

The monitoring and review process in English regional planning

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In loving memory of my father

Abstract

This study investigates the trajectory of regional planning in England in the light of the reforms to the planning system since 1997. It looks in particular into a key element of these reforms, namely the introduction of what will be called a *Plan, Monitor and Manage* (PMM) approach to regional planning. The concept of PMM first emerged in regional planning debates in relation to housing but a central argument in this research is that with the revision of PPG11 in the late 1990s/early 2000s a 'mainstreaming' of PMM has occurred insofar as key ideas and elements of PMM have become the formula for regional planning as a whole. In a nutshell, the current PMM approach envisages a continuous planning process of strategy making, implementation, monitoring and review which is to increase the responsiveness of planning, bring about more up-to-date strategies and enhance implementation.

Against this backdrop, the research sets out to examine and explain the operation and implications of the PMM approach to regional planning. The investigation is carried out at two interconnected levels. On the one hand, the study examines the 'practical' side of PMM, its functioning and implications as regards technical, organisational and governance matters as well as substantive outcomes. On the other hand, the operation of PMM and its implications are linked to wider theoretical debates about political ideologies, governmental agendas, public sector, planning and state reform. The empirical element of the study combines an overarching analysis of the situation across England with two detailed case studies of the practice of PMM in two English regions, namely the West Midlands and South East of England.

The analysis of the operation and implications of PMM in regional planning produces a fairly ambiguous picture. On the one hand, the study shows the progress which has been made so far and identifies potential and concrete benefits of the PMM model, e.g. a planning system which is responsive to change and draws more widely on monitoring. On the other hand, the current PMM model entails major problems and challenges. Some of these could be described as the 'teething problems' of a new system, some are operational problems and others are methodological and conceptual limitations such as the difficulties in achieving responsiveness through strategy review. However, many of the problems which have been identified can be assigned to structural limitations in the way the current PMM model is designed and resourced, inherent tensions and conflicting or essentially incompatible requirements. In the light of these findings, the study develops recommendations for improved national policy and regional practice of PMM.

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List of Abbreviations

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
AWM	Advantage West Midlands
BCC	Black Country Consortium
BCS	Black Country Study
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England (formerly 'Council for the Protection of Rural England')
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfT	Department for Transport
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EiP	Examination-in-Public
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GOR	Government Office for the Region
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
GOWM	Government Office for the West Midlands
HoCPASC	House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MUA	Major Urban Area
NPM	New Public Management
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PARSOL	Planning and Regulatory Services Online
PDG	Planning Delivery Grant
PMM	Plan, Monitor and Manage
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance Note
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RAISE	Regional Action and Involvement South East
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
RHS	Regional Housing Strategy

RO	Regional Observatory
RPB	Regional Planning Body
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSDF	Regional Sustainability Framework
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SEE-iN	South East England Intelligence Network
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly
SEP	South East Plan
SERPLAN	London and South East Regional Planning Conference
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
WMLGA	West Midlands Local Government Association
WMRA	West Midlands Regional Assembly
WMRO	West Midlands Regional Observatory

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PART ONE – Background and Research Approach

1 Introduction

This study investigates the trajectory of regional planning in England in the light of the reforms to the planning system since 1997. It looks in particular into a key element of these reforms, namely the introduction of what will be called a *Plan, Monitor and Manage* (PMM) approach to regional planning. In a nutshell, this approach aims to achieve a continuous planning process which is to improve the responsiveness of regional planning and its implementation. The research sets out to examine and explain the operation and implications of this PMM approach to regional planning. This chapter introduces the background and the purpose of the study, and describes in more detail the aims and objectives of the research. It also develops the conceptual framework which has guided the theoretical and empirical elements of the investigation. Finally, the chapter explains the research design and methodology which were used for carrying out the research.

1.1 'Plan, Monitoring and Manage' (PMM) in regional planning

Since the late 1990s the regional planning system in England has been subject to major change. The publication of *Modernising Planning* in 1998 (DETR 1998a) marked the start of a first wave of reforms of national planning policy which culminated in a revised version of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing* (PPG3) in March 2000 (DETR 2000a) and a new *Planning Policy Guidance Note 11: Regional Planning* (PPG11) in October 2000 (DETR 2000b). These developments in national policy have significantly altered the shape of planning in the English regions. Among the changes was a broadening of the scope and content of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) from a 'land use' to a 'spatial planning' document. Voluntary Regional Assemblies were made responsible for the preparation of draft RPG and extended opportunities for stakeholder consultation and involvement were provided during the drafting process. In addition, new requirements such as sustainability appraisals and a strict timetable for the production of RPG were introduced. Central to these reforms and of particular interest to this study has been the introduction of the *Plan, Monitor and Manage* (PMM) approach to regional planning.

The PMM approach was initially brought in by the New Labour government in the field of planning for housing. The ambition behind PMM was nothing less than to introduce a new way of conducting planning and, particularly, a declared shift away from what had been perceived as a *Predict and Provide* model of planning. Under the new model spatial planning documents are to set annual targets for the provision of new dwellings, and information obtained through continuous monitoring is to be used to adapt housing numbers and the release of land to changing circumstances. However, this study argues that with the publication of PPG11 and consecutive planning reforms *Plan, Monitor and Manage* was taken beyond the field of housing and has become the formula for regional planning as a whole. In essence, PMM is about

making planning a continuous process of strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring and review. In the government's view this is to be achieved through a number of measures which underpinned PPG11. These include a tight timetable for the preparation of RPG to cut down the time spent for a full review to around thirty months. Moreover, RPG policies are to be accompanied with quantified targets and timescales for their implementation, and an implementation plan is to show how policies are going to be implemented. An indicator-based monitoring system is used to assess the implementation of policies on an annual basis, and RPG is to undergo periodic partial or comprehensive reviews in the light of monitoring. Overall objectives of this PMM approach are to turn regional planning into an ongoing process, to increase flexibility and responsiveness and, as a result, to achieve more up-to-date strategies and improved implementation.

In itself the reform of the regional planning system and the introduction of a PMM approach already represented a significant break with the past and posed considerable challenges to those involved in regional planning. However, these changes have been happening alongside wider developments which are, to some degree, intertwined with regional planning policy and practice. Among these broader developments have been changes to the UK state in the form of devolution and regionalisation of state activities. There have also been ongoing reforms in policy making and service provision in the public sector, including the continuation of a managerialist agenda in the public sector and an increasing emphasis on 'delivery' of services. Economic policy has had a bearing on regional planning too, for example, through the creation of Regional Development Agencies and the Treasury's interest in the economics of housing supply. This connects to issues around the provision of housing, the role of the planning system, and the impact of government initiatives such as the Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM 2003a) and the *Review of Housing Supply* (Barker 2004). All these developments potentially have substantial implications for regional planning – some more subtle and indirect, others more direct and overt – and for the functioning of the PMM approach in practice.

Shifting the attention back to the planning system itself, more recent events have taken PMM in regional planning even further towards centre stage. A second wave of reforms started with a Green Paper in 2001 (DTLR 2001a) and led to the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* (Great Britain 2004a) and a related new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on regional planning (ODPM 2004a). The Act set out the abolition of structure plans and a replacement of RPGs with Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) which are now part of the development plan. In addition, monitoring was made a statutory requirement, obliging Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) to produce Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). This comes together with an even stronger emphasis on RSS implementation, or 'delivery' to use the government's preferred term. Finally, a third wave of reforms to the planning system is looming on the horizon. In response to the debates around housing supply the government issued proposals for planning for housing during 2005 (ODPM 2005a, 2005b) which, as some early commentaries suggest, may well represent 'the abolition of

the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach to housing numbers' (Planning Resource 2005). These concerns may gain even more relevance in the face of further reform to the planning system which may arise from the fundamental review of planning instigated by the Treasury and ODPM in late 2005 in response to the first Barker Review (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005a, 2006; see Chs. 2 and 3 for details).

In sum, the past few years have seen major changes to the legal and policy framework of regional planning with PMM being one, if not *the* key feature of the new system. The small number of reflections which exist so far in academic literature have taken a rather critical view on the new approach. Although the concept of PMM has been lauded, the way it was introduced by the government has been criticised for falling short from the concept's basic ideas (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a). There has also been suspicion that, as far as planning for housing is concerned, the government introduced PMM at least to some extent as a rhetorical tool to reduce tensions over housing numbers, without much change in substance (Murdoch and Abram 2002). Be that as it may, there is much indication that the introduction of PMM has had significant implications for planning practice in the English regions.

Above all, the continuous nature of the regional planning process seems to have become a reality. Literally immediately after the publication of the first 'new-style' RPG in the early 2000s each region started work on 'early' reviews, most of which were 'partial' revisions of specific aspects or topics of the RPG/RSS¹. This policy work has gone alongside efforts in relation to the implementation of RSSs such as the formation of working groups or the preparation of implementation plans. Significant developments have also taken place in terms of monitoring of RSSs, in particular the setting up of monitoring arrangements and the preparation of AMRs. The RPBs have also actively sought to fulfil new requirements such as sustainability appraisals and 'stakeholder' involvement, and got involved in a number of RSS-related studies and other policy work, for example, Regional Housing Strategies (RHSs) and Regional Sustainability Frameworks (RSDFs). However, to the author's knowledge there has been no study to date which has looked into PMM in regional planning in a comprehensive way.

