Infrastructure Delivery

Spatial Plans in Practice: Supporting the reform of local planning
The findings in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Department for Communities and Local Government.
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CHAPTER 1

Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

1.1 This report presents the findings of the fifth thematic study (TS5) prepared as part of the Spatial Plans in Practice (SPiP) Study. It is focused on the role of spatial plans in the delivery of infrastructure requirements resulting from the reformed spatial planning process.

1.2 In response to the earlier (Barker) reviews into housing supply (2004) and land use planning (2006), as part of the Government’s 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review it was stated that ‘…LPAs should be required to undertake sound infrastructure planning as part of the formation and review of their LDFs; key stakeholders, such as local developers, public sector infrastructure providers, utility companies, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and local communities should be involved in the infrastructure planning process; and in deciding whether to approve LDFs, the Planning Inspectorate should consider the soundness of infrastructure planning, taking into account the resources likely to be available to implement the plan…’.

1.3 Previous research (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) on Effective Practice in Spatial Planning (EPiSP), undertaken on behalf of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Communities and Local Government, has already made recommendations on the potential for alternative and innovative approaches to the delivery of infrastructure. These include improved collaboration between planners and the stakeholders involved in local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and the potential use of delivery mechanisms such as local area agreements (LAAs) and multi-area agreements (MAAs). The EPiSP Study (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) also recommends that local planning authorities (LPAs) establish a local infrastructure programme (LIP), together with a local infrastructure fund (LIF), managed by a local infrastructure group (LIG) to improve co-ordination of infrastructure delivery and facilitate more effective resource management.

1.4 Most recently, the Planning White Paper (Communities and Local Government, 2007) effectively identifies local authorities as ‘ringmasters’, co-ordinating and working with other infrastructure providers and stakeholders, to deliver infrastructure requirements. This role is to be strengthened, in relation to the LSP, by proposals to ‘clarify’ the current soundness test so that local authorities ‘… demonstrate how and when infrastructure that is required to facilitate development will be delivered…’.
Research Components and Issues

1.5 Research undertaken as part of this thematic study involved a number of related components.

- A review and analysis of the various relevant government policy statements and previous research to clarify the meanings behind the delivery of spatial plans and their role in local infrastructure provision.

- Two half-day discussion workshops involving a number of invited ‘experts’ and ‘key players’ representing local government and a variety of organisations, bodies and government departments at the national level to amplify understanding of issues related to spatial plan delivery, including current experiences and potential approaches and good practice.

- A documentary/web-based review of the limited number of core strategies (CSs) and area action plans (AAPs) and their associated Inspector’s Reports (adopted by early June 2007), focusing on their main infrastructure requirements and any information on how these are expected to be delivered in terms of delivery partners and mechanisms.

- A limited number of case studies that cover a range of planning contexts where infrastructure delivery is a significant issue, involving documentary/web-based analysis and telephone interviews with the LDF team and other delivery partners.

1.6 One research challenge encountered in addressing this topic is that relatively few local planning authorities have yet reached the stage of having an adopted core strategy or other development plan document which outlines local infrastructure requirements. Nevertheless, lessons were able to be drawn from these experiences in terms of both emerging ‘good practice’ and less successful examples which, nevertheless, provide useful pointers towards better practice.

‘Stakeholder’ and Local Government Perspectives

1.7 The wider governmental context within which the delivery of infrastructure is taking place is one of significant change. The two workshops which were held as part of this study thus provided an excellent opportunity to explore current perceptions and understanding of this changing local governance context, alongside a broader consideration of the spatial planning issues that local planning authorities and other delivery partners will need to respond to as they engage in local development framework (LDF) preparation and delivery. Discussions at the two workshops broadly covered the following areas relating to infrastructure planning and delivery:
• the context for infrastructure and plan delivery;
• the identification of infrastructure priorities through the LDF process;
• the delivery of LDF infrastructure priorities.

1.8 The key points that emerged from the two workshops played an important role in the consideration of the recommendations presented below.

Documentary Analysis of LDF ‘Infrastructure’ Content

1.9 A number of positive lessons and examples of ‘good practice’, in terms of the ways in which the authorities have addressed delivery issues in their LDF documents, and the approaches they have adopted in order to do so, were identified from the review of adopted core strategies (CSs) and area action plans (AAPs):

• Several authorities explicitly emphasized the importance of taking a partnership approach to infrastructure delivery and that they were actively working with a range of delivery partners to achieve the policies and proposals set out in their plans. Examples included the Plymouth, Horsham and South Cambridgeshire Core Strategies; the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Strategy and the Biddulph Town Centre AAP.

• A variety of mechanisms are being employed to achieve this, ranging from longer-standing, pre-LDF partnership arrangements in South Cambridgeshire to the establishment of new vehicles for partnership such as Project Integra (Hampshire) or the use of existing town centre management arrangements and the potential creation of a limited company in respect of Biddulph Town Centre.

• The important linkages with, and role of, the local strategic partnership (LSP) are highlighted in some areas, notably in the Plymouth and Hambleton Core Strategies and the Biddulph Town Centre AAP.

• Agreements or ‘statements of commitment’ with individual delivery partners have been secured in relation to some plans including the Redcar and Cleveland Core Strategy and the Walker Riverside AAP.

• The significant relationship between the LDF and other strategies at the local and regional level, in terms of strategy co-ordination over infrastructure delivery, are set out in the Hambleton, South Cambridgeshire and Plymouth Core Strategies and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Strategy.
• The importance of community involvement and consultation with key stakeholders is highlighted in South Cambridgeshire, Hambleton, Hampshire and Plymouth.

• Several LDF documents set out clear statements relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements, and the broader implementation of policies, via the identification of responsible agencies and the setting of targets for monitoring purposes etc. Examples include Redcar and Cleveland’s Implementation Plan; the arrangements for monitoring and delivery set out in the Hambleton Core Strategy; Hampshire’s monitoring plan; and the revised Core Strategy for Mid-Devon.

• The consideration of various mechanisms for the funding of infrastructure delivery such as the use of developer contributions in Biddulph Town Centre and the use of the Council’s own land sale receipts in Walker Riverside.

1.10 Supplementary material, drawn from the longitudinal case studies (LCSs) undertaken as part of the wider SPiP project, highlighted a rather mixed picture in terms of the quality of current LDF content, with significant numbers (37-57 per cent) of the examined documents being judged as performing ‘poorly’, or not covering the criteria at all, against a set of identified criteria related to delivery.

1.11 Common weaknesses included a failure to provide sufficient detail on the infrastructure requirements of the plan; a lack of identification of the agencies responsible to deliver specific projects or proposals or who the key partners might be; insufficient consideration (or evidence) that the key partners were willing or able to take responsibility for delivering relevant infrastructure requirements of the LDF; insufficient consideration of the existing plans, strategies and expenditure commitments of the key partners; and the inclusion of overly ‘aspirational’ or unrealistic policies and proposals.

1.12 Nevertheless, some good practice pointers could be picked out. These include LDF documents that provide details of the agencies responsible for delivery of plan policies or proposals; those that provide sufficient evidence of joint-ownership of such proposals and the commitment of partners to their delivery; and those that provide information on the means of funding available (such as developer contributions in respect of particular sites).
Case Study Analysis

1.13 A limited number of case studies were chosen for more in-depth investigation as part of this thematic study. The four case studies chosen covered:

- A local authority within a growth area (Ashford);
- An urban metropolitan authority with a focus on regeneration (Liverpool);
- A mixed urban/rural authority with an adopted core strategy (CS) which addresses local infrastructure needs (Redcar and Cleveland); and
- A more localised area covered by an Area Action Plan (AAP) with infrastructure requirements (Walker Riverside AAP, Newcastle upon Tyne).

1.14 The four chosen case studies embraced a broad cross section of LDF contexts and proved a useful source of additional analysis on top of the workshop discussions and documentary analyses that formed the other research components of this thematic study.

Ashford

1.15 The Ashford case allowed for a more in-depth study of how LDF infrastructure requirements are being handled in a nationally-identified ‘growth area’ context with significant levels of planned new residential and employment development on significant sites within the main town and in the form of urban extensions. These are associated with significant levels of necessary infrastructure provision, including major highways works as well as other heath, education and community facilities.

1.16 The complexities of the Ashford situation are not to be underestimated. However, as a growth area, the Council is able to operate in the context of relatively high levels of public sector and government commitment to the delivery of their LDF vision. A special purpose agency has been established (Ashford’s Future) and partnership working between this Agency, together with the local authority and a number of key private sector developers have resulted in the emergence, over the last few years, of the only tangible example of a local infrastructure group (LIG) encountered in this study.

1.17 The authority has nevertheless encountered some difficulties in ensuring the necessary degree of developer involvement and contribution to infrastructure provision. In response, the Core Strategy sets out specific policies relating to a ‘strategic tariff’ through which it is hoped to support
a contractual audit trail relating to specific commitments and avoid the previous difficulties particularly associated with the provision of necessary junction improvements on the M20.

**Liverpool**

1.18 Although also operating in a complex institutional arena with a plethora of public and private sector organisations and agencies with spatial planning and development interests, Liverpool contrasts with Ashford in its focus on regeneration and significant development pressure associated with high profile city centre and riverside sites, and the powerful position of specific major landowners.

1.19 This level of development is placing severe demands on the City’s existing infrastructure. However, there is currently little evidence of co-ordination of strategy development and/or delivery partners, or of any comprehensive analysis of infrastructure needs except in relation to the Land Development Company’s research in relation to land in the Northshore area alongside the Mersey Estuary, primarily under the ownership of one landowner.

1.20 Partnership between the main players and the LDF team appears somewhat piecemeal; a situation not helped by the tendency for the main landowners and developers to primarily interact with the political and administrative (Chief Executive's Office) leadership of the City Council rather than the planners. More positively, links with the LSP appear relatively strong. No ‘infrastructure plan’ has yet been prepared as part of the LDF process although, in any event, the Council’s LDF work is still at too early a stage to speculate with any confidence on how this situation might develop in the future.

**Redcar and Cleveland**

1.21 Redcar and Cleveland provides an excellent example of an adopted core strategy which has, as a key component, an ‘Implementation Plan’ which cross-references policy commitments outlined in the Core Strategy with desired outcomes, indictors for monitoring implementation, the mechanism for delivery, and the lead agencies involved. This approach was commended by the Inspector following the Examination of the CS.

1.22 The development of partnership approaches and the consideration of cross-boundary issues were also positive aspects identified in relation to this case. Relationships between the LDF and the LSP are also developing. However, identified challenges include some difficulties in engaging developers, and subsequently keeping them involved, as well as issues of timing and synchronisation between the LDF process and the strategy-making activities of some other Council departments and external organisations.
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Walker Riverside

1.23 Finally, Walker Riverside (Newcastle upon Tyne) provides an opportunity to more closely consider issues relating to infrastructure delivery at a more local scale, covered by an adopted area action plan (AAP) with a strong community regeneration focus. To achieve this, the fostering of effective partnership working is considered essential.

1.24 The main vehicle for such partnership working has been the establishment of the Walker Riverside Board on which the key players, both within and external to the Council, have been invited to sit. Nevertheless, coordination with partners within the Council appears to have generally been more straightforward than with external partners and engaging with the private sector has been somewhat problematic. Although consideration has been given to funding mechanisms, including developer contributions, and the Council’s own land ownership helps control and facilitate developments, problems of synchronisation with other partners’ strategies, priorities and timescales have also proved a challenge.

Conclusions

1.25 This thematic study focuses on issues relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements related to the LDF process. Its importance is evident, as the success of the new LDF process is not simply judged on whether local planning authorities can steer their new-style documents through the statutory procedures to adoption, but rather whether the resulting policies and proposals make a difference to the quality of places and people’s lives. Success or otherwise in terms of implementation and delivery is thus crucial if the reformed spatial planning system is to be judged as successful.

1.26 However, one clear message emerging from the two workshops was that there is, at present, something of a gap between these government expectations and current practice and, in some cases, even basic knowledge and understanding of these issues. The sheer amount of policy development in the local government and spatial planning fields in recent years has proved extremely difficult to keep up with. This is especially the case with those delivery partners whose main focus and working environment is not directly linked to local governance. This means there is a need for continuing effort in terms of dissemination, education and, more broadly, further ‘culture change’ across local government and infrastructure providers if the Government’s intentions are to be understood, embraced and ultimately put into practice.
Delivering LDF Infrastructure Requirements: Recommendations

1.27 Beyond the general issues relating to the current context, and evolution, of spatial planning and local government, there are a number of more specific findings, ‘good practice’ examples and lessons which can be identified. From these, a set of recommendations has been identified.

Identification and prioritisation of LDF infrastructure requirements

- Local authorities need to give serious consideration to issues relating to the implementation of their LDFs and, in particular, to the means by which necessary infrastructure requirements will be delivered, by whom and in what timescales.

- Such infrastructure requirements related to the LDF process should normally be broadly conceived as embracing all matters necessary for the achievement of LDF policies, proposals and aspirations. This might, for example, include attributes such as ‘green infrastructure’ and the provision of a wide range of community services.

- However, because of resource constraints, there is a need to avoid a simple ‘shopping list’ of desired provision which is likely to be unattainable. Local planning authorities should therefore give careful consideration to the need to prioritise between potential infrastructural requirements when preparing most LDF documents.

Content of LDF documents

- Local planning authorities need to avoid the common weaknesses encountered up to now in some submitted LDF documents. These include a failure to provide sufficient detail on the infrastructure requirements of the plan; a lack of identification of the agencies responsible to deliver specific projects or proposals, or who the key partners might be; insufficient consideration (or evidence) that the key partners were willing or able to take responsibility for delivering relevant infrastructure requirements of the LDF; insufficient consideration of the existing plans, strategies and expenditure commitments of the key partners; and the inclusion of overly ‘aspirational’ or unrealistic policies and proposals.

- Relevant LDF documents should set out clear statements relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements, and the broader implementation of policies, via the identification of responsible agencies and the setting of targets for monitoring purposes.
• Appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to monitor whether the necessary infrastructural requirements are subsequently being delivered, and to re-consider the prioritisation and subsequent delivery programme as necessary. The AMR is one potential vehicle for addressing some of these issues, as might be some form of ‘infrastructure programme’ which should be agreed jointly with delivery partners as far as possible and treated as a ‘living document’ to be amended as and when required to keep it up-to-date.

• Local planning authorities need to provide sufficient evidence of joint-ownership of infrastructure proposals which will be delivered primarily by other partners, and of the commitment of such partners to their delivery. Formal agreements with delivery partners (eg in the form of ‘statements of commitment’) should be secured wherever possible. Such statements are a potentially important source of evidence in terms of meeting the LDF test of soundness related to delivery.

• Local planning authorities need to consider carefully the relationships between the LDF and other strategies at the local and regional level, in terms of strategy co-ordination over infrastructure delivery.

• Local planning authorities should recognize the importance of community involvement and consultation with key stakeholders on matters related to infrastructure requirements.

• Relevant LDF documents should give appropriate consideration to the level of risk that some of the required infrastructure will not be forthcoming and ways that this might be mitigated or addressed.

Working with delivery partners

• The involvement of key partners, from the earliest stages of plan-preparation, is essential if infrastructure requirements are to be delivered.

• Despite the relatively few examples of current practice identified in this study, local authorities should consider – in line with earlier recommendations of the EPISP Study (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) – working more closely, and on a more formalised basis, with other partners via the establishment of local infrastructure programmes (LIPs), local infrastructure funds (LIFs) and local infrastructure (management) groups (LIGs) to facilitate improved co-ordination and delivery of infrastructure provision.

• One useful way to conceive of the local authority’s role might be that of a ‘ringmaster’, co-ordinating the actions of partners and the delivery of infrastructure requirements flowing from LDF. However, in doing so, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of ‘good town planning’
and a focus on ‘making better places’. A successful LDF process involves tasks related to spatial planning (eg in generating visions, objectives, alternatives, and selecting a preferred option) as well as mediation, co-ordination, consultation and negotiation.

• A more committed approach to forming partnerships with developers is desirable, but this is not always not easy to achieve and needs to be worked on. Local authorities need to make sure they are trying hard enough to facilitate this. Local planners need to gain a better understanding of the development process and property finance in order to understand what might or might not be possible, and to facilitate their attempts to involve developers.

• Current expectations in respect of infrastructure delivery via the private sector are sometimes unrealistically high. Local planning authorities need to be reasonable in their consideration of the extent to which the private sector and developers can be expected to fund the necessary LDF infrastructure requirements.

Potential approaches and funding mechanisms

• Local planning authorities need to give consideration to the various possible mechanisms available for the funding of infrastructure delivery. Mechanisms such as developer contributions have a significant role to play in infrastructure delivery, but there needs to be careful thought given to ways in which developers can be more readily encouraged to make commitments to fund infrastructure. Locally derived mechanisms such as Ashford’s ‘strategic tariff’ (see case study section of this report) might be one way forward.

• Local authorities should explore the potential for more integrated mechanisms for infrastructure delivery. Links between the local authority and the LSP are particularly important, and there is potential for new and emerging mechanisms such as local area agreements (LAAs), multi-area agreements (MAAs) and (where relevant) single purpose vehicles (SPVs) to provide a means of co-ordinating activities and funding.

Issues for central government consideration

• The Government has already stated an intention to amend soundness test (viii) to emphasise further the importance of delivery of infrastructure. Although this additional clarity would be welcome, in principle, there is a need to avoid setting the revised test at such a level that it would be extremely difficult to pass, otherwise plan-preparation will be further delayed and the reputation of the new system will suffer.
• The issue of how to encourage developer contributions, particularly in situations where the tendency is for a developer to sit back in the hope that someone else will commit first, needs further consideration by central government at the national level.

