of a journal such as *Regional Studies* will reveal. 'Packaging' the various theories constitutes a major problem. In the 1960s, Friedmann and Alonso published a seminal text on Regional Development and Planning (Friedmann and Alonso 1964), which sought to organise relevant knowledge into three broad areas: spatial organisation, urbanisation and regional growth theories. Another approach is to differentiate between 'macro', inter-regional approaches, which focus on inter-relationships between regions as a whole, and 'micro', or intra-regional approaches, which focus on the actions of individual agents within a region. There are also supply-side and demand-side approaches, and variations in approach depending on an academic/discipline starting point. Over time, there has been considerable inter-mixing and fusing of explanations.

In addition, although economic factors are of fundamental importance, development is much more than economic development or economic growth. It can be seen as a multi-dimensional process including, in addition to the economic development process, social development processes concerned with the distributional aspects of development, and political/administrative development processes concerned with the shifts in the influence and power of groups and individuals. All these processes are complexly inter-related and interdependent – the distributional impact of economic growth, the productivity effect of social factors and so on. Regional development can be seen as the process of multi-dimensional development within a particular area, a region.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of this dynamic field of substan-

tive regional theory, of those aspects of particular relevance to contemporary regional planning, by adopting a simple threefold structure. The most substantial section (4.2) first provides a brief overview of some of the more traditional theories of regional development, before focusing on the perceived key elements which determine the relative competitiveness of regions and their constituent sub-regions. This is set in the context of the forces of globalisation and the dramatic shifts in the structure of economies of advanced nations towards more knowledge-based economies. This is followed in section 4.3 by a discussion of theories of regional spatial structure, including hierarchies of settlements, growth poles, transport corridors and concepts such as polycentricity of regional activities and services. Section 4.4 sets the theoretical discussion in the wider context of sustainability and examines the determinants of a more sustainable regional development. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the evolution and the possible next steps in the nature and explanations of the dynamic regional development systems.

4.2 Regional growth and development

4.2.1 Structuring the discussion

Regional development has both short-run and long-run dimensions. All regions and sub-regions experience short-run ups and downs in prosperity, and some of the techniques for analysing such changes are discussed in Chapter 8. But the long-run nature of the development of regions, measured, for example, in terms of income, output, population change and employment, can vary widely, and some regions may experience long-run decline while others may have decades of relative prosperity. Similarly, within regions, certain sub-regions may be considerably more prosperous than others. What factors account for such variations?

It is generally recognised that regional growth and development may result from either exogenous or endogenous determinants – that is from factors external or internal to a region, or more usually from some combination of both. A key external determinant is the level of demand for the products and services of a region. Internal determinants relate more to the supply of factors in the region, such as the quality of the workforce, local innovation systems and transport and communications. There has been an increasing recognition of the supply side of regional growth, and a bottom-up focus on some of the key actors involved in the regional development process.

The evolving approach to explanations of relative levels and rates of regional growth and development is discussed here in two stages. The first takes a brief overview of some of the traditional/classical theories of regional growth – identifying external and internal, aggregated and disaggregated, and economic and non-economic dimensions. There is also discussion of concepts which seek to explain whether regional growth is convergent or divergent. The second stage focuses on more contemporary determinants of competitive regions, drawing for

example on the work of Krugman (1991), Porter (2002, 2003), Parkinson (2004) and others, and covering factors such as innovation, economic diversity and strategic decision-making capabilities.

4.2.2 'Traditional' theories of regional growth

Aggregate growth models

These are models which are spatially aggregate, abstracting from space and looking at the region as a whole. Some models focus on growth from the inside, such as the sector theory (Clark 1940) and the related stages theory (Hoover 1948). Both seek to explain regional growth in terms of an evolutionary progression of a region's economic structure from one based on primary sectors, through secondary manufacturing sectors to one based on tertiary/services sectors.

Other models focus on growth from outside, recognising that regions are not vacuum sealed against all external impulses, but are open to the flows of trade from the outside world. The export base theory (North 1955; Tiebout 1956) provides the classical model, which sees the level of external demand for the products of a region's export industries as the critical determinant of regional growth. A region's growth is determined by the exploitation of natural advantages and the growth of the regional export base which are in turn largely influenced by the level of external demand from other regions and countries. The income from export sales will lead to the development of residentiary activities, capital and labour movements, the development of external economies and future regional growth. In our globalising world the external, national and international environment for a regional economy cannot be ignored. International economies are becoming increasingly open; there are also major structural shifts towards high-tech industry and consumer and producer services. But will export growth always lead to regional growth, and is export growth solely determined by external demand? If, for example, there are constraints on the necessary infrastructure to service growth or on local business innovation, a region may not benefit much from the external stimulus. As such internal factors can be of considerable importance and are intertwined with the external determinants.

Another strand of theory in 'good currency' in the 1980s was that of long waves of regional development (Marshall 1987). Kondratieff identified in the 1920s 'long waves' in the world economy, with a cycle of about 50 to 60 years. Schumpeter (1954) emphasised the role of technology in long-wave formation. A combination of ideas led to the postulation that the advanced industrial nations had evolved through four Kondratieff cycles, before entering the fifth in the 1980s/1990s associated with major innovations in new technology – microelectronics, computing, bio-technology and similar industries. Unfortunately, long-wave theory cannot clarify the regional locational requirements for innovative development; it merely provides a useful descriptive framework.

A disaggregated approach – industrial structure analysis

The models discussed above do recognise the importance of industrial structure in the process of regional growth, but their aggregate nature can hide important regional variations. Industry is not homogeneous and some industries grow much faster than others. Similarly some regions grow faster than others. As industrial structure varies from region to region, it is tempting to draw the obvious conclusion that there is a causal relationship between industrial structure and regional growth. Industrial structure analysis examines this relationship. Pioneered first in the UK Barlow Report (see HMSO 1940 Appendix II) it was subsequently rediscovered by Perloff *et al.* (1960) in the USA, and gained popular application in the UK in the 1960s/1970s under the new title of 'shift-share analysis' (see, for example, Stilwell 1969). It has also been subject to considerable criticism (Stilwell 1970) partly because it is less a regional growth theory and more an analytical technique. Yet it does still have much to commend it.

The approach requires the isolation of the effects of a region's industrial structure on its growth over a particular period of time, using a representative variable – normally employment. Total regional employment growth (G) is divided into share (N) and shift (P, D) components, as follows:

The 'national share' component (N) represents the amount by which regional employment would have grown if it had grown at the national rate over the study period. This is the norm for the region from which the shift deviations can be measured.

The 'shift' component represents the amount by which the regional growth deviates from the national share, being positive in prosperous areas and negative in depressed areas. The net shift can be subdivided into two further components:

The 'proportionality shift' component (P), sometimes known as the 'structural' or 'industrial mix' component, measures the amount of net regional shift attributable to the mix of industrial sectors in the region. Hence the more nationally fast-growing sectors in the region, the more positive this component will be.

The 'differential shift' component (D), sometimes known as the 'locational' or 'regional' component, is the remainder. It measures the amount of net regional shift attributable to a region's internal factors – such as good workforce skills and transport systems. It will be positive for a region with locational advantages and negative for one with disadvantages.

A UK application by Stilwell (1969) showed that in the prosperous South East region in the 1960s, only two-thirds of the regional employment growth (G) could be explained by the national share component (N). The remaining positive deviation was explained by the proportionality shift component (P) only, which suggests that the main reason for growth was the mix of nationally growing industries in the region. Indeed, a small negative differential shift factor (D) suggests that some locational factors in the region, such as congestion, may have actually been inhibiting the growth potential reflected in the industrial mix. For the North West region, the analysis presented both negative

differential and proportionality shift components, as reflected in the poor growth performance of the region in the 1960s.

Convergent or divergent regional growth?

The question of whether the gaps in regional prosperity will widen or narrow over time is one of considerable importance to the regional planner. Factor flows between regions (for example, the movement of capital to exploit lower costs in depressed regions) and the development of diseconomies of scale in the prosperous areas, could in theory lead to convergence. In practice, however, convergence trends may be limited by the immobility of factor movements between sectors and regions, and the failure of diseconomies to have impact on the growth of the prosperous regions. Other, more hybrid, regional growth theories which clearly recognise that regional growth may be more divergent than convergent are the *centre-periphery theories* of Hirschman (1958), Friedmann (1967) and Myrdal (1957). Figure 4.1 illustrates the general arguments behind such theories. Region A initially develops faster than region B because it possesses certain natural and/or man-made advantages. However, contrary to some growth theories, this initial divergence may not be self-righting, and indeed the process may be cumulative, with 'the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer'.

  Myrdal explained this process of *cumulative causation* in terms of *spread* and *backwash* effects. The spread effects are those forces favouring convergence between the rich and poor regions. As the rich region grows it may demand more products from the poor region thus stimulating its growth. Diseconomies of scale may also affect the prosperous region. However, Myrdal believed that such spread effects would invariably be more than offset by
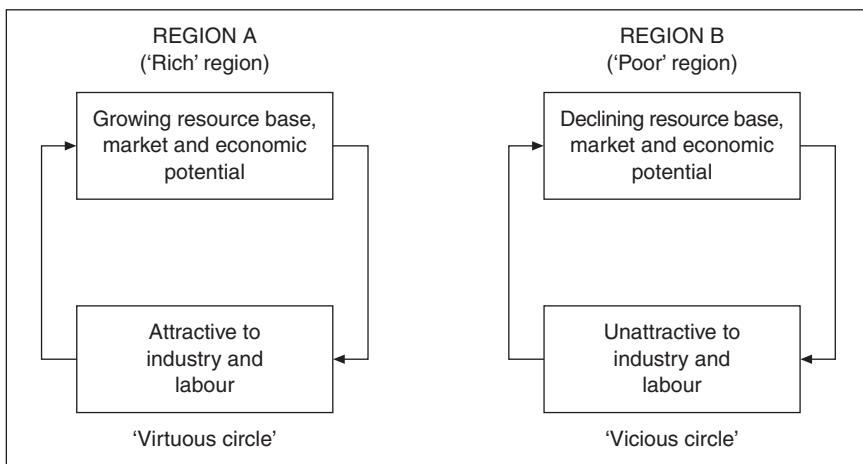
Figure 4.1 The process of regional cumulative causation.

backwash effects. The increased demand for peripheral goods may not mate-rialise if the peripheral region's goods are primarily those with a low income elasticity of demand, such as agricultural goods. In addition, and of particular importance, the selective out-migration of capital and skilled labour from the poor region to the rich region may do more harm than good, reducing the ability of the poor region to compete. As already noted, the diseconomies of the rich region may also have little impact being offset by other economic and social benefits.

Other theorists have supported the concept of divergent regional growth on the basis of the control, as much as the structure, of industry. For example, Holland (1976) argued that the fundamental cause of regional imbalance was capitalism itself, and especially the rising power of multi-national enterprises (MNEs). He saw the latter as concentrating in the most prosperous regions of a country, and remaining there impervious to policy measures to relocate them, and threatening to leave the country altogether if they did not get their own way. This may be an over-rigorous assessment of the activities of MNEs, and many have relocated some or part of their activities to the problem regions. But this may bring its own problems of greater external control and dependency in a peripheral economy – with possible political implications (see Firn 1975, in relation to Scotland).

Social and political factors in regional growth

As noted in the previous section, political and social factors are of considerable significance in regional growth and development, but they have had a low profile in traditional theories. However, there have been some significant con-tributions and these are briefly noted here. Klaassen (1968), for example, noted the importance of social amenities in regional economic growth. On a slightly different tack, Pahl (1970) argued that an individual's location in a spatial sense fundamentally influenced his/her life chances because of constraints it imposed on access to social facilities, such as education. From practice, the Northern Region Strategy Team (NRST 1975) drew attention to the greater proportion of low socio-economic groups in the North compared with the national average, and with the reverse situation in the South East. Factors such as these may limit the proclivity for entrepreneurship and reinforce social and occupational immo-bility, which may themselves limit indigenous self-help and hinder the adoption of new concepts and technologies.

A contemporary discussion of the role of *social factors* in economic growth and regional development (Regional Studies Journal 2005), reinforces the importance of 'social capital'. The term 'social capital' is a fuzzy concept, but it has been defined as 'the networks, norms, relationships, values and informal sanctions that shape the quantity and co-operative quality of a society's interac-tions' (Performance and Innovation Unit 2002 p. 5). It can involve horizontal and vertical associations, links within groups ('bonding' social capital) and cross-cutting links ('bridging' social capital). Storper (1995) stresses the

importance of 'untraded inter-dependencies' (such as networks of trust and co-operation), which may be important in explaining the relative competitiveness of regions and sub-regions, as will be discussed further below, and in Chapter 8.

Political factors are of course central in regional policy making, and regional policy decisions are political decisions about the spatial allocation of resources. Some traditional theories made limited inroads to building political factors into regional growth theories. For example, additional to Holland's ideas in the preceding section, Kohr (1971) argued the principle of *peripheral neglect* – with remote regions being seen as out of sight and out of mind of central decision makers. Hechter (1975) argued that regions, such as Wales, may be treated like *internal colonies* within a nation. The implications of such arguments are the need to manipulate political as well as economic space to generate regional growth, giving greater political weight to the problem regions. Thus regional policy decisions often reflect a trade-off between economic efficiency, equity and political expediency, and this should be recognised in any discussion of regional growth. We return to a more contemporary assessment of the politics of regional planning in later chapters.

4.2.3 Competitive regions – a contemporary approach

Overview – competitive regions and cities

Since the 1980s there has been a growing recognition of a range of key determinants in nations, regions and cities which help to explain their relative competitiveness and economic performance in the world. These determinants include a range of largely supply-side factors such as the innovative capacity and the quality of the workforce of an area. These are often discussed with particular reference to the changing nature of economies, with the marked shift towards high-tech industries and knowledge-intensive businesses (see Hall and Markusen (1985) for an early example of high-tech location factors). Some of the key proponents of the competitive approach – such as Krugman, Porter and Parkinson – have already been noted above. An important element in much of their writing is the central role of cities/city regions within the wider context of regions and nations, and the importance of innovative capacity.

Krugman (1991) has stated that 'one of the best ways to understand an economy is to study its cities'. Similarly, Porter has highlighted how the geographical clustering of industries helps to explain both the competitive performance of those industries, and the success of the regions and cities in which those clusters are located (Porter 1998, 2003). But what are the key determinants of the economic competitiveness of regions and their cities? Porter's analysis of the structural and process factors underpinning successful national and regional economies has been very influential. His fundamental argument is that competitiveness is based on productivity and that innovation underlies productivity – 'a region's or nation's standard of living [wealth] is determined by the productivity with which it uses its human, capital and natural resources. The appropri-

ate definition of competitiveness is productivity' (Porter 2002). In the context of globalisation, advanced economies need to concentrate on high value-added products and services and to be innovative in doing so (Porter 2003).

Parkinson *et al.* (2004), in their comparative study of what makes European cities competitive, reviewed quantitative data on 50 large cities and canvassed the views of key stakeholders in 30 of the cities. Five factors were consistently identified as the main drivers of competitiveness. *These were: innovation systems, quality of the workforce, economic diversity and specialisation, connectivity and strategic decision-making capacity.* Subsequent work on the major UK 'State of the Cities Report' (ODPM 2005d) reinforced these findings. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) report reinforced also the main thrust of the competitive approach:

> The new conventional wisdom is that nations, regions and cities have to be more competitive to survive in the new marketplace being forged by globalisation and the new information technologies. Within government, interest has grown in the regional foundations of national competitiveness. The government has focused on the competitiveness of the country's regions, cities and more recently, city regions, as part of its own aim to improve the productive and innovative performance of the national economy. Similarly, the European Commission argues that the improvement of the competitiveness of cities in Europe's lagging regions is vital to the pursuit of social coherence.
>
> (ODPM 2005d)

Figure 4.2, drawn from the *State of the Cities Report* (ODPM 2005d), highlights the key drivers of competitiveness – of relevance as much to regions as to cities. It also makes interesting reference to the underlying theories/concepts. The links with some of the traditional theories, such as export base and evolutionary theory, are evident. Others, such as cumulative causation, are also noted in the report. The following section highlights variations in UK regional competitiveness. This is then followed by a brief exploration of the key determinants/drivers, and other relevant concepts/theories, such as clustering.

Variations in UK regional competitiveness

Table 4.1 provides an index of UK regional competitiveness, as assembled by Huggins (2003). The underlying three-factor model uses (1) inputs – business density (firms per capita), knowledge-based businesses as a proportion of all businesses, and overall economic participation (economic activity rates); (2) outputs – productivity (GDP per capita); and (3) tangible outcomes – level of average earnings (full-time wages) and rate of unemployment. It reveals very clearly the continuance and deep-seated nature of the north–south divide in economic fortunes in the UK, with the three GSE regions providing the driving force in the UK economy.
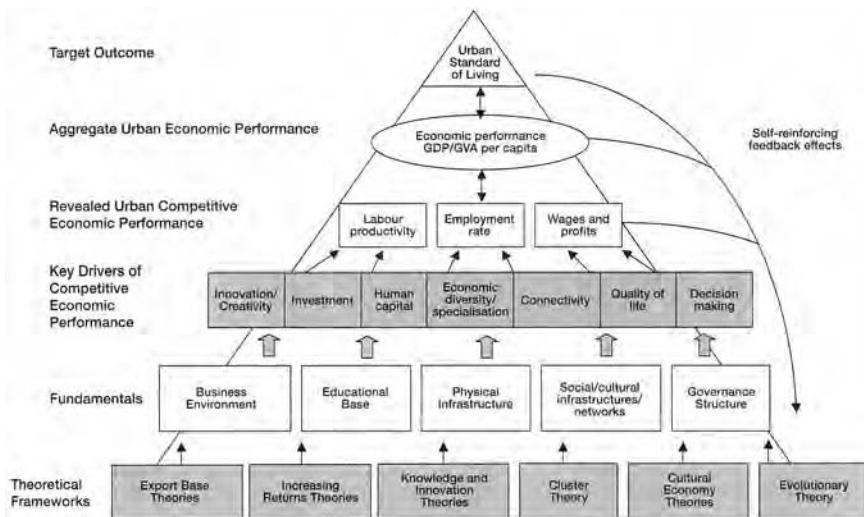
Figure 4.2 Conceptualising urban (and regional) competitive performance. (*Source:* ODPM (2005d).)

This divide is verified at the more city region scale (using Travel to Work Areas – TTWAs) by findings in the 'State of Cities Report' (ODPM 2005d). For example, this shows average weekly household incomes (adjusted for housing costs) and GVA per capita substantially higher in GSE TTWAs, such as Oxford, Reading and Cambridge, than in the nation at large. Visible exports per capita are also much higher in these locations. But for most indicators there are also examples of intra-regional variations – including prosperous pockets in the problem regions (see Chapter 8, Figure 8.1).

Key determinants of competitive regions

For knowledge-driven economies such as the UK, the most significant driving forces are ideas, *innovation*, highly-educated people and risk investment (ODPM 2005d). Key elements tend to be highly concentrated in a limited number of city regions, enabling them to gain competitive advantage and to export into world markets. Data on innovation is limited, but patent applications and levels of investment and venture capital provide a start. Patent applications are particularly high in the Oxford, Cambridge, Aldershot, Reading, Ipswich and Bristol TTWAs (Figure 4.3(a)). Begg (2002) sees 'investability' (how investable an area is) as the key to competitive regions, and determined by public capital (such as transport infrastructure), factor markets and a range of social and governance factors.

The *quality of the workforce* is closely associated with the maintenance of an innovation system in a region. The importance of the variations in human

Table 4.1 UK index of regional competitiveness

Rank	Region	Index
1	London	119.2
2	South East	107.2
3	Eastern	104.8
4	South West	97.0
5	East Midlands	95.6
6	West Midlands	95.4
7	Scotland	95.1
8	North West	93.8
9	Yorkshire and Humber	92.6
10	Wales	89.8
11	Northern Ireland	87.7
12	North East	86.5
	UK	100.0
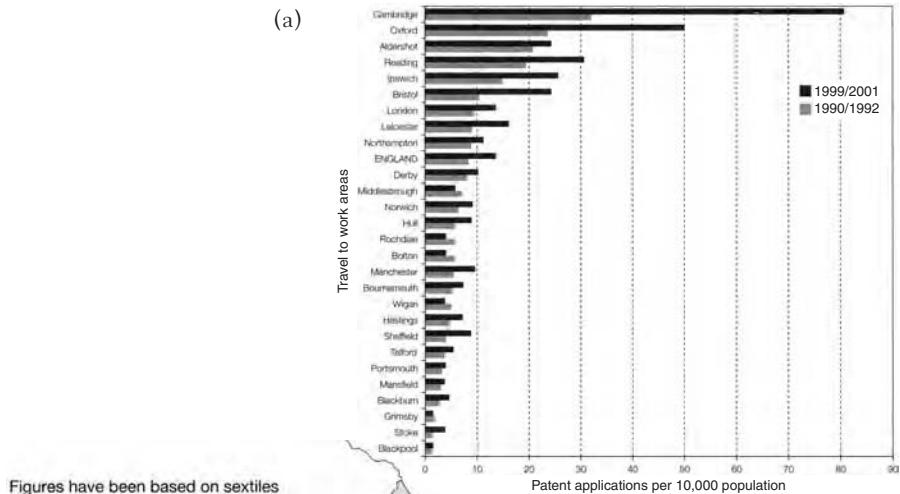
Source: Huggins (2003).

capital has already been noted in the discussion of traditional theories. Recent reports (Simmie *et al.* 2006; ODPM 2005d) show a correlation between inter-mediate level and higher education skills and an area's ability to develop an innovative, knowledge-based economy. Florida (2002) has advocated the importance of a 'creative class' and the 'geography of talent', whereby a rich mix of entrepreneurs, philanthropists, local policy makers and professional services come together in an area to provide leadership, vision and examples of what can be done (see Lawton Smith *et al.* 2005; Glasson *et al.* 2006 for the example of Oxfordshire in the UK).
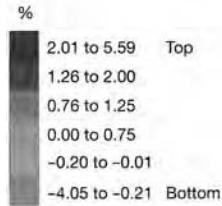
The importance of *economic diversity* for competitiveness has generated some debate. The outcome appears to be that there are advantages in having a com-bination of specialisation and diversity, 'clustered diversity', combined with an adaptive capacity. Parkinson *et al.* (2004) have illustrated the value of a diver-sity of economic sectors for the economic success of European cities – but the most successful cities also had high levels of specialisation within some key sectors. This reflects the need for highly sophisticated knowledge and compe-tence in modern goods and services, although there is a danger of becoming stuck in particular structural and technological trajectories that can make them vulnerable to shifts in competition and trade (ODPM 2005d).

For advanced economies the key sectors tend to be more service than manu-facturing. De-industrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s has reduced the percent-age share of manufacturing for total employment to well below 20 per cent, although some manufacturing, especially high-tech-based, can be significant in regional prosperity (note, for example, the impact of Rolls Royce and Toyota on the Derbyshire sub-region in the UK East Midlands). Services are now the key growth sectors, including finance, business, public administration, education, health and social services. A particular important category for growth is the

(a)

1999/2001
1990/1992

Travel to work areas

Cambridge
Oxford
Aldershot
Reading
Ipswich
Bristol
London
Leicester
Northampton
ENGLAND
Derby
Middlesbrough
Norwich
Hull
Rochdale
Bolton
Manchester
Bournemouth
Wigan
Hastings
Sheffield
Telford
Portsmouth
Mansfield
Blackburn
Grimsby
Stoke
Blackpool

Patent applications per 10,000 population

Figures have been based on sextiles

England = 1.27

Mean   0.97
Standard Deviation   1.63

%

2.01 to 5.59   Top
1.26 to 2.00
0.76 to 1.25
0.00 to 0.75
−0.20 to −0.01
−4.05 to −0.21   Bottom

Unsampled data

Miles
0   50   100

0   50   100
Kilometres

TTWAs

Boundary Data Source: Travel to Work Areas 1998, National Statistics
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(b)

Cities (y-axis)

Burnley, Sunderland, Rochdale, Blackpool, Blackburn, Middlesbrough, Plymouth, Grimsby, Hull, Newcastle, Birkenhead, Huddersfield, Mansfield, Bolton, Bradford, Preston, Wigan, Liverpool, Telford, Sheffield, Warrington, Manchester, Leeds, York, Wakefield, Norwich, Gloucester, Bournemouth, Nottingham, Derby, Barnsley, Doncaster, Stoke, Portsmouth, Hastings, Birmingham, Worthing, Southampton, Bristol, Leicester, Brighton, Ipswich, Coventry, Northampton, Peterborough, Swindon, Southend, Oxford, Cambridge, Aldershot, Chatham, Crawley, Milton Keynes, Luton, Reading, London

Minutes (x-axis): 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250

(c)

Figure 4.3 Some indicators of determinants of competitiveness – selected TTWAs. (a) Innovation: patent applications. (b) Growth sectors/diversity: percentage change of employees in knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) between 1991 and 2001. (c) Connectivity: fastest post 0600 rail weekday journey time to London. (*Source:* ODPM (2005d).)

knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS); in the core city regions these are dominated by financial services (Figure 4.3(b)).

Connectivity is of vital importance for facilitating the interdependencies and interactions that may develop between the particular components of innovation, both in a given region and between that region and the wider national and international systems. Connectivity is generally defined as transport infrastructure (roads, rail and air), telecommunications and business networks. One indicator of physical connectivity in the UK is given by the fastest available journey time by rail to London (Figure 4.3 (c)). This is less than 50 minutes for locations such as Oxford, Cambridge and Milton Keynes in the GSE, but over three hours for locations such as Burnley, Blackburn and Rochdale in the North West region. Air travel has become particularly important in the global economy, both for the transfer of people and high-value goods. The connectivity of airports depends on the number of destinations served on a regular basis by scheduled flights; for example, in 2004 London Heathrow served approximately 180 destinations, Manchester 88 and Newcastle 14.

Telecommunications are of increasing importance to connectivity, and especially for e-commerce. A critical element is high-capacity broadband, allowing large amounts of data to be transferred at high speed. In a survey by the British Chamber of Commerce (2003), almost 50 per cent of businesses indicated that broadband access was a significant factor in choosing a business location. The broader the bandwidth, the quicker information can be transmitted. In 2002, London was ranked first among European cities for Internet bandwidth (Simmie *et al.* 2006). Also of great importance are business/social networks which can help to transfer ideas, facilitate business support and create new alliances. See, for example, their role in the case of university/high-tech business links in 'Enterprising Oxford' (Lawton-Smith *et al.* 2003).

A further driver is the degree of autonomy over *strategic decision making*. UK cities and regions differ markedly from their European counterparts. Local governments in England control only 25 per cent of public sector expenditure, compared with 35 per cent in Germany and 42 per cent in the USA. This highly centralised system concentrates decision making in the hands of an array of central government departments. However, in the 'quality of life' activities (such as planning, amenity, recreation, public space and, to some extent, transport) local authorities do retain some influence. The advent of the Regional Development Agencies also supports regional decision making in some key areas, such as innovation, diversity and skills.

4.3　Regional spatial structure

4.3.1　Structuring the discussion

The spatial structures of regions are the products of a variety of forces, and have been and continue to be the subject of considerable academic debate, particularly by human geographers. Many years ago Garner (1967) noted a number of

premises which then underpinned most models of regional spatial structure. These included:

- the spatial distribution of human activity rests on ordered adjustments to distance;
- locational decisions are taken to minimise the frictional effects of distance;
- some locations are more accessible than others;
- there is a tendency for human activities to agglomerate to take advantage of scale economies;
- the organisation of human activity is essentially hierarchical in character; and
- human occupance is focal in character.

The key models were central place theory, which sought to explain the distribution of services in a hierarchy of centres in a region, and industrial and growth pole/centre theories which sought to explain clusters and agglomerations of more specialised activities such as manufacturing and mining. Patterns of transport connections provided the linkages in the spatial structure. All were clearly acknowledged to be partial models. Also, there were attempts to develop mathematical models of spatial interaction.

Yet the nature of economic activities in advanced regions has changed greatly; manufacturing activity has shrunk, service activity has grown and diversified. Economic and social tendencies foster increasing mobility, in daily/week time and in lifespan time. Spatial patterns are influenced by concentrating and dispersing flows (DETR 2002). Also, it no longer makes sense to consider urban and rural areas as distinct self-contained territories; they are linked to nearby and distant areas in a variety of different ways – reflecting, for example, the growth in telecommunications discussed in section 4.2.

But extant spatial patterns also provide some constraints and rigidities in the system. From the previous discussion in section 4.2, it is clear that issues of hierarchies, of growth poles/clusters and agglomeration economies, and of transport and connectivity, are of continuing importance for the location of activities and for regional spatial patterns. As such these provide the structure to this section, which concludes with an exploration of the concept of polycentric development.

4.3.2 Hierarchies of activities and settlements

A common feature of regions and of regional plans is some element of spatial hierarchy of activities (e.g. of retail activities) and of settlements. The theoretical underpinnings of the hierarchical approach date back to the writings of Dickinson (1934), Losch (1954), Berry and Garrison (1958) and, in particular, to the pioneering work of Christaller (1966 translation) on 'The Central Places of Southern Germany'. The theory seeks to relate central places to their surrounding areas and defines a central place as a settlement providing services for its hinterland. From the voluminous literature on the subject, certain basic concepts can be abstracted.

Service activities have hierarchies, population thresholds and market ranges. With regard to *hierarchies*, 'lower order services' (e.g. a sub-post office or a primary school) may be found in most settlements from substantial villages upwards; but 'higher order services' (such as a general post office, technical college or a university) are found largely in major centres, such as large towns and cities. Service activities have different *population thresholds* – perhaps as low as 250 for a village shop, but as high as 150,000 for a theatre. The *market range* of a service is that distance which people are willing to travel to reach the service; further for a higher order service and much less for a lower order service. Range may be influenced by distance, time and cost factors. The spatial manifestation of such concepts was a nested set of central places. Christaller postulated a hexagonal structure with, for example, the higher order settlement (with key higher order services) having six sub-centres (with fewer higher order services), each of which had six smaller centres, and so on.

There has been much critique of and many modifications to the Christaller hierarchy approach (which, for example, assumed an even distribution of population), to incorporate more realism and flexibility. Yet empirical studies have shown the existence of hierarchies both in the inter-urban distribution of settlements, and in the intra-urban structure of towns and cities (see Carter 1965; Hall *et al.* 2001). Central place theory has provided a valuable partial framework to the understanding of regional spatial structures, and its concepts have been used in regional planning; most notably in Dutch spatial planning (see Government of the Netherlands 1966), and in UK regional plans, and sector specific retail and tourism plans. But how relevant is the approach to the twenty-first century and to contemporary regional planning? It could be argued that the Internet has negated the impact of distance and the relevance of service centres, that large superstores in edge of town/semi-rural locations have undermined the centrality of cities, yet we continue to be attracted to and need to use centres for both higher order economic and social services. The hierarchy may have been weakened but it still exists as an important structuring element, and contemporary regional spatial planning makes good use of the hierarchical approach.

4.3.3 Growth poles, clusters and agglomeration economies

Growth poles, and the more recent manifestation of 'clusters', initially represented a break away from the geographical concepts of the previous section – being much more economic in nature. The concept of *growth poles* owes much to French economists, and especially Perroux (1964) who believed that the basic fact of spatial, as well as industrial development, was that 'growth does not appear everywhere and all at once; it appears in points or development poles, with variable intensities; it spreads along diverse channels and with varying terminal effects to the whole of the economy'. More specifically, Boudeville (1966) defined a regional growth pole as a 'set of expanding industries located in an urban area and inducing further development of economic activity

throughout its zone of influence'. Perroux also recognised that growth poles would exist in geographical space, but his focus was on the economic dynamics.

From the various writings on growth poles, several basic economic concepts and their geographical dimensions can be identified. *Leading industries and propulsive firms* are at the core of the concept. They grow by *polarisation* – attracting other economic units which benefit from the various agglomeration economies (internal and external economies of scale). Over time there is a shift to *trickling down or spread effects* as the propulsive qualities of the growth pole radiate outwards into the surrounding space. It is the latter element which has been particularly attractive to regional planners, with the planting of growth poles being seen as an efficient way of generating long-term and wide-ranging effects to a much wider area than the original location. Well-known examples include the national policy of growth points or *metropoles d'equilibre* in France, the capital city of Brasilia, and the 1960s attempts to create growth poles in Central Scotland and in the North East of England.

The contemporary advocacy of *clusters* as drivers of growth and innovation draws on some of the elements of growth poles and of industrial location theories (Hoover 1948), and in particular on agglomeration economies. Porter's definition (1990) is that 'a cluster consists of industries linked through vertical (buyer/supplier) or horizontal (common customers, technology, channels) relationships'. Clusters may be characterised by the significance of one sector or more usually may be multi-sector. There has been considerable debate around the importance of proximity for interaction in the cluster in a knowledge-based economy; can organisational proximity be substituted for geographical proximity? (Boschma 2005). Some authors challenge the importance of geographical proximity, emphasising the importance of 'communities of practice' that produce, acquire and diffuse knowledge through the use of digital technology and temporary physical proximity, associated with business travel (Breschi and Lissoni 2002). Others, such as Morgan (2004), claim that geographical proximity is very important for effective knowledge transfer. Markusen (1996) also notes the importance of geographical proximity, drawing a distinction between places that are 'sticky' or able to hold onto new ideas and translate them into industrial clusters, and places that are 'slippery' or not able to benefit in the long term from innovation and investment.

The recent and rapid rise of the high-tech economy of 'enterprising' Oxfordshire in the UK provides an example of a multi-sector spatially concentrated cluster of activities, including both high-tech services (e.g. computer services, consultancy) and high-tech manufacturing (e.g. biotechnology, motor-sports, medical engineering; Glasson *et al.* 2006). Key elements in the Oxfordshire 'virtuous circle of activity' include the R&D base of the universities, government laboratories and hospitals; the creative entrepreneurs (Florida 2002; Lawton Smith *et al.* 2005), and a network of supportive organisations, such as the Oxford Trust which pioneered business incubation in the UK. Co-location is important, as emphasised by Henton *et al.* (2002) in their research findings on the 'new economy' in the USA:

> Place matters in the new economy because people matter. Ideas essential to innovation are generated and shared by talented people who choose to work and live in close proximity because of the power of networks in the innovative process. Some places seem to have a 'buzz' because that is where the most creative work is taking place. Talented and creative people want to be where the action is.

The economic success of places such as Oxfordshire, and well-known innovative clusters, such as Silicon Valley in California, USA, and Silicon Fen in Cambridgeshire, UK, has encouraged attempts to utilise the cluster approach in regional planning practice (see Chapter 8).

4.3.4 Transport and connectivity

The importance of transport and communication links for the competitiveness of a region or sub-region has already been discussed in section 4.2. Transport influences spatial accessibility, which can be seen as 'the inherent characteristic (or advantage) of a place with respect to overcoming some form of spatially operating source of friction (for example, time and/or distance)' (Ingram 1971). The improvement of transport links – new motorways/high-speed rail links – has been an important element of regional planning and development from the sub-regional to European scale – exemplified by the Trans-European Network investment in the EU. But Gwilliam (1970) has reminded us that transport investment can be a two-edged sword. Inter-regionally, unless a region enjoys a comparative advantage in particular markets, improved transport links may make it more vulnerable to extra-regional competition. Intra-regionally, however, transport improvements, such as new light rail systems, are invariably positive, improving the efficiency for the local public and for local firms.

Transport is also important in its own right in the discussion of hierarchies and clusters and in regional spatial structures. Transport 'hubs and spokes', corridors, networks and hierarchies, are inter-related with the spatial structure of settlements in a region. Some forms of infrastructure with more limited access, such as airports, may encourage activity concentration; others with easier access may have a more dispersed effect. Transport in regional planning is discussed further and more fully in Chapter 10. Finally it should be noted that the impacts of transport improvements can be transitory. As a transport system fills out, a region having an initial advantage of good links may find its relative advantage being eroded.

4.3.5 Polycentric development

Polycentricity is 'One of the most central yet least clear concepts in the ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective)' (Davoudi 1999). The ESDP and the application of the polycentricity concept at the level of the EU will be discussed in Chapter 13; the focus here is on polycentricity at the regional level.

According to Hague and Kirk (2003), the underlying concept is simpler than the pronunciation! In a *Scoping Report* for the UK Government, they offer the following definition:

> Polycentric development is an important concept in spatial planning. It means connecting a number of places so that they form a network. By operating together they achieve a new critical mass that can sustain and grow businesses, services and facilities. Polycentric development means forging new connections by overcoming historical barriers, such as those caused by national boundaries, local rivalries or distance/poor communications. The links in the network may be improved transport channels, but this is not the only possibility. Links may be virtual connections using information technology, or joint working or simply a newly focused and active co-operation. Polycentric development offers an alternative to mono-centric development in which one city or metropolitan region dominates all others. Polycentricity is an alternative to the traditional core/periphery development model.

Hague and Kirk provide a diagrammatic representation of the differences between mono-centric and polycentric development (Figure 4.4). In the mono-centric case, the declining pit settlement, and the village and small town, are very much dependent on the big settlement, with, for example, the village becoming a dormitory settlement; the other town is cut off by an administrative boundary. In the same imaginary area, in the polycentric model the parts are connected to each other and their roles are now complementary. For example, the small town has space for a high-amenity site, which provides a facility for all the other settlements. The administrative boundary is no longer a barrier.

But how can the polycentric region be identified and demarcated? In his 'closer inspection' Parr (2004) seeks to specify the essential characteristics of a *Polycentric Urban Region (PUR)* as a cluster of centres having: a pattern which may have a variety of forms – including circular, polygonal and linear; upper and lower limits of separation – no more than an hour's travel time between neighbouring centres, but separate enough not to be a conurbation; a more evenly spaced structure than in a benchmark region; no one centre having a population dominance over the others; a higher level of interaction than would normally be expected; and high indices of centre specialisation. The nature of interaction is particularly important. In some contrast to the earlier discussion on hierarchies, trade here is not hierarchically restricted. So a centre of medium size, for example, may export goods and services not simply to a smaller centre but also to centres of similar or greater size (as in the example of Figure 4.4). The PUR would generally benefit from the advantages of regional externalities, such as regional workforce skills, and commercial, cultural and social facilities.

Examples of PURs can be found in various guises/scales around the world; for example, Randstad (Holland) and Emilia-Romagna (Italy) in Europe; and the Kansai region in Japan. The approach appeals to regional planners, and 'instead

Diagram 1: Mono-centric development

Diagram 2: Polycentric development
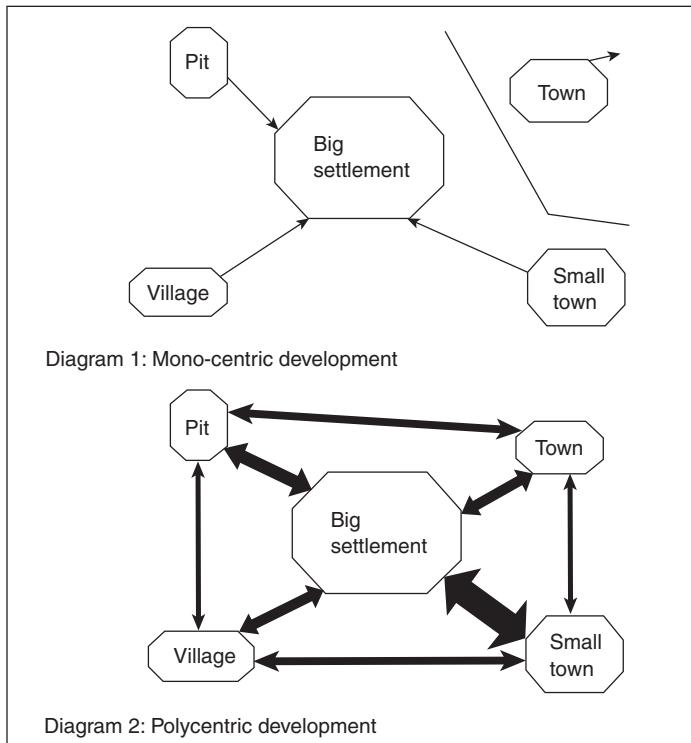
Figure 4.4 Mono-centric and polycentric developments. (*Source:* Hague and Kirk (2003).)

of being used to describe an existing or emerging reality, the concept is coming to determine that reality' (Davoudi 2002).

4.4 Sustainable regional development

4.4.1 *Conflict and opportunity*

A focus on the socio-economic dimension of regional development can be at odds with a high-quality natural and built environment in a region. Economic development and environmental degradation can be a causal downward spiral which, although now recognised by governments at all levels, can be hard to reverse. In the EU, several decades of Environmental Action Plans have had mixed impacts on various environmental indicators, as reported in the European Environment Agency's State of the Environment report for Europe (EEA 2003). Yet for over two decades the concept of sustainable development has offered a way forward which is potentially more positive. This discussion, under substantive theory, briefly covers the concept of sustainable development, why

it is particularly appropriate at the regional level, and the emerging nature of sustainable regional development. The promotion, application and evaluation of the approach in regional planning are covered in later chapters, and especially in Chapter 11.

The previous discussion in section 4.2 noted the importance of the supply side attributes of a region, including the quality of life, as an element in competitiveness. Geographers have experimented over the years with rankings of relative urban and regional quality of life (see Hall 1986; Findlay 1988; DEFRA 2004). The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) highlighted the link between the natural environment and economic development. The oft-quoted reminder from the IUCN (1980) that 'we have inherited the earth from our parents; we have borrowed it from our children' was taken a step further in the Brundtland Report (UN World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Brundtland rejected the argument that economic growth and good environmental quality were mutually exclusive. But converting good intentions into good practice is more difficult. The 'ends' and 'means' of sustainable development have generated considerable debate, including the relative merits of weak and strong sustainability, social and environmental justice and inter- and intra-generational equity. International conferences such as Rio (1992), and Johannesburg a decade later, have made some limited progress, but more than anything have highlighted the enormity of the challenge. Interestingly Wang *et al.* (1993) noted that this challenge was of particular relevance for the regional level.

The regional level may have a central role to play in the 'territorial integration' between the natural and socio-economic systems. Friedmann and Weaver (1979) showed that in the evolution of US regional planning there were some innovative, although not always successful, examples of integration, such as the river-based regional development Tennessee Valley scheme. The 1990s regional revival in the UK has refuelled interest in the regional level as the most appropriate level for delivering sustainable development (see Campbell 1991; Roberts 1994; Glasson 1995; Benneworth *et al.* 2002; Roberts 2006). In Australia, Jenkins *et al.* (2003), drawing on US activity (US National Research Council 2002), note that:

> After a decade of trying to implement Agenda 21 at a national level, a number of recent reviews of how to progress sustainability are concluding that the appropriate scale to address the concept is at the regional or sub-national level. These reviews suggest that regions are an appropriate basis for considering sustainability.

The regional level may, for example, demonstrate some contiguity of socio-economic systems, such as commuting zones, and natural environmental systems, such as river basin catchment areas.

4.4.2 Dimensions of sustainability and sustainable regional development

Globally the term 'sustainability' has become increasingly preferred as it emphasises the stance needed to achieve 'sustainable development'; but the terms are often used interchangeably. However, despite the global acceptance of the concept, its scope and nature is a contested and confused territory (Faber *et al.* 2005). There are numerous definitions, but a much-used one is that of the 'triple bottom line' (TBL), reflecting the importance of environmental, social and economic factors in decision making. Figure 4.5 shows how the three dimensions are separate but overlap, and it is the integration and synergies which are particularly important. The aim is to minimise trade-offs (for example, not sacrificing an important wetland for a marina development) by seeking to increase synergies providing mutually reinforcing solutions.

Figure 4.6(a) and (b) illustrates some different perspectives, and modifications, of the TBL approach. Figure 4.6(a) seeks to stress the holistic nature of sustainability within the borders of the triangle and the need to advance on several fronts to achieve the green, just and growing region. The relative pace of advance usually varies between the fronts, and this is a key implementation challenge for sustainable regional development. Figure 4.6(b) provides another perspective which emphasises that within the elements of sustainability there is an important hierarchy. The environment and its natural systems are the
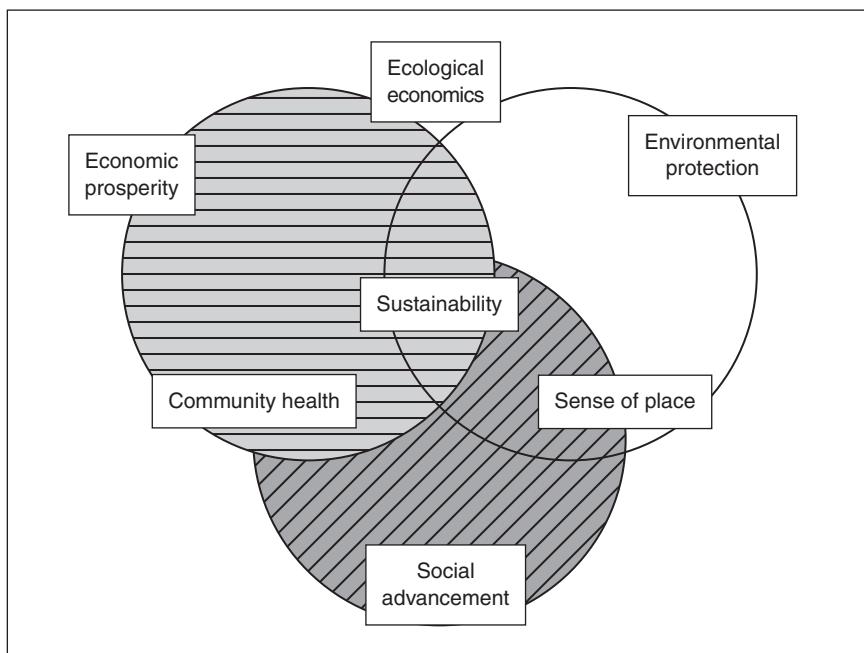
Figure 4.5 Integrating the dimensions of sustainability.
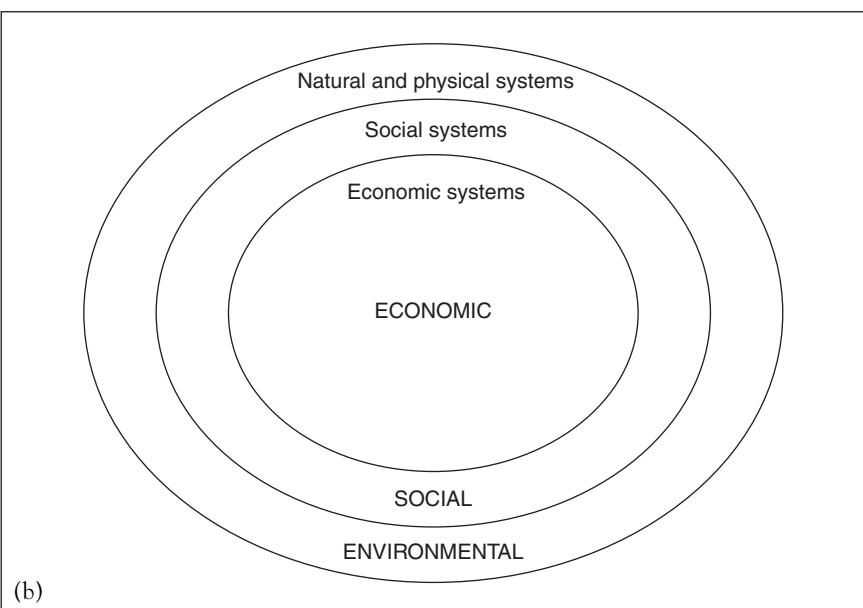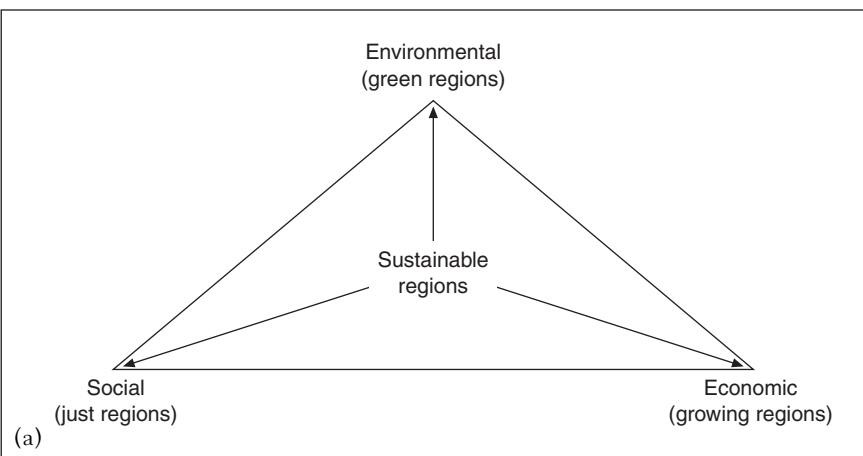
Figure 4.6 Alternative perspectives on the dimensions of sustainability. (a) Adapted from Campbell (2003). (b) Adapted from MacNaughton (1997), Pope *et al.* (2004).

foundation of any concept of sustainability. We cannot survive without the 'goods and services' provided by those systems – breathable air, drinkable water and food. The international recognition of the threat of climate change highlights the importance of the environmental foundation to life. We then need social systems to provide social justice, security, cultural identity and a sense of place. Without a well-functioning social system, an economic system cannot be productive. Another important modification is the movement from TBL to TBL + 1, with the addition of sustainable governance to the other dimensions (DEFRA 2005).

Whatever the perspective, there is a generally accepted recognition of the holistic nature of sustainability, although the balance between the elements is contested territory. A holistic approach implies more integration which, besides bringing synergies, can also reduce duplication and waste, and lead to a more efficient use of resources. In regional development, such integration can include policy areas (e.g. employment and housing); institutions and agencies (e.g. between levels of government); and plans (e.g. integrated regional development frameworks). There can also be integration of methodologies, for example, using sustainability assessment, and above all, integration of visions and principles for development. The UK South East Plan (SEP; SEERA 2006a) encompassed the dimensions of sustainability in its vision of 'The Healthy Region'.

4.5 On dynamic systems – some conclusions

Regional substantive theory seeks to explain changes in regional systems – and the questions about regional growth and structure which were raised at the start of this chapter. Regional systems are dynamic. The nature of the economic context for regions in advanced economies has changed out of all recognition in the last 30–40 years. Global economic forces have led to a major focus in many regional economies on service activities, and the key growth sectors are knowledge-based. People are more mobile, and communication by the Internet must be seen as an important complement to the more traditional, but still very important, transport modes. Urban–rural boundaries are now much more flexible. Yet some of the old problems remain – including substantial divides in regional prosperity. Regional spatial structures are also built on extant structures designed for earlier regional systems. As such there are some constraints, rigidities and continuities in the systems.

Theory seeks to explain the changes in the regional systems. Approaches are partial, and the systems are complex. But there have been some interesting advances including, for example, the competitive regions approach, innovation clusters, polycentricity and the global movement of sustainable development. Yet there is also evidence of much continuity and complementarity between the traditional and newer concepts. Competitive regions need export demand for their outputs; the various determinants of their success can be partly seen in terms of the proportionality/industrial structure and differential/locational shift factors of the shift-share approach. The innovative clusters have some of the dynamics of growth poles.

There is also some evidence of overlapping theories, and integration of approaches. The connectivity dimension is relevant to both regional growth and regional spatial structure. Innovation has economic and geographical manifestations, as reflected in the innovative cluster approach. There is also evidence of other dimensions of integration. The determinants of regional growth are recognised as being wider than the economic, and social, political and environmental factors are important. The holistic approach is most evident in the concept of sustainable regional development – especially with the addition of sustainable governance to the other dimensions.

Part 3

Evolving UK practice

5   The new English regional planning

5.1 Introduction

Two components make up the functioning of regional planning in England now. One is the changed planning system under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, along with its supporting guidance. The other is the peculiar structure of English regionalisation created since the 1990s. This chapter starts with the latter, which coexisted for some years with the pre 2004 planning system.[1]

5.2 English regionalisation – its institutions and practice

Chapter 2 showed that the return of regional planning practice in England was marked by the establishment from 1990 of a system of regional planning guidance. This delivered the first set of English regional plans by 1995. These plans had been prepared by the conferences of local authorities in each of the eight regions shown in Figure 1.2 and then, suitably amended, approved by central government. These planning conferences were the most important regional institutions, but not the only ones. Most regions had bodies which led on some kind of economic planning, and co-ordinated bids for European funds. Such economy-oriented bodies were stronger in the northern regions, where for example the Northern Economic Development Council had functioned as a tri-partite co-ordinating and lobbying group for the North East since the mid 1980s (Lanigan 2001). From 1994 GORs complemented these bodies, representing at first four government departments (Environment, Trade and Industry, Transport, and Employment). The GORs gradually built up their capacity to co-ordinate government actions in the regions, with a special focus on planning and economic development (Bradbury and Mawson 1997).

   The New Labour government elected in 1997 was committed to devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. After referenda this commitment was made good in 1999 in Scotland and Wales (as we detail in Chapter 6). In the very different situation of Northern Ireland, a power-sharing Executive started functioning in 2000, only to be suspended in 2002. For London a new structure was created around a relatively strong mayor, alongside

a much weaker Greater London Assembly with only essentially scrutiny powers. Ken Livingstone became the first elected Mayor of London in 2000, standing as an independent against the Labour candidate. He was re-elected in 2004, having been readmitted to the Labour Party. Planning in London has a rather different character to that in the rest of England, with some features more of a metropolitan or strategic nature than of a region, and so it is not treated in detail in this book (see Thornley *et al.* 2005; Newman and Thornley 2005; Rydin *et al.* 2004; McNeill 2002). However, planning, particularly the making of the London Plan, approved in 2004, has been a central field of work for the Mayor, and therefore London will appear occasionally here.

The relative clarity of the government's actions for the above territories dissolved when addressing the English regions. John Prescott, who was to be the head of the super ministry, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), from 1997 until 2001 and again 2002 to 2006 (though from 2002 he lost functions to separate departments, the ministry being renamed the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) had been the great evangelist of the English regions since the 1970s. Labour's regional policy commission of 1996 (headed by Bruce Millan, previously regional commissioner in Brussels) had agreed that Labour should set up elected regional governments in England. This was watered down in Labour's election manifesto, given the strong dislike of regional government by Blair, Straw and other prominent ministers. Hence, in due course, only parts of Prescott's aspirations were met by the legislation passed in 1998, the Regional Development Agencies Act.

5.2.1 Regional Development Agencies

The Regional Development Agencies Act had two main elements. The dominant one, at least at that stage, was the creation of Regional Development Agencies, somewhat similar to those seen as having had success in Scotland and Wales since the 1970s. These were set up for all eight English regions, using the boundaries of the Government Offices (which were in turn the boundaries of the government statistical regions created in the 1940s – on boundaries, see Hogwood 1995). In 2000 a ninth body, the London Development Agency, was created, with the difference that this worked to and for the Mayor of London. The other eight agencies were responsible to central government, first Prescott's ministry, and then the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) after 2001. They were also responsible to a regional board, which had a chairman drawn from business as well as a majority of business sector members.

The RDAs' purpose was to facilitate economic development for their regions, although they did have a final function added, to promote sustainable development. Given that they were created for all regions, this implicitly meant that the government was pressing for economic improvement in all regions. The fact that the budgets of the southern regions (with the exception of London) remained always much smaller than those of the rest, meant that there was still an emphasis on supporting weaker regions more than stronger ones (see

Chapter 8 for more detail). However, the shift in emphasis was significant, supporting Brenner's argument that neoliberal spatial development policy involved supporting winning regions as well as losing ones (Brenner 2004). This was to have very important implications for regional planning strategies as well.

We will meet the RDAs frequently in the following chapters, as they are key actors in the English regions (on the RDAs see Benneworth 2001; Roberts and Benneworth 2001). For now we need to stress three points. First, they have *significant budgets*. These have been increasing each year, and since 2004 have been in a 'Single Pot', that is to say the Agencies can move money between budget headings, pursuing, in principle, their long-term strategies as seems best to them. These resources are very noticeable in the stripped-down world of planning and regeneration in this period. These numbers are magnitudes larger than those of regional planning bodies, and much larger than the related functions of all but the very largest local authorities. Second, though, and working partly against this, they are largely the *creature of central government*, who approves their corporate plans and their economic strategies. They do need therefore to keep within the broad guidelines of the government's economic strategy, with all larger elements of spending needing Treasury approval. Third, their business led boards have created a very much *business-led philosophy*, although with some variation between regions. This has been accentuated with the gradual tapering off in their responsibility for the Single Regeneration Budget schemes which they inherited. These schemes had had a much larger social and community element, while from about the time the DTI became the parent department, programmes began to switch to projects more related to competitiveness considerations. Recent RES revisions such as that for the South East in late 2006 show this clearly, compared with the earlier more socially and regeneration oriented strategies.

All three factors have been important in governing the relationship with regional planning processes, given that government has consistently refused to say that either planning or economic strategies should be the overarching regional strategy. The presence of the RDAs in the form in which they were created has affected planning fundamentally during this period, inducing a *core process of continual mutual adjustment*.

5.2.2 Regional chambers or assemblies

The second element in the 1998 Act was the formation of regional chambers. These were bodies made up of at most two-thirds local authority councillors, reflecting the political balance of power between parties present in the region. The rest were nominated from regional pressure groups, and were divided between economic, social and environmental representatives. How these members came to be chosen was very variable (Federal Trust 2003; Sandford 2005), with varying degrees of transparency. Different regions set up chambers of different sizes, as shown in Table 5.1. Furthermore, from the beginning some chambers opted for the title of RAs, and by 2002 the government had accepted

Table 5.1 Numbers of members of English regional assemblies 2004–2005

Regional assembly	Number of members
East of England	107
East Midlands	111
North East	72
North West	80
South East	111
South West	117
West Midlands	100
Yorkshire and Humberside	37
Total	735

Source: Retrieved from English Regions website (www.ern.gov.uk), report by Snape *et al.* (2005b).

this change of name (we will use the term assembly from here on, even for the early years, for the sake of simplicity).

The primary role in the legislation for the assemblies was to *scrutinise the performance of the RDAs*. They had powers to reject the Agencies' budgets, and to return their RESs: not massive powers, but there were cases of assemblies using them, for example in the East of England in May 2001 when the assembly rejected the RES as too focused on business objectives and not fitting in with the social and environmental objectives of the region's planning strategy.

It was also expected from the start that assemblies would work with others in developing other regional strategies, and that this could include *regional planning guidance*, if the body preparing guidance at that stage so wished. Some regions decided to give this role early on to the assembly, while elsewhere, particularly in the regions with the strongest regional planning tradition such as the South East and West Midlands, the transfer did not occur until about 2002, when government virtually ordered that this should happen. This resistance to transfer was largely because of the view among the local authorities who made up the regional planning bodies such as SERPLAN and the West Midlands section of the Local Government Association, that they were the more legitimate body to carry out regional planning, being democratically elected. The government's antipathy to local government and preference for more corporatist or associative forms, meant that this argument did not prosper.

