3

Plan-making: changing contexts, challenges and drivers

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Introduction

Despite an abundance of anti-planning rhetoric in Government and media communications, support for spatial strategy or plan-making[i] still persists and extends across the public and private sectors. Even during the Thatcher years of so-called 'roll-back' planning, when "neoliberal ideas about deregulation were at their height" (Healey, 2007: 140), many plans continued to be prepared whereas experiments that promoted a project-led approach to urban development, in the absence of strategic plans, created uncertainty and increased risk for developers and investors and a range of adverse consequences for the market (see Allmendinger and Haughton, 2013: 11). As Leonora Rozee, former deputy chief executive of the Planning Inspectorate, insists (2014: 124):

> We cannot create a stable and creative economy, a fair and healthy society and a culturally and ecologically diverse and attractive environment without long-term visionary planning which operates within a flexible hierarchical framework that can accommodate change and the unexpected whilst providing sufficient certainty to investors at all levels.

However, the approach to strategic planning has changed substantially over the years. Since the turn of the last century when it was a highly ideological activity, "embedded in the reformist ideas of a number of visionary individuals" (Davoudi, 2006: 17), there was a shift in the role of the planner from 'expert' to 'facilitator' in line with a 'communicative turn' in planning (Healey, 1992), and a shift in the type of evidence and knowledge that has informed

planning, "away from simple descriptive physical surveys represented in detailed maps and blueprints" towards more analytical evidence that includes social-economic dimensions, supporting the systems view of cities (Davoudi, 2006: 17). As the contexts within which plan-making takes place change, so there continue to be significant changes.

This chapter has been guided by the following questions: (1) how are plans made?; (2) what are the contemporary drivers?; and (3) what challenges are planners facing in their practice? The discussion reflects on how these processes, drivers and challenges have changed over time and how they are framed by the broader contemporary contexts discussed in Chapter 1 – in particular austerity, deregulation and decentralization. In writing this chapter, I have drawn on interview material with planning practitioners in the public and private sectors, insights gained during my teaching which involves guest speakers from practice, as well as my own professional experience in a local authority planning policy team, and working as a planning consultant.

Plan-making can take place at many scales: "the nation, a wider region, an urban node, a neighbourhood, a new development, or a redevelopment area where a new 'piece of city' is proposed" (Healey, 2007: 198). This chapter focuses mostly on the statutory development plan – which includes the local (development) plan[ii], and in some places also the regional plan[iii] and the neighbourhood plan – but acknowledging that non-statutory plans prepared for smaller areas or sites are hugely influential in the preparation of the 'higher tier' plans. The chapter will argue that plan-making has become a more rigorous and collaborative activity, with more of an emphasis on what can realistically be delivered, which has had implications for how we view 'creativity' in the process of planning. Even though the 'communicative turn' in planning remains strong, the failure of so many local authorities to produce up-to-date local plans means that, in these places the potential for public participation in the plan-making

process has been lost entirely. Although statutory plans are led by the public sector, much of the work that goes into plan-making is done by the private sector, with the work of public sector planners (in policy) dominated by the management of consultants' contracts and their members' expectations.   The broader implications of this are not discussed here, but analysed in more detail in Mike Raco's chapter in this volume.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides an overview of plan-making in the UK. Drawing on publicly-available data from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and published reports, it reveals the geographical differences in coverage of local plans and exposes the challenges for Government. The second section considers what plan-making involves in theory and how it plays out in practice, focusing mostly on the question of 'how' we make plans, examining the interplay between knowledge, creativity and politics. The third section examines the changing drivers of plan-making, revealing how the delivery of housing and growth have overtaken place-making and social transformation as drivers. The final section concludes and reflects on these contemporary challenges for plan-making in practice.