• The delivery of infrastructure is often a long-term and expensive process requiring substantial long-term financial commitments on the part of various key agencies and sectors. Central government and the key national agencies (such as the Highways Agency) need to be in a position to provide a longer-term financial commitment to funding infrastructure, thus providing greater certainty. As well as directly funding infrastructure, such a commitment would make it easier to get the private sector and other delivery partners also to commit their own resources.

• There are currently some synchronisation difficulties identified between the visions and time-horizons of the LDF process and those of delivery partners. This was not helped by the timescales seemingly required to prepare the first round of LDF documents. However, as local planning authorities become more experienced, this will hopefully improve and there is a strong argument for letting the current system ‘bed-in’, and for local planners to be given sufficient time and resources, to develop a working system.

• Nevertheless, it is also clear that further understanding of the spatial planning process, and the wider evolution and role of local government, is needed by both local planning authorities and key stakeholders. A continued drive for further understanding and ‘culture change’ amongst both local planning authorities, and their delivery partners, thus remains vital if the reformed system is to operate effectively.
CHAPTER 2

Scope of the Research

Introduction

2.1 As part of the wider Spatial Plans in Practice (SPiP) Study, one component of the overall research methodology being employed is the preparation of a number of thematic studies. The intention is that these will be used to investigate critical issues in more depth than the more general research components such as the strategic survey of local authorities and the longitudinal case studies. As set out in paragraph 6.2 of the project’s Inception Report (ODPM, 2006), thematic studies are intended to contribute to the project in a number of ways, including

- in depth investigation of a particular aspect of LDF implementation which is deemed critical because of the potential impact on success of LDF production and implementation;
- in depth investigation of a particular aspect which is significant in meeting priority objectives for local authorities;
- assessing progress in relation to specific local development documents, projects or approaches to national policy delivery.

2.2 This report presents the findings of the fifth thematic study (TS5) prepared as part of the SPiP Study. It focuses on the role of spatial plans in the delivery of infrastructure requirements in the context of the reformed spatial planning process.

2.3 Aspects of the delivery and implementation of the new forms of local spatial plans introduced by the 2004 reforms have already been touched on in various components of the SPiP study to date through, for example, the literature review on the role and scope of spatial planning (Nadin, 2006); emerging policy and practice in the longitudinal case studies; and research looking at cross-boundary working. However, these covered various aspects of the plan-making process leading up to the successful adoption of a plan.

2.4 None of these other SPiP Study outputs therefore focus primarily on matters relating to the implementation and delivery of infrastructure post adoption. Yet, for all the challenges involved in the plan-making process, the purpose of the new LDF process is not simply the production of a development plan document that successfully passes the various tests of
soundness considered at the examination, but rather whether the policies and proposals in the resulting adopted development plan document are subsequently delivered. Ultimately, the true judge of whether a plan has been successful or not is whether its policies and proposals have been successfully implemented. This thematic study is therefore intended to address this gap.

Research Components

2.5 Research undertaken as part of this thematic study involved a number of related components:

I. A review and analysis of the various relevant government policy statements and previous research to clarify the concepts behind the delivery of spatial plans and their role in local infrastructure provision. As well as context setting, one important output of this component was to help identify and clarify the broader issues, and more detailed questions, to be used in the case study component (see iv below). The results of this review are set out in Chapter 3 of this report.

II. Two half-day discussion workshops, held in central London, involving a number of invited ‘experts’ and ‘key players’ at the national level to amplify understanding of issues related to spatial plan delivery, including current experiences and potential approaches and good practice. The first workshop was held at the offices of Communities and Local Government and involved national representatives of a number of organisations and government departments with interests in the operation of the planning system and the preparation of local development frameworks. This ‘stakeholder’ workshop was followed by a second event, held in the offices of the Local Government Association (LGA), attended by a number of representatives of the LGA, local authorities and the South East Regional Assembly. Chapter 4 sets out and analyses the main issues and opinions discussed at the two workshops.

III. A documentary/web-based review of the limited number of development plans (and their associated Inspector’s Reports) adopted up to June 2007 that are most likely to have related infrastructure requirements for their delivery (ie core strategies and area action plans), focussing on their main infrastructure requirements and any information on how these are expected to be delivered in terms of delivery partners and mechanisms. At the time this component of the research was conducted (June 2007), available information suggested
that there were around 12 core strategy (CS) documents and two area action plans (AAPs) that had reached adoption. The review of adopted CS and AAP documents, undertaken specifically for this research study, was also supplemented by an analysis of relevant findings in relation to infrastructure delivery from the longitudinal case study research being undertaken as part of the wider SPiP Study.

IV. A limited number of case studies, drawn from those authorities investigated in research component III and the wider SPiP Study, which cover a range of planning contexts where infrastructure delivery is a significant issue. The four case studies chosen covered:

- a local authority within a growth area (Ashford)
- an urban metropolitan authority with a focus on regeneration (Liverpool)
- a mixed urban/rural authority with an adopted core strategy (CS) which addresses local infrastructure needs (Redcar and Cleveland)
- a more localised area covered by an Area Action Plan (AAP) with infrastructure requirements (Walker Riverside AAP, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Each case study involved relevant web-based/documentary analysis and a limited number of interviews (around 5-6 per case study) with relevant local authority representatives (LDF team, Chief Executive or other relevant local authority departments) and other stakeholders and delivery partners of significance to the delivery of the infrastructure requirements related to the LDF such as the LSP, housing, transport, water providers etc). These interviews were conducted mainly via telephone though, where practicable, some were conducted on a face-to-face basis. A list of interviewees is given in Appendix 3 and the findings from the case studies are reported in Chapter 6.

V. Analysis and reporting, including the preparation of a draft thematic study report which was discussed with Communities and Local Government (and other steering group/expert advisory group members as appropriate). At this stage, other relevant SPiP Study findings, such as existing case study material relevant to the delivery of spatial plans and the provision of infrastructure, were also drawn upon as appropriate.
Research Issues

2.6 One of the main challenges in addressing this topic is that relatively few local planning authorities have yet reached the stage of having an adopted core strategy or other development plan document which outlines local infrastructure requirements. Many local authorities are only at an early stage in grappling with this aspect of the new spatial planning arrangements and, as a result, the extent of current experience and practice that can be drawn upon in the form of ‘good practice’ examples is relatively small. This problem was evident in an earlier RTPI/Communities and Local Government sponsored study into effective practice in spatial planning (EPiSP) (UCL/Deloitte, 2007) which also tried to address some of the issues raised in this thematic study.

2.7 A limited number of authorities have now adopted new style development plan documents, thus reaching the ‘delivery’, as opposed to ‘preparation’, stage in their local spatial planning activities. Part of this research has drawn on their experiences in successfully charting their way through to adoption and subsequent delivery of their strategies. Lessons have therefore been drawn, where appropriate, from these experiences in terms of both emerging ‘good practice’ and from less successful examples which nevertheless provide useful pointers towards better practice. These are examined in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report via the documentary analyses and more in-depth case studies.

2.8 The context within which the delivery of infrastructure is taking place is, however, one of significant change and, in some cases, experimentation as a result of, not only the cultural changes already at the heart of the spatial planning reforms themselves, but also changes within the wider governance arena, particularly in the way local councils are expected to work with a range of partners in a more formal, integrated and co-ordinated manner (eg see HM Treasury et al, 2007). More specifically, the links between local authorities and the LSP and new mechanisms for co-ordinated action and funding such as local area agreements (LAAs) and multi-area agreements (MAAs) are likely to play an increasingly important role in terms of the ways in which local planning authorities seek to implement their LDFs and deliver the associated infrastructure requirements.
2.9 The two workshops which were held as part of this study provided an excellent opportunity to explore current perceptions and understanding of this changing local governance context, alongside a broader consideration of the spatial planning issues that local planning authorities and other delivery partners will need to respond to as they engage in LDF preparation and delivery. These are reported in Chapter 4. Before that, an overview of current issues related to the delivery of infrastructure through the spatial planning process, in the context of this wider changing institutional and governmental arena, is provided in the next chapter of this report. This is drawn from various government policy statements and other relevant studies and literature. It should, however, be recognised at the outset that, given the current uncertainties surrounding the broader local governmental context (or at least how it might actually operate in practice), the findings and recommendations emerging from this thematic study involve a degree of speculation about what ‘might’ be possible, and what local authorities ‘might’ consider as they go about their spatial planning in respect of infrastructure delivery.
CHAPTER 3

Context to the Research

Spatial Planning Reforms

3.1 The 2004 planning reforms emphasised ‘a spatial planning approach which goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function’ (ODPM, 2005: para. 30). The local development frameworks (LDFs) that lie at the heart of this new approach thus ‘include policies which can impact on land use… but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means’ (ibid). Such an approach requires the identification of the means of implementation and this is reflected in one of the current tests of ‘soundness’ (soundness test viii) which requires ‘clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring’ (ODPM, 2004: para. 4.24). Thus, the new spatial planning system is about more than the plan-making process, it is about ensuring the delivery of plans in a co-ordinated and integrated way, in line with the principles of sustainable development (ODPM, 2005: para. 6).

3.2 Since 2004, this emphasis on the delivery of spatial plans and, in particular, the links between plans and infrastructure provision, has been significantly strengthened. PPS12 states ‘the provision of infrastructure is important in all major new developments. The capacity of existing infrastructure and the need for additional facilities should be taken into account in the preparation of all local development documents’ (ODPM, 2004: Annex B, para.3). The origins of this emphasis can be traced back to the years leading up to 2004 in the content of the Planning Green Paper (ODPM, 2000) and Sustainable Communities: building for the future (ODPM, 2003). This latter document outlines a strategy for accommodating the economic success of the South East and London and for alleviating the pressures on housing and services in the two regions through the provision of four major growth areas in and around London and the South East. Significantly, the strategy identifies one of the challenges facing the growth areas as being the need ‘to address public services and infrastructure needs to enable the new communities to function’ (ibid: 46) whilst also identifying the need for delivery mechanisms (specifically the planning system) to be more responsive to local development needs.
Barker Review of Housing Supply

3.3 Against the backdrop of the emerging sustainable communities agenda, the Government commissioned the Barker Review of Housing Supply (Barker, 2004) which was charged with examining the causes underpinning the lack of supply and responsiveness of housing in the UK. The review identifies a number of infrastructure-related barriers to housing supply which include a lack of existing infrastructure to support new housing development; local authority fears that new housing development will place unsustainable pressures on existing infrastructure; and the under-resourcing of infrastructure to accommodate new housing provision. It is argued that in addressing these barriers there needs to be ‘clear and timely mechanisms to provide the necessary infrastructure and services to support development and deliver sustainable communities’ (ibid: 32). Thus, the review sets out a range of recommendations for improving the delivery of infrastructure which include:

- Improving the co-ordination between planning authorities and infrastructure providers, and the resourcing by central government of public-private partnerships that help bring forward development through building essential infrastructure;
- The involvement of infrastructure providers at an early stage in plan preparation to minimise delays to development later on in the plan delivery process;
- Central government should make resources available for infrastructure provision to bring housing development forward through the establishment of a Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) in Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM);
- Central government and local authorities should make more strategic use of area-based special purpose vehicles (eg UDCs, URCS, CPOs, LDOs) to help deliver housing and supporting infrastructure;
- The more strategic use of a reformed section 106 agreement as a mechanism for infrastructure delivery and a greater role for Planning-gain Supplement at a local level.

3.4 In preparation for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, the Government announced the commissioning of a series of detailed reviews on specific cross-cutting issues. In the light of the Barker report (2004), and the Government’s own response to Barker’s recommendations which was published alongside the 2005 pre-Budget report (HM Treasury, 2005), a cross-cutting review into supporting housing growth was established to ensure that ‘appropriate infrastructure will be provided to support housing and population growth’ (HM Treasury, 2007a). Its purpose is to:
• determine the social, transport and environmental infrastructure implications of housing growth in different spatial forms and locations;
• establish a framework for sustainable and cost-effective patterns of growth, including by examining the use of targeted investment through the Community Infrastructure Fund and Growth Areas funding to support the fastest-growing areas;
• ensure that departmental resources across government are targeted appropriately for providing the national, regional and local infrastructure necessary to support future housing and population growth.

3.5 Although, at the time of this research, the actual outcome of the review was still to be made public, it is clear that the Government is committed to addressing infrastructure provision to support new housing development. Another recent Treasury report comments ‘an increase in housing supply is necessary to address demographic change and improve affordability, and is essential to the UK’s future economic and social success in the context of global economic change…[However] increasing housing supply requires investment in supporting infrastructure’ (HM Treasury, 2006: para. 129). Indeed, The Eddington Transport Study (Eddington, 2006) provides a review of the long-term impacts of transport decisions on the growth, productivity and stability of the UK economy. The report highlights that travel is placing considerable pressures on the UK’s existing transport infrastructure, and that these pressures, or more specifically the incapacity of existing infrastructure to cope with these pressures, is having adverse effects on UK economic competitiveness.

Barker Review of Land Use Planning

3.6 In response to criticisms, notably from the Treasury (and Barker, 2004), that the planning system is hindering the competitiveness of the UK economy, the Government commissioned the Barker Review of Land Use Planning (Barker, 2006), ‘to consider how, in the context of globalisation, and building on the reforms already put in place in England, planning policy and procedures can better deliver economic growth and prosperity alongside other sustainable development goals’ (ibid: para. 3). At the heart of the review is the concern that the planning system is inefficient and unresponsive and that ‘necessary infrastructure…is not being delivered quickly enough’ (ibid). According to the review (ibid: para. 69) the main problems that need to be addressed in terms of infrastructure provision are:
• the **length of time** it takes to make a decision on projects;

• the **uncertainty** this brings for developers and stakeholders involved in the delivery of infrastructure;

• the **increased costs** to both the public and the developer (as a result of delays and the complexity of the system);

• the **lost investment** if schemes are not brought forward because of the perceived difficulties in obtaining consents.

### 3.7

The review raises concerns that the national policy framework currently in place to guide planning applications and consents for major infrastructure projects, in particular, is unclear and would benefit from improved national guidance. According to the review, a collection of **Statements of Strategic Objectives** for specific infrastructure groups including transport, energy, and strategic waste and water would help to remove the ambiguity and uncertainty currently surrounding infrastructure planning on the part of local planning authorities, stakeholders involved in infrastructure delivery, developers and local communities. However, alongside improved national guidance and the establishment of an independent Planning Commission to decide on infrastructure projects of national importance, the review argues that it is important to retain ‘democratic accountability’ through public and stakeholder engagement in the infrastructure delivery process. Indeed, one of the core messages emerging from the review is that decision making must be undertaken at the most appropriate scale which is often at the local level. However, it is suggested that for the democratic process to deliver the right development outcomes, ‘*it is vital that the incentives facing decision-makers are aligned with the benefits of development*’ (ibid: para. 14). In other words, it is important that the system of local government finance offers incentives to encourage local decision-makers to pursue development on the basis that they have the resource capacity to fund and ultimately deliver supporting infrastructure.
Local Government White Paper and Lyons Review

3.8 Establishing the capacity of local authorities to deliver infrastructure through the LDF has been further emphasised in the Local Government White Paper which states ‘local authorities should play a positive coordinating role in the delivery of infrastructure. This is a vital part of their statutory spatial planning responsibility’ (Communities and Local Government, 2006: para. 45). In addition, the 2007 Budget Report (HM Treasury, 2007b) directly addresses the issue of local planning authorities (and LDFs) and their role in local infrastructure delivery, proposing (in paragraph 3.153) that:

- ‘Local Planning Authorities should be required to undertake sound infrastructure planning as part of the formation and review of their LDFs…
- key stakeholders, such as local developers, public sector infrastructure providers, utility companies, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and local communities should be involved in the infrastructure planning process; and
- in deciding whether to approve LDFs, the Planning Inspectorate should consider the soundness of infrastructure planning, taking into account the resources likely to be available to implement the plan…’

3.9 However, as the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government (Lyons, 2007: para. 31) notes ‘while local authorities see it as a core part of their concern to pay attention to local prosperity and to the needs and future prospects of their citizens and their local areas, there are no coherent or systematic financial incentives that encourage growth either for them or, more importantly, for their communities’. Section 106 agreements are increasingly being used as tools for generating funding for infrastructure whilst the proposed Planning-gain Supplement (PGS) has been identified as a further mechanism that might be used to support local and regional infrastructure provision (Barker, 2006). The proposals for PGS and the future of development obligations and section 106 agreements are still being reviewed and consulted on but there is consensus emerging from central government in particular that if development and infrastructure provision is to take place or incentive effects are to be realised then there needs to be a transparent and predictable link between local development and local resourcing (Lyons, 2007).
Effective Spatial Planning

3.10 There has also been increasing emphasis on the potential for using alternative and innovative approaches to deliver infrastructure. The recent RTPI/Communities and Local Government publication ‘Planning Together: Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and spatial planning: a practical guide’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007a) explores the potential benefits of improving the collaboration between planners and stakeholders involved with LSPs. In the context of infrastructure delivery, the guide makes the point that LSPs have a key role to play in co-ordinating ‘the delivery of appropriate social and community infrastructure, particularly for areas of new development, renewal or regeneration’ as well as helping to ‘ensure that planners are aware of implementation and infrastructure issues in developing plans and delivering planning decisions’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007a: 10). Thus, the guide recommends the integration of LDFs and sustainable community plans (SCPs) in the form of integrated strategies and the sharing of delivery mechanisms through local area agreements (LAAs). The value of such an approach lies in its potential to ‘simplify arrangements for utilising funding streams…to achieve locally-determined outcomes for improved service delivery [including infrastructure] in local areas’ and in ‘allowing greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007a: 25).