Against this background, this study investigates the 'new'² approach to regional planning which is encapsulated in the triad of *Plan, Monitor and Manage*. It examines how PMM works in practice and sheds some light on the various implications of this approach to regional planning. The purpose of the study is twofold. On the one hand, it deals with what may be seen as rather practical, technical or concrete issues around the practice of PMM. Given the background of the study, which is based on an ESRC/ODPM collaborative studentship, the starting point was a practical one, namely to analyse how the PMM

¹ As mentioned above, with the enactment of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) has become the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in each of the English regions. This change took formal effect on 28 September 2004 (Great Britain 2004b). In order to ease the legibility of this thesis the term RSS will be used in the remainder of the document to refer also to RPG unless the differentiation is required for the understanding of particular issues.

² 'New' only in the sense that the introduction of PMM in late 1990s/early 2000s was to mark a shift away from an approach in the 1980s/early 1990s which, especially in the field of planning for housing, was seen as being 'predict and provide' to one of PMM. However, as shown in Chapter 3, the concept of PMM reaches back to planning and decision making theory and practice of the 1960-80s, in particular the Strategic Choice approach (e.g. Friend and Jessop 1969).

approach to regional planning works in practice and what problems exist, as well as to suggest ways for improving national policy and regional practice. On the other hand, it was clear from the outset that in order to understand the practice of PMM it was necessary to take into account more theoretical or wider concerns. This includes developing an understanding of the context in which regional planning operates and of the factors that have direct or indirect impacts on the way the system works. By doing this, the thesis aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms which help to establish and explain the functioning and the implications of PMM. The acquisition of such a broader understanding is also important for the development of recommendations for improved regional planning practice.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

Since the publication of *Modernising Planning* in 1998 substantial developments in national policy on regional planning have occurred which have had significant implications for planning practice. Pioneering research in the field suggested that these changes seem to have brought about nothing less than a 'new' regional planning model (Marshall 2002a, 2004). The existing research treated the early years of the new system and focused on the period of preparing the first 'new style' RPGs mostly from 1999 to about late 2002. Marshall's (2002a) work on the time dimension of regional planning described the emerging continuous nature of the new approach and reflected on some of its implications. There are also early accounts of the process of producing RPG for several regions and the role of different actors in the preparation processes (Baker et al. 2003, Marshall et al. 2002, Marshall 2002b, Pattison 2001, Sennett 2002). Furthermore, particular elements of the new regional planning system have been analysed such as the new dimension of sub-regional planning (Baker and Roberts 2004, Marshall *forthcoming*, Roberts and Baker 2004) or issues around the implementation of RSSs (Marshall 2005). Haughton and Counsell (2004) gave a detailed account of how the concept of 'sustainable development' has been treated in the new regional planning system and analysed how the concept affected the development of planning policy, tools and practices.

The existing research provided valuable insights into the early practice of regional planning and into particular aspects of the new system. However, little attention has been paid so far to one of the key elements of the new system, the introduction of the PMM approach. Although existing studies have alluded to some of the aspects of PMM, there has been no comprehensive analysis of PMM, how the different elements of this new approach work together, and what the combined implications of these changes are to the regional planning system.

For these reasons this study provides a detailed investigation of the PMM approach to regional planning which has been developing in England since 1997. It examines the concept and policy of PMM, the operation of PMM in regional planning practice and the implications of this new planning approach. In

doing this, the study builds on existing research in the field but takes it forward in at least three ways. First, whereas existing work focused on the early years of what has been a fast moving process of change in policy and practice, this study extends the period under investigation to mid-2006. This helps to develop a more complete picture of the functioning and implications of PMM as the system may have started to settle down. Secondly, much has been written about the process of preparing the first round of new-style RPGs, i.e. the 'plan' element of PMM. In contrast, this study extends the analysis to the other stages of the PMM process by paying particular attention to the 'monitor' and 'manage' elements. Thirdly, and closely related to the previous point, this research for the first time examines the linkages between the three components of PMM and how the PMM approach works as a whole.

Thus, in investigating the PMM approach in regional planning the study has the following objectives:

- 1) to describe and analyse how the PMM approach in regional planning works in practice, what is working well and what problems exist;
- 2) to disclose the implications of PMM for planning policy and practice in technical/methodological, organisational, governance/power and substantive terms;
- 3) to understand and explain the practice of PMM in terms of how the functioning and implications of this approach can be explained;
- 4) to examine how the PMM system works in different English regions and how any differences and similarities between regions can be explained; and
- 5) to contribute to developing PMM by devising recommendations for improved policy and practice.

As outlined earlier, the study addresses rather practical, technical and concrete issues as well as more theoretical and wider concerns. The starting point has been an interest in how PMM works in regional planning practice. This includes a range of questions about the functioning of PMM and its component parts such as: How is national policy on PMM applied in practice? What does PMM require as regards the content and format of RSSs? What is being monitored, how is it done and what is monitoring information being used for? What does the 'manage' element refer to, the review of an RSS or implementation activities? When does an RSS need to be reviewed and what role does monitoring play in taking such decisions? How is the PMM process organised, who is involved and in what ways, and how do actors influence the process and its outcomes? What are the effects of PMM? Does the new approach lead to 'better' RSS policies and enhanced implementation? How can the policy and practice of PMM be improved?

In dealing with these questions it is important to investigate how the current practice of PMM can be explained. Therefore the study also examines the context in which PMM in regional planning operates and

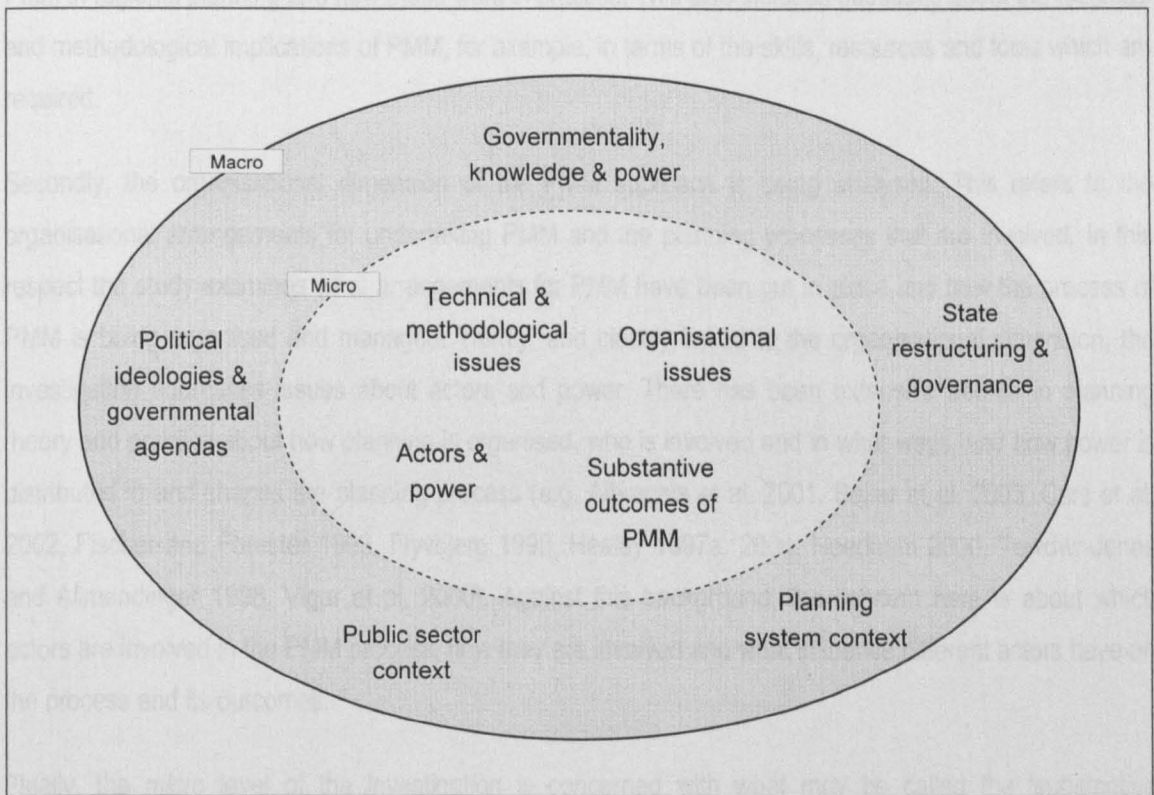
the factors which shape the functioning of PMM in practice. The development of such a broader understanding aims at explaining current developments and revealing more fully the implications of PMM. It is also used to theorise the practice of the new regional planning model by identifying factors and wider structuring forces which lie beneath the functioning of PMM. Ultimately, such a deeper understanding is necessary for developing recommendations for improving national policy and regional practice.

1.3 Conceptualising PMM in regional planning

This section develops a conceptual framework for the study of PMM in regional planning. Guided by the aims and objectives of the research, a range of issues have been identified which were deemed important in investigating the practice of PMM. These issues were used to structure the study and, in particular, to guide the empirical part of the work by defining the elements of the research subject which were examined. The conceptual framework has also assisted the analysis and interpretation of the empirical information in that the conceptual issues have been applied to analyse and explain the practice of PMM. At this point, the focus is on developing the conceptual framework and on introducing its component parts. A more detailed description and discussion of the individual component parts is provided in Part Two of the thesis.