5.2.3 Government Offices for the Regions

The third public agency deeply involved in the regionalisation process since the 1990s is in most respects the most important. Table 5.2 shows the overall budgets of the core triumvirate, and the financial dominance of the GORs is clear. Much government effort since 1994 has been put into making regional administration and management by central government more efficient (Mawson forthcoming). In 2001 a Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) was set up, first in the Cabinet Office, now based in the Department of Communities

Table 5.2 The triumvirate of English regional actors

Regional public actor	*Year created*	*Budgets 2003–2004 (£ millions)*	*Main roles*	*Accountability*
Government Offices for the Regions	1994	5102.7	Implementing central government programmes in a co-ordinated way, and steering regional governance	To central ministries
Regional Development Agencies	1999	1984.8	Improving regional economic performance	To parent central ministry (DTI), with regional board steering progress within centrally set targets
Regional Assemblies	1999	24.2	Acting as RPB and scrutinising RDA programmes, plus wider integrating role	To Assembly membership, 60–70% from local authorities, others from regional partners

Source: Based on figures derived from M. Sandford (2005).

Notes
The total for GORs depends very much on what is considered to be managed or influenced by them, within central government spending. Mawson (forthcoming) comes to a figure of £9.2 billion.

and Local Government, with the task of administering the GORs network. Some 350–450 civil servants work in each GOR, headed by a Regional Director who is accountable to the Director General of the RCU.

On Mawson's higher estimates, each GOR has annual expenditure of, on average, around £1 billion, but there are large differences, with London's share at £2.7 billion reflecting management of the massive transport budget for London. From a planning point of view large budgets inevitably mean large influence, so it is no surprise to find that GORs have an increasingly large role in steering the statutory RSSs. This chimes well with research arguing that the primary effect of regionalisation since 1997 has been to give central government more power over all lower agencies, whether local or regional (Musson *et al.* 2006).

5.2.4 The English regions White Paper 2002

After the 2001 election the government promised to lay out its proposals for the second stage of English regionalisation, leading to the publication of the White Paper in May 2002. This had two parts. The headline section dealt with the

offer to English regions to elect their own Regional Assemblies. This was to be dependent on success in a referendum in each region. The option on offer was a modest one, with such elected assemblies to take powers over planning, the RDAs and the recently created Housing Boards, with some advisory powers over several other sectors, particularly culture. John Prescott was unable to persuade other departments to cede powers to such regional bodies. In addition the White Paper insisted that regions wanting such assemblies must lose one of their two tiers of local government, moving to a unitary system. All this reflected the deeply varying enthusiasms of members of the government, with some as opposed as in 1997.

Very slowly the arrangements for the first referenda were made. That for Yorkshire never took place, because of, ostensibly, doubts about the reliability of the electronic voting system to be used. In the North East the proposal was resoundingly rejected, by 78 per cent to 22 per cent of those voting, on a turnout of 48 per cent, on 4 November 2004. As all agreed, this finished the prospect of any elected English Regional Assemblies for many years to come, as the North East had always been the region with most enthusiasm for devolution, and had been expected, certainly up to 2003, to be likely to vote Yes. In fact even a few months before, opinion polls had suggested a majority in favour. Whatever the explanation for the collapse of support (the unpopularity of the government among many Labour voters was probably very relevant), this event ended an era during which many planners had advocated elected regional government as the most important measure to make regional planning a force to be reckoned with in England. From November 2004 on, different kinds of aspirations had to be brought forward.

The 'Chapter 2' section of the White Paper was concerned with what should be done to improve regional governing in the absence of any elected assemblies. It has, therefore, become the only potentially operative part of the 2002 initiative. The aim was to boost co-ordination by all public actors in the regions. This particularly involved promoting the ability of Regional Assemblies to integrate strategies, and the capacity of Government Offices to bring together policy making and action in a connected manner. One sign of progress on this agenda was the Treasury's action in 2005 to seek the advice of the three main regional institutions on long-term regional spending guidelines for economic development, transport and housing. However, a study in 2005 found little evidence of most government departments taking the White Paper agenda very seriously (Snape and Mawson 2005). Some were even carrying out regional reorganisations of their activities with no reference at all to the main regionalisation drive of government.

5.3 The new regional planning system

On 13 May 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force. Backed by relevant guidance, especially PPS11, issued in final form in September 2004, this laid down England's spatial planning arrangements, for, presum-

ably, several years to come. Before examining the details of this new system, we need to look at how the previous system had been evolving, continuing the story from Chapter 2.

5.3.1 Regional planning 1997–2002: continuity and strengthening

The New Labour Government did not during its first term regard reforms of the planning system as a priority. Prescott and his main planning minister Richard Caborn were under some pressure to show that the planning system would be delivering for business, as required by the main drive of government of Blair and Brown. A statement was issued in 1998 on Modernising Planning, but this did not call for any legislative reform, rather pressing local authorities to be more efficient in dealing with development applications and finishing local plans (DETR 1998a). However, both Prescott and Caborn were strong regionalisers, and wanted regional planning guidance to step up its performance. Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 was issued in draft in 1998 and approved in 2000. This was the first Planning Policy Guidance Note devoted to regional planning; previously there had only been one page within PPG Note 12, issued in 1990. Up to 1998, regional planning conferences had effectively had autonomy to develop guidance in whatever mode seemed best to them.

PPG11 brought in a number of significant developments in regional planning practice.

- Central government wished to speed up the process of making RPG, and laid down a *timetable* for each stage of the process. From start of work by the planning body to final approval by the minister, no more than 31 months should pass. Half of these should be for preparation of the advice by the Regional Planning Body (RPB), half for the rest. This target was rarely achieved, with typical lengths of preparation being around three to four years. Most delay was normally concentrated in the second part of the process, that controlled by government.
- A *Public Examination* was to be held of the guidance submitted to government, chaired by two inspectors chosen by government. This would allow public discussion of the matters chosen by the inspectors, during a period of typically, between 1999 and 2004, two or three weeks. The inspectors would then issue a report advising government. Normally this report would have a very strong impact on government's final RPG, although government was not obliged to follow any of the inspectors' recommendations. This innovation, inspired by an exercise held in the West Midlands in 1993, gave a new forum for at least the better organised interests to argue their case, and for government to hone its arguments as well.
- RPBs were instructed to raise the level of *public involvement*. This was not pressed or detailed to the extent that was to appear in 2004, but there was a consciousness that the raised profile of RPG meant that a more regionally shared process would be desirable.

- *Extra resources* were provided by government, both directly to the regions for preparing guidance, and for the process as a whole, paying for the holding of the Public Examinations and for publications and research. At first resources were channelled through strategic planning authorities, but when this was seen to be not always effective in reaching the regional planning process, budgets were given directly to the assemblies. This recognised the burden on regions in carrying out a much more demanding process, and made a considerable difference to work from 1999 onwards. However, the overall amounts have still been extremely limited, given the huge new tasks imposed on regional working.
- More emphasis was placed on *monitoring*. There was a real worry in government that the main objectives of previous guidance were not necessarily being met, or at least that no one really knew whether they were or not. From 2000 on, therefore, a set of main targets was created, with a monitoring guide produced in 2002, requiring an annual monitoring report to be prepared by assemblies. This innovation reflected the widespread emphasis in the post-1997 governments on management by target setting, and the increasing wish to control key outputs of the planning system.

Already therefore in the period from 1998 to 2002 the regional planning system was given major boosts, even though this rested within a continuity, with no new legislation. With hindsight it can be seen that this was effectively preparing the way for what was to come, but this was not evident at the time.

5.3.2 The planning reforms of 2004

In December 2001 the government published a Green Paper on the planning system, proposing major reforms. The tone of the paper was highly critical of the performance of the system, with a strong emphasis on the needs of business. The drive for reform had the appearance of coming from the Treasury and business, particularly the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), which had been pressing strongly on delays in the development control system (CBI 2001). However, the most significant reform was to be the abolition of county structure plans and making the regional strategy a part of the statutory development plan. This had not been part of the business agenda, as far as can be seen, and more likely came from the planning officials of the ministry, backed by pressure from the minister, Lord Falconer, who was probably being pushed by the prime minister for a 'radical' reform. As the British planning system is quite hard to change radically, being bound around by matters of legal process, some change in the development plans system must have looked attractive, especially as ministers saw the traditionally run counties as obstacles in opening up new areas to growth and development, particularly in southern England.

What was perhaps not realised in 2001 was the upsetting effect planning reform would have on the *local government system*. England has had a broadly two-tier local government system since 1974, made up of shire counties and

normally between half a dozen and a dozen districts in each county. Since reforms in the mid 1980s and mid 1990s this pattern has been complicated by the creation of many 'unitary' authorities, so that by the 2000s a patchwork effect was created. The removal of planning powers from the counties, alongside powers taken away in other fields, especially education, puts the local government system under further stress. The local plan is now placed with districts (whether shire or unitary): these are now responsible for the Local Development Framework (LDF), with its portfolio of Local Development Documents. There remains the possibility that at some stage English local government will be further reformed, although the 2006 Local Government White Paper stepped back from this course, with just a few more unitary authorities the likely result.

The *Planning Bill was strongly contested*, with environmental groups and, naturally enough, the counties, being its most vigorous opponents. Opposition in the House of Lords was finally effective in early 2004 in extracting some compromise in the making of the RSS, and particularly its sub-regional component. But ministers, annoyed by this need to compromise, promised to come back with new legislation, if counties did not co-operate with government and assemblies in the new regional planning process. By 'co-operate' was meant acceptance of the government's new growth agenda. Subsequent developments, particularly around the Barker Reviews, were to show that the 2004 Act was indeed by no means the end of the reforms.

We now look at the main elements of the new system. Most of these build on the changes brought in earlier as described above. Government committed itself to replacing the set of 26 PPGs with a fresh series of PPSs. This meant that the tight central control over planning practice built up since the first PPG of 1988 was to be maintained under the new system (for the core significance of PPGs, see Tewdwr-Jones 2002). PPS11 on regional planning was followed by PPS1 on the system as a whole in February 2005. *Six main elements of the system will be examined here*, others will emerge during the following chapters.

The Regional Spatial Strategy – content

The now statutory Regional Spatial Strategy is in principle the core element of the planning system in England. The phrase 'in principle' is necessary, as little experience exists so far, to see whether it will fully achieve the task it has been given. Chapter 7 will consider possible ways in which the aspirations for it might not be realised. For the moment it is assumed that paragraph 1.3 of PPS11 (ODPM 2004a) gives us the prime aims:

> The RSS should provide a broad development strategy for the region for a fifteen to twenty year period. The following matters should be taken into account:
> * identification of the scale and distribution of provision for new housing;
> * priorities for the environment, such as countryside and biodiversity protection; and

- transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals extraction and waste treatment and disposal.

The lower section of the statutory development plan, the LDF, should follow the RSS. Rather less definitely, it is stated that other regional strategies should be consistent with the RSS, with this consistency to be achieved by processes of joint or connected preparation, or continuing mutual dialogue.

The RSS follows to a significant degree the path taken by the London Plan, the Spatial Development Strategy for the capital, which can be seen as the first of the new 'spatial strategy' generation. That Plan is a hefty document of 420 pages, and that is not including sub-regional strategies, which were published for the five divisions of the city (central, north, south, east, west) in 2005. Equally the first formally titled RSS, for the West Midlands, published in June 2004, was also a detailed planning exercise, running to 155 pages (and again it had little in the way of sub-regional strategies, having been prepared under the previous legislation as RPG). The first 'real' RSSs were being published in draft or more final form in 2006 and 2007, and they, too, are in their size and detail illustrative of the very major task the RSS has been given.

The RSS – process

The process of making an RSS is specified in great detail by the government guidance in PPS11. Two detailed figures are given which sum up the process clearly enough, reproduced here as Figures 5.1 and 5.2. There will be opportunities to comment on how this process really works in later sections.

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Transport planning occupies a somewhat odd and anomalous position in the new English system, doubtless reflecting the uneasy relationship between land use and transport planning, partly within separate professional ambits and normally run by different government departments. The RTS is an integral part of the RSS, but it is also treated as a visibly separate strategy, and it was treated at length in a separate annex in PPG11, and again this way in PPS11, the only substantive topic to receive this treatment. The implications of these signs of partial separation will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 10.

Sub-regional planning

The abolition of the structure plan meant that the RSS has taken on the role of planning sub-regions (Roberts and Baker 2004; Marshall 2007). The government had argued that many parts of regions did not need coverage with sub-regional strategies, as there were no issues of major change that needed to be covered at that scale. For many areas, it was argued, either all regional or even national guidance was sufficient, or local planning could fill the gap.
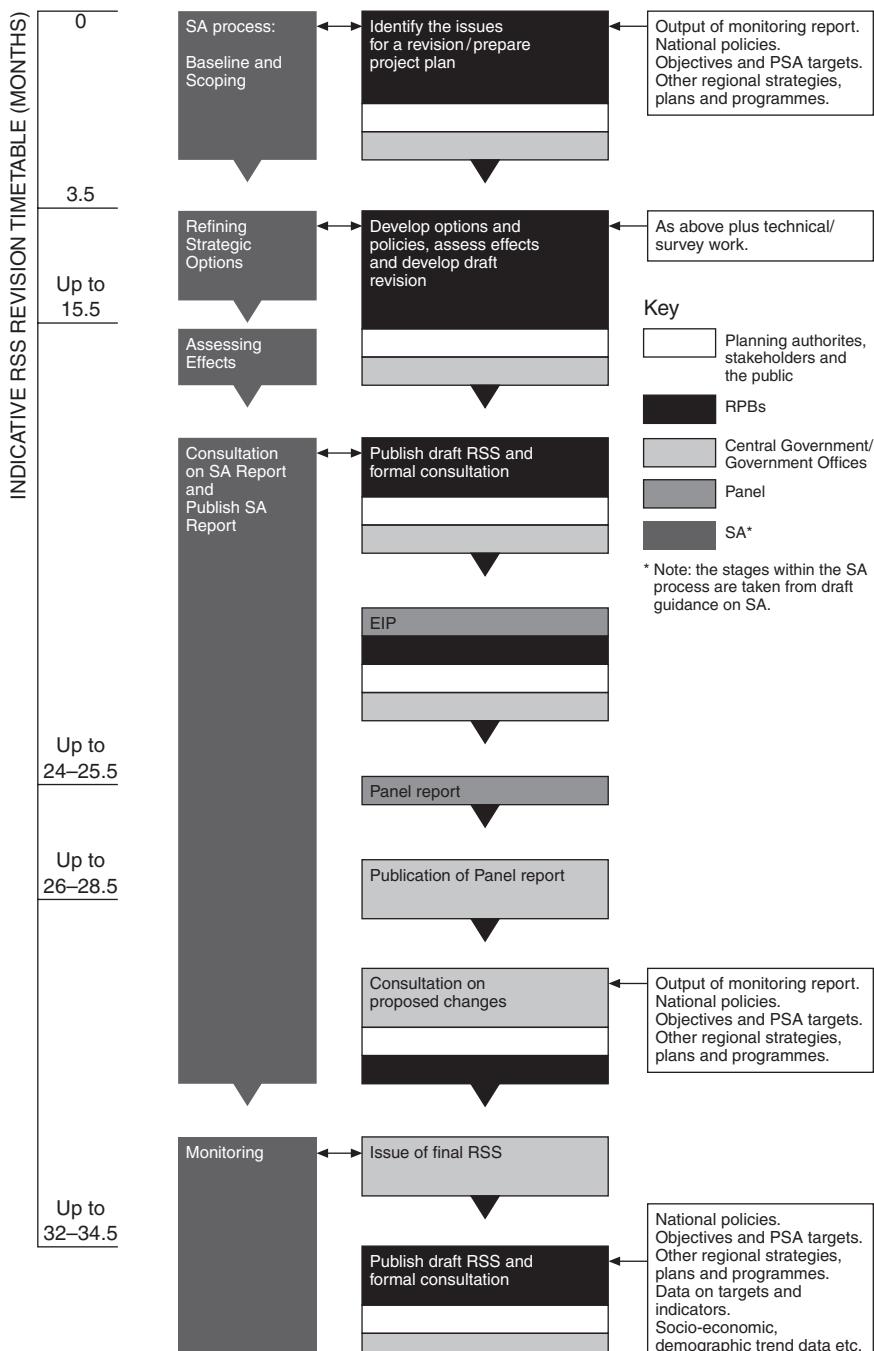
Figure 5.1 RSS Revision Process. (*Source:* ODPM (2004).)

Stage:	RSS revision
1 Drawing up a Project Plan and Statement of Public Participation	RPB in consultation with the GO draw up the draft project plan and a regional statement of public participation for the draft RSS revision, including the relevant regional objectives and likely issues, and consult and revise the plan. *[up to four months]*
2 Developing options and policies	RPB in co-operation with GO and other stakeholders, develops initial proposals, commences an SA of the impacts of these and then develops and refines options into a draft RSS revision involving the public on these as it does so. *[up to 12 months]*
3 Submission of the Draft Revision to the Secretary of State	RPB submits draft RSS revision, SA report, pre-submission consultation statement and any background documents to the Scretary of State. The draft revision is then published for consultation with an RPB letter inviting representations and a press notice issued announcing timing of the EIP. Written responses to Panel Secretary – within a six-to-12 week specified period – which are copied to GO/RPB. *[up to three-and-a-half months]*
4 Testing and the EIP	Following the receipt of responses: • They are analysed – four to eight weeks depending on number and complexity; • First prelim meeting coinciding with start of consultation period on draft list of matters – 12 weeks in advance of EIP; • Revised list of matters – published at least six weeks in advance of EIP; • Second prelim meeting – at least five weeks in advance of EIP; and • EIP in front of independent Panel appointed by the Secretary of State – three to six weeks. *[five to six-and-a-half months]*
5 **The Panel's report**	Panel reports to the Secretary of State (which GO copies to RPB and other public examination participants) and report is published. *[two to three months]*
6 Publication of proposed changes to RSS revision	Following Panel's report, Secretary of State publishes proposed changes to draft RSS revision with a statement of reasons. Eight week consultation period on these changes before final RSS and statement of reasons is issued. *[up to six months]*
7 Issue of final RSS	RSS approved and issued by Secretary of State. *Total time from start of process:* *approximately two years, six months to two years, 11 months.*
Further stages:	
Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plan conformity	With support of RPB and Secretary of State (GO) to ensure that LDDs and LTPs are consistent with the RSS.
Monitoring and review	RPB, in liaison with Go and other stakeholders, to monitor achievement of RSS targets, identify remedial action and trigger further revisions where appropriate.

Figure 5.2 Summary of the RSS Revision Process. (*Source:* ODPM (2004).)

Nevertheless, it was considered by government that some areas, especially where major growth was proposed, would need sub-regional strategies inset within the RSS. These would rarely, it was advised, be the same areas as counties, because current land use and transport interactions rarely respect such boundaries.

Therefore an important role of the RSS was to identify those areas needing separate treatment. Under the arrangements finally agreed in the 2004 Act, the counties and other strategic planning authorities (the so-called Section 4(4) authorities after the name of the paragraph in the Act) would be offered by the assembly the opportunity to work up the first proposals for their sub-regions. This work would be done under a brief set by the assembly, which would specify overall requirements such as levels of growth to be examined. The proposals would be then handed to the assembly, who would have the final responsibility for the content of the sub-regional strategies in the RSS submitted to government.

The reality of the new sub-regional planning has been that most regions have identified a very widespread need for such planning. The South East has included ten sub-regions, covering all the areas of growth and hence all the parts of the territory which really matter. The same applies in Yorkshire and the Humber, where all the major urban areas in West and South Yorkshire and Humberside, along with some coastal and more rural areas, have been included in detailed sub-regional strategies. Effectively, a whole new level of planning has emerged, as the opponents (and some of the supporters) of the Act had argued would happen. But this level is now controlled ultimately from above, by the central government and the regional strategy makers, not by those in each sub-region.

Consultation

A major theme of the 2004 reform was the need for improved public consultation. PPS11 specified how this was to be carried out for the regional level, encouraging assemblies to be innovative. The advice built on suggestions by recent research (Baker *et al.* 2003, for the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) in particular). It was advised that consultation should be 'front loaded' as far as possible, that is, the assembly should try to involve as many interests as possible in the early stages of strategy generation, before significant options were closed off. RPBs have made a large effort to follow this advice, by organising major consultation exercises on the issues to be addressed in the RSS, by maintaining systems of continuous responsiveness via newsletters and web pages, by some effort to reach hard to reach groups (such as the Youth Forum in Yorkshire and Humber) and by commissioning opinion polling companies to carry out repeated polls of representative samples of the region's population at several points during RSS preparation.

Responsibility for consulting at sub-regional level has in part been left to local authorities, but also backed up by work by the RPB itself. It is apparent that, in some regions at least, wide publicity has been achieved for the RSS,

especially at the time when proposals have gelled. The number of comments received on the South East Plan consultation exercise of January to March 2005 is indicative of this degree of success – 2646 written comments, as against 398 and 650 on the two London Plan consultation stages in 2001 and 2002, a Plan which had itself been very heavily publicised. But the challenge of 'front loading' looks a very heavy one, given the rule of thumb well known to planners that the nearer development becomes (in time and space), the more people participate. It seems highly probable, without some major changes to practice, that this rule will continue to hold, with most interest in actual planning applications, down through LDFs, sub-regional strategies, firm RSS plans, to the more abstract early discussions before the RSS proposals gell. For the moment, this raises serious questions about how far the RSS can become a genuinely participatory exercise. We will return to this question in Chapter 12.

Monitoring and implementation

As mentioned above, monitoring of progress on RPG progress had become a significant part of the reformed RPG regime. This emphasis was stepped up in the RSS, with an added stress on implementation. Thus assemblies were instructed to explain in their Annual Monitoring Reports why particular targets had not been achieved, and to describe the measures taken to improve implementation. This was particularly important for the government's housing agenda, where pressure from business and the Treasury, backed by the Barker Review of 2004, pushed for assemblies and local authorities to be more sensitive to market signals in allocating land for housing. Such decisions would clearly require reliable data on housing progress, and major efforts were being made from about 2000 to improve the reliability of such data, which, perhaps surprisingly, was found to be not very high.

   As part of this drive, PPS11 recommended that RSSs must contain careful consideration of how each section was to be implemented. In practice this has led to each RSS containing a separate implementation chapter, specifying where possible those responsible for action, likely timescales, and possible barriers. Even the more sophisticated work emerging in 2006 was hard pressed to deal with the challenge this requirement poses, given that most action in most policy fields is dependent on private sector actors, and their intentions are far from being in the control of assemblies or related agencies, especially when looking more than a year or two into the future.

   From the point of view of achieving genuinely effective regional planning, this issue is likely to be one of the Achilles heels of the new system. This system is apparently highly ambitious in its objectives, seeking to press forward on such high-flying aims as sustainable development, economic competitiveness and social equity, but does not appear to be equipped with the means to achieve

these ambitions. This tension will be encountered as we look at practice in more detail in the coming chapters.

5.4 The landscape of regional strategising

Before summing up on the new English system, it is important to look briefly at one more dimension. The RSS is not the only strategy for these regions. Table 5.3 gives some of the other strategies recently prepared in the English regions. The RES is especially important because of the RDAs' budgets and the high priority given to business by successive governments. There are many other strategies, most being prepared for the same regional boundaries as the RSS, such as that for Culture, led by officials of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF). The latter was instituted by the DETR in 2000, intended as a strategy which could promote an overarching view of the region.

An earlier initiative, the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) prepared in the East Midlands in 1999–2000, had gained support as a possible model to pull together all regional work (Aitchison 2002). This strategy was consciously promoted by the Regional Assembly as an overarching statement and process, to which the RES, RPG and other strategies must adhere. It became, with some adjustments, the RSDF for the region. However, it is notable that this initiative, though applauded at the time by government, was only copied elsewhere to a limited degree (most confidently in Yorkshire and the Humber). Probably given the flurry of change emerging again from 2001 onwards, the role for such strategies was squeezed, with the front lines of argument shifting to the government endowed 'heavy hitters', the RES and RSS.

Some public sector strategising is carried out on boundaries which differ from the RSS, such as the river basin plans to be prepared by the Environment

Table 5.3 Some major recent regional strategies prepared in English regions

Name of regional strategy	*Main agency responsible for preparation*
Regional Spatial Strategy (includes Regional Transport Strategy)	Regional Assembly
Regional Economic Strategy	Regional Development Agency
Regional Sustainable Development Framework	Regional Assembly
Regional Housing Strategy	Regional Housing Board (led by Regional Assembly)
Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action	Regional Development Agency
Regional Cultural Strategy	Regional Cultural Consortium
Regional Waste Strategy	Regional Assembly
Regional Tourism Strategy	Regional Tourism Board
Regional Sport Strategy	Regional Sports Board
Regional Biodiversity Strategy	Regional Biodiversity Partnership

Agency, required under the EU's Water Framework Directive. Equally some strategies are national, such as those of the Department for Transport (DfT) for road and rail. Of course the strategies of private companies are generally unlikely to be aligned with English regions, and so those seeking to align RSSs for implementation purposes have to make efforts to square investment by these companies. We will return to the complexities of making these various strategies compatible with each other in Chapter 7, in looking at the vexed issue of integration.

5.5 Conclusions

Our survey of the creation and current nature of the English regional planning system has been undertaken when that system is little more than two years old. Nevertheless, the broad outlines and challenges of a very substantially transformed system are already becoming clear. Planners have, more or less of necessity, been rising to many of these challenges, particularly that of working up a more powerful planning instrument, the RSS, and inserting in it a new sub-regional formula. The learning curve has been very steep, and it is to be expected that the first generation of RSSs will be revised significantly later.

At the same time it is likely that many of the practices established in this first round (still far from finished) will congeal into the norm, through the persuasive power of continuity. The biggest challenges lie perhaps in the fields of politics and consultation, and implementation. These two thorny policy issues are not that separate, given that political legitimacy and wide acceptability may be key to securing effective delivery across many policy sectors. But we will have a much clearer view on these challenges once the first round of RSSs is completed, and the whole system starts to settle down – if another round of reform does not overtake this possibility. At the same time as this period of radical change in England, the planning arrangements in the rest of the UK have been far from static, and we now move on to survey these varying territories.

Note

1 As mentioned in the Preface, a significant change to the way regional strategies are made was proposed by government in July 2007, after this book had been completed. Although this is still only a proposal, it is widely expected that government will go ahead with the change. It will not take full effect until 2010, but will start to alter the regional landscape before then.

   The proposals were announced within the Treasury-led *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*. The Government proposed to rationalise the regional strategy landscape by introducing a 'single strategy', to include both Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy. It is proposed that this single strategy will be prepared by the Regional Development Agencies, and that Regional Assemblies will be abolished. It is clear that this will have significant effects on the regional planning processes described in this chapter and elsewhere, especially in Chapters 7 and 12. However, the real impacts will not be clear until details of replacement mechanisms are developed during 2008. Further reflections on the implications are given in the final chapter. In the meantime, and until at least 2010, the analysis here will retain its validity.

6 Regional planning in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

The 'devolved' system

6.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 4, political factors and the degree of autonomy over strategic decision making can be significant in regional development. Three 'countries' in the UK have historically enjoyed more autonomy than their counterpart English regions. This chapter focuses on the context and systems for regional planning and development in the three countries of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It seeks to draw out themes and innovations in their particular practices, drawing comparisons both between them, and with them and the English regions.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland together account for almost 50 per cent of the area of the UK (Scotland alone has almost one-third of the UK's landmass of 242,000 square kilometres). But in population terms, they account for only about 17 per cent of the 2006 national total (Scotland approximately 5.3 million, Wales approximately 3 million and Northern Ireland approximately 1.7 million). They are relatively sparsely populated and peripheral, with traditionally higher proportions of rural areas and primary and manufacturing industry than the UK at large. But all three do have at least one substantial conurbation – the Clyde/Forth area with the major cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, South Wales with the capital city of Cardiff and the Greater Belfast area. They display a range of issues and challenges for regional planning, and have been characterised over history by some innovative approaches.

The institutional context provides the essential background to any discussion of regional planning and development in the three countries. There has been some degree of autonomy for many years, considerable pressure for more, and the last decade has witnessed important evolution in the framework of government and associated agencies and bodies. Following discussion of these changes, the chapter considers some of the key features of the pioneering approaches to spatial planning for metropolitan regions, and the subsequent innovations in planning for regional economic development. The discussion of contemporary spatial planning practice explores the nature and content of the new generation of spatial plans, and associated issues, including the relationship between 'national' and 'regional' in the 'devolved administrations'. The chapter

concludes with comments on future prospects for regional planning in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and comparisons with the English regions.

6.2 An evolving institutional context

6.2.1 Devolution pressures

The three countries have enjoyed a history of a greater degree of administrative devolution than the English regions. In Scotland this dates back as far as the 1707 Act of Union, since when the country has maintained its own independent judicial and legal systems. Since 1885 a substantial proportion of central government responsibilities in Scotland have been transferred to the Scottish Office, with a Secretary of State subsequently of UK Cabinet rank. Similar arrangements were introduced in 1964 for Wales, via the Welsh Office, but with a smaller proportion of responsibilities. Similarly, there was a Northern Ireland Office. Such offices had the advantage of being both regional and central government departments. In the Scottish Office, the Scottish Development Department (SDD) and the Scottish Economic Planning Department (SEPD) played significant roles in regional development and planning. However, there was growing pressure for more devolved powers.

The devolution debate was intense during the 1970s. A Royal Commission on the Constitution (1973) produced a Majority Report (the Kilbrandon Report) which advocated directly elected assemblies for Scotland and Wales, with legislative responsibility for matters such as local government, town and country planning, new towns, housing and roads. In contrast, the Minority Report, less motivated by satisfying the nationalist discontent in Scotland and Wales, and more concerned with finding a wider solution, believed that it was unfair to discriminate between Scotland and Wales and the English regions. The then Labour Government response separated out the discussion on devolution to Scotland and Wales from devolution to the English regions, which was seen as less urgent and less clear cut. Key issues in the debate were around the functions to be devolved, the extent of financial autonomy of the devolved assemblies and the potential intra- and inter-regional impacts. Following an array of Discussion Documents, Green Papers, White Papers, Bills, Acts and two Referenda, the movement came to a grinding halt in 1979. Separate Scotland and Wales Acts had received parliamentary approval in 1978, but failed to clear the 1979 referendum hurdle, whereby 40 per cent of the electorate had to vote in favour of the proposals. Concern about the bureaucracy of an extra tier of government, worries from the remoter areas of Scotland about being squeezed out by an assembly dominated by Central Scotland, and possibly the inappropriateness of referenda for assessing progressive legislation may all have played a part (Glasson 1992).

Devolution disappeared from the central government agenda during the Thatcher years, although other parties maintained their support, and devolution pressures grew – especially in Scotland. With the return of a Labour

Government in 1997, devolution to Scotland and Wales was quickly, but differentially, progressed. Under the Scotland Act of 1998, Scotland has an Executive, and a Parliament with legislative powers over all matters not reserved to the UK Parliament. Under the Government of Wales Act of 1998, Wales has only executive functions. However, it does have full powers in relation to subordinate legislation, including planning, environmental, housing and local government functions. Unhappily, in contrast to these developments, the very serious and long-running crisis in Northern Ireland undermined the Northern Ireland administration, resulting in a long period of 'direct rule' from central government in Westminster. Overall, as elaborated by Bogdanor (1999) the varying approaches to devolution across the UK reflect a range of inherited and emerging political, electoral and cultural circumstances.

6.2.2 Devolved government

The *Scottish Executive* is the devolved government for Scotland, responsible for a range of issues of direct relevance to regional development and planning, including planning, environment, economic development and some aspects of transport. It has a budget (2006–2007) of almost £30 billion. Planning is currently handled by the Communities Ministry, but most other ministries have relevance for regional development. There are also a number of executive agencies and non-governmental public bodies. Scottish Enterprise with its key role in economic development is an important example of the latter. A Scottish Planning Bill (2005) was being debated at the time of writing, and has subsequently become law as the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. Among other things, it includes provision for a National Planning Framework, and for Strategic Development Plans; these are discussed further in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

The *Welsh Assembly* took over a wide range of functions from the former Welsh Office (now Wales Office) and other government departments, including town and country planning, housing, local government, economic development and transport. Unlike the Scottish Parliament which has powers of primary legislation, the Welsh Assembly has fewer devolved powers, and its annual budget is about one-third that of the Scottish Executive. However, the making of subordinate legislation, which details how UK legislation will apply in Wales, can be powerful in its own right. Again all Ministries have some relevance to planning and development; the current ministry responsible is Environment, Planning and Countryside. Its aim is to 'deliver better government in relation to Planning, in the context of both the Better Wales (the Assembly's corporate plan) and the Partnership Agreement of 2000'. The Welsh Development Agency has been a key public body, responsible to the Welsh Assembly. Welsh planning activities include, among many others, the Wales Spatial Plan (2005) also discussed in section 6.4.

The Northern Ireland situation is markedly different. *The Northern Ireland Office* (NIO) was created in 1972 after the Northern Ireland Government was

dissolved in the face of the deteriorating security situation. Its primary aim is fundamental, to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to secure a lasting peace. The new *Northern Ireland Executive* was similarly suspended in 2002, and the NIO resumed responsibility for all government departments. All the main services, including town and country planning, transport, countryside policies and urban regeneration were administered directly by the NIO. The key department is Environment, which has responsibility for most of the services. Planning is undertaken by an executive agency, the Planning Services Agency, operating through eight divisional planning offices. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is another key agency, which took control of the local authority housing stock in 1971. As and when the new Executive is returned, the Department for Regional Development will renew its responsibility for strategic planning.[1]

6.2.3 Relationships with local government

Local government in the UK has been subject to much reorganisation over the last 30 years. The result in England is a mix of one- and two-tier structures, whereas elsewhere there is a single-tier system. In Northern Ireland, a unitary system was set up in 1973. There are 26 district councils, with quite limited powers, and only consultation status in relation to planning. Despite this democratic deficit, Hendry (1992) argues that they have operated with a considerable measure of success. The reorganisation into unitary authorities took place in Scotland and Wales in 1996. Scotland has 32, and Wales 22, unitary councils responsible for all local government planning functions, except in the areas of national parks. In each country there is considerable variation in the population and area size of the local government units, with some very large areas covered for the Highlands in Scotland and Powys in Wales. There is some concern about the fragmentation of strategic planning, as discussed later in this chapter.

There has been some concern, from international experience, that 'when formerly centralist states decentralise powers to the regional level, local government can suffer from the "decentralisation of centralism"' as the new regional governments seek to grasp power from the local governments within their jurisdictions (Jeffrey 1998). Stewart (1995) makes a similar argument. However, from an examination of early experience in Wales, Laffin (2004) indicates that regional centralism is not inevitable, and 'the Welsh Assembly allows local government considerable policy influence and exercises looser direct controls compared with Whitehall departments'. The Assembly is an important source of resources; local government is important for policy implementation and is also a vital source of political support for election to the Assembly. Good working relationships are also fostered by formal mechanisms, including the Welsh Local Government Association and the new Partnership Council (which institutionalises communications between central and local government). Laffin also notes that 'In part this comparatively good relationship in Wales reflects the small scale of Welsh central-local relations; it is a setting in

which everyone knows everyone else.' This also tends to be the case in Scotland (Bennett *et al.* 2002). Allmendinger (2005) also argues that there may be more defined local government relationships in Scotland and Wales as a direct consequence of devolution.

6.3 Early innovative practice

6.3.1 *Pioneering approaches to spatial planning for metropolitan regions*

Scotland has figured prominently in both the practice and theory of UK regional planning, stemming no doubt to a large extent from the degree of administrative independence in many matters, including planning. A pioneering initiative was the Clyde Valley Regional Plan of 1946, prepared by Abercrombie and Matthew for the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee, composed of constituent local authorities and established in 1943. Wannop (1995) sees this plan as one of a 'classic vintage': 'No subsequent regional plans have had a greater impact than those for Greater London and the Clyde Valley, and Abercrombie was the author of both – (they) were the peaks of achievement of the period.' The Plan sought to meet Glasgow Clydeside's severe problems of congestion and unfit dwellings with decentralisation to new towns, such as East Kilbride and Cumbernauld. The planned scale of intervention was vast with up to 500,000 people to be moved. This was shared between outward extensions to the urban area and the new towns. Glasgow's spread was to be limited by a greenbelt. In spite of taking many hard knocks, the plan was remarkably successful in underpinning planning policies in Clydeside for over 30 years. The strong and independent support of the Scottish Office was a key factor.

The benefits of planning at a larger scale contributed to arguments for administrative reform in Scotland. In 1975, following the recommendations of the Wheatley Commission (Royal Commission on Local Government in Scotland 1969), local government was reorganised on the basis of nine regional authorities and 53 districts. The wide-ranging functions of the regional authorities, which included strategic planning, industrial development, transportation, education, water supply and sewerage, made them very powerful and comprehensive authorities. This was particularly so for the most populous Strathclyde Regional Authority. The regional authorities were required to produce Regional Reports as a means for the new authorities to take stock of their responsibilities and to establish priorities for resource allocation over their wide-ranging activities. These were seen as having considerable potential (Robinson 1977); they were produced quickly and corporately, introduced new ideas and effected quick decisions, such as the abandonment of Stonehouse new town as advocated by the Strathclyde Regional Report (Strathclyde Regional Council 1976). Unfortunately they did not survive the change in UK government in 1979, and as noted above the regional level was subsequently reorganised out of Scottish local government.

There were similar innovations in *Northern Ireland* focusing around planning for the dominant settlement of Belfast. Here the key plan was Sir Robert Matthew's Belfast Regional Plan (1963). This physically oriented plan combined the then contemporary approaches of containment and overspill. The Belfast 'stop line' was a key feature of the plan, with planned overspill linked in particular to the new city of Craigavon at about 30 miles to the west of Belfast. These concepts provided the framework for the planning of Belfast for much of the twentieth century. The stop line eventually became the Belfast Metropolitan Green Belt. Unfortunately Craigavon, overlain on the towns of Lurgan and Portadown, had many growth problems, intertwined with the 'troubles' of the province, and with difficulties in underpinning the industrial base (the quick pullout of the relocated Goodyear Tyre Company in the early 1970s was a prime example of the latter).

There has been some reasonable critique of the Matthew's Plan for being too Belfast-centred and for, de facto, relegating the rest of the province to a rural backdrop (McEldowney 2001). However, it should be seen also in the context of other planning activity. For example, in 1963 the government had commissioned Professor Thomas Wilson to prepare a comprehensive plan for future economic development in Northern Ireland. The Wilson Report (1965), accepted by the government, provided a detailed programme of action covering the location of industry in centres of growth, amenity and tourism, transport services, training, inducements to industry, agriculture and the general investment programme. The Regional Physical Development Strategy: 1975–1995 (NIDLGHP 1975) provides another example of a province-wide approach, with a commendable attempt to spread development across district towns; but this was also side-tracked by the political instabilities of the period.

6.3.2 Innovation in regional economic development

One approach to increasing the power of the machinery for regional development and planning is through the creation and use of regional development agencies with executive powers and substantial budgets. The work of such agencies is more a regional development than a regional planning activity, but such activity does have the advantage of implementing by direction as well as by persuasion. Both Scotland and Wales have been innovators in the use of such agencies for regional economic development, and well before the introduction of the RDAs for the English regions in 1999. The agencies were of two types – rural development agencies, and more general development agencies.

The trailblazer was the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB 1965) in Scotland, established in 1965 as a statutory body responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland. It was charged with 'assisting the people of the Highlands and Islands to improve their economic and social conditions and of enabling the Highlands and Islands to play a more effective part in the economic and social development of the nation' (Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland) Act, 1965). For these purposes it was given finance and a wide

range of powers, including the power to borrow money, acquire land and business by compulsory purchase, to enter into partnership with commercial and industrial concerns and broaden the capital structure of a company. The Board initially supported large-scale projects, dependent on external initiatives, but it quickly developed a parallel policy more geared to supporting local initiatives, many in indigenous industries such as fishing, agriculture and tourism. The Development Board for Rural Wales (DBRW) was established in 1977 to carry out a similar pump-priming role for development in rural Wales. It was given a more restricted role than the HIDB, although it was also responsible for the development of the new town of Newtown in Powys.

Partly in response to the increasing threat of the Scottish Nationalist vote (Wannop 1995), a Scotland-wide agency, the Scottish Develpment Agency (SDA), was established in 1975. Again, this was followed in 1976 by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), with a relatively lower profile, and by the Northern Ireland Development Agency (NIDA). The aim of the WDA was to encourage business development and investment in Wales. Its two main functions were to encourage entrepreneurial growth in terms of new business start-ups based in Wales, and to persuade multi-national corporations either to relocate or open subsidiary facilities in Wales. These regional development agencies have been a distinctive feature of the institutional capacity of the countries and have played an important role in the process of planning and economic development (Danson *et al.* 1993).

There have been several subsequent changes to the development agency institutional environment. In 1991 the SDA merged with the Scottish offices of the Training Agency to become Scottish Enterprise (SE), which did raise concern at the time about the possible loss of independence of this effective agency (Danson *et al.* 1989). However, SE has remained an independent non-department public body, and a world leader in regional economic development. Its Operating Plan for 2006–2009 uses the theme of a 'Smart, Successful Scotland', focusing on the priority industries of tourism, food and drink, financial services, life sciences, energy and electronic markets (Scottish Enterprise 2006). It had a budget (2006–2007) of £550 million. The HIDB has become Highlands and Islands Enterprise with the aim 'to unlock the potential and help create a strong, diverse and sustainable economy'. It has an annual budget of over £100 million and is active in a wide array of activities, including the delivery of business support services, the provision of training and learning, community and cultural projects and measures for environmental renovation (HIE 2006). In Wales, the WDA was merged with the DBRW and the Land Authority for Wales in 1998. Since 2005 it has become part of the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks of the Welsh Assembly. The relevant agency in Northern Ireland is now Invest Northern Ireland.

6.4 'National' spatial plans

While the intermediate territorial level between the nation state (UK) and local government is normally referred to as 'regional' (Keating 1998) and

planning for that level is 'regional planning', the various countries here have national identities. As such, although they can be seen as 'regions' of the UK, they can also claim to be 'nations' in a sense that no English region can. Their contemporary work on the production of 'national' spatial plans is a reflection of this interpretation. Indeed the various plans can in some way be seen as 'nation building' documents seeking to develop agreed visions and spatial strategies for the various territories. This is in marked contrast to the rest of the UK. Despite some advocacy for action (see, for example, Wong *et al.* 2000), there is no UK national spatial plan, although there is a UK Strategy for Sustainable Development (DEFRA 2005). Nor is there a spatial plan for England, although again there has been strong advocacy for such a plan with, for example, the TCPA initiated debate in 2005/2006 on *A Vision for England's Future*.

The approach to spatial planning discussed here partly reflects the influence of European developments, and especially the ESDP (CEC 1999). The ESDP, although non-binding, informs the preparation of regional spatial strategies by seeking to secure balanced and sustainable development in the interests of economic and social cohesion across the EU. The European Commission has encouraged the production of spatial planning frameworks to provide a context for resource allocation; indeed such frameworks could be a significant factor in the EU Regional Policy post 2006 (see Chapter 13). The national spatial planning activities are now discussed for each country, drawing out the context and purpose, approach, plan contents and priorities, the spatial plan diagram, and the crucial action or implementation mechanisms. The section concludes with a highlighting of similarities and differences in approach. The discussion is in chronological order. Northern Ireland was developing new province-wide spatial planning initiatives in the 1990s; the initiatives in Wales and Scotland have been more recent, following the advent of the devolved Assemblies.

6.4.1 Northern Ireland

Ironically the first national spatial strategy to be discussed is called a regional strategy. The *Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (RDS)* (NIDRD 2001) was produced during the times of positive change in the province, with the (initially temporary) establishment of the new Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. The strategy offers a long-term perspective on the development of Northern Ireland up to 2025. It is stressed that it is not a fixed blueprint or master plan, but more a framework – a spatial framework for action helping 'to inform and guide the whole community in the drive to create a dynamic, prosperous and progressive Northern Ireland in the third millennium'. The strategy explicitly seeks to adopt the integrated approach of the ESDP in relation to the inter-related goals of economic and social cohesion, sustainable development and balanced competitiveness.

The strategy notes that long-term planning for a region is a complex process. There was a particular focus on community involvement with extensive consultation with all sections of the community, plus two major conferences. About

500 voluntary and community groups participated in the process. A Draft Regional Strategic Framework, *Shaping our Future: Towards a Strategy for Shaping the Region* (DoENI 1998) was produced for consultation, accompanied by a comprehensive set of supporting documentation, including reports on the Family of Settlements, the Regional Baseline, the Strategic Environmental Appraisal and Population and Housing. The resultant strategy was subject to further public consultation and then to a public examination by an Independent Panel which lasted for five weeks. The agreed Regional Development Strategy (RDS) was made under Article 3 of The Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, by which all Northern Ireland government departments must have regard to the RDS in exercising their functions; the RDS will also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and planning appeals.

The Shared Vision which emerged from the public consultation process was:

> Together to create an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region with a strong sense of its place in the wider world; a Region of opportunity where people enjoy living and working in a healthy environment which enhances the quality of their lives and where diversity is a source of strength rather than division.

To deliver this vision, a number of Guiding Principles were adopted, including: an overriding principle of a sustainable approach to development, plus a people and community focused approach, a more cohesive society (with a focus on equality of opportunity and spatial equity), competitiveness (including investment in intelligence and improved communications) and an integrated approach (of institutions).

The Spatial Development Strategy (Figure 6.1) is a hub, corridor and gateway approach – a familiar approach from European spatial planning. The key transport *corridors* and associated trunk roads provide the skeletal framework for future physical development and are the primary links to the port and airport *gateways*. There is a hierarchy of hubs, including the metropolitan centre at Belfast and the North West centre based on Derry/Londonderry; the new town of Craigavon plus 14 other main hubs; and smaller local centres and rural clusters (although the hierarchy was somewhat clearer, and possibly more logical, in the Draft RDS, with seven major centres and 12 smaller key service centres, beneath the metropolitan level). The RDS sees the hubs as having the potential to develop as growth poles, and indicates an overall polycentric network, adopting a sub-regional approach to clusters of urban centres in some parts of the province, to enable the necessary concentration of employment and complementary facilities to create a strong magnet for investment and development. The spatial strategy provides the framework for the allocation of housing figures. A housing need of 160,000 new units is predicted up to 2015, of which 77,500 would be in the Belfast Metropolitan Area and hinterland.

The important legal framework for implementation has already been noted. The strategy is managed by the Minister for Regional Development, and
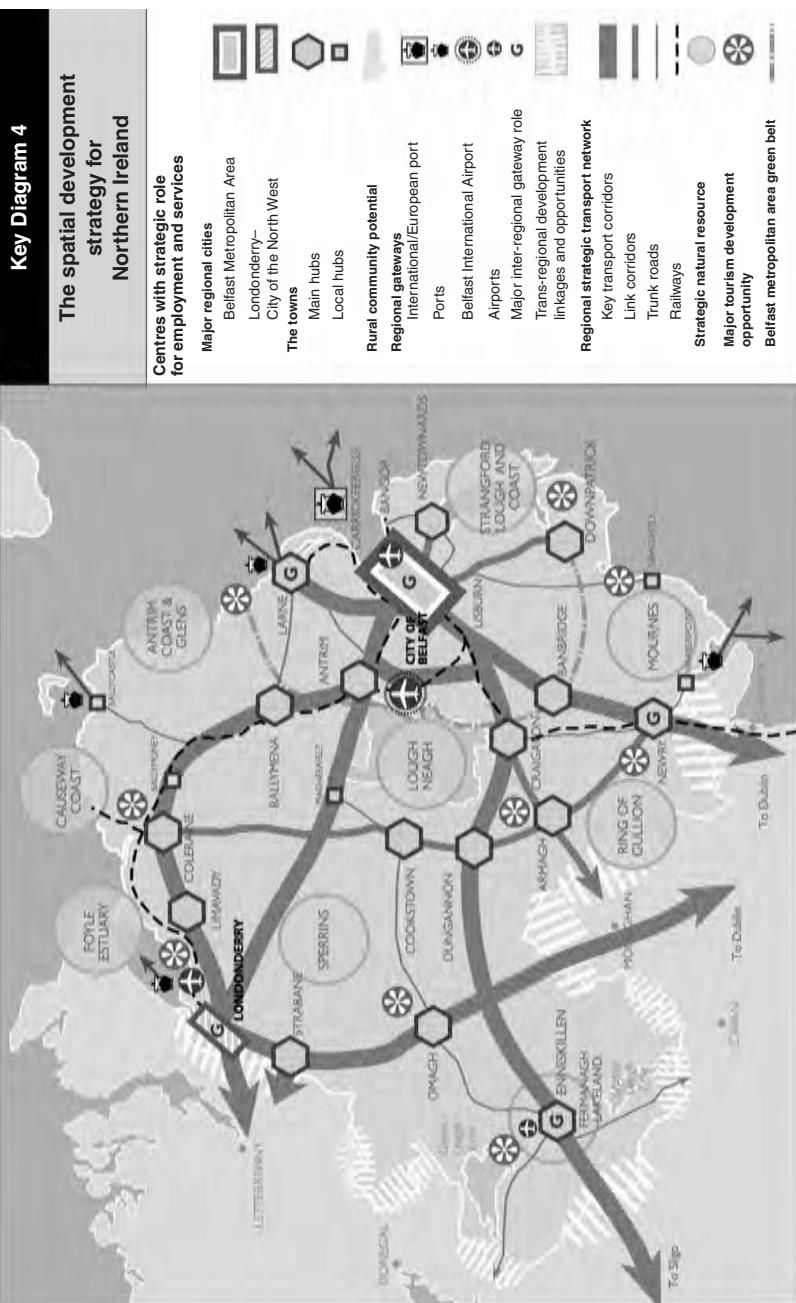
Figure 6.1 The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (2001) – key diagram. (*Source:* NIDRD (2001).)

strategic partnerships are used for sub-regional implementation. Associated Regional Policy Statements have also been developed, on topics such as the countryside. Since its inception the RDS has been monitored annually; there is also a requirement for a major review after ten years plus a 'focused assessment' after five years, to identify any aspect where in due course adjustment might be needed. The focused assessment was undertaken in 2006 by an External Working Group. The consultation document tracked implementation against 12 Critical Threshold Indicators, such as '% new development on brownfield land' (NIDRD 2006). The strategy performed well on the brownfield indicator, exceeding the 60 per cent norm. More worrying was the difficulty of concentrating development in the hubs, in a region with a preference for rural development.

6.4.2 Wales

The Welsh Assembly soon recognised the need for a strategic planning overview, especially in the context of the fragmented unitary system of local government. A Draft Wales Spatial Plan was produced in 2003 (Welsh Assembly Government 2003a), and the final document *People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan* was published at the end of 2004 (Welsh Assembly Government 2004). The strategy initially started out on an informal basis, but it was subsequently felt necessary to address issues of status and legislative requirement. Provision was subsequently made for a statutory duty to prepare a plan and keep it under review, under Section 60 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). The Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) has a 20-year horizon, and has also been influenced by the ESDP. It adopts the following definition of 'spatial planning':

> Spatial planning is the consideration of what can and should happen where. It investigates the interaction of different policies and practices across regional space, and sets the role of places in a wider context. It goes well beyond 'traditional' land-use planning and sets out a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions, whether or not these relate to formal land-use planning control.

The production of the WSP involved 'a proactive consultation process', and the opportunity to participate in seminars/workshops and conferences to discuss the plan. Reflecting its significance in the Welsh Government, responsibility for the plan was moved from the Planning to the Corporate Strategy Division of the Assembly Government. Compared to the RDS in Northern Ireland, it is a briefer document. But it is a significant statutory document, and one of the high-level strategic guidance building blocks for Wales, alongside *Wales: A Better Country* (Welsh Assembly Government 2003b) and *The Sustainable Development Scheme and Action Plan* (Welsh Assembly Government 2003c).

The WSP has a written and spatial vision. The latter identifies, for example, key centres and socio-economic hubs; the written version is as follows:

> We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being, and we will sustain our distinctive identity.

The WSP is structured according to five guiding themes of: building sustainable communities, promoting a sustainable economy, valuing our environment, achieving sustainable accessibility and respecting distinctiveness. For each theme, there is a brief diagnosis of issues, followed by a set of objectives, and actions to address the objectives. The plan is also structured by sub-region, with a vision, strategy, propositions and actions for each. For example, for North West Wales, one proposition is 'The University of Wales, Bangor, has a key role to play in supporting the development of an outward-looking knowledge economy', and the associated action is 'University of Wales, Bangor and FE institutions, WDA and business to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy'.

The actual spatial vision is very broadbrush, as is much of the overall plan which is more of a descriptive stocktake than a forward looking strategy (see Figure 6.2 for an example of the issue diagnosis focus). Implementation, as a process and as a product, will involve national and area level actions. At the national level, this will be via a National Spatial Planning Group, which 'while having no executive powers – will advise the Government on spatial priorities'. Area level working partnerships are likely to be flexible, building on and adapting what currently exists. It is doubtful, however, whether the plan is sufficient, in its current form, to guide local planning and decision making. Work is underway on performance indicators to monitor implementation of the spatial plan, and there is an important provision to 'refresh' the plan in 2007/2008.

6.4.3 Scotland

There was a mixed lead up to the first national spatial plan for Scotland. While the Scottish Executive (SE) consultation in 2001 on the value of such a plan found widespread support, there was also a view that a statutory plan was not needed. As such *The National Planning Framework for Scotland: Quality and Connectivity* (Scottish Executive 2004a) is a non-statutory document, a statement of government policy, rather than a part of the statutory development planning system (this will change as a result of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Bill and the subsequent Planning etc. (Scotland) Act of December 2006 (see below)). Nevertheless, the framework marks an important first step to introduce a spatial dimension into the traditionally aspatial Scottish public policy arena. In the foreword to the framework, the Minister for Communities notes that 'Place matters. It makes a difference to people and business. We recognise that policy
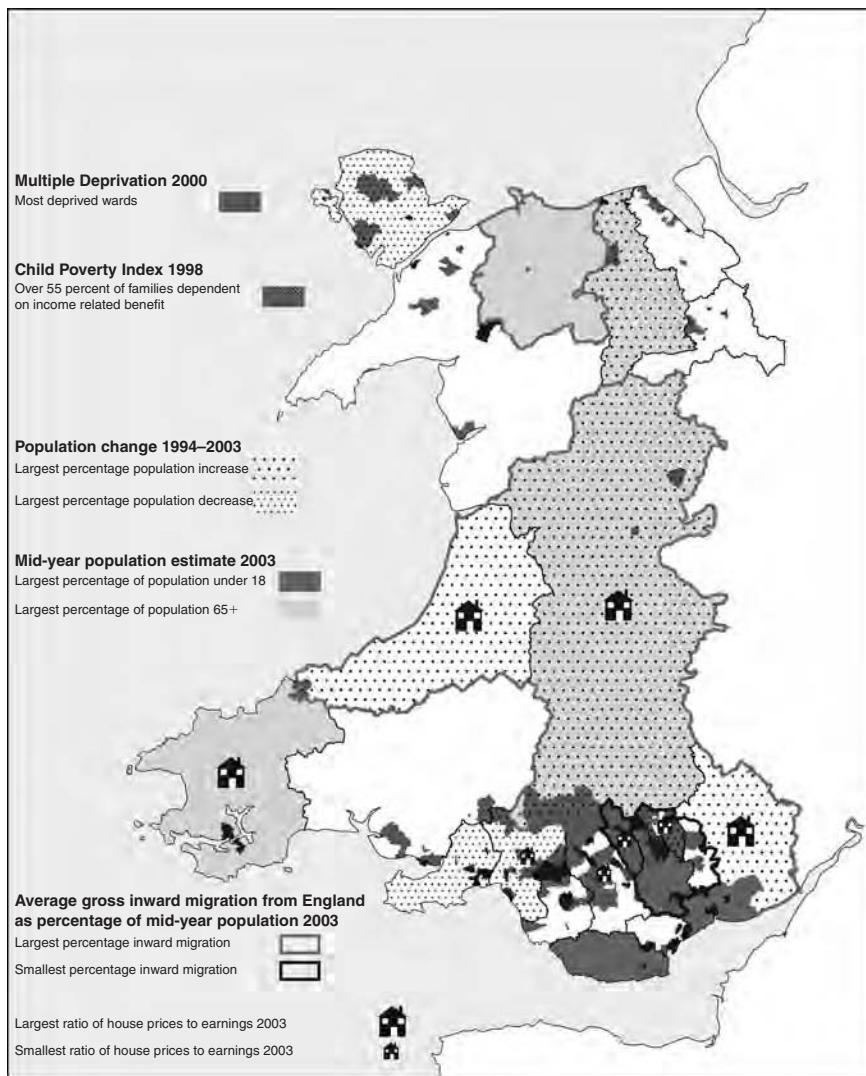
Figure 6.2 WSP (2004) – example of issue diagnosis – building sustainable communities.

has a geographic dimension.' There are also comments that this is a 'perspective and not a masterplan or blueprint' and, as with the other national spatial plans, there is a 20-year time horizon. There is also reference to the importance of the ESDP and to the implications for Scotland of the enlargement of the EU.

Work on the framework started in 2002 and involved extensive stakeholder involvement. The contents were also subject to strategic environmental assessment. The framework describes Scotland as it is in 2004, identifies key issues and drivers of change, sets out a vision to 2025, and identifies priorities and

opportunities for different parts of the country in spatial perspectives for the Central Belt, East Coast, Ayrshire and the South-West and Rural Scotland. The final section focuses on action to progress the framework.

The key aims are the now familiar triad: to increase economic growth and competitiveness, to promote social and environmental justice, and to promote sustainable development and protect and enhance the quality of natural and built environments. Quality and connectivity are recurrent themes; cities are seen as the main economic drivers, and substantial infrastructure investment (for example, in water supply and sewerage) is seen as essential. 'Closing the Opportunity gap' is a favoured phrase underpinning the spatial strategy. The key elements of that strategy include:

- to support the development of Scotland's cities as the main drivers of the economy;
- to spread the benefits of economic activity by promoting environmental quality and connectivity;
- to enable the most disadvantaged communities to benefit from growth and opportunity;
- to strengthen external links;
- to promote economic diversification and environmental stewardship;
- to highlight long-term transport options and promote more sustainable patterns of transport and land use;
- to invest in water and drainage infrastructure to support development;
- to realise the potential of Scotland's renewable energy resources;
- to provide the facilities to meet waste recycling targets; and
- to extend broadband coverage in every area of Scotland.

The Strategy Map, Figure 6.3, is broadbrush but does identify some important spatial features. It highlights the key communications corridors and strategic transport routes to support Scotland's development to 2025. Hunterston and Scapa Flow are identified as deep-water opportunities, and the West and North Coasts as having great potential for marine energy development. West Edinburgh and the Clyde Corridor are seen as areas where co-ordinated action is required to support economic development and area regeneration.

But what about 'making it happen' which is briefly addressed in the final section of the document? In a commentary on the plan, Lloyd and Peel (2004) highlight four dimensions to the crucial issue of capacity 'deficit'. There is institutional capacity ('The Executive and its agencies are not in control of all the factors driving change'); policy capacity ('Some changes must be seen in the context of EU enlargement and globalisation'); spatial capacity ('Striking the balance in policy, expenditure and Executive action can involve difficult choice'); and infrastructure capacity ('a more systematic approach is required to decision making on strategic infrastructure provision').