3.11 Furthermore, the recent RTPI/Communities and Local Government sponsored research, Shaping and Delivering Tomorrow’s Places: Effective Practice in Spatial Planning (UCL and Deloitte, 2007), contains important views about the role of spatial planning as ‘a delivery vehicle for the social, economic and environmental infrastructure needed for our communities…’ (UCL and Deloitte, 2007: 5). The report argues that for spatial planning to be effective, ‘it must focus on outcomes before processes’ (page 2), which suggests that delivery should be a driving force behind spatial planning. Thus, the report recommends that local planning authorities establish a Local Infrastructure Programme (LIP), together with a Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF), managed by a Local Infrastructure Group (LIG) to improve the co-ordination of infrastructure delivery and to facilitate more effective resource management. Complementing this research, another RTPI/Communities and Local Government sponsored study, currently being undertaken by the Universities of Manchester and Sheffield, is seeking to identify a coherent and integrated set of indicators that are able to measure the delivery of spatial planning outcomes in England robustly. The ability to monitor infrastructure delivery through a robust and consistent framework
would be particularly useful for providing a transparent and accountable delivery framework which facilitates more informed decision making about infrastructure provision and its role in supporting existing and new development. To date, this is something that has been lacking (Eddington, 2006).

Planning White Paper

3.12 The Planning White Paper (2007b) pulls many of these issues together, setting out proposals for a forward-looking approach to infrastructure provision at the local level that moves away from ‘site specific planning of infrastructure delivery to a more strategic and holistic view, which takes infrastructure decisions on roads alongside those of, for example, schools, hospitals, cultural and community facilities’ (ibid: para. 8.26). The White Paper identifies local authorities as ‘the right bodies to be undertaking this strategic view of infrastructure provision at the local level’ (ibid: para. 8.27). In doing so, they ‘…will need to involve infrastructure providers … and may well need to work across local authority boundaries’. Thus local authorities are effectively identified as the ‘ring-masters’ working with other providers and stakeholders to co-ordinate local infrastructure provision. The LDF’s role is further highlighted by proposals to clarify the current soundness test on ‘implementation’ so that local authorities more clearly ‘…demonstrate how and when infrastructure that is required to facilitate development will be delivered’ (ibid: para. 8.28).

3.13 The spatial planning, and wider local governmental, context reviewed above sets the background for the subsequent analysis of current practice in the delivery of infrastructure through the LDF process in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report. Firstly, however, the current views and perspectives of a range of national ‘experts’ and ‘key players’ representing both local authority views (via the Local Government Association) and a range of other organisations, agencies and government departments with interests in spatial planning and its delivery were examined through two discussion workshops held as part of this study. The results are set out in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

‘Stakeholder’ and Local Government Perspectives

Introduction

4.1 To amplify understanding of the key issues relating to spatial plan delivery, including current experiences and potential approaches and good practice, two half-day discussion workshops were held in central London, involving representatives from local government and a number of other organisations, agencies and government bodies/departments with interests in the spatial planning system and, more particularly, the delivery of infrastructure requirements. Although not all invited organisations and bodies were able to attend, the resulting workshops nevertheless gathered together a good cross-section of interests and opinions. The first workshop was held at the offices of Communities and Local Government in June 2007 and involved national representatives of a number of organisations and government departments with interests in the operation of the planning system and the preparation of local development frameworks. This ‘stakeholder’ workshop was followed by a second event, held in the offices of the Local Government Association (LGA) in July 2007, attended by a number of representatives of the LGA, local authorities and the South East of England Regional Assembly. A list of attendees at both workshops is given in Appendix 1. This chapter reports on the main issues and opinions discussed at the workshops.

2.2 The discussions at the two workshops were broadly split into three areas relating to infrastructure planning and delivery:

- the context for infrastructure and plan delivery
- the identification of infrastructure priorities through the LDF process
- the delivery of LDF infrastructure priorities

Context for Infrastructure and Plan Delivery

4.3 The participants at both workshops generally commented that the delivery of infrastructure is a long-term process and needs to be thought about in such a way when developing plans. There was a need to get the location right; plan for the longer term; reduce demand for new infrastructure (for example, through demand management and renewal of existing
infrastructure) and to secure funding for environmental infrastructure early in the planning process. There was, however, a general feeling at the workshops that the general context within which the reformed planning systems and processes are being rolled out is not yet sufficiently synchronised with the aspirations of the new system. This was because of the continuing need for improved understanding of the system and, more generally, for continued ‘culture change’ amongst both local planning authorities and their delivery partners.

4.4 There was also a view that there remained a lack of synchronisation between different components of the spatial planning system, including the emerging LDFs and the RSS at the strategic level and between the LDF/RSS and other plans and policies (e.g. local transport plan) at the local level. As one participant noted, ‘…what is still missing are linkages between the sustainable communities strategies, the local development framework and how these documents interact with business and funders in general…’. A related question was raised in the LGA workshop, ‘What is the most appropriate (spatial) level to plan for locally?’ One participant commented that city regions have added to the complex spatial situation and, in the North, the Northern Way framework has identified sub-regions which are different from those identified in specific RSSs. This creates a problem of joining-up funding streams, existing research, and planning agendas in practice. Similar issues were also identified in the SE in relation to the growth areas.

4.5 Participants at both workshops spent some time exploring what was meant by the concept of ‘infrastructure’. As one participant at the national stakeholder event commented, ‘…infrastructure will mean different things to different people. It is impossible to separate this debate from the wider debate on culture change and the difference between land use and spatial planning. Culture change will be pivotal to ensure that all these different ideas about what constitutes infrastructure are taken into account…’. One participant commented that people’s perceptions of infrastructure are different now – they used to consist primarily of utilities, flood defences and roads but ‘infrastructure’ has evolved to include green space, social facilities etc. Generally, participants at the workshops felt that policy-makers and stakeholders needed to consider issues relating to infrastructure in a broad sense and that, in order to facilitate better infrastructure delivery, a more comprehensive definition of ‘infrastructure’ was needed. As well as the more obvious issues such as provision of new roads and highways, other transport links, water supply, sewage and sanitation facilities and flood defences, infrastructure requirements that were potentially important aspects of LDF delivery also included housing
supply; community facilities such as hospitals, schools, libraries; and ‘green infrastructure’ including aspects relating to the design, landscaping and public realm aspects of new developments and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

4.6 However, some of the participants sounded more of a note of caution, warning of the danger of a ‘shopping list’ approach which might be ‘… out of kilter with the realities of funding availability…’ and that what is provided will ultimately be constrained by the realities of funding. ‘Trade-offs’ were therefore likely, with local planning authorities having to decide priorities, and the Inspectorate examining the trade-offs and choices made in the light of the evidence base. Private sector representatives, in particular, commented that they felt political expectations had risen to unrealistic levels in terms of what developers are being asked to fund. Participants at the LGA workshop felt that there had also been a long period of under funding at the local level and that that this has meant that planning goals, dictated by regional and national planning agendas, have been difficult to deliver (examples given included housing and flood defence schemes). One of the participants commented that this funding gap, and the resulting failure (or more likely reduced capacity) to deliver plans means that ‘…the spatial ambition and vision of the plan will lack credibility if infrastructure cannot be delivered because of a lack of local funding…’. The LGA workshop participants thus identified the need for a long-term funding commitment from government to help LPAs in the delivery of infrastructure but felt that that such a commitment was currently lacking.

Identification of Infrastructure Priorities through the LDF Process

4.7 There was general recognition that it is reckless to plan for growth or any kind of development without giving thorough thought to infrastructure delivery. Indeed, it was suggested by one participant that ‘… the easiest way to ‘ruin’ a plan is to show that the infrastructure goals of the document are undeliverable…’. There was a need to consider and work to budgets and to think about issues of timing. Prioritisation was therefore essential but, even with a fairly realistic (and basic) list of infrastructure schemes it often still takes a long time, and a vast amount of resources, to deliver. One participant commented that, despite attempts to move away from a wish list approach to one that identified around 40 prioritised infrastructure schemes, funding was only likely to be secured for the top two or three schemes anyway.
4.8 Some specific examples of attempts to prioritise infrastructure requirements were cited by workshop participants. At the RSS level within the South East, sub-regional partnerships have been used to identify infrastructure requirements. This process has been informed by a project, involving the Environment Agency and other utilities providers, focusing on infrastructure delivery. The intention is to have a ‘living document’ that can be adapted and changed according to changing infrastructure requirements and priorities whilst also trying to avoid simply stating a long wish list. At a more local level, Ashford has taken careful consideration of infrastructure requirements in its plan and, despite being relatively well funded as a growth area, the Council has recognised the need to adopt a cautious approach to tackling infrastructure requirements because of the cost implications.

4.9 The LGA participants raised the issue that local authorities have limited ability to influence national priorities (‘... demands flow down [from national level to local authorities but rarely flow back up...’). This raised issues where local strategies were reliant on support from central government or national delivery partners, such as in Leeds where the Council has been trying to develop and regenerate corridors of development along existing rail links but their ability to do so has apparently been restricted by limited rail capacity which cannot be addressed because rail companies refuse to increase services or individual train capacities. It was suggested that local authorities might be able to better influence national priorities by going through the Regional Assemblies but that this avenue was now uncertain in the light of the proposed changes to existing regional arrangements.

4.10 Some participants pointed out that spatial planning was about more than just delivering a realistic (ie in terms of resources) list of infrastructure projects and that there was a danger of losing the visionary aspects of spatial planning. As one participant at the national stakeholder workshop commented, ‘...whatever happened to place shaping and tying to understand how individual places work and tailoring policies to them?’ Indeed, if it was just about scheme delivery, there was a question of whether it needed to be delivered via an LDF at all, but rather simply through existing capital programmes. Another participant agreed that there was a need to focus on places and individual settlements, but that local priorities need to be identified and addressed. This was ‘...good, simple town planning’.
From a Communities and Local Government perspective, the LDF (and the local planning authority) was designed to be ‘…a ‘ringmaster’ – an intermediary between residents and some of these quite technical discussions…’. This was challenged by one participant who was concerned that, in doing so, ‘…place-based questions are left to the end. If you are envisioning a place you don’t leave questions of demand reduction to the end. ‘Ringmasters’ is an accurate but lamentable description of local planning – it seems to remove any [visionary] town planning from the activity. We aren’t talking about envisioning places…its all about minimum requirements and that is not how you will make great places’. Extending this ‘ringmaster’ analogy, one question posed was that of ‘how the ‘ringmaster’ might decide what ‘acts’ he wants in the circus?’ In response, one participant suggested that it hinged around evidence, ‘… and evidence to me means three things. First of all, there are indicators, and local authorities (although they don’t know it sometimes) have a wealth of data on key indicators. Second, it is about establishing a base level which we can define through these indicators – ‘quality of life’ and so on. Then, third, there is what I would call ‘public preferences’ about what the community would like to see. Now there might be a discrepancy between elements of this (‘what is there’; ‘what should be there’; and ‘what people would like to see there’) – but we can use evidence to support our decisions on what infrastructure is needed’.

Other participants at the stakeholder workshop raised concerns that local planners did not generally understand the development process and property finance and that it was difficult to choreograph everything when there is not a clear understanding of what is needed, and not much leadership. Again the need for ‘culture change’ was highlighted, along with potential for improvement following the introduction of new funding and delivery approaches in the local government arena. As one participant commented, ‘…there are proposals on the table which will radically alter the governance structures within which planning operates. If you look at the sub-national review published last week [HM Treasury et al, 2007] it clearly flags up Local Area Agreements (LAAs) as the delivery arm of the LSP – these are likely to be superseded by MAAs which cover a wider sub-regional area. You can’t understand the changes in planning, and how we are going to plan for infrastructure, without understanding the changes occurring in the wider public sector context within which planning exists…’.
The Delivery of LDF Infrastructure Priorities

4.13 The participants at the LGA workshop were also asked for their views on whether Local Area Agreements (LAAs) would help facilitate infrastructure delivery. However, the consensus was that there was little evidence that this was the case at present and that, without significant change, it was difficult to see the LAAs as seriously helping to deliver infrastructure. The participants thought that the LSPs’ visions, as currently set out in the community plans, were not yet sufficiently linked to LAAs and were insufficiently focussed to be clearly aligned in terms of spatial delivery with the LDF. However, they did comment that things were improving and that, in the future, there is likely to be a greater emphasis on the internal functional alignment of LSP visions with the core strategy to make the spatial expression of community statements more deliverable. Nevertheless, they still doubted the extent to which this would happen through the mechanism of a LAA.

4.14 Amongst the wider group of potential delivery partners, the problem is, more fundamentally, one of a lack of knowledge of these changes in the local governance arena in the first place. As one participant put it, ‘…isn’t this all too complicated … [the industry] goes out and build houses – they don’t know what an LSP, LAA or an MAA is…’. Another stakeholder representative commented after the workshop that he had arrived in the morning thinking he had a reasonable grasp of the planning process, and how his organisation might fit into it, but having now listened to all the discussion of the role of local authorities and LAAs etc, was going away more confused than when he started and realising he didn’t know anything whatsoever about the wider local governance arena despite its alleged importance.

4.15 This led onto further discussions at both workshops about stakeholder and partner involvement in the LDF preparation process and the co-ordinated engagement of partners to deliver LDF policies and proposals. The question of whether LPAs were engaging the right people in their LDF activities, and whether these delivery partners were able or willing to get involved, was central to this discussion. It was ‘action’ rather than just ‘talking’ that was important, and one participant involved in earlier related research emphasised that ‘…one of the things we tried to do in the EPiSP research [UCL and Deloitte, 2007] was to emphasise that co-operation does not mean just sitting in a room together…’. She continued by envisaging a time in the future where there will be ‘…something like what I call a ‘places delivery team’ … something which deals with a range of inter-
related aspects of making better places. That might be something which is handled by the local authority or, in some cases, it might be something you do through a Special Purpose Vehicle…’ Such ideas were being worked on via IDeA and a National Planning Forum report (NPF, 2007).

4.16 One local authority representative commented that delivery partners included developers but that, although their core strategy had been driven by infrastructure requirements, individual developers were challenging it because of a perceived lack of detail and that they were generally very slow to get involved in the LDF process other than in a negative way via objections. Participants at both workshops cited difficulties in getting delivery partners to engage, although blame for this did not necessarily lie entirely with the partners – one comment was that, if a local planning authority was saying it has tried to get other agencies involved in the LDF preparation process but without success, the question to ask is, ‘How hard have they tried?’ Research findings from the earlier EPiSP project were cited as suggesting that not many have tried very hard in this respect, although there was also a feeling that the situation was now getting better.

4.17 On a related point, it was suggested at the LGA workshop that the LDF test of soundness (viii) needs to be applied with common sense and to take account of the strategic nature of core strategies. Participants commented that many of the issues which are not addressed in detail in core strategies will actually be developed in greater detail in later DPDs or SPDs. They suggested the core strategy had a role in identifying risks to infrastructure delivery. One participant commented that developers in particular need to be made aware of this to avoid ‘… dragging the system back to a point where it took months to get anything done.’ because of attempts to introduce inappropriate detail into the core strategy.

4.18 However, other participants commented that it might prove difficult to have an individual DPD for infrastructure because infrastructure requirements change with all new developments. It was suggested that, because of the fluid nature of infrastructure delivery, a ‘living document’ would be more beneficial and provide the flexibility needed to change infrastructure priorities. This might be best achieved through the AMR process. It was further commented that the evidence base needs to make the case for infrastructure requirements but that it was unclear ‘how far the evidence needs to go in order to be considered sufficient’. For example, the question was asked, ‘What happens if infrastructure cannot be delivered through an adopted plan alone?’ This was considered a reality in many areas – even Ashford, which has received substantial public funding as a growth area, was apparently struggling to deliver infrastructure
commitments because of delivery ‘bottlenecks’. It was also pointed out that evidence of deliverability of a plan might take several forms including ‘commitment statements’ from partners (eg ‘a letter from Network Rail saying they will do XYZ’) and that local authorities should make such commitment statements available to Inspectors as part of their evidence base.

4.19 The discussion moved on to explore further mechanisms potentially available to generate the funding needed to help deliver infrastructure. At the time the workshops were undertaken, central government had identified a potential Planning-gain Supplement (PGS) and developer contributions as providing mechanisms for helping to fund infrastructure requirements. Although the participants commented that these will help to partially fill the void in funding, they felt there would still be a significant gap. Also, the LGA participants commented that developers are usually willing to help fund infrastructure, but the system will not be sustainable if the developers do not see how their contributions are helping to enhance their own projects. The participants suggested that there is currently nothing to stop a developer from holding onto land in the hope of increasing their returns through market processes and that, in areas where several developers own land, there is currently no advantage in making the first move to develop because of the danger of ‘bearing the brunt’ of providing the infrastructure requirements whilst others can then ‘ride on the back’ of the first developer in terms of infrastructure delivery obligations. If development land is held back in this way, government policy (as set out in PPS3) does not help because it simply puts the onus back on the local authority to go out and find more land. What was needed was a mechanism for the negotiation of local developer contributions in such a way that could secure agreement between all parties concerned which would make developer contributions fairer and more sustainable in the longer-term.

4.20 The private sector perspective was put by a participant at the stakeholder workshop. In his view, local planning authority expectations on what developers should deliver were just unrealistic: ‘…everyone wants infrastructure now, but to pay for it later….that just isn’t realistic. We need some sort of partnership with public agencies where we do what we do, and we make a contribution, but the contribution of others has to be clearly defined also….’. It was also suggested that the local planning authorities ‘…need to know what levers to pull to get the private sector involved…’.
4.21 It was generally agreed in the discussions at the LGA workshop that a more committed approach to forming partnerships with developers would prove beneficial. However, it was recognised that developers need to see an outcome from their investment. It was also suggested that other local authority and national government departments need to be sensitised to this approach. There was also the feeling amongst LGA participants that, for this to work, government funding needs to be made more reliable (as opposed to the current ‘uncertainty of competitive bidding’), which could then actually help to open up further funding streams and facilitate longer-term planning for infrastructure.