In order to examine PMM in regional planning, an approach has been adopted which comprises an investigation at two interconnected levels (see Figure 1). First, at a *micro* level, the practical nature of PMM, its functioning and the practical implications of PMM are being investigated. This dimension relates in particular to questions about how the PMM system works in practice, what tools and arrangements are used for PMM and how they are used, what practical problems exist in applying PMM and how the system can be improved. Secondly, at a *macro* level, attention is being paid to wider framework factors and structuring forces which affect the practice of PMM. For example, it has been stressed that planning – like all other activities of public policy making and implementation – operates within, and is shaped by, its wider political, administrative and governmental context (e.g. Benveniste 1989, Faludi 1973, Tewdwr-Jones 2002). As a result of this, the way PMM works in practice and its implications can only be understood fully when it is considered within this broader context in which the regional planning system operates. This contextual dimension is used to disclose what factors have been shaping the introduction and practice of PMM, to explain why the PMM system is working the way it is and to inform the development of recommendations for improved policy and practice.

The distinction between the *micro* level (i.e. the practical nature of PMM in regional planning) and the *macro* level (i.e. broader framework factors and structuring forces of PMM practice) has proved to be a useful differentiation for analytical and practical purposes. As explained earlier, the starting point of the study has been a practical one, namely the aim to analyse and, if necessary, improve the policy and practice of PMM. This entails an interest in the way the PMM approach and related planning tools work in practice and how the system can be improved. However, in developing the conceptual framework it became clear that the practice of PMM and its implications could only be understood fully if the wider context of regional planning and broader structuring mechanisms were taken into account. For example, the functioning of a particular planning technique may not only be shaped by 'internal' factors such as limitations to the particular method itself but also by more 'external' factors such as the scope of local discretion and wider power structures. Thus, by approaching the topic from both a *micro* and a *macro* perspective, the study sets out to develop solutions for the policy and practice of PMM in regional planning, while at the same time providing a fuller explanation of the functioning of PMM.



Source: author

Figure 1: Micro and macro levels of the study

1.3.1 Micro level: The practical nature of *Plan, Monitor and Manage*

The *micro* level of the investigation relates to what may be described as the practical nature of PMM in regional planning. Here the focus is on how the PMM system operates in planning practice and what practical implications this model of planning entails. Drawing in particular upon writings about planning

theory and practice, four aspects have been identified which are guiding the investigation of the practice of PMM at the *micro* level (these issues are treated in more detail in Ch. 3). These comprise:

- technical and methodological issues;
- organisational issues;
- issues about actors and power; and
- issues around the substantive outcomes of PMM.

First, technical and methodological issues around PMM are being examined. PMM represents a particular approach to the way planning is or should be undertaken and as such involves particular techniques, tools and methods of planning (cf. Allinson 1999, CPRE 2000, DTLR 2001b, ODPM 2002a, Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a). The study therefore examines what approaches, techniques and methods are being used in PMM in regional planning and how these work in practice. This also includes questions about the technical and methodological implications of PMM, for example, in terms of the skills, resources and tools which are required.

Secondly, the organisational dimension of the PMM approach is being analysed. This refers to the organisational arrangements for undertaking PMM and the planning processes that are involved. In this respect the study examines what arrangements for PMM have been put in place and how the process of PMM is being organised and managed. Thirdly, and closely linked to the organisational dimension, the investigation addresses issues about actors and power. There has been extensive debate in planning theory and practice about how planning is organised, who is involved and in what ways, and how power is distributed in and shapes the planning process (e.g. Albrechts et al. 2001, Baker et al. 2003, Cars et al. 2002, Fischer and Forester 1993, Flyvbjerg 1998, Healey 1997a, 2004, Needham 2000, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998, Vigar et al. 2000). Against this background, the concern here is about which actors are involved in the PMM process, how they are involved and what influence different actors have on the process and its outcomes.

Finally, the *micro* level of the investigation is concerned with what may be called the 'substantive outcomes' of PMM in regional planning. The introduction of a particular planning approach such as PMM is normally linked to the expectation that the approach will have particular effects or produce specific results (cf. CPRE 2003, DETR 1998b, Johnston 1999, 2000, Feasey 2000, ODPM 2003b, Pidgeon 2000, Ricketts 2001, Raynsford 2000, Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a). Against the background of the government's expectations and theoretical approaches to PMM, the study examines what effects or outcomes PMM has in relation to different 'substantive' issues. The question here is, firstly, how the PMM approach affects the quality or 'appropriateness' of the strategies, decisions and actions involved. This

refers, for example, to the extent to which the policies in a strategy are up-to-date and relevant/appropriate to the decision situation on hand³ (cf. Faludi 2000, Mastop 2000, Mastop and Faludi 1997). It is also about the extent to which PMM leads to a practice which, on the one hand, is flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances and, on the other hand, provides long-term guidance (cf. Marshall 2002a, Wenban-Smith 2002a). Finally, the question about the substantive outcomes also relates to the implementation of regional planning strategies (cf. Barrett 2004, Barrett and Fudge 1981a, Healey 1982, Healey et al. 1982, Laurian et al. 2004, Marshall 2005). Thus the study examines how the application of PMM affects the way in which regional planning strategies are implemented⁴.

1.3.2 Macro level: Framework factors and structuring forces

Whereas the *micro* level of the investigation relates to the practical nature of PMM in regional planning, the *macro* level is about broader framework factors and structuring forces which affect the practice of PMM. In particular, the introduction and operation of a new planning approach or technique like PMM cannot be understood in isolation from the broader political, administrative and governmental context of regional planning. This wider context is being investigated with a view to establishing the extent to which it has shaped the way in which PMM has been introduced and applied in practice. Thus, it is used to understand and interpret present practice, i.e. how PMM is working in practice, why it is working the way it is and what the implications of this approach are to planning. Conversely, the evidence collected in the empirical part of this thesis will also be used to reflect on developments in the broader context⁵. For the purpose of this study five areas have been selected which are used at the *macro* level of the investigation (these issues are dealt with in more detail in Ch. 2):

- political ideologies and governmental agendas;
- public sector context;
- planning system context;
- state restructuring and governance; as well as
- governmentality, knowledge and power.

³ For example, in the sense that policies represent solutions to identified planning problems in line with defined planning objectives.

⁴ This can include the extent to which a regional strategy affects decisions which are taken at lower levels (e.g. policies in a local plan, development control decisions, actions of other actors).

⁵ That is, the evidence collected on PMM in regional planning is used to reflect on some of the theories around the broader context, for example, to what extent PMM in regional planning is part of the reforms to the public sector, to what extent the evidence collected on PMM supports theories about the rescaling of the state or about the relationship between knowledge and power (see below and Ch. 2).

First, political ideologies and governmental agendas form an important element of this broader context. Planning has never been a purely technical exercise but needs to be understood also as a political process which is strongly affected by politics and political ideologies (cf. Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 1997, 2000, Allmendinger and Thomas 1998a, Ambrose 1986, Griffiths 1990, Pennington 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 1996a, 2002, Thornley 1993). The concern here is how political ideologies have shaped the political agendas of governments and how these ideologies and agendas have affected planning. This includes governments' attitudes towards planning, the role and purpose they attach to planning, and how this affects the shape and functioning of the planning system. The study therefore seeks to understand PMM in regional planning in the light of political ideologies and governmental agendas. The questions concern the extent to which PMM in regional planning has been affected by, and is an expression of, those ideologies and agendas.

Secondly, PMM in regional planning is placed into its public sector context. Traditionally planning has been a state activity or public service which operates in a particular politico-administrative framework. Therefore attention needs to be given to the role of the state in the provision of services and the way in which the public sector is organised and run (cf. Ferlie et al. 1996, Flynn 2002, Hood 1998, Horton and Farnham 1999a, Imrie 1999, Leach et al. 1994, McLaughlin et al. 2002, Pilkington 1999, Pollitt 2003, Rose and Lawton 1999). By putting regional planning into its public sector context the study investigates how reforms to the public sector have affected regional planning and the practice of PMM, and to what extent PMM can be interpreted as being a part of wider processes of public sector reform.

Thirdly, regional planning is just one of the tiers in the British planning system, each of which has its particular function and relation to other levels in the planning hierarchy. Therefore PMM in regional planning needs to be analysed within the legal, organisational and policy framework of the British planning system (cf. Glasson 1978, Cullingworth and Nadin 2002, Rydin 2003a). This relates to issues around what planning is about, how it should be conducted, and what the objectives, tools and processes of planning are. It also concerns the relationship and interplay between the different levels of the planning system and how this has changed over time. The study therefore examines how PMM in regional planning fits into the planning system in Britain, how this wider planning framework has affected the introduction and functioning of PMM, and to what extent PMM is a part of broader processes of recent planning reform (cf. DTLR 2001a, Great Britain 2004a, Haughton and Counsell 2004, Marshall 2004, ODPM 2004a, Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

Fourthly, attention is being paid to debates around processes of restructuring and rescaling of the state (e.g. Allmendinger 2003, Brenner 2004a, Brenner et al. 2003a, Jessop 2002, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Peck and Tickell 2002, Ward and Jonas 2004). On the one hand, these debates relate to how state activity and administrative and political power are distributed between different governmental tiers. On the other hand, the debates are concerned with the distribution of responsibilities for, and powers in, policy

making and service provision between different sectors, in particular between the public and the private sectors. Furthermore, there are questions about the driving forces behind these processes of state restructuring, the role of the state in these processes and its influence in shaping this restructuring. Against this background, the study investigates how processes of state restructuring relate to the introduction and practice of PMM in regional planning, and the extent to which PMM in regional planning can be interpreted as part of these wider processes of state restructuring.