The new Planning Act may help on the capacity issue by giving a statutory status to the National Planning Framework (Scotland) (NPF), although the
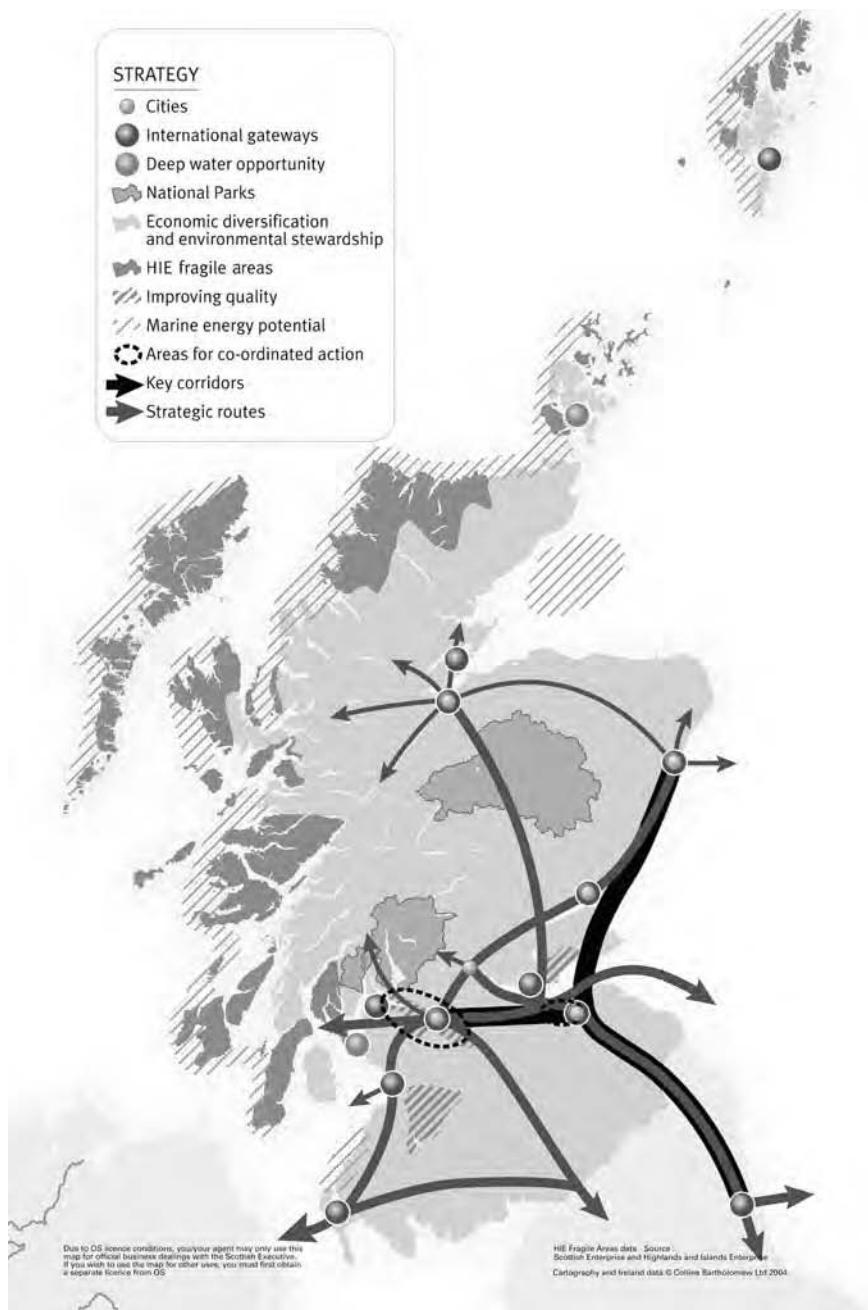
Figure 6.3 NPF (2004) – strategy map. (*Source:* Scottish Executive (2004a).)

details of the legislation have raised some concerns. For example, the scope for the NPF to include provision for 'national developments', such as major infrastructure and urban/industrial investment projects, raises concerns about the fast-tracking of controversial projects. The first Monitoring Report on the NPF (Scottish Executive 2006a) examines progress on key objectives, and outlines trends on issues such as the development of Scotland's cities, promoting environmental quality and strengthening external links.

6.4.4 *Comparing approaches*

There are many similarities in the approaches to national spatial planning in the three countries. Its very existence as a new and developing tier of planning is notable in itself. All three plans have been influenced in their nature by the emerging approach to spatial planning in Europe; exemplified by the ESDP. They are spatial plans, with a 20-year time horizon. They also focus on high-level strategic issues, and their scope is wider than land-use planning. They all assert to be broadbrush perspectives rather than more detailed masterplans. The vision and key themes reflect the triple-mantra of the ESDP and contemporary approaches to sustainable development, with economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental quality themes. Concerns with spreading opportunities, and respecting differences figure highly in the narratives. Connectivity is also identified as a key concern, as it should be for such spatially peripheral regions – although coverage of the international dimension to connectivity is limited. The spatial elements include some of those popular in contemporary regional planning elsewhere – hubs, clusters, corridors, gateways and polycentricity. All the plans have sections cascading down to a limited number of regions/sub-regions. The processes to date have made much of their wide-ranging consultation, environmental appraisals and the importance of monitoring and an ongoing approach.

There are also differences, partly reflecting the stage in development of the plan, and the different procedural and political contexts. The plans vary in statutory status, although the position is in flux. They vary in their very names, from regional to national, from strategy to plan to planning framework. There is also considerable variation in the degree of detail, especially in relation to the spatial elements; there is most detail in the RDS and probably least in the WSP. Of course status and detail does not always equate with implementation. This can be the Achilles heel of such planning exercises. The fact that they each have the strength of a government behind them is important, but the concluding sections of each report reveal the difficulties of implementation. Again there appears to be differential progress in developing partnership arrangements, both horizontally and vertically with relevant stakeholders. Monitoring is also apparently best developed in Northern Ireland, but from an earlier start to the process than Scotland and Wales. Underpinning much of the concern, and the future of this level of planning, are the capacity issues raised earlier, which must be confronted in all the countries.

6.5 Planning for city regions – a Scottish example

Recognition of the importance of cities as drivers of regional development has been discussed in both the theory (Chapter 4) and practice (Chapters 5) of regional planning. As noted in the previous section this is particularly the case in Scotland where the NPF has emphasised their strategic role. To better deliver this role there has been considerable research and discussion in the last few years to improve strategic planning for Scotland's city regions. *A Review of Scotland's Cities* (Scottish Executive 2002a) stressed the importance of the cities in the economic growth of the country, indicating the unique importance of each, set in the context of the region which surrounds it. One outcome was the establishment of the £170 million City Growth Fund into which the Scottish cities could bid. A subsequent *City Region Boundaries Study* (Scottish Executive 2002b) reviewed the possible boundaries of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen city regions, based on the consideration of housing market areas, TTWAs, strategic transport links and retail catchments. These were complemented by more economic-based studies. A review of the economic development strategy for Scotland, *A Smart, Successful Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2004b) incorporated a stronger spatial perspective, emphasising the vital nature of cities. A study on *Competitive Scottish Cities* (Hutchins and Parkinson 2005) sought to measure the performance of the Scottish cities in terms of the criteria discussed in Chapter 4 (innovation, connectivity etc.). It showed that only Glasgow and Edinburgh are comparable to the English core cities in terms of size, scale and employment growth, but lagged well behind their EU competitor cities in terms of indicators such as GVA.

A possible legislative response was set out in a White Paper, *Modernising the Planning System* (Scottish Executive 2005). This proposed the establishment of four Strategic Development Planning Authorities charged with the role of producing City Region Strategic Plans, combining strategic land-use planning and action plans. The proposal was generally welcomed by the authorities in the affected areas, although there was some concern as to the availability of the specialist strategic planners capable of fully integrating the land-use planning work with strategic transport plans and local economic councils. The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 has since given the legislative underpinning, and provides for the designation of groups of planning authorities to jointly prepare 'strategic development plans', for 'strategic development plan areas'.

Another response is provided in the Scottish Enterprise Operating Plan (2006–2009) (Scottish Enterprise 2006). This builds on the Scottish Executive's Cities Review and the NPF, to reinforce the importance of cities working co-operatively with their regions as drivers of success in Scotland. A metropolitan region approach is seen as having many positive impacts by concentrating effort on delivering high impact projects, focusing on coherent geographical areas, encouraging strategic co-operation, and improving partnership working (between, for example, the departments of the Scottish Executive, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, structure plan teams, and the main business

organisations). The Plan stresses the need to make the most of the science and technology assets of the metropolitan regions; it also gives high priority to transport and information communication technology (ICT) connectivity. Figure 6.4 illustrates the potential for positive city-regional linkages in the Scottish 'Opportunity Triangle'.

6.6 Conclusions – prospects and lessons

While there are some commonalities across the UK in terms of, for example, the rescaling of planning activities towards the regional/national level, and a continuing emphasis on a shift of planning towards a market supporting role (Allmendinger *et al.* 2003), there are also some clear differences between

Metro region collaboration for global scale
Successful 'core cities' critical

→   Enhanced connectivity
○   Core city
◌   City region catchment
▨   Key regeneration and
    growth corridor

Aberdeen

Dundee

Glasgow

Edinburgh

Core cities boost regions by providing:
• A critical mass of knowledge institutions
• A vibrant environment for knowledge creation and transfer
• Strategic business and financial services
• 'Connectivity' – attracts higher value business functions
• Highly paid jobs
• A concentration of culture, leisure and sport
• Transport hubs
• National and international profile

But cities rely on regions for:
• Space for major economic and infrastructure projects
• A wider range of housing options
• Distinctive urban centres with niche retail experiences
• A wider range of business sites and premises
• A wider workforce and skills base
• Opportunities for countryside leisure

Figure 6.4 Metropolitan Scotland – opportunity triangle. (*Source:* Scottish Enterprise (2006).)

practice in the 'devolved system' and England. Regional planning practice in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has benefited from a degree of political independence and autonomy in decision making not enjoyed by their English region counterparts. This has facilitated a planning process and plan contents tailored to the respective contexts, plus more power of implementation. The degree of underpinning autonomy has strengthened in recent years in Scotland and Wales, and will also do so again in Northern Ireland as direct rule from Westminster is lifted. There have been pioneering approaches over time in planning for metropolitan regions, and initiatives such as the Strategic Development Planning Authorities in Scotland will hopefully introduce a new round of activity. The three countries have also benefited over many years from having their own development agencies, both rural and wider, with substantial budgets and wide-ranging briefs.

In contrast the English RAs suffer from a 'democratic deficit', and the only referendum on establishing a tier of regional government, for the North East Region of England, failed badly when put to the electorate. The English RDAs are also much more recent, and with smaller per capita budgets. But there may be lessons to be learned from some of the mechanisms for working with local government and others, such as Partnership Councils, which are used in the three countries. However, such mechanisms may work best when the 'regional' authority is seen to be important, especially in budgetary terms, and where it is itself dependent on electoral support from the local authorities. In addition the three countries have the strength of distinct 'national' identities which is difficult to replicate in the English regions.

The contemporary initiatives on spatial planning have drawn on the integrated approach advocated by the ESDP. The approach is much wider than land use planning, and introduces an important spatial dimension into a formally aspatial policy level. The emerging spatial plans have a strong focus on equality of opportunity and also the importance of distinctiveness. There is a high priority to improve connectivity, to invest in infrastructure and to utilise the city regions as the drivers of change. In terms of content and approach there are many similarities with their English RSS equivalents. There has been a move to the creation of statutory plans, the use of an open consultative process, the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and the establishment of monitoring procedures for an ongoing process. Some of the plans are currently very broadbrush, and not as detailed as their English equivalents, but this will no doubt change as new versions are rolled out. What may not change is the absence of an England-wide, or indeed a UK national spatial plan.

Note

1 In May 2007 the Executive was returned, and has taken over responsibility again for the Environment Department and for the Department for Regional Development, which resumes its responsibility for strategic planning.

7 Making and executing regional spatial plans

7.1 Introduction – a goal of integrated spatial planning

The review of spatial strategy making in the three non-English parts of the UK has raised issues about the conditions under which integrated and effective strategies are to be created. This chapter continues to examine the practices of actually making regional plans. We start by looking at what *integration* may mean and how it may be achieved. This section is followed with a closely connected issue, at what *scale* planning should operate, given what seem to be the ever rising challenges facing planning. Finally, we discuss the different *stages* involved in regional planning – assuming we can accept that there really are stages. This will form a third cut into current practice, and raise further issues which any practising planners will be regularly confronting. These three related sections set up an overview of current challenges and approaches – the big picture. Subsequent chapters take a more sectoral perspective on planners' workloads.

Implicitly, planning has always been about integration. Any of the great figures in planning (as recounted say in Hall 1988) knew that things had to match up – jobs, houses, transport and so on. This was the essence of the plans of Ebenezer Howard or Patrick Abercrombie, as it was of the structure or regional plans in the UK in the 1970s. That is not to say that integration was achieved either in the forming or the execution of these plans, or in many others. In recent years integration has become perhaps the holy grail of planning in Britain. Two possible explanations for this dominant aspiration may be because it is harder than ever, for a range of reasons, or because other substantive objectives are less agreed than in the past.

At any rate it is generally agreed that a key requirement of plans and strategies, most especially at regional and sub-regional levels, is that they should be integrated. The core of this is a most demanding set of challenges:

- Getting two components (doubtless the ultimately critical ones) to work together well – *jobs and housing.* That is, these two 'activities' or 'land uses' need to be connected in a way acceptable to the living and values of the society being planned. Transport is evidently as much at the core of this, as the managing of the two locating activities.

- Getting *other elements of livelihood* to also support these two, not to work against them: in contemporary Britain, all the core needs of family and consumption, getting goods, looking after people of different ages and in different health, enabling forms of recreation, leisure and culture and so on. Current 'spatial planning' pretends that this extra sensitivity to other aspects of planning, such as to health or culture, is something new. Planners of previous generations might answer that these had always been part of the package.
- The 'spatiality' of this may well be more demanding than in the past, because of the stretched geographies affecting just about every activity and function, due to the changed ecology caused by cheap fuels. A loss of clear boundaries and multiple superimposed 'relational' spatialities are seen as resulting (Graham and Healey 1999).
- Equally, *temporality* has to be part of the integration imperative, in principle. Landscapes and uses within these were perhaps more slowly changing in the past, allowing a more plausibly gradual and accumulating planning horizon. Now perhaps territories are subject to very varying temporal demands – to improve competitiveness over few years, to provide housing over generations, to re-equip infrastructures over mostly long periods, for example. In principle, there should be at least an attempt to make these work together sensibly.

None of this set has to specify the substantive purposes of planning. Each set of interests will have very different purposes, and therefore a very different concept of integration. What is clear is that there are very difficult demands here, even before encountering the politics involved – the discussion of much of which is left to Chapter 12. What approaches may be and are being used currently in the UK to improve integration? Although the discussion is divided into more substantive techniques and more procedural ones, these clearly overlap.

7.2 Achieving integration – substantively

There are essentially four ways this may be achieved, and all are present in varying degrees in current practice. They are: regional government – the highest potential, but non-existent in most of the UK; central government drives – the really most powerful, but often very imperfectly integrated spatially; within plan techniques; and sub-regional methods. The last two are the prime terrain of regional planning skills.

7.2.1 By regional government

In Scotland and Wales elected governments have been in place since 1999, responsible for spatial planning at all levels above local authorities. As we saw in Chapter 6, they have moved to create new regional planning systems. The

Assembly in Wales and the Executive in Scotland have the legitimacy to impose an integrated model on a range of sectoral agencies – at least in principle, whether or not they choose to or manage to do this.

Their success in achieving integration has been variable. In 2004–2006 the Assembly made some agencies previously operating as quangos (Welsh Tourist Board, Elwa – Education and Skills, the Welsh Development Agency) into directly controlled parts of the government, a move interpreted by some as admitting the difficulties of integration with these bodies working at arm's length. In 2003 the Assembly agreed on an overarching strategy for the government, *Wales – A Better Country*, and this was followed by the Wales Spatial Plan in 2004. However, it is not clear how strongly integrative these are in relation to the many sectoral strategies (Economic Development, Sustainable Development and so on).

Scotland's 2005 National Planning Framework is seen by some as suffering from similar weaknesses, being little more than a general infrastructure framework. It doubtless remains for the next level down, under the emerging new planning system, to provide the integrative drive needed in the major city regions, above all to knit up the growth, movement and regeneration challenges in the Central Scotland region.

In *London* some of the same doubts are present, but the first six years of the new London government have seen at the very least a strong integrative push from the London Plan (Greater London Assembly 2004a), the statutory plan prepared and finalised by the Mayor. Given the limited powers given to the Mayor, the attempt via the Plan to bring together the sectoral elements (regeneration, housing, transport) has impressed many planners, even though doubts remain as to whether the direction of integrated strategising is the right one, and whether it can really be implemented (Newman and Thornley 2005; Hall 2006). The Plan pushes for growth, of population and economic activity, and all the policies are oriented around this, reading across to other areas more or less controlled by the Mayor – mainly economy and transport. Much of this initial integrative success results from the political leadership given by quite a strong mayor, based on his electoral legitimacy, though other factors must be helping, among them some of those shown as further techniques below.

It appears then, that elected governments at this regional/national level, even when equipped with major powers as in Scotland and to a lesser degree Wales, cannot guarantee convincing integrating frameworks – for their chances of implementation we will have to wait some years. The key in this is doubtless strong and continuing political leadership, most marked in these three cases in London, as much as the formal powers. But the size and varied political life of Scotland and Wales may problematise integration, as may the tendency in all governments for fiefdoms or silos to emerge. There are clearly complex political dynamics at work here in the creation of devolved governments, dynamics which certainly operate in other federal or semi-federal states (Belgium, Germany, Spain). Time may be of the essence, in that the judgement on Scotland and Wales may be very different in a decade's time.

7.2.2 By national government policy steers

In the twentieth century the major drives in regional planning often came from national government – the new towns programme, the transport investment programmes (rail nationalisation, motorway and other roads programmes), housing programmes, regeneration or inner city programmes and so on. In a sense these are unavoidably integrating, because implicitly the government decides priorities, spatially and in the allocation of resources. Even apparently non-spatially conceived national planning tools like PPGs and PPSs have buried within them spatial implications. For example, the push for sustainable development including the sequential test, concentrating development in existing urban areas, as pursued since the mid 1990s, leads on balance to a certain spatial prioritising across all England – investment in larger towns and cities.

Examples of *explicit spatial steers* in the 2000s have been the Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP) of 2003 (Figure 7.1) and the Northern Way (plus similar exercises in the Midlands and the South West) from 2004. The SCP mainly directs growth in the South East (including re-emphasising the Thames Gateway initiative pressed by central government since the early 1990s), and seeks to reverse decline in some struggling northern and midlands localities. The criticisms of the Plan are that it is far less integrated than it needed to be, if the various initiatives are to be successful. But its proponents argue that for the first time central government departments have come together to allocate resources to sub-regions, with government leading
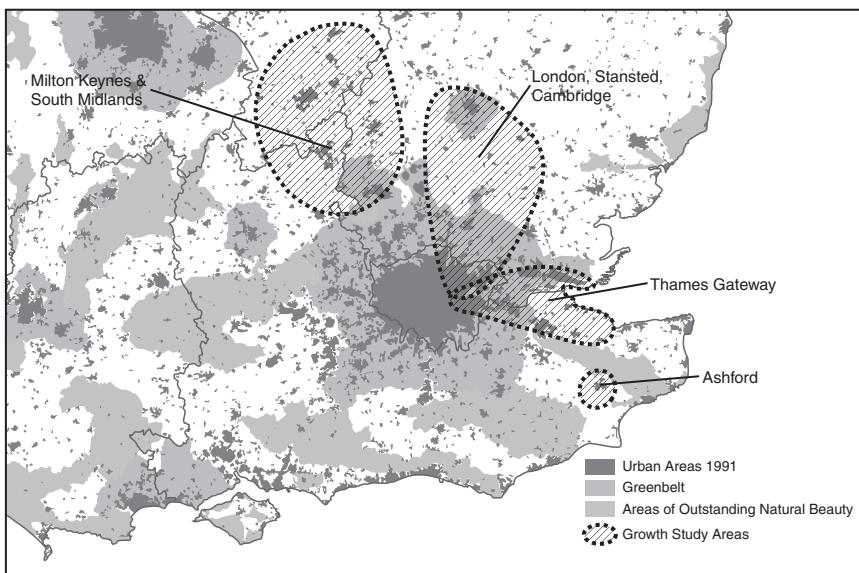
Figure 7.1 Growth areas in South East England identified in the SCP. (*Source:* ODPM (2003).)

specially created implementation vehicles in each area, after the catalysing of plans to cover each zone.

The 'Ways' have variable solidity, the *Northern Way* being that with some drive and resources attached. Here the RDAs have led the initiative, with the encouragement of the Government Offices. There is no doubt that the identification of city regions as the prime hopes for economic success by the Way documents has affected the RSSs prepared by the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. Given that the RSSs must be compatible with the RESs, this is not surprising: the RDAs' priorities must, up to a point, be those of the Assembly and thus of the RSS. The Northern Way has had its critics, as spatially and sectorally incoherent (Goodchild and Hickman 2006). At any rate the emergence of these multi-regional or cross-regional strategic initiatives, led by central government, has been of real significance, reducing the autonomy of regional strategists and politicians and in some sense having an integrating effect, even if not one the region might have wanted.

The impacts of central government may therefore be placed along a spectrum. At one end are policies emerging from departmental silos. Examples are well known in science and technology, such as the 2000 decision to locate the synchroton in Oxfordshire in the south east, not in the north west which already had much expertise and investment. Countless other examples could be found, from the policies for designation and investment of universities, to defence and arms procurement decisions, and agricultural support systems: all have regional and sub-regional effects, few if any were 'proofed' for these effects.

Further along the spectrum are planning policies which will have been thought out with some reference to spatiality, such as that mentioned above on compact cities. But here the taking of space into consideration is rather general and implicit. More clearly spatial are the planned drives such as the SCP. These are intended to be integrated initiatives from central government down, and they will in the best of cases work effectively, perhaps more than any other technique, if central departments can really be persuaded to resource them. But they may well suffer from the classic silo processes observed for decades by students of the UK government. In that case, for good or ill, they will be only partially integrative.

7.2.3 *Within plan substantive goals*

All RSSs have visions for their regions, and then a hierarchy of goals which flow down from these visions and are intended to frame the whole plan, in both its sectoral and its sub area dimensions. In many cases in the early 2000s the over-riding mantra was 'sustainable development'. Thus for the South East the vision is: 'Through the Plan and other measures, the South East will show a sustained improvement in its quality of life over the period to 2026, measured by the well-being of its citizens, the vitality of its economy, the wealth of its environment, and the prudent use of natural resources' (SEERA 2006a p. 28). And there are ten elements of the spatial strategy below this. The question is

the extent to which this type of process, common to plan making in Britain since at least the 1970s, works to integrate policies. Can planning be goals led in this way? – an old question of planning theory (Faludi 1973). Recently the practice of '*visioning*' has been examined, to evaluate its real impacts (Shipley 2002). The whole area connects back to the wider debate on rational planning introduced in Chapter 3. It is far from easy, even for an experienced planner familiar with a region, to assess how far a plan really does follow through in this way, or whether a lot of rhetorical tricks are being played, covering up the 'real' decisions embedded in the plan. These may really have emerged from complex negotiated processes, and then are encapsulated within the plan later – 'finding a form of words'.

Two points are relevant here. First, it is clear that plan makers have little alternative but to believe that a rational schema of this kind must have some integrative potential. Otherwise there would be little point in the current forms of strategies, with their many words. Could these not be replaced by maps and investment lists? Immediately this is asked, it is clear how difficult this would be for long-term plans for large regions. The framing objectives are essential, however ambiguous or difficult these may be to track. Second, whatever its limits, rationality in some form remains the only effective tool for planners when negotiating with interests, the only one with some chance to balance or integrate priorities. In principle, it is clear that real planning is done in many areas of human endeavour with some success – a corporation seeking a certain profit level, a state intending to win a war. The reality that regional (and all other forms) planning faces, is that stronger integration needs strong cross agent commitment, something often in short supply. But substantive visions have to remain as one way to garner such commitment.

7.2.4 Sub-area integration

The fourth track to better integration is that always used by planners, to zoom in on smaller localities. In the English RSSs this means the use of sub-regions or sub-areas within the Plans. One of the main justifications of the 2004 reforms was that better bounded sub-regions could be found for integrated planning, once outdated county boundaries were dropped. Thus the Yorkshire and Humber 2005 draft RSS has a 'context diagram' (Figure 7.2) for the Leeds City Region, which covers a large part of central Yorkshire (more than the old county of West Yorkshire, reaching out to Barnsley, Harrogate and York).

A number of potentially integrative techniques can be seen in this diagram:

- a hierarchy of centres and settlements, from Leeds downwards (the inevitable shades of central place theory and German planning's tradition of hierarchical investment allocation);
- zones shown for regeneration/investment opportunities – aiming to prioritise areas for regeneration;

Settlements
- ☐ Regional centre
- ☐ Sub-regional centre
- ■ Principal service centre
- ♣ Emerging housing market renewal strategy main area
- ➤ Main linkages

Development patterns
- ░ Area of regeneration opportunity
- Regeneration/investment opportunities of sub-area significance
  - ☐ Airedale
  - ☐ Bradford/Leeds
  - ☐ Coalfields
  - ☐ Aire Valley south/east of Leeds
  - ☐ South Dewsbury
- ░ Area of high quality environment

Transport
- —— East coast mainline railway
- —→ Local connection priorities
- ⇢ Other strategic rail links
- ⋯ Inland navigation

Figure 7.2 Diagram for Leeds sub-area in Yorkshire and Humber Draft Plan December 2005. (*Source:* Yorkshire and Humber Assembly (2005).)

- zones of high-quality environment – prioritising protection; and
- indications of 'main linkages', with the transport implications.

All of these work potentially to make public and private strategies and investment consistent through the plan period, thus to integrate. Instead of this spatial framing being done by another plan (the structure plan), this element of broadbrush prioritising is done within the RSS. Still much is left to the lower-level plans, the LDFs. But all new RSSs now have this sub-regional level, and all effectively put much faith in this as an integrating tool. For the moment it is not at all clear as to what weight these framings will carry, once carried down to identifiable land allocations and pressured by the market investors (and maybe state agencies) who want to go to one place and not another, quite possibly contrary to the RSS. But it is clear that all plan makers are obliged by the new system to use this technique to its utmost, to make more concrete the vision and objectives elements of their plans, and to deal as best they can with the central government drives affecting their region. The problem is that, in the absence of regional government, only central government drives provide strong steering forces. The rest is up to planners' regional planning skills.

7.3 Achieving integration – by process means

Elected regional government is as much a process instrument as a substantive one. Given the very low likelihood of this instrument being available to planners in the coming years in England, other ways to integrate by means of designing appropriate processes have been widely experimented with in England since the 1990s. These can be treated in three categories: formal strategies, informal close working arrangements, and looser cross-region collaboration. All in practice exist in every region, being far from mutually exclusive.

7.3.1 Formal strategies

The new regional agenda confronted the Regional Assemblies with a very clear integrative challenge. One region, the East Midlands, grasped the nettle earliest, preparing in the late 1990s an Integrated Regional Strategy (Aitchison 2002). All other regions, with the exception of the West Midlands, followed suit during the early 2000s, with government encouragement signalled in PPG11 and PPS11.

Research in 2005 revealed the state of play then (Snape *et al.* 2005). Two emphases were detected, with four regions (East Midlands, North East, South East, Yorkshire and Humber) undertaking what was called *Integrated Regional Frameworks*. These were more single reference points within which all the other strategies nestled, rather than overarching strategies. Some contained a Sustainable Development toolkit, which all regional agencies were supposed to use in strategising and decision making. Two regions (East of England, South West) had been more ambitious, preparing what the researchers felt could properly be called *Integrated Regional Strategies*. These were to be the single regional strategy to which other strategies should relate, they had implementation plans attached to them, and integrative governance structures were being sought in the East of England to match this process.

Preparing these strategies was a significant part of work by assemblies and their partners in these years, and they clearly hoped that the process would help to build a regional consensus on how to balance different objectives. In some cases the work on these strategies overlapped with that on Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks. In some cases the IRS was the RSDF. The 2005 research, while impressed by the stage reached, concluded that central government was a long way from taking these regional integration efforts seriously, with very variable awareness of them in key departments, and with the Treasury in particular pursuing quite different paths. The Sustainable Development Commission was very doubtful about the value of the RSDFs in particular (SDC 2005), suggesting that new approaches were needed. Government in response proposed that the high-level integrating strategies should be rationalised and made more coherent, and made consistent with the 2005 national Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA 2006a).

Within the RSS process itself there are also potentially integrating elements,

including the EIP, where the Panel can pull together detached parts of draft strategies, and the sustainability appraisal process, which may help to link up different elements, in addition to government's interventions at different stages.

It is clear from the flurry of regional strategising that no settled point has been reached by which a strong alignment of directions in regions over a long time scale can be secured. It looks as if *inter-strategy competition or at least friction is going to remain the norm in the English regions*. An example in 2005–2006 was in the making of the new RES for the South East. The RES draft contained a too strongly growth-oriented strategy for the Regional Assembly, and they criticised the RDA for this, in particular asking it to remove references to higher housing requirements and for the expansion of Heathrow and Gatwick. In the final version the airport reference was made ambiguous and the RDA abandoned its excursion into housing numbers. But disagreements surfaced at the EIP: no overall or integrated strategy for the South East could smooth out these differences between these two core regional actors, on two matters so central to regional planning. Could more informal techniques do better?

7.3.2 Key partner collaborations

Day-to-day co-working is critical to the functioning of the machinery in the English regions. The whole tenor of the regional architecture means this must be the case, with a trio of institutions all with some weight and legitimacy. PPS11 has been explicit that the RSS and RES must be compatible with each other, and planners know that without Government Office support, policies will be contested by government at the EIP and, if appropriate, removed by the government at a later stage.

In the 1990s regional planners enjoyed some autonomy in putting together draft strategies, with just a government official sitting in on key meetings, and the planners able to draw on their own regional economic partnerships, before the coming of RDAs. In the 2000s regional working is marked by continuous mutual presence between these bodies, with each likely to make very clear early on those areas of strategies which they are unlikely to support. The fact that all three bodies are often located in the same towns or cities also helps regular contact (where they are all separate, as in the sprawling South West – Government Office in Bristol, Assembly in Taunton, RDA in Exeter – special efforts to keep integrated decision making may be needed).

Apart from this *continuous side-by-side working*, there have been attempts to make more durable and *formal concordats*, such as that formed by the three partners in 2000 in the West Midlands (after a particularly acrimonious row between Assembly and RDA) and replaced by a ten-way concordat in 2003, bringing in other region-wide actors (quangos, groupings of business and voluntary bodies). The more such concordats have in them, the nearer they approach the integrated framework approaches discussed above.

Almost certainly this is the most important key to most aspects of integration in process terms. However, as the West Midlands concordat indicates,

there is a risk that anyone outside this trio of closely linked partners may feel excluded – hence the third form of collaboration for integration.

7.3.3 Wider and looser collaborative processes

Since the 1990s, regional planning in England has been gradually made more and more open in its working processes. Earlier a number of key regional interests were already present on working groups (as in the preparation of changes to West Midlands housing policies in 1996, when the HBF and CPRE were invited onto the body involved). The review of RPG in the West Midlands widened the preparation stage further, with the creation of two parallel working streams, one of more technical workers (mostly but not all planners or other public officials), the other of 'reference groups' made up of interest groups of varying kinds, and region-wide concerns, which shadowed the whole process up to the Public Examination (Sennett 2002). We will touch further on this from a political and policy-making perspective in Chapter 12. Here it is important to remember the potentially integrative tendencies of such open collaborative processes. Different perspectives can be brought into the planning process, possibly cutting across sectoral concerns and thinking more holistically. Whether this actually occurs has not been the subject of recent research, but it is possible it may introduce a different dynamic into strategising.

7.4 Achieving integration – summarising

There has been a strong emphasis in recent years on the importance of more horizontal working forms, stressing networks rather than hierarchies. Much academic discussion (Hill 2005; Jessop 2002; Rhodes 1997) has been trying to identify the basic processes at work in making strategies or policy. Are participants essentially exchanging resources, swapping favours? Or are they really arguing out from some rational basis, founded on firm evidence which has resisted challenges? The answers to these questions affect the prospects for integration. If planning is essentially horse trading, mainly between a few core actors, the more or less integrated result will be due to the resourcing of these key actors, on balance (assuming equal abilities and skills). If the process is much more open and in some sense rational, power imbalances may matter less. *Some* sort of integration may come either way – but on different terms.

The scope for effective integrated strategies, spatially intelligent ones, in reality depends on a mix of all the aspects discussed under the above substantive and process headings. Classic goals-led plan making, alongside a degree of sub-regional integrated detailing, is inevitably going to work in with central government priorities. All that will be guided by mainly informal collaborative processes within the 'magic circle' of core actors; but we should not disdain the struggle to try to make overarching regional strategies, which might build up a level of regionally coherent thinking over a number of years, with regionally owned leitmotifs and shared commitments.

As for what would work better, we would suggest the following as our pre-
ferred paths:

- as above, take the idea of an overarching strategy seriously, though recog-
  nising it will always have a secondary role, without elected regional govern-
  ments;
- reduce central government's incoherent policy interventions – introduce
  'regional proofing' into as many policy areas as possible;
- keep regional planning processes as open as possible, to reduce the bias in
  favour of government agencies (Government Offices, RDAs) – we explore
  some ways to make this more real in Chapter 12; and
- build up the sub-regional elements of RSSs, while recognising that the
  2004 reforms have for now left this as a weak part of the planning system,
  by its very nature.

It will be noticed that the issue of the scale at which planning is undertaken has
been touched on several times above. This issue is now tackled more explicitly,
as it remains contentious and important for planners to think through.

7.5 Scales of planning

There is always, from a 'rational' point of view, a principled discussion to be
had, about what is the most appropriate scale at which to lay down spatial pol-
icies. Every country and every period resolves the issue in its own way, depend-
ing on numerous factors – many far from simply rational, but much more about
power battles and values. Here, this issue is examined in the current English
case, by asking about the decisions on, first, national versus regional, and then
regional versus local. Many underlying debates in recent years have been about
these questions, and they are likely to rumble on for many years to come.

7.5.1 The national level versus the regional

National level planning is well established in several countries around the
world – France, Netherlands, Japan have been examples (Alterman 2001).
Sometimes this has consisted of complete physical or spatial plans or frame-
works, sometimes it has had a more sectoral character, for transport, housing,
water or the environment. Such a spatial plan has never existed in any
developed form in England, and even sectoral plans have been very limited, at
least any with strong spatial dimensions. Whatever is behind this aversion to
national plans, it is long lasting and has so far been little altered by calls by
planning bodies since about 2000 for the making of a national spatial frame-
work. This was first made by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), asking
for such a framework for the UK as a whole (Wong *et al.* 2000). Later, the RTPI
commissioned further work (RTPI 2006), examining analytically functional
relations, including transport links nationally and housing and employment pat-

terns. In 2006 a commission appointed by the TCPA extended this proposal, though only dealing this time with England, recommending the government to make a Development Framework for England (TCPA 2006).

In both cases these bodies have argued that the absence of an explicit spatial plan or framework means that spatial decisions by government are taken either without thinking about spatial impacts and connections, or without being open about this. It can be argued, for example, that since the 1980s all governments have had a hidden pro south east England investment and policy agenda, in the absence of any clear regional policy. But none have admitted this, even though a whole range of policies, expenditure and fiscal measures work this way (Allen *et al.* 1998; RSA 2001; TCPA 2006). A recent example has been the *absence of a national ports policy*. In 2005–2006 several important planning applications for port developments were given permission in the south east, without, critics argued, the effect on northern ports being considered. The TCPA pressed for such a national policy to be made, for this to be linked up with stronger or new policies on rail, road and airports, and for this to be tied in with the links to Europe, extensively worked on since the 1990s in the mega-region studies supported by the EU. Their recommendations went wider than this, covering some of the major development decisions facing England.

The TCPA Commission sought a 'light touch' framework, and one worked up from below, with the co-operation of the regions. To some extent their call mirrored the suggestions of the RDAs, which have been forming a strong lobby through their chairmen's group, pressing government for infrastructure improvements for their regions. How should this call be viewed? Is there a potential conflict between empowering regions, as presumably regional planning's strengthening since the 1990s was meant to do, and putting together a national framework? There is some force in the TCPA position, in which certain limited matters are best decided nationally, but on the basis as far as possible of work coming up from the regions. Where regions are effectively in competition, only the national government can decide – this will apply to the major national transport infrastructure. The same applies to the overall policy on the spatial support or restraint of economic activity. While governments since the 1980s have tried to claim that market forces must rule this issue, in reality there have always been many public policies which affect the decisions of private investors. At least the broad trend of such policies is a matter for government.

The final report of the Barker planning review (HM Treasury 2006a) argued for the *creation of a National Planning Commission* to decide on major projects, on the basis of clear government positions on the overall sectors within which these are set (for example, within a national energy framework, or a national ports strategy). At the time of writing it remains to be seen how far this will impinge on regional and local prerogatives. One risk lies in the closeness of large corporations and governments, since the privatisation of most provision of infrastructure scope may exist increasingly for secret deals and imposition of private investments on localities which will fight to resist them. Whether a Planning Commission will improve governance of this issue will probably now be tested.

Up to the present, *governments have been thoroughly averse to any explicit national framework*, certainly for political reasons: to be seen to say that certain areas would be prioritised over others will always be seen as politically very risky. Whether this reason will be overcome by the rationality of planning arguments remains to be seen. If it is not, then national planning will remain covert, implemented by a number of means, including sectoral decisions of numerous kinds, and decisions on each RSS as it is made and finalised by government. In the end these nine RSSs (including London, not approved by, but strongly influenced by government) will make a jigsaw puzzle whose combined picture will be an unadmitted framework for all England. No doubt a civil servant will have an implicit national schema somewhere in a filing cabinet in the planning ministry!

7.5.2 The regional level versus the local (and sub-regional) level

The 2004 planning reforms broke open the scalar settlement of the previous 30 years (an agreement to leave sub-regional planning to counties), bringing more regional and national force to bear on sub-regional planning. The principle behind the reforms was that too much of the country was covered by too many plans. It was said that many areas needed little more than what was set in the general principles of PPGs/PPSs. RPGs should not repeat these unnecessarily. RSSs needed to set policies which applied in most of their territories, obviating the need for detailed sub-regional policies in most places. Local plans (LDFs) would be able then to detail these all-regional policies. It was accepted by government that in some places there would be a strategic policy deficit, requiring sub-regional strategies to be prepared. These, it was argued, would be for functional areas, not counties. How has this schema worked out in the first round of RSSs?

Effectively two models have emerged. The model in the three southern regions has meant sub-regional detailing of varying degrees for identified growth areas, in the South East and East of England, or for virtually all urban regions, in the South West (see the South East sub-regions on Figure 7.3). These sub-regional parts of the RSSs have set housing targets and policies on greenbelts, as well as giving indications on infrastructure requirements. In addition all RSSs have to allocate housing numbers by district, so in that very important sense they cover all their regions sub-regionally. Other components of planning, as we will see in more depth in Chapters 8–11, are covered in less detail, with region-wide policies often being seen as sufficient.

In the northern regions and the East Midlands, the model has been to include all, or nearly all parts of the regions within sub-area planning, although, in the case of the North East this meant simply a split between the two main city regions, and the more rural rest (Figure 7.4 shows the Yorkshire sub-areas). The results appear quite variable, with again the main urban areas detailed much more than the other parts of the regions (effectively the RSSs become, in this dimension, bundles of city regional plans for the six big city regions). This

Sub-regional Strategy Areas

1 South Hampshire
2 Sussex Coast
3 East Kent and Ashford
4 Kent Thames Gateway
5 London Fringe
6 Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley
7 Central Oxfordshire
8 Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale
9 Gatwick Area

Special Policy Area

10 Isle of Wight

☐ County/Unitary boundary
☐ District/Borough boundary
▨ Built up area
⌇ Motorway
⌇ Trunk road
⌇ A road
—— Railway
● Rail station

Figure 7.3 Sub-regions in the SEP. (*Source:* Draft, as submitted to government March 2006.)
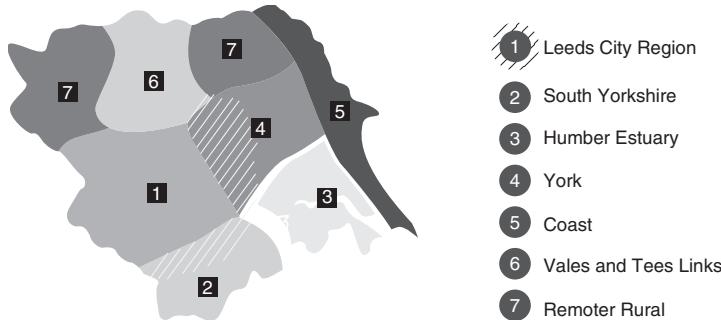
Figure 7.4 Sub-areas in the Yorkshire and Humber Plan. (*Source:* Draft, as submitted to government in December 2005.)

perhaps represents a compromise, going a bit further than the government was recommending, in that virtually all parts of all these regions (rural Lincolnshire may be an exception) will have sub-regional detailing.

In all the regions then, there is detailing of all the key areas of change, effectively around all or most urban areas, even though the northern model goes further with this. We would see this as inevitable, given the 2004 reform. Two major questions remain as to how this will work out. First, will this detailing provide a sound platform for the emerging local area planning? At present it is very hard to answer this question, as RSSs are being finalised at precisely the same time that LDFs are going through the statutory process. The interaction of the two levels, in the absence of the 'missing link' of structure planning, will eventually become clear, but it will take some years for this to work itself out (assuming there is no more reform of the system). Second, will the imbalance in sectoral treatment caused by the detailing of housing numbers everywhere allow integrated approaches to local planning? There must be a real doubt here, given that one factor has been selected in advance of more detailed analysis. In the 1990s it was agreed by government that such numbers needed to be 'tested' locally, and therefore might be changed. In the absence of generalised sub-regional planning, such a provision for such subsequent amendment might be sensible.

There are strongly held differences of opinion on the appropriate levels of planning. Many local authorities resent the removal of decisions to higher levels, here representing a significant degree of localism still in many areas, often also supported by such groups as the CPRE. Government and many business groupings see decisions made higher up the scale as likely to be more in line with their priorities – more freedom for the profitable development of land, higher levels of housebuilding. So the decision on appropriate scales of planning is always in part a political one, based on the struggles between these different groups – as will be explored further in Chapter 12.

For the moment, in the absence of another radical reform of the system, the division of powers is likely to settle down with the current balance, although two changes may be predicted as quite likely in the coming years. First, there

may be some strengthening of the national spatial dimension, depending on the decisions after the Barker 2006 review. Second, the practice of sub-regional planning may well be given a more standard form, as the first round of RSSs emerges, as counties accept the loss of their planning powers, and assemblies become adept at steering asymmetrical sub-area and sub-regional frameworks within their RSSs. Whether either of these shifts will begin to deliver a really 'appropriate' scalar architecture for English planning remains a thoroughly open question.

7.6 The stages of regional planning

As we saw in Chapter 3, a long debate within policy analysis has considered whether policy making should be conceptualised as taking place in consecutive stages, or whether it should be seen as much more complex than this (Hill 2005). The original view, before the mid 1970s, was that any rational policy process was seen as having at least *two separate stages: making the policy, and implementing it*. This was implicit in most planning practice, as this is what a plan's rationale was. The discovery, at first in US studies, that many public policies were poorly implemented, if at all, challenged this view, and particularly after the book *Policy and Action* (Barrett and Fudge 1981), an alternative view came into planning debates. This suggested that *policy and action are in reality all tangled up*, with actions often informing or preceding policy making. Practising planners often warmed to this view, and stressed the frequent weakness of plans as against more opportunistic streams of action (Kitchen 1997, 2003).

   Hill discusses the current state of the debate, arguing that *complexity* is a more acceptable position: that a wide range of relationships may exist between policies and implementation, depending on political circumstances and the policy field, in particular (2005). However, he still finds himself drawn to structure his policy analysis book around such topics as implementation, and the same position is taken here: the policy process is discussed as if it can indeed be broken up in this way, with only comment at times and at the end on the difficulties lying within these clean-cut divisions. As always *planners have to act as if rationality is a possibility*, even in the knowledge of its frequent implausibility. Hence, the rest of this section will deal successively with the phases of making regional plans, implementing them, monitoring them and reviewing them.

7.6.1 Making regional plans

Much of the book deals with this stage, and so an outline only of what is at stake overall is given here – much more will be found on particular components in Chapters 8–11. The old mantra of early twentieth-century planning was 'Survey, Analysis, Plan', and in varying forms this remained the essence of the process through the structure planning and regional planning years since the 1970s. A number of steps have been and are involved.

The first step is to *set the objectives of the Plan*. This is often presented in the form of a short vision statement, followed by a longer set of objectives. Sometimes these are framed in a different way, as in Yorkshire, which says what it expects the region to be like by 2021 (see Box 7.1). These broad framing aims are set early in the Plan process from a combination of professional, political and consultative sources. Sometimes the objectives of the Integrated Regional Strategy (or similar document) may be adopted, as in the Yorkshire and Humber draft of 2005. It is usually quite difficult for either vision or objectives to be especially distinctive, in that all regions aspire to similar objectives. There is a reluctance to prioritise. It is difficult to find a plan which says that the most important objective is – economic growth, or social progress. Some public or political interest is likely to object to such open prioritisation. Thus the objective of 'sustainable development' has been adopted in some cases, simply because it is very ambiguous, particularly in its usage after the government White Paper of 1999 (DETR 1999a).

It is usually at the level below the overall objectives that policies begin to have some 'bite'. Thus the Yorkshire and Humber plan in its 'Core Approach' chapter seeks in policy YH 1 to 'reverse the long-term trend of population and investment dispersal away from cities and major towns'. When combined with part of policy YH 8 to 'concentrate the majority of new development and redevelopment on the Regional and Sub-regional Centres', and with YH 3 (see Box 7.2), this may constitute a more solid base for a spatial strategy. The only threat to the clear definition of such goals comes from the possibility that either the whole set of general policies (here YH 1 to YH 8) may have internal contradictions, or more detailed parts of the plan may go against this package. This is where processes of public debate and the arguing through at the EIP may serve to cohere the document internally.

The second step concerns the *data* needed at regional and sub-regional levels, about each topic of planning. This must build up a picture of the working of each space to be planned for. The aim is to develop as full an understanding of spatial relationships and processes of change as possible. Regional planners working up to about 2000 had to draw mainly on generally available statistical data, and on the knowledge of strategic planners working in their own local authorities, who needed data to prepare structure and unitary development plans. Regional planning bodies such as the London and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN) had some capacity to do limited wider research, but most did not. After about 2000 regional planning teams and budgets were expanded with the help of funds from the central planning ministry, and so there was scope for increasing both some inhouse research and much commissioned work, on, for example, housing needs and markets, transport modelling and employment land stocks and changes. Given these, albeit still limited, budgets, consultancies did start to build up specialised skills in a range of areas, as to an extent did the regional planning teams.

Other agencies would be effectively contributing to this creation of an ever larger database, for example:

Box 7.1 Vision and objectives in Yorkshire and Humber Draft Plan December 2005

THE PLAN'S SPATIAL VISION
In delivering the overall vision for the Region that:

> Yorkshire and Humber will be a recognisably world class and international Region where the economic, environmental and social well-being of all our Region and its people advance rapidly and sustainably.

The RSS will:

> Achieve a more sustainable pattern and form of development, investment and activity in the Yorkshire and Humber region – putting a greater emphasis on matching needs across the Region with opportunities and managing the environment as a key resource.

By the end of the Plan period, in 2021, Yorkshire and Humber will be a region:

1 continuing to change and adapt to meet new economic, social and environmental challenges;
2 where all its cities, towns and rural areas are working together to the benefit of the whole Region;
3 with lively cities and and vibrant towns and rural areas, fit for purpose in terms of twenty-first-century living, working and movement;
4 with an even stronger regional identity, whose special character and distinctiveness has been protected and improved;
5 with safe, attractive and high-quality places offering a wide range of living, working and investment opportunities;
6 that is adapting to the threats and opportunities caused by climate change and is moving to a low carbon economy;
7 that has optimised the use of its land and infrastructure, offering a clear competitive advantage over the South of England;
8 that has reduced inequalities across its area;
9 whose economic performance is closer to the UK average, with more and better jobs;
10 that is collaborating internally and externally to deliver a more sustainable, competitive and better performing North of England.

Box 7.2 Yorkshire and Humber Draft Plan December 2005, showing one of the eight core policies of the Plan (YHA 2005)

Policy YH 3: KEY SPATIAL PRIORITIES
All plans, strategies, major investment decisions and programmes in the Region will, where relevant, aim to:

1   transform economic, environmental and social conditions in the older industrialised parts of South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the Humber;
2   manage and spread the benefits of continued growth of the Leeds economy as a European centre of financial and business services;
3   optimise the opportunites provided by the Humber Ports as an international trade gateway for the region and the country;
4   support towns as hubs for the rural economy and as service centres;
5   enhance the environmental character and qualities of the Region's coast and countryside including for economic and social development.

• the work by the Environment Agency and the regional sustainability network or body in making State of the Environment Reports;
• the ongoing work by RDAs, making a fuller picture of regional economies, particularly focused on particular economic clusters of interest to them but also on infrastructure issues, and in some cases more sophisticated work on input–output modelling or other more fundamental approaches;
• work from 2003 by the Regional Housing Boards (RHBs), on affordable housing need, and on allocation of available public spending;
• work stemming from the multi modal studies of the period 1998 to 2003, which had built up greater knowledge on regional transport flows and options.

From around 2000, the government was putting increasing emphasis on this data or 'evidence base' side of making plans, in common with its approach in other policy fields. This may have been due to a greater wish to be able to argue with what it regarded as often weakly founded strategies, which were not giving enough importance to many kinds of growth pressures. The growing importance of the Treasury increased this tendency, with economic arguments given special value, as shown by the first Barker review, on housing supply (HM Treasury/ ODPM 2004). Doubts among many planners as to whether strategic planning could respond in the same way as some other policy fields were to an extent silenced by the satisfaction for planners of extra resources being provided to do much needed work.

   Another step, intimately linked to the last, is to think about *the future of the*

region. Various techniques are used here, with the repertoire somewhat extended in the latest RSSs. The simplest and oldest is extrapolation of existing trends, or, more precisely, thinking about whether or how such trends might change in one direction or another in the short, medium or long term. The temporal dimension was becoming increasingly critical, as the time horizon moved towards 20 or even 25 years in RSSs. Plans might thus say that a trend was not likely to be alterable in the first five or ten years, but might be bent after that.

Extrapolation remains at the base of all planning, but increasing computing power, shown, for example, in the work of the big economic or transportation consultancies, has not by any means removed its problems. Consultants, if asked, will happily predict the number of jobs or the amount of gross value added in a region, and perhaps employment land needs, many years into the future. But they and the regional planning bodies are aware of the risks involved in putting much weight on these predictions. The same goes for the more conventional demographic and household work, always dependent on migration assumptions and on household size changes.

Related to extrapolation is the option of *large-scale modelling*. This was common in the 1960s, when many US cities (and some planners elsewhere) built up large land use transportation programmes to model changes in movement and land use over years to come. This was vigorously attacked in the 1970s as a waste of resources, given the weakness of the various inputs, and the difficulty of effectively linking sub-elements reliably together (i.e. spatial systems were seen to be insufficiently understood to be modelled). Modelling has made some comeback since the 1990s, but has still been relatively little used in regional planning, outside the transport field. It seems likely that current governments may be attracted by its apparent technological sophistication, and fund more work in this area.

Planners have sought ways round extrapolating past trends. Perhaps the way most attempted in recent years has been that of *scenario building*. This has been a common technique in businesses, and became part of the armoury of strategic planning for cities from the 1980s (Marshall 1997; May 1996). For example, in the preparation of the South East Plan, consultants identified the main likely drivers of change, so that these could be used to 'futures proof' the emerging strategy (Forum for the Future 2004). The aim is to sensitise planners to variable possibilities. A similar technique involves 'backcasting', where preferred regional outcomes for a certain date are tracked back to the present, to see what measures would need to be put in place to have a good chance of arriving at the destination. This might include negative backcasting, designed to head off particularly those outcomes to be avoided.

Altogether these techniques give planners something to work on, but all are aware of their limitations. For example, the South East Plan emphasised the risks of trying to base policies on predictions of economic change (and hence surely all other change) beyond perhaps ten years into the future – a serious admission of uncertainty on a central matter, in probably the best resourced

plan of recent decades. In the end all planners may be left with the option of choosing a set of values around preferred futures, and adjusting this to plausible extrapolations, backed by modesty in their confidence in achieving what is planned for. Such a view of the future goes somewhat against the hyperbole or rhetoric often expected of public policy, but may be more appropriate to the panorama presented here for the field of regional planning.

The final and culminating step is actually *generating the proposed set of policies, and making a spatial form for these*. In the early 1970s UK sub-regional planners experimented with several techniques for distributing growth around an area (Cowling and Steeley 1973). The essence of these was to 'sieve out' places which for one reason or another were not suitable for varying types of development, leaving the remaining areas as the likely locations. Sieve maps would be prepared as overlays. Another technique much discussed involved identifying thresholds for varying levels of development, so that the costs of developing in one form or one place became clear: a new town of 50,000 in one place might be much cheaper than two of 25,000 elsewhere – or several urban extensions might give better value, given the chance to use existing infrastructure. Another approach starts at the other end, selecting plausible spatial forms – say concentrating development in axes radiating from London, or in the M62 corridor across northern England, or in five main poles in the region. This type of spatial simplification has a long history, and is attractive to those of a design or spatial training (architects and engineers), and perhaps to national politicians. Planners and those most familiar with regions usually are less taken with the results of such schemas, although they may serve to elaborate options.

In principle these and other techniques should be used to generate spatial options, which could then be evaluated in relation to the goals of the Plan, including by means of sustainability appraisal (see Chapter 11). All plans show stages where options were presented to the public. For example, the South East Plan moved first of all to consider six options based on a grid of three policy directions (RPG 2001, more economically driven, or more driven to reduce intra-regional disparities) and two spatial distribution models, one concentrating very much on 17 transport hubs, one a little less concentrated on all the urban areas. After workshop consultation and further work, these were cut down to two options, continuing RPG 2001, or 'sharper focus' which put more emphasis on both the areas with most economic potential and those needing regeneration (SEERA 2006a pp. 30–31). These two options were then turned into spatial options and attached to the chosen housing levels, as shown in Figure 7.5. How much difference all this made is hard to tell, but it did constitute relatively transparent working through of both policy emphases and spatial options.

In Yorkshire and Humber a related exercise was undertaken. Here the three policy options were responding to market forces, matching need with opportunity and managing the environment as a key resource. This was then mapped onto the six sub-areas, and also detailed down to specific localities.
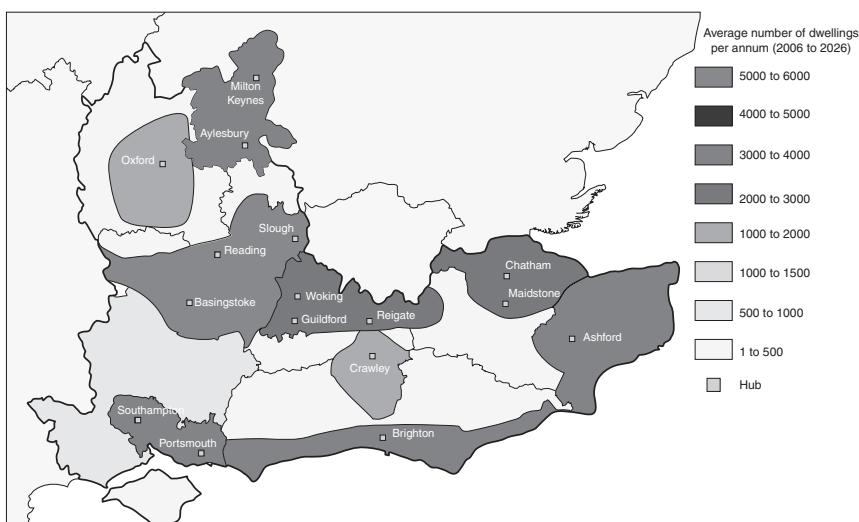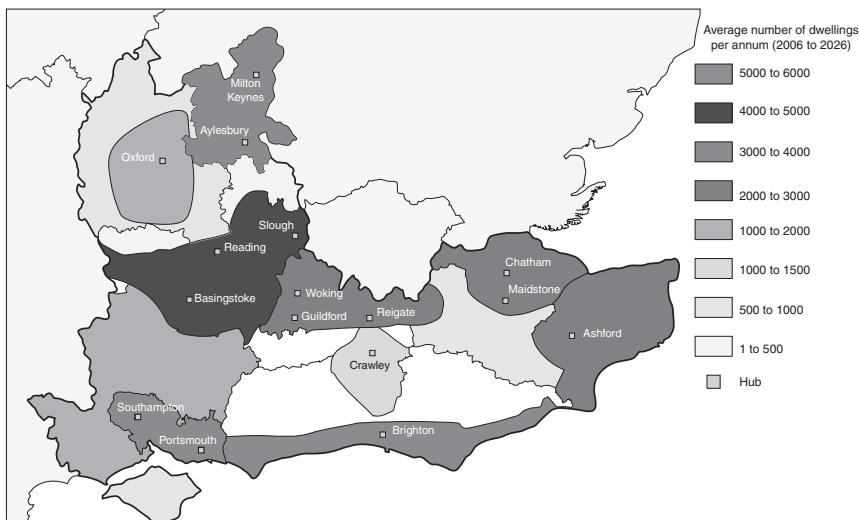
Figure 7.5 South East Plan consultation January to March 2005 – options. This shows the two alternative options offered for accommodating 32,000 new houses per annum, the top one being 'sharper focus', stressing both the more economically successful areas and regeneration areas, the lower one with a slightly more even distribution. (*Source:* SEERA (2005).)

This became the material for the consultation of winter 2004/2005 on the pre-draft RSS (YHA 2004b). The consultation resulted in support for a mix of the social and environmental options, which then fed through to the final draft. In the South West, the main options consultation stressed spatial elements, rather than either the policy alternatives of Yorkshire or the combined attempt of the South East. Thus, there the options were continuing the RPG 2001 emphasis, going for an even more concentrated urban model, or varying development much more, with different approaches in different parts of the region, effectively allowing more dispersion in some places (SWRA 2004).