4.22 The overall view, amongst representatives of both workshops, was that the private sector, on its own, would not be sufficient for delivering infrastructure. It was also recognised that there are other mechanisms which could be used to help deliver infrastructure (eg congestion charging in relation to public transport infrastructure delivery) but there was scepticism that these would go much of the way towards fully funding delivery.

4.23 The two workshops ended with some additional thoughts on other relevant issues and ways the system might be made to work better. These included concerns about possible disjuncture between different agencies, particularly perhaps with respect to synchronising timetables and spending commitments. An example cited related to problems in planning for waste disposal facilities in a northern metropolitan area. Others re-emphasised that the credibility of the whole LDF (and spatial planning) process was dependent on delivery and that people (including the general public as well as developers) will only buy into the process if delivery is seen to be taking place. Participants at the LGA workshop re-emphasised their view of the need for central government to sign up to a long-term financial commitment to funding infrastructure whilst also commenting that there is a need to allow things to ‘bed in’ because the policy and process landscape is still developing. Ultimately, it was argued that planners need to be given the time and resources to develop a working system.

Key Issues

4.24 The key points emerging from the two workshops are summarised below:

4.25 There is a need for local authorities to give serious consideration to issues relating to the implementation of their LDF and, in particular, the means by which necessary infrastructure requirements will be delivered, by whom and to what timescales.
4.26 Such infrastructure requirements related to the LDF process can be considered in a ‘traditional’ sense, focussing on ‘hard’ infrastructure, such as roads and other transport provision, water supply and other utilities provision. However, it might be preferable in most cases for local authorities to conceive of infrastructure requirements more broadly as embracing a wider range of issues necessary for the achievement of LDF policies, proposals and aspirations, such as ‘green’ infrastructure and the provision of community services.

4.27 Funding, and the ability of the local authority and other partners to deliver infrastructure, is always going to be constrained so there is a need to avoid a simple ‘shopping list’ of desired provision which is likely to be unattainable. Potential delivery partners, other stakeholders with interests in the spatial planning process and, arguably most importantly, local communities and the public, are likely to become quickly disillusioned with the new planning system if LDFs are unrealistic and the visions, policies and proposals within them are not delivered. In any case, such documents are unlikely to meet the tests of soundness.

4.28 There is therefore a need to prioritise between potential infrastructural requirements when preparing most LDF documents.

4.29 The LDF core strategies should give appropriate consideration to the level of risk that some of the required infrastructure will not be forthcoming and ways in which this might be mitigated or addressed. Commitment statements from partners are potentially important sources of evidence in terms of meeting the test of soundness related to delivery.

4.30 The Government has already stated the intention to amend soundness test (viii) to further emphasise the importance of delivery of infrastructure (Communities and Local Government, 2007b). However, the reputation of the new system has already suffered as a result of the difficulties some local authorities have had in passing the current tests and more authorities have delayed their submission as a result. It is important that any subsequent changes do not unnecessarily add significant further delays to preparation timescales.

4.31 There is a need for appropriate mechanisms to monitor whether the necessary infrastructural requirements are subsequently being delivered, and to re-consider the prioritisation and subsequent delivery programme. The AMR is one potential vehicle for addressing some of these issues, as might be some form of ‘infrastructure programme’ which should be agreed jointly with delivery partners as far as possible and treated as a ‘living document’ to be amended as appropriate and thus kept up to date.
4.32 One way to conceive of the local authority’s role might be that of a ‘ringmaster’ co-ordinating the actions of partners and the delivery of infrastructure requirements flowing from the LDF. However, in doing so, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of ‘good town planning’ and a focus on ‘making better places’.

4.33 Current institutional and cultural developments in the local government arena could provide a range of more integrated mechanisms for infrastructure delivery. Links between the local authority and the LSP are particularly important and there is potential for new and emerging mechanisms such as local area agreements (LAAs), multi-area agreements (MAAs) and special purpose vehicles (SPVs) to provide a means of co-ordinating activities and funding. There is a need, however, for greater understanding of the possibilities, and changing context, by both local authorities and other parties. In particular, it would seem from the workshop discussions that a number of the representatives of organisations or agencies probably had little or no real understanding of any of these matters, or possibilities, at present.

4.34 Private sector developers have a potentially important role in infrastructure delivery. However, local planners need better understanding of the development process and property finance in order to understand what might or might not be possible, and to facilitate their attempts to involve them. From a developer perspective, there are concerns that expectations in respect of infrastructure delivery via the private sector are often unrealistically high. A more committed approach to forming partnerships with developers is desirable but needs to be worked on as, at present, there often appear to be difficulties in getting developers (as well as other agencies) to engage fully in the LDF process. Local authorities need to make sure they are trying hard enough to facilitate this.

4.35 Mechanisms such as Planning-gain Supplement and developer contributions have a significant role to play in infrastructure delivery, but probably they will not deliver everything and there needs to be careful thought given to ways in which developers can be encouraged to make commitments, especially in situations where several different developers or landowners are potentially involved, as opposed to waiting in the hope of ‘riding on the back’ of provision by other partners. Locally derived mechanisms such as Ashford’s ‘strategic tariff’ (see case study in Chapter 6) might be one way forward, but this issue also needs further consideration at the national level.
4.36 A strongly held LGA view was that the delivery of infrastructure was a long-term process and that there was a need for central government and the national agencies (such as the Highways Agency) to provide a longer-term financial commitment to funding infrastructure, thus providing greater certainty. As well as directly funding infrastructure, such a commitment would make it easier to get the private sector and other delivery partners to commit their own resources.

4.37 There were currently some synchronisation difficulties identified between the visions and time-horizons of the LDF process and those of delivery partners. This has not been helped by the lengthy timescales required, so far, to prepare the first round of LDF outputs, particularly core strategies. However, as local planning authorities become more experienced in respect of the reformed system, hopefully this will improve. There was an overall feeling amongst LGA representatives about the need to let the current system ‘bed-in’ and for local planners to be given sufficient time and resources to develop a working system.

4.38 Nevertheless, it is also clear that further understanding of the spatial planning process, and the wider evolution and role of local government, is needed. A continued drive for further ‘culture change’ amongst both local planning authorities and their delivery partners remains crucial.
CHAPTER 5

Documentary Analysis of LDF ‘Infrastructure’ Content

Introduction

5.1 A documentary/web-based review was undertaken of the limited number of adopted core strategy (CS) and area action plans (AAPs), and their associated Inspector’s Reports that were available at the time, focussing on their main infrastructure requirements and any information on how these were expected to be delivered in terms of delivery partners and mechanisms. At the time this component of the research was conducted (June 2007), available information suggested that there were around 12 core strategy (CS) documents and two area action plans (AAPs) that had been adopted. A list of all the authorities whose LDF documents were reviewed in this way is provided in Appendix 2.

5.2 This review of adopted CS and AAP documents, undertaken specifically for this research study, was supplemented by an analysis of relevant findings in relation to infrastructure delivery from the ongoing longitudinal case study (LCS) research being undertaken as part of the wider SPiP Study. This chapter sets out the main findings of the review, on an authority by authority basis, before drawing on the supplementary information from LCS work to highlight aspects of ‘good’ and ‘weaker’ practice.

Examination of Adopted Core Strategies (CSs) and Action Area Plans (AAPs)

South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy

5.3 South Cambridgeshire lies within part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge ‘growth corridor’ that was identified in the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM, 2003). As a result, the infrastructure delivery issues in the Core Strategy (CS) are dominated by the delivery of new housing (20,000 new units in the period to 2016) and the associated transport and retail infrastructure that the new residential development requires. The CS identifies partnership working/consultation as an important mechanism for delivery of the plan. The CS itself was prepared in consultation with stakeholders through three rounds of iteration. The local authority is also involved in the preparation of the Cambridgeshire Long-Term Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan. Cambridgeshire Horizons (CH) (an independent consultation group operating in the
Chapter 5 Documentary Analysis of LDF ‘Infrastructure’ Content

Cambridge sub-region and responsible for driving the delivery of 47,500 new homes and associated support infrastructure by 2016) will assist the local authority with the delivery of major developments and necessary infrastructure. Various partnership working arrangements have been in place for the majority of the major developments set out in the CS since around the time of the adoption of the Structure Plan. These include Member Reference Groups, Officer Steering Groups and Topic Groups to facilitate further partnership working with the main stakeholders on a range of key infrastructure issues (eg housing, community facilities, drainage). Following the Inspector’s Report (see below) the monitoring of key trends and processes through the AMR is identified as being an important mechanism for ensuring successful delivery of the CS objectives.

5.4 The Inspector’s Report (IR) focuses mainly on housing delivery issues. The Inspector comments that the delivery vision set out in the CS is rather optimistic about the date when any substantial development will begin and, based on the need for essential infrastructure provision (eg transport, retail, employment) and the need for planning permission and master plan approval. The Inspector considers that the proposed speed of development of Northstowe is unrealistic. The Inspector’s report is also sceptical that an annual rate of anywhere near 600 dwellings per annum can be achieved up to 2016 due to exogenous constraints. In addition, the submitted CS contained detailed housing trajectories for the growth areas. However, the IR comments that CS should not include housing trajectories but that they should instead form part of the AMR and should be included in specific AAPs. Indeed, the Report suggests that the inclusion of the housing trajectories in the CS would make the CS unsound. As a result, they were removed from the adopted CS.

Redcar and Cleveland Core Strategy

5.5 In Redcar and Cleveland, the infrastructure delivery aspect of the Core Strategy (CS) focuses on a broad range of infrastructure issues. The provision of housing is a key issue in the borough and the CS outlines a brief summary of projected annual housing provision for three periods that will be developed more fully in subsequent AAPs. However, under the Borough’s ‘Sustainable Communities’ objectives, plans are outlined to support new residential development and established residential areas with the provision of new infrastructure including retail, schools, local services, access to green spaces to enhance quality of life, and sustainable transport infrastructure to support new development and regeneration priorities in key urban areas in the Borough. The CS also outlines proposals to support existing employment infrastructure in traditional steel and chemical industries and diversify the local economy in both urban and rural
areas. A key component of the CS is its ‘Implementation Plan’ in which the plan cross references policy commitments outlined in the CS with desired outcomes, indicators for monitoring implementation, the mechanism for delivery of the policy and the agency that will lead policy implementation. The mechanisms for implementation identified in the Implementation Plan include a Housing DPD, Employment and Town Centre DPD, AAPs, LTP, the determination of planning applications and a range of additional strategies targeting specific policy issues (eg Housing Market Renewal areas).

5.6 The Inspector’s Report makes specific comment on the delivery of housing and employment infrastructure in the Borough, reflecting the fact that the two issues occupy a prominent position in the CS. Although the IR notes that the implementation of the strategy will, in large part, be reliant on the subsequent DPDs, the CS was considered by the Inspector to provide a suitable framework for the subsequent delivery of such infrastructure. The IR identifies the AMR as an important mechanism through which to monitor and inform the implementation of the plan. The IR comments that there is evidence that the Council has consulted with appropriate bodies and agencies to ensure the strategy can be implemented. Examples of this include a ‘Statement of Common Ground’ with Northumbrian Water (clarifying that there is no undue constraint to development proposals in East Cleveland in terms of water supply). The IR is particularly complimentary of the inclusion of the ‘Implementation Plan’ which sets out the indicators, the implementation/delivery mechanism, and the lead agency for all the DPD policies.

Hambleton Core Strategy

5.7 The two primary infrastructure issues that are identified in the Hambleton Core Strategy (CS) are housing and employment. Under Policy CP5, the CS outlines a consistent annual supply of housing for three planning periods. However, an important requirement for the Borough is the provision of affordable housing in high demand areas in the Borough. The ‘Service Centres’ (the larger towns) are targeted for the greatest level of increase in new housing, reflecting higher need and demand issues. The provision of new housing is to be addressed in detail in specific AAPs and an Allocations DPD. In terms of employment land, Policy CP10 states that, ‘the Council, its partners and service providers will ensure that 75 hectares of land for employment development are brought forward in the period 2005 to 2021’. The majority of land allocated to new employment infrastructure is in the Service Centres, reflecting the Council’s objective of integrating housing, employment, and services to reduce unsustainable travel. Further infrastructure priorities include improved transport provision. Policy CP2 states that support will be given to sustainable transport investment,
particularly in public transport, but the CS recognises its limited capabilities in a largely rural authority area. Policy CP3 also supports proposals for sustaining or enhancing access to ‘social and cultural infrastructure’ (eg village/community halls, schools, nurseries, public houses, post offices, and convenience stores). Policy CP14 also seeks to support retail and other town centre infrastructure of a scale appropriate to the roles supported in each Principal Service Centre or Service Centre, provided that development respects the character of the environment, including architectural and historic interest and assists in maintaining the Centre’s existing retail function.

5.8 The delivery plan of the CS has been informed by extensive community consultation which was used to guide the Council’s views on where infrastructure development should be targeted. For example, the community were asked where new housing should be located within areas at minimal risk of flooding and close to services and shops being favoured. In addition, in an appendix to the CS, the policies are linked to performance indicators, the main agencies (or strategies) involved in delivery, and identified targets. The mechanisms for delivery include specific SPDs, and DPDs and the local authority is supportive of the use of extensive partnership working, including developers, local community groups, and regional agencies, to deliver key infrastructure.

5.9 The Inspector comments that the CS relates well to other relevant plans and strategies that influence the delivery of its policies, including the draft RSS, RES, and Sub-Regional Investment Plan. The IR also comments that the DPD addresses the links with the LTP, Community Strategy, and Schools Organisation Plan. The IR makes specific reference to the provision of housing infrastructure, commenting that the proposed level of housing provision is in balance with the level of employment development proposed. In relation to employment infrastructure, the IR comments that, although there are uncertainties about future growth trends in employment in different areas of the Borough, the adoption of a ‘medium growth strategy’ (defined through an Economic Development Study) provides an appropriate background for allocating land for new employment provision. The Inspector also found that appropriate consideration has been given to supporting new retail development and improving access to services. The IR complements the CS for setting out the arrangements for monitoring and delivering the DPD, including the range of indicators, targets, milestones and timescales, as well as the way the proposals are linked to delivery mechanisms and the main agencies involved.
The Horsham Core Strategy (CS) includes a number of infrastructure objectives related to the provision of new housing development (to 2018); the provision of land and floorspace for new employment development; the provision of ‘supporting necessary infrastructure’ (community facilities, services, transport provision) to complement housing and employment development; infrastructure to promote and enhance community leisure and recreation facilities; and infrastructure to enhance the current retail make-up of Horsham town centre and smaller towns and villages in the District. The CS acknowledges that the release of land for development (housing, employment, retail etc) will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity in existing local infrastructure (eg waste collection, utilities, roads, etc) and community facilities to meet additional development pressures, or there will need to be arrangements made for additional infrastructure to be provided to meet new development pressure. The CS outlines an implementation strategy, cross-referencing specific policies with an appropriate monitoring indicator, target date for implementation and reference to the agencies responsible for delivery. The AMR is also recognised as an important tool for monitoring trends and facilitating implementation of policies based on a clear evidence base. Finally, it is recognised that the involvement of partner agencies, service providers and continued consultation with local communities and stakeholders will be needed to deliver the policies contained in the CS.

However, the IR commented that the CS, as submitted, failed to meet soundness test (viii) as it was not stated in the LDS that the CS is expected to be reviewed in 2008 in order to take account of the final version of the South East Plan and also as an opportunity to correct any significant deviations from the targets; nor did the CS state that ‘reserve’ housing sites will be identified in a separate DPD and would be activated should monitoring reveal that it was necessary. On the inclusion of targets, the IR comments that these should allow for direct effects to be measured and should be SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Timed) but considered that not all of the targets set out in the CS fit these requirements as some indicators have no means of measurement or are vague.

Hampshire provides an example of a core strategy in relation to future minerals and waste planning in the County. Two strategic objectives in this CS refer to ‘infrastructure’: (i) ‘ensure that infrastructure for the management of waste and the extraction of minerals are developed with due regard to the principles of sustainable development’, (ii) ‘support the driving of waste resource infrastructure and management up the waste
hierarchy by helping to deliver [a range of changes to waste and minerals planning]’. In addition to these objectives, infrastructure issues and the delivery of infrastructure, are addressed extensively throughout the CS both in relation to waste and minerals. The CS outlines an implementation framework which, it is stated, will be undertaken through extensive consultation and involvement with LPAs, the Environment Agency and minerals and waste agencies. Indeed, such a partnership approach is identified as being essential, with the CS noting that, although many of the implementation steps are within the control of the Mineral and Waste Planning Authorities, several are not. In particular, delivery of this Strategy is acknowledged to require extensive involvement of district councils (as both Planning Authorities and Waste Collection Authorities), Project Integra (a partnership involving local authorities and a private waste contractor), the Environment Agency and the minerals and waste industries. It also expects district councils to incorporate the principles of sustainable design, construction and demolition into their LDFs and development control processes as well as considering waste and minerals issues when deciding on the proposed location of development. To facilitate the achievement of CS objectives, Project Integra, and the waste industry more generally, will need to optimise waste collection and recycling systems; develop the required new recycling, composting and recovery and treatment infrastructure; and, with the help of the Environment Agency, improve the effectiveness of waste reduction strategies.