Finally, PMM in regional planning is being analysed in relation to concepts of governmentality, knowledge and power. PMM can be understood as a planning tool or governmental technique which, as such, was designed to shape the activities of those involved in and/or affected by regional planning in a particular way (cf. Dean 1999, Foucault 1991, Miller and Rose 1990). From this perspective, it is important to analyse the intentions behind the introduction and design of PMM as a governmental technique, how this technique is applied in practice and whether it has the intended or different effects. Closely linked to this are approaches which interpret the application of planning tools as attempts at creating rationality and knowledge which are used to justify particular arguments or decisions (cf. Counsell and Haughton 2003a, Murdoch and Abram 2002). This connects to debates around the social construction of knowledge and rationality, and the ways in which actors construct and mobilise knowledge and rationalities to achieve particular goals (cf. Flyvbjerg 1998, 2001, Murdoch and Abram 2002, Rydin 2003b). It also relates to the relationship between knowledge and power, and how knowledge can be both a source of power and shaped by the play of power (Fairclough 2001, Flyvbjerg 1998, Forester 1989, Richardson 1996). Against this background, the study investigates how PMM is used as a governmental technique to construct a certain rationality and knowledge, how knowledge is applied in, and shaped by, regional planning processes, and what influence knowledge has in decision-making as opposed to other factors.

Altogether the *macro* level covers a broad range of themes. Although this raised issues in terms of the scope of the study, the rather wide approach was deemed necessary to acquire a more complete understanding of the practice of PMM. As a substantial amount of literature already exists for each of the individual themes, this study concentrates on filtering out key issues in this broader context which are relevant to the research topic. These *macro* level themes essentially serve as spotlights which are used to illuminate the practice of PMM to assist in analysing and explaining that practice. In doing so, they complement the issues identified at the *micro* level and help to develop the fuller explanation of the functioning of PMM which is required for making recommendations for both policy and practice. As described earlier, a more detailed description and discussion of the individual components of the conceptual framework is provided in Part Two.

1.4 Research design and methodology

The research design and the development of a methodology for the study was guided by the aims and objectives of the research and the conceptual framework (cf. de Vaus 2001). In terms of research design a case study approach has been adopted as this seemed to be the most suitable approach given the nature of the research object and the aims and objectives of the research (cf. Yin 2003: 5-9). First, the research is not only interested in describing the practice of PMM in regional planning but also in understanding and explaining that practice. Secondly, the new regional planning system is a contemporary phenomenon which has continued to develop throughout the research, and which needs to be investigated in its real world context. By using a case study approach attention can be paid to the detail of PMM in regional planning practice and to the context in which the system operates. Information about the context can be used to understand and explain the research object and, quite importantly, the circumstantial conditions underpinning the state and development of the research object (Flyvbjerg 2001: 136). Finally, the case study approach allows investigation of the selected case(s) in detail, drawing on a variety of sources of evidence and, as a result, developing a deep understanding of the subject and the relationships, processes and outcomes it entails (Yin 2003: 8).

For a number of reasons the decision was made to investigate the operation of PMM in two case study regions. One of the objectives of the research is to disclose and explain any differences and similarities in the functioning of PMM between different English regions. Earlier studies suggested that, despite being placed in the same legal and national policy framework, there are marked variations in the way the British planning system operates in different localities (Brindley et al. 1989, 1996). These variations are understood as a result of how the national framework is applied locally and the way in which the application is shaped particularly by the economic and ideological context. In a similar vein, recent work on regional planning identified geographical variations in the way central government intervened in the regional planning process which has also led to different practices across the English regions (Haughton and Counsell 2004). As geographical variation seems to be one of the characteristics of planning in Britain the use of two case study regions can help to discover and explain differences and similarities. Furthermore, looking at more than one region allows a broader insight into the practice of PMM through comparison of different cases. This also helps to develop greater confidence in the findings and improves the basis for making generalisations about the functioning and implications of PMM (cf. de Vaus 2001, Yin 2003). However, given the need to investigate each of the cases in sufficient detail, while at the same time keeping the study feasible, two regions have been selected as case studies.

In selecting the case study regions the aim was to select cases which, at first glance, showed a high level of variation (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001: 79). Ideally, the two regions should have different characteristics in terms of the local circumstances and the issues facing regional development and planning. For example, in applying the typology developed by Brindley et al. (1996), one of the cases could be a region which faces

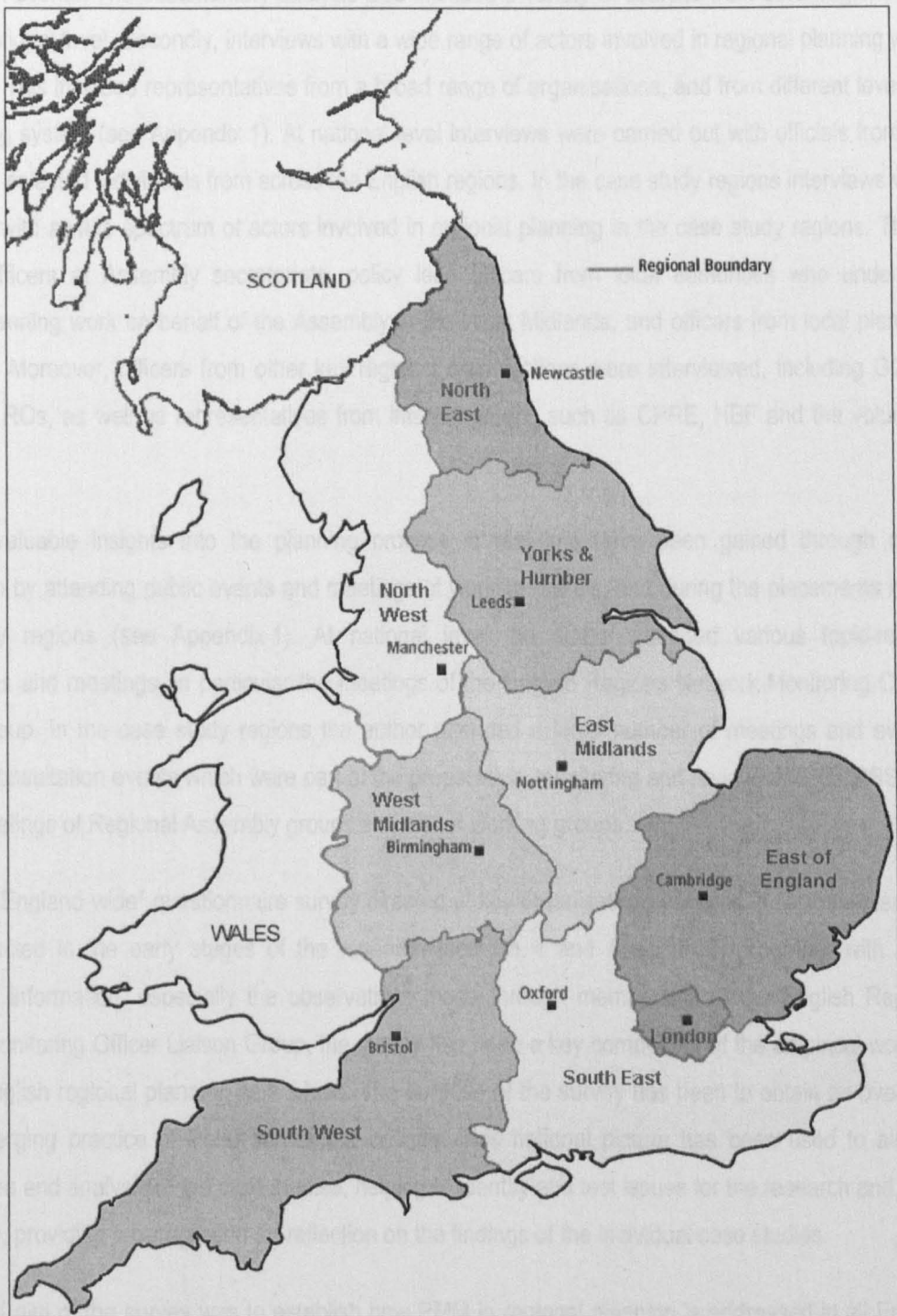
growth pressures, whereas the other case could be represented by a region in which urban decline and regeneration are of key concern. In addition, the regions should be at different stages in regional planning process and vary in terms of the way in which the requirements of the new system are being addressed. On this basis, two regions have been selected for this study, the South East of England and the West Midlands (see Figure 2).