There are then attempts to think through and offer up options for public debate, though the range and type of options offered varies, as these three regions show. The impression is that this remains very much an inexact science. In the end, policy makers have to plump for certain of the most plausible alternative emphases, on the basis of the research done and a range of policy pressures, from government and stakeholders, and then go public. How wide a range of options this really covers, and whether it deals with the critical decisions, is hard to say. There doubtless remains much to learn about innovative and honest strategy generation.

7.6.2 *Implementing regional plans*

Plans are of course only as good as their implementation, or so most people would think. The Blair governments have put increasing stress on 'delivery' as their progammes have hit various barriers over their years in office. Therefore PPS11 made clear the importance of implementation, requiring RSSs to contain an implementation plan, and to explain in their Annual Monitoring Reports why any matters not being progressed were not going well, and what the RPB was doing about these failures. Assemblies have, therefore, all prepared increasingly full Implementation Plans. The London Plan led the way in 2004, showing a wide range of ways in which the Plan would be implemented, including work by agencies within the Greater London Authority (GLA) 'family' (for transport and the economy), and appropriate partnership and persuasion work with numerous other actors – central government, developers, the London boroughs (whose plans had to conform with the Plan).

The South East Plan described four types of instruments available for implementation (SEERA 2006d):

- behavioural change, for example, in travel habits, or energy or water consumption;
- using regulatory frameworks, for example, government's ability to alter the pricing and investment systems of utilities, but also of course including planning's own regulatory instruments – planning permission etc.;
- managing existing infrastructure assets effectively; and
- adding new infrastructure capacity, through national, regional and local investment programmes.

Naturally it is the last category which tends to dominate the Implementation Plan of this and other RSSs, with the making of long lists of requirements for investment. For the South East this is split into the needs under each Plan topic heading, and then broken down into lists for each of the Plan's sub-regions. The Plan also puts great emphasis on the need to align major national spending programmes with the Plan (see Figure 7.6). It also attempts to calculate the infrastructure costs involved in implementing the Plan, a highly ambitious move unusual in regional planning practice (see Figure 7.7).

There is clearly, in England at present, a very strong push behind this element of regional planning. We can see this in the creation, by central, regional and, to an extent, local bodies, of special purpose 'delivery vehicles', made to deliver particular growth area results, often in the style of the Thatcherite Urban Development Corporations of the 1980s. The push is also evident in the resources being put by RPBs into ensuring that the new round of local plans will conform with the RSSs. Equally, sub-regional planning is strongly emphasised, if only to make up for the loss of the structure plans and the accompanying loss of the commitment of the English counties to their implementation.

The question is: Will this deliver the objectives of the RSSs, which are in some cases ambitious, and are designed to operate over long timescales? The problems relate in part to the issues raised in the next two 'stages', and as to whether the whole process can be made to work together. Furthermore, it is most likely that we will see very variable success in different fields. Far more government resources and effort are going into some sectors within RSSs than others. For example, the economy is served by relatively well-resourced publicly funded agencies, the RDAs, with the ear of central government. Transport on the other hand, depends very largely on private companies, with much more public funding of road building and maintenance than any other element. The same goes in different ways for some other key areas – housing, retailing, energy and waste, though some have regulatory regimes with potentially strong public levers. It is unlikely that government will confront these basic underlying factors which permeate the implementation prospects of RSSs. This means that they are likely to remain very unevenly implemented, with some parts 'real' and other parts more aspirational.

It is quite possible that the political economy within which English regional planning sits will scupper effective implementation. A neoliberal state may expel such an attempt at serious planning, however much this is based on networked and partnership forms. All we can say at present is that some efforts are starting to be made in some areas. In this respect regional planning practice in England is likely to be fast changing, with innovation and development of new approaches needed to make progress.

7.6.3 *Monitoring regional plans*

Government policy also stresses the importance of monitoring. There is some ambiguity about whether this means simply securing the exact targets set in plans, or whether a more subtle steering role is intended. Key elements were

Sector	Plan or Programme	Responsibility[1]	Review Period
Transport	Targeted Programme of Investment (TPI)	Highways Agency (DfT)	2 years
	Transport Innovation Fund	Department for Transport	Unspecified
	Network Rail Strategic Business Plan	Network Rail (DfT)	5 years (2009-14)
	High Level Output Statement	Department for Transport	5 years (2009-14)
	Prioritisation of Regional Funding Allocations for Transport	Regional Transport Board	5 years (2011-2016)
Economic Development	SEEDA Corporate Plan	SEEDA (DTI)	3 years (2005-08)
Regeneration	English Partnerships Corporate Plan	English Partnerships (DCLG)	
Housing	Regional Housing Strategy	Regional Housing Board	2 years (2006-08)
Waste Management	Municipal Waste Management Strategies and Contracts Commercial waste contracts	Waste disposal authorities Waste management companies' business plans	c20 years (municipal) short term (commercial)
Water	Periodic Price Review	OFWAT (Defra)	5 years
	Asset Management Plans	Water companies	5 years
	Prioritised Programme for Environment Improvements	Environment Agency (Defra)	
Energy (Distribution)	Pricing Regime	OFGEM	5 years
	Investment Plans	Energy companies National Grid	
Education and Training	Capital Investment Strategy	South East Learning and Skills Councils (DfES)	5 years (2006-2011)
	Corporate Strategy	Higher Education and Funding Council for England	2006-2011
	Institutional Business Plans	Higher Education Institutions	
Health	PCT Capital Programmes	Primary Care Trusts[2]	3 years (2003-2006)
Other public services	Corporate Strategies	Local authorities	
	Local Area Agreements	Local authorities	3 years (irregular)
Flood Defences	Catchment flood management plans Shoreline management plans Cost-benefit analyses	Environment Agency Local authorities Coastal planning authorities	Plans in development – 5 year review likely

Table Notes:
[1] Where responsible body is a Non Departmental Public Body the parent Government department is provided in brackets.
[2] Note that individual PCTs now have their own capital programmes. There is no longer a strategic capital fund managed by the Strategic Health Authority.

Figure 7.6 National and regional investment plans and programmes which need to be aligned with the South East Plan to ensure its effective implementation.

detailed in guidance issued in 2002 (Box 7.3). This guidance was updated in 2005, making a more complex and demanding process, but the core elements remain the same.

Monitoring has been given increasing importance. Initially RPBs were expected to prepare regular monitoring reports 'possibly on a bi-annual basis, resources permitting' (DETR 1998a para 6.13) but PPG11 specified that 'monitoring reports of progress in relation to targets and indicators should be produced on an annual basis if possible' (DETR 2000b para. 16.09). These Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) must focus on output targets and indicators to

Investment Area		Resources Required (£m)	Source of Resources
TRANSPORT	TOTAL	12,527 – 27,965	See below
	Road and other modes	12,527	(LTP, LA, PFI, DfT, CIF, Strategic Road Expenditure – no allowance for rail)
	Rail	12,473	
HOUSING	TOTAL	10,846 – 18,034	See below
	Social Rented Housing	15,028	(PFI, HC, RSL borrowings, developer subsidy/free land)
	Affordable Housing	3,006	(HC, RSL borrowings)
EDUCATION	TOTAL	2,500 – 6,326	See below
	Further education colleges	635 – 1,800	(LSC Capex budget)
	Secondary and primary	1,760 – 4,526	(Basic need budget, PFI, 2005 Budget)
	Nursery	105	(Public subsidy and private provision)
HEALTH	TOTAL	99 – 805	See below
	Acute and General Hospitals	565	(PFI, Strategic capital budgets)
	Mental hospitals	105	As above
	Health centres / PCT	99 – 119	As above
	Ambulance services	16	As above
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE	TOTAL	656 – 1,911	See below
	Supported accommodation	578	(Social Services, Health Trusts, Capex from HC, revenue budgets)
	Social and community facilities	506 – 687	(PFI, no dedicated funding)
	Sport centres	150 – 200	(PFI, Sports Council budgets, no dedicated funding)
	Open space and parks	446 – 495	(Developers, no dedicated public funding)
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	TOTAL	No estimate	NOT AVAILABLE
PUBLIC SERVICES	TOTAL	69 – 303	See below
	Libraries/Archives	61 – 58	(PFI, uncertain)
	Cemeteries	8	
	Other services	188	As above
UTILITIES AND WASTE	TOTAL	No estimate	NOT AVAILABLE
	Water	No estimate	As above
	Energy	No estimate	As above
	Waste management	57	(PFI mainly)
FLOOD DEFENCES	TOTAL	562 – 1,175	(National Budget)
FUNDING GAP	TOTAL	TBC	(Mainly transport and Social Infrastructure)
OVERALL	**2006–2026**	**£37,255m – £47,018m**	

Figure 7.7 Estimated infrastructure costs for implementation of the South East Plan.

measure the effect of RSS on real world developments. Furthermore process indicators are to evaluate the implementation of RSS through the inclusion of appropriate policies in development plans, local transport plans and other types of plan and strategy. Additional contextual indicators should be used selectively to monitor issues on which RSS has only indirect influence and which help to

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Box 7.3 Key elements of monitoring in ODPM Good Practice Guide 2002

KEY ELEMENTS OF MONITORING RPG
Key elements in the monitoring process are:

- identify key objectives, policies, output targets and related indicators;
- identify means of delivery in implementation programme, including any process targets;
- scrutinise the relevant plans and strategies for accord with RPG targets;
- consider action if a plan or strategy is not in accord;
- check delivery of real world outputs against targets and indicators; and
- if targets are not being met investigate the reasons.

(*Source:* ODPM 2002 para. 2.7.)

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understand the context in which RSS operates. The government also introduced a set of 'national output indicators' which all RPBs are expected to report on in their AMRs (ODPM 2002, 2005e). Alongside the national output indicators RPBs are also required to 'keep track of progress' towards relevant local PSA targets and accompanying Best Value Performance Indicators (DETR 2000b para. 16.07, also ODPM 2002).

RPBs have dutifully prepared these AMRs, though not always to the standard hoped for by central government. The regime imposed tends to encourage 'box ticking' behaviour by those completing the AMRs, rather than really thinking about progress and problems. The pressure exerted by plan making means that planning resources are squeezed away from this less urgent activity of monitoring. The impression in England is that government's real main concern is the overall housing numbers figure, hence devaluing other monitoring work. Though, in principle, a key part of the armoury of regional planners, the evidence up to now is that monitoring has not been effectively integrated with its close siblings, implementation and review (Preuss 2006).

7.6.4 Reviewing regional plans

In the 'continuous planning process' advocated by PPS11 flexibility and responsiveness were to be achieved primarily through the review of RSS. This would be in response to the results of monitoring 'or where there have been changes in national policy'. 'Although the core strategy and vision in RSS should be reasonably robust, RSS revisions will be required periodically' (PPS11 para. 2.1). PPS11 set a 'target timetable' for the production of a full review of between 30 and 35 months. Selective reviews were expected to be quicker. The RPB has to

agree a 'project plan' with the GOR to set out how the target timetable is to be met (PPS11 para. 2.33).

The reality of review is that it occurs mainly through top-down pressures. For example, in the South East RPG approved in 2001, the Secretary of State ordered the investigation of a number of areas for growth – this led to the Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003, with its four growth areas. He also required further work on a number of topics, and this led the work programme for the South East Assembly in its first years, with work on transport, energy, minerals, waste and tourism all being taken through partial reviews. In the same way the West Midlands RPG/RSS of 2004 required a three-phase programme, the first, a sub-regional strategy for the Black Country, the second and third involving more extensive work leading to complex partial reviews. In both cases it was government which set the review process, not monitoring or the judgement of the regional planning body.

Other issues are beginning to emerge with the multiple review process instituted by PPG11 and PPS11. Government wants RSS to remain up to date, which means frequent partial reviews. This is very demanding on the limited resources of Assemblies and leading local authorities. It also runs the risk of losing the coherence of overall strategies, dropping that priority to integrated long-term strategies which are at the heart of new English regional planning. In the West Midlands it now appears to Assembly planners that much of the 2004 RSS may have to be, in effect, fully reviewed only two or three years after its completion, given the complex interrelationships between housing, land for economy and infrastructure. If, as government is ordering, housing numbers must go up, this risks destabilising the whole conurbation regeneration strategy, requiring more housing land in the non-metropolitan areas previously restrained. This is doubtless very much to the liking of the housebuilders, who can revisit questions closed in 2002–2004. But it hardly looks like long-term strategy making. Such are the tensions brought in by the schizophrenic commitments to both market responsiveness and ambitious long-term integration for urban renaissance and sustainability. We would recommend moving away from partial reviews, to regular and less frequent general reviews and much more resources devoted to implementation and monitoring.

The exception to this panorama is, as often, *London*. Here the review process does appear to work in a much more appropriate way, with serious note taken of the difficulties spotted early on by monitoring after the Plan of 2004, and decisions made to concentrate the review process on these areas (housing, transport), as well as areas identified by the Mayor as of new vital importance (particularly responding to climate change). Here the fact that the GLA is 'master in its own house', not subject to the extensive central government controls affecting all the English Assemblies, but able to set its own plan-making and reviewing timetable, means the possibility of a much more seriously steered process, responding to, in some sense, London's needs, not just those of central government.

This would be the other model for review, and in principle it is the one spelt out in PPS11: that the tracking of change and progress through monitoring should

lead to a decision that new strategy is needed on some topic or perhaps across all matters, in the judgement of the RPB. Perhaps when the new RSS system is fully established, this less centrally driven model will be more apparent. For the moment, it would appear that the regional planning process created by the Blair governments in England since the late 1990s is one designed to deliver government objectives in a highly centralised manner, and that this affects review, as much as anything. In our view, this does not allow the regional planning process to reach any real maturity, based on some degree of regional autonomy.

7.7 In conclusion: a regional planning policy cycle?

The way the process is supposed to work, in a rationally tidy world, is shown in Figure 7.8.

Things do not work like that. It is clear from the above survey of the four possible stages of the regional planning process, that there are several places where either the stages may blur (making – reviewing, making – implementing) or where at the very least one stage may not follow another in the 'proper' manner (making – implementing, monitoring – reviewing).

In simple terms:

* a plan may be implemented while it is being made, or other things may be implemented which are not in the plan;
* a plan may be reviewed almost continuously, so that there is no clear boundary between the stages of making and remaking of the plan;
* a plan may not be implemented, whether in core critical elements, or in less critical parts; and
* a plan may either not be monitored effectively, or this may not lead rationally to relevant review.

These realities are easily stated, but it is much harder to decide whether their presence condemns a stages conception of regional planning to irrelevance.
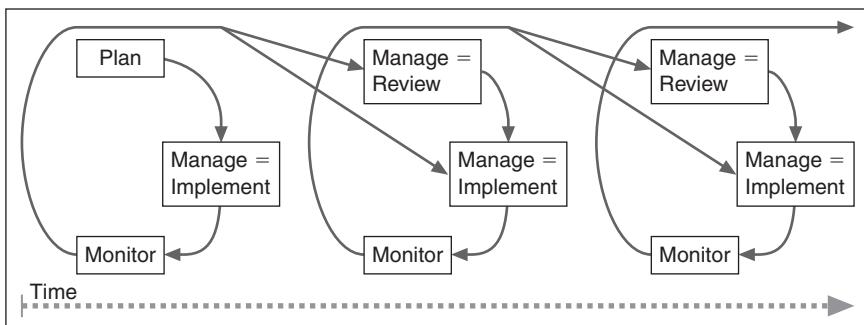
Figure 7.8 Plan, Monitor and Manage – the PPS11 model. (*Source:* Preuss (2006).)

Almost certainly, in the current English case, it is too early to make any firm judgement. Implementation in terms of outcomes takes years to verify, and is always methodologically hard to establish with full confidence (was it the regional plan that caused the stream of actions over the following ten or 15 years?). Monitoring, now somewhat weakly linked to the rest of the process, may be given greater priority once/if the outburst of plan making of the early and mid 2000s subsides. It is conceivable that regions will start to insist on a more separated set of plan-making phases, with reviews less parachuted in by central government policy changes and requirements.

Should few of these things happen, then certainly a complex understanding of the regional planning process will be the only one fitting to current English realities. In that case, we should accept that there is indeed a thoroughly messy policy-making process here. In the case of the South East region, for example, we could then present this as a dual track situation. On *one track is the formal plan and strategy-making process*, continuous since the later 1990s, though punctuated with numerous formal stages (examinations in public in 1999 and 2006, final guidance 2001 and c2008 etc.). Alongside this, we may see a *second track of 'actually existing regional planning'*, led by:

a   central government decisions like the growth agenda (Sustainable Communities Plan 2003, pressing growth areas in South East Plan 2004–2005, Barker housing agenda 2004 onwards), RDA programmes, decisions on ports and airports at various times, road-widening decisions and rail investment or disinvestment, general environmental or many other sectoral policies, and so on);
b   policies of lower authorities (Mayor of London, Regional Assemblies, local authorities), not all of which will be based on RPG/RSSs; and
c   decisions of private investors not always following such strategies.

The relationship between the two tracks is clearly key to how worthwhile we judge regional spatial strategy work to be. For the moment there is a large investment in making integrated spatial planning work, by means of RSSs. Within a few years the scope for integration using this instrument will be clear.

In the next four chapters we now turn to the detail of the policies in four different fields. Given the difficulties of integration it is clear that each of these will have some autonomy, and so their study separately has much sense. Much of the technical equipment of planners works at this more specific level. We will then finish this section of the book with a fuller consideration of political and public processes involved in regional planning. These, as has appeared at times in this chapter, are often at the hub of regional planning as it really occurs.

8   Components of regional planning
Economy

8.1 Introduction to plan 'components'

Any sub-division into components invites challenges to the very nature and importance of the chosen components, and of the breaking up of a plan or strategy which by its nature seeks to provide an integrated and holistic way forward for an area. Regional plans and strategies involve a wide range of interconnected elements, reflecting the complexity and linkages of the regional systems in which we live. The substantive theory of Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of many of the elements – of the regional economy, of transport systems, of the physical environment. The focus on sustainable development stresses the importance of a holistic approach, and of economic, social and environmental synergies. Yet, if planning is to be manageable there is a need to sub-divide the whole into component parts for diagnosis of issues and identification of relevant policies, which may be very much agency related.

In the limited space of this text, there is a focus on what we see as four key components of contemporary regional plans and strategies – economy, housing, transport and the environment (although some overlap is inevitable). This chapter covers economy. Economic activity and associated employment are key factors in the growth and structure of regions. Yet, with the pressures on the housing market, and the marked imbalance between limited supply and growing demand in many regions in the UK, and in other countries, the location and other characteristics of housing are also very significant. Housing is often at the forefront of the interface between socio-economic and bio-physical objectives for a region and is the subject of Chapter 9. Transport and environmental issues, including techniques which seek to take a holistic sustainability approach to resolving conflicts and to maximising synergies, are discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.

The structure of this chapter and the next three chapters adopt similar approaches, starting with a section which explores the drivers of change and highlights the contemporary regional issues resulting from those drivers. Drawing on evolving approaches, the following section then discusses policy responses from key agencies, both national and regional/sub-regional. This is followed by a brief outline of some of the techniques employed in the compo-

nent area, before concluding with case study examples from current regional and sub-regional planning practice. The discussions in this chapter seek to show not only some of the common features of regional planning for economic development, but also some of the inter-regional and intra-regional variations, reflecting the relative importance of the mix of generating growth, and accommodating growth, in particular regions and sub-regions.

8.2 Drivers and issues

Regional economies are not vacuum-sealed; they are set in national and international economic contexts and are influenced by those contexts. We live in a global economy and the forces of globalisation of trade are major drivers of change in regional economies. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) encompasses many of the world's most developed economies, though membership has broadened since the mid 1990s. Trends in OECD economies provide a window on the structural changes in the predominantly developed world (Simmie *et al.* 2006). Although there have been some cyclical swings, value added has grown consistently in the OECD since 1971, and real GDP has grown by approximately 2–3 per cent per annum. Associated with this growth has been a major shift in the industrial mix of the industrialised economies. Non-manufacturing increasingly dominates economic activity in the OECD, accounting for 80 per cent of total value added by 2001. Conversely manufacturing has fallen significantly, and this fall would have been even greater but for the good performance of electronics. The three key service sectors, which each account for almost 20 per cent of total activity, include business services, banking and finance; other services (mainly public), including education, health and public administration; and distribution, hotels and restaurants. In general, the trends in the UK economy as a whole have been similar to those in the OECD. The country has performed particularly well in exporting services – an area of clear comparative advantage. Thus while the UK accounts for just less than 5 per cent of total world trade in goods, it has 8 per cent of trade in services.

Other notable characteristics of contemporary advance include the importance of the knowledge economy, of high-tech activities, and of outsourcing. A *knowledge economy* is one where knowledge is the key resource, and:
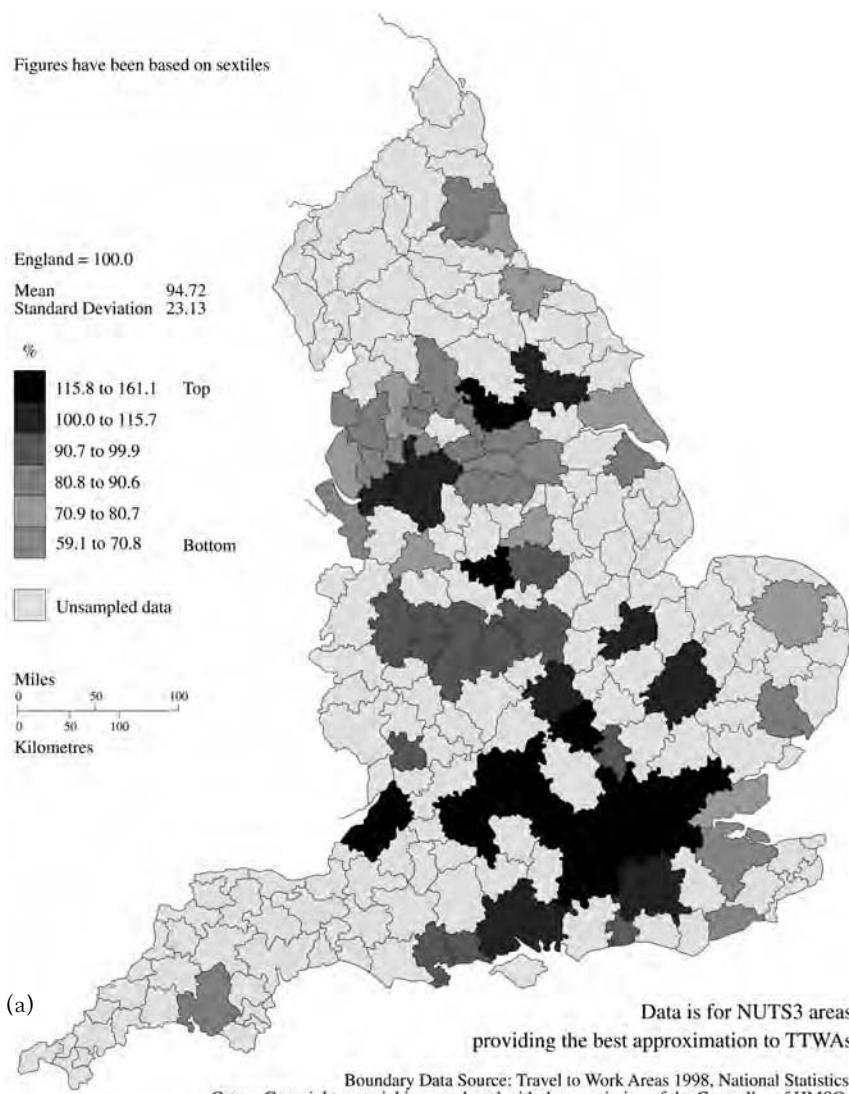
> in which the generation and exploitation of knowledge has come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth. It is not simply about pushing back the frontiers of knowledge; it is also about the more effective use and exploitation of all types of knowledge in all manner of economic activity.
>
> (DTI 1998)

The pursuit of the knowledge economy, and of innovation, has focused attention on the role of universities in economic development, and especially in

regional economic development (Glasson 2003). There has also been a focus on *high-tech activity*. There is a wide variety of definitions of high-tech, but there is some agreement on the general characteristics (Glasson *et al.* 2006). These relate to the twin themes of innovation (the introduction of new products, processes or services) and technology intensity (of resource inputs and/or outputs). Most definitions make use of quantitative data to identify a list of industries meeting specified criteria which are indicative of high-tech activity, such as a high level of research and development (R&D) intensity or the employment of a high-proportion of technology-oriented workers. High-tech

Figures have been based on sextiles

England = 100.0

| Mean | 94.72 |
| Standard Deviation | 23.13 |

%

115.8 to 161.1	Top
100.0 to 115.7	
90.7 to 99.9	
80.8 to 90.6	
70.9 to 80.7	
59.1 to 70.8	Bottom

Unsampled data

Miles
0   50   100

0   50   100
Kilometres

(a)

Data is for NUTS3 areas
providing the best approximation to TTWAs

Boundary Data Source: Travel to Work Areas 1998, National Statistics
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industries are both manufacturing (e.g. biotechnology, electronic equipment) and service (e.g. software development, consultancy). In contrast to these characteristics, another rapidly growing feature of economies, such as the UK, has been the phenomenon of *outsourcing* where services are transferred in substantial numbers to lower labour cost economies. These have normally, but not always, been in lower level service jobs, such as call-centre employment.
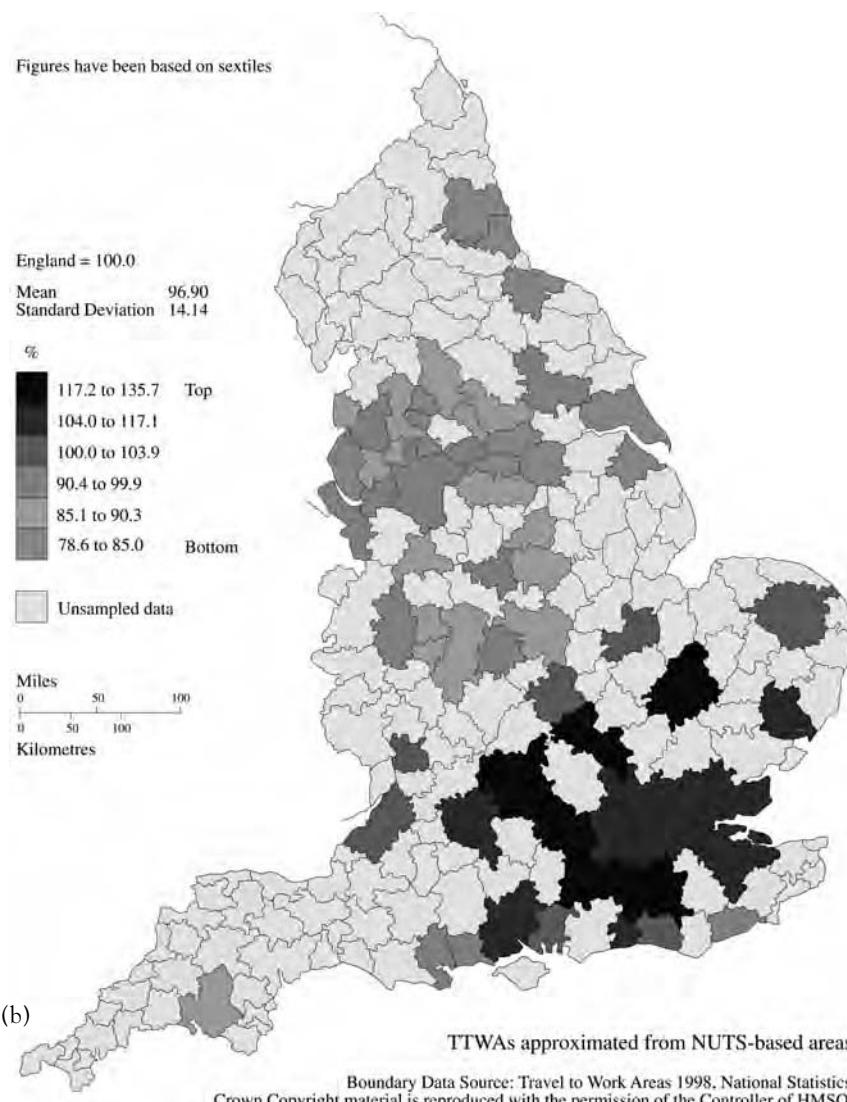
Figure 8.1 Some indicators of relative regional/sub-regional prosperity. (a) GVA per capita. (b) Average weekly household incomes (adjusted for housing costs). (*Source:* ODPM (2005d).)

Regional economic issues relate to performance in the evolving 'modern' economy of advanced countries. Determinants of performance of a particular region are likely to include some or all the competitive factors noted in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). The UK *State of the Cities* report (ODPM 2005d), illustrated relative factor performance with reference to data on criteria such as patent applications, and change in percentage of working age with degree level qualifications. The resultant indicators of relative prosperity include measures such as: weekly earnings, gross disposable household income, visible exports per capita, GVA per capita, rate of change in productivity (GVA per employee) and change in employment rate. Figure 8.1 provides some examples of these indicators by TTWAs within regions. There are considerable inter- and intra-regional variations. Some regions and sub-regions, especially in the GSE, have a good mix of the growth sectors, represented in positive economic indicators. However, they may still have economic issues, for example, skill capacity constraints, high costs, congestion and imbalance in prosperity within a region. For other regions the indicators may also show regional imbalances, perhaps reflecting pockets of decline in primary and manufacturing activity, but also higher rates of unemployment, inactivity and outmigration, and lower levels of productivity growth and labour skills.

Figure 8.2 from the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) illustrates some of the spatial variations of economic characteristics within that country – including some of the determinants and indicators of economic prosperity.

8.3 Policy/agency responses

8.3.1 High-level policy steers

Economic development policy responses for particular regions in the UK are set in the wider context of EU and UK national government policies. Many UK central government departments – including the Treasury, the DTI, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, formerly ODPM), the Department for Employment and Skills (DfES) – have an interest in the economic development of regions. Since 2002 their interests have been pulled together for England under a Joint Regional PSA Target to:

> [m]ake sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions and over the long term, reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the regions, defining measures to improve performance and reporting progress against these measures by 2006.
>
> (HM Treasury website)

There is an array of relevant *central government policy measures*. There is a PPS for Economic Development (PPS4; ODPM 2004d), but this is now seen as of little practical value and out of date. It is to be shortly updated, and will no doubt reflect some of the emphasis of the 2006 Barker Review of Land Use

Town Centre Employment 2000

Over 20,000

5,000 – 20,000

2,000 – 5,000

Highest percentage employment rate 2002/2003

Highest percentage inactivity rate 2002/2003

Largest percentage VAT registrations 2002/2003
(per 1000 working age population)

Highest percentage of degrees (NVQ level 4) 2002/2003

Highest percentage with no qualifications 2002/2003

Universities

Other HE/FE

Long-term limiting illness (2001 census)
Over 30 percent of population by Electoral Division

High proportion of employment 2001 in
Banking, finance and insurance

Manufacturing

Public administration, health and education

Figure 8.2 Promoting a sustainable economy – some characteristics of the Wales economy. (*Source:* Welsh Assembly Government (2004).)

Planning – to ensure that the benefits of economic development are fully taken into account in plan making and decision taking. There are many other policy initiatives; for example, the DfES focuses on gaps in education and skills, through programmes such as Excellence in Cities, a programme aimed at areas with low educational achievement, and Sure Start, aimed at pre-school learning. The DTI administers the (albeit much reduced) regional preferential

assistance to industry (RSA and Enterprise Grants) of approximately £200–£300 million per annum. It also has targets to establish at least one risk capital fund in each of the English regions, and boost R&D, innovation and technology transfer by developing the university–business interface. The DTI is also the lead sponsor for the RDAs.The aim of national policies is to help all regions, but in particular those regions, or parts of regions, suffering from long-term structural and locational problems. There has been a strong emphasis on the regeneration and renaissance of formerly run-down areas. The overall aim is economic growth, but sustainable economic growth, with a focus on so-called 'smart growth' – in high-value, low-impact activities/sectors. The competitive agenda has been much to the fore, with benchmarking against the perceived top-performing EU or world regions, and with ambitious targets to move up the 'league tables'.

The *RDAs* for the English regions, and their Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland equivalents, provide an important regional tier to economic development policies. Set up in 1999 to provide the strategic framework to improve the sustainable economic performance of each English region, the RDAs have wide-ranging portfolios and significant budgets. Their portfolio of activities includes: economic development and regeneration; promoting business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; promoting employment and skills development; and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Haughton and Counsell (2004) see the RDAs as emblematic of New Labour's approach to a more 'competitive and collaborative regionalism'.

Table 8.1 summarises the RDA budgets, which show some element of skew towards the 'problem regions'; it also includes some of the RDA outputs for 2005–2006, illustrating the range of their activities. The objectives, targets and spending programme of each RDA are brought together in the RESs, first produced in 1999, and subsequently in 2002 and 2006. The first round of activity resulted in RESs which were broad, and aspirational rather than strategic, but this has shifted in later documents. The evolution of the relationship of the RESs with the RSSs (and the previous RPGs) has been uncomfortable, partly reflecting the ongoing 'silo-mentalities' of separating regional economic planning and regional physical planning (Haughton and Counsell 2004). However, Central Government now clearly specifies that RSSs should have regard to the RES, and that the RES should sit within the spatial planning framework of the RSS (HM Government 2004).

Evidence to date on RES and RSS alignment has been very mixed (see Box 8.1). There are various reasons for this including policy differences, timing horizon differences (the RES operates on a five to ten year horizon compared with the 15 to 20 years horizon for the RSS), timing sequencing differences (with different timeframes and start dates), different evidence bases and sub-regional definitions (HM Treasury 2006). One solution would be to merge RSS and RES into a single strategy, but this has a number of institutional implications stemming from the different statutory roles of the two documents. In the meantime the Barker Review of Land Use Planning calls for better integration

Table 8.1 English RDAs – budgets and some output indicators (2005–2006)

RDA	Budget: 2005–2006 (£m)	Some output indicators for year of 2005–2006			
		Jobs created or safeguarded	New businesses created and surviving first year	Hectares of brownfield land reclaimed or redeveloped	Number of people assisted in skill development through RDA programmes
Advantage West Midlands	272	11,500	1650	90	27,500
East of England Development Agency	129	4300	2563	39	32,700
East Midlands Development Agency	156	8200	2208	107	14,600
London Development Agency	373	21,300	3077	57	34,300
North West Development Agency	382	15,700	2770	327	23,100
One North East	240	16,000	3406	139	121,000
South East England Development Agency	157	4200	2027	101	41,800
South West of England Development Agency	153	6300	198	94	19,600
Yorkshire Forward	295	23,800	1007	117	58,600
Total	2157	111,300	18,906	1071	373,200

Source: Adapted from RDA end-year results for 2005–2006 (DTI: London).

of RESs and RSSs through enhanced alignment of timescale and more compatibility of evidence bases (HM Treasury 2006a).

Box 8.1 RES and RSS – varying degrees of alignment

- The South West RSS acknowledges that successful RES delivery is more likely to result in the continuation of strong growth. However, the draft RSS plans only for average economic growth at 2.8 per cent growth in GVA per annum rather than the 'strong' growth that the region has witnessed over the past ten to 15 years. Therefore the RSS growth predictions imply that the RSS is not planning for successful RES delivery. This in turn is used to justify lower than necessary levels of housing provision. Evidence suggests that approximately 30,000 dwellings per annum are needed to support RES delivery whereas the draft RSS plans for only 23,000. The RDA has estimated that this contrast could have a large impact on the delivery of the RES.
- The East Midlands Development Agency commissioned Experian (consultants) to look at the impact of housing options to inform the development of the draft RSS in May 2006. Experian's report highlighted a significant concern that the RSS's preferred housing option would be likely to hold back employment and economic output in some parts of the region.
- The East of England RA prepared their draft RSS largely on the basis of the 2001 RES, which used a range of economic growth targets. The RDA has affirmed its support for the RSS through its continued engagement in the RSS process and joint research. The two strategies do have a major policy divergence in relation to the growth of airports, notably at Stansted. Although the RA has acknowledged that airports are key economic drivers, it has consistently opposed a second runway. The RSS gives greater emphasis to retail than is supported in the RES. The review of the RES will begin before the publication of the RSS.
- GLA Economics provides a good example of a common information and research base which is used by both the London Development Agency and the GLA in preparing the RES and the London Plan, respectively.

(*Source:* HM Treasury 2006.)

The *EU Structural Funds* provide a further source of support for the economic development of the regions, with overall aims of reducing inter-regional imbalances and creating competitive regions. The ERDF focuses on economic infrastructure (e.g. transport, energy); the ESF supports training and mobility. Under the EU 2000–2006 programme, UK Objective 1 regions, including locations

such as Merseyside and South Yorkshire, received over £1.5 billion; a wider range of Objective 2 regions received over £2.2 billion, but relative support is changing with the widening membership of the EU (see Chapter 13 for more discussion).

8.3.2 *Some characteristics of economic policies for regions and sub-regions*

Economic development policies can be characterised in many ways, for example, by their overall aims, by the type of targeted economic activity, by the preferred spatial distribution, and by associated support measures (including a skilled workforce and employment land). Economic development *aims* tend to vary by sub-region. The WSP: Consultation Draft (Welsh Assembly Government 2003a) has the general economic spatial challenge of 'Increasing and Spreading Prosperity', including developing the potential of places to adapt to change, for example, through a flexible skills base and accessibility. However, it also differentiates according to location and relative prosperity. Thus, aims for the more urban South East and North East Wales include increasing the economic potential of links with adjoining English regions, and enhancing R&D, innovation, the knowledge economy, and Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) potential as motors for economic development. In the more rural areas of mid Wales, aims include mobilising opportunities for economic development linked to indigenous potential particularly in terms of tourism and recreation, natural resources, renewable energy, agriculture and lifestyle; and devising strategies to retain and attract back skilled people.

There are many common items on the shopping list of contemporary regional strategies for *types of economic activity* (Glasson 2002). These include targeting knowledge-based sectors, high-tech, R&D and high value-added activities; links with HE and FE are also seen as of growing importance. Typical target growth sectors are life sciences industries (biotechnology and pharmaceuticals), medical equipment and technology, financial and professional services, computer software, creative industries and environmental technologies. But there may also be support for the modernisation and diversification of older manufacturing industry as appropriate, plus of course support for more traditional high-tech manufacturing such as aerospace and automotive engineering. Support for an increase in the tourism industry tends to be another common feature. Most policies also include support for diversification, plus a mix of attracting in new industry from outside the region, and often outside the country, but also encouragement for indigenous development. Common features in the preferred *spatial distributions* include regeneration zones, both urban and rural, high-tech corridors, innovation hubs/clusters, science and technology parks, and strategic investment sites.

Yet without *associated support measures* and, in particular, the supply of a skilled workforce, employment land and infrastructure and key services, few of the above characteristics may be achievable. There is increasing recognition in

regional planning of the importance of human resource development. Successful places need well-qualified people, but lower-skilled jobs will also be needed to support the growing service sector, itself driven by rising disposable incomes and the ageing workforce. As such, policies need to support a dual and interconnected labour market. Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) are being promoted as a way of integrating activity on skills, training, business support and labour market activity. Planning the overall provision of employment land is also of vital importance in the delivery of an economic strategy. The *RSS for Yorkshire and Humberside to 2016* (GOYH 2004) identifies three key stages in an employment land policy – determine the overall level of provision of employment land, establish criteria for choosing and prioritising sites, and develop a continuing process for managing and bringing forward the supply. These are amplified in Table 8.4 in the next section. The provision of sites for employment, and especially large serviced sites, often close to motorway junctions and on or adjacent to greenfield land, can create considerable tension between development and conservation lobbies in the regional planning process (the wider and vital role of infrastructure, and especially transport infrastructure, is discussed in Chapter 10).

8.3.3 Implementation and monitoring

Many agencies are involved in the planning and development of a regional economy, including industrialists, developers, infrastructure providers, RDAs, Government and the European Commission. It is important to highlight mechanisms and roles and responsibilities for implementation, as illustrated in Table 8.2. It is also important to have clear output indicators and targets as noted in Chapter 7. For economic policies, indicators might include, for example, progress on the provision of the range of sites, noted in Table 8.4; on the percentage of sites on previously developed land; on percentage of employees in high-tech sectors; on relative unemployment rates; on total tourist visits to the region; and on percentage of new businesses surviving for three years.

Table 8.2 Examples of economic policy implementation mechanisms and roles

Economic policy	Mechanisms	Lead agency roles	Support agency roles
Provision of employment land	Development plans; regional employment land survey	Local authorities; Regional Assembly	RDA; developers
Promotion of tourism	Development plans; local transport plans; tourism strategies and action plans	Local authorities; Regional Tourist Board; RDA; tourism operators and developers	English Heritage; Countryside Agency; Regional Assembly

8.4 Relevant techniques

The study of regional economics has produced an array of techniques which can be employed in a variety of roles in planning for regional economic development. This is a vast area (see Alden and Morgan 1974; Glasson 1992; Armstrong and Taylor 2000). The brief focus here is on a few examples of techniques which can be used in diagnosing issues/understanding trends in the fortunes of regional economies and on forecasting manpower and land requirements.

8.4.1 *Diagnosing issues and trends in regional economies*

In Chapter 4 a number of conceptual explanations of long-run regional growth and change were outlined. Some of these, such as Industrial Structure Analysis, can be used to diagnose the relative significance of industrial structure and other (e.g. locational) influences on such growth. In addition, there is a set of economic theories, known collectively as regional multiplier theories, which seek to explain shorter-run regional changes. They stress the interrelationships of sectors within the regional economy and the spread of impulses originating in any one sector to all other sectors either directly or indirectly. They range from the simple, but still useful location quotient and economic base approaches, to the more complex input–output approach.

Location quotients provide a useful initial check on the fortunes of the industrial sectors of a region or sub-region comparing regional economic characteristics against the same characteristics in the national or international (e.g. OECD) economy. For example the location quotient (LQ) for each industrial sector can be derived from the following ratio:

LQ = (% of regional employment in sector A)/(% of national employment in sector A)

Ratios of greater than unity are taken to indicate an export or basic activity, with the number of workers surplus to those necessary to give an LQ of 1 – that is surplus to regional self-sufficiency. A number of economic characteristics can be used for the analysis. In Table 8.3 the LQs are the value added in industrial sectors in English city regions as a proportion of the total value added divided by the equivalent proportion for the OECD for the period 1996–2001. The table illustrates the incidence of some high manufacturing industry LQs in northern regions (e.g. 2.7 for chemicals in the Newcastle city region, 3.3 for metals in the Sheffield sub-region). But these are not fast-growing sectors internationally compared with services such as communication, financial services and business services, in which the London capital region dominates, with strong LQs.

Implicit in the *economic base* approach is a division of industrial sectors into basic activities which export goods and services outside a region, and non-basic activities which support the regional population. The assumption is that there is a multiplier relationship, with an increase in basic activities leading to a flow of

Table 8.3 OECD output growth, and Location Quotients for the UK and some English city regions (1996–2001)

	OECD growth 1996–2001	UK	London	Birmingham	Manchester	Leeds	Sheffield	Newcastle	Liverpool	Nottingham	Bristol
Food, drink and tobacco	-1.0	1.2	0.4	2.0	1.7	0.9	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.1	0.6
Textiles, clothing and leather	-2.5	0.9	0.3	3.7	2.0	1.2	0.3	0.7	1.2	4.6	0.2
Wood and wood products	0.0	0.7	0.3	2.9	1.0	1.5	1.2	1.4	0.4	1.2	0.7
Paper, printing and publishing	-0.3	1.5	1.2	0.5	1.6	1.4	0.4	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.5
Chemicals, rubber and plastics	1.2	1.1	0.3	0.8	5.5	0.5	0.4	2.7	2.3	0.4	0.5
Other non-metallic mineral products	0.8	0.9	0.2	5.0	0.9	1.5	2.0	0.2	2.6	1.3	0.4
Metals and fabricated metal products	0.3	1.0	0.2	14.0	0.3	1.1	3.3	0.3	0.8	1.8	0.6
Machinery and equipment	6.7	0.9	0.3	4.3	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.9	0.7	1.1
Transport equipment	3.5	0.9	0.2	10.7	0.2	0.9	1.0	3.5	0.4	4.5	0.6
Other manufacturing	1.6	1.1	0.5	2.9	0.7	1.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.6
Electricity, gas and water	0.8	0.9	0.5	3.9	0.7	1.0	0.6	1.5	0.4	3.7	0.5
Construction	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.4	0.8	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.1
Distribution, hotels and catering	3.9	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.0
Transport	2.1	1.3	1.2	0.8	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.6	1.2
Communications	8.7	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.8	1.5
Financial services	5.6	0.8	2.0	0.4	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.5	0.5	2.4
Business services	3.8	0.8	1.7	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.0
Other (mainly public) services	1.6	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.8	1.1
Total of above	2.8										
Manufacturing	*1.9*	*1.0*	*0.4*	*3.0*	*0.9*	*1.0*	*1.1*	*0.9*	*1.0*	*1.2*	*0.7*

Source: Simmie *et al.* (2006).

income into a region, an increase in demand for goods and services in the region, and a corresponding increase in non-basic activity. Hence, a forecast of changes in basic activity can be scaled up by a multiplier, derived from an analysis of the regional economy, to provide a total economic impact – often estimated in terms of jobs. The approach is crude and there are complications, such as the initial basic/non-basic division, but it can provide a useful indicator of regional change. More sophisticated approaches use *regional income multipliers* (see Figure 8.3), and *input–output analysis*. The latter approach disaggregates an economy into its component sectors, linked in a matrix by supply and demand coefficients. This allows the impact on all sectors of predicted changes in any one sector to be estimated. Again there are complications; for example, the supply relationships between sectors may not be too stable in anything other than the short run. The approach is also data hungry, but there have been some useful examples of the application of the approach in regional planning.

8.4.2 Forecasting manpower and land requirements

Manpower forecasting involves two main elements: the supply and demand for labour. Each has its complications. Labour supply projections can build on population projections, adjusted for activity rates which themselves need to allow for gender and age variations. However, increasingly, there is a focus on skill levels and productivity, which may greatly reduce the real capacity in the workforce, although of course training can help to offset such problems. Yet, supply is also a function of the level of demand in a region at any particular time. Supply and demand are interrelated and a region with low demand may see its workforce diminish through the process of net out-migration which, as noted in Chapter 4, can be selective of the most skilled and marketable – leading to a vicious circle of cumulative decline. Labour demand can be forecast, in the short run, by a statistical analysis of, and projections from, past trends in the region's industrial sectors. This might utilise some of the multiplier approaches previously discussed, preferably complemented by direct

$$Yr = 1/1 - (1-s)(1-t-u)(1-m) \times J$$

where

Yr is the change in level of income (Y) in region (r), in £;

J is the initial income injection (the multiplicand);

t is the proportion of additional income paid in direct taxation and national Insurance contributions;

s is the proportion of income saved (and therefore not spent regionally);

u is the decline in transfer payments (e.g. unemployment benefits) which result from the rise in regional income and employment;

m is the proportion of additional regional income spent on imported consumer goods.

Figure 8.3 A simple income multiplier model for the prediction of regional economic change.

survey and inquiry of perceived prospects by major employers in the region under study.

The planning of the total supply and the particular characteristics of *employment land* is an important element in regional planning. Table 8.4 outlines an

Table 8.4 Key stages and techniques for an employment land policy

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Planning the overall provision of employment land
(a) Regional Assembly should undertake a *regional employment land survey* of existing sites to assess their market value potential, allowing for necessary site preparation and the cost and time constraints of achieving this.
(b) Local authorities, in preparing their development plans, should rigorously assess *amount of employment land needed*, taking account of factors such as past rate of development and projected needs, range of sites, regeneration requirements, national and regional measures to improve the regional economy and the regional employment land survey.
(c) Development plans and economic development strategies should ensure that locations are reserved for a range of *regionally significant sites*, including Single User Sites of approximately 25–50 hectares, with good public transport connections, Estuary Related Sites, and Premium Sites, of approximately 15–40 hectares, to meet the needs for high-tech products and processes and service sector growth (minimimum individual development size of five hectares).
(d) There should also be a good supply of a *range of sites* for sub-regional and local development, well integrated with existing urban areas.

Determining the employment site and selection criteria
(a) *Locational choice* – development plan provision for employment land should give preference to previously developed land within urban areas, subject to factors such as quantity and quality of the supply and preparation costs, including infrastructure. Where land outside the urban area is required to ensure a balanced portfolio, preference should be given to land on the urban periphery accessible by good public transport, taking account of greenbelt constraints, followed if necessary by sites at nodes on public transport corridors. Subject to this, re-use of previously developed sites will be favoured.
(b) *Development type* – major production industries should be located with good access to inter-regional transport corridors; business/science-based clusters would benefit from a premium site location; business parks and offices should where possible be located in town and city centres. Any alternative locations should be assessed in terms of effects on future private investment in town centres, implications for development plan strategies, accessibility by public transport, and impacts on travel. Provision should be made for warehousing and distribution activities, with high goods volume and low labour content, near to inter-regional transport facilities.

Managing the employment land portfolio
(a) At any one time, one large single-user site should be capable of development commencing within one year of a firm expression of interest.
(b) Estuarial locations should be handled in a similar way.
(c) A priority order should be established for premium sites at the sub-regional level, with a choice of two such locations available in key sub-regions at any one time.
(d) Prioritisation at the sub-regional and local levels should be based on patterns of demand for the particular type of land in the locality. Between 2–4 years' supply of land should be readily available.

Source: Abbreviated adaptation from YHA (2004a).

overall logic to the process, the importance of a regional employment land survey, and the sequential approach to the allocation of particular sites.

8.5 Some sub-regional examples

8.5.1 *Managing high-tech growth: the example of the Oxfordshire sub-region*

The Oxfordshire sub-region of South East England provides a fascinating example of the transformation from an economy based on the commodity-producing industries of the twentieth century towards one based more on the potential of the knowledge and information economy. By 2000 Oxfordshire had over 1400 high-tech companies, employing over 36,000 people, including high-tech manufacturing (e.g. publishing, biotech and pharmaceuticals, medical instrumentation and motorsports) and high-tech services (e.g. telecoms, software, consultancy and other R&D) (Chadwick *et al.* 2003). At 15 per cent it was third only to Berkshire and Cambridgeshire in the percentage of all employees in high-tech sectors and had the fastest rate of growth in high-tech services between 1991 and 2000 of any English county. In the wider EU (Nomenclature of Territorial Regions for Statistics) NUTS 2 regions, the area of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire had the highest proportion of employees in high-tech services in the whole of the EU in 2000.

But what explains this Oxfordshire phenomenon? The county has many of the competitive features identified by Parkinson *et al.* (2004), discussed in Chapter 4 of this book. It has good connectivity, especially to London and international airports, a good quality of life, economic diversity and in particular a series of factors related to innovation and decision making. Recent research has identified a 'triple helix' – of key elements which underpin a virtuous circle of activity (Figure 8.4). First, at the centre of the virtuous circle is a set of entrepreneurial individuals and their companies. Second, underpinning such entrepreneurial activity is the science base of Oxfordshire – its universities, government laboratories and hospitals. Third, there has evolved a network of supportive organisations.

Oxfordshire provides a contemporary example of Florida's (2002) 'geography of talent' (Lawton-Smith *et al.* 2005). A rich mix of entrepreneurs, philanthropists, local policy makers and professional services come together to provide leadership, vision and examples of what can be done. Some of the key individuals include the Woods (Wood 2001) who were leaders in the field of cryogenics which led to the development of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and to medical instrumentation applications, most notably as body scanners. O'Regan pioneered Research Machines plc – the UK's leading supplier of ICT to schools; Drayson was co-founder of Powderject, the world's leading vaccine producer; Williams is the driving force behind the Williams F1 motor racing team and Hruska's Sophos supplies computer anti-virus protection to business users. Oxford University has been particularly innovative in spinning out

companies from its science base, and the county also has several major government research laboratories – including the UK Atomic Energy Authority, the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, the Medical Research Council and others, sitting astride the north–south A34 through the county. But technology transfer needs both the technology to transfer, and supportive organisations to facilitate that transfer. Oxfordshire has been very fortunate to have the Oxford Trust, a charitable body set up in the 1980s by the Woods to encourage the study and application of science and technology. It has pioneered business incubation centres in the county, of which there are now ten. Another of its initiatives is the Oxfordshire Investment Opportunity Network (OION) Ltd which provides venture capital funding.

Much of the 'management' of the high-tech growth appears to have come from the 'grassroots' (Simmie *et al.* 2004). But what has been the role of the public sector planning system? A particular attraction to entrepreneurs is the quality of life of the county – its natural, built and socio-cultural environment. Yet, therein lies the conflict. Oxford is a relatively small (population 150,000) and compact city, and both the city and the surrounding countryside are under pressure from development. The planning response has been to protect the city from spread with a greenbelt, to divert growth to a set of country towns (such as Banbury and Witney) and to seek to manage commuting to Oxford with, for example, a well-developed Park and Ride policy. Figure 8.5 illustrates some of the key building blocks of this strategy. High-tech activity is now supported through the location of two science parks, north and south of the city, plus the
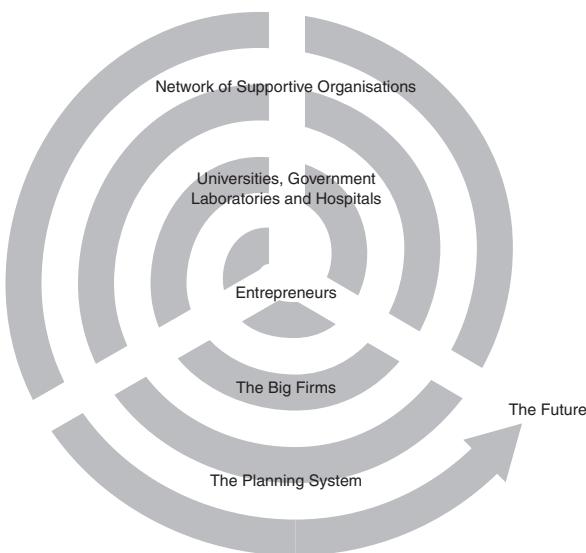
Figure 8.4 Some key elements in the virtuous circle of activity in the Oxfordshire high-tech economy. (*Source:* Glasson *et al.* (2006).)

major 'high-tech' business park at Milton Park on the A34 in the south of the county.

The Oxfordshire high-tech economy is likely to continue to grow, but such growth will give rise to a number of collective externality effects, related to economic, environmental and social sustainability, that raise important issues for policy makers. These include shortages of skilled labour, and of land and buildings – all necessary if incubated firms are to grow larger in the county rather than outside it. A legacy of past planning policies is increasing traffic congestion as a result of the dislocation of much new housing in the country towns but much of the employment growth in Oxford itself. There is also a shortage of affordable housing and the danger of a 'dual-economy' with plenty of opportunities for those with high-level qualifications but fewer well-paid opportunities for those less skilled. Nevertheless, unemployment rates are some of the lowest in the EU. Some of the future challenges, and potential responses, are set out in
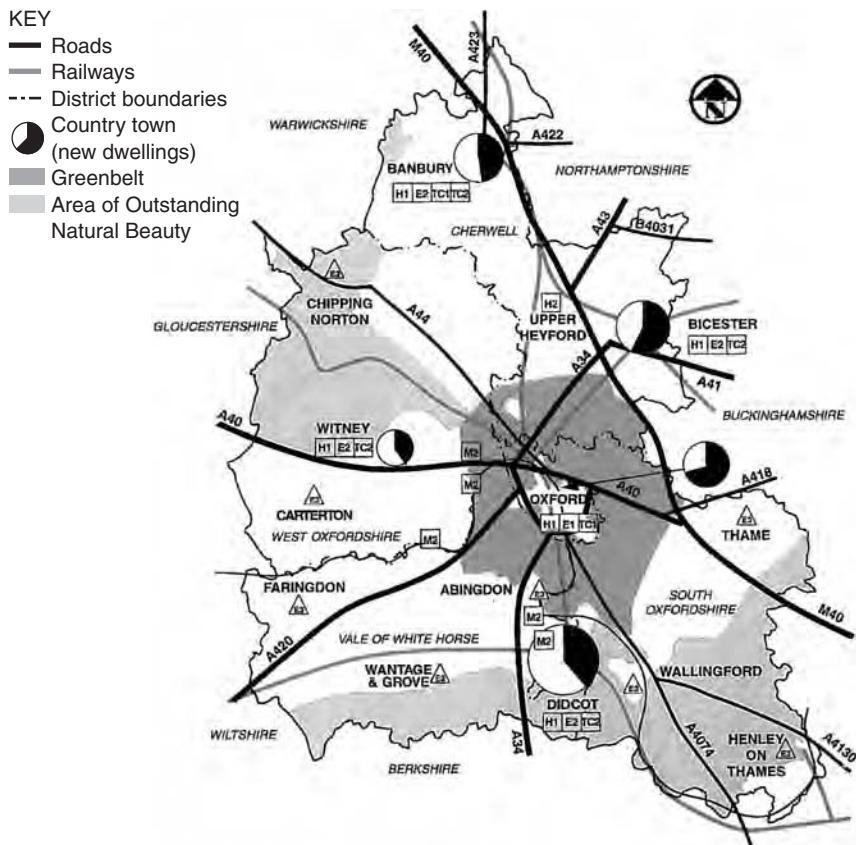
Figure 8.5 Key building blocks in the Oxfordshire planning framework. (*Source:* Oxfordshire County Council (2002).)

the sub-regional planning section of the South East Plan (SEERA 2006a). There are major choices to be made about the level of housing growth (see Chapter 9), the future shape of the Oxfordshire Greenbelt and the provision of better transport infrastructure. Oxfordshire's economic dynamism comes at a price and, in the contemporary parlance, needs a 'smart planning' solution. A fundamental strategic question is whether the county is happy to retain its incubator identity or whether it would like to be more like its twin town, Grenoble in France, and allow the large-scale units of major companies to locate and grow locally, create employment and provide training of scientists, managers and professionals to local small firms, a process which is part of the success of Silicon Valley in the USA.

8.5.2 Reversing economic decline: the case of the 'Black Country sub-region' in the UK's West Midlands

The West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11; GOWM 2004) set out the region's future development opportunities and priorities until 2021. There is a focus on promoting the urban renaissance of its major urban areas. Part of the government response to RPG11 was to ask the region to give priority to setting out the key actions for the renaissance of the Black Country. To achieve this, a Black Country Study (BCS) has been carried out, which constitutes a Draft Phase One Revision of the RPG (now RSS), and which will provide a framework for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks for the area (BCC 2006a).

The Black Country is a significant area in the west of the West Midlands. It includes the major metropolitan areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall. Its reputation is reflected in its name; as a centre of the UK industrial revolution, with a heavy metal and engineering history, it has suffered from the ravages of industry. Interestingly, the sub-title of the BCS is 'See it in colour'. In 2006, 1,100,000 people lived, and 500,000 people worked, in the Black Country. But the area is one of only three sub-regions in the UK experiencing net population decline. Since 1990, population has fallen by over 20,000 and net out-migration has approached 4000 people per annum. While the area retains a substantial manufacturing sector supporting 22 per cent of total employment, it has failed to sufficiently attract new knowledge-based industries that are driving economic growth elsewhere in the UK. It has low numbers of high-skilled, high-earning people living in the sub-region, and some of the most severe concentrations of deprivation. There were 100,000 fewer jobs in 2006 than in the 1970s.