5.13 The IR comments that the key issue in terms of soundness is whether the CS contains sufficient realistic and achievable targets, indicators and milestones to monitor the performance of the Strategy and its policies, with clearly identified delivery mechanisms and timescale. The IR comments that the CS sets out a Monitoring Plan, with a wide range of core and local output indicators and targets related to each policy, many of which directly reflect national monitoring core indicators for minerals and waste. The IR notes that the AMR outlines a comprehensive framework for monitoring this CS, summarising the various output indicators and the procedure for monitoring, which will be complemented by further local indicators as the plan-making process continues through the development of subsequent DPDs. In addition, the IR comments that the implementation framework, set out in the CS, outlines the mechanisms and actions necessary to implement the Strategy for each of the core policies, along with the main agencies and supporting bodies responsible. It also reflects some of the actions included in the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and the mitigation measures suggested in the current Sustainability Appraisal reports. The IR thus concludes that the monitoring and implementation arrangements for the CS are comprehensive, realistic and achievable.
Plymouth Core Strategy

5.14 The Plymouth Core Strategy (CS) focuses on a broad range of infrastructure-related delivery issues. The infrastructure issues include the provision of quality employment, exceptional shopping, cultural, community, education, leisure, and healthcare infrastructure, sufficient housing development, an improved public transport network and improved waste management infrastructure. A broader thematic consideration of infrastructure needs is also detailed in the CS including economy (employment provision and development of existing sites); shopping (provision of retail development); education (provision of new children’s centres and safeguarding of sites for development to meet anticipated population growth); housing; waste management (providing appropriate waste management and treatment infrastructure); transport and communication infrastructure; and community health, safety, wellbeing and social inclusion (provision of leisure and recreation facilities, improving Plymouth’s healthcare infrastructure, and the provision of key community infrastructure such as places of worship and local services). The CS also indicates that more specific delivery infrastructure requirements will be set out through specific AAPs for particular areas.

5.15 The CS emphasises that implementation of the policies contained in the CS will require concerted action by a range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies working in partnership, stating that, ‘the document’s role is to provide a clear and robust framework for development in order that investment and action can be co-ordinated and geared to efficient and effective delivery’. Identified partners in relation to individual areas, or site-specific spatial development projects, include the Council together with any local regeneration or community partnerships and the private sector. Other City-wide or non-spatial aspects are to be delivered in conjunction with the Plymouth LSP under the umbrella of the Plymouth 2020 Sustainable Community Strategy. The new City Development Company will also play a key role. The CS also comments that partnerships will be guided by strategies such as Housing and Economic Strategies and that, at the regional level, the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and others will combine to deliver targeted funding investment and action through an Integrated Regional Strategy, ‘Just Connect’.

5.16 The IR notes that the Council has recognised that the original monitoring and implementation section of the CS needed to be considerably improved to provide greater clarity on how a ‘plan, monitor and manage’ approach will operate and that, in response, the Council had proposed replacing Section 17 of the original CS with a more detailed implementation and monitoring framework which shows clearly the targets and milestones that
relate to the delivery of policies; how such progress will be measured; and who will deliver the outcomes. The IR stated that the CS would be unsound without this degree of detail and it should therefore be included.

**Mid Devon Core Strategy**

5.17 Mid Devon’s Core Strategy (CS) sets out a vision and spatial strategy for the Council underpinned by 18 ‘core policies’. In relation to infrastructure, the CS contains a range of relevant core policies on meeting housing needs; meeting employment needs; town centres which includes a range of infrastructure delivery issues subsumed within the regeneration of town centres (eg promoting new retail development, housing, transport links etc); previously-developed land; and access (transport infrastructure and provision of community-based infrastructure). There are also six core policies which focus on specific localities (4 urban focused; one generic covering ‘villages’ and one focusing on the countryside) and outline detailed infrastructure issues for each area (eg housing provision, employment land provision). The CS also includes a core policy specifically related to ‘infrastructure’ (CP 8) which appears to relate mainly to community facilities and utilities.

5.18 Although the IR acknowledges that the CS sets out indicators and targets for the monitoring and assessment of the core policies, it commented that initially no mention was made as to who would be responsible for the implementation of these strategic policies and that, as a consequence, the submitted CS did not pass soundness test (viii). In response, the Council produced a list of agencies that will be responsible for delivering the core policies, thus making the plan sound in this respect.

**Walker Riverside AAP**

5.19 The implementation section of the Walker Riverside AAP (Newcastle upon Tyne City Council) details a range of infrastructure priorities for the AAP including the development of a community resource centre, the delivery of new primary schools, improved leisure facilities, development of a new community centre, and the delivery of new housing. The AAP notes that the availability of external funding will also influence the nature and timing of the programme of proposed developments and improvements and that, wherever possible, leverage will be sought from external funding bodies not identified in the funding plan to advance and increase the scale of strategic investment in the area. The AAP comments that income is dependent on factors including regional economic growth, the cost of land remediation and the amount of investment received from external partners. However, it is argued in the AAP that the use of a long-term, strategic partnership with an associated range of sources of external funding, mitigates against the risks.
5.20 Newcastle City Council also owns significant land assets that are designated for new housing and new/improved employment uses and it is committed to re-investing the revenue generated from the sale of these assets to meet the infrastructure needs identified in the Plan. It is stated that the Council and its partners, including ‘Your Homes Newcastle’, will manage its assets to support the delivery of the objectives and policies in this Plan, and the City Council has entered into an agreement with ‘Places For People’ (including local councilors, developers, and local residents) to help deliver the AAP. However, the AAP does also comment that, in the event that funding does not materialise at the scale that is expected, the delivery of the Plan will be slowed and projected housing completions will be put back. The funding regime for the delivery of the AAP is outlined in an appendix to the AAP and it is stated that delivery and policy implementation will be monitored and reviewed as necessary to reflect any significant changes.

5.21 In relation to implementation of the Walker Riverside AAP, the IR comments that it is not clear who is responsible for implementing some of the AAP’s policies although the IR acknowledges that the Council own about 95% of the land proposed to be developed in addition to existing leisure, recreation and community facilities and thus can control the release of land (in accordance with Policy HP1) and reinvest the receipts from sales. As a result of the IR, changes have been introduced to ensure that the AAP more clearly establishes who is responsible for implementing policy, bringing forward allocations and securing infrastructure improvements. The IR also highlights that the reliance on external sources of funding brings uncertainty but that a strategy for reducing the risk of relying on external funding is set out, including the acquisition of letters from English Partnerships and Bridging NewcastleGateshead showing their commitment to the regeneration of the area. The IR also comments that the Council is seeking to agree a protocol with the Housing Corporation with the intention of increasing certainty in respect of its investment programme. Finally, the IR comments that the monitoring framework for the AAP needs to be improved to increase its robustness and thus the soundness of the AAP (and recommendations were made on how to accomplish this).

Biddulph Town Centre AAP

5.22 The Biddulph Town Centre AAP (prepared by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council) comments that implementation will be undertaken over an eight year period through a partnership approach involving a number of stakeholders. A schedule for delivery is presented which documents phasing of development for six sites. A timetable for delivery is also
presented, detailing the lead agency involved in each stage. This reflects a change recommended by the Inspector to the original AAP, who felt that the original AAP implementation framework was weak and needed to be improved (see comments on IR below). The majority of development proposals set out in the AAP will be delivered by the private sector and, where appropriate, developers will also be expected to make a financial contribution towards the cost of delivering general infrastructure and public realm improvements in the town centre. However, the AAP also comments that there are a number of proposals (for example, pedestrianisation) that will require public sector resources and that funding for these projects will be secured through the main public sector partners (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; Staffordshire County Council; Biddulph Town Council; Advantage West Midlands) in addition to section 106 contributions from private sector developers.

5.23 Town Centre Management arrangements are currently in place to support the regeneration of the town centre and the AAP comments that, to make these arrangements financially sustainable in the longer term, consideration should be given to establishing mechanisms that draw the private sector more formally into town centre management activity. It is suggested that this could include the establishment of a company limited by guarantee or a formal Business Improvement District, both of which would encourage private sector contributions to support the continued enhancement, promotion and maintenance of the town centre to complement available public sector assets. The delivery of the Plan will therefore be based on public and private sector partnerships and continued consultation with local residents and stakeholders. The Biddulph Executive, which exists as part of the Staffordshire Moorlands LSP, will coordinate the ‘high-level’ delivery of the AAP, although the more detailed delivery strategy will be coordinated by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The AAP comments that delivery will require a dedicated resource that can draw upon skills in the fields of planning, regeneration, surveying, design, marketing and project management.

5.24 The Inspector commented that the initial implementation framework for the AAP was weak as, despite giving estimates of project feasibility, detailed design and construction phases for the development site policies, it provided little indication of who is intended to implement the proposals referred to in the policies, or evidence of their commitment to do so. Furthermore, it failed to provide any delivery mechanisms or timescales for the public realm or transport policies. As a consequence, the IR comments that these latter policies appeared to be unacceptably ‘aspirational’ and/or ineffectual. The IR commented that the brevity of the implementation
framework (section 8) detracts from the soundness of the AAP. In response to the Inspector’s initial concerns, the Council produced Core Document 57 which includes a table clarifying the lead implementation agency and delivery timescales for the development site, public realm and transport policies, on a policy-by-policy basis, thus supplementing the information provided in an existing chart in the AAP.

Infrastructure Delivery in SPiP Longitudinal Case Study (LCS) Authorities

5.25 Following on from the more in-depth documentary analyses and case studies undertaken explicitly for this thematic research study, supplementary material, available from the ongoing longitudinal case studies (LCS) that form part of the wider SPiP Study, was examined to extract additional lessons or examples of ‘good’ and ‘weaker’ practice of relevance to the delivery of LDF infrastructure requirements.

5.26 Although it was possible to highlight a number of good practice examples, the majority of the evidence from the LCS material suggests that local authorities are still struggling to get to grips with the issue of infrastructure delivery. As part of the wider SPiP analyses, relevant LDF documents from the LCS authorities were evaluated against a template based around a set of criteria chosen for their relevance to the broad concept of what was meant by spatial planning under the 2004 reforms. A few of these evaluation criteria addressed issues relating to delivery and implementation. The table below shows the extent to which the reviewed LDF documents were judged to meet these ‘delivery’-related criteria. This reveals that only a relatively small percentage of the documents examined (generally less than one third) addressed each of these criteria in ways that were judged as ‘very good’ or ‘good’, whereas between 38-65% of documents were judged to have either addressed these criteria ‘poorly’ or not at all.
Evaluation of the Content of LDF Documents against ‘Delivery’ Criteria
(table shows number and percentage [in brackets] of documents judged to fall into each category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of joint ownership of proposals/ reference to other delivery agents</th>
<th>Very Good (%)</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Adequate (%)</th>
<th>Poor (%)</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4 (22)</td>
<td>6 (33)</td>
<td>5 (27)</td>
<td>3 (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of range of incentives and mechanisms</th>
<th>Very Good (%)</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Adequate (%)</th>
<th>Poor (%)</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (11)</td>
<td>4 (22)</td>
<td>7 (38)</td>
<td>5 (27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference to resources for infrastructure delivery</th>
<th>Very Good (%)</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Adequate (%)</th>
<th>Poor (%)</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>5 (27)</td>
<td>3 (16)</td>
<td>7 (38)</td>
<td>2 (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation of phasing and any investment programmes</th>
<th>Very Good (%)</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Adequate (%)</th>
<th>Poor (%)</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (11)</td>
<td>9 (50)</td>
<td>5 (27)</td>
<td>2 (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPiP Study (note: in total, 18 LDF documents were evaluated)

5.27 The relatively small number of ‘good practice’ examples that were identified through this analysis are useful in highlighting some relevant approaches and ways of presenting material in emerging LDF documents that may be of relevance to other local planning authorities as they prepare their LDF documents:

- **Brentford AAP**: Chapter 13 of the AAP outlines for each policy, the agency with responsibility for delivering that particular proposal or development. These are typically named actors (for example, Bonnington Investments and Development Ltd., BSkyB, Carlton Properties). The information contained in this chapter is very specific and is well-supported by illustrative material in the form of maps.

- **North Plymstock AAP**: Chapter 6 covers delivery and for each policy, establishes the agency responsible for its delivery, targets, funding and phasing. Within the plan, there is evidence of joint ownership of policies across a variety of sectors. The intentions of other delivery agents are indicated; for instance, the conformity between the proposals contained in the AAP and the local transport plan are referred to on several occasions.
- **Plymouth CS:** The Plymouth Core Strategy sets out a reasonably detailed account of the types of development, their locations and the agencies responsible for their delivery. The intentions of other delivery agents are indicated as appropriate: for instance, the delivery of a significant reconfiguration in healthcare provision in the City through the modernisation and redesign of Derriford Hospital and a neighbouring new Planned Care Centre under the Vanguard Health Project, as well as other healthcare developments in the east end of the City, Mount Gould and a new Peninsula dental school and surgery at Devonport. Whilst the most commonly cited method of supporting infrastructure requirements comes by reference to the utilization of a potential Planning-gain Supplement, there is also clear evidence that infrastructure requirements have played an important role in the specific proposals which comprise the main body of the document. Statements are made in relation to all site-specific proposals, with the means to achieve the development indicated through references such as ‘s106 or other mechanism’.

- **Longbridge AAP:** The AAP provides a costs estimate for off-site infrastructure works as well as investment requirements across the AAP area.

5.28 Various areas of weakness, where LDF documents were struggling to score well against these criteria could also be identified. Information on these may assist local planning authorities to address such issues better or more comprehensively in the future. The authorities have been anonymised for the purpose of this list of ‘weaker’ practice examples:

- **A district council AAP:** The weakest aspect of the document is the lack of detail on which agencies will assume responsibility for the delivery of specific projects. The chapter devoted to this issue is very short (2 pages) and does not specify in sufficient detail how the developments, described at great length in the preceding chapter, are to be achieved. Instead it refers to ‘developers’ in very abstract terms.

- **A district council CS:** No real mention was made of resource needs to address infrastructure requirements.

- **A district council CS:** For the most part, specific responsibility for the delivery of particular proposals is not included in the CS. Although one chapter provides a monitoring and implementation framework, responsible agencies are only identified generically, for instance, as ‘private sector’ and ‘healthcare providers’ without reference to any supporting evidence which would suggest that the partner agency is actually willing or able to accept such responsibility.
• **A district council CS:** Does not make reference to delivery mechanisms. No specific reference is made to what resources will be needed to deliver infrastructure or what resources will be available at different phases for infrastructure delivery.

• **A district council CS:** There is little evidence that many of the policies in the CS have been formulated jointly with other locally significant actors. References to partner agencies are sparse, as are details regarding which delivery agents will take responsibility for specific proposals.

• **A district council CS:** Insufficient attention is devoted in the CS to identifying what infrastructure requirements exist in the borough. There is little evidence of joint ownership of proposals across sectors, with minimal reference made to other delivery agents or their own proposals or expenditure plans. Aside from a generic commitment to make best use of Planning-gain Supplement, there is little evidence of serious consideration of possible delivery mechanisms.

• **A district council CS:** There is little evidence of joint ownership (with delivery partners) of proposals. References to other delivery agents are sparse and, whilst infrastructure is generally defined, specific requirements are not articulated. Consequently, there is no clear policy set out regarding what infrastructure might be needed, which agencies might provide it, or how it might be funded other than through a generic commitment to the use of Planning-gain Supplement.

• **A metropolitan council CS:** The core strategy does not include site-specific policies for which responsibility could be accorded to a particular agency. Issues of implementation are deferred to a separate document, but this does little to identify specific delivery agencies. In many instances, it again defers decision making to other bodies. For example, responsibility for key aspects of infrastructure planning including transport, water supply, healthcare and education are said to be best dealt with at the strategic level (ie external to the local authority).

• **A district council AAP:** There is inadequate detail included on responsibility for delivery. The document in general has a very vague focus on traditional land use planning issues rather than embracing a more integrated, spatial planning approach.
Key Issues

5.29 A number of positive lessons and examples of ‘good practice’, in terms of the ways in which the authorities have addressed delivery issues in their LDF documents, and the approaches they have adopted in order to do so, can be identified from the review of adopted core strategies (CSs) and area action plans (AAPs), although the degree to which these documents successfully achieved the current test of soundness relating to implementation and monitoring (soundness test viii) is somewhat mixed. In several cases, the documents only passed the test following changes made via the Inspector’s Report. Nevertheless, positive findings included the following.

5.30 Several authorities explicitly emphasized the importance of taking a partnership approach to infrastructure delivery and that they were actively working with a range of delivery partners to achieve the policies and proposals set out in their plans. Examples included the Plymouth, Horsham and South Cambridgeshire core strategies; the Hampshire Minerals and Waste strategy and the Biddulph Town Centre AAP.

5.31 A variety of mechanisms are being employed to achieve this, ranging from longer-standing, pre-LDF partnership arrangements in South Cambridgeshire to the establishment of new vehicles for partnership such as Project Integra (Hampshire) or the use of existing town centre management arrangements and the potential creation of a limited company in respect of Biddulph Town Centre.

5.32 The important linkages with, and role of, the local strategic partnership (LSP) are highlighted in some areas, notably in the Plymouth and Hambleton core strategies and the Biddulph Town Centre AAP.

5.33 Agreements or ‘statements of commitment’ with individual delivery partners have been secured in relation to some plans including the Redcar and Cleveland Core Strategy and the Walker Riverside AAP.

5.34 The significant relationship between the LDF and other strategies at the local and regional level, in terms of strategy co-ordination over infrastructure delivery, are set out in the Hambleton, South Cambridgeshire and Plymouth core strategies and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste strategy.

5.35 The importance of community involvement and consultation with key stakeholders is highlighted in South Cambridgeshire, Hambleton, Hampshire and Plymouth.
5.36 Several LDF documents set out clear statements relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements, and the broader implementation of policies, via the identification of responsible agencies and the setting of targets for monitoring purposes, etc. Examples include Redcar and Cleveland’s Implementation Plan; the arrangements for monitoring and delivery set out in the Hambleton Core Strategy; Hampshire’s monitoring plan; and the revised Core Strategy for Mid-Devon.