The South East of England can be generally characterised as an area with extraordinary growth pressures. It has also been one of the first regions in England to finalise a revision of RPG following the publication of PPG11 in October 2000 (cf. GOSE et al. 2001). Moreover, the South East has been the first English region to undertake a series of partial RPG reviews since the publication of the last full revision in early 2001. As the region also started another full review in 2003 it appears to offer a good example of the continuous planning process envisaged in PPG11. In contrast, the West Midlands region could be described as an area in need of urban regeneration. It was also the last region in England to complete an RPG revision after the publication of PPG11 (cf. GOWM 2004). Unlike the South East of England, the West Midlands had not completed any partial RPG review at the time of writing but had only started with a partial revision in early 2005. On the other hand, the West Midlands has been a frontrunner in relation to other aspects of the new regional planning model. The region produced an RPG monitoring report as early as in 2000 (WMLGA 2000a) and developed an implementation framework for the emerging RPG in 2001/2002 (GVA Grimley and ECOTEC 2002). In sum, the selected regions seemed to exhibit differences in terms of the practice and context of regional planning and thus appeared to constitute suitable case studies for the research.

Although issues about the representativeness of the findings have already been addressed by selecting two apparently differing cases, the particular arrangements of this research offered the possibility to further improve the representativeness and to help in drawing general conclusions. The ESRC/ODPM collaborative studentship provided unique access to information which allowed monitoring of the situation in the other English regions and on developments at national level throughout the course of the research (see below). This information has been used to put observations made in the case study regions into a national perspective, and to inform the generalisation of the findings.

The empirical information used in this study has been drawn from a number of different sources with a view to improving the validity of the findings and conclusions of the research ('triangulation', cf. Robson 2002: 174, Yin 2003: 97-101). Two factors have been particularly helpful in the process of data collection. First, the author was given the opportunity to spend some time in both of the case study regions, being based at the RPB secretariats. This facilitated very good access to actors involved in regional planning, to meetings and events as well as to a wide range of documents. Secondly, throughout the course of the research the author attended the meetings of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group which is a group of representatives from each of the RPBs and staff from the Office of the Deputy

Prime Minister (ODPM), the central government department responsible for planning⁶. As a result of this, unique access to information about the national level and from across all of the English regions has been gained.



Source: author

Figure 2: Map of the English regions and case study areas

⁶ When New Labour came to power the responsibility for planning became part of the new Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). In subsequent government reshuffles the planning function was transferred first to the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) and from May 2002 rested with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Another restructuring saw the creation of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in May 2006 which since then has been responsible for planning. The great bulk of the research was carried out before this latest change and therefore the text refers mostly to the ODPM as the Department responsible for planning at the time of the research.

Altogether the empirical material has been drawn from four main sources. First, a wide range of documents has been analysed over the period of the research. This included a variety of documents from the case study regions such as RPGs/RSSs and related documents, and documents from meetings and consultation events. The documentary analysis also included a variety of sources from other regions and from the national level. Secondly, interviews with a wide range of actors involved in regional planning were conducted. This included representatives from a broad range of organisations, and from different levels of the planning system (see Appendix 1). At national level interviews were carried out with officials from the ODPM and selected individuals from across the English regions. In the case study regions interviews were conducted with a wide spectrum of actors involved in regional planning in the case study regions. These included officers at Assembly secretariats, policy lead officers from local authorities who undertake regional planning work on behalf of the Assembly in the West Midlands, and officers from local planning authorities. Moreover, officers from other key regional organisations were interviewed, including GORs, RDAs and ROs, as well as representatives from interest groups such as CPRE, HBF and the voluntary sector.

Thirdly, invaluable insights into the planning process in real-time have been gained through direct observation by attending public events and meetings of working groups, and during the placements in the case study regions (see Appendix 1). At national level the author attended various topic-related conferences and meetings, in particular the meetings of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group. In the case study regions the author attended a large number of meetings and events, including consultation events which were part of the preparation, monitoring and review of RPGs/RSSs, as well as meetings of Regional Assembly groups and officer working groups.

Finally, an England-wide⁷ questionnaire survey directed at key organisations involved in regional planning was conducted in the early stages of the research (see Ch. 4 and Appendix 2). Together with other sources of information, especially the observations made through membership of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group, the survey has been a key component of the empirical work on PMM in English regional planning as a whole. The purpose of the survey has been to obtain an overview of the emerging practice of PMM across the country. This national picture has been used to aid the investigation and analysis of the case studies, helping to identify and test issues for the research and, very importantly, providing a background for reflection on the findings of the individual case studies.

The central aim of the survey was to establish how PMM in regional planning is addressed in all English regions and to identify differences and similarities in current regional practice. While the primary focus of attention was on regional planning, the survey has also been used to obtain a concise overview of strategy making, implementation and monitoring in closely related fields. This work was applied to compare

⁷ Excluding London, see Chapter 4.

practice in the regions and, more importantly, to provide further insights which help to explain and develop PMM in regional planning. Therefore, the survey also covered strategy making, implementation and monitoring activities in the field of regional economic planning (in form of the RDAs) and current arrangements for data and information management in the English regions (in form of the ROs).

The research started in early 2003 and followed the regional planning process up until mid 2006. The bulk of the empirical data collection (especially as regards interviews, direct observations and documentary analysis) took place in 2004 and early 2005 although developments in the case study regions, and at national level have been followed until mid 2006.

1.5 Summary and outline of the study

This chapter has described the background, aims and objectives of the study. It has also outlined the conceptual framework which has directed the theoretical and empirical elements of the research. Moreover, the design and methodology of the investigation have been described (see Figure 3). Part Two of the thesis establishes the theoretical foundations of the study and further develops the conceptual framework. Chapter 2 elaborates the *macro* level of the investigation and places PMM in regional planning into the broader context in which it operates. In Chapter 3, the *micro* level is discussed in greater depth, including a more detailed description of the PMM model enshrined in government policy and guidance, as well as theories of PMM and strategic spatial planning. The empirical element of the investigation is covered in Part Three. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the practice of PMM in regional planning across the English regions. This is followed by detailed accounts of the two case studies in Chapters 5 and 6. Finally, Part Four brings together the empirical work and the theoretical background. Chapter 7 provides a comprehensive synthesis and analysis of the results of the research, and Chapter 8 presents conclusions, reflections and recommendations for improved policy and practice of PMM.

PART ONE – Background and Research Approach

Chapter 1 – Introduction

- Background
- Aims and objectives of the study
- Conceptualising 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM) in regional planning
- Research design and methodology

PART TWO – Theoretical-conceptual Framework

Chapter 2 – The context of regional planning

- Political ideologies & governmental agendas
- Public sector context
- The planning system in England
- State restructuring & governance
- Governmentality, knowledge & power

Chapter 3 – 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in regional planning

- Regional planning in England
- Government policy on PMM
- Theoretical underpinnings of PMM
- The 'plan' element of PMM
- The 'monitor' element of PMM
- The 'manage' element of PMM

PART THREE – Empirical Investigation

Chapter 4 – 'Plan, Monitor and Manage': Practice across England

- Arrangements for planning in the regions
- The 'plan' element
- The 'monitor' element
- The 'manage' element
- PMM 'As a whole': Expectations and early experience

Chapter 5 – 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in the West Midlands

- Planning & governance background
- Overall approach to PMM
- The 'plan' element
- The 'monitor' element
- The 'manage' element
- Overarching implications of PMM

Chapter 6 – 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in the South East of England

- Planning & governance background
- Overall approach to PMM
- The 'plan' element
- The 'monitor' element
- The 'manage' element
- Overarching implications of PMM

PART FOUR – Analysis and Conclusions

Chapter 7 – Synthesis and analysis: Pulling it together

Part 1 – The practical dimension of PMM

- Overall approach to PMM
- The 'plan' element
- The 'monitor' element
- The 'manage' element
- Overarching implications of PMM

Part 2 – Placing PMM into a wider context

- Political ideologies, governmental agendas and planning
- Planning and public sector reform
- State restructuring & the planning system
- Governmentality, knowledge & power in planning

Chapter 8 – Conclusions, reflections and recommendations

- The trajectory of PMM in regional planning so far
- Possible ways ahead

Source: author

Figure 3: Structure of the thesis

PART TWO – Theoretical-conceptual Framework

2 The context of regional planning

This chapter establishes the context in which PMM in regional planning operates which for the purpose of this study is referred to as the *macro* level of the investigation (see 1.3). It relates to factors in the broader framework of regional planning that affect the functioning of PMM and that help to examine and explain the practice of PMM. Five areas have been identified which seem to offer valuable perspectives from which to conceptualise and investigate the practice of PMM in regional planning. First, the chapter discusses political ideologies and governmental agendas in Britain which are of particular relevance to the research. As planning can be understood as a public service it is then placed into its public sector context. This is followed by an overview of the British planning system and the context it provides for PMM in regional planning. After that the current interest in regions and regional planning is approached in the light of debates about restructuring and rescaling of the state. Finally, the chapter links PMM in regional planning to theoretical concepts of governmentality, knowledge and power.

For the purpose of this study each of the five fields is discussed only briefly and references to existing literature are provided for fuller accounts on each of the matters raised. The chapter concentrates on identifying factors in each of these areas which can be considered particularly relevant to regional planning and especially to the operation of PMM. These factors function as 'spotlights' in that they are used as analytical tools to throw light on the practice of PMM from different yet interconnected angles. As such, they have been applied in the empirical part of the research to examine, understand and explain the practice and implications of PMM. In addition, the empirical findings are used to reflect on some of the debates in these contextual areas (see in particular Ch. 7).

2.1 *Political ideologies and governmental agendas*

Planning cannot be seen as a solely technical, non-political activity but operates instead in a specific political context, and as such is affected by political ideologies and political agendas. Therefore the introduction and operation of PMM in regional planning also needs to be analysed with regard to its political and governmental context. There are at least two issues at hand: what are the impacts of political ideologies and the political agendas of successive governments on planning that are relevant to PMM? To what extent is the introduction and functioning of PMM affected by, and an expression of, this politico-governmental context?