The struggle to get a plan in place

The UK is said to have a 'plan-led' planning system. Decisions on planning applications are made primarily on the basis of policies set out in the development plan, which in turn is required to conform to national-level guidance or frameworks[iv] (see Cave et al, 2013 for an explanation of the similarities and differences between the four nations). The weight of the development plan in decision-making has always been a subject of debate, however. In a background paper prepared to inform the Raynsford Review of Planning (TCPA, 2017: 4), it

is argued that there was always ambiguity in the presumption in favour of the plan, introduced through the Planning and Compensation Act in 1991, but that it has been further undermined by the presumption in favour of (sustainable) development in the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which has "made the status of the plan even harder to understand" and has "had the effect of reducing the weight of the plan in decisions on housing". Certainly, if the plan is to have any weight, it needs to be 'up-to-date', otherwise developers can defer to national-level guidance or frameworks. As the Conservative Party (2010) explained:

> We will legislate that if new local plans have not been completed within a prescribed period, then the presumption in favour of sustainable development will automatically apply. In other words, if a local planning authority does not get its local plan finalised in reasonable time, it will be deemed to have an entirely permissive planning approach, so all planning applications will be accepted automatically if they conform with national planning guidance.

Geographical coverage of up-to-date plans varies across the UK. It is almost absent in Northern Ireland due to fact that responsibility for making local plans only transferred to local councils in 2015. In Wales, there is good coverage: all 25 local planning authorities have an adopted local plan, although 11 of those pre-date 2012, and are therefore more than five years old at the time of writing. There appears to be no publicly available data for Scotland. The coverage in England is very patchy. Of the 386 local planning authorities (LPAs) in England, 56% are without an up-to-date local plan found sound against the NPPF[v]. The geography of this coverage reveals that "plan-making is lagging in some particular areas including authorities surrounding Manchester, Birmingham and London where difficult choices about Green Belt appears to be halting progress" (Lichfields, 2017:2).

A recent report to Government prepared by the Local Plans Expert Group (2016) sought to understand the causes behind slow or incomplete local plan preparation in England and found that local authorities were struggling to agree housing needs with adjoining authorities under the Duty to Cooperate[vi] and suffering from a lack of an agreed methodology on the Strategic Housing Market Assessments, amongst other problems. This, according to the Housing White Paper (DCLG, 2017: 13), is undermining our ability to address the housing crisis: "the uncertainty this creates about when and where new homes will be built is both unpopular and affects the entire house building process, slowing it right down".

The City of York's draft Local Plan was not approved for consultation in 2014 due to members' nervousness that it would fail the NPPF's 'test of soundness'. The only relevant document which is a material consideration for planning decisions is a draft local plan document from 2005[vii]. As the Council states on its website: "If we don't adopt an up to date Local Plan, development will still happen, but decisions will be taken in regard to the NPPF without local people having a say on setting local policies" (City of York Council, 2017). This goes against the government's ambitions for the planning system, as stated by the Minister of State for Housing and Planning in July 2015 (DCLG, 2015):

> We are committed to a planning system that provides communities with certainty on where new homes are to be built. Local plans produced in consultation with the community are therefore the cornerstone of our planning reforms.

The discussion here raises the concern that, despite good intentions, the patchy coverage of plans across the UK and the fact that the weight of the plan itself is now under question, undermines the impact of consultation in local plan-making [see also Yasminah Beebeejaun's

chapter in this volume for a further discussion]. The next section takes a closer look at the processes and practical challenges of plan-making, integrating reflections from theory and practice.

The process of plan making

In an attempt to summarise the complex nature of contemporary plan making, Patsy Healey (2008: 865) suggests that it involves

> draw[ing] on diverse sources and forms of knowledge and imagination to generate one or more strategic ideas, which give a sense of direction and focus to those involved in place-management and place-development processes.

Although the bringing together of knowledge and imagination was a feature of the Geddesian 'survey-analysis-plan' approach in the early 20th Century, the knowledge was limited to physical survey data, and the role of the planner "was seen as being imaginative and visionary, not only in setting the goals, but also in taking a creative leap from the analysis of the survey to the making of the plan" (Davoudi, 2006: 17). As planning moved away from a simple concern with the physical arrangement of land, buildings and the spaces between them, towards broader questions of the interplay between physical, economic and social aspects (the systems view of planning), so this required a more analytical approach to evidence gathering and the role of knowledge in the process of planning acquired greater weight.