The challenge is formidable, but the innovative BCS has set itself four key headline objectives to 2031: to reverse net out-migration and grow the population to 1,200,000; to raise income levels to 90 per cent of the UK average from 81 per cent in 2006; to accommodate a more balanced population, achieving parity with the national social grade profile; and to create high-quality, sustainable environments. A modern economy, generating high value-added jobs,

W- Wolverhampton Centre
Ws –Walsall Centre
WB-West Bromwich
BH-Brierley Hill
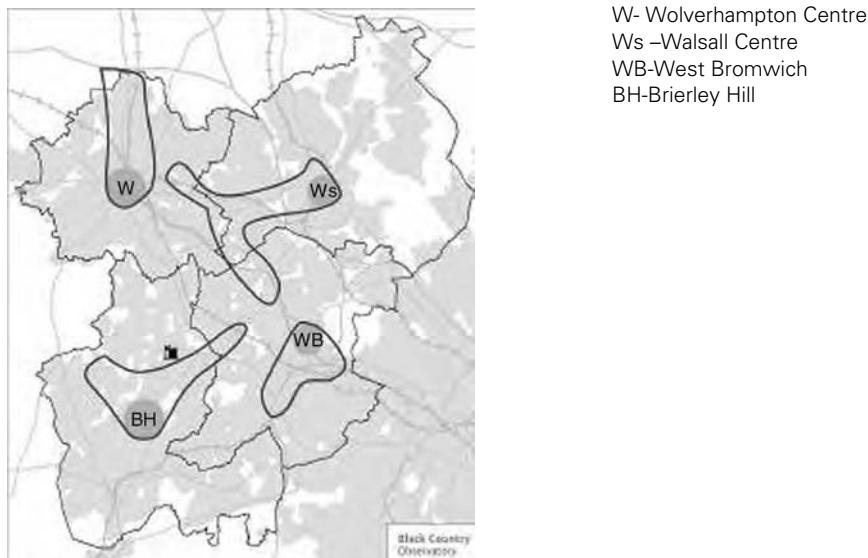
Figure 8.6 Black Country Study – employment land investment zones and strategic centres. (*Source:* BCC (2006a).)

is seen as the first key to the prosperity of the sub-region. The area must move from a relatively low-wage economy to a high-skilled, well-paid knowledge economy where both service and manufacturing companies are competing successfully in the global economy. Some of the key elements and planned employment outcomes in strategy are set out in Box 8.2.

The BCS was carried out by the Black Country Consortium (BCC), the cross-sectoral sub-regional partnership for the four local authorities in the area. A continuation of such innovative joint working will be essential to deliver this ambitious economic development strategy in a sub-region which in the past has been too driven by narrow individual agency interests and occasional damaging local rivalries.

8.6 Conclusions

The economy component is of central importance in planning for a region. Regional economies and their associated planning have been subject to very significant shifts in key drivers over the last 25–30 years, with important ramifications for regional planning activity. They have been influenced by the forces of globalisation, and manufacturing is a shrinking component in the face of the growing service economy. The growth, in particular, of high-tech activity and the knowledge economy in the prosperous regions has provided the

Box 8.2 Some key elements, and planned outcomes, in the Black Country Economic Development Strategy

KEY ELEMENTS

- Black Country Incubation Strategy (linking local population, business and academic communities); provision of Technology Parks;
- provision of modern, fit for purpose, employment sites, including: 1,300,000 square metres of net additional office space to be focused in key centres; retention of 2200 hectares of employment land, of which at least 1600 hectares must be transformed into competitive high-quality, well-serviced and accessible sites required by knowledge-based businesses;
- concentration of development into a polycentric structure of public transport-based corridors and four major urban centres, with fast and efficient access to the motorway network;
- education and skills plan to create a twentieth-century workforce with 100,000 more skilled workers and 60,000 more with qualifications of at least degree standard by 2031;
- other complementary policies, including extension of the West Midlands Metro to Merry Hill and other improved connectivity, and a step change in the quality of the environment (physical and cultural), including the new Black Country Urban Park.

Planned employment outcomes to 2031:

- 160,000 new jobs (90,000 net) of which 60,000 will be knowledge worker jobs;
- growth in jobs in financial and business services by 83,000, in public admin and personal services by 18,000, in retail by 13,000 and in logistics by 11,000;
- total employment of 600,000, including a restructured manufacturing sector of 47,000;
- 63,000 more people in employment, taking the employment rate from 70 to 80 per cent.

(*Source:* Adapted from BCS 2006a.)

template to which other regions aspire, as illustrated by the cases of the Oxfordshire and the Black Country sub-regions.

There are strong high-level policy steers on the range of responses to the economy issues; thus, for example, nationally there is a PSA target to narrow inequalities in regional economic fortunes and, at a higher level, the EU is an important influence and paymaster. There are many other steers including a

clear steer to a sequential approach to the use of land, targeting the urban brownfield supply first. There is also a growth in the institutional environment, including the important advent of the RDAs. However, there are also variations in policies reflecting the variations in the nature of the regions and sub-regions, and there are still major variations in the levels of regional and sub-regional prosperity, again as reflected in the two case studies discussed here.

9 Components of regional planning
Housing

9.1 Introduction

Housing has become a very high-profile issue in regional and sub-regional planning. With the pressures on the housing market, and the marked imbalances between limited supply and growing demand in many regions in the UK, and in other countries, the location and other characteristics of housing are very significant. Housing is often at the forefront of the interface between the socio-economic and environmental objectives for a region, and between many competing interests.

This chapter follows the structure of the previous chapter, first, framing the issues and setting out the underlying drivers. The following section then explores the agency environment and policy responses at the national level, before discussing some characteristics of housing policies for regions and sub-regions. A number of techniques of relevance to regional planning for housing are briefly discussed. We conclude the chapter with a case study of recent practice from the South East England region, where the battle over housing numbers and their sub-regional allocation has many of the characteristics of those around the pursuit of blood sports in the UK!

9.2 Framing the issues

One of the most fundamental problems facing regions in the UK is how to provide the number and types of housing required by the regional population, in appropriate locations, and at affordable prices. This problem is not unique to the UK, although the particularly high house prices in this country do exacerbate the situation. Housing is usually the greatest store of social capital in existing settlements and new housing is the largest use of development land, yet the housing problem is growing. The underlying determinants/drivers of the problem cover a range of housing demand and supply factors.

The *demand factors* include many characteristics increasingly common to advanced societies. Although overall population growth may be low, the number of households is increasing and occupancy rates are decreasing. In the UK the number of new households grew by five million between 1971 and

2001. The increase is due to many factors (not all mutually exclusive): to longer life expectancy and more one- or two-older person households (we increasingly need to house four generations not three); to an increase in people marrying later and divorcing more often; and, for some regions/sub-regions, an increase in the level of net in-migration. Nor are demand factors independent of housing supply characteristics, and especially cost. Figure 9.1 illustrates recent trends and forecasts in household type and size for England. Official estimates of household formation suggest households forming at the rate of 180,000–190,000 a year until 2021 (Shelter 2004; HM Treasury 2005a); although recent work by Holmans and Whitehead for the TCPA (2006) suggests that a more realistic allowance for rising in-migration may lift the figure considerably. There has also been a substantial shift in the tenure structure of the UK housing market, with a major growth in owner occupation, and a fall in local authority households, partly offset by a growth in privately rented and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) households (see Figure 9.2).

Housing supply has not kept up with demand. In 2002, 183,000 houses were built in the UK (134,000 in England), but after allowing for demolitions and conversions, the net increase was only 134,000, which was a 0.6 per cent increase in housing stock (HM Treasury/ODPM 2004). Figure 9.3 shows the dramatic fall in housing completions since the 1970s; the backlog of unmet demand is very substantial. Figure 9.4 shows some of the regional variations in market responses by type of housing, with the quite stark significance of flats in the expensive capital city region. There is also the fundamental issue of housing
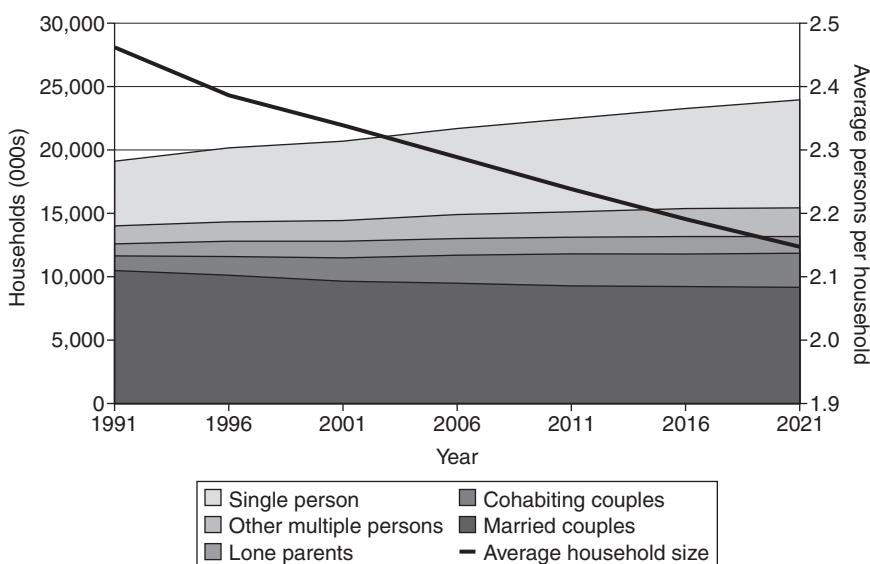
Figure 9.1 Household types and sizes: recent trends and forecasts in England (1991–2021). (*Source:* HM Treasury/ODPM (2004).)
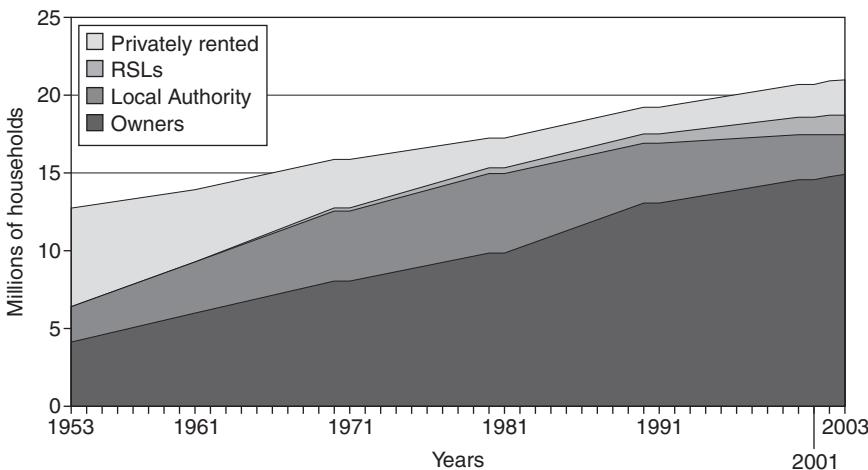
Figure 9.2 The shift in the structure of household tenure in England (1953–2003). (*Source:* HM Treasury (2005a).)

need, of those who cannot afford to buy their own house; of concealed and sharing households; would-be couples living apart; homeless families and singles living in hostels/bed and breakfast; and squatters and rough sleepers. For many, the situation was exacerbated by the 1991 'Right to Buy/Right to Acquire' legislation which took much local authority housing out of reach and resulted in a net reduction in the size of the affordable housing stock. House prices have rocketed, increasing in real terms by 2.4 per cent a year over the last 30 years. Housing (un-)affordability is a national issue, and is particularly intense not only in some of the more prosperous regions but also in pockets of high demand/low supply in most regions. In some areas, it is not unusual to find a ratio of average house price to average wage of over 9:1, rendering house purchase difficult for a very large proportion of the population. Bramley (2003) estimated that only 37 per cent of new households could afford to buy in 2002, compared to 46 per cent in the late 1980s. Of course, the simple rules of supply and demand suggest that, for most markets, when price rises, supply also increases. However, for UK housing, the Barker Review (HM Treasury/ODPM 2004) concludes that the land supply is a major constraint on the market response.

9.3 Policy/agency responses

9.3.1 *Contested territory – national policy/agency positions and steers*

The provision of housing land, on the large scale involved in regional planning, is a particularly contested territory, as are other dimensions of housing including
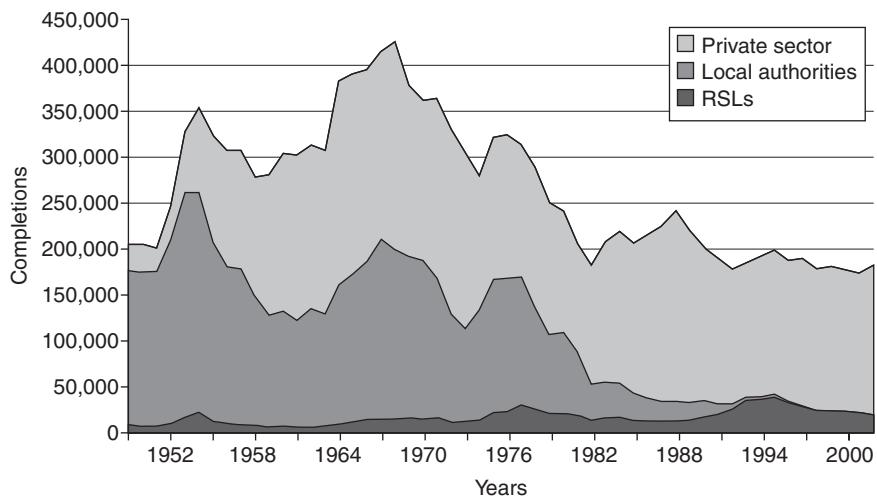
Figure 9.3 UK housing completions (1949–2002).* (*Source:* HM Treasury/ODPM (2004).)
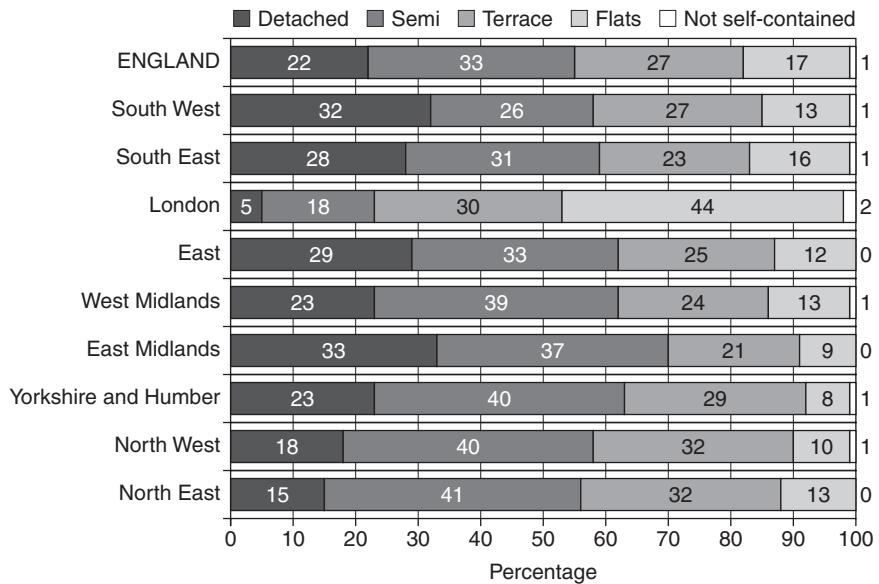
Figure 9.4 Variations in type of housing supply in the English regions (2004). (*Source:* NEA (2007).)

affordability, density and specific locations. Regional planning is increasingly seen as the key arena for discussing housing issues. *Key stakeholders* in England include the national government (especially the Treasury and the DCLG (formerly ODPM)), local government (especially the planning activity), the RAs and the RDAs, environmental pressure groups (especially the CPRE), housing pressure groups (such as Shelter), the housebuilders and their own pressure groups, and of course the public.

Issues are interrelated, but a starting point is the *number of houses* needed nationally and per region. The Government commissioned a Review of Housing Supply by Kate Barker of the Bank of England. Her Final Report was produced in 2004 (HM Treasury/ODPM 2004). The review called for a more responsive housing market, in an effort to improve the affordability of supply and to secure greater labour mobility into the UK economy. It indicated that to deliver a lower trend in real house prices of 1.8 per cent a year an additional 70,000 private sector houses might be required in England over and above current supply of about 150,000. To bring the real price trend down to 1.1 per cent a year, in line with the EU average, might require an extra 120,000 houses a year; and to improve housing access for those who cannot afford market rates, an extra 17,000 to 23,000 additional social houses may be required. In addition Barker recommended the Government establish a national affordability goal and that each region should set its own target to improve market affordability which should be used to inform regional housing targets. Higher housing densities were also advocated.

The *Government response* (HM Treasury 2005b) was generally supportive of the findings, stating that 'The opportunity for everyone to live in a decent home – at a price they can afford – is one of the most fundamental goals of the Government.' It indicated that a step-change was needed in housing supply, with a suggestion of 200,000 net additions per year over the next decade. The response also highlighted the importance of higher housing densities, sustainable communities, infrastructure provision and environmental sustainability. This builds on earlier Government steers of direct relevance to regional housing provision. For example, the Urban White Paper, *Our Towns and Cities* (DETR 2000e), set out Government proposals for urban renaissance aimed at upgrading the attractions of urban living. In many parts of the country, and especially in the northern cities, there are severe problems of housing abandonment and dereliction. A parallel Rural White Paper, *Our Countryside: the Future* (DETR 2000d), contained proposals to ensure that a greater proportion of housing in rural areas is affordable. In addition, the Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP) (ODPM 2003a) stressed the importance of an integrated approach to housing, delivered in communities, and not in soulless housing estates.

The Government has also sought to steer the planning response to the housing problem in a variety of other ways. To support environmental sustainability and to minimise the impact on greenfield sites there is a clear Government target to build at least 60 per cent of new development on previously developed (brownfield) land. To recognise the inherent uncertainty in house-

hold projections there is a need to adopt a 'plan, monitor and manage' rather than a 'predict and provide' approach to housing provision. For a region this involves: (i) *plan* for an overall annual rate and distribution of housing based on key objectives, strategic themes, and need and capacity issues for the region; (ii) *monitor* the proposed provision against agreed targets and indicators; and (iii) *manage* the process via annual monitoring and reviewing the plan accordingly. To help to finance the infrastructure needed to support the housing growth, the Government response to Barker also initiated consultation on her recommendation for a Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) (HM Treasury 2005c). The PGS is designed to capture better the increase in value uplift from new development for the benefit of the wider community.

A succinct summary of Government policy is provided in the new *Planning Policy Statement (PPS3): Housing* (DCLG 2006a). This reinforces the need for the housing market to respond more effectively to meet housing demand and need, and reiterates key objectives: to secure a wide choice of high-quality homes, both market based and affordable housing, to provide a better balance of supply and demand, to widen opportunities for home ownership, to improve affordability across the housing market and to create sustainable and mixed communities. Box 9.1 provides a list of some of the Government definitions of terms relevant to housing policy.

Contrasting views on planning and managing the housing problem are provided by two other key stakeholders – the environmental pressure groups and the major housebuilders. Key concerns are the supply of land for housing and the resultant impact on landscape and undeveloped land. Barker (HM Treasury/ODPM 2004) argues that there is capacity to accommodate growth, citing that even in the most pressured South East region, only 7.8 per cent of land is urbanised, compared with nearly 60 per cent protected by designations such as National Parks, greenbelts, areas of outstanding natural beauty or other designations. Her additional high growth targets are argued to only increase the urbanised land take in the region by 0.75 per cent, and this can be focused on 'the land which society values least'. Predictably the Home Builders Federation (*HBF*), which is the principal trade organisation for the private sector housebuilders and 'the voice of the home building industry in England', welcomed the general contents of the Barker Review. But the HBF also argued that to meet a target of a one-third rise in house completions, there is an urgent need to find effective ways to increase the flow of brownfield land being developed for houses, against a background of a reduction in the availability of such land, and to face up to identifying more greenfield sites for residential development (HBF 2004).

In contrast, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (*CPRE*) accuses the housebuilders themselves of worsening the problem through their landbanking activities, with an increase in such land by a third in the period 1998 to 2004. In their *Housing Manifesto* (CPRE 2004a), they argue against attempts to weaken the planning system – fearing it will devastate large parts of the countryside. They also propose a raising of national targets for new homes built on

Box 9.1 National Housing Policy – some (abbreviated) relevant definitions

Brownfield land (also known as previously developed land)
Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agriculture or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. Previously developed land may occur in both urban and rural settings.

Housing demand
The quantity of housing which households are willing and able to buy or rent.

Housing need
The quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance.

Market housing
Private housing for rent or sale, where price is set in the open market.

Affordable housing
Non-market housing provided to those whose needs are not met by the market, for example, homeless persons and keyworkers. It can include social rented housing and intermediate housing. Affordable housing should:

- meet the needs of eligible households, including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and
- include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, any subsidy should generally be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing
Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and RSLs for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. There is also provision for rented housing owned by other persons.

Intermediate housing
Housing at prices or rents above social housing but below market prices or rents. This can include shared equity products such as Homebuy.

Keyworker
Those groups eligible for the Housing Corporation funded Keyworker Living programme and others employed within the public sector, outside this programme, identified by the Regional Housing Board (RHB) for assistance.

(*Source:* DCLG 2006a.)

brownfield land to 75 per cent by 2008 and at a minimum density of 50 dwellings per hectare. In 2000, 61 per cent of new homes were built on such land at 25 per hectare; this had risen to 70 per cent at 40 per hectare by 2004. With over 60,000 members, 'of people who care passionately about the country-side and campaign for it to be protected and enhanced for the benefit of every-one', the CPRE has a powerful voice and has been influential in working with the public and some local councils in seeking to restrict plans for housing growth especially in the south of the country.

9.3.2 *Some characteristics of housing policies for regions and sub-regions*

Guidance on the key characteristics of housing policies is provided by Government for both RSSs, and for the more local level of Local Development Documents, in the PPS3 (DCLG 2006a) – although the regional guidance was much more succinctly expressed in the Consultative Document (ODPM 2005f) than in the eventual PPS3. Box 9.2 summarises the content for RSSs. In preparing the housing policies, the regional planning body should have regard to relevant Government policies as noted above. Policies should also be developed in consultation with other regional stakeholders, local planning authorities and local communities. The guidance recognises the importance of sub-regional housing markets within the larger regions. These are geographical areas within which there are clear links between where people live and work, and which can be defined by patterns of household movement – which are likely to straddle local authority boundaries.

Box 9.2 Housing content for RSSs

RSSs should set out:

- the region's approach to achieving a good mix of housing;
- the regional approach to addressing affordable housing needs, including the affordable housing target for the region and for each housing market area;
- the level of overall housing provision (expressed as net additional dwellings) for the region, broadly illustrated in a housing delivery trajectory, for a sufficient period to enable Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to plan for housing over a period of at least 15 years; this should be distributed among constituent housing market and LPA areas;
- the approach to co-ordinating housing provision across the region; this may include arrangements for managing the release of land both within and across housing market areas; it will involve monitoring and reviewing housing performance across the region and taking appropriate action where it becomes apparent that regional housing provision is not or is at risk of not being achieved;
- broad strategic locations for new housing developments so that the

need and demand for housing can be addressed in a way that reflects sustainable development principles; RPBs should, working with stakeholders, set out the criteria to be used for selecting suitable broad locations for new housing, taking into account:

–   evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing, at the local, sub-regional, regional and national level, as well as the availability of suitable land;

–   the contribution to be made to cutting carbon emissions from focusing new development in locations with good public transport accessibility and/or by means other than the private car and where it can readily and viably draw its energy supply from decentralised energy supply systems based on renewable and low-carbon forms of energy supply, or where there is potential for this to be realised;

–   the objectives of relevant national policies and programmes that seek to support the provision of new housing developments, for example, Growth Areas;

–   particular circumstances across the regional or sub-regional housing market that may influence the distribution of housing development; for example:

  •   where need and demand are high, it will be necessary to identify and explore a range of options for distributing housing including the consideration of the role of growth areas, growth points, new free-standing settlements, major urban extensions and the managed growth of settlements in urban and rural areas and/or, where necessary, review of any policy constraints;

  •   where need and demand are low, it may be necessary to renew or replace the existing housing stock in particular locations in both urban and rural areas;

–   the availability and capacity of, and accessibility to, existing major strategic infrastructure, including public and other transport services, and/or feasibility of delivering the required level of new infrastructure to support the proposed distribution of development;

–   the need to create and maintain sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities in all areas, both urban and rural;

•   a target for the proportion of housing development that will be on previously developed land over the plan period; the target should contribute towards meeting the national target, taking into account evidence from Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and sustainability appraisals.

(*Source:* DCLG 2006a.)

The level and distribution of housing provision is informed by many factors, including, in addition to Government policy, regional objectives and themes, household projections, environmental considerations, and sub-regional housing market assessments and land assessments (which are considered in the next section). The recognition of the opportunity involved in the housing provision to contribute to cutting carbon emissions is particularly welcome. This is partly related to use of non-car modes of travel but also to the energy use of the houses themselves. Buildings in general have, to date, contributed about 50 per cent of the UK's carbon emissions; but the implementation of much higher standards leading eventually to zero-carbon developments should seek to avoid the wasteful excesses of the past.

The level of housing provision must recognise not only new demand, but also the backlog of demand and affordable housing. The distribution figures are normally shown by sub-region, and expressed as annual averages to provide benchmarks for annual monitoring. Discussions about the level and distribution of the housing provision normally highlight all the tensions and competing interests noted earlier, and the 'Nimby factor' can be a significant influence on allocations in certain areas. It is important that all the land provided for housing is not made available on the same terms. As for economic development (section 8.3) a *sequential approach* has been the policy position. While this is now no longer in the PPS (PPS3), it is likely to continue to be influential in the allocation of housing land and on the resultant development form, with a general preference priority order of (i) previously-developed land and conversions of existing buildings to housing use within urban areas; (ii) other infill sites within urban areas, subject to achieving appropriate environmental and conservation standards; (iii) extensions to main urban areas with good public transport provision, with preference for previously developed sites; (iv) extensions to smaller settlements, where there is good/potential for public transport provision, again with previously developed land priority; and (v) other development that supports the regional spatial transport, and that provides/has the potential to provide good public transport and non-car mode links to a wide range of employment and services.

As noted in Box 9.2 the regional strategy is likely to include policies on other aspects of the housing market. These may include overall regional targets for the percentage of all new housing which should be affordable, and for housing density. For example, the South East Plan proposed that 25 per cent of all new housing should be social rented, with another 10 per cent in other forms of affordable housing (SEERA 2006a); the Draft East Midlands RSS proposed 32 per cent affordable housing (EMRA 2006). But housing provision is more than a 'numbers game', and the strategy should seek to encourage local authorities to prepare guidelines to bring forward high standards of housing design, and a range of types, sizes and tenures which will meet the needs of different types of households – including the elderly and disabled, minority ethnic households and others with specialist requirements.

9.3.3 Implementation and monitoring

Table 9.1 indicates some of the key agencies involved in delivering regional housing policies. Particular attention is drawn to the role of the RHBs. These were established in 2003, as part of the Sustainable Communities Plan, to implement and review regional housing strategies, and advise Ministers on how the 'Regional Housing Pot' of resources should be allocated to support strategic housing authorities and Housing Corporation activity in the region. Priorities vary from region to region but all have a particular interest in supporting the provision of affordable housing. However, there was potential for institutional and policy confusion, and for overlap with the new RSS system. As such, in 2006, the RHBs were transferred to the RAs to bring together planning and housing. They continue as RHBs to fulfil a valuable function in developing and implementing housing strategies. The RHB in the North East provides an example of an RHB which is already updating its previous 2005 strategy (NEA 2007). Figure 9.5 illustrates the rapid escalation of the unaffordability of housing in a region which is by no means the most pressured. The problems are particularly acute in rural sub-regions. Monitoring indicators follow directly from the key characteristics, for example, the annual number of dwellings achieved in particular sub-regions, percentage of new homes on brownfield sites, average densities and the annual provision of affordable housing.

9.4 Relevant techniques

This brief discussion of techniques of relevance to regional planning for housing provision focuses on the two key demand and supply dimensions – assessing the

Table 9.1 Implementation of housing policies

Policy	Mechanisms	Lead roles	Support roles
Additional housing	Local development frameworks	Local authorities	Regional Assembly (Regional Housing Board); private housebuilders; RSLs; infrastructure providers
Brownfield land use	Urban capacity studies	Local authorities	As above
Sequential approach	Local development frameworks	Local authorities	As above
Affordability, size and type	Local development frameworks; local housing needs assessment; Supplementary Planning Guidance	Local authorities	As above; Housing Corporation

Ratio of lowest quartile house prices to lowest quartile earnings

☐	<4 times	▨	8.5–10 times
▨	4−5.5 times	▨	>10 times
▨	5.5−7 times	☐	Region boundaries
▨	7−8.5 times		
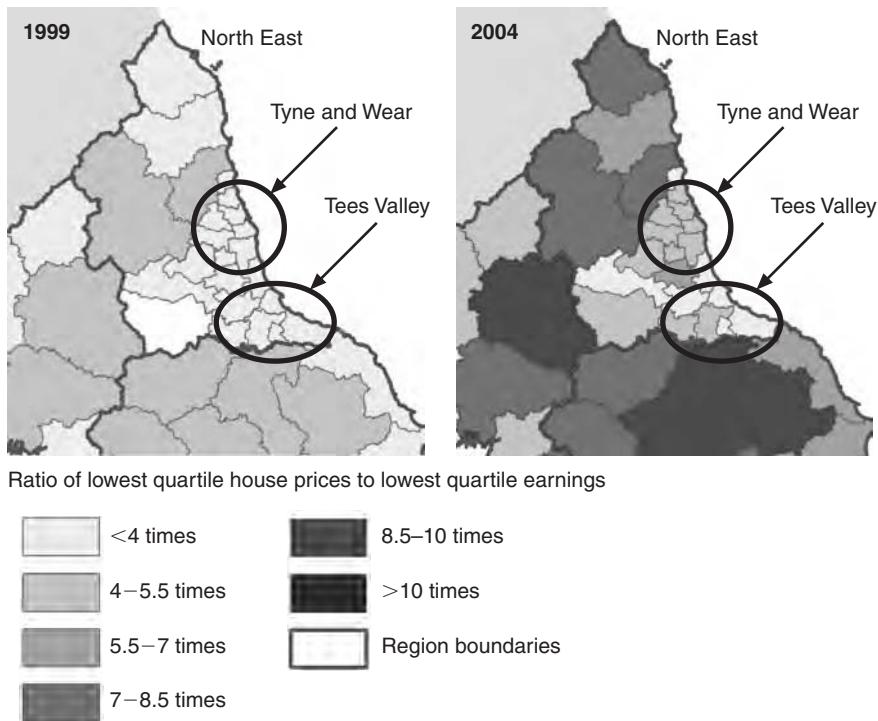
Figure 9.5 Housing (un)affordability in the North East England region (1999 vs 2004). (*Source:* NEA (2007).)

market for housing, and the land availability and capacity issues involved in meeting that demand.

The *PPS3 Housing* (DCLG 2006a) and the *Housing Market Assessments: Draft Practice Guidance* (ODPM 2005g), provide useful advice on the steps involved in carrying out *housing market assessments*. For regional planning, the advice is for a sub-regional approach to housing market assessment, which may necessitate a partnership approach between local authorities. Key outputs from the process should be: estimates of need and demand for market and affordable housing; determination of the spatial distribution of need, for example, between urban and rural areas; and identification of the needs and demands of particular groups such as older people, ethnic minorities, students, the homeless and first-time buyers. The methodology for conducting assessments involves an under-standing of the current and future housing market (supply and demand), and the current and future housing need (including unmet need compared to supply, and affordable housing).

An understanding of the socio-economic conditions in a region or sub-region is an important starting point for the assessment. This includes, among

others, *population and household projections*. The two principal components of population forecasts are changes in the existing population and the effects of national and international migration. A combination of these components provides the basis for estimates of the number of households, likely labour force, age patterns etc. There may be alternative approaches to the estimate of the important migration component, depending on whether long-term (ten-year trends) or short-term (five-year trends) are used. Population and household projections, for sub-national areas, for up to 2021, for example, are produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the DCLG (formerly ODPM). From such data it is possible to identify trends and calculate projections in the number and size of households, age structure and migration for regions and sub-regions. For example, the South East Plan forecasts that between 2002 and 2027, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over will increase from 16 to 23 per cent of the total. It also shows annual average net migration (1997–2002) of 93,000 into London and 12,500 into the South East (SEERA 2006a).

Useful guidance on *housing land availability assessments* can be found from various sources, including both the *Draft Housing PPS3* (ODPM 2005f) and the Welsh *Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN 1) Joint Housing Availability Studies* (Welsh Assembly Government 2002). Key features as specified in the final *PPS3 Housing* (DCLG 2006a) are outlined in Table 9.2. TAN 1 stresses that local authorities should ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available to provide a five-year supply for housing. It is also important to carry out availability studies annually as housing land supply can change rapidly. The Welsh guidance employs a useful categorisation of sites according to the timing of their availability. For example, Category 1 includes sites or phases of sites where development can commence immediately and which are likely to be completed within the first year of the study period.

Table 9.2 Contents of strategic housing land availability assessments

The assessment should:
– assess the likely level of housing that could be provided if unimplemented planning permissions were brought into development;
– assess land availability by identifying buildings or areas of land (including previously developed land and greenfield) that have development potential for housing, including within mixed-use developments;
– assess the potential level of housing that can be provided on identified land;
– where appropriate, evaluate past trends in windfall brownfield land coming forward for development and estimate the likely future implementation rate, y;
– identify constraints that might make a particular site unavailable and/or unviable for development;
– identify sustainability issues and physical constraints that might make a site unsuitable for development; and
– identify what action could be taken to overcome constraints on particular sites.

Source: DCLG (2006a).

9.5 The case of contested numbers in South East England

The South East region of England has been at the forefront of regional planning activity in the UK, and particularly in relation to the level and distribution of housing activity, for several decades. The current region itself is a somewhat artificial creation. Until the new millennium, and in RPG9 (GOSE 2001), it was a large region which included London and the surrounding shire counties. But subsequently it has been dismembered, with London having its own Spatial Strategy, and the three eastern shire counties of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire becoming part of the East of England region. Yet it is still a large and powerful region, with a population of over eight million and with much of the UK's economic strength. Within the region there are considerable variations in prosperity between the affluent west and north-west of London (especially Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey) and the more deprived locations in the east and along part of the coast. In many areas in the region there are increasing concerns about the 'quality of life', reflected in congested transport systems, increasing pressure on infrastructure, strong demand for highly skilled workers, high house prices (with some areas having average house price: average wage ratios of over 9:1), and pressure on natural resources, including water and energy supplies, and protected habitats.

One of the key issues arising from the mix of growth, spatial imbalances, quality of life concerns and a competitive agency environment is the contested level and distribution of housing development. The housing numbers in the 2001 RPG9 (GOSE 2001) emerged out of a long and heated process. The draft strategy (SERPLAN 1998) advocated controls on housing numbers in the prosperous west of the region, and the promotion of regeneration in areas of need. The housing numbers were well below government household projections. The report of the EIP on the draft RPG (Crow and Whittaker 1999) recommended a higher housing figure, fearing the impact of controls on the economic dynamism of the region. The Government, concerned about a local political backlash, finally adopted a middle way between the numbers, and considerably less than the Panel's recommendation.

Five years later, with the new region, and a South East England RA, the debates have been revisited with the production of the South East Plan (SEERA 2006a). The SEERA regional planning secretariat suggested the region needed between 32,000 to 36,000 dwellings per annum over the plan period, and indeed some ODPM projections and the Barker Housing Review suggested housing numbers considerably higher than this if needs were to be met. The higher figures received the support from various parts of the stakeholder environment; predictably from the housebuilders and the business community, but also from the social sector and from some local councils, such as Oxford and Southampton, which wished to meet both the demands of economic growth and the needs of local people for affordable housing. On the other hand, there was considerable antagonism to the perceived high figures from many county councils and some environmental groups. One argument they employed was

that the housing numbers should be realistic and feasible, reflecting historical rates of housing performance in the region, which have averaged about 25,000 completions per annum over the 1991 to 2004 period. They also pointed to environmental constraints and the major infrastructure deficit (especially transport infrastructure) which must be resolved to support housing growth.

A South East England RA debate in November 2004 brought to a head this technical–political confrontation. Key arguments ranged around issues of 'using the well-founded evidence base' of the secretariat and other projections, set against the 'need to be realistic' – in terms of what level of housing was likely to be deliverable and at what costs to the environment. The outcome was the adoption by the RA of much lower figures, for consultation, of 25,500 to 32,000 per annum – with two spatial alternatives of: continuation of existing policy, rolling forward the pattern in RPG9, *or* a sharper focus with a twin focus on areas with strong economic potential and areas with a particular need for regeneration.

In addition to a range of meetings and events, the consultation period included various polls, which generated over 78,000 responses – the largest exercise of its type ever conducted in UK regional planning. There was no clear consensus on numbers of additional homes. A MORI poll for the RA had 38 per cent of questionnaires favouring 25,500 per annum, 35 per cent favouring 28,000 and 22 per cent favouring 32,000. The SEP (SEERA 2006a) finally opted for 28,900 net additional homes per annum (2006–2026) – arguing an underpinning of this figure by the technical evidence base, deliverability considerations, the views of the public in general and those representing the public and other organisations in the region through their Assembly membership. The Assembly believed this struck 'the right balance between meeting the needs of the region while ensuring that valuable environmental resources are maintained and enhanced'. At the time of writing, these arguments are being tested in the South East Plan EIP (November 2006 to March 2007).
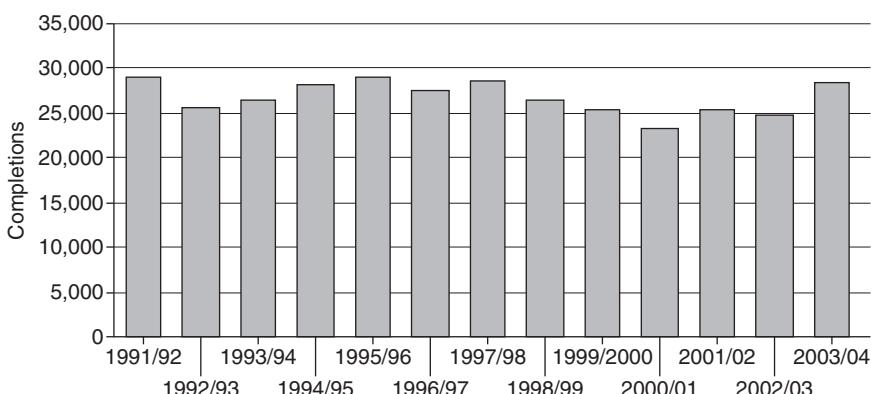
Figure 9.6 Recent housing completions in the South East region – a realistic basis for future planning? (*Source:* SEERA (2006a).)

9.6 Conclusions

As for the economy, housing has also seen significant shifts in key drivers since the 1970s. Compared with the economy, housing has been influenced possibly more by national factors – including more single-person households and rapidly escalating house prices – though these are also found in other Western economies, as is the impact of improved health, longer life expectancy and an ageing population. The UK, and especially the south of the country, has also had to manage net in-migration. The overall impact has been a dramatic rescaling of the forecast additional housing numbers needed to cope with the forecast growth in households.

The housing sector has also been subject to particularly strong national policy steers, in relation to targets for numbers, affordability, density and other characteristics of housing supply. The other non-Central Government stakeholders can also make their presence felt, as exemplified by the strong resistance in some regions to higher housing number targets. In these areas the level and distribution of housing numbers has become the key battleground in the regional planning process.

10 Components of regional planning

Transport

10.1 Introduction

Transport has always been seen as key to effective planning – at least by planners. However, it has not generally been taken as seriously by governments in reality as in rhetoric, when compared with the more substantive goals of planning for enabling the provision of houses or employment. If anything the struggles to make transport both implemented and integrated have been even tougher than in the case of the environment, probably the other key focus of interest since the early 1990s. Much of this chapter on how transport is dealt with in regional planning will, therefore, have a tone of fighting against the odds. Perhaps this is a particularly British disease; it remains a mystery as to why the UK is consistently one of the worst planners and managers of transport systems in Western Europe.

By its nature transport is a multiscalar element of society, which needs to be managed and (in the views of planners) planned for at every level from the individual street or generator of movement up to the global or continental. The regional scale has been given major importance in the UK in recent years, alongside the local and national, which until the last decade or so were the most important locus of planning. This makes the topic of significance and considerable contemporary fascination. Here, the emphasis is on the mechanisms closest to core regional planning processes, given that as in all components discussed here, the field is a vast one, with continual overlaps to other scales and policy sub-fields. The literature on planning at this scale and in this field is not large, though several experts have written briefly on the area since 2000 (Glaister 2006; Headicar 2002, 2006; Vigar 2006; Vigar and Porter 2005).

10.2 Drivers and issues

Economic growth generally generates more movement. But this simple observation has to be supplemented by myriad qualifications. Technical change within and between different transport modes can shift the impacts of the movement very considerably, meaning different environmental, social and economic

effects (economic, because the transport industry is itself a major economic sector, where it matters who does the moving and how).

Overall movement growth in the UK, as in most developed countries, has been consistent over the last half century or more, though there have been significant speedings and slowings in the overall upward curves, and in their modal make up (see Figures 10.1 and 10.2). Much planning, since the Second World War, has been the struggle at every scale to make way for the private car. At certain moments such as the late 1960s and 1970s or the late 1990s, national government policy paused in this facilitation, with attempts to reduce car movement and, to varying extents, promote public transport modes.

At present the emphasis on managing or even reducing the growth of travel demand is much subordinated to *the search for further supply of capacity to accommodate road, rail, sea and air traffic growth.* That search then, is the major driver behind current transport planning and affects every level. This does not mean that aspirations to moderate demand or at least manage it have completely gone away, as we will see in our case studies of regions. But it is important to understand the insistence of growth pressures resulting from the economic buoyancy since the mid 1990s and the politics that has accompanied this nationally, and also to an extent lower down the political process.

The 2004 White Paper on Transport (DfT 2004a) projected road traffic growth at 35 per cent for the period 2000 to 2025, and without the effect of congestion, it was admitted this figure could be a serious underestimate. Unconstrained rail growth would be equally high (if the capacity existed), and the
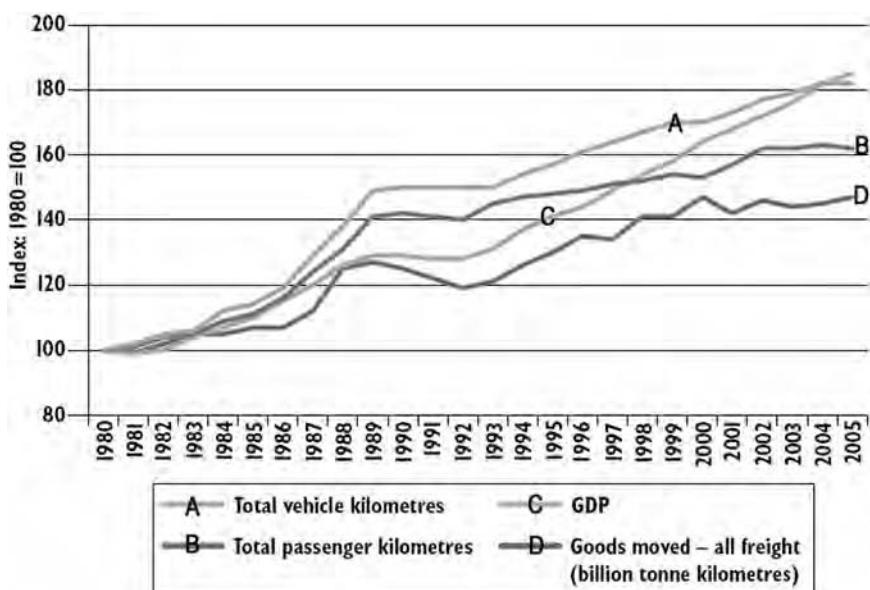
Figure 10.1 Growing transport movement in the UK. (*Source:* HM Treasury/DfT (2006), volume 2, page 48.)

Trend A: Passenger travel by car
and other modes: 1980 to 2005

Trend B: Passenger travel by mode
other than car: 1980 to 2005

■ Cars, vans and taxis	□ Other

■ Rail	■ Buses and coaches
■ Air	■ Motor cycles
□ Pedal cycles	
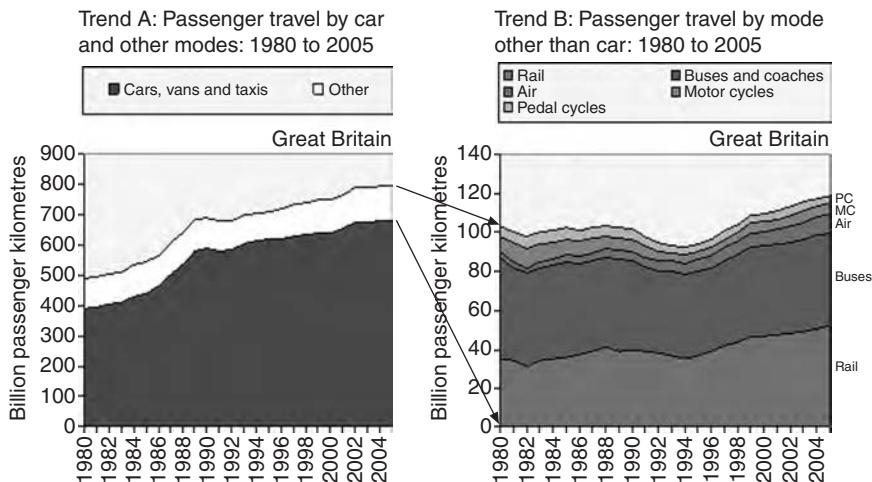
Figure 10.2 Passenger travel by mode in the UK. (*Source:* Transport Trends 2006, Department for Transport.)

2003 Aviation White Paper (DfT 2003) expected air passenger travel to double or triple by 2030. Much of the UK transport system in almost every mode is already seriously congested, though there is significant regional variation, with the southern regions and the major cities in most regions suffering most. Road congestion is much worse than in any other European country (TCPA 2006 p. 21).

At the same time other agendas do exist. Accessibility is seen by many as a key issue, encapsulating the challenge of reducing the social exclusion inherent in present transport trends, which generally worsen public transport options. The importance of walking and cycling is accepted by many analysts as the environmentally most sustainable modes, and so these should, it is argued, become major drivers of transport policy.

Policy making therefore finds itself responding to these pressures, which impact differently at different levels and to a certain degree in different regions, sub-regions and even very locally. On the one hand, the need to respond to global, national and local environmental imperatives is if anything seen to be rising, among a wide public and specialist constituency, with the effect of climate change very high on the agenda by the mid 2000s. Demands for high quality of life give force to numerous lobbies fighting this corner, whether on local landscapes, on noise, on air pollution. On the other hand, business and very many consumers see free movement as critical to their abilities to compete or work or enjoy life day to day. International travel and tourism continues its explosive rise, with airports now vying for growth in every region of the UK. Global trading patterns drive the expansion of ports and the mainly road traffic emerging from them, as more and more commodities are globally not nationally

traded. No wonder transport planning is so caught at present between a rock and a hard place.

10.3 Policy and agency responses

The agency environment for transport is one that has been in continuous flux, but with some continuing features. One is that it is *a policy field which is highly centralised*, with those policy levers with most effect held by central government. This reinforces and is reflected in the lobbies seeking to affect policy, which are also highly nationalised – bodies representing the industries such as rail, buses, airlines and road freight, environmentalist bodies such as Transport 2000 or Friends of the Earth. This contrasts to some degree with our other policy fields, which have a more regional or often local component. Second, *the transport policy field is strongly sectoralised*, with policy for ports, airports, roads, rail and buses dealt with to a degree, separately. Both these key and enduring features make the search for integrated approaches within the reach of local or regional planning agents particularly challenging.

The flux of policy and the agency environment has been particularly marked in the last 20 years, with two big periods of change. The first was in the 1980s and early 1990s, when most transport services were privatised – buses, rail, airlines and airports, ports. Only roads remained primarily in public ownership. This wave of state divestment was accompanied by varying forms of de- and re-regulation, but the overall impact was a significant removal of power from governments at all levels to steer transport and movement to their ends. The Department for Transport has remained the key actor (within the wider ministry with regions and environment between 1997 and 2001), overseeing management of the roads through the Highways Agency, and other sectors, directly. Local authorities, mainly counties and unitary councils, maintained their powers to manage local transport provision, through Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP) and then after 2000 with Local Transport Plans (LTPs). At this stage regions had relatively little role in transport, though regional planning guidance had transport chapters.

The second wave of agency change has been since 1997, but this has had a much less consistent pattern, with much chopping and changing of priorities and instruments. The Strategic Rail Authority has come and gone, while the Highways Agency retains its powers over trunk roads and motorways, and has been able to ride out the ups and downs of budgets, maintaining road building capacity. The key change for the purposes of this chapter has been at the regional level, with the promotion since 2000 of an identifiable element within regional plans of a Regional Transport Strategy. This has gone alongside some new regional involvement on financing. We will look at these elements in more detail.

10.3.1 Regional Transport Strategies

Aims and guidance

PPG11 (2000) stipulated that each RPG should have *a separately identified RTS, though this was to be part of the RPG, fully integrated with it in both substance and process.*[1] This is an odd arrangement, unlike any other element of RPG, and was continued in the 2004 reform with the RSS. The strength and, to a degree, separateness of the transport planning community, with a significant ministry behind it holding significant budgets, means that there is a risk that the RTS will have a 'bolt on' character in relation to the rest of the RSS. RTSs are subject to separate government guidance, and are normally, at least initially, the product of separated work streams. Evidently this could put pay to aspirations for integrated spatial strategies, in which transport must play such a core role.

Detailed aims of the RTS are shown in Box 10.1.

Box 10.1 Aims of an RTS

The RTS should provide:

- regional objectives and priorities for transport investment and management across all modes to support the spatial strategy and delivery of sustainable national transport policies;
- a strategic steer on the future development of airports and ports in the region consistent with national policy and the development of inland waterways;
- guidance on priorities for managing and improving the trunk road network, and local roads of regional or sub-regional importance;
- advice on the promotion of sustainable freight distribution where there is an appropriate regional or sub-regional dimension;
- a strategic framework for public transport that identifies measures to improve accessibility to jobs and key services at the regional and sub-regional level, expands travel choice, improves access for those without a car, and guides the location of new development;
- advice on parking policies appropriate to different parts of the region; and
- guidance on the strategic context for local demand management measures within the region.

(*Source:* ODPM 2004a Annex B para. 4.)

Guidance on the preparation of RTSs is published separately by the DfT (2006). RPBs are advised that the requirement for them to be 'an integral and clearly identifiable part of RSS' is likely to be best served by making them a separate chapter with cross-references to policy material in other chapters and

contextual material, analysis etc. set out in a background document. The suggested coverage of this background analysis is shown in Box 10.2.

Box 10.2 Suggested coverage of background analysis for RTS

General profile of the region – on a regional and sub-regional basis, including key connections with other regions

Profile and analysis of the transport network

- including problems and opportunities concerning congestion, safety and modal integration.

Transport land use analysis: problems and opportunities in relation to planned pattern of spatial development, including

- identifying highly accessible locations as well as areas where transport improvements may be required to support the spatial strategy (e.g. in relation to growth areas);
- identifying environmental areas where developing more sustainable travel patterns is important;
- assessing the impact on the region of current national and cross-regional initiatives;
- consideration of specific transport infrastructure issues such as air-ports, ports and freight interchanges.

Scenario testing: of a series of land use and transport policy scenarios.

(*Source:* DfT 2006 p. 8.)

The guide reiterates the importance of an objectives-led approach:

> Objectives should stem from the issues and problems identified in the analysis and in turn provide the basis for the development of options for policies and priorities.
>
> (Ibid. para. 3.8)

RPBs are advised that objectives for the RTS should be focused on the wider policy priorities of the spatial strategy and not on narrow transport issues. They should also be regionally-specific and add value to national policy. DfT's own procedures tend to undermine this advice in practice. This is because the framework set by the ministry for the appraisal of transport proposals effectively makes the pursuit of regional and spatial objectives subject to fulfilling national transport objectives. For example, it would be difficult gaining DfT approval for a transport investment to serve an area prioritised by regional agencies for economic regeneration if it offered poor 'value for money' in transport terms.

The RTS is required to set out policies and proposed solutions for addressing the identified problems and objectives, with, in each case a brief explanation of their rationale and analytical basis. The DfT guide is careful to point out that

RPBs should consider *first* a range of options for ensuring the effective use of existing transport assets and for influencing patterns of travel through demand management and alternative land use strategies. They should also consider the scope for encouraging investment by the private sector. Where public sector investment is being considered attention should not simply be focused on major items of new infrastructure but on network management and small-scale infrastructure enhancements. However, except where this can be 'bundled' into a package which the DfT is prepared to consider as a major scheme there can be a perverse incentive for local highway authorities to pursue the 'big bang' approach of bidding for a single large project as this potentially increases their chances of receiving additional funding.

In line with the increasingly sub-regional approach which an RSS is expected to follow the RTS will need to show how transport measures contribute to the spatial strategy of different sub-areas. However,

> policies should only be included in the RTS if there is a genuine and distinctive regional dimension to the issue and an appropriate mechanism for a policy response at the regional level.
>
> (Ibid. para. 3.15)

Advice on the approach to be taken to each of the substantive topics listed for the RTS in PPS11 (summarised in the previous section) is given in Chapter 4 of the RTS Guide.

Prioritisation

A unique feature of the RTS component of an RSS is that, in addition to an implementation plan, RPBs are asked to address the prioritisation of transport proposals. They are expected to include in their strategies a 'framework' within which affordable priorities for public sector investment can be determined. (This is not the same as the prioritisation requested for Regional Funding Allocation submissions discussed below, although ideally the two would be related.) The additional dimension of complexity arises because of the link between RSS and the DfT's procedures for planning and approving major highway investments.

The implication is that RTS will refer to more potential investments during the plan period than will be affordable in practice – in effect presenting a 'long list' or 'preparation pool' from which individual schemes will subsequently be selected and brought forward for implementation. This occurs because neither the likely level of funding nor the cost or practicability of proposals will be known beyond the initial few years. (The nature – hence cost – of many proposals for the later years will not have begun to be explored in any detail.) This may be a realistic reflection of the uncertainties involved in planning and managing major investment programmes but it does raise questions about what exactly is 'included' in an RSS/RTS and whether this is

sufficient for its impact to be identified and its soundness and deliverability to be assessed.

The notion of 'prioritisation' also encourages those who prefer to see the RTS process as something of a beauty contest between a long list of disconnected schemes (each one being campaigned for by its promoting agency and associated supporters) rather than as a genuinely coherent regional strategy. The RPB will be under pressure to include new proposals in its RTS list (and retain old ones) in order not to 'disappoint' their proponents – but in the process the intent and implications of the strategy becomes blurred. For all the emphasis placed on public involvement in the preparation of the strategy it is decisions made subsequently about the progressing and funding of individual schemes which determine what actually materialises – and typically these are made on a one-off basis rather than fully considering their strategic implications. Ten or 20 years hence the strategy as delivered will have become very different from the strategy as initially presented, but the formal exercises in RTS review will only account for part of this difference and the 'policy shift' that it implies. We will see in the case studies (10.5) how RTSs are turning out in practice.

10.3.2 Regional transport funding allocations

The transport funding field is complex. A first division is between capital and revenue components. Only capital schemes are normally addressed to any extent in planning discussions, though revenue funding of bus, rail and demand management may be seen to be just as important (probably often more important) than capital spending. Broadly speaking local capital schemes are funded through LTP bids to government, while major road and rail investment is nationally determined. But from 2005 a mechanism was introduced whereby regional actors advised government on the road investment priorities they saw for their regions, at some scale between the national and local. The prime actors were the RDAs, the RAs and the GORs. One oddity of the process was that the Treasury's guidance indicated that the objective against which schemes were to be judged was 'improving economic performance' (HM Treasury *et al.* 2005), rather than the broader mix of objective normal to regional planning (and indeed much transport policy making). This advice was submitted to government in 2006, and was broadly accepted.

Analysis of this process has shown a significant shift in resulting schemes being promoted, from those larger schemes more attractive to central government, to those which gave satisfaction to more local interests.[2] It has been observed that local authorities' programmes are mainly conditioned by DfT guidance and by national appraisal procedures required of schemes to be funded, not based on RPG or RSS. On top of these pressures is local political 'wheeling and dealing', involving the bargaining between localities and government over the acceptance of growth packages (we take so many houses, if you give us a new bypass etc.). Naturally, these schemes were argued to be well aligned with

what was simultaneously in many regions being inserted into RTSs. However that may reinforce doubts about the degree to which RTSs were genuinely promoting long-term strategic shifts, as against picking up accumulations of the 'pet schemes' of numerous local actors.

This fresh regional funding steering process has some significance in that it is likely to be the furthest England will see any devolution of influence over regional transport policy, given the absence of regional elected government. The influence certainly does not go very far, from what can be seen up to the present, with the transport Regional Funding Allocation only covering local authority major highway schemes and Highways Agency 'regional' trunk roads. Rail, revenue support and much else does not even enter into this regional prioritisation experiment.

10.3.3 Policy directions

A transport White Paper in 1998 was succeeded by an ambitious programme of investment in 2000 (the Ten Year Plan). From 1999 a major programme of studies was promoted by the government, the *Multi Modal Studies* (MMSs). These 22 separate studies stemmed from the need for decisions in 1997–1998 on around 150 road studies, a matter over which the government was deeply split. Essentially the studies postponed the need to make these decisions on road schemes for several years. But they also constituted an innovative approach in transport planning, looking for a long-term approach and new solutions, and with significant efforts put into engaging stakeholders and building consensus over recommendations (AEA Technology 2004).

The £32 million programme was managed by the Government Offices and paid the major transport consultancies to examine transport corridors around the country, looking at future demand and alternative modal investment which might meet this demand. These studies reported to the RPBs from 2000 to 2003. It has been argued that the road elements promoted in the MMSs were in many cases implemented, while the more difficult public transport ingredients have tended to be forgotten (House of Commons Transport Committee 2003; CPRE 2004b). The research carried out in the MMSs nevertheless represented the largest effort to look at regional transport issues for many years, and doubtless gave a firmer basis for regional transport work after 2000. (The MMS budget may well have also outweighed all the rest of regional planning research spending in recent years.)

But after the 'fuel tax revolt' and the Hatfield rail crash, both in 2000, the pattern moved to a less interventionist tone, with more road building, rail funds diverted to track renewal programmes away from network development, as well as growing support for airport and port expansion. It is natural that major schemes like ports and airports have a large national component in their decision making. Regional actors have been left to await decisions from government on airport and port expansion. These have, however, been taken in somewhat different ways, with airport strategy based on a national research process

leading to the 2003 White Paper, while the port decisions of 2004–2006 were all taken individually with no apparent background of assessing need and spatial priorities. These decisions refused one port application on the south coast and approved three on the south east coast, leading many critics to query the failure to divert traffic to less congested parts of the country.