This section provides an overview of the ideological and political context of planning in Britain. In doing so, it focuses on issues around the relationship between state, market and civil society, prevalent attitudes towards state intervention and planning, as well as governmental priorities and policies which are of

particular relevance to spatial development and planning. As some of the current developments in planning can be traced back to changes introduced by successive governments the following overview describes how the politico-governmental context has developed over the past 25 years. For structuring purposes a somewhat crude distinction is being made between the last era of Conservative governments (1979-1997) and recent Labour governments (1997 to date). However, in addition to identifying differences between the eras the aim is also to highlight any continuities that can be observed across this 25 year period.

2.1.1 The legacy of the Conservative era

Libertarian theory and New Right ideology provided the ideological basis of the Conservative governments under Margaret Thatcher in the late 1970s and 1980s (Adams 1998, Pennington 2000, Sorenson and Day 1981). Key elements of these ideological principles were an emphasis on 'choice' and 'freedom' of the individual and the promotion of a liberal market order. Under the primacy of market rules liberalised markets were to determine patterns of production and consumption (Johnson 1991, Thompson 1990). This included a reliance on private sector activity in the provision of goods and services, which led to an extensive programme of privatisation and other changes in public service provision (see below). Great importance was also attached to the economy and economic competitiveness which entailed a drive towards the liberalisation of the economy and a reduction of the regulatory 'burden' on markets and business (Jackson 1992, Thompson 1990). The Conservative governments believed in the rule of law through which centrally defined laws and regulations form a framework that provides a high level of freedom and certainty for individuals and market activities (Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

These Libertarian and New Right ideas underpinned political thinking and rhetoric under Thatcher and strongly affected the policies and activities of her governments. These effects will be illustrated in more detail below in relation to the public sector and the planning system in Britain. Although the significance of the changes introduced by the Thatcher governments can hardly be underestimated, they appeared to be more radical in their rhetoric, whereas actual implementation of stated ideological beliefs was in practice more ambiguous. Some proposals did not have the intended effects and others were not implemented fully, for example, due to local resistance and changing broader political, economic and social circumstances (Flynn 2002, Marsh and Rhodes 1992). The Conservative governments under John Major introduced some policy changes or different emphases, among other things, against the background of the negative consequences of the unconstrained play of market forces and the emerging environmental agenda (Thornley 1993). Overall there was, however, a large degree of continuity of the fundamental ideological beliefs and governmental agendas such as privatisation and deregulation between the Thatcher and Major governments (*ibid.*; see also below).

As far as the attitude towards the state is concerned the Conservative governments were highly sceptical of state intervention and in favour of market solutions and the reduction of state control (Horton and Farnham 1999b, Hughes 2003, Sorenson and Day 1981). In what has been termed a period of 'roll-back' neoliberalism, governments pursued the 'active *destruction and discreditation* of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions' (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384, original emphasis). The direct provision of some services by the state, such as public sector house building, was cut back significantly and greater emphasis was placed on the provision of services through private channels (Flynn 2002, Horton and Farnham 1999b, Rydin 2003a). The state, however, still had an important role to perform, albeit that its regulatory power was redirected to achieve essentially neoliberal goals (Peck and Tickell 2002). The notion of 'The free economy and the strong state' (Gamble 1994) captures how economic liberalism was blended with an appreciation of an authoritarian state whose activities are geared towards supporting the operation of free markets. As for planning this implied it should assist the market-driven system, for example, by reducing uncertainty through the designation of land uses, mediating land use conflicts or dealing with the undesired consequences of unrestrained economic growth (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 1997, Rydin 2003a, Sorenson 1983).

Another aspect that should be mentioned concerns the relationship between different governmental tiers. The Thatcher governments were highly suspicious of local government and felt it was a barrier to the implementation of central government policy. As a result there was a continuous quest for centralisation of policy making and control, together with a reduction of local discretion (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 1997, Allmendinger and Thomas 1998b). While central government tightened its control over lower levels, e.g. through its legislative powers, policy steering and fiscal controls, local authorities and executive agencies were made responsible for the delivery of centrally prescribed priorities. This trend towards 'authoritarian decentralization whereby various decisions were devolved to lower-tier or quasi-governmental organizations but with strong central controls and reserve powers' (Rydin 2003a: 59, see also Thornley 1993) continued with similar vigour during the Major era.

2.1.2 The New Labour era

The ideological code of New Labour under Tony Blair was the idea of a 'Third Way' (Blair 1998, Giddens 1998, 2000). This brought together elements from different ideological perspectives, most importantly neoliberalism and social democracy. It sought a new balance between economic growth and social justice, and between market determination and state provision (Driver and Martell 1998). The approach has also been characterised as being less ideological or theoretical and more 'pragmatic', focusing on 'what works' to achieve desired outcomes, and being less concerned about the way in which those outcomes are attained (Blair 1996, Powell 2000, Sanderson 2002, 2003). Although there has been a marked shift in the political rhetoric compared to the Conservative period, several commentators have noted that it is not

always simple to pin down what the 'Third Way' means in practice and how it differs from the previous era (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000, Gray 2004, Rydin 2003a, Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

On the one hand, there are areas in which significant distinctions from its Conservative predecessors exist. The New Labour government has shown more interest in the social dimension and issues around social justice and social inclusion (Giddens 1998). An emphasis on individual freedom, rights and duties has been mixed with an appreciation of community as a base for action (Levitas 2000, Rydin 2003a). There has also been a concern for more joined-up government, partnership working and community involvement (Bevir and O'Brien 2001, Rhodes 2000). On the other hand, despite such differences there is also a high degree of continuity between the Conservative and New Labour governments (Hall 2003). Flynn (2002: 59) argues that 'On balance, the preferences that were labelled a 'third way' seem to be mainly a continuation of the older, Conservative policies' (see also Gray 2004, Hall 2003, Horton and Farnham 1999c). There seems to be significant continuity in terms of policy direction, in particular a continuing pursuit of neoliberal ideas and the paramount importance attached to economic concerns. Under an apparent 'neo-liberal consensus' (Horton and Farnham 1999b) the New Labour governments carried on with activities in support of economic growth, private enterprise and market solutions. This included measures in the fields of labour market and fiscal policy as well as further deregulation. Akin to the Conservatives' attempts at extending 'consumers choice' the Blair governments have aimed to introduce markets or 'contestability' into the public sector (Hindmoor 2005, Wintour 2005). There has been a subtle yet significant shift from a period of 'roll-back' neoliberalism towards one of 'roll-out' neoliberalism with a focus on 'the purposeful *construction and consolidation* of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations' (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384, original emphasis).

New Labour's attitude towards the role of the state has been described as being less ideological and more pragmatic (Blair 1996, Horton and Farnham 1999b). Under the notion of 'what works' state intervention is accepted as long as it serves the achievement of overall objectives. The state is to 'enable' in that it puts in place the conditions in which individuals and business can rely as far as possible on themselves (Bevir and O'Brien 2001). This implies that the state does not primarily provide services itself but rather creates the opportunities for provision through other channels such as self-reliance and the private and voluntary sectors (Driver and Martell 1998, Levitas 2005, Peck 2001). In turn, the state also has an 'enforcing' function in that it aims to ensure social justice. On the whole, however, the Blair governments have continued the programme of privatisation and marketisation, including the introduction of internal markets in the public services and competition between private and public sectors (Gray 2004, Rydin 2003a, Wills 2004).

In terms of the relationship between different levels of government there has again been a significant degree of continuity but also obvious differences between New Labour and the Conservatives. Especially during its early years in office the Blair government pursued a distinct programme of devolution and

regionalisation (see 2.4.2 and Ch. 3 for more detail). This gave greater powers for policy making and implementation to Scotland, Wales and to a lesser extent Northern Ireland. Within England, however, the transfer of power to the regions has been much more limited (cf. Sandford 2005, Tomaney and Mawson 2002). The arrangements in England still very much follow the overall pattern of a continuing centralisation of budgetary control and policy direction along with a decentralisation of responsibilities for policy implementation (Belfiore 2004, Gray 2004, Hall 2003, Power 2000). In a similar way as under the Conservatives, central government control over lower levels seems to have continued to rise after 1997 as will be illustrated for the public sector and the planning system below.

2.2 Public sector context

Against the background of the ideological and politico-governmental framework this section describes the public sector context in which the planning system operates. Planning has traditionally been an activity of the state and thus has been affected by wider developments in the public services. Therefore attention needs to be paid to the role of the state in the provision of services and how the public sector is organised and managed. The main concern here is what effects changes to the way the public sector is run have had on planning. In particular, to what extent is the introduction and operation of PMM in regional planning a result of, and affected by, these wider changes in the public sector? In what follows some of the key characteristics of the public sector in Britain are highlighted. This relates to the role of the public sector in the provision of public services, the relationship between the public and private sectors, the way in which the public sector is organised and resourced as well as the tools and mechanisms used in the management of the sector. Wherever possible particular reference is made to how this affects the planning system. Again, as some of the current developments in planning can be traced back to changes in the public sector introduced over time the account that follows describes the development of the sector over the past 25 years. For structuring reasons the same distinction is made between the last era of Conservative governments (1979-1997) and recent Labour governments (1997 to date). Similarly, differences will be highlighted, alongside any continuities that can be observed over the course of the period.