The question of what constitutes knowledge in planning has, however, shifted over the years. Whereas rational, scientific approaches dominated in the first half of the 20th Century; in the

latter half, the question of what constitutes knowledge was opened up to debate. Rydin (2007) suggests that the communicative turn was effectively an argument for a broader view of knowledge in planning, bringing local (or lay) knowledge to bear on planning processes, as well as scientific and technical knowledge, to create 'multiple knowledges'. In practice, Alexander (2005) argues that the balance between these knowledges changes depending on the scale of the plan. At the neighbourhood or community scale, local knowledge is highly valued in the planning process, but higher up the governance scale the issues become more complex and require bringing together domains of specialised knowledge, and ultimately "appreciative knowledge loses some of its value" (100).

The upsurge of interest in evidence-based policy under New Labour in the late 1990s was driven by a renewed enthusiasm for evidence, rooted in the instrumental view of the policy-research interface, whereby "the relationship between evidence and policy is unproblematic, linear and direct" (Davoudi, 2006:15). But this is a simplification (Young et al, 2002) and the role of power and politics in all this is key; "power procures the knowledge which supports its purposes, while it ignores or suppresses that knowledge which does not serve it" (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 226). Hence, Davoudi (2006: 21) argues "[i]t takes more than knowledge and ideas to make policy" and the "[p]olicy process is as much about power relations and competition over agenda setting as it is about finding the truth and solving problems".

One public sector planner with more than 20 years professional experience reflected on the impact of the New Labour reforms. Prior to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, policies had to be 'justified' but there were no tests of soundness and so planners would "fudge everything and go with what their politicians wanted". The focus in the independent examinations was on 'objections' to the Plan. Now, "you've probably got to do more work because you need to make sure everything is sound, rather than just the bits that people are

going to object to". On the other hand, budget cuts have meant that they don't always have adequate up-to-date evidence. For example, their

> strategic flood risk assessment is way out of date - from 2006 or 2007 - we should really be updating that now. We're taking risks really with going with what we've got. That's a resourcing issue.

At the same time, even though "the evidence stage is really critical, because that's what you get tested on… there's a massive amount of choice in terms of where [housing] sites actually go, and a lot of politics comes into it." So, for example, the requirement in the NPPF for planners to consider viability in both plan making and planning decisions, an absence of an explicit 'brownfield first' policy and the requirement for local authorities to demonstrate a five-year housing supply has, in practice, meant more latitude to consider greenfield sites for housing delivery. However, politicians have historically strongly opposed any building on greenfield sites and this opposition is still apparent since "there are lots of residents out there in groups and parish councils and the like who don't want to see development on greenfield sites…and that filters through to what the politicians want". Local authority officers are therefore increasingly seeking to engage members' early in the policy and plan-making process, in order to encourage cross-party engagement and support for the plan as it progresses. In cities with elected mayors, the politically-driven nature of plan-making is even more apparent. In London, the election of a new Mayor prompts the preparation of a new London Plan, the direction of which is in accordance with the Mayor's election manifesto. This provides the opportunity for a much more direct relationship between the plan and the Mayor's political priorities than in a typical local authority context. In Greater Manchester, where a strategic spatial framework - developed jointly with 10 councils – had proposed controversially building housing on the Green Belt, the Mayor for the Combined Authority of Greater Manchester, who was elected in May 2017, pledged a radical re-write of the spatial framework in his election manifesto (Manchester Evening News, 11 May 2017). Thus,

although planning is inherently a political process, in the case of cities (or regions) with elected mayors, the influence of politics seems to be even more explicit.

In terms of the role of appreciative knowledge, there is a perception amongst local authority planners that consultation is taken more seriously by officers than it ever was. As one planner said: "Back in the day, [my boss] wasn't keen on us going to area forums or ward forums, he was very 'anti' them. We just avoided community engagement at all costs on the basis of concerns that these forums lacked diversity and representation of the whole community… officers knew best and we had our evidence". The greater enthusiasm for consultation today has no doubt been encouraged by the Localism agenda. "The fact that neighbourhood planning exists also affects the content and the way you produce a local plan", leading to a more place-based approach that will help communities see the benefit of engaging in the local plan and ultimately encouraging officers to be more proactive in consulting with their communities.