A new development of potentially major significance was the re-emergence of a proposal to set up a *Planning Commission* (HM Treasury 2006a). If enacted, this would create a body which would decide many of the major infrastructure schemes, within national policy statements laid down by government for each sector (air, ports etc.). The proposal is described as for an 'independent' Commission, but sceptics are not hopeful that the Commission would have much scope for movement away from government policy, and that in any case Commissioners are not likely to wish to do so, given government's powers of appointment. Opponents fear that chances for localities to oppose unwanted infrastructure will fade away, as local interests lose rights to genuinely influence such schemes. This would potentially also further reduce the scope of RTSs to adopt regionally or sub-regionally specific trajectories.

10.4 Techniques

Transport planning is in some respects a foreign egg in the nest of regional planning, coming from *a partially separate professional tradition, that of engineering*. This has meant a different approach to forward planning, with more faith in quantification and large-scale modelling than is typical among planners, at least since the 1970s. In the 1960s and early 1970s there had been major land use and transportation studies carried out for US cities and regions and to a lesser extent in Britain. This tradition had been maintained and developed in the transport planning world. This approach was revived and was typified by the MMS described above, with their large budgets, paying for the services of the big transport consultancies, who were charged to predict travel growth and alternative ways of addressing this, a task they mainly met by means of modelling traffic demand in relation to possible capacity, and appraising alternative options according to government criteria. The process to be followed by MMSs was set by government, as shown in Figure 10.3. An assessment of the process detected a lack of adequate modelling expertise in the transport planning field, but greater success and some innnovation in the appraisal element (Bates *et al*. 2003).

Regional transport planning in England has been able to draw on the MMSs, and has also typically commissioned further research studies on regional freight patterns, on regional port prospects and on the potential transport impacts of different growth proposals for the RSS. This has increasingly needed some economic expertise as well, with judgements to be made about the management of demand, whether by more conventional means such as differential parking standards, or by factoring in forms of road charging.

The MMSs also on occasion drew on the techniques of cost–benefit analysis

2. Understanding the current situation

2.1 transport and other policies
2.2 oppportunities and constraints
2.3 travel demands and levels of service
2.4 transport-related problems

1. Objectives

1.1 central government:
 • environment
 • safety
 • economy
 • accessibility
 • integration
1.2 local objectives

3. Understanding the future situation

3.1 committed land uses and policies
3.2 committed transport system changes
3.3 travel demands and levels of service
3.4 transport-related

4. Consultation, participation, information

4.1 objectives, problems, opportunities and constraints
4.2 potential solutions

objectives   potential solutions

5. Options for solutions

5.1 review of policy instruments
5.2 previous ideas

6. Appraisal Framework

6.1 appraisal summary table
 • achievement of central government objectives
 • overall value for money
6.2 achievment of local objectives
6.3 amelioration of problems
6.4 supplemantary issues:
 • equity and social inclusion
 • affordability and financial sustainability

9. Option testing and appraisal

10. Distillation and comparison of options

 • front-runner options
 • rejected options

11. Consultations

12. Outputs from the study

 • preferred option or options

13. Funding sources

14. Implementation programme

7. Appraisal tools and procedures

7.1 transport model or land use/transport model
7.2 environmental impact assessment procedure
7.3 cost/benefit analysis procedure
7.4 geographic information system

8. Costs

8.1 implementation
8.2 operation
8.3 maintenance
8.4 enforcement

possible iteration required

Figure 10.3 An overview of the multi-modal study process, taken from GOMMS. (*Source:* AEA Technology (2004).)

or planning balance sheet approaches, when seeking to balance up the potential gains and losses resulting from one investment or another to shift modal splits in a particular corridor. For example, just before the MMSs, the work undertaken in 1999 on the Newport, South Wales M4 Corridor Study assessed four different schemes to deal with the traffic congestion on the M4 around Newport (Glasson 2004). Options included building a relief road, enhancing public transport, managing demand and a hybrid of parts of these. An appraisal methodology was used echoing elements of the above techniques as well as approaches common in EIA. (The hybrid package won in the appraisal, but the Welsh Assembly subsequently did not support the package, reputedly fearing the impacts of demand management on the attractiveness of the region to business investors.)

It will be interesting to see whether the British government's increased stress on *evidence-based policy making* generates a convergence between the already highly quantitative transport planning field and those of housing or economic development. The urging in the two Barker reports towards more quantified data and analysis on, for example, housing affordability or business land pushes for a larger element within the regional planning process to be taken up with such tasks. Inevitably these would then need to be matched up with traffic generation models and similar parts of transport planning's armoury. However, time will show whether such a major return to 'hard techniques', involving as it would very considerable budget increases and imported expertise, would turn out to pay its way, in the highly politicised world of regional planning decision making. Recently, in England, regional transport planning has been living off the relative riches of the MMS for years, and it remains to be seen whether future governments will make the further investments which would be needed to keep databases up to date, and analysis usable.

10.5 Case studies

It will help to look at some regions with relatively recent RTSs, to examine variations in approach and policy content. As in all parts of regional planning, there are multiple demands on practitioners. They must integrate the transport component as effectively as possible with the core of the spatial strategy. They must put together, especially in the RTS, an investment list that has some chance of implementation. The policies have to have enough regional support from key interests not to cause major revolts that could seriously reduce the legitimacy of the strategy over coming years. The presence of the 'shopping' (investment) list in the RTS makes these demands perhaps at their sharpest in this component, and perhaps, therefore, the hardest to achieve simultaneously.

Study of the 2004–2006 RTSs suggests considerable recourse to support for all possible goals, based on a hoped for but in many cases unlikely combination of circumstances (full government support with funds, industry co-operation, large behavioural change of travellers etc.), in short, of RTSs which will fail to be implemented and which would therefore bring down their RSSs with them.

This is not a criticism of the preparers of the RTSs, who do appear to be working in fairly impossible policy environments, pressed by the demands for economic growth on one side, and for environmentally sustainable futures on the other, to mention only the largest tension. But it does emphasise the need to read the contemporary English strategies with great care. We may find two RTSs inside each RTS, the rhetorical one which aims to hit every target, and the real one which is really going to happen and be funded. Questions about the sensibleness, ethics and honesty of this, if we find it, would then need to be asked. But the answer may be still, that such two-track planning is impossible to avoid, given current framing circumstances.

10.5.1 North East

Vigar (2006) analysed the making of the *North East* RTS 2001–2004, and reached highly critical conclusions. He observed a dysfunctional policy process, which failed to generate regional learning about options, instead polarising debates. Social inclusion issues were largely omitted: 'the proposals in the RTS were highly inequitable: there was over-emphasis on providing new bits of infra-structure (rather than new services) and on expanding (rather than managing) networks' (Vigar 2006 p. 215). The RTS adopted a road network expansion policy, in spite of the absence of evidence that this would lead to the hoped for economic gains: simply a return to the infrastructure led model of regional development, dominant in the North East for most of the twentieth century. This RTS, like most others, proposed investment in public transport, roads *and* demand management, without understanding the relationships between the three. This kept a 'fragile consensus' between key interests, but does not suggest, Vigar maintains, an ability to put together effective strategies.

10.5.2 London

London is a different case altogether, as in so many regional planning respects. The Mayor has a directly controlled agency, Transport for London, and although finance and priorities still have to be negotiated with central government, the ability to direct the public transport system (buses, underground, increasingly trains) is much greater. Demand management, at least in the shape of the central London congestion charging scheme, is also far advanced in comparison with elsewhere in the UK. Thus the London Plan and the London Transport Strategy have better chances of being implementable and well integrated than elsewhere. This is not to say that all is easy. Precisely the dependence on central government funding, so far not forthcoming, threatens to undermine the grand growth plans of the London Plan of 2004. The London case no doubt shows the very long way that all the other English regions have to go, given their considerable weaknesses in comparison with London.

10.5.3 *South West*

Three regions with quite well-developed RTSs, all finalised in draft form essentially in 2005, are the South West, South East and Yorkshire and Humber. The South West divides up policies at two scales, examining separately the problems within the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) and then the South West as it fits into the English and international transport systems. This gives at least a good chance of building a close fit to the core spatial strategy, and to sub-regional strategies. In the SSCTs, the emphasis is on boosting public transport and managing travel demand as far as possible. That latter phrase is present in strategy after strategy. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the RSS questioned the extent to which its policies could lead to a traffic reduction, 'in the absence of greater national intervention (such as stronger measures to manage demand, including road user charging and increased fuel prices)' (SWRA 2006 p. 97). Regional Assemblies are very aware of their unenviable position in this respect. The wider component of the South West RTS calls for major investment in both road and rail to build better connections to the rest of England, and internationally. Here such investments as the expansion of the capacity of Reading rail station (outside the region, but still a key pinch point), or of a second strategic road to the far south west, or of airports expansion, are called for – little sign of restraint of travel demand or freight demand here.

10.5.4 *South East*

The approach in the South East is similar in taking a varied spatialised approach, at two scales, but the lower scale is differently treated from in the South West. The higher scale indicates international and inter-regional corridors, reflecting the region's gateway role for the UK (see Figure 10.4). These are to be prioritised, for both management and investment purposes. Below this are the 'hubs and spokes' (see Figure 10.5). These are intended to support the role of the 21 regional hubs, the centres of economic activity in an increasingly polycentric structure for the region. The spokes are movement corridors without travel modes indicated.

   As in most RTSs, this element of spatialised planning rests alongside at least three other elements. First is a statement of generalised goals, laid out before the first policy of 'manage and invest'. These goal statements typically try to be all things to all interests, covering all bases – reducing travel demand, meeting all economic growth needs, improving environmental quality and so on. Second, there are the sub-theme issues required by government guidance – demand management generally, parking, ports, airports, freight. Third is the 'shopping' or investment list, of schemes which need public or private investment over the plan horizon. The South East's list is contained within the Implementation Plan, not the transport chapter, but is similar to that in most other RTSs, reflecting both government current agendas and pressures from within the region. In most cases this means a strong bias towards road schemes, with a
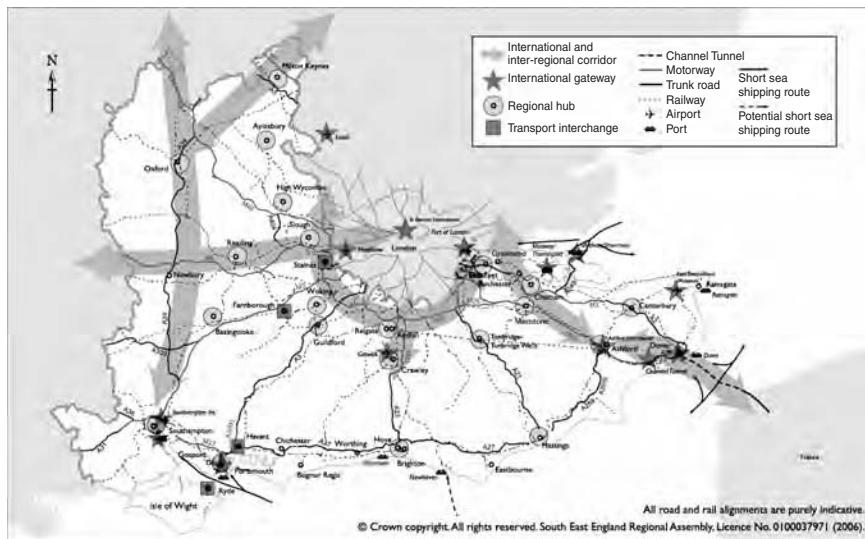
Figure 10.4 Internatational and inter-regional corridors in South East England. (*Source:* South East Plan draft submitted to government March 2006.)
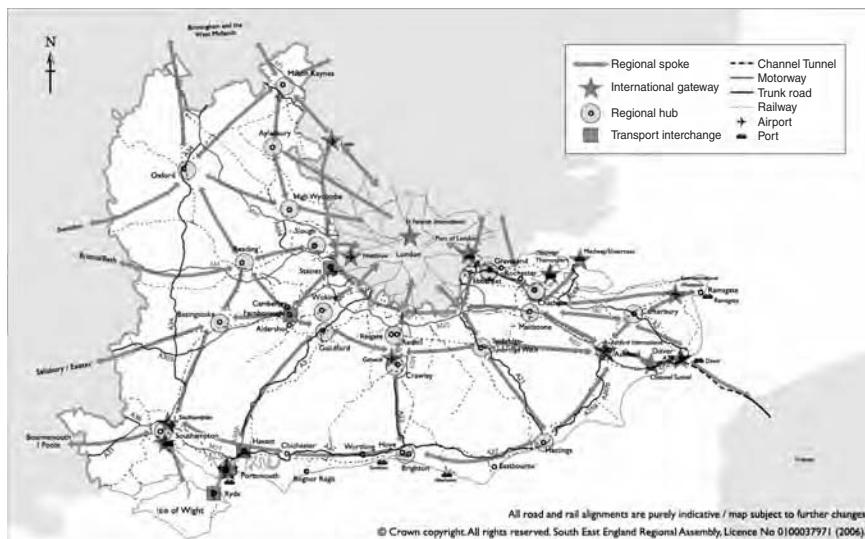
Figure 10.5 Regional hubs and spokes in the South East Plan. (*Source:* South East Plan draft submitted to government March 2006.)

scattering of smaller or long-term speculative public transport schemes. This bias marks strongly the 2005 generation of RTSs, and brings in doubt any serious environmental sustainability or travel reduction goals.

The issue in the South East is how far these four elements are really mutually supporting and also supporting the core spatial strategies and the ten sub-regional strategies. The answer is doubtless, as indicated above, that the contradictory pressures on the Plan are great, and that therefore coherence is not to be expected. As the government's agenda for the South East is growth, and this is supported by many regional and local interests, other agendas for environmental and social sustainability are not easily brought into the RTS, though they are rhetorically present. A clear example of this tension is in airports policy, where the Plan rejects proposals for further expansion beyond agreed totals at Heathrow and Gatwick, but is keen to develop the spinoffs now gained from their international gateway roles.

10.5.5 Yorkshire and Humber

The Yorkshire and Humber RTS is a longer and more complex chapter than that for the South East (47 versus 11 pages). This reflects sections within the text on implementation and monitoring and on desired outcomes at the end of the Plan period. There are several differences in content. First, the nearest to a spatial and map-based element is the Regional Transport Infrastructure map, showing the strategic highway network. This, no doubt, reflects the greater inclusion of detail in the sub-regional parts of the Plan, where many transport dimensions are to be found, matching the overall urban concentration goal of the Plan (Figure 7.2 showed the Leeds sub-area). Second, travel reduction and modal shift are given much greater prominence, with these forming policy T1. This is backed by a detailed policy framework telling local authorities to use destination and origin accessibility criteria to back public transport use in all new developments (a reminder of the renowned Dutch ABC policy of the 1990s). Third, the investment list at the end of the chapter is outcome based not scheme based, prioritised in four levels. (A list of committed schemes is also included, for information.) Thus the first outcome prioritised is 'increase rail and road capacity and capability to the south Humber ports', though more specific ways to achieve this are suggested (here not surprisingly, more rail and road capacity making). This would have facilitated decision making in the Regional Funding Allocations exercise of 2006.

One further feature of the RTS is that it does not give clear support to airport expansion in the region, confining itself to recommending better public transport connections to the regional airports. In some other regions there is a similar tension being fought out, with RDAs and the business lobbies pressing strongly for maximum expansion of regional airports (often beyond the expansionist proposals of the government's 2003 White Paper), while some Assemblies prefer to limit growth (the case in South East and East of England in relation to London's airports). This is seen as a critical issue by most analysts, in

relation to both economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. Regions are in any case aware that government holds the key cards on these decisions.

Overall the Yorkshire RTS shows a greater emphasis on environmental sustainability than that of the South East, with the public transport drive mirroring a similar urban regeneration core strategy in the West Midlands RSS of 2004. This can be seen in the listing of the headlines of the RTS, reproduced in Box 10.3.

Box 10.3 Yorkshire and Humber RTS 2005 draft headline goals

- Reduce the need to travel wherever possible by both positive interventions such as improved public transport or by demand restraint and promote modal shift from the car (T1).
- Seek a consistent approach to parking strategies (T2).
- Promote improved public transport (T3).
- Promote the movement of goods by water and rail while recognising the key role road has to play in moving freight (T4).
- Encourage access to tourist locations by public transport and promote the journey component to be considered part of the tourism offer (T5).
- Seek to improve surface access to airports (T6).
- Support expansion of its ports and waterways and improve surface access to them (T7).
- Seek to improve access to services in rural areas by improving transport provision but also by innovative means (T8).
- Support a range of transport and investment priorities that underpin the wider spatial strategy (T9).

Again though it would be necessary to look deeper as to whether this marked policy drive was matched in detailed policy decisions, for example, on investment schemes (the outcomes-based list may allow 'fudging' here), or on parking standards. The northern and midlands RTSs often exhibit this greater emphasis on public transport and urban regeneration, no doubt matching their political and social make up and, generally, lesser growth pressures.

10.6 Conclusions

We have presented transport planning in the English regions in the mid 2000s as a fraught but fascinating policy field. The fraughtness is in the massive tensions playing on it, meaning that strategy elements such as the RTSs in RSSs have to look several ways at the same time. But this lends the fascination, at least for observers (frustration might be the word occurring to some practitioners), in that very considerable skill is needed in negotiating this minefield.

Some effective development has been evident in these years. Some 'hard' skills have been accumulated in the MMSs, in research commissioned from consultancies by RPBs, and in local transport planning work. This has moved along beside the softer capacities to bring the very variably driven actors of the transport field into some sort of communion, in complex governance balancing acts. The latter is the role of the managers of the regional planning process. The result is documents and approaches of greater sophistication than ten or even five years ago.

But there are still *large impediments to any effective transport planning* at these levels, with revenue issues and most non-road funding omitted from RTS consideration. In addition the commercial independence and non-engagement of bus and rail operators, and to a large extent of Network Rail, are further brakes on the system. Even road schemes, incorporated within the RTS, may in practice depend for their implementation on many other factors in competing appraisal regimes. Serious skills shortages remain in local authorities and RAs. Furthermore, questions arise as to whether the RTS process is yet sufficiently integrated within the RSS, giving all the support it can to the core spatial strategies. This reflects the still weak institutionalisation of the regional planning field in the English regions, in comparison with that in the other parts of the UK, and in London. That continues to give the central ministries great control via guidance on the RTSs and via informal policy steers, in a field like transport with such potentially heavy public funding.

This strategising work is beginning to be melded with vertical linking on funding, via the Regional Funding Allocations exercise, first completed in 2006, where central government broadly accepted the advice offered by regional bodies. It is this vertical linking that holds the key in the transport field (as in so much else in regional planning). The signs are not at present good in this respect, with the creation of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) from 2007 onwards progressively 'renationalising' transport spending, with the regions again having less chance to secure the implementation of their RSSs via an insider status in relation to the Treasury and DfT. The only regional actors who will have such an insider role in the TIF are the RDAs – again showing the skewed nature of much wider regional policy/planning work under the Blair–Brown regime.

Notes

1 This section on RTSs draws very extensively on work of Peter Headicar, for which we are most grateful.
2 We are grateful to Peter Headicar and Stephen Brown for information on their work (not yet published), which has analysed the RFA process.

11 Components of regional planning

Environment

11.1 Introduction

The environment provides the vital framework for all regional planning and development activity; it is the foundation to life and it is under increasing threat, some would say almost terminally, from development actions. All the other components discussed in previous chapters – economic development, housing and transport – have impacts on the environment and are often in conflict with the maintenance, let alone the enhancement, of environmental quality. The environment is diverse, dispersed and covers the whole of a region, in contrast to the other components which tend to be more concentrated in particular locations, in hierarchies of centres and in corridors connecting those centres.

The assessment of the 'State of Europe's Environment' (EEA 2003) starkly illustrated that several decades of EC Environmental Action Plans have had mixed impacts on various environmental indicators. While we can point to some successes, for example, a reduction in the impact on ecosystems of 'acid rain', and some improvements in the quality of water at designated bathing beaches in the EU, the environment faces some powerful and problematic drivers of change, and serious trends in many environmental indicators. For example, road freight traffic increased by 44 per cent in Western Europe in the 1990s. Almost 400 million foreign tourists visited Europe in 2000, representing 56 per cent of the world's international tourist market. Numbers are expected to grow by 50 per cent by 2020, with a doubling of air traffic in Europe. Almost half of Europe's domestic animal breed diversity is categorised as being at risk of extinction, and the trends are negative. There is also the issue of climate change. Over the past 100 years the mean temperature in Europe has increased by about 1.2°C; it is projected to increase by another 1.4 to 5.8°C between 1990 and 2100.

This chapter first discusses the scope and nature of the environment, and the drivers which are putting pressure on the environment, resulting in the issues noted in 'The State of Europe's Environment' (EEA 2003). Climate change is an overriding driver and an issue which is central to much of this chapter. Regional policy responses to these issues take place within the contexts of

global, EU (especially) and national policies and guidance. But there are many other stakeholders in the environmental arena in addition to the various levels of government. Reference is also made to the developing array of techniques which seek to assess environmental impacts, increasingly within the wider framework of sustainability. The chapter concludes with regional case studies of some specific environmental issues.

11.2 Range, drivers and issues

The scope and nature of the 'environment' is vast, as are the drivers of change. A widely accepted approach to providing a structure to this scope is the 'pressure–state–response (PSR)' model, which has been adopted for some time by many agencies, including the OECD (1996), and Europe (see EEA 1992). Activities, predominantly human, put pressure on the environment, which changes its state – the quantity and quality of natural resources. Society responds to these changes through environmental, economic and sectoral policies. The 1996 OECD study identified a list of environmental issues, divided into 'sink-oriented' (environmental quality issues) and 'source-oriented' (natural resource quantity issues). Table 11.1 provides a brief example of two of each type of issue and the associated PSR indicators.

Table 11.1 indicates only a few of the *dimensions and indicators of the environment.* Contemporary UK regional plans/strategies usually make a distinction between the built and the natural environment; another approach uses the

Table 11.1 Examples of OECD PSR indicators by environmental issue

Issue	Pressure indicator	State indicator	Response indicator
Climate change	Index of greenhouse gas emissions; CO_2 emissions	Atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases; global mean temperature	Energy efficiency; energy intensity; economic and fiscal instruments
Biodiversity/ landscape	Habitat alteration and land conversion from the natural state	Threatened or extinct species as a share of total species known	Protected areas as a percentage of national territory and by type of ecosystem
Water resources	Intensity of use	Frequency, duration and extent of shortages	Water prices and user charges for sewage treatment
Soil degradation	Erosion risks; potential and actual land use for agriculture; change in land use	Degree of topsoil loss	Rehabilitated areas

Source: OECD (1996).

'ABC' structure of the abiotic (e.g. energy, waste, water), the biotic (e.g. forests, wildlife) and the cultural (e.g. historic), although the mix of dimensions varies from region to region. For example, the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (ODPM 2003b) followed the quantity/quality distinction used in the OECD approach above, distinguishing between environmental resources (landscape, built heritage, biodiversity and nature conservation, woodlands, water resources, minerals/aggregates and energy resources) and environmental quality (including derelict land, water quality and waste).

Of the many *drivers of environmental change*, climate change has become increasingly recognised as of overwhelming importance. *The South East Plan* (SEERA 2006a) highlights the importance of rising temperatures, rising sea levels and more weather extremes. Among other things, planning needs to avoid areas with a tendency to flood, should take account of the availability of water resources and should anticipate other implications of climate change, for example, on the deterioration of built structures and disruption to transport and energy supplies. A corollary of the serious concerns about climate change is recognition that there will need to be a significant reduction in use of resources such as water. Major reports, such as the Stern Review, in the UK, on the *Economics of Climate Change* (HM Treasury 2006b), highlight the implications of failure to respond to climate change nationally and internationally. The report stresses that the scientific evidence is now overwhelming; climate change is a serious global threat which demands an urgent global response.

The investment that takes place in the next 10–20 years will have a profound effect on the climate in the second half of this century and in the next. Our actions now, and over the coming decades, could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the twentieth century. And it will be difficult to reverse those changes. Without action, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere could reach double its pre-industrial level as early as 2035, virtually committing us to a global temperature rise of over 2°C. In the longer term there would be a 50 per cent chance that the temperature rise would exceed 5°C. This rise would be very dangerous indeed; it is equivalent to change in average temperatures from the last ice age to today.

A wide range of *environmental challenges/issues* arise from the drivers of change. These are often packaged under banners such as the need to 'value our environment', and to achieve a 'high-quality environment', all set within the wider context of achieving more sustainable development. The Wales Spatial Plan (Welsh Assembly Government 2003a, 2004) provides an interesting summary of the spatial challenges of valuing our environment (Box 11.1).

Box 11.1 An example of the spatial challenges of valuing our environment,
from The Wales Spatial Plan

The quality of our environment is a fundamental asset for its intrinsic value, for our economy and for the quality of life. By safeguarding and enhancing both the natural and built environment we will attract people to and retain them in our communities and preserve the foundations for the future. Key spatial challenges are:

- how to protect high-quality landscapes, conservation and heritage interest while reconciling competing demands for their use;
- how to respond to the potential impact of climate change, including coastal and river flooding, habitat and species loss and water supply;
- how to address constraints in environmental and related infrastructure capacity, e.g. waste and sewage disposal, water supply, mineral extraction and pollution.

(*Source:* Adapted from *The Wales Spatial Plan* (Welsh Assembly Government 2003a, 2004).)

11.3 Policy and agency responses

11.3.1 *Agency environment and policy steers*

The main stakeholder groupings in the agency environment for 'environment' are not unlike those for the other components discussed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 including regulators and policy makers (at various levels of government/associated agencies), developers, pressure groups and the public, and facilitators/consultants. However, each component has its own particular mix and balance of agencies. The range of agencies is particularly wide for environment, reflecting the range of environmental dimensions and issues noted in the previous section. Of central importance is the role of government and associated agencies at both national and at supra-national levels, and the overriding steer of sustainable development.

   The wider international context to sustainable development was introduced in section 4.4, and the various UN conventions and declarations have provided important policy steers. These have been taken up substantially by the *European Community/Union*. Under the Single European Act of 1987, the then European Community stressed the importance of a 'high level' of environmental protection, and outlined objectives to: preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment; contribute towards protective human health; and ensure a prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources. The associated principles for Community action were: preventative action should be taken;

environmental damage should be rectified at source; the polluter should pay; and environmental protection requirements should be a component of the Community's other policies. The Maastricht Treaty reaffirmed the environmental objectives and principles, and also added the 'precautionary principle' – where there are uncertainties, the environment should be given the benefit of the doubt.

In parallel with these important high-level policy steers, the EC/EU also has Environmental Action Programmes (EAPs) which suggest specific proposals for legislation/action. The fifth EAP (1993–1999), entitled 'Towards Sustainability' (CEC 1992), gave priority to the sustainable management of natural resources, integrated pollution control and waste prevention, a reduction in consumption of non-renewable energy, mobility management, environmental quality in urban areas, and public health and safety. The 6th EAP (2001–2010) 'Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice' (CEC 2001b), identifies four areas for priority action: climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health and quality of life, and natural resources and waste. To make progress in these areas, the programme stresses the importance of: effective implementation of environmental legislation for all the EU countries, an integration of environmental concerns into all policies, the use of a blend of different instruments (e.g. economic as well as legislative), and improved participation across society on environmental issues. It also requires the European Commission to prepare Thematic Strategies covering the seven areas of: air pollution, prevention and recycling of waste, protection and conservation of the marine environment, soil, sustainable use of pesticides, sustainable use of resources and the urban environment.

The Environment Directorate is the key agency in the European Commission charged with the delivery of the EU environmental policy. A key instrument is the EU Directive, of which there have been more than 200 covering aspects of environmental policy, related especially to air, water, waste, noise, soil and biodiversity, plus more general procedural matters (see Haigh 2005). All have relevance for regional planning. For example, one of the more recent directives, the Water Framework Directive (CEC 2000), has rationalised community water legislation by replacing seven of the previous 'first wave' water directives. Concern about water pollution ranks highly among EU citizens, and one aim of this new directive is to have a clear and single system of water management by river basin, with a requirement for the production of river basin management plans. The plan should be a detailed and comprehensive account of how the objectives set for a river basin (ecological, quantitative, chemical and protected area) can be achieved within specified timescales. The large geographical scale of river basins and their plans are of particular significance for regional planning activity. Also of particular significance for regional planning is the EU-initiated activity on impact assessment, with directives on EIA and SEA, which are discussed in section 11.4.

At the level of *UK national government/agencies*, there have been several examples of environmental policy initiatives, including the pioneering Clean Air Act (1968), and *This Common Inheritance* (DoE *et al.* 1990). The latter had

a clear emphasis on environmental stewardship and precautionary action. But there has never been a National Environmental Plan similar, for example, to the Dutch initiatives (VROM 1989). However, there is now a UK Sustainable Development Strategy, initiated in 1999 (DETR 1999a) and updated in 2005 with *Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy* (DEFRA 2005). Box 11.2 sets out the guiding principles, priorities and headline indicators in that strategy, which is of course much wider in scope than the physical environment discussed in this chapter. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has the key government responsibility for environmental matters, although environmental issues touch on many other government departments. The DCLG (formerly ODPM) is significant through its planning regulations and PPSs, for example, *Planning Policy Statement 22 – Renewable Energy* (ODPM 2004c), *Supplement to PPS1 – Planning and Climate Change* (DCLG 2006d) and *Planning Policy Statement 25 –Development and Flood Risk* (DCLG 2006e).

There are also many associated agencies at national and regional level. The Environment Agency is the key environmental regulatory body in England and Wales, involved in setting standards, best practice guidance and policy implementation with particular reference to waste, and air, land and water quality. Its flood risks mapping is an increasingly important factor in spatial planning. Another significant agency, established in 2006, is Natural England. It brings together the activities of the former English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency, and the environmental land management function of the Rural Development Service. Its aim is 'to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the well-being and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings'.

The agency space is also populated by many *environmental interest/pressure groups*. The growth in such groups, such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, the CPRE and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), is of particular note and is partly associated with the growth of public interest in environmental issues. For instance, membership of the RSPB has grown from 100,000 in 1970 to over one million in 2006. Such groups, although often limited in resources, may have considerable 'moral weight', and can galvanise public opinion in relation to regional planning issues. They often come into conflict with the *development industry*, which itself increasingly seeks to enhance its environmental credentials, through mechanisms such as environmental management plans, sustainable travel plans and corporate social responsibility activities. Without such responses the development industry may find itself increasingly at odds with the insurance industry which is becoming an important influence on the environmental acceptability or otherwise of the location of development. A further group is the *environmental facilitators* – the various consultants, advocates and advisers – who participate in the environmental activities of the planning and development process. There has been a massive growth in the number of environmental consultancies in the UK, increasing from about 50 in 1970 to over 800 in 2006 (ENDS 2006).

Box 11.2 UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)

Guiding principles:
- living within environmental limits;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- promoting good governance;
- using sound science responsibly.

Shared priorities for UK action:
- sustainable consumption and production (in particular, decoupling the link between economic growth and environmental degradation);
- climate change and energy;
- natural resource protection and environmental enhancement;
- sustainable communities.

High-level framework indicators:
- greenhouse gas emissions (Kyoto target and CO_2 emissions);
- resources use (domestic material consumption and GDP);
- waste (arisings by sector and method of disposal);
- bird populations (indices of farmland, woodland, coastal and wintering wetland birds);
- fish stocks (around the UK within sustainable limits);
- ecological impacts of air pollution (area of UK habitat sensitive to acidification and eutrophication with critical load exceedences);
- river quality (rivers of good biological and chemical quality);
- active community participation (informal and formal volunteering at least once a month);
- crime (crime survey and recorded crime for vehicles, domestic burglary and violence);
- employment (people of working age in employment);
- workless households (children, and working age population, living in workless households);
- childhood poverty (children in relative low-income households before housing costs, and after housing costs);
- pensioner poverty (pensioners in relative low-income households before housing costs, and after housing costs);
- education (19 year-olds with level two qualifications and above);
- health inequality (infant mortality (by socio-economic group), life expectancy (by area) for men and women);
- mobility (number of trips per person (by mode), distance travelled per person per annum (by broad trip purpose));
- social justice (measures to be developed);
- environmental quality (measures to be developed);
- well-being (measures to be developed).

(*Source:* DEFRA 2005.)

11.3.2 Some characteristics of environmental policies for the regions: the important, but confusing world, of sustainable development frameworks

Section 39 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act for England and Wales requires regional and local planning bodies to operate the system 'with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development'. As noted in Chapter 4, the regional and sub-regional levels are particularly appropriate for the management of many environmental sustainability issues, such as water, waste, minerals and renewable energy. Prior to the new Act, and to provide guidance and structure to the regional level of intervention, the then DETR produced guidance for the preparation of *Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs)* (DETR 2000c). The aim of these frameworks is to provide a long-term and high-level vision for the sustainable development of a region, and to establish a set of regional indicators and targets to provide a common context for the preparation of the RES, RPG (since superseded by the RSS) and other relevant regional strategies – such as the RTS. For example, in the South East England region, the report *A better quality of life in the South East* (SEERA 2001) sought to translate national sustainable development objectives into the particular characteristics of the region providing a list of 25 objectives (to guide policy, decisions and actions) and associated indicators (to outline how progress will be monitored). This approach was followed in other regions, but an evaluation of such frameworks (CAG Consultants and Oxford Brookes University 2002) concluded that they had not been a strong influence on activity or policy making in the regions. A subsequent report in the South East, *South East England Integrated Regional Framework* (SEERA 2004), developed the indicators and targets approach (see Table 11.2). With some modifications, the 2004 South East indicator set was used for the South East Plan (SEERA 2006a).

The approach to sustainable development in the regions was reviewed by the independent Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in 'The Next Steps: An independent review of sustainable development in the English regions' (SDC 2005). The SDC provided the following useful statement as a context for the review:

> In a truly sustainable region, all actors in the public, private and voluntary sectors would incorporate sustainability requirements at the heart of all their operations and in their procurement and construction activities. They would create powerful alliances and initiatives for promoting energy efficiency and greater use of renewable sources of energy. They would enhance the natural environment and tackle past pollution and land degradation. They would co-operate together to ensure that all new developments are created on sustainable development principles and that existing communities are encouraged and assisted to evolve in more sustainable directions.

Table 11.2 Some examples of environmental objectives, indicators and targets from the South East England Integrated Regional Framework (2004)

Objective number	Objective	Indicator	Target
10	To improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings	Development on previously developed land	By 2008, to develop 60% of all forms of development on previously developed land
12	To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and ensure that the SE is prepared for its impacts	Emissions of greenhouse gases from energy consumption, transport, land use and waste management	By 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from activities within the region by 60%
17	To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste	Percentage of total tonnage of all types of waste that has been recycled, composted, used to recover heat, power and other energy sources, and landfill	By 2010, to increase the recovery of all waste in the region by 71%, recycling and composting of waste by 50%, and to reduce growth of all waste to 1% pa (and 0.5% by 2020)
19	To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the region	(a) Energy use per cap (b) Installed capacity for energy production from renewable sources	By 2020, to install 620 MW of renewable energy (5.5% of generation capacity)

Source: SEERA (2004).

The review found some good, but sporadic practice in the regions. Many issues were raised including the lack of consistent leadership at the regional level. In the English regions no single body was seen as acting as the lead advocate for delivering sustainable development principles and priorities. The roles of RDAs, RAs and GOs were not clearly defined in relation to sustainable development; the lead role of the Mayor in London was seen as the only exception to the rule. The review also recommended a more holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development for the RDAs. Attention was also drawn to the widespread confusion as to the purpose and nature of RSDFs. Table 11.3 shows a variety of terms/instruments in use across the regions. An IRS aims to provide a unified single strategy for the region, working across economic, social, spatial and environmental objectives. An Integrated Regional Framework (IRF), as used in the South East region, aims to provide vision and sustainable development objectives for the region; the RES and RSS are nested within this framework. The SDC review advocated improved Government guidance to make the potentially valuable RSDFs more overarching and influential.

In a response to the SDC review, *Securing the Regions' Future* (DEFRA 2006a), the Government leaves regions discretion over the names of their sustainable development frameworks but requires that the arrangements in each region must be fully integrated. The Government response sets out some of the essential sustainable development ingredients for regional high-level strategies (see Box 11.3). Figures 11.1 and 11.2, from the same report, provide a summary of the current sustainable development progress of the regions, and the regions' pledges to contribute to 'one planet living'. The progress is from a December 2005 assessment against some of the 68 indicators in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA 2005).

Table 11.3 Overarching 'frameworks' used across the regions

Region	*RSDF only*	*RF and RSDF*	*IRF only*	*IRS and RSDF*
East Midlands			✓	
East of England				✓
London	✓			
North East			✓	
North West	✓			
South East			✓	
South West				✓
West Midlands	✓			
Yorkshire and Humber		✓		

Source: SDC (2005).

East Midlands

East of England

North East

North West

South West

Yorkshire and the Humber

West Midlands

South East

London

☐ Indicators in the region showing clear improvement
◧ Little or no change
◼ Clear deterioration
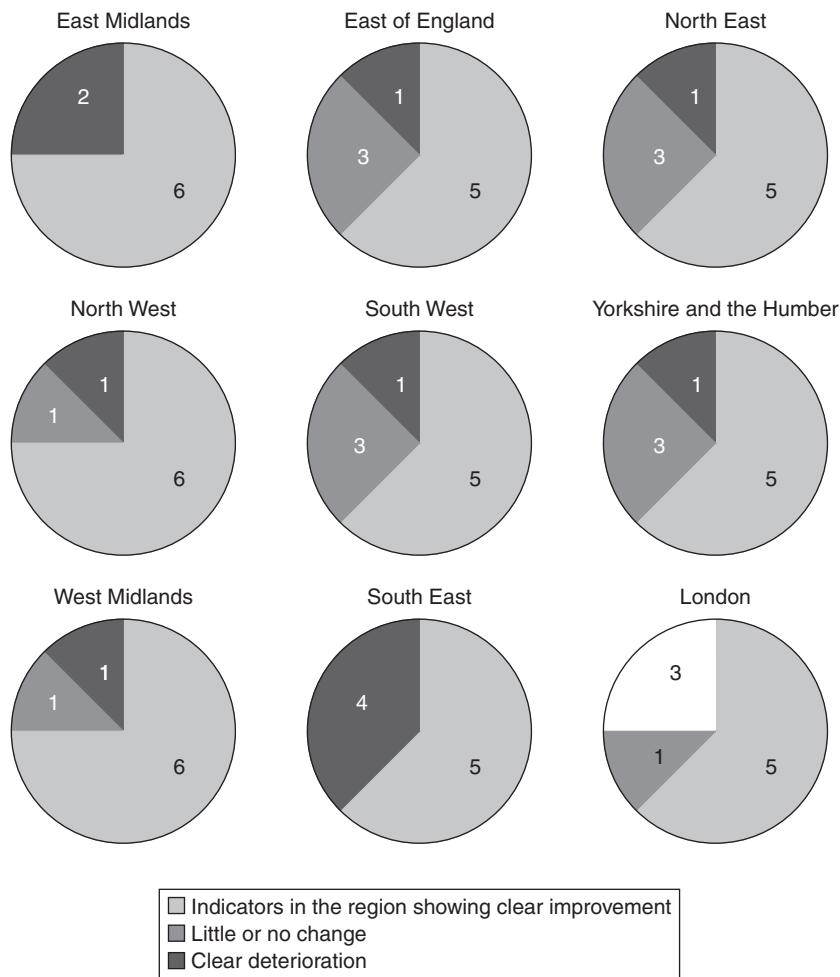
Figure 11.1 Charts showing progress on sustainable consumption and production, and natural resource protection for the nine English regions. (*Source:* DEFRA (2006b).)

11.3.3 Some characteristics of environmental policies for the regions: planning for climate change and responses to individual environmental issues

As noted earlier in this section, the *issue of climate change* is now high on the agenda of contemporary regional planning. Indeed, as far back as 1998, research carried out for the North West region (North West Climate Change Group 1998) revealed the wide-ranging implications of predicted changes on industry and business, land management and social life in that region. For example,

To drive forward a new industrial and cultural revolution to achieve *One Planet Living* across the North West

To be a carbon neutral North East

To reduce the ecological footprint of Yorkshire and the Humber

To be a carbon neutral West Midlands by 2030

East Midlands goal to be agreed

To be a *One Planet* region in the East of England

Fair shares – Fair choice – to tackle climate change in an equitable way by encouraging everyone to live within their fair share of carbon

To stabalise and reduce the South East's ecological footprint

To be a low carbon London

Figure 11.2 Regional aspirations/pledges for 'one planet living'. (*Source:* DEFRA (2006b).)

much of the North West's low-lying coastline would be at serious risk from sea level rise and tidal waves. More recent findings from a range of cross-regional research climate change adaptation projects have shown that the costs from climate change will hit across a large number of sectors, including water, health, ecosystems, planning and infrastructure (DEFRA 2006b). The research focusing on the planning and built environment project, undertaken by Land Use Consultants and Oxford Brookes University, considered the effects climate change would have for developments in the growth areas of the South East of England. The study included a literature review of the likely impacts climate change would have, considered potential climate change risks and adaptation measures at three development sites, and concluded that planners were more likely to focus on climate mitigation than adaptation.

A guidance document, 'Adapting to climate change impacts – A good practice guide for sustainable communities' (Land Use Consultants *et al.* 2006, and

Box 11.3 'Essential ingredients' on sustainable development for regional high-level strategy/strategies

- *Evidence base:* The region's current and future challenges are clearly set out based on robust social, economic and environmental data, trends, scenarios or analysis. This includes regional data for the national sustainable development indicators and other regional sustainable development.
- *Stakeholder involvement:* In taking account of these ingredients and preparing high-level strategies in the region, regional stakeholders from social, economic and environmental interests and from all sectors are engaged in the process.
- *Integrated vision:* A shared, overarching and long-term vision for the future of the region is clearly articulated, based on the region's challenges and opportunities, and which integrates the region's social, economic and environmental priorities. The vision is consistent with the national priorities and principles set out in *Securing the Future*.
- *Aims and objectives:* Clear aims and objectives are identified, which will help implement the shared vision for the region's future. These attempt to reconcile strategic issues/conflicts facing the region and move the regional and national headline sustainable development indicators in the right direction. The aims and objectives make the relevant links across regional social, economic and environmental issues and have regard to the priorities and principles in *Securing the Future*. Clear links are made between other relevant regional and local plans.
- *Indicators, actions and targets:* Targets are identified along with accompanying indicators and actions in order to address unsustainable activities/negative trends and meet the region's aims and objectives. Clear links are made to related actions, indicators or targets in other regional or local plans. Actions have owners and timescales identified.
- *Monitoring and reporting:* Arrangements are identified for monitoring progress on implementation and for reporting to regional stakeholders and the wider public. Monitoring and reporting arrangements capture the region's contribution to delivering the priorities in *Securing the Future*.
- *Sub-regional and local levels:* Links are made between the 'ingredients' above and the opportunities offered by sub-regions, city regions and local Sustainable Community Strategies/Local Area Agreements, to help contribute to national and regional sustainable development priorities.
- *Sustainability appraisal:* A sustainability appraisal has been conducted on the high-level strategy/strategies in line with available best practice.

(*Source:* DEFRA 2006a.)

available on the DEFRA website), has been produced to take planners and developers through the process of incorporating adaptation measures into new developments. An earlier study, *The planning response to climate change: advice on better practice* (CAG Consultants and Oxford Brookes University, for the ODPM 2004) sought to outline the valuable role which planning can and should play. Some of the many examples at the regional level include: RSSs should identify principal areas where flooding issues are likely to be of regional significance and establish policies to discourage inappropriate development in high-risk areas; regional bodies should engage in the River Basin Management Plans being drawn up under the Water Framework Directive; and RESs and RSSs should also recognise the opportunities created by climate change for agriculture, forestry and 'environmental industries' such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The *Supplement to PPS1 – Planning and Climate Change* (DCLG 2006d) sets out the role of the RSS in responding to climate change. In particular it states that 'Climate change should be a key and integrating theme of the RSS and be addressed in conjunction with the economic, social and environmental concerns that together inform the overall strategy and its components.' Among other things, this requires RPBs to:

- focus on the location of major generators of travel, the effect of patterns of development on movement of goods and supply chains, and the integration of low-carbon energy sources into developments;
- locate new developments with good non-car-based accessibility;
- set renewable energy targets in line with PPS22, and consistent with national targets;
- help secure carbon sinks through land use planning;
- avoid new developments in areas with likely increased vulnerability to climate change; and
- bring forward adaptation options for existing development in likely vulnerable areas.

To manage performance, RPBs should also include in the RSS trajectories for the expected carbon performance of new residential and commercial development.

In addition to the broad framework areas of RSDFs and climate change, regional plans provide more specific policies and guidance on a wide range of environmental issues. Key elements in the *management of the biotic/natural environment* include the sustaining of landscape character, and biodiversity. Landscape character at the regional scale has been defined in the 'Character of England' map, published by the Countryside Agency in parallel with English Nature's (now Natural England) Natural Areas. Together with maps of designated areas (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and others), landscape character maps provide an important backcloth and context for development plan policies. Such natural areas of course also provide

the habitats for biodiversity, and regional planning bodies must afford the highest level of protection to the regional nature conservation resource, taking into account the contents of Regional Biodiversity Audits, and English Nature's Regional Biodiversity Targets.

Key elements in the *management of the abiotic/natural resources* include water, minerals, waste and energy. Some specific examples of the coverage of such elements in regional plans are included in section 11.5. Suffice to say at this stage that the management of the quality and quantity of all these natural resources are invariably included in regional plans. If such resources are poorly managed they can provide major constraints on the sustainable development of regions and sub-regions. Water is a prime example. The maintenance of an adequate potable and industrial water supply of suitable quality from environmentally sound resources is necessary in order to allow continued development in a region. In some regions the imbalance between the supply of and demand for water can be a strategic constraint on the location of new development. The key issue for a regional plan/strategy is to provide an appropriate framework to integrate the work of relevant agencies – the Environment Agency, water companies and local planning authorities. This work has many dimensions, including programmes of new investment, demand management, and flood risk management (inland and coastal). The new *Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk* (DCLG 2006e) seeks to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development. At the regional level this involves the production of Regional Flood Risk Appraisals, which should refer to the Environment Agency's Flood Maps and other information, such as Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, to allow flood risks to be taken into account in a broad regional context.

Waste management is another high-profile issue. The UK produces more than 400 million tonnes of waste each year, and a very high proportion goes to landfill. Waste management issues are often difficult to resolve within local authority boundaries; regions can provide more appropriate frameworks – and there is now a clear drive towards self-sufficiency within regions. Regional bodies have the responsibility for waste planning policy for their regions. Recent guidance is provided for England in *PPS10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management* (ODPM 2005a) and the companion guide (ODPM 2005b).

11.4 Environmental techniques – impact assessment

11.4.1 *An evolving array of practice*

The environmental component of regional planning can draw on many analytical and procedural techniques, but over the last 25 years one of the most pervasive of these has been that of impact assessment. This covers an evolving array of techniques, methods and processes which in the UK and the wider EU owes

much to the stimulus provided by EC Directives (Glasson *et al.* 2005). The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (CEC 1985), built on the pioneering US National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and from 1988 introduced EIA as a process to be employed in Member States to assess in advance the impacts of 'development actions' on the 'environment'. It provides an excellent example of the precautionary principle. Development actions were seen primarily as major projects (such as energy, transport, waste, water, industrial and urban development) and the environment was seen largely as the bio-physical environment.

After about ten years of operation the EIA Directive was amended (CEC 1997a) to include more project types and a more rigorous process. But the focus was still limited to projects. This changed in 2001 with the introduction of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (CEC 2001a) which widened the scope of impact assessment to include programmes (e.g. of power stations, of waste management projects) and plans (e.g. local and regional plans) to add to the projects covered under the EIA Directive. The SEA Directive was implemented from 2004. In addition to this trend from the narrow project-based approach to the wider plan and programme approach, there has been a shift also from the narrow bio-physical approach of early EIA activity and of some current SEA activity, towards a more holistic approach including bio-physical, social and economic dimensions. This is exemplified most clearly in the UK by the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) approach which is now required for all regional and sub-regional planning activity (ODPM 2005b). These trends are now briefly outlined in the very relevant context of regional planning.

11.4.2 *EIA for major projects*

Major projects are often the building blocks of regional strategies. The latter usually identify infrastructure requirements including economic infrastructure, such as roads and power stations, and social infrastructure, such as universities and hospitals. Indeed an infrastructure deficit can provide a major constraint on effective regional planning. But major projects can have wide-ranging impacts on a region, and not all may be beneficial. Such impacts vary over the lifecycle of a project and can be particularly marked during the construction and operational stages. The construction stage often has serious implications for the bio-physical environment; on the other hand both construction and operation may be good for employment. However, the threat of a major project during the early conception/planning stages can also have dramatic impacts, particularly on the social and economic environment; the closure at the end of the project life can also be significant. The EC EIA Directive stipulates mandatory assessment for a set of Annex 1 projects, but leaves more discretion for a set of Annex 2 projects (see Table 11.4). Recent practice in the UK involves approximately 700–800 EIAs each year.

The EIA process typically has a number of steps (including – screening,

scoping, description of development and baseline, consideration of options, impact identification, prediction, assessment of significance, mitigation, review, decision making and monitoring) although ideally not carried out in a rigid linear fashion. The process seeks to both mitigate adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects of the project under consideration. The outcome is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which contributes to the decision on whether and in what form a project should proceed. The overall process has been subject to five-yearly EC reviews, and there have been many refinements. Yet the third EC review (CEC 2003) still raised a number of concerns and variable practice across Member States. These include variations in thresholds used to trigger Annex 2 project assessments; for example, three turbines would require an EIA in Sweden, compared with 50 in Spain. There are also major variations in the number of annual assessments across countries, the treatment of public consultation, and the vital monitoring of post-EIA compliance. In the UK the process is increasingly accepted and valued by stakeholders, but another systemic weakness is the bio-physical focus and the limited consideration of socio-economic impacts. Chadwick (2002) highlights the importance of a more

Table 11.4 Major projects and EIA: mandatory and discretionary status under the EC EIA Directive

Annex 1 projects for which EIA is mandatory	*Annex 2 projects for which EIA is discretionary*
1 Crude oil refineries	1 Agriculture, silviculture and aquaculture
2 Thermal and nuclear power stations	2 Extractive industry
3 Radioactive waste processing	3 Energy industry
4 Iron and steel works	4 Production and processing of metals
5 Asbestos processes	5 Minerals industry (not in Annex 1)
6 Integrated chemical installations	6 Chemical industry
7 Motorways/major roads/railways/airports	7 Food industry
8 Trading ports and inland waterways	8 Textile, leather, wood and paper industries
9 Incinerator processes/dangerous wastes	9 Rubber industry
10 Large-scale incinerator processes/other wastes	10 Infrastructure projects
11 Large-scale groundwater schemes	11 Other projects
12 Large-scale water transfer schemes	12 Tourism and leisure
13 Large-scale waste water treatment plants	13 Modifications, extension or temporary testing of Annex 1 projects
14 Large-scale extraction of petroleum and gas	
15 Large dams and reservoirs	
16 Long pipelines for gas, oil or chemicals	
17 Large-scale poultry or pig-rearing installations	
18 Pulp, timber or board manufacture	
19 Large-scale quarries or open-cast mines	
20 Long overhead electrical power lines	
21 Large-scale installations for petroleum, petrochemical or chemical products	

Source: Glasson *et al.* (2005).

holistic approach and Glasson (2005) provides an example of the utility of socio-economic assessment in a longtitudinal study of the impacts of the construction of Sizewell B nuclear power station, Britain's last (to date) nuclear power station.

11.4.3 SEA

Sadler and Verheem (1996) define SEA as 'A systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policy, plan or programme initiatives in order to ensure that they are fully included and appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making on a par with economic and social considerations.' An important aspect of this definition is that SEA should be a process carried out concurrently with the plan-making process and not an add-on at the end of that process. Glasson and Gosling (2001) provide a taxonomy of SEA practice (see Figure 11.3) which reinforces the importance of a concurrent approach. In scope and purpose SEA also seeks to cover some of the omissions of EIA, for example, by being more proactive in terms of steering rather than reacting to development, and addressing the consideration of

The *Incremental* model to which project EIA techniques can readily be applied (Wilkinson 1994);

The *Stapled* model where SEA is carried out as a single act at a specific stage of the plan-making process, the EIA of plans (Wood 1988);

The *Concurrent model*, where SEA is carried out at the various stages of the plan-making process in an iterative fashion, EIA in plan-making (Wood 1988);

The *Holistic* model in which EIA becomes the tenet of the plan-making process to the extent that its presence as a separate exercise disappears.

Figure 11.3 A taxonomy of SEA and plan-making. (*Source:* Glasson and Gosling (2001).)

alternatives and cumulative impacts. It also relates to a more strategic level of development actions – plans, programmes and policies – generally summarised as PPPs.

The EC/EU had long aspired to introduce a strategic level of assessment, and indeed to some extent practised what it preached from the 1990s onwards by requiring 'environmental profiles' of its own PPPs. This applied, particularly, to regional development plans produced by Member States to gain access to EC/EU Structural Funds (Glasson and Gosling 2001). However, the major breakthrough came with the SEA Directive in 2001. This became operational in July 2004. It applies to plans and programmes, but agreement could not be reached on the inclusion of policies. The Directive relates to PPPs for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use. In the UK the SEA Directive has been implemented through different regulations in each devolved administration, and through a range of guidance documents produced by different government agencies. SEA guidance has been produced for English local and regional land-use plans (ODPM 2005a), for Scottish development plans (Scottish Parliament 2005) and for Transport Plans (DfT 2004a). Box 11.4 sets out the SEA steps in the guidance for England. SEA practice is now moving apace. A recent review by Therivel and Walsh (2006) shows considerable activity, with potentially as many strategic assessments as EIAs each year in the UK, and with already some significant assessments of the emerging generation of RSSs. There is some evidence of the integration of SEA with the plan-making process, but another integration issue relates to the question of how far should SEA be part of an objectives-led sustainability approach? Fitting the 'deep and narrow' SEA process into the 'wider, but shallower' SA process poses considerable integration challenges.

11.4.4 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

The wider SA approach had its UK origins in the 1990s government requirement, in advance of SEA, and set out in *Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance (PPG12)* (DoE 1992), for planning authorities to carry out an 'environmental appraisal' of development plans. This was followed by government guidance for such appraisals, with *Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: Good Practice Guide* (DoE 1993), which outlined the wide range of environmental components for consideration (e.g. air quality, liveability). This was reinforced in a 1999 revision of PPG12 which advised authorities to consider a range of social, economic and environmental effects in a broader 'sustainability appraisal'. Under the 2004 planning legislation, SA is now mandatory for RSSs, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Further guidance (ODPM 2005b) sets out the nature of such appraisal, which has been designed to meet both the requirements of SA and SEA (as required under the SEA Directive).

Box 11.4 SEA steps for development plans

A. *Setting the context and establishing the baseline*
- Identify other relevant plans and programmes.
- Identify environmental protection objectives, and state their relation to the plan.
- Propose SEA and sustainability appraisal objectives.
- Propose indicators.
- Collect baseline data, including data on likely future trends.
- Identify environmental and sustainability problems.

B. *Deciding the scope of SEA and developing alternatives*
- Identify alternatives.
- Choose preferred alternatives.
- Consult authorities with environmental responsibilities and other bodies concerned with aspects of sustainability.

C. *Assessing the effects of the plan*
- Predict the effects of the plan.
- Evaluate the plan's effects.
- Propose measures to prevent, reduce or offset adverse environmental effects.

D. *Consultation on the draft plan and the environmental report*
- Present the results of the SEA up to this point.
- Seek inputs from the public and authorities with environmental responsibilities.
- Take consultation results into account.
- Show how the results of the environmental report were taken into account in finalising the plan.

E. *Monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment*

(*Source:* ODPM 2005a.)

The key stages in the SA process are outlined in Figure 11.4. The guidance stresses that, to be effective, the SA should, inter alia, be:

- objectives led, with clear indicators and targets to identify directions of desired change;
- iterative, allowing appraisal of successive stages and drafts of plans;
- evidence based;
- inclusive, providing for the involvement of the public and relevant stakeholders;

Stage A:
Setting the context and SA objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

A1: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and SA objectives

A2: Collecting baseline information

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

A4: Developing the SA framework

A5: Consulting on the scope of SA

Stage B:
Developing and refining options and assessing effects

B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA objectives

B2: Developing the plan options

B3: Predicting the effects of the plan, including options

B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan, including options

B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects

B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of the plan's implementation

Stage C:
Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

C1: Preparing the SA Report

Stage D:
Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

D1: Consulting on the draft plan and the SA Report

D2: Appraising significant changes

D3: Decision making and providing information

Stage E:
Monitoring implementation of the plan

E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring

E2: Responding to adverse effects

Figure 11.4 Key steps in the sustainability appraisal process for RSSs. (*Source:* ODPM (2005c).)

- timely, transparent and independent; and
- useful, providing clear information on how the plan can be made as sustainable as possible.

SA practice is evolving quickly. The *East of England Plan* (EERA 2004a, 2004b) provided an early example. The process ran over a two-year period and resulted in a very long (800 pages) report. But it did raise some very important sustainability issues associated with the proposed substantial development in this region, including water resources, flood risks, quantity of movements to be accommodated, urbanisation and competition for land. The SA for the South East Plan (SEERA 2006c) used an even more integrated approach, bringing together not only SA and SEA, but also Health Impact Assessment (HIA) – to consider the potential impacts of policies on people's health and well-being and on health inequalities.

   At the sub-regional level, the SA for the *Black Country Study* in the UK West Midlands (BCC 2006b) had other innovative features, including an independent chair for the process and a wide 'reference group' of consultees. However, what has emerged most strongly from practice to date is the importance of an SA process which is not a stapled add-on but which is concurrent with the plan-making process. This can provide the attributes of an iterative process which allows 'real-time' influence on the planning process, yet maintains a certain 'independent detachment' from that process in terms of defending sustainable development principles.

11.5 Case studies

11.5.1 Renewable energy in the regions

The conventional generation of energy is having a serious impact on climate change. The UK is also faced with a rapid decline in its North Sea gas supply. As such there is a major push to increase the generation capacity from renewable sources, allied to improvements in the management of demand. Current plans propose up to 20 per cent of energy supply from renewables by 2020, possibly rising to as high as 60 per cent by 2050. But can the planning system enable the delivery of such capacity in the face of often hostile opposition to the location of renewable plant, and especially windfarms? UK governments are seeking to provide some impetus to the process. In England, *Planning Policy Statement 22 – Renewable Energy* (ODPM 2004c) states that renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic and social impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. It identifies a particular role for regional planning. The RSS should include the target for renewable energy capacity in the region, derived from assessment of the region's renewable energy resource potential, and taking into account the regional environmental, economic and social impacts (either positive or negative) that may result from the

exploitation of that resource potential. Where appropriate, targets in RSSs may be disaggregated into sub-regional targets. Similar guidance for Scotland is covered in *Scottish Planning Policy* 6 (Scottish Executive 2006b).