5.37 The consideration of various mechanisms for the funding of infrastructure delivery such as the use of developer contributions in Biddulph Town Centre and the use of the Council’s own land sale receipts in Walker Riverside.

5.38 The supplementary material, drawn from the longitudinal case studies (LCS) undertaken as part of the wider SPIP project, re-emphasises the rather mixed picture in terms of the quality of current LDF content, with significant numbers of the documents examined being judged as performing poorly against a set of identified criteria related to delivery.

5.39 Common weaknesses included:

- a failure to provide sufficient detail on the infrastructure requirements of the plan
- a lack of identification of the agencies responsible to deliver specific projects or proposals (or who the key partners might be)
- insufficient consideration (or evidence) that the key partners were willing or able to take responsibility for delivering relevant infrastructure requirements of the LDF
- insufficient consideration of the existing plans, strategies and expenditure commitments of the key partners
- the inclusion of overly ‘aspirational’ or unrealistic policies and proposals.

5.40 Nevertheless, some good practice pointers could be picked out. These include:

- LDF documents that provide details of the agencies responsible for delivery of plan policies or proposals
- those that provide sufficient evidence of joint-ownership of such proposals and the commitment of partners to their delivery
- those that provide information on the means of funding available (such as developer contributions in respect of particular sites).
CHAPTER 6

Case Study Analysis

Introduction

6.1 A limited number of case studies were chosen for more in-depth investigation as part of this thematic study. These were drawn from those authorities investigated in component III of the research (the documentary analysis of adopted CS or AAP documents reported on in Chapter 5) and the wider SPIP Study (primarily from the ongoing LCS component) in such a way as to cover a cross-section of spatial planning contexts where infrastructure delivery was identified as a potentially significant issue. The four case studies chosen covered:

- a local authority within a growth area (Ashford)
- an urban metropolitan authority with a focus on regeneration (Liverpool)
- a mixed urban/rural authority with an adopted core strategy (CS) which addresses local infrastructure needs (Redcar and Cleveland)
- a more localised area covered by an Area Action Plan (AAP) with infrastructure requirements (Walker Riverside AAP, Newcastle upon Tyne).

6.2 Each case study involved relevant web based/documentary analysis of available LDF documentation and a limited number of interviews (around 5-6 per case study) with relevant local authority representatives (LDF team, Chief Executive or other relevant local authority departments) and other stakeholders and delivery partners of significance to the delivery of the infrastructure requirements related to the LDF such as the LSP, housing, transport, water providers etc). These interviews were conducted mainly via telephone though, where practicable, some were conducted on a face-to-face basis. A list of interviewees is given in the Appendix along with a generalised list of interview questions. This chapter sets out the findings from each case study before providing an overview in terms of the lessons and key issues that can be derived from the four cases.
Chapter 6 Case Study Analysis

6.3 Ashford’s Core Strategy (CS) was undergoing examination at the time of this research in September 2007. Growth in Ashford is taking place in an extremely complicated context, encompassing a wide range of development pressures. Notwithstanding, the issue which initially prompted close consideration of infrastructure requirements and their funding was the development of a new junction on the M20.

6.4 The creation of a new motorway junction between existing junctions 10 and 11 (10a) was identified as a requirement given the level of development proposed for Ashford. The necessity for an additional motorway junction was identified in the Greater Ashford Development Framework (2005) and later established, in the course of the plan-making process, to be a necessary precursor to the development of significant sites in the Borough, namely Ashford town centre, its inner brownfield sites and planned urban extensions to the south east and south west. However, responsibility for undertaking this work could not easily be assigned, as a range of developers were responsible for individual sites which, when viewed collectively, would create an additional burden on the M20. Progress on this issue was inhibited by the fact that developers argued that the revenue streams upon which junction 10a would be dependent could only be generated by proceeding with development proposals first – proposals which Ashford Council deemed unviable without a significant accompanying infrastructure contribution to finance junction 10a.

6.5 Negotiations between individual developers and the Council are anecdotally said to have been ongoing for almost 5 years until one company (unnamed by interviewees) agreed to finance the development of the motorway junction before being reimbursed subsequently by fellow developers, in some cases through a redistribution of section 106 receipts. Specific details of these arrangements were not readily available.

6.6 The complexity of this arrangement prompted the consideration of how general, non site specific infrastructure could be delivered. The result is the ‘strategic tariff’ proposal included in the Ashford CS as policy CS8. In essence, the strategic tariff is envisaged as a solution to the lost time and brinksmanship which underpinned the (currently ongoing) construction of junction 10a. Under the proposal, pooled public funds would be used to finance required infrastructure projects and would be subsequently refunded through a pre-defined strategic tariff paid by the developers. Greater detail on the nature of this arrangement, its terms and conditions,
is set out in Chapter 8 of the CS and in a forthcoming Urban Site and Infrastructure DPD which, at the time the research was carried out, was due to go to preferred options stage in late 2007. There is also a Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD, due to be at preferred options stage later in 2007, but this is less likely to be so overtly focussed on infrastructure.

The delivery of infrastructure

6.7 Significant partners integral to the delivery of infrastructure requirements include the Primary Care Trust and Education providers. In addition, as Ashford is an area of heightened flood risk, the Environment Agency has played an important role in identifying and assessing flood risks and there is evidence to suggest that their research and input is reflected in the CS. Further, given the extent of development envisaged as taking place in the growth area many partners from the private sector, particularly from the development industry, will be important in undertaking some of the principal infrastructure work (such as junction 10a). Finally, Ashford’s Future, which is a special purpose/partnership agency (incorporating Ashford Borough Council, Communities and Local Government, English Partnerships, GOSE, the Environment Agency, Kent County Council, Learning and Skills Council, SEEDA, SEERA), is keenly interested in infrastructure and has an infrastructure manager who has been at the heart of the proposals relating to the strategic tariff.

6.8 Most partners appear to have been involved from an early stage, and on an ongoing basis. Anecdotally, some interviewees suggested that the role played by the Highways Agency in negotiations around junction 10a of the M20 had not been as extensive as might have been anticipated. Conversely, the role of Ashford’s Future was cited as imperative to its inclusion as a policy in the CS. Due to the particular circumstances surrounding junction 10a, and the manner in which it created significant bottlenecks in the proposed development of Ashford as a whole, infrastructure was central in considering the developmental trajectory of the area. This is reflected in the centrality of the strategic tariff in the CS.

6.9 The CS was undergoing examination during the course of this study. Whilst interviewees were understandably guarded, it was suggested that infrastructure provision and policies relating to the strategic tariff were central to the Examination.

6.10 The Ashford context is very complex. There is evidence, both through interviews and in the body of the CS, to suggest that collaboration has occurred with agencies both within and external to the local authority.
However, one interviewee noted that the relationship with the LSP was weaker in terms of identifying infrastructure requirements than in other areas, but also argued that this was to be expected given that there was a more pressing need to engage with developers and infrastructure delivery agencies.

6.11 There is an embryonic local infrastructure group (LIG) although it is not known by this name. The negotiations between, particularly Ashford Borough Council, Ashford’s Future and assorted developers over about 5 years, is said to have coalesced into an infrastructure forum. This is not mentioned in the CS. Nevertheless, if the strategic tariff becomes operational, an accompanying board or infrastructure group could be a valuable institutional addition to administer this approach. The overall tenor of the CS document suggests that institutional responsibility for coordinating such a group would most likely fall to Ashford’s Future Delivery Board and their Delivery Plan to 2031 (see below).

6.12 In addition to the detail contained in the CS and the proposed SPD on the strategic tariff, Ashford’s Future are currently preparing a delivery plan to 2031. This is occurring against the backdrop of the Greater Ashford Development Framework, produced in 2005, which has influenced the subsequent content of the CS. There is evidence, both documentary and through interview testimonials, that integration between Ashford’s Future and the LDF team is close and that documents are in conformity with one another.

6.13 The strategic tariff means that there will be a much clearer connection between site-specific development and non site-specific infrastructure requirements. Moreover, under the strategic tariff proposal it will be specified at the outset what the infrastructure charges will be to potential developers and, in turn, this should support a contractual audit trail which clearly relates specific infrastructure developments to an aggregate of residential development throughout an administrative area. As a result, the distinction between the public and private sectors is blurred due to the fact that under these proposals the Borough Council will have to play a prominent role as a development participant. Interview testimonials suggest that policy makers in Ashford see this as an important aspect of speeding up the development process and dealing with the private sector on a more even and professional footing.
Liverpool

**Context**

6.14 The City Council’s LDF Core Strategy (CS) is at the issues and options stage. The most recent version of this, at the time of the research, available on the Council’s website was dated March 2006. Public consultation on a Preferred Options document is anticipated to be published for public consultation in December 2007 with formal submission expected around a year later in winter 2008/9. According to the most recent LDS, other DPDs under preparation include an allocations DPD and a technical policies DPD. In addition, there is a range of AAPs planned for North Liverpool, East and South Inner Liverpool, and South Liverpool Riverside but work has only begun on the South Liverpool Riverside document. There is also a joint Merseyside waste DPD under preparation, led politically by St. Helens Council and administered by Merseyside Environmental Services. The only other DPD proposed in the Liverpool LDS is a land allocation document although the interview with the LDF manager suggested that a decision had not yet been taken regarding what documents (AAPs or land allocations DPDs) would best complement the CS. In addition there is a range of adopted SPDs – Edge Lane West SPD (March 2005); New Housing Development SPD (July 2005); Rope Walks SPD (December 2005); Oldham Street SPD (August 2006); Commercial Quarter SPD (August 2006) – some of which include tangential references to infrastructure.

6.15 Development pressure continues to be focussed on Liverpool City Centre. The ‘big dig’ (so-called in the local press) represents £3 billion of investment and includes large scale retail and leisure development (Paradise Street Project, the Kings Waterfront Scheme), a cruise liner facility, the Pier Head canal development, office developments in the commercial district and the redevelopment of Liverpool Lime Street railway station. Some interviewees indicated that the level of development across a range of projects in the city centre was likely to place a much greater burden on existing infrastructure in the city centre, ranging from sewerage to capacity issues on the city’s underground rail network.

6.16 There is, however, little evidence that such infrastructure requirements have, as yet, been systematically identified or coordinated between the two key agencies – Liverpool Land Development Company (LLDC) and the main landowner, Peel Holdings. LLDC’s vision for the north of the city is the subject of an ongoing infrastructure needs study which seeks to identify infrastructure needs over a 50 year period in the Northshore area. This begins from the principle that development will be on a very grand scale in keeping with the proposals of the main landowner, Peel Holdings.
However, the extent to which these grand visions fit with the perspective of the LDF team, and the emerging preferred options document is uncertain. Consequently, whilst there is evidence to suggest that there is ongoing engagement between these two agencies, the extent to which there is shared consensus over infrastructure requirements, and the general direction of development, is a more open question.

The delivery of infrastructure

6.17 As might be expected in a metropolitan context, the range of agencies and entities required to be involved in the plan-making process is wide. Liverpool City Council sits within a congested institutional setting with a host of regeneration and economic development agencies. The most significant of these include the Liverpool Land Development Company, Business Liverpool and Liverpool Vision as well as an array of private developers, energy and utilities companies which serve the city centre. In addition there are those partners common in any context such as the Primary Care Trust and Education providers. Partnership between these agencies and organisations and the LDF process appears to have been piecemeal and episodic. The development industry tends to engage with the political and administrative upper echelons of the City Council in preference to the planning department. Moreover, there is not a great deal of evidence to suggest that agencies external to the City Council have been integral to the plan-making process in relation to identifying infrastructure requirements.

6.18 Engagement with some agencies is said to have been inhibited by potential partners’ unwillingness to be involved: for example, Natural England are said to have been difficult to engage. If accurate, this may be significant in Liverpool due to its estuarial setting and corresponding requirements relating to habitats regulation assessment. The plan-making process has not progressed sufficiently to establish clearly the full extent to which spatial policy integration has, or has not, been realised. Anecdotal evidence from interview testimonials would suggest that the type of close partnership working necessary to underpin the synchronisation of infrastructure funding between agencies has not been fully developed. Neither is there evidence of a strong relationship with the LSP, although it should be noted that this may have been inhibited by the fact that the LSP has undergone a prolonged period of upheaval and staff turnover.
6.19 One issue raised concerned the position of utilities companies which, in the view of some interviewees, hold a privileged and uncontested position as the sole provider of some facilities in the city centre. It was suggested that these circumstances do not provide an incentive for utilities providers to engage in strategic forward planning. Indeed, Interviewees referred to providers’ detachment from the plan-making process.

6.20 Since the plan-making process has only reached the issues and options stage (at least in terms of published documents), the LDF process has not yet become sufficiently advanced to assess the extent to which delivery and infrastructure considerations are shaping the choice of preferred option.

6.21 There is no local infrastructure group (LIG) or any indication that one is likely to be considered in the future. There is little to suggest that the type of systemic collaboration necessary to operate a local infrastructure fund (LIF) yet exists, nor has any local ‘delivery plan’ or ‘infrastructure plan’\(^1\) been prepared as part of the LDF process. Liverpool Vision’s Strategic Regeneration Vision Framework does have a section which addresses infrastructure issues although it is not a document that focuses specifically on infrastructure issues. At this stage in the LDF process, it is not possible to determine the extent to which there is conformity between this framework and the LDF process.

Redcar and Cleveland

Context

6.22 The Redcar and Cleveland Core Strategy (CS) was adopted in early 2007. In addition to the CS, a number of DPDs are in the process of being prepared, including a Development Policies Document; a Communities DPD which focuses on housing and community issues; and an Economy DPD focusing on transport, economic development and the role and performance of town centres. The infrastructure delivery aspect of the CS focuses on a broad range of infrastructure issues, albeit in a rather generalised way. The provision of housing is seen as a key issue in the Borough and the CS outlines a brief summary of projected annual housing provision for three plan periods which are to be developed more fully in subsequent AAPs. However, under the Boroughs ‘Sustainable Communities’ objectives, proposals are outlined to support new residential development and established residential areas with the provision of new infrastructure including retail, schools, local services, access to green spaces to enhance quality of life, and sustainable transport infrastructure to support new

\(^1\) See the footnote to appendix 4 for further explanation of what is meant by a ‘delivery plan’ or ‘infrastructure plan’ in the context of this research.
development and regeneration priorities in key urban areas in the Borough. The CS also proposes to support existing employment infrastructure in traditional steel and chemical industries as well as diversifying the local economy in both urban and rural areas.

6.23 A key component of the CS is an ‘Implementation Plan’ (see box). This cross-references policy commitments outlined in the CS with desired outcomes, indicators for monitoring implementation, the mechanism for delivery of the policy and the agency that will lead on the policy implementation. The mechanisms for implementation identified in the Implementation Plan include a Housing DPD, Employment and Town Centre DPD, AAPs, LTP, the determination of planning applications and a range of additional strategies targeting specific policy issues. The Inspector’s report which followed the Examination of the submitted CS commended the authority for including the implementation plan.

Redcar and Cleveland Core Strategy: Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Purpose of the Implementation Plan:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To set out how it is envisaged that the plan and each policy will be delivered</td>
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<td>• The outcomes – what it is that you expect to achieve</td>
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<td>• How to identify successful delivery</td>
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<td>• The means of delivery</td>
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<td>• Who will be paying for it</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Format of Implementation Plan:</strong> For each Policy show:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Indicators with targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implementation/Delivery Mechanism</td>
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<td>• Lead Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>How will it be delivered?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Future DPDs for allocations</td>
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<td>• Key initiatives and proposals</td>
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<td>• Local Transport Plan</td>
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<td>• Determination of planning applications</td>
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<td>• Private sector investment</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Lead Agency:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• List of organisations and sectors that will have a part in the delivery of the policy</td>
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</table>

Source: Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
6.24 The interviewees had a mixed conception of infrastructure. A number held a traditional view of infrastructure centred on the provision of physical services needed for a place to function (e.g., roads and utilities). Others took a much broader perspective, including attributes such as green space, schools, leisure facilities, and hospitals. Not surprisingly, perspectives on what the interviewees regard as infrastructure sometimes reflect their specific interests in respect of the CS. For example, one interviewee working for the PCT emphasised the importance of hospitals and GP surgeries whilst the regeneration officer highlighted the physical infrastructure needed to regenerate an area. There was a general consensus among the interviewees that plan delivery was the appropriate mechanism through which policy obligations should be delivered and implemented.

The Delivery of Infrastructure

6.25 The interviewees commented that the CS takes account of a range of spatial scales but it has a specific focus on the sub-regional and local levels. The LDF team leader commented that the LDF is intended to link the two scales in order to help address cross-boundary linkages, particularly in relation to the delivery of services and in enhancing connectivity between urban areas, and between urban areas and transport hubs such as airports and ports. The infrastructure priorities identified in the Core Strategy reflect existing priorities that have been ongoing in the Borough.

6.26 The infrastructure requirements in the CS are being delivered through a partnership approach led by the local authority planning team. Partners from within the local authority have formed a steering group which includes representatives from planning, housing, social services, education, health, and the LSP. External partners have engaged with the local authority steering group through workshops, meetings, and statutory consultation on draft documents and this has taken place from an early stage of the process; during the issues and options stage in particular. There seemed to be a consensus that the process had been relatively smooth and that few difficulties had been encountered. Engagement with the private sector appeared to be taking place but there was still a feeling that developers were relatively difficult to keep interested and involved unless it was beneficial to their specific development objectives.

6.27 However, one interviewee commented that, initially, there had been an internal battle between the planning and regeneration departments over the links between regeneration policies and CS obligations. There were also concerns that the policies in the CS were sometimes disconnected from some of the priorities of partners, which prevented the Core Strategy
taking on the role as an overarching spatial planning document. This probably reflected the fact that both the planning department and their partners are still trying to come to terms with the new LDF process, and the integration of strategies is something that is likely to continue to emerge with experience and closer working between partners.