If evidence were the primary input into the process of plan-making, then lower-tier plans (for smaller sites or areas) would have to conform with and follow (in temporal terms) higher-tier plans. However, it is far from a linear, hierarchical process. In reality, landowners and developers come forward with proposals for sites in an ad-hoc manner, and the higher-level plans might have to work to accommodate these proposals. This means that there may be a compromise in terms of the strategic vision and that developers and landowners have more influence in the plan-making process than might be apparent from reports on consultation. The increasing pressure on local authorities to speed-up the preparation of their local plans has exacerbated these pressures and means there is even less clear progression from evidence-gathering through to plan-making. Evidence does not always precede the plan. From the perspective of local residents and businesses trying to engage with the plan, this is confusing

and can be seen as lacking transparency. Box 3.1 lists the evidence-based documents and

stages involved in the preparation of a Local Plan (for Welborne), as well as the variety of

consultants engaged in its preparation (see Raco, this volume, for a fuller discussion of the

role of consultants in planning).

Date	Document	Prepared or led by
March and June 2009	Stakeholder Visioning Workshops for the North of Fareham Strategic Development Area	Urban Design and Mediation
July 2009	Fareham SDA Capacity Analysis Study	David Lock Associates
August 2011	Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (Adopted)	Fareham Borough Council
July 2012	Options consultation	Fareham Borough Council
August 2012	Concept masterplan options study	LDA Design
April 2012	Preferred concept masterplan option report	LDA Design
Nov 2013	Welborne Employment Strategy	Wessex Economics
Dec 2013	Welborne SRTM Modelling Analysis	MVA/TfSH
Jan 2014	Concept masterplan	LDA Design
	Welborne Plan Parking Strategy	FBC
Apr 2014	Welborne Wastewater Infrastructure: Initial Infrastructure Assessment	Albion Water
	Welborne M27 Junction 10 – Preferred Option Note	HCC/FBC/HA
May 2014	Welborne Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document	Fareham Borough Council
June 2014	Welborne Design Guidance SPD	FBC/LDA Design
	Welborne Concept Masterplan phasing plan	FBC
July 2014	Welborne Infrastructure Funding Strategy	GVA
June 2015	Local Plan Part 3: The Welborne Plan	FBC

Box 3.1: List of evidence based documents and stages of preparation for the production of the

Welborne Plan (Adapted from Appendix A, The Welborne Plan, Fareham Borough Council,

2015).

Commissioned evidence that does not fit the Council's agenda does not always see the light of day. In Camden, a Freedom of Information request revealed that a consultants' report on the suitability of various employment sites for redevelopment (for housing) was never made public, presumably since it did not support the Council's intention to release particular sites for housing redevelopment (see Ferm and Jones, 2016, for a discussion). Similarly, a private sector planning consultant who is regularly commissioned to undertake evidence based studies for Neighbourhood Forums suggested that evidence is quite often "just ditched if it doesn't suit them".

So if evidence is not as central to plan-making as we might have assumed, what else comes into play? Other studies have emphasized how planners are much more pragmatic in their search for solutions to problems; relying on experience, what they learned in their planning education, rules of thumb and best practices applied by others (Krizek et al., 2009; Hack, 1984). Far from carefully assessing the multiple knowledges before them, "too often a suggested policy action is justified with reference to a single source of evidence that fits the practitioner's or author's preconception…they ignore evidence that does not agree with their position" (Krizek et al., 2009: 469). Weiss (2001) elaborates on this arguing that research or evidence is only one contender for influence amongst many competitors, including: (1) Ideology (people's basic values); (2) Interests (both people's and organisations' self-interest); (3) institutional norms and practices; and (4) prior Information (new information has to fit in with current understandings).