2.2.1 The legacy of the Conservative era

During the 'roll-back' neoliberal period, successive Conservative governments sought to drastically alter the role and shape of the public sector. In line with their agenda of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation the Thatcher and Major governments pressed towards a shift from the provision of services by the state to a situation where the state creates the conditions for provision through private and voluntary channels (Cope 1999, Horton and Farnham 1999b). This led to extensive privatisation of public services, including of nationalised industries and council housing, outsourcing of tasks and increased

competition with providers from the private sector. Under the banners of the 'entrepreneurial' state (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) and particularly the 'New Public Management' (Ferlie et al. 1996, Lane 2000, McLaughlin et al. 2002, Rhodes 1991) a substantial reworking of thinking and practices in the public sector was set in motion. In essence, the 'New Public Management' aims to apply private sector management thinking and methods to the public sector. In pursuit of increased 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and 'economy' of service provision the public sector was reorganised and new modes of control and management were established (Flynn 2002, Hood 1991, 1998, Hood et al. 1999, Pollitt 1993, 2003). This comprised, inter alia, the introduction of market mechanisms and 'market testing', the contracting out of services, performance related pay and other ways of managing employees. One of the key elements of this new approach to public management which is also of major significance for the research topic has been the increased use of performance appraisal and performance management as mechanisms of control over the public sector (see below and Ch. 3).

The above mentioned trend towards centralisation of control was a continuing theme in the public sector during the Conservative reign (Flynn 2002). The concept of 'New Public Management' involved a separation of 'steering' and 'rowing' between different governmental tiers (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Central government concentrated on a steering role by defining the policy direction and setting the regulative and financial framework for lower levels. In turn, the responsibility for service provision was decentralised to local authorities, government agencies and service providers outside the public sector (Cope 1999). This decentralisation went hand in hand with extended central control over those responsible for the delivery of services. Central government tightened its regulative, policy and fiscal control over local authorities and other bodies. In the words of Hood et al. (2000: 286) 'the public management revolution produced increasing formality of controls' and 'there was an explosion of formal auditing associated with declining trust in professional self-regulation'. This has resulted in a reduction of local autonomy and greater dependence upon central government grants.

A variety of mechanisms were introduced by central government to steer the local delivery of services. Among these were the definition of duties, policy and advice, budgetary controls, supervision and in some cases also direct intervention in local decision making and implementation. Initiated under Thatcher, the 'performance'-driven orientation of the public sector was eagerly pushed forward during the Major era (Pollitt 2003, Rogers 1999, Rouse 1999). This approach is based on appraisal and management systems which are geared towards improving the 'performance' of service delivery bodies (see Ch. 3 for details). Central government departments set standards and targets for the envisaged level of service provision which local authorities and other agencies are expected to meet. Bodies such as the Audit Commission have been established to monitor the achievement of these targets. These monitoring activities are linked to incentive structures in which the level of funding and autonomy of service providers depends on their 'performance' against the targets.

2.2.2 The New Labour era

New Labour came into office with a commitment to 'modernise' government and the public services (Great Britain 1999). The government embarked on a programme of 'renewal' of the public sector to bring about 'joined-up' policies, a focus on the 'users' of services and 'efficient' and 'high quality' public services. As will be shown in the following, the New Labour governments have indeed taken many steps in pursuit of the 'modernisation' agenda. In many ways, however, rather than turning away from the policies of its predecessors there appears to be much continuation or 'acceleration' of the public sector reform initiated by Conservative governments (Ahmad and Broussine 2003, Horton and Farnham 1999c). In particular, a 'consensus on management' (Flynn 2002) has emerged in that 'New Public Management' thinking continues to provide the recipes for running the public sector (Newman and McKee 2005). The Blair governments have carried on with the privatisation of services and the introduction of markets or 'contestability' across the public sector (Gray 2004, Hindmoor 2005, Wintour 2005). There has also been an even stronger emphasis on ensuring transparency and accountability of the public services. The scope and depth of inspection and auditing have been extended and systems of target setting and monitoring are used even more widely to assess the performance of public sector bodies (Boyne et al. 2002, Power 1994, 1997, Hood et al. 1999; see also below). This has gone hand in hand with New Labour's concern for 'delivery' in the public services. Especially since the second term in office the implementation of policies and the provision of services in line with performance targets has been high on the agenda of the Blair governments (Brooks 2000, Performance and Innovation Unit 2001).

In terms of the organisation of the public sector, there has been a continuing separation of 'steering' and 'rowing'. The responsibility for the provision (or 'delivery' as it is now called) of services has been further decentralised to local authorities and actors outside the public sector (Ayres and Pearce 2005). In turn, there has been increasing centralisation of control of the public sector and less room for local discretion under New Labour (Ashworth et al. 2002, Hood et al. 1999, 2000, Lowndes 2002). Central government has tightened fiscal and regulatory constraints on public bodies, in particular through extended use of target setting, auditing and performance appraisal systems such as the 'Best Value' and 'Comprehensive Performance Assessment' schemes (see Ch. 3 for details). The Treasury and others have been keen to promote a 'cash and targets' approach (Hindmoor 2005), where the funding of service providers depends on their 'performance' against output targets within specified timetables. Moreover, New Labour has placed more emphasis on 'networks' and 'partnership working' in an attempt at getting actors from outside the public sector increasingly involved in the provision of services (Bevir and O'Brian 2001, Hood 1998, Radcliffe and Dent 2005, Rhodes 1997). As a result of these partnership arrangements, decentralisation and privatisation of services, a plethora of policy initiatives and bodies now exist which has raised concern about the continued fragmentation of the public sector (Hall 2003, Ayres and Pearce 2005).

Overall, therefore, there appears to be much continuity between the Conservative and New Labour eras in terms of the role and organisation of the public sector. Although there are different views on the effects or 'success' of the last 25 years of public sector reform the cumulative impact of these changes has been significant (cf. Dent et al. 2004a). The size of the public sector has been reduced, mainly as a result of privatisation, but there has also been some reduction of employment in local government (Flynn 2002, Hughes 2003). Furthermore, the application of the 'New Public Management' has had significant effects for the way the public sector is run. The implications vary, however, between and within different parts of the public sector (Dent et al. 2004b, Dent and Barry 2004). Common features that can be found across the sector are the emphases on 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' of service provision, accountability of those 'delivering' public services, and increased central control through the imposition of new demands and targets. But different sectors and professionals have responded differently to the 'New Public Management' movement, having to accept the general principles but reconfiguring and adapting them during the implementation (Dent et al. 2004b).

As far as planning is concerned, views on the impact of public sector reform vary too. Some argue that the direct impact of local government reform on planning has been less significant than elsewhere in the public sector. Cullingworth and Nadin (2002: 66) conclude that 'in contrast to most local services, planning as a statutory and regulatory function has been somewhat protected from the pressure for change'. Nevertheless, they further identify a growth in the contracting out of planning tasks, especially those of a more specialist nature, such as environmental impact assessment where the in-house capabilities of local planning authorities have been limited. On the other hand, others hold the view that public sector reforms have had a more substantial impact on planning. Campbell and Marshall (2005) state that professionalism has been strongly challenged by managerialism as the organisational norm in planning authorities. Furthermore, changes to the role and organisation of local authorities and planning (see 2.3) mean that nowadays many planners work outside the fields of forward planning and development control which has led to a shortage of qualified planners in what used to be (and still are) core fields of planning (Thomas 2004). Moreover, Imrie (1999) identifies a number of implications of the 'new managerialism' for planning. These include a redrawing of the relationship between central and local government with tighter central control over policy content and operation of the planning system, e.g. through setting service standards and publishing policy guidance, and decentralisation of the responsibilities for implementation to local planning authorities. The planning system has also been subject to the 'performance-based orientation' of the public sector (ibid.). In particular, systems of contracting, target setting and auditing, such as the Best Value initiative, appear to have shifted attention to procedural and efficiency issues (ibid., Carmona and Sieh 2004b). These matters will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.3 The planning system in England

Regional planning is just one level in the hierarchy of the planning system in Britain. The role, content and practice of regional planning is to a significant extent determined or affected by other levels. Therefore attention needs to be paid to the legal, policy and organisational framework provided by the British planning system. In particular, an issue is how this framework, and changes to it over time have affected the introduction and functioning of PMM in regional planning. In what follows the role of planning in Britain, its objectives and the way the planning system operates are described. This includes a brief discussion of the role of, and interplay between, different levels in the planning hierarchy, as well as the instruments and resources in planning. A more detailed introduction to the present arrangements for regional planning in England follows in Chapter 3. Again, for structuring reasons a distinction is made between the last era of Conservative governments (1979-1997) and recent Labour governments (1997 to the present). Differences will be highlighted as well as any continuities that can be observed across this period.