6.28 It was evident from the interviews that delivery has not yet been coordinated through mechanisms such as MAAs or LAAs. A LAA to help in the delivery of the CS priorities, including infrastructure priorities, has been suggested, but this is still under consideration. Similarly, one interviewee highlighted the potential for a LAA to help address the Borough-wide deficiency in trained Health Impact Assessors. There was also a feeling, particularly among the planning department, that the relationship with the LSP is still ‘developing’, but that it was crucial to coordinating the delivery of infrastructure, especially in terms of engaging local community groups. However, there are currently no plans to establish a LIG or LIF. This seems to reflect the fact that the local authority steering group believes that existing mechanisms have the capacity to co-ordinate the delivery of infrastructure. There was also a general feeling that infrastructure funds would be difficult to put in place and maintain, largely because funding often has restrictions attached to it which would make pooling difficult, whilst a LIG was seen as an unnecessary duplication of groups already thinking strategically (such as the steering group) about infrastructure and the way that infrastructure priorities link in with wider CS policies. However, there are plans to set up a section 106 ‘pot’ to help fund broad infrastructure priorities.

6.29 One area which interviewees suggested could be improved was identifying the range of resources that could be used to help coordinate and deliver infrastructure. The local authority steering group is currently exploring sources for funding but a more strategic overview was seen as necessary if the most is to be made of potential sources of funding. As one the interviewee highlighted, current funding comes from mainstream sources such as government departments or agencies, developer contributions or existing department budgets. There was a feeling among the interviewees that, in a time of scarce resources, the successful delivery of infrastructure is dependent on the partnership being innovative in attracting funding. Although there seemed to be a consensus that planning obligations, section 106 agreements and PGS have important roles to play in the future, there were concerns that these mechanisms are not being ‘exploited’ to their full potential by local authorities. One interviewee commented that local authorities appear to be frightened of using section 106 agreements because they fear they might drive developers away. There was also the feeling that section 106 agreements in particular, have greater generating
capacity in the south than in the north. Thus, it was suggested by a number of interviewees that the current systems for generating local funding should be reviewed.

6.30 There was a general consensus among the interviewees that the synchronisation of planning and infrastructure delivery has been problematic. It was suggested that the prioritisation of government funding, and the uncertainty surrounding general funding, are real obstacles to effective infrastructure delivery. A number of other interviewees from within the local authority also commented that, in spite of attempts to synchronise planning objectives with their own departmental strategies (e.g., regeneration, housing, and health), there are still problems that have not been addressed. This can mean that individual local authority departments are sometimes delivering their own infrastructure priorities ahead of the preparation of a spatial plan. Indeed, one interviewee commented that the new system appears to be as ineffective at speeding up the planning process as the old system. However, a number of interviewees felt that many of the problems being experienced in infrastructure delivery reflected the fact that people are still getting used to the requirements of the new system. The more optimistic message emerging in this respect seemed to be that, with time and a period of stability in which the planning system can bed-in, more effective planning for infrastructure delivery would occur. Nevertheless, the general feeling among the interviewees was that, to enhance the delivery of infrastructure, funding needs to be more reliable to allow for credible longer-term plan-making to take place.

Walker Riverside

Context

6.31 The Walker Riverside AAP was adopted in early 2007 and has preceded the adoption of the Newcastle City Council Core Strategy (CS) which is due to be submitted in October 2007 and expected to be adopted in 2008. In addition to the Walker Riverside AAP, two other AAPS are currently being produced by the Council—one focusing on the city centre and the other on the West End of the city.

6.32 The Walker Riverside AAP has, at its centre, a community facility focus, the Heart of Walker, with a vision to regenerate two currently deprived neighbourhoods. The key infrastructure requirements identified in the plan include two major new shopping areas to provide functional services to the newly regenerated communities. There is also a plan to develop a hub at
the heart of the two communities including a new leisure centre with green space attached, a new primary school, and a new range of shops all located in the same place in order to reduce the need to travel. The plan is also looking to support these primary infrastructure priorities by the delivery of other supporting infrastructure including new public transport facilities (bus stops, new bus routes), broadband facilities in new homes, and the provision of eco-homes.

6.33 There was a general consensus among the interviewees involved in the Walker Riverside AAP that ‘infrastructure’ covers a swathe of attributes including traditional ‘hard’ infrastructure (e.g., utilities and roads), physical attributes that might not traditionally be considered infrastructure (e.g., housing, employment facilities) as well as ‘soft’ attributes such as green space. Plan delivery was also taken to be the process whereby the aspirations of the plan are put into practice on the ground.

The Delivery of Infrastructure

6.34 It is interesting to note that initially the local authority had intended to produce the AAP and CS together (in terms of timescale). The intention was that the CS, being the strategic document, would set the broad infrastructure and development priorities for the borough, one of which was the regeneration of Walker Riverside. However, a combination of delays in CS preparation and the fact that the preparation of the Walker Riverside AAP took place at a quicker rate than first anticipated has meant that the Walker team has not had a formal lead from the CS in terms of infrastructure requirements. However, the interviewees commented that this has not been a problem because the AAP is being delivered from a regeneration perspective and many of the priorities had actually been predetermined before the new planning system was introduced.

6.35 The interviewees commented that the AAP is first and foremost a ‘local’ plan. However, it was acknowledged that the priorities of the plan and its focus sit comfortably within regional objectives and more broadly within national policy agendas. As one interviewee commented, one of the key tasks of the AAP is to increase the density of residential areas in Walker and ultimately to stem the flow of population from Walker to housing developments in North Tyneside, which reflects the priorities set out in the national Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM, 2003).

6.36 The interviewees suggested that the successful delivery of the AAP is dependent on fostering strong partnership networks. There was a consensus that the planning department was trying to work with partners on the delivery of infrastructure. In addition to statutory consultation, the
partners have been invited to sit on the Walker Riverside Board (see box) which meets on a monthly basis to discuss the development priorities of the area. In addition to meeting statutory requirements for consultation, a partnership approach was seen as beneficial given the perceived demands of the AAP, particularly the diverse skills that were needed to deliver certain aspects of the scheme, and the financial resources needed for its delivery. The latter was considered particularly significant given the assumption that the Council’s planning and regeneration teams were ill-equipped in resource terms to deal with such a programme without the engagement of other departments in the local authority and, in particular, the private sector.

### Walker Riverside Project Board (Steering Group) Membership

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One North East (NE Development Agency)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridging Newcastle Gateshead (housing market renewal pathfinder)</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Partnerships</td>
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<td>Places for People (national property management and development company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shepherd Offshore (development company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walker and Riverside Network (community group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>East End Community and Voluntary Forum (community group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle City Council Councillors (x3)</td>
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6.37 However, whilst there is general consensus that the engagement of partners responsible for the delivery of infrastructure is needed, a number of the interviewees commented that this sometimes has been more challenging to achieve in practice. Developing networks with partners within the local authority appeared to have been relatively successful with, from a strategic perspective, attempts to engage colleagues from other departments early on in the process proving relatively fruitful. In contrast, however, there was the feeling that engaging private sector partners has been much more difficult and this had resulted in a less comprehensive engagement in the process by private sector partners than would have been desirable. Similar concerns were also expressed about the engagement of the LSP. These concerns were also echoed by the regeneration officer responsible for implementing the plan at a local level, though he made the comment that engaging all partners had been
'a massive uphill struggle'; a perspective which was supported in interviews with other local authority partners who felt that their engagement in the process had been somewhat fragmented. According to a number of the interviewees, this has created problems in co-ordinating the AAP policy objectives with those of partners and agencies.

6.38 It was evident from the interviews that the delivery of the AAP has not been coordinated through mechanisms such as MAAs or LAAs. One interviewee commented that there was a plan to create a LAA to provide funding from a ‘ground rent’ to help fund the maintenance of open spaces in the regenerated areas. However, there have been no attempts to establish a LIG or LIF to help in the delivery process and, to the interviewee’s knowledge, there are no plans for such mechanisms to be created in the future.

6.39 However, there has been extensive consideration of the range of resources available to the AAP team. One interviewee commented that the Walker Riverside scheme was conceived before the new planning system was introduced and was initially developed as part of a Master Plan under the previous system. Part of the consultant’s role in the Master Plan process was to identify existing funding streams that could be utilised. The delivery of infrastructure in Walker Riverside is currently in its infancy. Funding streams are being explored to determine how best they may be exploited to fund infrastructure delivery.

6.40 There was a consensus that mechanisms such as section 106 agreements, PGS, and planning obligations are necessary to help fund infrastructure delivery. However, in the view of public sector interviewees, there were a number of concerns that these mechanisms are currently being underutilised by local authorities, particularly in the case of section 106s and developer contributions, because the systems were currently considered to favour developers rather than local authorities. However, it was suggested that better guidance from central government, a stronger section 106 and developer contribution system, and greater control over how generated funds can be spent by local authorities would benefit the delivery of infrastructure.

6.41 Some of the interviewees felt that plan proposals are being held back by a lack of longer-term infrastructure planning by partners. The delivery of infrastructure is dependent on partners engaging in the process, and in ensuring that the policies and priorities of partners correspond with those of the AAP. However, the interviews highlighted that this is not always the case, particularly when engaging agencies operating at the national level.
One interviewee highlighted that national partners tend to have extensive priorities in the south (e.g., growth areas, Olympics) which meant that it has been relatively difficult to attract long-term commitment for funding from such partners in the North East. At the other end of the spectrum, local partners (such as other local authority departments) have their own infrastructure priorities which may not necessarily reflect the priorities of the AAP.

6.42 The uncertainty surrounding funding for infrastructure, and the difficulties in attracting long-term commitment from partners, has created problems of phasing and prioritisation of development. The priorities set at a strategic level were thus felt to be somewhat aspirational and it was noted that plan delivery is dependent on the acquisition of funding for particular aspects of the programme (often with timescales and restrictions attached) which means that phasing and prioritisation on the ground has to be fluid and adaptable to meet the resources in place.

Key Issues

6.43 Though limited in number, as a result of timescales and resources available, the four chosen case studies embraced a broad cross section of LDF contexts and proved a useful source of additional analysis on top of the workshop discussions and documentary analyses that formed the other research components of this thematic study.

6.44 The Ashford case allowed for a more in-depth study of how LDF infrastructure requirements are being handled in a nationally identified ‘growth area’ context with high levels of planned new residential and employment development on key sites within the main town and in the form of urban extensions. These are associated with significant levels of necessary infrastructure provision, including major highways works as well as other health, education and community facilities.

6.45 The complexities of the Ashford situation are not to be underestimated. However, as a growth area, the Council is able to operate in the context of relatively high levels of public sector and government commitment to the delivery of their LDF vision. A special purpose agency (Ashford’s Future) has been established and partnership working between this agency, together with the local authority and a number of key private sector developers have resulted in the emergence, over the last few years, of the only tangible example of a local infrastructure group (LIG) encountered in this study.
6.46 The authority has nevertheless encountered some difficulties in ensuring the necessary degree of developer involvement and contribution to infrastructure provision. In response, the Core Strategy sets out specific policies relating to a ‘strategic tariff’ through which it is hoped to support a contractual audit trail relating to specific commitments and avoid the previous difficulties particularly associated with the provision of necessary junction improvements on the M20.

6.47 Liverpool is also operating in a complex institutional arena with a plethora of public and private sector organisations and agencies with spatial planning and development interests, but contrasts with Ashford in its focus on regeneration and significant development pressure associated with high profile city centre and riverside sites, and the powerful position of specific major landowners.

6.48 This level of development is placing severe demands on the City’s existing infrastructure. However, there is currently little evidence of co-ordination of strategy development and/or delivery partners, or of any comprehensive analysis of infrastructure needs except in relation to the Land Development Company’s research in relation to land in the Northshore area alongside the Mersey Estuary, primarily under the ownership of one landowner.

6.49 Partnership between the main players and the LDF team appears somewhat piecemeal; a situation not helped by the tendency for the main landowners and developers to interact primarily with the political and administrative (Chief Executive’s Office) leadership of the City Council rather than the planners. More positively, links with the LSP appear relatively strong. No ‘infrastructure plan’ has been prepared as part of the LDF process. The Council’s LDF work is probably still at too early a stage to speculate with any confidence on how this situation might develop in the future.

6.50 Redcar and Cleveland provides an excellent example of an adopted core strategy which has, as a key component, an ‘Implementation Plan’ which cross-references policy commitments outlined in the Core Strategy with desired outcomes, indicators for monitoring implementation, the mechanism for delivery, and the lead agencies involved. This approach was commended by the Inspector following the Examination of the CS.

6.51 The development of partnership approaches and the consideration of cross-boundary issues were also positive aspects identified in relation to this case. Relationships between the LDF and the LSP are also developing. However, identified challenges include some difficulties in engaging
developers, and subsequently keeping them involved, as well as issues of timing and synchronisation between the LDF process and the strategy making activities of some other Council departments and external organisations.

6.52 Finally, **Walker Riverside** provides an opportunity to consider more closely issues relating to infrastructure delivery at a more local scale, in an area covered by an adopted area action plan (AAP) with a strong community regeneration focus. To achieve this, the fostering of effective partnership working will be crucial.

6.53 The main vehicle for such partnership working has been the establishment of the Walker Riverside Board on which the key players, both within and external to the Council, have been invited to sit. Nevertheless, co-ordination with partners within the Council appears generally to have been more straightforward than with external partners and engaging with the private sector has been somewhat problematic. Although consideration has been given to funding mechanisms, including developer contributions, and the Council’s own land ownership helps control and facilitate developments, problems of synchronisation with other partners’ strategies, priorities and timescales has also proved a challenge.
CHAPTER 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

7.1 This thematic study has focussed on issues relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements related to the LDF process. Its importance is evident, as the success of the new LDF process is not simply judged on whether local planning authorities can steer their new-style documents through the statutory procedures to adoption, but rather whether the resulting policies and proposals make a difference to the quality of places and people’s lives. Success or otherwise in terms of implementation and delivery is thus crucial if the reformed spatial planning system is to be judged as successful.

7.2 However, the timing of this study is somewhat problematic as the vast majority of local planning authorities have not yet reached adoption stage in relation to their core strategy (CS) or any other DPD such as area action plan (AAP) with significant infrastructure requirements. As a consequence, this study focused on a relatively small number of local authorities that did have adopted CS or AAPs, but supplemented this with material drawn from the ongoing longitudinal case study (LCS) authorities involved in the wider SPiP Study and from the perspectives of ‘key players’ and ‘experts’ representing a broad spectrum of national organisations, bodies and agencies with interests in spatial planning outcomes and the delivery of infrastructure.

7.3 In addition, a review was made of government policy statements and other relevant material related to the LDF process and the evolving institutional landscape and culture of local government. This clearly sets out the Government’s intention that ‘...LPAs should be required to undertake sound infrastructure planning as part of the formation and review of their LDFs; key stakeholders, such as local developers, public sector infrastructure providers, utility companies, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and local communities should be involved in the infrastructure planning process; and in deciding whether to approve LDFs, the Planning Inspectorate should consider the soundness of infrastructure planning, taking into account the resources likely to be available to implement the plan…’ as part of the Government’s 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review and response to the earlier (Barker) reviews into housing supply (2004) and land use planning (2006).
7.4 Previous research (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) on Effective Practice in Spatial Planning (SPiSP), undertaken on behalf of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Communities and Local Government, has already made recommendations on the potential for alternative and innovative approaches to the delivery of infrastructure. These include improved collaboration between planners and the stakeholders involved in local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and the potential use of delivery mechanisms such as local area agreements (LAAs) and multi-area agreements (MAAs). The EPiSP Study (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) also recommends that LPAs establish a local infrastructure programme (LIP), together with a local infrastructure fund (LIF), managed by a local infrastructure group (LIG) to improve co-ordination of infrastructure delivery and facilitate more effective resource management.

7.5 Most recently, the Planning White Paper (Communities and Local Government, 2007b) effectively identifies local authorities as ‘ringmasters’, co-ordinating and working with other infrastructure providers and stakeholders, to deliver infrastructure requirements. This role is to be strengthened, in relation to the LSP, by proposals to ‘clarify’ the current soundness test so that local authorities ‘... demonstrate how and when infrastructure that is required to facilitate development will be delivered...’.

7.6 However, one clear message emerging from the two workshops was that there is at present something of a gap between these government expectations and current practice and, in some cases, even basic knowledge and understanding of these issues. The sheer amount of policy development in the local government and spatial planning fields in recent years has proved extremely difficult to keep up with. This is especially the case for those delivery partners whose main focus and working environment is not directly linked to local governance. This means there is a need for continuing effort in terms of dissemination, education and, more broadly, further ‘culture change’ across local government and infrastructure providers if the Government’s intentions are to be understood, embraced and ultimately put into practice.

7.7 Beyond the general issues relating to the current context, and evolution, of spatial planning and local government, there are a number of more specific findings, ‘good practice’ examples and lessons which have been identified in this report and summarised in the last section of each relevant chapter. From these, a set of recommendations can be drawn. These are set out below.
Delivering LDF Infrastructure Requirements: Recommendations

**Identification and prioritisation of LDF infrastructure requirements**

**7.8** Local authorities need to give serious consideration to issues relating to the implementation of their LDFs and, in particular, to the means by which necessary infrastructural requirements will be delivered, by whom and to what timescales.

**7.9** Such infrastructure requirements related to the LDF process should normally be broadly conceived as embracing all matters necessary for the achievement of LDF policies, proposals and aspirations. This might, for example, include attributes such as ‘green infrastructure’ and the provision of a wide range of community services.