The role of the imagination or creativity in the plan-making process receives little attention in the literature. Most commentators agree that it forms a key part. For example, Albrechts (2017: 195) suggests

[t]he construction of different futures, which lies at the very heart of transformative practices, requires creativity and original synthesis. To construct visions for the future, we need both the solidity of the analysis that seeks to discover a place that is and that might exist, and the creativity of the designing of a place that would otherwise not be.

On the other hand, there is an acknowledgement that (broadly) there has been a transition from a mode of planning led by creativity to one led by knowledge. This has not, however, been a linear transition. In Davoudi's account of the role of evidence in plan and policy-making processes, she shows how planning in the 1980s and 1990s in Britain was criticized for its lack of imagination and creativity (2006: 21) at a time when planning was almost reduced to a regulatory function and Local Plans were notoriously dry and wordy. This led to a renewed emphasis on the 'spatial', and design, in planning under New Labour, alongside the revival of evidence-based planning (Nadin, 2007).

For my graduating students, the private sector is seen to offer more scope to use their creative skills in planning and urban design, whereas public sector jobs are often perceived to be dominated by bureaucracy. Finn Williams, who is spearheading an initiative to encourage talented young planners (and architects) to work in the public sector, claims that the appeal of planning weakened over the years as the "agency that used to be afforded to the Town Planner is now fragmented between officers specializing in Development Management, Planning Policy, Placemaking, Conservation, Regeneration, Housing, Sustainability, Building Control and Enforcement". This, he argues, "inevitably result[s] in each specialist taking a more blinkered approach, which makes thinking holistically and planning proactively an extraordinarily complex task of coordination" (Williams, 2016: 55). Ten years ago, the work of plan-making had been outsourced to the private sector almost entirely, taking much creative work away from public sector planners and reducing their role to project management. However, there is a perception in the public sector that there has been a 'shift

back'. Part of that is due to perceived poor quality of consultants' work, since with budget cuts you get what you pay for: "With staff cut backs it's much easier politically to justify cutting consultants' budgets than making redundancies." So, planners in the public sector are again doing more of the creative work by necessity. However, as Raco (this volume) shows, planning consultancies' incomes have continued to rise, suggesting a shift in the nature of their work as changing legislation and policy means Councils are better off spending their limited budgets on technical studies and viability assessments, than on recruiting consultants to prepare an Area Action Plan. Even where private sector planners are preparing site plans on behalf of landowner or developer clients, the potentially creative side of plan-making is suppressed by technical calculations and viability exercises. One planning consultant commented, "I never thought masterplanning would be all about spreadsheets".

Changing drivers of plan-making

In the introduction to this chapter, the quote from Leonora Rozee suggested that the purpose of long-term visionary planning is broad, namely to "create a stable and creative economy, a fair and healthy society and a culturally and ecologically diverse and attractive environment". These aspirations are familiar to me from my days working in planning practice, where our briefs tended to be focused on improving and transforming places, turning around their economic fortunes, and dealing with their complex socio-economic issues. However, with political priorities focused on addressing 'the housing crisis' and requirements for local planning authorities to meet objectively assessed needs for housing, increasingly the primary driver of strategic spatial planning has become the delivery of housing. Difficulties in assessing housing needs has, according to the report of the Local Plans Expert Group (2016: 15), been "a key barrier to plan progression".

In assessing housing needs, there is little or no scope for public participation in the process of agreeing on an area's capacity, which remains a technical process. Once communities tend to get involved in planning (at neighbourhood scales), housing capacity for that area has normally already been agreed in the development plan. The scale of change is already a 'given' and therefore matters for consultation (or local determination, in the case of Neighbourhood Plans) are limited to the detail of how it might be delivered, and exactly where, in what configuration etc. Almendinger and Haughton (2010: 809) claim,

> where spatial planning could have provided a forum for meaningful debate over radically different alternative visions of development futures, instead it has provided a forum for legitimating a government-led agenda dominated by economic growth and meeting housebuilding targets, allied to some hard-to-enforce commitments to improving quality of place. Any search for radical alternatives is in effect displaced to outside the spatial planning arena.