The South East of England region provides an example of the use of sub-regional targets for renewable energy supply. *The Regional Strategy: Harnessing the Elements* (SEERA 2002) identifies the potential and targets for onshore and offshore wind, biomass and solar for each sub-region. The Thames Valley sub-region, for example, has a target of 128 megawatts in 2010, rising to 196 megawatts by 2016 (Figure 11.5). The draft North East RSS (NEA 2003) has a spatial strategy for renewables which includes a hierarchy of on-shore and off-shore wind power sites. In Scotland, *The National Planning Framework* (Scottish Executive 2004a) highlights the great potential for marine energy development on the west and north coasts.

The *London Plan* (Greater London Assembly 2004a) and in particular *The Mayor's Energy Strategy: Green Light to Green Power* (Greater London Assembly 2004b) provide an innovative example of energy planning. The aim is to reduce London's contribution to global climate change (reducing carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 from the 2000 level), tackle the problem of fuel poverty and
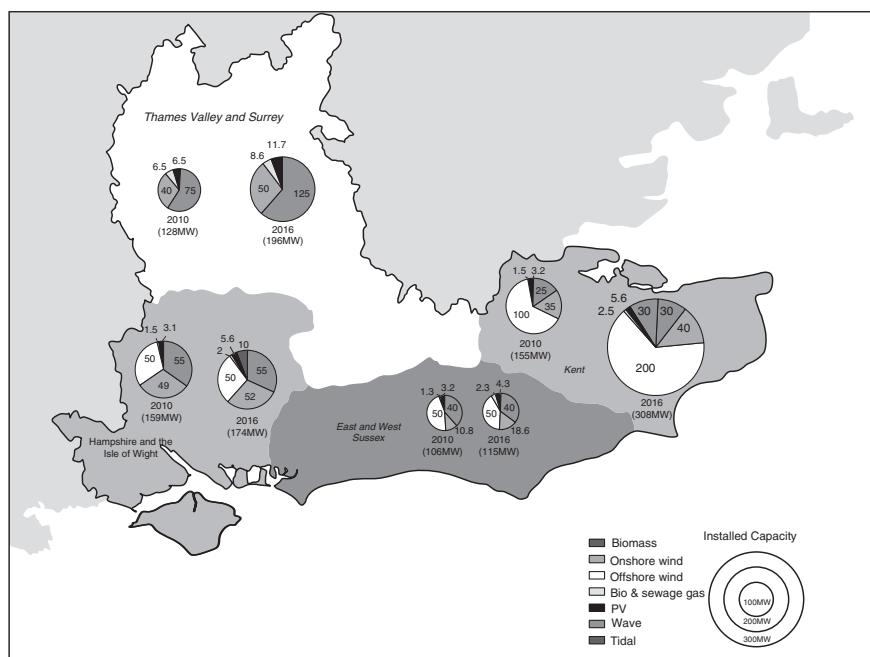
Figure 11.5 Sub-regional targets for renewable energy capacity in South East England. (*Source:* SEERA (2002).)

promote London's economic development through renewable and energy-efficient technology. The energy strategy introduces the concept of the energy hierarchy:

1   use less energy (be lean);
2   use renewable energy (be green);
3   supply energy efficiently (be clean).

Through a series of partnerships, the strategy is seeking to target all activities in the region, and especially transport and housing. For housing, one aim is to raise the standard assessment procedure (SAP) ratings of London housing stock to a minimum of 30 by 2010 (the SAP system rates the energy efficiency of domestic buildings on a scale of 0 = very inefficient to 120 = very efficient). The strategy also includes major drives on photovoltaics, combined heat and power and hydrogen and fuel cells.

11.5.2 Minerals planning

Minerals of various types, and especially aggregates, are important for development. There is also increasing concern that they should be managed in a sustainable way. Regional agencies play a central role in such management, in the context of national policy and guidance. National policy is laid out in Minerals Planning Statements (MPSs) and Minerals Policy Guidance Notes (MPGNs). *MPS 1: Planning and Minerals* (DCLG 2006b) sets out the key overarching policies and principles which the Government expects Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) to follow when preparing minerals development frameworks and in considering applications. MPS 1 is supplemented by a *Planning and Minerals Practice Guide* (DCLG 2006c). The policies should be taken into account by RPBs in the preparation of their RSSs. The DCLG publishes national and regional guidelines for aggregates provision. RPBs should apportion the guidelines for their regions to local authorities, in collaboration with the MPAs (primarily county councils), and taking account of the technical advice from Regional Aggregate Working Parties (RAWPs) in relation to the supply and demand for construction aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock).

   The Yorkshire and Humberside region is a major source of aggregates, especially of crushed rock from quarries, some in, or adjacent to designated locations (e.g. National Parks). The RSS (YHA 2004a) recognises some of the inherent conflicts, as set out in policy positions in Box 11.5.

11.6 Conclusions

The environment is a vital component of regional planning and development, although in many cases this has not prevented very damaging impacts from a wide range of human activities. Fortunately, there is now a growing concern,

Box 11.5 Some policy positions on mineral extraction in Yorkshire and Humberside

(a) MPAs should make provision in their development plans for the supply of minerals, including both aggregate extraction and recycled and secondary materials, in accordance with current Government guidance. In particular:

    (i)   the contribution made by substitute materials should be max-imised wherever possible and suitable facilities provided for recycling, reprocessing and the transfer of materials;

    (ii) MPAs should indicate in general terms areas within which sites for land-won mineral extraction should be safeguarded. Sites in areas subject to international and national designations (e.g. National Parks, AONB, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and SSSIs) should be considered only in exceptional circumstances (and after the most rigorous examination) and where they are demonstrated to be in the public interest;

(b) MPAs should seek a progressive reduction in the proportion and amount of aggregate production from National Parks and AONB;

(c) the environmental impact of minerals should be minimised through:

    (i)   sound environmental management of extractive operations, including adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to large-scale resource areas likely to be worked over a long timescale;

    (ii) high-quality restoration;

    (iii) aftercare of land affected by mineral extraction, where appro-priate; and

    (iv) the promotion of the use of rail and water for the movement of minerals.

(*Source:* YHA 2004a.)

partly fuelled by the recognition of the overriding importance of climate change, that the protection and management of the environment, in all its dimensions, must be accorded a central role in plans and strategies. Of course, the enhancement and sustainability of the environment is also seen as an important means to achieving other social and economic objectives; the focus on environmental quality can attract and retain people and firms in a region. But the challenge is to achieve the environmental, social and economic syner-gies in the face of the competing interests of the many stakeholders involved. There is an array of policies and guidance – some for specific aspects of the environment and some more recently, such as regional sustainable development frameworks, which seek to encourage a more comprehensive and holistic approach.

Associated with the development in policies is a requirement to use an evolving array of methods/techniques designed to highlight a precautionary approach to development and its environmental impacts. EIA was the early pioneer and there is now over 20 years of experience in the UK and beyond. More recently, and of particular relevance to the regional level of intervention, is the advent of SEA and the wider approach of SA. Such approaches have much to offer but it is important that they are integrated with the plan-making process.

12 Processes and politics in regional planning

12.1 Introduction

All the substantive chapters have raised issues of process, most explicitly so in the case of housing, where the degree of contestation was very clear. But stresses and tensions were also evident in other areas, such as in the force field of economy and environment. Chapter 3 surveyed thinking on the processes involved in regional planning, by looking at two central issues. First, we considered power relationships in this public policy process. The discussion looked at the alternative models of regional planning by elites, as against regional planning with much wider influences. We looked at how far regional planning may be thought about as a democratic activity, and how this related to how it is politically charged. The second dimension was the management of the process. How should we think about the co-ordination of planning, both vertically (between different layers of government, and between different scaling of actors overall) and horizontally, within particular regions? Many aspects enter into what was seen as a formidable management challenge, including the roles of professionals, particularly professional planners.

Overall that chapter explored the modes of policy making and governing. How far should this area (alongside others) now be viewed to a degree through 'postmodern' eyes – as complex, networked, unpredictable? And how far should it be seen as 'traditionally' power based, with state institutions and more or less powerful interests interacting in a way perfectly recognisable to observers 50 or 100 years ago? This chapter advances with these themes, by examining mainly recent practice in England. Despite this empirical focus, these issues can be read across to many other regional planning contexts. The aim is to understand the dynamics of situations. Readers should be learning how to conceptualise and how to read the processes and the political forces at work in those processes. By focusing on these recent cases, it is hoped that others can apply the approach used to their own situation (time, country, region).

It is clear that such 'reading across' is by no means straightforward. Detailed studies of other contexts would have shown very different dynamics and power balances. What passes for regional planning in say Germany or Spain is structured differently from that in the UK. Some of these cases will be examined in

the following chapter. We have also seen that there are now at least five differ-
ent models within the UK. Here, mainly the English regional model is referred
to, although it can be argued that the London, Scottish and Welsh modes of
regional planning are probably more effective. But they are possibly atypical
internationally. Regional planning quite often seems to have the features now
present in England, as summarised schematically in the next section. This
element of indeterminacy and blurring may therefore be worth exploring in
depth here.

   This chapter is divided into four parts. First we summarise the English model,
as it stands at the time of writing. Then we explore two aspects of the model in
more depth, through case studies based on the South East of England. The final
section considers the scope for improving on the current model, bearing in
mind experiences so far and in other contexts.

12.2 The English model summarised

Schematically the current English model can be described, from a process point
of view, under the following headings (Table 12.1). We stress again that this is
the model in 2007, not taking into account the removal of assemblies from the
regional landscape proposed by the government in July 2007.

12.2.1 Complex geometries

In the early 1990s the newly reformed regional planning process had a simple
form. Essentially local authorities in association proposed a schema, which was
then amended by government. Now the picture is a great deal more complex.
Alongside the core trio of Assembly, Government Office and RDA, there are
several quite well-organised interests, and some opportunities for wider publics
to have some say.

12.2.2 Complex processes

These actors also operate within a much more intricate and elaborated mechan-
ism. This mechanism is tightly prescribed by central government, through
PPS11 and other means, particularly through the allocation of funding to the

Table 12.1 Key features of the current form of English regional planning

Complex geometries	Three major public sectors actors (Assembly, RDA, Government Office), plus many more informed and participating actors, including to extent wider public
Complex processes	Intricate mechanics of producing and keeping up to date regional strategies, with many complex steps
Blurred accountabilities	Multiple levels of responsibility over many years, in establishing and implementing policies

main actors, for research and for moments of public debate such as the EIP. All this process complexity is freshly minted from around 2000. Another element of the process, discussed in Chapter 7, is the non-stop nature of the game, meaning that all the time one or other of the ingredients of regional planning is being worked on.

12.2.3 Blurred accountabilities

As a result of both of the above aspects, a third feature is the difficulty many might have in saying who is responsible for the strategies expressing regional planning, and for their implementation. Is the government the main decider? Are private corporations, who fund most development, really the key movers? Or are local authorities still in charge of key parts of the agenda? Who would you complain to if you did not like the RSS for your region, or its implementation? These are hard questions for both experts and the general public, much harder than they would have been a decade ago.

In principle the above complexities correspond to the greater importance and scope of regional planning than a decade or more ago. Making regional plans statutory in 2004 crowned this greater importance. It is impossible to say at present how this importance will really work out, given the many aspects which are apparently also governed or decided outside the realm of regional planning (other strategies, other programmes, resourcing by key public and private actors and so on).

12.3 How the major actors work together (or not)

The experience in making RSSs varies considerably between English regions. Here, building on the housing discussion in Chapter 9, we examine the South East region, aware that it is not representative of all regions, but in the hope that it brings out issues in sharper relief than elsewhere.

Between 2003 and 2006 the South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA) put together a draft of the South East Plan, to be the RSS for this region of eight million people, one of two regions forming in a sense the wider London region, along with London itself. *Three parallel tracks were involved in the process*. One was the working by the *professional planning team* of SEERA. This was in 2006 a sizeable team, 13 professional planners – the largest in any English region. During most of the period it was led by a highly experienced planner, Mike Gwilliam, who had, among other jobs, been a county planning officer. Some of the work done by these professionals has been covered in the last four chapters, so it is not necessary to analyse it here, but only be aware of its links to the other two tracks. Compared to previous rounds of regional planning, this team was very far from insulated from what was going on beyond its office walls. This is exceptionally demanding in current English circumstances and may well be putting too much pressure on professionals, facing too many directions at the same time.

The second and third tracks are those of *the big actors* interacting over these years, and how *the wider public* was involved. For the purposes of analysis, these are dealt with separately. The account is based largely on material available on the assembly's webpages, in the form of committee reports, Plan drafts and publicity material, but backed up by interviews carried out for particular projects during these years (see Marshall 2006).

The first 18 months of the process were in a sense just the prelude to the intensive second period. This following 18 months began in October 2004 and culminated in the submission of the draft Plan to government in March 2006 (Table 12.2 is a timeline of the Plan). This whole period of about three years was much longer than recommended by PPG11/PPS11, which stipulated 20 months maximum. The assembly had to argue the case for extensions with the government on the basis of the complexity of the task in hand. The result is that instead of the maximum of PPS11 of two years 11 months, the reality is likely to be nearer five years when the RSS is finalised in 2008.

These first 18 months saw the technical and research work taken through, overseen by steering groups, where the core actors, particularly the RDA and the GOR, were able to be fully involved. The steering groups oversaw working groups, made up mainly of local authority planners. In addition to the most

Table 12.2 The South East Plan process 2003 to 2008

Date	Stage of plan
Early 2003	Start of technical work. Preparation of communications strategy
July to September 2003	Urban and rural conferences, briefing workshops with voluntary sector and members
September 2003	Project plan agreed by Regional Planning Committee
January and June 2004	Early public opinion surveys
Spring 2004	Spring debates – across region consultations
July 2004	Assembly plenary meeting agrees issues and parameters for draft Plan
November 2004	Assembly plenary meeting agrees draft Plan for consultation, agreeing lower housing numbers than planners recommend
January to April 2005	Large-scale public consultations on draft Plan, including further public opinion polling
July 2005	Plenary meeting agrees Plan's regional policies
Autumn 2005	Local authorities work on sub-regional strategies
March 2006	Plenary meeting agrees full Plan and submits to government
April to June 2006	Formal public consultation organised by Government Office
November 2006 to March 2007	Examination in public of Plan
2007–2008	Publication of Panel's report on examination and of Secretary of State's draft and final RSS

organised interest groups (mainly business and environmental) were represented in the Assembly, and so had at least windows onto the drafting and researching processes. All this was overseen in the Assembly by the Regional Planning Committee, which met about eight times a year, reporting to the full assembly which met three times a year. This committee was chaired by a representative of the controlling group in the Assembly. The committee had 16 local authority members, allocated proportionally according to the strength of parties in the region, and up to ten non local authority, from the economic, environmental and social partners in the assembly.

The assembly itself was controlled by the Conservatives, the dominant political party in the region (just as Labour were in the northern regions). Thus the chairs of the planning committee and the assembly were, from 2000 on, the leaders of the county councils of Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Oxfordshire, each serving three-year terms. These were the politicians who led the process overall and had to meet with ministers at key moments, to negotiate over special problems. In such meetings they were never in very strong positions, as the assembly owed most of its funding directly to central government, the local authority members not being prepared to foot much of the bill, and the other partners paying nothing.

The *Government Office* had had a tough experience in the last round of RPG in 1999–2001, and decided that it needed to make very clear the government's views much earlier in the process. It did this by means of letters in 2003, stressing the need to plan for significant growth, especially of housing, in the region. It continued to stress this point to planners and assembly members throughout the process. By October 2004 a first draft of the plan was ready. The Government Office again made clear its view, by means of a ministerial letter pressing for higher housing numbers.

As often in regional planning in England, the housing numbers became the core element of conflict. Planners argued, on the basis of their technical work, that a housing range of 32,000 to 36,000 net housing additions per year was appropriate. But in November 2004 members of the Regional Planning Committee and then the Assembly rejected this professional advice, proposing a range of 25,500 to 32,000. The councillors on the Assembly, above all the Conservative majority, argued that the building level oscillating around 27,000 since 1990 was as much as the region could take, particularly if there was no further resourcing by government for infrastructure.

Political debate at this moment was intense. The Conservatives were aware of the political importance of the issue, especially given local and general elections due in early 2005. They hoped that taking a strong stand on this plan would work to their advantage in the region: probably this was the case, although it is hard to separate out the elements involved in Labour's worsened performance in the region's elections in May 2005.

The argument was intensified by the emergence of what we may call a *regional growth coalition*. This was called the Campaign for More and Better Homes and was formed in November 2004. It was formally a national group, but

took a very strong interest in the Greater South East, as evidenced by its press releases. This was put together by a somewhat unlikely grouping of public and private bodies, including private and social housebuilding interests (Shelter, Wilson Bowden plc, George Wimpey and, for the first three months, the National Housing Federation), a planning association (the TCPA), a business grouping (CBI), a trade union (UNISON) and even the government's design quango, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). This lobby group argued its case for more housebuilding of all kinds, within the professional press and more widely, including by holding meetings at the party conferences. In the South East it was on the side of much higher housing numbers, and pushing for early release of land for housing. Its spokesmen were normally from the TCPA, Shelter or the CBI.

During this short period relationships beween the core actors putting together the Plan became sharper and came out into the open. National newspapers carried articles on the Plan, as did local ones around the region. The division was above all between politicians in the Assembly and government. Other actors positioned themselves in relation to these two sides, with business groups more on the government side and environmental groups more with the political majority. But there was quite widespread support for the Assembly position that far higher funds for infrastructure must be forthcoming from government. The final figure in the March 2006 draft was 28,900 per year, as against 28,000 in RPG9. But government signalled its rejection of this figure by commissioning consultants to produce justification for higher numbers, and to specify how these would be best distributed across the region. Their report was published in June 2006, exploring growth scenarios of from 33,000 to 46,000 homes a year. The chairman of the Assembly responded immediately, calling this 'back of the envelope stuff compared to the robust evidence base developed by the Assembly. With the support of public opinion too, I am confident that we will have the strongest case at November's EIP' (SEERA press release 20 June 2006).

As will be seen in the following section, this stream therefore interacted with that of the wider public at this moment, making a stage of genuine politicisation. But for the final 12 months of Plan preparation, the process went back into the normal channels. This was the phase above all for finalising the *subregional strategies* for the ten areas selected for more detailed treatment, and deciding the district level housing numbers needed for the RSS. Originally these had been expected to appear very quickly, but the local authorities complained about lack of time to do technical work and consult the public, and won extra time. The process was still quite rushed, compared with the more measured pace normally used for structure plan preparation in the previous 30 years. It is unlikely that many interests in these sub-regions were very aware of what was being planned for them, though as far as can be told, the relevant public consultation stages were undertaken.

In some sub-regions the proposals were perhaps not very controversial. In *South Hampshire*, for example, there was fairly wide support for further growth

among local authorities. Here, a local growth campaign emerged, led by Portsmouth and Southampton unitary councils, but including all 11 local authorities for the sub-region. This was called PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire). This body was formed after SEERA commissioned authorities to prepare sub-regional strategies from late 2003. Its language was very much that of a 'growth machine', but blended with a strong dose of social and regeneration concerns. It was given encouragement by the Government Office, who tended to see this sub-region as the only one seriously taking on the government growth agenda.

PUSH's submission to SEERA in December 2005 contained a sub-regional strategy for South Hampshire with a strong commitment to make this area, the largest urban area in the South East outside London (with a million people), 'a world class city region', with an agenda of 'conditional managed growth', backed by infrastructure provision. It contained proposals for two new settlements (or strategic development areas) not far from each of the two main cities. The coalition was in part a pressure group to persuade government to fund more infrastructure in the sub-region, as the leaders of the councils saw areas like the Thames Gateway and Milton Keynes getting some extra finance for transport or other public investment. In order to encourage this kind of local thinking, the government had offered a £40 million growth point fund late in 2005. However, PUSH's chairman pointed out that a share of this would be 'small beer' next to the £3 billion they were looking for over the next 20 years (*Planning Magazine* 6 January 2006 p. 15).

There were some divisions among the main creators of the strategy. Hampshire County Council remained inside PUSH, but submitted a letter of reservation on several matters. It argued that a lower economic growth rate (3.25 as against 3.5 per cent) over the 20-year period was preferred – meaning 7000 houses less. And, in any case, it considered the 6100 houses per year too high. It also pushed the case for a Hampshire greenbelt, as against the proposed 'strategic gaps'. Portsmouth and Southampton also put their own glosses on the submission, with Southampton especially in favour of the 'city first' policy, keeping the sequential test for office development strong (so supporting city centres).

These tensions had long been present in Hampshire between the normally Conservative-led county and the normally Labour-run cities (though Labour had lost control of both the big cities in 1999, with ever declining presence through most English local government). The tensions now necessarily came out in the process of submitting advice to SEERA, but disagreements were kept to a minimum, given the wide south Hampshire consensus on growth. Subsequently it was clear that this consensus would be tested. In May 2006 a counter group was set up, led by the CPRE and other more local societies, to temper the pressure for housing growth. It was called SHUV ('South Hampshire's Unheard Voices').

In many other sub-regions there was a clear anti growth sentiment. Their local authorities then had to negotiate with the Assembly planners and politicians an acceptably limited level of growth to present for the Plan. In one case

there were very sharp divisions. The *Central Oxfordshire* area was seen by government as somewhere suitable for growth. It was hoped that, as in the Cambridgeshire case (While *et al.* 2004), Oxford's economic potential would not be restrained by unnecessary protectionist sentiments, with greenbelt changes if required. Oxford City Council, until 2006 controlled by Labour, supported building on parts of the greenbelt, while some districts (especially South Oxfordshire where much of the building was to be) and the county council, were opposed to growth of this form. The county recommended a solution which meant more growth for two of its 'country towns' (Bicester and Didcot), where much growth had been directed for the previous 30 years.

In this case the conflict was temporarily resolved by the county council, as guardian still of the outgoing structure plan, deciding against the city council growth formula and submitting its answer to the Assembly, which incorporated this into the draft of March 2006. Given that the leader of both Oxfordshire County Council and the Assembly was the Conservative councillor Keith Mitchell, this resolution was to be expected. But it was unlikely that this would fully stick during the following two years, given that the government would have the final say on RSS. Hence the architecture of the new system allowed political local differences of this kind to emerge into public debate – for example, to local television and the local newspapers – to an extent that the old structure planning system did not. More importantly, central government could ally much more easily with its preferred local growth interests, given its very strong control over the RSS process. The politics of regional planning had been rescaled by the 2004 reforms.

How then was the plan-making process negotiated by the major actors? Clearly there is a difference at the regional and sub-regional scales. Sub-regionally, although local authorities are given a strongly directional brief, they still have some scope to push for what they regard as local priorities, and here therefore elected councils retain some force. At the regional level, the councils, just one part, even if the majority, of the assembly, have to compromise continually with the big government and private actors even in this earlier pre EIP stage. Thus in its macro dimensions regional planning in England is very strongly led by central government priorities, even though it is formally carried through the first half of the process largely by regionally-based bodies.

However, the process is vigorously contested, as we have seen in the South East assembly's arguing of its case over the 2003 to 2006 period, both with government and in dealing with its RDA. The process does leave this space for lively and open contestation. Campaign groups have formed like that on housing, even if this and the CPRE may look a lot like the old range of interests. Of the three big actors, the government and to a lesser extent the RDA do undoubtedly have a stronger veto power. But the chance to argue gives regional and local forces some opportunities.

This is a change of emphasis, from a process which in the previous three decades was led more locally (and to an extent in the 1990s, regionally). Some countries may have more centralised models now more like the English process,

others have local and regional government systems which give more leeway to local and regional actors. There are doubtless advantages and disadvantages in each emphasis. At any rate the path chosen affects the experience of regional planning and the likely outcomes quite profoundly.

12.4 The involvement of the wider public

There had been an increasing tendency to widen the net of public coverage for RPG from the 1990s onwards, and this was given a major push by the 2004 legislation. Therefore by the mid 2000s all regions were engaged in large-scale exercises to reach out to the public. The programme to promote public involvement in the South East Plan was exceptionally extensive, almost certainly the largest such exercise carried out in any spatial planning in Britain up to that time. This was fully documented by the assembly, as required by the 2004 Act. In the Pre-Submission Consultation Statement of March 2006, a basic introduction of 16 pages was followed by details running to 112 pages (SEERA 2006b). This document noted that the exercise had begun well before publication of PPS11, with its intensified regime of consultation requirements, but in most respects met or exceeded those requirements.

Sub-regional consultations did take place, as noted above, but we will concentrate on the all-regional elements. The Assembly planners prepared a communications strategy in 2003, which laid out quite carefully the elements of the involvement or engagement approach to be taken. This was subsequently modified and detailed under the pressure of events, but remained the core of what was done. The main elements fall into two main groups.

12.4.1 'Traditional' consultation campaigns

These essentially extended relatively common practice from lower planning levels to the regional scale: a very major challenge, given the over eight million population of the region. After initial urban and rural events in 2003, the first main round was the Spring Debates of April–May 2004. These were held all over the region, discussing the issues to be included in the Plan, mainly involving more knowledgeable stakeholders or group representatives (over 1000 people, according to the Pre-Submission Consultation Statement). The major consultation organised by the Assembly was in January to April 2005, on the draft plan. A very wide range of techniques was used in this, including:

- 5000 copies of the full Plan, distributed around the region;
- work by sub-regional and thematic partners through their own channels, using Assembly prepared material such as a CD with presentations;
- meetings organised directly by Assembly planners (about 100 were attended);
- paid promotions in the region's press and radio;
- and in-house and webpage-based publicity material.

A further ingredient was the leaflet delivered to each home in the region, a measure proposed by the Assembly, after the November 2004 conflicts. There was some party political motivation, given the general election in the offing, and the battlelines on development were in part Labour versus the Conservative majority in the Assembly. Assembly planners had warned of the expense of leafleting every household and the limited results to be expected. They were proved right, in that response to this element was low (only 1.6 per cent) and skewed by area, age and very likely income group. However, this element does seem to have helped to politicise the consultation, thus indirectly generating media interest. A poll showed 56 per cent awareness of the Plan only four weeks into the consultation period, an extremely high figure for any planning exercise.

Overall response rates were impressive after the 2005 consultation, with much higher numbers of written responses than in recent comparable exercises: 2646 as against 650 in the second London Plan consultation and 498 in the East of England Plan equivalent stage.

12.4.2 Opinion polling

Assembly planners put very great emphasis on the work carried out by MORI, the opinion polling company. They regarded this as the best chance to obtain statistically reliable views on the emerging plan, with a sample of 2003 residents being polled through mainly face to face interviews in three rounds, two in 2004 and one parallel to the major campaign of early 2005. In addition some small-scale focus group work was undertaken by MORI. The main strategy prepared by planners drew support from this polling, alongside the technical work carried out, whether in house or commissioned.

In addition to this polling, the leaders of the South East county councils commissioned another firm, ICM, to carry out a separate telephone poll of 8000 residents, with slightly more politicised questions on growth levels and infrastructure needs. This was part of the Assembly leaders' campaign to show that the region was unhappy about the growth levels proposed by government, especially if not backed with necessary public infrastructure investment. This raises interesting issues about competing use of the same technique, and how important the framing and timing of the questions can be in such exercises. Answers to this polling gave, not surprisingly, more support to the Assembly leaders' doubts on growth than did the MORI polling.

Opinion polling appears to be becoming part of the standard armoury of regional plan making, with all regions referring to past or future plans to use it by early 2006. At present little research has been carried out on this element. This could help to establish more clearly its democratic credentials. In other spheres (particularly politics) its limitations are widely known. This technique appears to have 'science' on its side, reaching a wider cross-section of the region's population. However, it may well suffer from weaknesses common to all opinion polling, of varying knowledge and understanding among respondents, as well as the above issue about framing. It is important that regional planning

can find a firm basis for this practice, if it is to become a major element during the coming years, especially as it is not a cheap part of any public consultation pacakage. Use of the internet may be extended further in future exercises.

12.4.3 Wider public involvement as a whole

Work on the South East Plan was little more than half way through the whole process at the time of writing. But the most open stages of wider public consultation have now passed. We may divide the elements into three types. One, representative, is traditionally linked to elected bodies, whether central or local; one is what we can call corporatist, bringing in interest groups in some way legitimised as able to speak for valid social concerns; and the third draws attention to newer deliberative modes, which have been used in other areas of public policy, and in local planning, for a number of years.

Quite a complex mix of devices including each of these types has been present over this three-year period of the South East Plan. These are summarised in Table 12.3. Some features stand out from this figure, highly simplified though it is:

* central and local elected governments still are leading most elements;
* but central government matters/will matter all the way through in orchestrating and steering consultation, with local government much less significant after early 2006;
* corporatist elements do matter too, and also run all the way through the process; and
* deliberative elements are not a main track of involvement.

These points are now enlarged upon.

Giving out information (more passive consultation) was extensive, through a range of media throughout the period, though with peaks at two moments of two to three months each. Direct searching out of views (more active consultation) was also considerable, via more standard meetings, focus group type gatherings and opinion pollings.

These specifically consultative modes ran alongside or intertwined with the more politicised dimensions of the process. In a quite unusual way, the Plan process escaped from the bounds of a technical or public participatory mode, to become an important element of regional party and pressure politics. As we have seen, in late 2004, passions ran high on the Plan, primarily on the growth issue and housing numbers, such that the national media were drawn in to comment on the arguments. In the atmosphere of heightened politics prior to the general and local elections of 2005, parties opposing Labour's growth agendas naturally took up the Plan as part of these arguments. Some parts of this process may appear a bit bizarre, such as the vote taken late in 2004 in favour of abolishing the Assembly, only beaten off by the votes of the social, economic and environmental partners (this being part of Conservative election campaigning). But the politicisation represented a rare moment of regional

Table 12.3 Democratic devices used in the South East Plan

Categories of devices	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Electoral (central)	Under 2004 arrangements project plan would have been agreed by government	Strong pressure throughout process from GOR and RDA, to follow central steers	National elections	Pre EIP consultation and EIP led by GOR and government appointed panel	Panel and then government decide final version of Plan, through to 2008	
Electoral (local)	Local elections	Plan preparation by Assembly	Local elections Politicisation of process in later phases of consultation	Local elections Assembly presents its draft to government. Assembly arguing case at EIP, through to 2007	Local elections	
Corporatist	Interest groups commenting on issues and represented in Assembly as economic, social and environmental members, through all drafting and to EIP and beyond					
Deliberative	Early discussions on issues, via website and public meetings	Opinion polling and focus groups through to 2005. Spring debates around many localities in region Local authorities organising sub-regional consultation	Major public consultation including via press, internet and postal questionnaire to all households in region			

planning engaging with wider political discussions, serving to raise knowledge of the issues beyond the bounds of the always knowledgeable, and so probably doing what normally no amount of patient work by regional planners can do.

Thus regional planning depended not only on the formal set of Plan steps, but also on real worldwide politics, and how these connected. 'The public' is touched just as much by these wider forces, as by the planned measures of publicity. This may well occur again during the remaining two years or more of the process, although it is likely that the nearer the end, the more government will be able to constrain public influence and secure its objectives. That constraint or capacity to manipulate from above is clearly present in the framing of the regional planning process, to a much greater degree than with previous planning systems in England. The complexity and long gestation of plans means that only those with most resources and consistency (above all government, plus one or two well-resourced interest groupings) can stay the course of five years or more of intricate and often abstruse planning processes. A general or sub-regional policy might be bent one way in an early draft, be argued the other way by other interests before the EIP, change again after that four-month long marathon, and then be altered completely by a new minister or government at the last step.

How far has this exercise begun to develop alternative democratic legitimacies? It is clear that so far few convincing elements of deliberative democracy have been brought into English regional planning. Regional planners have done something in the South East to introduce some deliberative democratic devices (spring debates, focus groups), within tight resource limits for such a vast region. Some more chances are given for just the most knowledgeable in the EIP. Far more dominant have been the more traditional forms of representative and corporatist democracy. Central government wields its legitimacy with a heavy hand, allocating resources at all levels – the Assembly is very largely dependent on annual grants by government for its operation. The fact that the Government Office moved in late 2005 to commission an alternative 'evidence base' to that of the Assembly, to be able to challenge the legitimacy of the Assembly arguments at the EIP, shows how the terms of engagement have changed in the now statutory world of regional planning.

Local authorities battle to maintain some influence, with limited resources, although probably significant public legitimacy. Both in largely controlling the pre draft sub-regional stages and through their position in the Assembly, local authorities are able to have an important position in the early stages. But this declines from the moment of the submission of the draft, and the heavyweight representative democratic part (central government) is likely to impose on the lighter local authorities.

Corporatist forms are present as ever, most formally in the composition of the Assembly with the social, economic and environmental partners enshrined in a latter day guilds structure, but equally influentially in the shape of the small set of eternally awake pressure groups. Though these are broadly the same people represented in the Assembly, they will follow the process of the Plan

outside that framework as well, joining in the Examination, and tracking the Plan to the end.

It is clear then that the representative and corporatist forms, including the inner circles of power in regional and national society, give the only serious chances of democratic influence operating on the Plan. The flurry of work around deliberative forms of recent years simply finds little purchase, at least up to now, in this sphere of public policy making.

12.5 Conclusions

What wider conclusions can be drawn from this account of some of the processes underway in one English region? It was suggested at the start of the chapter that regional planning has become an exceptionally complex policy field, in terms both of the processes it has to move through and the numbers of actors involved. The result it seems is an area where it is quite difficult to know who has decided what, who bears responsibility – a major potential problem for any activity intended to be democratic.

On the question of the *adequacy and efficiency of management*, it can be argued that the professionals running the processes in the English regions have shown an impressive ability to learn how to make changing systems work. Broadly speaking they have risen to the management challenge. Plans have not generally been progressed according to government's timetable, but they have been progressed. Planners have been able to meet the massive demands of co-ordinating upwards with an increasingly interested government, and of co-ordinating across to a quite active regional landscape of agencies and public.

Some work areas have suffered, particularly implementation and monitoring, in the pressure of making and reviewing strategies since the late 1990s. The progress made has been helped by the extra government funding provided, but the planners involved are very clear that these extra resources have not come in anything like the amount needed, given the enormous step up in regional planning's role in recent years. This appears to have affected regions operating under both kinds of management system. The West Midlands operates a largely decentralised model, in which most work is done by the local authorities of the region, with a minimal team in the assembly. Most other regions are nearer the south east arrangement, with more staff employed directly by the assembly. But both schemas have been under enormous pressure and the regional planning process may be demanding too much of this relatively small grouping of skilled and experienced experts. Much work has to be let out to consultants, and although these have been gradually building up experience, the results have been very mixed in making efficient progress within a demanding and politically complex timetable. The impression is that neither model, under current resourcing, can really do the job being asked of it. This conclusion may be unsurprising, but it needs to be borne in mind in any assessment of contemporary regional planning.

On the *wider democratic question*, judgement is bound to be politically

charged. It can be argued that it is most unlikely that the current package adds up to an adequate formula, and this in spite of a mammoth effort by regional planners to try to secure public involvement. The reasons for this are in part institutional design and in part systemic, mirroring democratic gaps throughout society and governing.

Institutionally, regional planning has been designed now to be very weakly democratic, downwards. It may well be assumed that this was deliberate, or more charitably (and naively) attribute it to the collapse of the elected regional government project of John Prescott (Deputy Prime Minister from 1997). The melding of central government and limited corporatist influences makes a power bloc hard to resist in regional planning, such that other interests are likely to be continuously pushed beyond the plan's framing. The present devices set is easily manipulated from above, being so extended, scattered, remote and technicised.

Systemically, power has been moving away from weaker interests in society, of many kinds. This has affected all levels of society and potential planning, and so plays equally into regional planning. This means the partial or full exclusion of any interests not in the hegemonic bloc (business essentially fills most of this, in its now highly extensive and diverse forms – media, the development industry, consultancy and law, education, beyond the 'pure' territory of business in the narrow sense). Few interest groups now remain to argue effectively for weaker social actors. Of course there is much scope for caveats and caution here, given that no cycle of regional planning from 2003–2004 onwards had been completed at the time of writing. However, it would be surprising if the remaining parts of the round are able to build up regional planning's democratic credentials significantly. What this would then imply is that regional planning is best understood in quite traditional power terms, rather than more postmodern conceptualisation, even though there is quite enough postmodern blurring to confuse observers and those involved.

So, what might be done about this more political dimension? How can regional planning be made fair and balanced, as well as effectively managed? It seems unlikely that the dual picture painted here is really delivering these requirements at present in the English context. We have seen a fragmented and complex process, alongside a concentrated mass of powers in central government, pressing very strongly to impose its will on the new round of regional planning in England. Elements of top-down force and bottom-up initiative vie for primacy. In a unitary state situation like that which governs England, this tension is inevitable, to a degree. There is no Scottish Parliament or Welsh Assembly or London Mayor there to mediate the territorial struggles which are bound to bubble up. But the mediating takes place somehow, and we would draw from the English case the following two points.

First, *conflict* in such situations is very much to be desired, because it opens out the planning process, ventilates real social differences. These differences are present in every planning context, even though they may not surface and may therefore not be aired. The presence of conflicts does not of course mean that

the results will be 'fair and balanced'. But at least there may be some degree of transparency in arriving at those results. Thus in the Greater South East since the later 1990s, conflicts have been to a certain degree open, reaching occasionally the front pages of newspapers or the television news: with the 'Crow report' on RPG9 in 2000, with the decision by SEERA on housing numbers at the end of 2004, with the sustainability appraisal of the East of England Plan in November 2004, when the Plan, according to the assembly's consultants, was not meeting sustainability criteria. Given that there are interests in the region with strongly held positions on both sides, which touch on fundamental political issues, it has surely been right that these differences have been there and visible to an extent. Elected regional government would have given these differences a firmer base, but in the absence of that, the new regional planning clearly does achieve some of what is needed.

But second, what *improvements* might be made to these processes? Given our criteria for choice (fair, balanced and democratic) we would suggest the following, which would also be relevant in many other regional planning contexts.

Those supporting weaker interests need to be both given better institutional footing in the game, and more resources. This means mainly more public funding, to level the playing field, but also some adjustment of the manner in which regional planning is done. Three measures would help.

One would be to fund, on a continuing basis, groups representing regional social and environmental interests. Given that public agencies (above all central government departments) and private corporations are well able to care for economic arguments in regions, it is these interests which need help in keeping up with the massively increased demands of current regional planning. Such support was given for autonomous 'technical aid centres' in Britain and elsewhere in the 1970s, and even small-scale funding would help to build up a growing expertise in this area over a number of years, in each region.

Second, more resourcing for the Regional Assemblies would help to give more voice to the electorally represented interests and rebalance the weight of the actors somewhat. It does not make sense to give these bodies more powers (as can be done in London, Scotland and Wales), in the absence of direct elections. But just to carry out their existing roles, more resources are needed. Any comparison of the staffing and budgets between RDAs and assemblies shows the strong imbalance – some justified by tasks, some not. Regional planning, to be serious, needs more regional planners.

Third, the regional planning process needs to be made more open, and less subject to government take over. Two changes might help here. Development of regionally-based broadcasting and ICT systems would help to build up a more substantive regional public realm. Resources should be available to Regional Assemblies not just to develop effective websites, as was done in the early 2000s, but also to run television of many kinds. Necessarily these will normally be of very minority interest, but their existence would gradually build a space for thinking about regional futures, long and short term. This could interact with teaching done in the schools and universities of the region. It would be fed

by the support given to groups proposed above. They could make their own contributions to the debates on television and elsewhere. This old dream of an expanding local and regional public realm, promoted, for example, by Raymond Williams (1974), has become more practical with ICT advances, and simply needs public champions to develop it.

The second change which might make the process fairer would be handing over the EIP to genuinely independent managers, although we recognise the new set of tensions with government policy that this would generate. At present, whatever the early intentions of the system's designers, inspectors naturally feel they must follow the latest government policy steers, PPSs and so on. This means that the region loses hold of the Plan by some months before the EIP. Funding an autonomous and region-based process could continue the normally high standard of testing of strategies, without at this stage assuming that government's priorities must be stamped on the Plan. Clearly this may appear a utopian demand, given that government in England has increasingly since 2000 insisted that it expects RPG and RSS to incorporate its priorities. But a certain backing off by Government Offices during the early stages of plan making and within the whole EIP process would, in our view, give a greater chance of the region really working towards some of its own emphases. Unavoidably government would perhaps then come in and change the strategy, but in the meantime, the process might have allowed the emergence of a more genuinely regionally coloured Plan.

Part 4

Wider prospects

European and future

13 Regional planning in a European context

13.1 Introduction

The focus of this text has been predominantly on regional planning in the UK, and more specifically in England, although, as noted throughout, even in this more limited context there can be considerable variations of approach between regions and sub-regions. Chapter 6 highlighted some of the other differences in approach when the various countries of the UK are separately considered. Such variations provide valuable comparative material. Of course such comparative learning can be widened greatly by drawing on regional planning experience outside of the UK, and interesting examples can be drawn from all over the world. Each example would merit a book in its own right rather than the few pages that are available here. To avoid a too superficial study it is only possible to take a very limited number – and even then this may be only scratching the surface of each one.

The chapter first seeks to set UK and other EU Member States' experience of regional planning in the increasingly important context of EU Cohesion and Regional Policy, and the ESDP. The Cohesion and Regional Policy has a long history and has grown in such importance in the activities of the EU that its funding now constitutes almost 50 per cent of the EU budget. The ESDP is more recent and does not yet have the power of a substantial budget, but it does have the power of ideas, concepts and information. Within this EU context, the current 27 Member States, with a combined population of approximately 496 million, provide a wide variety of regional planning experience.

Two examples are taken from the EU 'core'. France was one of the original six Member States; with a population of about 64 million, similar to the UK but with a much larger land area, it provides a fascinating history of regional planning very much concerned with counterbalancing the dominance of the Paris region. Germany was also a founder member; it has changed greatly over the years, particularly with the reunification in 1990. It is now a country of over 82 million people with a wide range of regional issues. France provides an example of regional planning in a unitary state, but with a 50-year history of approaches to regional decentralisation. Germany has a federal system and the sub-national level occupies a significant role in the planning structure. The chapter also provides some brief illustrations of regional planning activity on the 'periphery' of

the EU – including the trans-national Oresund region initiative in Scandinavia and the remarkable development of Barcelona in the Catalonia region on Spain's Mediterranean coast.

13.2 The EU framework for regional planning

13.2.1 EU cohesion and regional policy

Counterbalancing an EU 'centre–periphery' model

The EU is on an integration path, moving from a free trade area, to common market, to various degrees of economic, monetary and, to some extent, political union. The aim of the Single European Act (1987) was the further elimination of barriers (non-tariff, such as restrictive practices, as well as tariff) and the creation of a powerful and competitive single market, well equipped to compete globally. The EU has also grown in terms of Member States and population and, with the addition of Bulgaria and Romania, will soon exceed 500 million people – well in excess of the population size of the United States. But the addition of new Member States usually brings problems of economic disparity. For example, Bulgaria and Romania together added a further 8 per cent to the EU population but less than 1 per cent to GDP (CEC 2004).

The removal of barriers to trade and factor movement within the EU can also emphasise the 'centre–periphery' model of differential regional prosperity, noted in Chapter 4. Many years ago, and just prior to the advent of UK membership to the then EC, Clark *et al.* (1962; see also Drake 1994 for a later version) ingeniously sought to model the impact of the new market by estimating the economic potential of EC regions using a gravity model approach. This assessed the economic potential for each EC region with reference to the sum of the GDPs of all regions divided by the distance from the region under consideration. Thus, central regions tend to have higher economic potential by virtue of being surrounded by other high-income regions. The findings also suggested that the very creation of the EC, with its freer trade patterns, would differentially benefit the centre, with its considerable economic potential, at the expense of the periphery. There is some evidence of this effect (see next section). As such, the EU must be, and must be seen to be, fair as well as free, and over time a counterbalancing cohesion and regional policy has been developed to aid the development of problem regions in the Member States.

The concern for problem regions dates back to the original Treaty of Rome where one of the original reasons for creating the EC was 'to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences between the existing regions'. This view was reiterated by the communiqué on the 1972 Common Market Summit, 'The Heads of State or of Government agreed that a high priority should be given to the aim of correcting in the Community, the structural and regional imbalances which might affect the realisation of Economic and Monetary Union.' Key elements in the original policy measures included research into the nature of regional

differences to raise awareness, attempts to co-ordinate Member States' individual regional policies to prevent unreasonable competition, and a 'topping-up' of financial support to problem regions from EU Structural Funds. It is this latter, additional funding element, which has become the dominant feature of the EU regional policy. Between 1988 and 2006 the Union has invested around €480 billion on the 'less-favoured' regions, of which around 70 per cent was to regions with income levels below 75 per cent of the EU average.

Widening membership and widening regional disparities?

The EU often presents the Union as a 'Europe of Regions' and provides a wealth of data, via its Eurostats, of economic performance across various levels of region (from the large NUTS 1 regions to the much smaller NUTS 3 sub-regions, equivalent to the English counties). It is difficult to directly attribute changes in relative regional economic indicators to the impacts of the EU policy measures. However, recent statements from the EU (CEC 2006b) claim that evaluations show that between 1988 and 2001 the gap between the poorest regions and the EU average was reduced by one-sixth. For example, the increase in the level of GDP due to EU policy was estimated at 10 per cent in Greece and 8.5 per cent in Portugal between 1989 and 1999, and Ireland provides a particular example of a country which has rapidly improved its economic performance with the benefits of regional support.

Yet, in many respects the EU cohesion and regional policy is constantly seeking to offset the impacts of an increasingly economically diverse membership. Recent Eurostat data shows that a total of 37 of the 254 EU NUTS 2 regions exceeded 125 per cent of the EU-25 GDP per capita average. These regions were located primarily in Germany, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Austria. In contrast 60 regions had a GDP less than 75 per cent of the EU-25 average. These regions were located largely in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Germany (former Eastern part). Table 13.1 shows

Table 13.1 Regional GDP per capita in the EU-25 in 2003 (in PPS, EU-25 = 100)

The ten highest			*The ten lowest*		
1	Inner London (UK)	278	1	Lubelskie (PL)	33
2	Bruxelles – Capitale (BE)	238	2	Podcarpackie (PL)	33
3	Luxembourg (LU)	234	3	Podlaskie (PL)	36
4	Hamburg (DE)	184	4	Swietokrzyskie (PL)	37
5	Ile de France (FR)	173	5	Warminsko-Mazurskie (PL)	37
6	Vienna (AT)	171	6	Opolskie (PL)	37
7	Berks, Bucks and Oxon (UK)	165	7	Eszak Magyaroszag (HU)	38
8	Bolzano (IT)	160	8	Vychodne Slovenska (SK)	39
9	Oberbayern (DE)	158	9	Eszag-Alfold (HU)	39
10	Stockholm (SE)	158	10	Del-Alfold (HU)	40

Source: CEC (2006b).

European cluster of competitiveness and innovation

Economic Lisbon indicators[*]

Number of indicators in the upper quartile minus number of indicators in the lower quartile

> 3	Primarily high performance
1 – 3	
0	Medium performance
-3 – -1	
< -3	Primarily low performance

Information society index

very low

high and very high

Patents

Regional share of total patent applications 2002. (only regions that cover the top 50 % of total patents).

5 %

2,5 %

■ Knowledge node of european significance (50.000 - 500.000 students in FUA, 2000-2001)

no data

© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries
Regional level: NUTS 2
Origin of data: Economic Lisbon performance:
ESPON Project 3.3, CURS;
Information society index: ESPON Project 1.2.3;
patents: ESPON Project 3.1, BBR;
Knowledge function of FUAs: ESPON Project 1.1.1

[*]For further information on the indicators see the table of the chapter

Source: ESPON database

© ESPON and ESPON Atlas Project 3.1, BBR, 2006

Reykjavik

Oslo · Stockholm · Helsinki · Tallinn · Vilnius · Minsk · Kyiv · Ankara · Nicosia · Valletta · Lisboa · Madrid · Paris · Bruxelles · Luxembourg · Amsterdam · Berlin · Warszawa · Praha · Wien · Bratislava · Budapest · Zagreb · Ljubljana · Beograd · Sarajevo · Sofia · Skopje · București · Athina

500 km

Figure 13.1 EU-25: Economic Lisbon Indicators, for NUTS 2 regions. (*Source:* from ESPON database; CEC (2006a).)

the very large range between the highest and lowest EU-25 regions in terms of GDP. In a similar vein, Figure 13.1 shows the relative performance of the EU NUTS 2 regions against the so-called 'Economic Lisbon indicators'. This shows the generally high performance of much of England, Sweden, Austria, Ireland, the west and south of Germany and northern Italy. Yet, ironically, all seem to be out-performed by the non-Member States of Norway and Switzerland!

Structural Funds Regulations 2007–2013 on Cohesion and Regional Policy

The third Cohesion Report on the performance of the EU regions (CEC 2004) recognised the persistence of wide gaps in employment and social conditions as a result of 'structural deficiencies in the factors of competition – physical and human capital, innovative capacity, business support and blighted urban and/or rural environment'. A key response was the 2007–2013 allocation of Structural Funds of €308 billion (at 2004 prices) which will be the greatest investment ever made by the EU to support the regional growth agenda and to stimulate job creation. A General Regulation sets out the common principles, rules and standards for the implementation of the three cohesion instruments (structural funds): the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund.

The role of the *ERDF* is to support programmes addressing regional develop-ment economic change, enhanced competitiveness and territorial co-operation. Particular priorities include R&D, innovation, environmental protection and risk prevention, and infrastructure investment (particularly in the least-developed regions). R&D can be a key factor in determining a region's inno-vative capacity. Estimates of R&D expenditure indicate a major concentration in the most prosperous regions; 35 EU NUTS 2 regions have 46 per cent of total EU-27 expenditure, whereas another 47 regions have collectively only 0.5 per cent of the total R&D expenditure. The *ESF* will focus on four areas: increasing the adaptability of workers and enterprises; enhancing access to employment and participation in the labour market; reinforcing social inclusion by combating discrimination and facilitating access to the labour market for dis-advantaged people; and promoting partnership for reform in the fields of inclu-sion and employment. The *Cohesion Fund* contributes in particular to interventions in the environment field and trans-European transport networks in Member States with a GNI of less than 90 per cent of the EU average, which covers all the new Member States, and Greece and Portugal. A further regula-tion introduces a *European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC)* which seeks to facilitate cross-border, trans-national and/or inter-regional co-operation between regional and local authorities.

The distribution of the structural funds is organised on a programme objec-tive and Member State region basis. Table 13.2 and Figure 13.2 set out the indicative financial allocations, and the regional distributions. The *Convergence Objective* will receive 81.5 per cent of the total funding. The rationale is to promote growth-enhancing conditions leading to real convergence for the least-developed Member States and regions. Eligible regions are those with a GDP

Table 13.2 Cohesion Policy (2007–2013): Indicative Financial Allocations (million euros, 2004 prices)

	Convergence objective			Regional competitiveness and employment objective		European territorial co-operation objective	Total
	Cohesion Fund	Convergence	Statistical phasing out	Phasing in	Regional competitiveness and employment		
Austria			159		914	228	1301
Belgium			579		1268	173	2019
Bulgaria	2015	3873				159	6047
Cyprus	194			363		25	581
Czech Republic	7830	15,149			373	346	23,697
Denmark					453	92	545
Estonia	1019	1992				47	3058
Finland				491	935	107	1532
France		2838			9123	775	12,736
Germany		10,553	3771		8370	756	23,450
Greece	3289	8379	5779	584		186	18,217
Hungary	7589	12,654		1865		344	22,452
Ireland				420	261	134	815
Italy		18,867	388	879	4761	752	25,647
Latvia	1363	2647				80	4090
Lithuania	2034	3965				97	6097
Luxembourg					45	13	58
Malta	252	495				14	761
Netherlands					1477	220	1696
Poland	19,562	39,486				650	59,698
Portugal	2722	15,240	254	407	435	88	19,147
Romania	5769	11,143				404	17,317
Slovakia	3433	6231				202	10,264
Slovenia	1239	2407			399	93	3739
Spain	3250	18,727	1434	4495	3133	497	31,536
Sweden					1446	236	1682
UK		2436	158	883	5349	642	9468
Not allocated						392	392
Total	61,558	177,083	12,521	10,385	38,742	7750	308,041

Source: CEC (2006c).
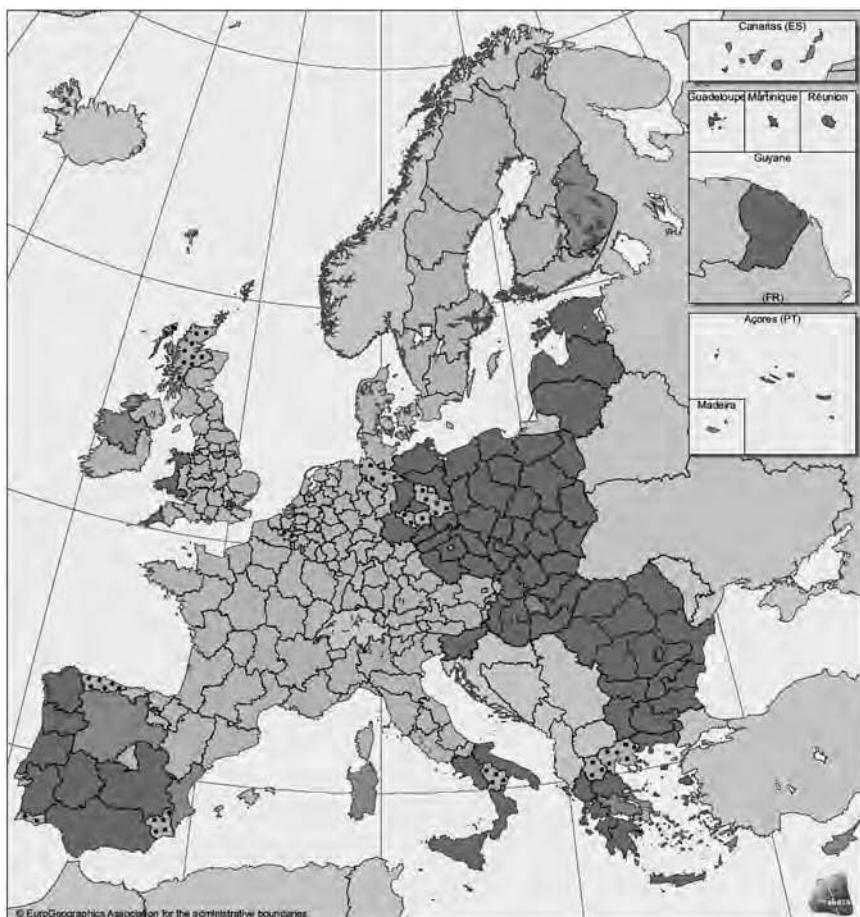
below 75 per cent of the EU average. They include 100 regions from EU-27 with a population of 170 million, including 16 granted 'phasing out' status (regions which would have been below 75 per cent of the EU average but for the enlargement). Outside the Convergence regions, the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective (RCEO) aims to help all other regions to strengthen their competitiveness and attractiveness, as well as employment, using the ERDF to support innovation, environmental protection and accessibility, and the ESF to invest in human resources. The RCEO applies to 168 regions with a population of 314 million, including 13 'phasing-in' regions subject to special financial allocations due to their former Objective 1 status. The European Territorial Objective covers 37.5 per cent of the total EU population reflecting the many borders and spatial barriers in the Union!

13.2.2 The ESDP

The evolution of spatial planning on a European scale – metaphors and studies

Davoudi (2005) notes that 'the European Union has no competency in spatial planning, yet its influence on the planning policies of Member States has been increasing particularly after publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999' (CEC 1999). The ESPD is, however, only one of the most recent 'ways of looking at EU space' (Williams 1996) or 'visioning in European Spatial Planning' (Nadin, in Faludi 2002). There was some interesting stimulation of thinking about a European spatial planning strategy by the Council of Europe in the 1980s, and the adoption of a European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (CoE 1984).

   There has also been a fascinating array of attempts to conceptualise and visualise the changing nature of European space using maps, models and especially metaphors. So we have the 'Golden Triangle' of London, Paris and the Ruhr (Williams 1993), the 'Blue Banana' of the perceived European economic and political core running from Birmingham through Brussels, Bonn and Frankfurt to northern Italy, the 'Sunbelt' growth zone running from Valencia in Spain along the Mediterranean coast and again to northern Italy, and the 'Atlantic Arc' (Brunet 1989). In contrast, Kunzman and Wegener (1991), drawing on postwar Federal Germany experience, use the European 'bunch of grapes' metaphor to convey the image of a Europe of polycentric regions (see Figure 13.3). Even more fascinating is the story behind one of these metaphors. According to Faludi and Waterhout (2002 p. 11) it was quite accidental how the *dorsale* (French for backbone) became the Blue Banana. On a visit to *Delegation a l'Amenagement du Territoire et a l'Action Regionale* (DATAR), the French Planning Minister, Jacques Chereque, saw a map of Europe with the *dorsale* painted in blue and asked: 'What is the blue banana for?' A reporter from the weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, after overhearing this comment, published an article under the title *La banane bleue*, and the name stuck.

Figure 13.2 EU-25: Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment Regions (2007–2013). (*Source:* EC DG-Regional Policy (CEC 2006c).)

(a)

(b)
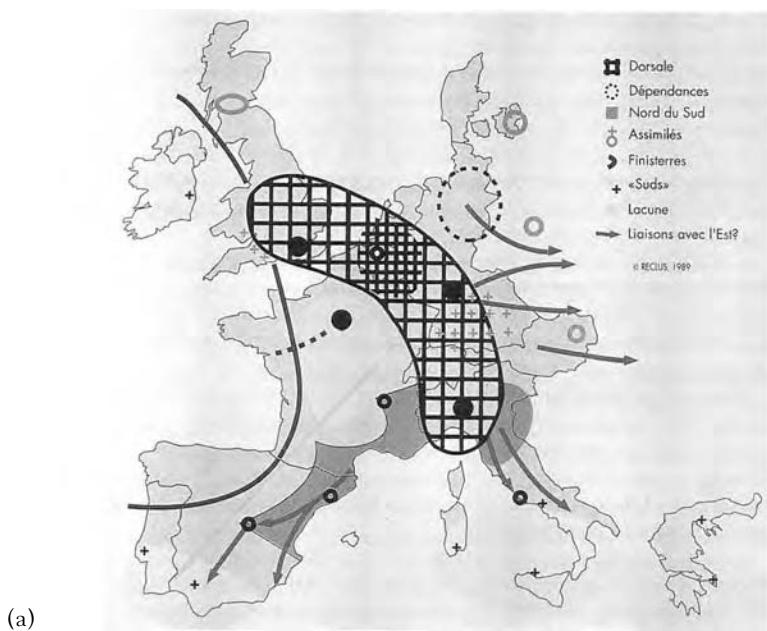
Figure 13.3 Two metaphors of European space – (a) the 'blue banana'; (b) the 'bunch of grapes'.