**7.10** However, because of resource constraints, there is a need to avoid a simple ‘shopping list’ of desired provision which is likely to be unattainable. Local planning authorities should therefore give careful consideration to the need to prioritise between potential infrastructural requirements when preparing most LDF documents.

**Content of LDF documents**

**7.11** Local planning authorities need to avoid the common weaknesses encountered up to now in some submitted LDF documents. These include a failure to provide sufficient detail on the infrastructure requirements of the plan; a lack of identification of the agencies responsible to deliver specific projects or proposals, or who the key partners might be; insufficient consideration (or evidence) that the key partners were willing or able to take responsibility for delivering relevant infrastructure requirements of the LDF; insufficient consideration of the existing plans, strategies and expenditure commitments of the key partners; and the inclusion of overly ‘aspirational’ or unrealistic policies and proposals.

**7.12** Relevant LDF documents should set out clear statements relating to the delivery of infrastructure requirements, and the broader implementation of policies, via the identification of responsible agencies and the setting of targets for monitoring purposes.

**7.13** Appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to monitor whether the necessary infrastructural requirements are subsequently being delivered, and to re-consider the prioritisation and subsequent delivery programme as necessary. The AMR is one potential vehicle for addressing some of these issues, as might be some form of ‘infrastructure programme’ which should...
be agreed jointly with delivery partners as far as possible and treated a ‘living document’ to be amended as and when required to keep it up-to-date.

7.14 Local planning authorities need to provide sufficient evidence of joint-ownership of infrastructure proposals which will primarily be delivered by other partners and of the commitment of such partners to their delivery. Formal agreements with delivery partners (eg in the form of ‘statements of commitment’) should be secured wherever possible. Such statements are potentially important sources of evidence in terms of meeting the LDF test of soundness related to delivery.

7.15 Local planning authorities need to consider carefully the relationships between the LDF and other strategies at the local and regional level in terms of strategy co-ordination over infrastructure delivery.

7.16 Local planning authorities should recognise the importance of community involvement and consultation with key stakeholders on matters related to infrastructure requirements.

7.17 Relevant LDF documents should give appropriate consideration to the level of risk that some of the required infrastructure will not be forthcoming and ways that this might be mitigated or addressed.

**Working with delivery partners**

7.18 The involvement of key partners, from the earliest stages of plan-preparation, is essential if infrastructure requirements are to be delivered.

7.19 Despite the relatively few examples of current practice identified in this study, local authorities should consider – in line with earlier recommendations of the EPISP Study (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) – working more closely, and on a more formalised basis, with other partners via the establishment of local infrastructure programmes (LIP), local infrastructure funds (LIF) and local infrastructure (management) groups (LIG) to facilitate improved co-ordination and delivery of infrastructure provision.

7.20 One useful way to conceive of the local authority’s role might be that of a ‘ringmaster’, co-ordinating the actions of partners and the delivery of infrastructure requirements flowing from LDF. However, in doing so, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of ‘good town planning’ and a focus on ‘making better places’. A successful LDF process involves tasks related to spatial planning (eg in generating visions, objectives, alternatives, and selecting a preferred option) as well as mediation, co-ordination, consultation and negotiation.
7.21 A more committed approach to forming partnerships with developers is desirable, but this is not always easy to achieve and needs to be worked on. Local authorities need to make sure they are trying hard enough to facilitate this. Local planners need to gain a better understanding of the development process and property finance in order to understand what might or might not be possible, and to facilitate their attempts to involve developers.

7.22 Current expectations in respect of infrastructure delivery via the private sector are sometimes unrealistically high. Local planning authorities need to be reasonable in their consideration of the extent to which the private sector and developers can be expected to fund the necessary LDF infrastructure requirements.

Potential approaches and funding mechanisms

7.23 Local planning authorities need to give consideration to the various possible mechanisms available for the funding of infrastructure delivery. Mechanisms such as developer contributions have a significant role to play in infrastructure delivery, but there needs to be careful thought given to ways in which developers can be more readily encouraged to make commitments to fund infrastructure. Locally derived mechanisms such as Ashford’s ‘strategic tariff’ (see case study section of this report) might be one way forward.

7.24 Local authorities should explore the potential for more integrated mechanisms for infrastructure delivery. Links between the local authority and the LSP are particularly important, and there is potential for new and emerging mechanisms such as local area agreements (LAAs), multi-area agreements (MAAs) and special purpose vehicles (SPVs) to provide a means of co-ordinating activities and funding.

Issues for central government consideration

7.25 The government has already stated an intention to amend soundness test (viii) to further emphasise the importance of delivery of infrastructure. Although this additional clarity would be welcome, in principle, there is a need to avoid setting the revised test at such a level that it would be extremely difficult to pass, otherwise plan-preparation will be further delayed and the reputation of the new system will suffer.

7.26 The issue of how to encourage developer contributions, particularly in situations where the tendency is for a developer to sit back in the hope that someone else will commit first, needs further consideration by central government at the national level.
7.27 The delivery of infrastructure is often a long-term and expensive process requiring substantial long-term financial commitments on the part of various key agencies and sectors. Central government and the key national agencies (such as the Highways Agency) need to be in a position to provide a longer-term financial commitment to funding infrastructure, thus providing greater certainty. As well as directly funding infrastructure, such a commitment would make it easier to get the private sector and other delivery partners to commit their own resources.

7.28 There are currently some synchronisation difficulties identified between the visions and time-horizons of the LDF process and those of delivery partners. This was not helped by the timescales seemingly required to prepare the first round of LDF documents. However, as local planning authorities become more experienced, this will hopefully improve and there is a strong argument for letting the current system ‘bed-in’ and for local planners to be given sufficient time and resources to develop a working system.

7.29 Nevertheless, it is also clear that further understanding of the spatial planning process, and the wider evolution and role of local government, is needed by both local planning authorities and key stakeholders. A continued drive for further understanding and ‘culture change’ amongst both local planning authorities, and their delivery partners, thus remains vital if the reformed system is to operate effectively.
Postscript

Since this research was conducted, there have been a number of developments in respect of national spatial planning policy relating to infrastructure delivery. The intention of this postscript is therefore briefly to outline some of these changes. Further details can be found via the Communities and Local Government website (www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/regionalllocal).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Following the earlier consultation exercise, the Government subsequently announced that it did not intend to introduce a Planning-gain Supplement (PGS) as previously suggested. However, as part of the 2007 Planning Bill, provisions were introduced for a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is intended to establish a way of increasing investment in vital infrastructure (Communities and Local Government, 2008). This will provide local authorities with the necessary powers to apply a levy on new developments in their areas to support the delivery of infrastructure.

The rationale for introducing a CIL is two-fold. First, the granting of planning permission for development has an impact on the local community which ‘needs to be mitigated if the development is to be sustainable’. Second, the granting of planning permission increases the value of the land. Therefore, ‘the overall purpose of the CIL is to ensure that development contributes fairly to the mitigation of the impacts it creates: to ensure that development is delivered, and in a more sustainable way. The fact that the value of the land (or property) typically rises as a result of development means that contributions can be required without removing incentives to develop’ (Communities and Local Government, 2008:3). The CIL will apply a standard charge decided by ‘designated charging authorities’ and levied by them on new development. However, the Government is keen to stress that ‘CIL forms part of a wider package of funding for infrastructure to support housing and economic growth. CIL cannot be expected to pay for all of the infrastructure required’ (Communities and Local Government, 2008:3); however, ‘it is expected to make a significant contribution’ (Communities and Local Government, 2008:3).

The research undertaken as part of this study into infrastructure delivery and the LDF process has already identified the funding of infrastructure as being the key challenge to effective infrastructure delivery. Interviews with stakeholders in both the two workshops and in several of the case study authorities, often expressed concern that, on their own, existing mechanisms for generating funding (eg section 106 agreements) did not have the capacity to provide the necessary funding and investment to deliver all infrastructure requirements. The Ashford
case study, in particular, revealed some of the current difficulties, and delays, involved in obtaining equitable contributions from a number of developers with joint interests in the development of key strategic sites. These challenges were at least partly resolved by the introduction of a local ‘strategic tariff’ which has successfully generated funding for infrastructure by removing the uncertainty surrounding contributions whilst still retaining incentives to develop.

Such experiences highlight the need for a more strategic funding mechanism to help fill the potential void between infrastructure requirements and current levels of funding generated through existing mechanisms. The proposed introduction of the CIL would seem to go some way to addressing this issue. Applying a more systematic, standard charge on new developments should remove the ambiguity that surrounds the current system of developer contributions which currently can vary within local authorities depending on the development. However, it should be noted that, even with the ‘strategic tariff’, funding infrastructure continues to prove a challenge in Ashford and, as stated above, it is acknowledged that the CIL cannot be expected to fund all of the required infrastructure and that it must sit alongside a range of other funding mechanisms. The success of the CIL will thus depend on whether it is able to generate, in conjunction with other mechanisms, the levels of funding needed to take infrastructure delivery forward without damaging incentives to develop.

Planning Policy Statement for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS 4)

In late 2007, the Government introduced a Consultation Paper on a new Planning Policy Statement for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS 4) (CLG, 2007c). The Government recognises that planning policy influences the drivers of productivity and facilitates employment growth. However, it also recognises that it can be unresponsive to market changes and in some cases can restrict employment growth and productivity. Thus, one of the key concerns of draft PPS 4 is to ensure that sustainable economic development is not constrained by the poor provision of infrastructure. This means that ‘Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should plan positively and proactively to encourage economic development, in line with the principles of sustainable development. In particular they should develop flexible policies which are able to respond to economic change and the need for co-ordination with infrastructure and housing provision’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007c:6). Such increased emphasis on the importance of infrastructure delivery in revisions to existing national statements of planning policy, such as PPS4, should help promote the right messages to both local authorities and other key stakeholders.
Revised Planning Policy Statement (PPS12) on Local Development Frameworks and Consultation on streamlining the LDF Process

In late 2007, the Government issued, for consultation purposes, a consultation paper (Communities and Local Government, 2007d) outlining proposals to streamline the LDF process, including associated revisions to Planning Policy Statement on Local Development Frameworks (PPS12). As well as reflecting the proposed CIL arrangements, these emphasise that ‘infrastructure delivery planning to support the core strategy needs to be undertaken satisfactorily’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007d:15).

In general, much greater emphasis is given in the draft revised PPS12 to the importance of infrastructure delivery (Communities and Local Government, 2007d). Indeed, the draft PPS12 sets out changes to the ‘tests of soundness’ on the basis that, ‘to be “sound” a core strategy should be justified, effective, and consistent with national policy’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007d) and, in terms of “effectiveness” the draft PPS 12 states that core strategies must demonstrate that they are deliverable, and that the Strategy must be ‘be based on sound infrastructure delivery planning’ (Communities and Local Government, 2007d: 43).

These changes are intended to clarify the soundness tests so that local authorities have to demonstrate how, and when, infrastructure requirements will be delivered. During the earlier study, some stakeholders had commented that such clarification would be welcome, particularly with regard to test of soundness viii, provided that any such changes to the tests of soundness would be applied in ways which reflected the strategic nature of core strategies and did not add unnecessary delays to preparation timescales. In a series of recent regional workshops, held in early 2008 and organised by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), the streamlining of PPS 12 and the associated changes to the tests of soundness were discussed with planning professionals and other stakeholders. The general consensus emerging from the participants at the workshops was that the proposals for streamlining the LDF process were welcome and should help speed up the delivery process.

In general, although it is too early to make any firm conclusions as to how the Government’s proposed changes to the policy landscape will affect the future planning and delivery of infrastructure, the findings of this study do suggest that the proposed changes will be beneficial.
References

The following list of references covers the main sources of government guidance, reports and other documentation relevant to this thematic study. It does not attempt to individually list the substantial numbers of LDF related documents relating to individual local authorities that were examined and referred to during the course of the study.


Communities and Local Government (2007a) Planning Together: Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and spatial planning: a practical guide. London, TSO.


Appendices

1 Workshop Attendees

SPiP workshop, 25th July 2007, Communities and Local Government offices, London

In attendance:

- David Nock – Highways Agency
- Janice Allen – Highways Agency
- David Shaw – Liverpool University
- John Simpkin – English Partnerships
- Andrew Whittaker – House Builders Federation
- John Oldham – Countryside Properties
- Mark Wilson – Planning Inspectorate
- Alex Lord – Liverpool University
- Alastair Donald – Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Patrick Akindude – Communities and Local Government
- Janice Morphet – University College London
- Richard Blyth – Communities and Local Government
- Daniel Ingram – HM Treasury
- Faraz Baber – British Property Federation
- Colin Eastman – Environment Agency
- James Dawkins – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Jonathan Price – Natural England

In attendance:

David Hill – Chief Executive, Ashford BC
David Fenny – Leeds City Council
James Goddard – Regional Cities East
David Payne – South East England Regional Assembly
Kevin Hazell – South East England Regional Assembly
Bev Hindle – Bracknell Forrest
Martin Wheatley – Local Government Association
Sandra Brown – Local Government Association
Mark Baker – University of Manchester
Stephen Hincks – University of Manchester
2. Local Authorities with adopted Core Strategies (CSs) or Area Action Plans (AAPs)

Local planning authorities with adopted core strategies available for review (as at 7th June 2007)²:

Horsham
South Cambridgeshire
South Hams
Hambleton
South Tyneside
Redcar and Cleveland
Plymouth
Mid Devon
Hampshire County Council (minerals)

Local authorities with adopted area action plans available for review (as at 7th June 2007)

Newcastle upon Tyne (Walker Riverside)
Staffordshire Moorlands (Biddulph Town Centre)

² South Tyneside also had an adopted CS by this date but the finalised document had not yet been published or made available on the Council’s web pages. It was not therefore available for review as part of this study.
3 List of Case Study Interviewees

LDF manager, Liverpool City Council
Commercial Manager, Liverpool Land Development Company
Highways Manager, Liverpool City Council
Development Control team leader, Liverpool City Council
Officer, Merseytravel
LDF Manager, Ashford Borough Council
Infrastructure Manager, Ashford’s Future
Official, Environment Agency
LDF Leader, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Housing Officer, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Environment Officer and LSP Contact, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Official, Redcar and Cleveland PCT
Official, Highways Agency
Regeneration Officer, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
AAP Team Leader, Newcastle City Council
Regeneration Officer, Newcastle City Council
Education Officer, Newcastle City Council
Planning Officer, Sport England
Representative, Places for People and Newcastle LSP contact

* In addition, the Chief Executive of Ashford Borough Council was also a participant at the LGA workshop, providing an opportunity to explore further some of the issues relating to that case study area.
4 Case Study Interview Questions

A list of questions that formed a general structure to the interviews with the LDF team and other key partners is provided below. Not all of these are relevant to each interviewee and thus individual interviews used these as a starting point or aide-memoire, adapting as necessary and covering additional questions where considered appropriate. The list is therefore included here in order to give a general indication to the reader of the scope of the case study research:

- What is current status of LDF core strategy? If not yet adopted, what is expected timetable to adoption?
- What are the main delivery/infrastructure requirements related to this plan?
- Other than the core strategy, what other DPDs are adopted or in preparation and how do they relate to core strategy in terms of delivery/infrastructure provision?
- Who are the main partners necessary for the delivery and infrastructure requirements of the plan?
- In what ways, and from what stages of plan preparation, were these partners actively involved in the plan preparation process?
- Were there any difficulties in getting key partners to engage in the spatial planning process as part of their own infrastructure and capital programmes? (give details of experience with particular sectors – good and bad – where relevant, such as education, health, transport, utilities etc.)
- To what extent did delivery or infrastructure issues influence the choices between alternatives and the selection of a preferred option?
- Were delivery/infrastructure issues a significant issue for debate at the examination stage? If so, what were the main issues and outcomes?
- What issues were raised in respect of soundness test viii and what were the Inspector’s comments/recommendations in respect of this test?
- In what ways are the local planning authority working with other parts of the local authority to co-ordinate plan delivery and infrastructure provision?
- In what ways are the local planning authority working with external (to the local authority) partners to ensure the delivery of the plan and its infrastructure requirements?
- What is the relationship with the LSP in respect of plan delivery?
- Has a local infrastructure group (LIG) been established (or is under consideration) to bring together partners to co-ordinate delivery and infrastructure provision?
• Has the local authority prepared a local ‘delivery plan’ or ‘infrastructure plan’ as part of their LDF process? To what extent, and in what ways, were key partners jointly involved in this process?

• Has the local authority considered the range of resources that can be harnessed for local plan delivery and infrastructure provision?

• What are the main sources of funding that are being utilized for plan delivery and infrastructure provision (see list on page 105 of ESPIP study as potential checklist)?

• Has any kind of ‘local infrastructure fund’ (LIF) been established (or is likely to be established)? If so, give details?

• How important are planning obligations/agreements in delivering local infrastructure? Has the local authority entered into any kind of ‘community delivery agreements’ with applicants/developers?

• What are the local authorities’ views on the current government position on obligations/planning gain supplement (PSG) etc?

• What general views does the local authority have on the respective roles of the public v private sector in plan delivery and infrastructure provision?

• In what ways might the co-ordination and delivery of infrastructure through the spatial planning process be improved or enhanced at the: (i) national level; (ii) regional level; (iii) sub-regional level; (iv) local level?

• Are there any other issues relating to plan delivery/infrastructure provision that haven’t been adequately dealt with above?

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*This question was intended to generate information from the case study authorities on any means by which they were systematically setting out their intentions relating to the planning, delivery and monitoring of infrastructure requirements. Such a ‘delivery plan’ might, therefore, involve a formal infrastructure programme, drawn up with delivery partners, along the lines suggested in the EPiSP research (UCL and Deloitte, 2007) but might also include attempts to more clearly identify LDF infrastructure requirements and key delivery partners, and to set out how such requirements would be subsequently funded, delivered and monitored. A good example of the latter would be the ‘implementation plan’ prepared by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.*