The greater emphasis on viability and deliverability of plans since the recession following 2008 has also significantly driven the nature of plan-making. During the recession, development activity across the UK slowed significantly and in some places stalled altogether. The response has been to bring a greater focus to 'viability' and 'deliverability' of development proposals and plans in all parts of the UK. This has brought a greater need for flexibility in plans, meaning that Councils have moved away from a 'blueprint' approach to plan-making. In some places, the need for flexibility has meant that Councils have avoided preparing a plan with any formal planning status and have chosen instead to prepare more abstract documents, which become 'material planning considerations' but allow for change and flexibility. So, for example, the London Borough of Redbridge is currently preparing a *Delivery Prospectus* for the development of one of its main town centres, Ilford[viii] but it is not clear what weight this will have in the planning decision process.

The emphasis on viability has also affected the content of plans. One local authority planner claimed it had "forced us to think more innovatively than we ever have done before in terms of how we really maximize the use of land". So, for example, there is now even more emphasis on the vertical mix of uses such as high density residential development incorporating schools and other social infrastructure, which reflects a shift in thinking. Viability considerations have also forced planners to be more spatially nuanced in their demands on development, for example, identifying employment-led areas where affordable workspace might be secured instead of affordable housing. Borough-wide plans are now considered to be more 'spatial' and fine-grained than in the past, when they tended to just set out borough-wide policies, without taking different approaches in different areas. On the other hand, the emphasis on viability can mean that planners or urban designers have to make compromises that jar with their professional opinions. So, for example, one consultant explained how a design for a scheme that had included mixed use and 'active' ground floor uses was ultimately turned into a purely residential scheme due to viability concerns. So consultants might well compromise design principles and the vision, as they can't be seen to be 'putting off' investment or development.

This emphasis on viability and deliverability, coupled with the context of austerity, has put the property industry in a more powerful position with respect to plan-making, and has meant that there are benefits for the public sector in working jointly or cooperatively with the private sector. This happens in a number of ways. First, as part of the assessment of availability of strategic housing land, local authorities rely on landowners to come forward as part of the process of identifying sites. Second, landowners, developers and housebuilders are increasingly more involved in the preparation of site masterplans and supplementary planning documents. This can vary from carrying out a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on

behalf of a local authority, to funding an SPD for a local authority in an area where a landowner or developer has vested interests, working closely with LPAs on the preparation of site masterplans or planning applications which then inform the higher-tier plan – the SPD or Area Action Plan (AAP). So, although the higher-tier local plans tend to be prepared by the public sector, they are invariably informed by lower-tier site plans that are developer/landowner-led. One consultant explained how they worked up a strategic masterplan for a site, in partnership with a local Council, where all the up-front work was done by consultants on behalf of their landowner client. After a few years of this work, the Council decided to 'break away' and continued working on the masterplan, which eventually became an Area Action Plan, formally adopted by the Council. But, the consultant observed, the strategic diagram in the AAP was "almost the mirror image" of their planning application, so "lots of the things we did directly informed their thinking". This chimes with my experience working in local authority planning policy on the preparation of Area Action Plans, where negotiations with landowners pre-dated any consultation on the AAP. So it can be the case that land deals, key ideas and important decisions are made in discussion with, say, the Regeneration team of the Council before the work even comes into the domain of the planning policy team. This inevitably fuels consultation apathy, where the local community understandably sense that they have little influence over many of the important decisions that will affect them.

Conclusions

This chapter has focused on plan-making – the area of planning practice that has the longest history and is seen as the most creative and visionary, with the potential to transform places. We know that, in the latter half of the 20th Century, there was a 'communicative turn' in planning and over the turn of the millennium, a revival in so-called evidence-based planning. However, little has been written on the practice of plan-making since New Labour's reforms

in the early 2000s. The main aim of the chapter has been to investigate the changes that have taken place – in the practice and drivers of plan-making.