These ideas helped to create a climate and an impetus for a set of attempts by the European Commission to provide a reference framework for spatial planning at the EU scale. *Europe 2000: An Outlook for the Development of the Community's Territory* (CEC 1991) was the first step. It included a geographical analysis of regional development trends in the EU, an appraisal of infrastructure and spatial coherence including the possible impact of the emerging Trans European Networks (TENs), and the promotion of new territorial groupings based on geographical proximity and developing mutual relationships (a 'Europe sans frontieres'; Figure 13.4). The second step was a series of trans-national studies for six areas including, for example, the Centre Capitals area containing six national capitals, and the Atlantic Arc from the north of Scotland to Portugal. Although carrying no statutory weight, the studies included spatial planning scenarios which set out important approaches for development, with, for example, a high profile for Euro-corridors linking metropolitan areas. The next step was *Europe 2000+* (CEC 1994) which argued the central message that if the EU was to achieve sustained and balanced economic development, there would need to be more co-operation supported by a common framework for territorial planning. The report also includes an overview of the diversity of planning systems in the EU – which can be a major constraint on such co-operation.

The ESDP and its influence on spatial planning

The *ESDP* emerged from this history of activity. Work was initiated in 1991, on an intergovernmental basis, to move from analysis to policy development and the ESDP was finally agreed by all Member States at their meeting in Potsdam (CEC 1999). Its aim is based on the EU aim of achieving a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the EU, in particular by strengthening economic and social cohesion. It seeks to provide a vision of the future territory of the EU, a general source of reference for actions with a spatial impact taken by public and private decision makers, a policy framework for better co-operation between Community sectoral policies with spatial impacts and also between Member States, and a positive signal for broad public participation in the debate on decisions at the European level which affect cities and regions. However, it is a legally non-binding document, and each country can take it forward to the extent that it wishes to take account of European spatial development aspects in its national policies. A brief summary of the spatial development aims and policy options of the ESDP are set out in Box 13.1.

There are a range of views on the nature and impact of the ESDP. Faludi and Waterhout (2002) argue that 'the ESDP has been an important source of inspiration' for further EU initiatives on territorial cohesion. The Tampere Action Programme (1999) set out 12 actions, addressing the spatial impacts of Community policies and enlargement. These included, for example, the INTERREG IIIB programmes which seek to foster trans-national co-operation within a common planning framework, and ESPON (the European Spatial Planning Observation Network) which is undertaking detailed analysis of
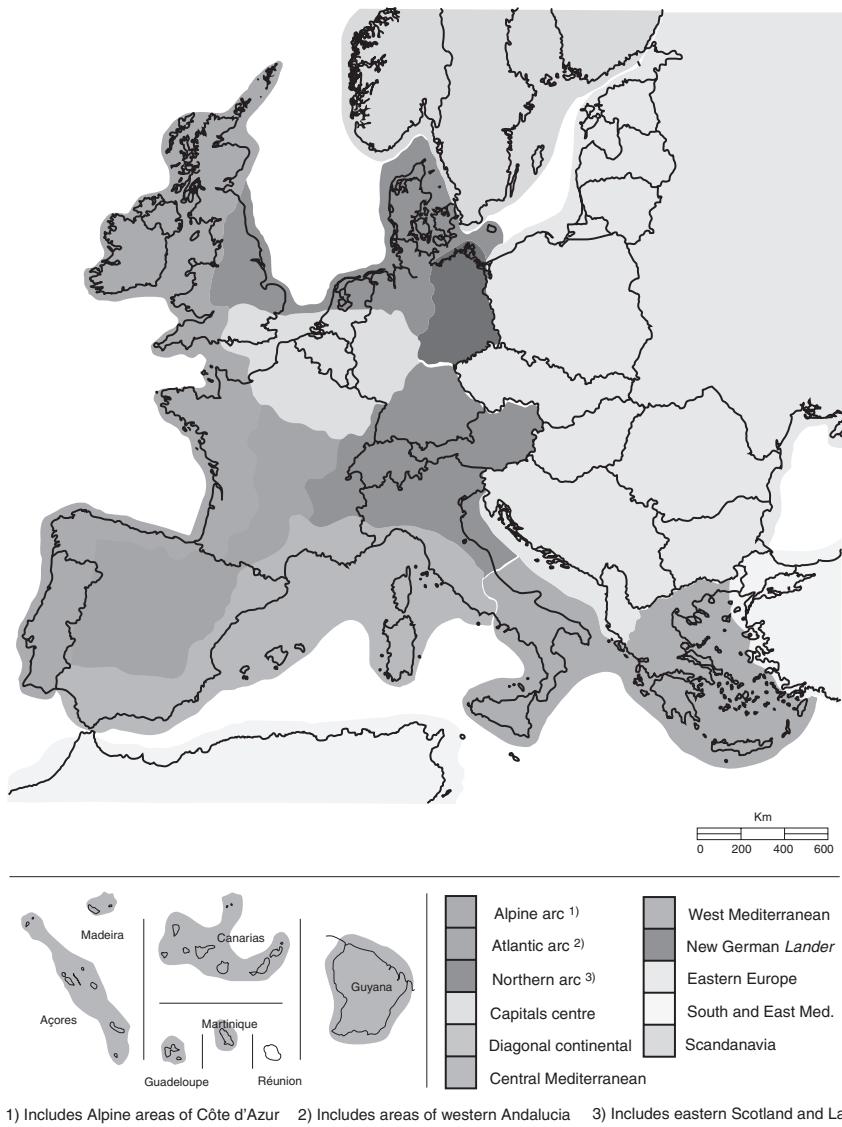
Figure 13.4 Europe 2000 – trans-national study areas.

Box 13.1 Spatial development aims and policy options of the ESDP

Polycentric spatial development and a new urban–rural relationship: development of a polycentric and balanced urban system and strengthening of the partnership between urban and rural areas, overcoming the out-dated dualism between city and countryside. Polycentricity seeks to use many centres as a basis for functional complementarity, for the integration of spatial planning and for political co-operation. Associated policy options include:

- the creation of dynamic, attractive and competitive cities;
- indigenous development and diverse and productive rural areas;
- urban–rural partnerships.

Parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge: promotion of integrated transport and communication concepts, which support the polycentric development of the EU territory and are an important precondition for enabling European cities and regions to pursue their integration into European Monetary Union (EMU). Associated policy options include:

- an integrated approach for improved transport links and access to knowledge;
- use of a polycentric model as a basis for better accessibility;
- efficient and sustainable use of the infrastructure;
- diffusion of knowledge and innovation (e.g. dissemination of new ICT in all regions).

Wise management of the natural and cultural heritage: this contributes both to the preservation and deepening of regional identities and the maintenance of the natural and cultural diversity of the regions and cities of the EU in the age of globalisation. Associated policy options include:

- natural and cultural heritage as a development asset;
- preservation and development of the natural heritage;
- water resources management;
- creative management of the cultural landscape;
- creative management of the cultural heritage.

(*Source:* Adapted from CEC 1999.)

spatial development trends in the EU. In the context of polycentricity ESPON has already identified about 40 functional urban areas, metropolitan European growth areas (MEGAs), that might offset the dominance of the new metaphor of the 'pentagon' (area bounded by London, Hamburg, Munich, Milan and Paris) – given appropriate policy support. Another perspective is provided by Jensen and Richardson (2004). They also recognise the significance of the ESDP in shaping views on the future vision of European space, but see the 'European project' as advancing a European space of high-speed, frictionless mobility, the transgression of borders and the creation of city networks – potentially creating a space which they call 'monotopia'. In this and in earlier work (see, for example, Richardson and Jensen 2000) they also suggest that the ESDP is more oriented to economic development to the detriment of other dimensions such as the environment, which is seen as subsidiary to the logics of material growth and market expansion.

In the UK, as noted elsewhere in this book, the ESDP has had an impact on regional planning. It has given a boost to the very concept of spatial planning, and the ESDP aims can be identified in a number of RSSs, in the preceding RPGs, and especially in the 'national' spatial plans for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The concept of polycentricity has also made some ground in both regional and sub-regional planning. The UK has also participated in INTERREG IIIB projects, covering the North West Europe Region, Atlantic Area and North Sea Region programmes. Successful outcomes include, for example, joint working on planning issues related to the high-speed train networks in the North West Europe Region, and strategies for converting fishing infrastructure to ecotourism in the Atlantic Area.

13.3 Evolving regional planning in the EU 'core'

13.3.1 *France*

Context: issues, agencies and the inter-regional framework

France now has over 50 years of regional planning activity and provides many innovative examples of responses to one of the most extreme cases of centre–periphery contrasts; it is also a key player in the core area of the EU. But, in contrast to the UK, regional planning in France is a post-war phenomenon. In 1947, it was the publication of a book entitled *Paris et le Desert Francais* by a young geographer, J.F. Gravier (1947) which probably lit the fuse. This book, which in its impact on public opinion was the French equivalent of the UK Barlow Report, focused attention on the regional problems and in particular on the effects of excessive centralisation and the growth of Paris. The Paris metropolis, Paris-Ile-de-France region, dominated France. The life of the country centralised around it to the extent that, in the early 1960s, this region, with only 2 per cent of the area of France, had 19 per cent of the population and 29 per cent of its industrial jobs (Hall 2003). The domination of

government jobs and HE students, in the even smaller area of the city of Paris proper, was much higher still. While Paris had grown apace, many other parts of the country had stagnated, and especially so in the largely rural areas to the south and west of the other critical prosperity cleavage – the imaginary line drawn from Le Havre in the north-west to Marseilles in the south-east. Out of an appraisal of these problems emerged the objectives of French regional planning which can be briefly summarised as: the reduction of regional disparities, with the control of the growth and excessive centralisation around Paris, the development of the under-developed west and south, and the regeneration of problem industrial areas. The achievement of such objectives, however, required efficient regional planning machinery.

With 90 *departements* and 38,000 *communes*, the French administrative system of the early post-war years was a relic of the Napoleonic era, and was not at all well fitted to the task of regional planning. But all this changed in the next 20–30 years, with the evolution of a planning machinery of considerable complexity. The details of this evolution are covered elsewhere (see Glasson 1992; Balchin *et al.* 1999). The main elements in the planning machinery include a system of planning regions and associated agencies, sub-regional planning organisations for six major urban regions, a separate system for Paris, and the all important co-ordinating bodies at the national level. The government formally set up 21 planning regions (*regions de programme)* in 1959; Corsica was added in 1970. They contain between two to eight *departements*, and have populations ranging from over ten million in the Ile de France to less than one million in Limousin. Since 1986 the regional councils (*conseils regionaux)* have been directly elected, with councillors being elected from *departements* on a six-year mandate. They work with the regional prefects (*prefets*) and others, to co-ordinate major transport projects and other investment in the regions. They also produce *contrats des plans* for implementation – which is very much dominated by state funding. As noted by Newman and Thornley (1996 p. 158) 'decentralisation at regional level represents only a partial devolution of power'.

In 1966, the state also set up a system of *Organisme d'Etudes d'Amenagement d'Aires Metropolitaines* (OREAM), to prepare plans for a set of two-city metropolises – Lille–Dunkerque, Rouen–Le Havre, Nantes–St Nazaire, Marseille–Aix, Lyon–St Etienne and Nancy–Metz. Separate arrangements for Paris included a full-time regional *prefet*, and an influential research organisation – the *Institut d'Amenagement et d'Urbanisme de la Region Ile de France* (IUARIF). Among an array of influential central state agencies, of particular significance is the DATAR which was set up in 1963 to co-ordinate planning activities in the regions and to allocate regional development funds.

The inter-regional framework for French regional planning has several strands and, as in the UK, has become increasingly influenced by EU regional policy. National planning was introduced post-war, via the *Commissariat General du Plan* (CGP), to rebuild a war-torn country. By the mid 1960s this included a regionalised zoning system for financial aid for industrial development, with up to 25 per cent investment grants for certain areas in the west and

south, and the old industrialised areas of the north-east. By 1995 the system had been greatly rationalised under a new Framework Law for Regional Development which set out the aims of French regional development policy to 2015. The key instrument (introduced in the 1980s) was the *Prime d'Amenagement du Territoire* (PAT); for manufacturing projects this grant varied from 17 per cent in much of the country to up to 34 per cent in Corsica. By the 1990s the EU Objective designations for the allocation of Structural Funds became key influences with, for example, only part of the Nord-Pas de Calais region and Corsica qualifying for Objective 1 aid. Figure 13.2 shows that from 2007 only a few French overseas territories will be beneficiaries, as Convergence regions, from the highest level of EU aid.

Complementary to this system of incentives has been a policy of increasing public investment in regions on the periphery. Since 1966, there has been an attempt to counter-balance the influence of Paris by building up strong counter magnets, growth poles, in the form of *metropoles d'equilibrie*. For this purpose the country is divided into nine functional regions – based around five of the OREAM areas (omitting Rouen–Le Havre), plus Strasbourg, Bordeaux and Toulouse, and of course Paris. Over time, these poles have received public investment, for example, in transport infrastructure and HE provision, to strengthen their economic potential and to attract private capital. The development of the French *TGV* (*train a grand vitesse)* system since the 1980s provides an outstanding example of the use of infrastructure to link the *metropoles d'equilibrium* with the capital (Figure 13.6). It is also the most emblematic image and example of the high-speed, frictionless EU space noted earlier by Jensen and Richardson (2004). But of course improved accessibility can reinforce the centre as much as the periphery!

Planning the Paris Region, and the 'balancing metropolis' of Marseille–Aix

Paris is a world city and the French are keen to enhance this role even further. On the other hand, there has been concern for many years about the over-concentration of economic activity, political power and cultural activity, and its physical implications, in an area within a radius of about 50 miles of Notre Dame. Issues such as outworn transport infrastructure, social exclusion and envisaged substantial population growth, have generated some innovative regional planning responses and in particular the *Schema Directeur d'Amenagement et d'Urbanisme de la Region de Paris* of 1965. This plan mapped out the guidelines for the development of the region up to the year 2000, based on an assumed growth of population up to 14 million, including an extra two million jobs. A key aim was to offset the region's mono-centric form by creating a new intermediate level of centre. This involved the renovation of urban centres within the existing agglomeration (e.g. La Defense; St Denis), and the development of eight new centres (with populations of 300,000 to 500,000) along north-west–south-east twin corridors on either side of the Seine at a distance of between 15 and 30 miles from the city. It differed from a typical greenbelt/new

Figure 13.5 France – planning regions and regional metropolises. (*Source:* Hall (2003).)

town approach which was seen as unnecessarily constricting on the agglomeration. It did necessitate considerable investment in over 500 miles of new highways and an entirely new Regional Express Rail (RER) system.

Since 1965 much has changed, and much has also been achieved. The scale of population growth was sharply reduced with the new target of about 11 million not much above the actual figure in the early 1980s. The number of new centres was cut back to five, but by 2000 their combined population was nearing one million. The western centres at Cergy-Pontoise and at St Quentin-en-Yvelines benefited from office development; the eastern centre at Marne-la-Vallee benefited from a university campus and the large Euro-Disney theme park. Much of the transport infrastructure is also now in place, including the
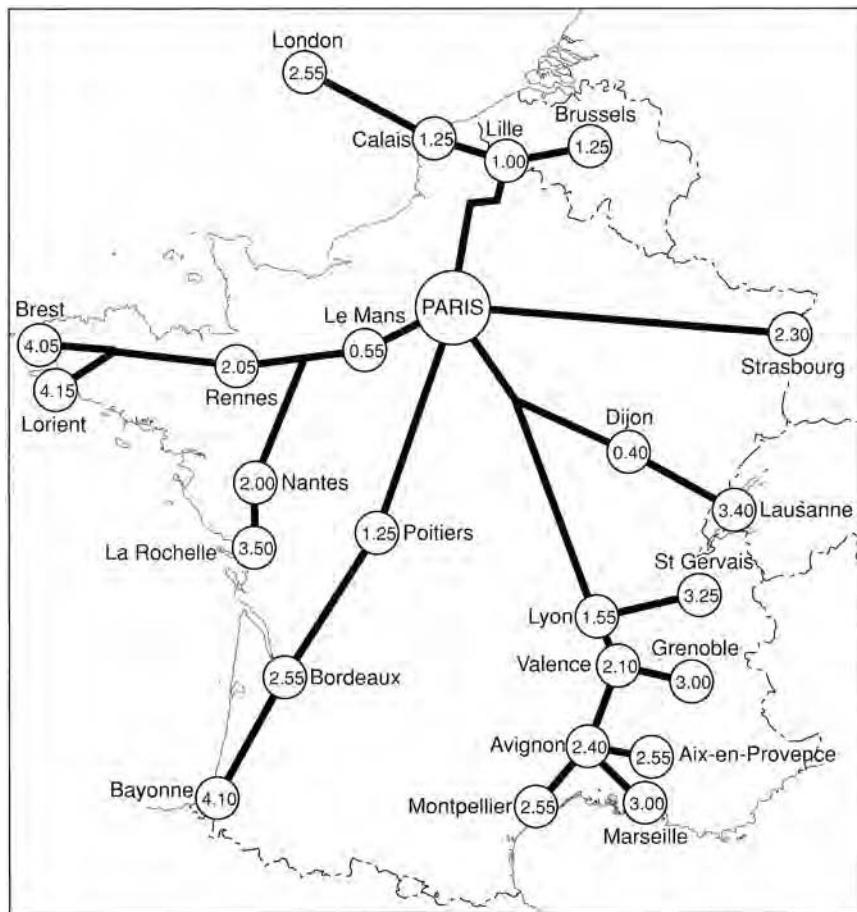
Figure 13.6 Regions and the TGV system (with travel times to Paris). (*Source:* Hall 2003).)

RER system. The *Schema Directeur* has gone through several periodic reviews, the most recent one involving a much stronger role for the elected Regional Council. Yet, returning to the noted aspiration for primacy as a world city, the updated implementation plan to 2015 in the *Livre Blanc* (DREIF *et al.* 1990) focused less on population growth and more on developing growth poles for attracting European/global-scale high-tech service activities. The net outcome is that the Paris Region continues to dominate France. In 2000, the population of 10.95 million was about 19 per cent of the national population; employment was 22 per cent of the total; GDP was 29 per cent and the region had 25 and 45 per cent, respectively, of the students and the researchers (Lefevre 2003).

But to what extent has the set of *metropoles d'equilibrie* been effective in

offering a viable counterbalance to the Paris Region? The Marseilles–Aix Region illustrates some of the practice and problems of the policy over the last 40 years (Motte 2003). The Region can be defined both by reference to its urban core, which is predominantly the Marseilles agglomeration, with a population of about 1.5 million, and by reference to the wider Rhone Delta Region with a much larger population of about 3.5 million. It occupies an important strategic location both in France and in the EU 'sunbelt', but has also suffered from major problems of deprivation and fragmented development. The early plan, *Schema d'Amenagement de l'Aire Metropolitaine Marseillaise* (OREAM Marseilles 1970), was based on a population projection for the urban core which, as for the Paris Region, has subsequently proved to be far too high. During the 1960s and 1970s the central state was a strong implementer of the scheme, with major investment in highways and support for high-tech development, but the only significant rail investment was the construction of the TGV link in the 1990s. Impacts included increasing urbanisation, 90 per cent of commuting trips made by private car and major congestion. During the 1980s and 1990s the state sought to facilitate an update of the metropolitan planning activity on a more decentralised participative regional basis, but support was often undermined by the independent and non-co-operative local authorities. The lack of effective vertical links between the three horizontal levels of government, and the squeezing of the regional level from above and below, has been a serious issue for regional spatial planning in several of the metropolitan areas, and especially for Marseilles–Aix.

13.3.2 Germany

Context: issues, agencies and the inter-regional framework

There is almost a 100 years of regional planning history in Germany, dating back to plans for Greater Berlin in 1910 and the Ruhr in 1920, but it is more recent events which now dominate the regional agenda. The reunification of Germany in 1990 created a country of 82 million people; it also added a whole new dimension to German regional issues. In addition to long-standing issues of urban–rural differences, emerging issues of an ageing population, more people born abroad and a growing economic prosperity gradient between the old traditional industrial areas of the Ruhr in the north and the more high-tech city regions of Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich in the south, Germany had to confront an even more stark gradient in prosperity between the east and the west. The five new eastern *Lander* were more sparsely populated than the 11 western *Lander*, had low GDP, high unemployment, a polluted physical environment and their problems were further compounded by a rapid leakage, post-1990, of much of their population/labour potential to the west.
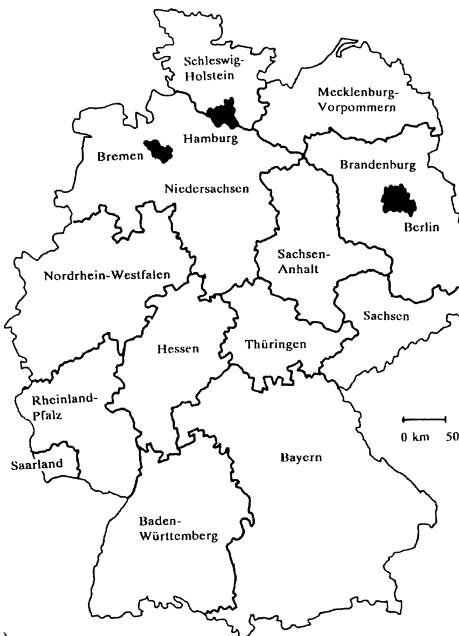
   The decentralised institutional framework for spatial planning is a reflection of Federal Germany's decentralised decision-making structure which was deliberately created post-war as a shift from the former centralised state. The *Lander*

are particularly significant in regional planning, but they are set within the context of the policies of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs (BMBau) which, amidst the sweeping changes affecting Germany, strives to create equivalent social conditions throughout the Republic, developing strategies for managing the differential development of growing and shrinking regions, often in close spatial proximity. The *Lander*, which in many respects are more like states than regions, vary greatly in area and population (Figure 13.7 (a)). Bavaria has over 20 per cent of the total area of Germany; North Rhine Westfalia has almost 20 per cent of the population; in contrast Hamburg, Bremen and the capital Berlin, are spatially small city-states. All the *Lander* produce a *Landesplannungsgesetz* (a regional planning act), a *Landesentwicklungsprogramm* (a regional development comprehensive programme), a *Landesentwicklungsplane* (a regional comprehensive development plan), a regional plan and sub-regional plans as appropriate.
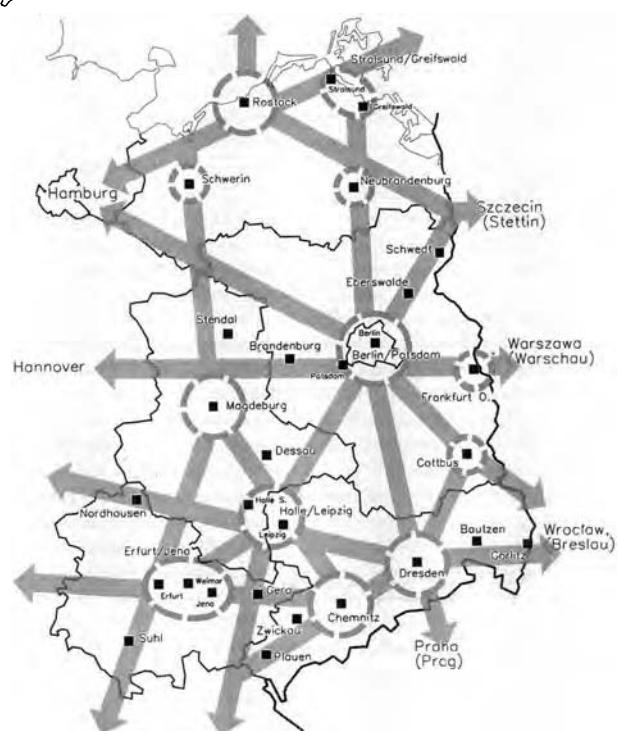
Inter-regional policy for Germany has displayed many of the characteristics found elsewhere with, for many years, Federal government investment in infrastructure (especially communications) and the use of a hierarchy of financial incentives to support private investment in industry. The policy supported a set of development areas, development centres and a frontier zone with the then East Germany, and at one stage covered 60 per cent of West Germany. With the success of this policy, and the advent of reunification, regional aid shifted markedly in the 1990s and beyond to support the eastern *Lander*, which also became eligible for the bulk of the EU Structural Funds' assistance to Germany – especially under Objective 1. Figure 13.2 shows the continuation of this emphasis through to 2013. The Federal Ministry (formerly BMBau; now BMVB) also felt the need to create a spatial development strategy to provide a framework for the new *Lander*. The aim was to create a balanced settlement structure, with several major urban centres as counter-magnets to Berlin. Figure 13.7(b) illustrates the *Spatial Planning Concept for the Development of the New Lander* (BMBau 1992). This, together with a subsequent document on *Guidelines for Regional Planning* (BMBau 1993), provided a forerunner of the polycentric approach favoured in the ESDP.

Regional planning in the Ruhr, and in Frankfurt–Rhine–Main and Stuttgart

The *Ruhr* Coalfield Settlement Association (*Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk* (SVR)) has an important place in German regional planning history. It was established in 1920 as the organisational framework to deliver the infrastructure (towns, transport and open spaces) associated with the Allied Powers' peace settlement demands for reparations in the form of a vastly increased supply of coal (Wannop 1995). From this beginning the SVR played a very important regional planning role for over 50 years, and through tumultuous times, for an area with a population of over 5 million, and with some very important cities stretching from Duisburg in the west to Dortmund in the east. It was funded largely from the local authority budgets, with some limited support from the Land and the Federal government; it

(a)

(b)

Figure 13.7 (a) German *Lander*. (b) Spatial planning concept for the development of the new *Lander*.

had a representative but unelected assembly and it proved very successful in all aspects of planning, including promoting settlements, greenbelts and regional traffic networks. But it was to meet its end in the 1970s, partly because the unifying coal and steel economy had weakened, and partly because of pressures from the North Rhine Westphalia Land, and from the powerful cities of the Ruhr.

It was replaced by a much weaker *Kommunalverband Ruhr* (KVR), which lost its planning function in 1974, and was mainly a promotional body to promote the Ruhr as a new economy. Today, the largely regional marketing role is handled by the successor organisation, the SVR. Knapp *et al.* (2004) highlight some of the problems of re-introducing a more effective 'institutional shape' for regional planning into this very competitive polynucleated region. However, they do identify steps that have been taken in recent years towards a more co-operative approach. These have led to a dense and functionally overlapping (sub)-regional associationalism (see Figure 13.8), which may be one way forward. But they conclude that this is not enough, and there is a need in the longer term for some form of overarching institution to co-ordinate and moderate future development at the strategic level of the Rhine–Ruhr region.

While the Ruhr has been having its economic problems, the stronger new economies were prospering rather more to the south, and the Frankfurt–Rhine–Main and the Stuttgart regions provide outstanding examples within and sometimes across the *Lander* structures. *The Frankfurt region* straddles three Lander – primarily Hessen, but also partly Rhineland-Palatinate and Bavaria. It is a prosperous polycentric city region with a population of over two million. It is a European centre for banking and stock exchange, air traffic and fairs, and is an important centre for high-tech service activities in Germany. Frankfurt is the core city, and can be characterised as a dwarf global city (population only 650,000) which draws on a surrounding network of centres. For a period of 25 years from 1975, the region benefited from having a multipurpose association, the *Umlandverband Frankfurt* (UVF), which had wide-ranging responsibilities including land-use, traffic, utilities and landscape planning. Its land-use plan was particularly well regarded, but over time its multipurpose coverage was eroded by single activity bodies (e.g. for public transport) and by jealous politicians, especially from the *Lander* governments (Freund 2003). It was dissolved in 2001; a non-profit organisation focused on promoting the region internationally, provided a weak replacement body.

In the *Stuttgart region* in the federal state of Baden-Wurtemberg, the trend has been different with the establishment in 1994 of the Association of the Stuttgart Region (*Verband Region Stuttgart* (VRS)) which, contrary to other regional organisations in Germany, is elected by the regional population (Heeg 2003). It has wide-ranging responsibilities, including regional planning, transport planning, waste disposal, economic development and promotion. It seeks to co-ordinate the plurality of organisations which the traditional local and sectoral institutions find increasingly difficult to achieve. It provides an interesting model to watch for the future.
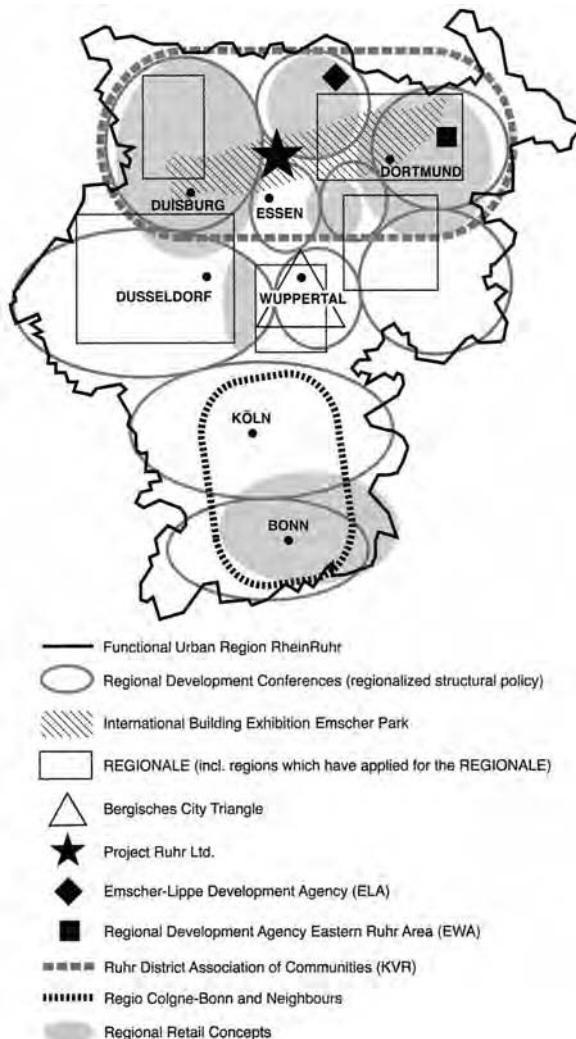
Figure 13.8 Sub-regional associationalism as the contemporary institutional model in the Rhine–Ruhr region. (*Source:* Knapp *et al.* (2004).)

13.4 Developing regional planning practice on the EU 'periphery'

Faludi and Waterhout (2002) have noted some concern that, unlike the USA, the EU has only one 'global economic integration zone' – within the 'pentagon' of London–Hamburg–Munich–Milan–Paris. However, they do tentatively suggest that two more regions have the potential to achieve similar status – the

Oresund region, and the region of Barcelona. There may be more but these two regions, which, until the EU expansion, were located more on the periphery of the Union, provide two interesting case studies for brief discussion.

13.4.1 Oresund – creating a new region in Scandinavia

The impetus for the Oresund initiative came from both EU and Member States. In 1994 the Essen Summit agreed a list of 14 priority TEN transport projects, including a fixed rail link between Denmark and Sweden. The link includes 15.5 kilometres of four-lane motorway and double-track railway from Copenhagen to Malmo across the Oresund. Two years earlier, in a report entitled *Denmark towards the year 2018: the spatial structure of Denmark in the future of Europe* (MoE 1992), the Danish government had outlined its spatial development goals including, inter alia, Denmark's cities will be beautiful and clean and will function well, and the Oresund region will be the leading urban region in the Nordic countries. The fixed link was opened in 2000. It brings together a new region of about 3.5 million people, with economic strengths in some of the high-technology areas such as medicine/biotech, environmental technology, research and design and tourism. It has received additional EU funding under the INTERREG programmes, which is administered by the Oresund Committee, a political body responsible for co-operation in the region and which includes members from both Danish and Swedish local authorities.

Jensen and Richardson (2004) see the link and the region-creating activities as an interesting example of some of the tensions and imaging activities which underpin spatial planning in the EU. There was objection from environmentalist groups to the Oresund bridge proposal, and its construction is seen as a victory by the big industrial corporations, such as Volvo and Philips. There have also been mixed feelings from the local populations on either side of the bridge. On the other hand, its very existence has provided the physical basis for the re-imaging of the area which over time may prove to be very powerful not only in creating a new identity for people in the region, but also in placing the Oresund very clearly on the EU and international map. Images and metaphors abound. Lofgren (2000 pp. 46–47), for example, finds that 'In the Oresund vision there is not only a cult of speed but a cult of flow…. The bridge and the transformed infrastructure of motorways, railroads, and airports are part of a vision of zero friction.' One name for the emerging economy is the 'Medicon Valley' seeking to benefit from high-tech, health industry and Silicon Valley associations. A key for future success may be the extent to which the 'region' can also create institutional integration to cut through the different regulatory frameworks and procedures which still divide these two EU neighbour countries.

13.4.2 Barcelona/Catalonia – initiatives in the Mediterranean 'sunbelt'

Over the last 30 years Spain has developed a formal structure of national, regional and local planning. A particular feature is the decentralised system of

17 regions (*Comunidades Autonomas*) introduced in 1978, each of which has its own parliament and law-making powers. Responsibilities for regional and urban planning and for the environment have been handed down to the regions subject to national framework laws. The latter include the spatial planning law (*Ley de Suelo)* plus an array of sectoral planning laws for water, transport, waste and natural spaces. Catalonia, with Barcelona – its capital city and also the second largest city in Spain – is a particularly powerful and independent-minded region. Indeed, reflecting its distinctive culture and history Catalonia, along with the Basque and Galician regions, claimed a distinctive treatment under the regional decentralisation. It was only partly placated by being denominated as a 'nationality'.

The territory of Catalonia is characterised in several ways. The Catalonia region has a population of about seven million; the wide-ranging Barcelona region has a population of about 4.25 million; the Barcelona metropolitan area has about three million, and within this metropolitan area Barcelona city itself has about 1.5 million. In the 1960s–early 1970s the city was the key centre for in-migration from the rest of Spain, but this shifted sequentially to the metropolitan area and then to the Barcelona region in subsequent decades. There was also a shift in economic activity, with the service sector being increasingly concentrated in the city, and manufacturing industry being located further afield. One implication has been the growth of mobility within the region.

Planning for this dynamic region is complicated by various levels of administration, and by the tensions between the autonomous Catalan state and its powerful capital city. This has been complicated by politics and personalities, polarised around the previous city mayor, Maragall, and the long-standing Catalan president, Pujol (Garcia 2003). The former has promoted the primacy of the Barcelona region and the importance of its resourcing; the latter has sought to counterbalance its overpowering presence by supporting wider decentralisation of development within the state. However, since the retirement of Pujol, and the takeover of the regional government by a Socialist-led rainbow coalition in 2004, regional planning for the whole of Catalonia has been revived. A plan for the wider Barcelona region is being finalised (2007), as are plans for other parts of Catalonia. These plans seek to address the dispersal of population and economic activity further and further away from Barcelona's core, and long-standing underinvestment in transport and affordable housing.

Since 1976, the key planning framework has been provided by the General Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona, which focused particularly on public spaces and on transport and communications. Spatially it has sought, with some success, to provide a structure to the growth of the wider metropolitan area, and to revive the city centre through small-scale city-quarter developments and also through major projects. The most outstanding of the latter was the Olympic project for the 1992 Games, which was the key to the transformation of the city and to the raising of its international profile. This was accompanied and facilitated by the development of strategic urban planning for the city, and the use of

public–private partnerships as the implementation arm of entrepreneurial local authorities. The first plan sought to consolidate Barcelona as a European metropolis; the second sought to strengthen businesses in the international market; the third (1999–2005) sought to position the city internationally as a city of production and consumption with a high quality of life (Garcia 2003). The planning, promotion and resultant prosperity of the city and its region has been such that it is also now seen as the centre of a much wider EU 'sunbelt' region stretching from Toulouse/Montpellier in France through Barcelona to Valencia.

13.5 Conclusions

The EU is of considerable significance for regional planning in the Member States. The long-standing EU Regional Policy seeks to achieve social and economic cohesion between regions in a regularly enlarging spatial territory, partly counter-balancing the very impacts of the Union itself. The associated financial allocations are now a major element in the EU budget, and continue to shift from the centre to the periphery and especially to the new Member States; Poland, for example, has been allocated 20 per cent of the funding for the 2007–2013 period. More recent is the ESDP and the vision of a European spatial planning strategy. Although non-binding, this vision and the associated planning concepts have already had some impact on regional planning in the Member States, including in the countries and regions of the UK.

   Yet despite the role of EU regional policy, spatial planning initiatives and many, many more relevant EU regulations and initiatives, there is still considerable 'diversity in the converging system' (see Glasson and Bellanger (2003) for an example from EIA policy). Variations in regional planning can be explained by many factors including the nature of regional issues, and the systems of governance in Member States. The chapter has highlighted a few examples ranging from the 'core' to the former 'periphery' states. The examples of France and Germany from the core show, as in the UK, that the duality of problems has led to a duality in regional planning. Both countries have their versions of 'prosperity gradients' and seek to help the problem industrial and rural regions, with evolving policies now dominated by EU funding mechanisms. The French investment in transport infrastructure has been a particularly significant feature of inter-regional policy. Both countries also seek to manage the growth of major cities and to advance polycentric spatial structures and high-tech/knowledge-based economies. The German federal system has resulted in more regional autonomy although there has been some limited regional decentralisation in France, but in both countries regional initiatives can be compromised by strong local authorities. The final brief discussion of the Oresund and Catalonia regions provides examples of the dynamism of the EU spatial system, the impact of major infrastructure investment and image creation, and the potential for some spread of 'global economic integration zones' in Europe.

14 Conclusions

This survey of regional planning has ranged quite widely in time and to an extent in space. This final chapter looks for conclusions on some of the core issues we have touched on, through the different perspectives opened out in the book. The main focus will be on the following eight questions.

1   How far is there a continuity in regional practice – or is the reality one of major and continuing change?
2   In what sense is there some 'regional imperative' which makes the regional scale an important one in regional policy and planning at the present?
3   Is practice marked by a degree of successful control and integration, or the opposite, meaning that policy tends to incoherence, and is marked mainly by conflict, pulling in different directions?
4   What skills most need promoting and extending, to make more effective planning practice at this level?
5   Is the theory available to support regional planning up to the job?
6   What values dominate in regional planning, and how might progressive values be boosted in practice?
7   What are the prospects for regional planning in the UK?
8   Is there a convergence of practice internationally, whether in Europe or globally?

It will be clear that there is considerable overlap between the questions and possible answers to them. Some are more matters of fact, others are strongly value based, and all have a speculative element. The main evidence base, as throughout the book, remains in England, but it is not limited to that large and rapidly evolving arena.

14.1 Continuity?

The answer depends partly on focus. Standing right back from UK experience, some continuing or recurring features can be seen. Through the twentieth century there were periods when government tended to let market forces have the main sway in guiding development – in the 1920s and 1930s, and again

since the 1980s in the Thatcher and Blair years. Between these two periods were the decades of Keynesian steering, when government sought to guide activity to less successful regions, and this strongly coloured regional spatial planning, both inside and between regions. However, some features cross cut this with other recurring patterns. Thus the attempts to direct growth to new towns after the Second World War or in the 1960s have resonances in the growth agendas of the early 2000s in southern and midlands England, with the government seeking to encourage localities to take extra growth, given predicted population and household demands.

These major swings can just as well be seen as major ruptures marking profoundly different historical periods. This perspective sees the interwar years and the period since the 1980s as reflecting liberal or neoliberal capitalist eras, in very strong contrast to the moderating of social democracy of the intervening decades. Part of the argument revolves around the interpretation of the New Labour regime since 1997. At present it may be judged that the first five years or so had a more socially and environmentally driven agenda, as against the economic competitiveness emphasis of the second and third Blair governments. But both put more faith in planning and especially regional planning than the Thatcher and Major governments. Thus, the closer up the record is viewed, the more distinctions and variations rather than more stark periodisations are seen. Only time will tell as to the overall characterisation of the New Labour years. Aspects of this fundamental discussion will be revisited in the final section on international comparability.

In another respect there have clearly been elements of continuity, as is normal in any established and strong national planning tradition. The overall instrumentation of UK planning, with its discretionary basis, its centralised control mechanisms, its legacy of new town designations, greenbelt creation, other countryside protection tools and so on, all colour and constrain approaches available to planners at all levels. The same applies in looking at regional planning in another tradition, as in our international case studies. Though there is far from a simple continuity through the decades in this sense, there is certainly a strong path dependency, which limits the plausible speed of change in several respects. Radically interventionist governments like those of the 1940s and 1960s or radically liberalising ones like those of the 1980s and 2000s can only go so far and so fast, given this inherited equipment. And this landscape also includes the pressure groups built up through the twentieth century, whether protectionist or developmentalist, who have honed their constituencies and arguments over the decades, infiltrating understandings and colonising subterranean political territories.

At a most particular level, this applies even to the skills and mindsets built up to do regional planning. In the UK these rest primarily on a tradition developed since the 1960s at a sub-regional level in structure planning, with occasional wider studies led by governments or local government associations, quite different from say the French approaches nourished in DATAR or the large community of Land level and regional level planners developed in Germany since the

1950s. One of the most significant challenges and changes of the 2000s has been the forming of new skills at regional level, as required by the empowering of regional planning guidance and then regional spatial strategies.

14.2 A regional imperative?

The first chapter discussed the question as to why regional planning seemed to be making a comeback in the UK, at the same time as strongly liberalising forces are promoted by governments. Is there some sort of regional imperative, as Urlan Wannop argued in the 1990s? Is there something about the scale above the locality but below the larger nation which is boosting the need to steer and govern that level? There are widely differing views on this question, with some arguing that it is the city and especially the city region, which is the critical level in current inter-place competition (Boddy and Parkinson 2004). Some geographers emphasise the continuing importance of the national level (McLeod 2001), seeing other levels as very variably important, depending on many political and economic circumstances. The 'Europe of the Regions', much discussed in the 1980s and 1990s, has tended to fall from political and academic fashion since that time. The collapse of the English regionalising project, after the 2004 referendum defeat in the North East, has tended in the same direction.

   A key distinction to be made is in the current approaches to regional policy as against regional planning. Regional policy has come down a long way from its high point in the 1970s. The UK government largely follows the non-interventionist lead of the EU in moderating its regional policy drive to a few areas with particularly entrenched problems (most recently Cornwall and South Yorkshire). In the UK, since the 1980s, there has been little appetite for holding back the more successful areas of southern England, and the same has applied increasingly in many other European states. EU rules limit severely what governments can do to bend the regional environments for business decisions. In the current round of EU regional funding, 2006–2013, the UK gets decreasing amounts of the EU budget, in common with all western European countries, as funds are diverted to central and eastern European member states. Despite consistent arguments by many academics that there is still an important role for governments in helping to stimulate demand in the weakest regions, there is little sign of government listening to these calls.

   This considerably weakened 'regional imperative' in the regional economic policy sphere then colours the nature of regional planning's 'comeback'. This appetite for spatial planning at the sub-state level is very evident in Scotland, Wales and to an extent Northern Ireland, where the national scale has come strongly to prominence in strategising. In many European countries such wider spatial planning experiences have been common, from Flanders to the Baltic states (Adams *et al.* 2006) and through most of the larger states as well. At the same time the existence in England for the first time of both strong economic promotion agencies (the RDAs) and of spatial planning with statutory clout

(the RSSs) means that something significant *is* going on, however mutated by the pressures described above. But, in the absence of any redistributive regional economic policy, does such spatial planning add up to anything more than 'trend planning' (following each market sector) and bidding for (mostly minor) public budgets?

So – imperative may well be the wrong word for something so hard to grapple with as the current UK phenomenon. But there is clearly an interest on the part of government and of significant economic actors in managing and governing at this intermediate level. Some sorts of spatial planning there certainly are, even though circumscribed by the retreat of regional policy. A regionalist *tendency*, at least, there does seem to be at the present, however hard to pin down.

14.3 Successful control and integration?

Chapter 7 examined a number of methods for promoting integrated regional planning, and then looked at four major components of current practice. *Within these components* we saw considerable tensions in the attempts to create consensus on policies, particularly in dealing with housing growth and with infrastructure and in meeting environmental challenges, such as climate change, extending renewable energy, or matching growth with water availability. There seems to be a considerable tendency to 'trend planning', that is following roughly what market pressures would do in any case. This is the way New Labour governments have been pushing planning in England, especially since about 2001, and the signs are that regional planning is little able to diverge from this tendency. Simply following what housebuilders or retail or office developers would do anyway is most unlikely to add up to a sustainable strategy for any territory, even within the sector's own terms. It is not clear that governing agents are able to steer private sector investors effectively under the new 'governance' structures, being too closely identified with that sector already. Making a single strong regional power centre in the Regional Assemblies would reduce this tendency.

This responsive mode also risks a spatial incrementalism, whereby areas of least resistance are gradually developed, tacking on housing estates here, business parks there. The debate over the future for the Black Country in the West Midlands is instructive. A strategy proposed and publicly debated in 2007 suggested significant changes to the settlement structure and functioning of the area; but some argued that a chance to make a really long-term change of direction was being missed.

In relation to *wider integration*, between each component, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at least had explicit overall spatial strategies for the whole of their territories, even though these were quite broadbrush. In England, the struggle to make all sectoral work hold together was being worked through in the mid 2000s round of RSSs. But there were real problems with the system, particularly in two respects (this is without returning to the

issue of the absence of elected regional government, still, in the view of many, the critical missing ingredient of English regional planning). One was the weakness of the sub-regional element, where the previously quite effective structure planning process was not yet matched by anything as democratically responsive or capable of implementation. In most areas there was a mismatch between sub-regional strategy areas and local authority and other implementing agency boundaries. This may in due course be resolved by large-scale local government reorganisation, but for the moment it hamstrings this level of planning. A second issue was the increasing tendency to frequent review, to the extent that the links between related components may be missed. This became particularly evident in the phased partial reviews being undertaken in the West Midlands in 2006–2007, where there were signs that the coherence of the 2004 strategy might be lost. This is largely the result of misguided government steering, always pressing for regions to respond to its latest policy turn.

For the moment, observers note the difficulty many regions seem to be having in securing sound and implementable strategies, given the very different objectives of different actors. Government and regional agendas often do not seem to be aligned, despite real attempts to improve vertical integration. Implementability is an issue widely queried by commentators. Steps have been taken to try to match funding with policies, particularly in the Regional Funding Allocations exercise of 2005–2006, discussed in Chapter 10 (this also made decisions on housing and economic development funding pots). But the fear is that many strategies are being made which are full of fine policies but with very uneven chances of implementation. Much policy discussion was underway in 2007 to address this, including the development of Local Area Agreements between localities and government, and the search for new ways of financing infrastructure (such as a proposed Planning Gain Supplement). The proposal to set up a Planning Commission to decide centrally on large infrastructure schemes would also have major implications for implementation, possibly helping to align policy and funding at a high level.

At present then the impression in England is that tensions and conflict are a key part of the picture. Integrated and really coherent strategies may well be gradually being developed in some regions, but even then the proof will be in their implementation over succeeding years. Chapter 7 suggested some possible reforms that could help towards better integration:

- empower an overarching strategy in each region, instead of the present competing collection;
- reduce central government imposition of every policy change on regions, which is leading to continuous revisions of regional strategies in non-integrated manners; and
- make the sub-regional elements of RSSs more responsive and internally consistent, properly connected with the democratically elected local governments.

14.4 Skills needed

In all four parts of the UK, but especially in the English regions, there has been a dramatic increase in the need for practitioners with the skills appropriate to regional planning. Gradually it has emerged what these skills are.

Hard technical skills: for estimating housing demand and need down to sub-regions, for analysing regional economies and their land, people and other requirements, for modelling transport demands and systems, and appraising alternative responses, and for analysing many aspects of regional and local environmental systems, and the impacts that alternative development levels and patterns will have on these systems. These all have relevance at different stages, for generating, implementing, monitoring and revising strategies at several levels.

Soft planning skills: for setting up, managing and adjusting regional planning exercises, including interaction with actors of many kinds, whether those fully versed in the processes or those with little knowledge but strong interest.

Mastering either or both of these broad types of skills has become increasingly demanding since the 1990s, with time and resource pressures making gaps and slippages critical. RPBs have responded in part by taking on more staff, in most regions, but this has in most cases been constrained by strong financial limits, so that teams are rarely larger than a handful of trained planners. Regional planning has, therefore, depended heavily on the traditional support given by strategic planning authorities – in regions such as the West Midlands the bulk of work was still done in this way in the mid 2000s. However, with the abolition of county structure plans, the skills maintained for strategic planning have begun to wither in many parts of England, as experienced staff are not replaced in counties, or other tasks are prioritised. The other recourse, increasingly general among RPBs, has been to consultancies, who have experienced a boom period as RSSs seek sound evidence on which to defend their policies in public examinations and in relation to government. For much of the hard technical work this has become the standard reflex, with consultancies building up skills across projects, in the housing, economy and environment fields, just as the large transport consultancies had, to an extent, already done earlier.

For the softer skills, consultancy use is often less easy to programme in to RSS production or revision, and the gaps at the centre have remained critical. The Egan review of skills needed for sustainable communities (ODPM 2004b) advocated a shift in emphasis towards a range of 'across the built environment' generic skills. It concurred with the evidence from a major review of the skill base in the planning system (Durning and Glasson 2006), that there is a shortage of supply of planners and important skill gaps – including in spatial planning. The government put some resources into planning education from 2004 onwards, by means of bursaries, and by setting up the Academy for Sustainable Communities. However, experience so far is that much of this increased supply of trained planners has been sucked into the development control and related consultancy sectors, rather than to the more analytical and research-based work

needed in regional planning. A downturn in the development boom may well, in due course, release some of this new planning blood for plan making and plan implementation work at regional level.

We see a continuing need for increased support for education and training in regional planning, across both the whole activity, to run integrated and well-managed exercises, and in the sub fields we have chronicled in Chapters 8 to 11. However, this is partly a matter of market creation by means of further support for the staffing of RPBs. RPBs need to be transformed from the relatively minuscule organisations they are now, into bodies with much greater capacity across the board. Alongside such improved staffing, this should be supported by the development of specially tailored courses in a range of regional planning specialisms, allowing mutual learning across English regions and to an extent other parts of the UK. This is particularly necessary with the cutting of the main Masters level planning qualification to one year full time, which means that many skills previously taught are now omitted.

14.5 Adequacy of theory

We have noticed on several occasions in writing this book that there are serious gaps in the theory that could form a solid basis for regional planning practice now. We have found ourselves harking back to theory developed in the major era of regional planning of the 1960s or 1970s, particularly in the field of economic policy. This is of course not because theory building has stood still. In areas such as competitiveness and environmental sustainability, and in analysis of collaborative planning processes, there has been a wealth of reflection during the last 20 years. Nevertheless, it can be argued that this has by no means added up to an adequate theoretical base for practice, in some holistic form, so that often, ideas such as economic base or growth pole theorising seem to hold a strong position still, despite having been invented for very different political economies. Of course theories can to an extent work across time, if of sufficient quality or degree of abstraction. But we judge that the developments of the last decade or so do demand new or revised theorising to match the needs of practice, as much in substantive as in process dimensions. One reason for the considerable struggles both government and practitioners are having in making the new systems work may be the absence of an adequate theoretical base.

Having said that, we are not going to propose what these theoretical lines might be! They may well have a large element of 'positive' work on the real functioning of current regional spaces, for example, on the lines being worked towards by the POLYNET project of 2004 to 2006, which examined eight European mega city regions (Pain and Hall 2006). This is likely to be the realm of geographers, working with other social scientists and connecting to the work of environmental scientists. The other 'softer' areas of work may well be more related to work in management and political studies and sociology, working out new governing formulas, on the lines being developed for many years by Patsy

Healey (1997, 2007), or perhaps harking back to the approaches of John Friend and colleagues in the 1970s, of the 'reticulist planner' (Friend *et al.* 1974).

14.6 Values for regional planning

There has been a strong tendency in government policy since about 2000, especially in England, for economic competitiveness to become the dominant value in planning. We have highlighted the vital need to balance this emphasis by explicitly prioritising other values – long-term environmental sustainability, social justice, democratic decision making. All of these values are contested (including competitiveness, which may be pursued by many pathways). Particularly in Chapter 12, we suggested a number of measures which could contribute to raising the profile of these values, which risk being sidelined by government policy drives. These included:

- Funding less well-resourced interests, in social and environmental fields, in order to level the playing field of regional contestation throughout the continuous flow of strategising and implementing that characterises regional planning in Britain now. Regional Technical Aid Funds should be set up for this purpose.
- Resourcing Regional Assemblies much more – this is important not just to raise the skills base as discussed above, but to give this critical representative of democratically elected bodies (in the absence of regional elected government) a fairer chance in debate with other regional and national agencies.
- In particular, building systems for making the processes even more open, using electronic access techniques to the full: regional television needs to be used fully, by a range of experiments; large explanatory screens can be placed in shopping centres and town centres, keeping plan processes in the public eye; more can be done with opinion surveying and informing, using larger samples and more continuous processes, to name a few possibilities.
- Making Examinations in Public of all regional strategies (not just RSSs, but also any integrated and economic strategies of real weight) genuinely independent of government or any other major interests. (The institution of a Single Regional Strategy might also not go amiss and might boost public comprehensibility and increase effectiveness.) Clearly this is a difficult demand, but other governmental processes (such as the ombudsman system) have built up traditions of independence, and it should be possible to work towards this in regional policy making too.

In the absence of vigorous and effective social movements pressing in support of these values, these mechanisms in themselves will not shift the balance very heavily. Regional planning is seeing some very major failures, such as the large-scale missing of targets on affordable housing (noted by monitoring in, for example, the West Midlands and London), and the absence of any serious moves to transition to a lower throughput economy with any kind of long-term

sustainable prospects. It is clear that any rectification of such profoundly embedded failures must come from deeply driven political pressures. Nevertheless, the above measures would do something to avoid the present tendencies towards a process strongly oriented towards the knowledgeable small elites who can engage at this level. In the absence of such moves, the planning process, in England at least, will have been shifted strongly towards a less democratic process. Actors will continue to find engagement at local and even to some extent at national level easier, but will find that key decisions are being taken regionally in the zone of maximum democratic deficit. While this may well have been the intention of the government in the 2004 reforms, we would argue that the tendency needs to be reversed.

14.7 Prospects for regional planning

Much of the above has implications for how the prospects for regional planning in the UK are viewed. In some respects the signs are positive. It is possible that the newly empowered spheres of regional planning (spatial, economic) will be able to settle down in all four parts of the UK, to become a strong arena of public policy. There are signs of this in the confidence shown in London planning and to lesser extents in Wales and Scotland, since 2000. On the other side, the indications at the time of writing are that the government may not allow the system to settle in England, and will embark on another round of liberalising reforms. This may well continue the centralising thrust of the reforms of 2000 to 2006, which gives the regions inadequate spaces to develop their own proper responses to their situations.

Looking further ahead two alternative scenarios may be considered. One could be to allow devolution in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to deepen and flourish, and extend such scope to the English regions, whether in due course through elected assemblies, or by other means. The London experience may form the template for the future of regional planning under this scenario, not as strong as those of Wales or Scotland, but enough to make some sort of difference. Strengthened Regional Assemblies, creating their own Single Regional Strategy, a much extended version of the Regional Funding Allocations process of 2005–2006 covering more and more funding pots – these might be elements of an extension of the above templates to the English regions. As might be guessed, we tend to view this scenario positively, though are quite aware that the central government of the UK is most unlikely to retreat to the extent that has occurred in more federal or federalising countries such as Germany or Spain.

Another scenario could be a major retreat from the regional models developed in the different territories and in the English regions. Clearly this would set the end to the present period of regionalising experimentation, and would be likely to relocalise or further centralise planning powers. This is a perfectly plausible prospect. There is little evidence that the present period of globalising and liberalising capitalism 'requires' any strong regionalisation of spatial planning, even though we have detected some tendency in this direction in the

UK and elsewhere in recent years. Relocalisation might have real advantages, in democratic terms, but further centralisation is doubtless the much more likely model, in which central government (and perhaps the central authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland if they are maintained) takes over most major spatial planning decisions. The Planning Commission proposed by the second Barker Review may well be the first step on this path.[1]

14.8 International convergence?

It was suggested above that there is, at the least, some kind of 'regional tendency'. The processes identified by analysts such as Jessop (2002) and Brenner (2004) do mean that a more multiscalar architecture of state action has been emerging in Europe in the last 20 years or more. These writers argue that this change is related to the increasing hegemony of neoliberal state policies across the world and especially in Europe. States are seen as scaling down their more interventionist national roles, leaving regulatory and steering options in the hands of regional and local actors or sometimes dropping such roles altogether.

The changes in the constituent parts of the UK may be seen as consistent with this process. However, in common with many analysts, we do not see this as a solidly established, or one-way process. The equally strong wishes of central governments, certainly in the UK, to hold on to key levers of power, are evident. The force of city self-promotion is also clear, although this may well be more real in its traditional homelands in some mainland European countries, where cities have stronger tax bases, than in the UK.

Within the UK, this would be consistent with seeing some sort of divergence of planning practice. Wales and Scotland now have high-level spatial strategies, and guide their planning systems in rather different ways from the approach of the UK government for England. A similar, if lesser degree of divergence between the English regions might be expected. These might be moving to respond to their rather different economic, social and environmental circumstances, by adopting different policies. So far, we have not seen much evidence that this is occurring to any real extent. It would appear that the strong hold kept by central government policy negates this possibility, as everything from PPSs to government investment programmes (roads and rail) and White Papers (airports, local government) keeps the lid on regional innovation.

At an international level in Europe, there may be some tendency to slightly similar styles of regional planning, at the highest level of generality. This would be based on the following observations:

- more regional planning overall;
- more stress on economic competitiveness;
- less strong leadership by governments on investment, more dependence on private agents;

- increasing emphasis on some environmental dimensions, though very variably; and
- somewhat more open and transparent processes than in the past.

In these ways the new 'spatial planning' carried by the ESDP may begin to give some degree of common hue to regional planning in different countries. However, such convergence may well be at most rhetoric, promotional or surface deep. Enormous differences appear to still exist between the approaches and contents and effectiveness of regional plans and strategies around Europe. And the same applies even more strongly in other continents, in realms beyond the pull of the EU.

Note

1 This section predates the government proposals of July 2007 (described at the end of Chapter 5). Our suggestions here and in Chapter 7 about moving to a single strategy may look similar to parts of these government proposals. However, we had envisaged that a single strategy would be led by the Regional Assemblies, as against the government proposal to abolish these and hand regional planning work to the RDAs. It is widely thought that the government moved to abolish assemblies because of the opposition in some regions to government economic and housing priorities. Removing the Regional Assemblies takes away inconvenient alternative power centres. However, any full judgement on this must await government elaboration of new alternatives. For the moment, we are concerned that this will worsen the democratic deficit identified in Chapter 12. RDAs have had an essentially business culture and, by and large, do not have the sympathies or skills needed to be effective in securing public involvement and in balancing economic, social and environmental objectives. They lack the democratic legitimacy held by local authorities. It is to be hoped that, if the proposals do go ahead, regional planning is maintained as a strongly socially and environmentally oriented activity, and not subordinated to short-term economic priorities or the prime objectives of raising housing numbers in each region. A second edition of this book may reveal a very interesting next step in the evolution of regional planning in the UK.

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