Decentralisation in the UK has had a significant impact. It has provided an opportunity for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to do things differently. In England, national-level guidance has been streamlined and neighbourhoods given powers to develop their own statutory plans. This has nurtured locally-driven (and thus more creative) solutions, and encouraged a more pro-active approach towards community engagement in all areas of planning. However, the actions of the government have not been coherent, with austerity and deregulation at the same time undermining local control and resources. The national political focus on the housing crisis has dominated plan-making, with increasing pressures on local planning authorities to quickly produce local plans that conform with national-level policy, demonstrate a five-year housing supply and are based on solid evidence, such that the majority of local planning authorities in England - who do not have the support of the higher-level regional tier of planning - are struggling to produce up-to-date local plans that are found to be sound. At a site level, the creative and collaborative processes involved in plan-making have been quashed by housing delivery calculations and viability spreadsheets.

Political agendas have long been acknowledged as a strong influence in plan-making. The increasing weight placed on evidence gathering in legislation has tampered this to some extent at the local level, although politicians are still swayed by voters' opinions on key emotive issues such as the Green Belt. At the regional and local levels, where there is an elected Mayor, the political agenda is a more explicit driver of the plan-making process. With the expansion of City Deals and elected Metro Mayors across England (see Tomaney and Colomb, this volume), this is likely to become accentuated further. Although strong, politically engaged local members can help to bring the concerns of their local constituents

and residents to the fore, where the political agenda is influenced more remotely – say at the regional level - this only accentuates communities' perceptions that important decisions are made elsewhere before plans are even consulted on.

The process of plan-making is significantly more complicated than it was in the past. Plans used to be the output of a creative process driven mostly by one individual – 'the town planner', or small team (based in the public sector). However, the more onerous requirements for collaboration and evidence-gathering, coupled with declining public sector resourcing for planning, has meant a much bigger role for the private sector in plan-making (both in preparing evidence and in making area-based proposals). For the policy planner, much creative work goes on to inform consultants' briefs and to pull together all the work into a coherent whole for their district or region. But this work needs to be done alongside the management of consultants and their contracts, as well as the statutory consultation and political processes to get plans adopted. All in all, the task of plan-making is one of coordination and more onerous than it ever was. In the context of budget cuts to planning departments, the use of consultants in plan-making has been seen as an obvious place to make savings. The upside of this has been more engagement of public sector planners in the creative work of plan-making. Finn Williams (2016) points to some encouraging signs of a revival of interest in public service, and a new generation of architects, urban designers and planners who are choosing to go into the public sector, as well as innovations in London boroughs such as Croydon, which has created the first in-house architecture department in decades. Whether or not this will lead to a more widespread return to the ethos of public sector plan-making, remains to be seen.

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i I have deliberated at length over what terminology to use to refer to the processes that are the focus of discussion in this paper. 'Spatial strategy making' feels most accurate, and yet is rather a mouthful for repetition in this chapter. Therefore, I have chosen to use the term 'plan-making'. However, the process involves more than devising a 'blueprint' two-dimensional plan, rather it is a spatial expression of multi-faceted policies, which I would ask that the reader keep in mind.

ii The terminology across the countries of the UK differs. In England, since 2010, the government refers to 'local plans'. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, these same plans are referred to as 'local development plans'. They are, essentially, the same. For brevity, this chapter will mostly use the term 'local plan'.

iii Regional planning was abolished in most of England with the incoming Coalition Government in 2010, but in London it remains, and in Scotland, strategic development plans exist in four of the largest cities.

iv either the National Planning Framework (NPF) for Scotland, the Wales Spatial Plan, the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland, or National Planning Policy Framework for England.

v Calculated from figures compiled by the Communities and Local Government (30 June 2017).

vi The NPPF states that local authorities have a 'Duty to Cooperate' with neighbouring authorities in the preparation of their local plans, in order to meet objectively assessed housing needs across Housing Market Areas. These tend not to coincide with local authority boundaries.

vii From the Meeting of the Council, Thursday 9th October, 2014 (Item 45). Available at: http://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=36260

viii https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/redbridge-news/ilford-prospectus-to-shape-major-town-centre-regeneration/