2.3.1 The legacy of the Conservative era

Much has been written about the impact of Thatcherism on planning. In the view of some commentators the changes introduced by the Thatcher governments came close to an abolition of planning in its traditional sense (Ambrose 1986). Others argue that, although planning came under strong attack in the governments' rhetoric, the changes were less radical in reality (e.g. Cullingworth and Nadin 1994, 2002). 'While there has been a sustained attack on planning from the New Right, this has been vigorous in its rhetoric but rather less drastic in its actions. Planning has certainly changed, but it has not yet been eliminated' (Brindley et al. 1989: 1). As described earlier, the Conservative governments were not against state intervention and planning per se but against 'market-critical conceptions of planning' (ibid.: 2; also Tewdwr-Jones 1996b). Though not being abolished, the planning system was reshaped and re-oriented so that it would work more strongly in support of the market and facilitate rather than restrict development (Allmendinger and Thomas 1998b, Thornley 1991, 1993).

The Thatcher governments were in favour of market-led approaches to spatial development and urban regeneration and the correct role of planning was seen as supporting the operation of market mechanisms. Along the lines of the White Paper *Lifting the Burden* (HM Government 1985) the development process was deregulated and planning controls were reduced, for example, through the introduction of Enterprise Zones, Simplified Planning Zones and Urban Development Corporations (Allmendinger 1997, Imrie and Thomas 1999). The 1980s also saw the (recurring yet temporary) end of strategic planning in Britain, culminating in the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council (Breheny and Hall 1984, Flynn et al. 1985, Leach and Stewart 1984, Roberts et al. 1999), and a turn towards a more project-led approach to planning. As the emphasis was on facilitating

development attention shifted towards the development control process. The Thatcher governments were concerned about the 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' of planning and took measures to 'speed-up' the planning system (Tewdwr-Jones and Harris 1998). The timetable for the preparation of development plans was cut, e.g. by scaling down the requirements for public consultation and survey work, and reduced timeframes for handling planning applications were introduced (Rydin 2003a). In addition, the weight of development plan policies in taking development control decisions was trimmed down, whilst greater importance was given to other material considerations. Consequently, the system provided more scope for challenging the decisions of local planning authorities, the number of appeals rose dramatically and as a result local authorities had difficulties in controlling development effectively (Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

Under the Major governments of the early 1990s there was both a continuation of Thatcherite policies and new emphases in the approach to planning (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 1997, Allmendinger and Thomas 1998b). Attempts at 'speeding-up' planning processes continued, as did the overall view that planning should assist the operation of market mechanisms. However, in the face of growing environmental concerns, and development pressures resulting from the deregulated planning framework, the later Thatcher governments and especially the Major governments came to hold a more 'pragmatic' view of planning, valuing its role in coordinating economic development, ameliorating environmental concerns and in addressing the negative impacts of development. A 'plan-led' development control system was introduced which assigned more weight to development plan policies (Allmendinger and Thomas 1998b, Tewdwr-Jones 1994a, 2002). Moreover, significant developments in government policy on planning occurred as central government issued a series of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) from the late 1980s onwards (Quinn 1996, 2000; Tewdwr-Jones 1994b, 1997). The late 1980s also saw the reintroduction of strategic planning at the regional level through the publication of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) documents (Baker 1998, Roberts 1996).

In terms of the role of, and interplay between, different levels of the planning system a centralisation of policy making and control and a reduction in local discretion took place under the governments of both Thatcher and Major (Ambrose 1986, Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 1997, Thornley 1991, 1993). On the one hand, the removal or relaxation of planning regulations limited the scope for local government control (Thornley 1991, 1996). The decreased status of local plan policies prior to the 'plan-led' system amplified this trend. On the other hand, central government extended its control over planning policies and decisions made at lower levels (Baker 1999, Tewdwr-Jones 1997). This included direct intervention into local planning as central government called-in development control decisions, decided on planning appeals and introduced special planning zones and Urban Development Corporations. Very importantly, the PPG system provided strong direction for local plans and planning decisions, even under the plan-led system which at first glance appeared to allow more local discretion (Tewdwr-Jones 1994b).

2.3.2 The New Labour era

When New Labour took office in 1997, planning was rather low down on its priority list and the new government had apparently given little thought to what it wanted planning to look like (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000). Early on, New Labour's ideas for planning were restricted to issues about the speed and efficiency of planning processes and the potential for deregulation. It was not until the publication of *Modernising Planning* in January 1998 (DETR 1998a) that the government's intentions took a little more shape. The proposals which had been drawn up under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott and planning minister Richard Caborn did not amount to a rounded vision for planning and were criticised for focusing on small-scale amendments and being overly concerned with procedural issues (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

In several ways there seemed to be some degree of continuity as *Modernising Planning* 'sealed the Labour government's rather passive inheritance of the New Right's planning policy legacy' (Tewdwr-Jones 2002: 73). Like its Conservative predecessors, the New Labour government showed a somewhat sceptical attitude towards an activity perceived as being too bureaucratic, and a barrier to economic growth. From early on, the Treasury in particular and other voices from outside the planning ministry called for a relaxation of planning controls to make it more 'business-friendly' (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002). This attitude was reflected in *Modernising Planning* and a subsequent policy statement (DETR 1999a) which to a large extent dealt with procedural aspects, in particular the 'speed' and 'efficiency' of planning processes, but said little about substantive issues or outcomes of planning.

Although the same procedural emphasis underlay early ideas about planning at the regional level (DETR 1998b), regional planning became an area in which government thinking developed more fundamentally (DETR 1999b, 2000b). There was still much concern with procedure, such as the proposal for a reduced timetable for the preparation of RPG, but this went further, covering issues about increasing stakeholder involvement and regional 'ownership' of RPG. Moreover the new PPG on regional planning (DETR 2000b) formally introduced the concept of 'spatial planning' into government policy. This entailed a broadening of the scope of regional planning, which was to expand beyond land use matters, and pay greater regard to integration between different policy fields (see Ch. 3 for details).

However, a critical assessment could suggest that despite the significance of these developments in regional planning they may have represented only an interlude, or at least only a confined area in which government thinking about planning tried to open up new horizons. By 2001 the pendulum seemed to swing back as the Treasury and also the Prime Minister's office took greater interest in planning matters. In response to pressure from the business sector (e.g. CBI 2001) there was growing concern in government about the perceived negative effects of planning on business and economic growth. The publication of a Green Paper in December 2001 (DTLR 2001a) marked the start of a substantial overhaul

of the planning system in England. The main thrust of these proposals followed a business-friendly agenda, including a 'speeding-up' of the planning system and a reduction of the levels of planning, essentially the abolition of structure plans (cf. ODPM 2002b, 2002c). Most of the proposed changes became law in May 2004 (Great Britain 2004a) but this did not mark the end of the reform of the planning system in England. Issues around the provision of housing and, in particular, housing shortages in the Greater South East and their impact on the economy had shot up the government's agenda. In an attempt to increase housing supply the government initiated the Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM 2003a) to directly promote house building in the Greater South East as well as the *Review of Housing Supply* (Barker 2004). What has become known as the 'Barker Review' has resulted in a whole raft of government initiatives, including proposed changes to the organisational and procedural arrangements for planning (ODPM 2004b, HM Treasury and ODPM 2005c) and a revision of planning policy guidance (ODPM 2004a, ODPM 2005d, 2005c).

During the second half of 2005 it became clear that the housing agenda is likely to change dramatically the way planning deals with the provision of housing which could even mean the 'abolition' of the PMM approach to housing (Planning Resource 2005; see Ch. 1 and particularly Ch. 3). As part of its response to the Barker Review a new PPS on housing has been proposed which among other things would give more weight to housing market concerns in the provision of new housing (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005b, 2005c, ODPM 2005a, 2005b). In late 2005, however, the New Labour government's drive to reshape the planning system reached again a new dimension when it launched 'Barker II', the *Barker Review of Land Use Planning* (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005a, 2006). The debate about housing supply and its economic effects was expanded into a more fundamental concern about the impact of planning on economic growth and prosperity. Once again the main concern of the New Labour government seems to be about creating a planning system that above all supports the economy, and the approach that is being taken focuses again on issues of 'efficiency', 'speed' and 'flexibility'.

By now it should have become evident that under New Labour central government influence on planning policy and practice has been considerable. The centralised nature of the British planning system which had already grown in the Conservative era has continued or even increased under New Labour (Marshall 2004, Quinn 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002). Many of the changes introduced since 1997 have continued elements of centralisation of control and, effectively, a decrease in local discretion (Allmendinger 2003, Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002). Policy guidance has remained a crucial mechanism for central control over planning policy and procedures at lower levels. There has also been an increase in the publication of 'advice' and 'good practice guidance' by central government which provide effective tools for directing local priorities and practices (see 2.5). Moreover, the organisational arrangements for planning, including the scrutiny role of Government Offices for the Regions (GORs) and the powers held by the Secretary of State, further contribute to a high degree of central government

control (Baker 2002, Musson et al. 2005). As for regional planning there are mixed views about how the changes introduced since 1997 have affected the role and power of different tiers in the planning system (see Ch. 3 for more details). Many academic commentators, however, argue that the new arrangements for regional and sub-regional planning tend to privilege central government and reduce local democratic control (Baker and Roberts 2004, Haughton 2005, Haughton and Counsell 2004, Marshall 2002a, 2004, Roberts and Baker 2004).

2.4 State restructuring and governance

Regions and regional planning have a chequered tradition in Britain as the regional level has enjoyed periods of fairly high popularity and others when it was basically nonexistent (Breheny 1991, Glasson 1992, Thomas and Kimberley 1995, Sandford 2005, Wannop 1995, Wannop and Cherry 1994). Under the notion of a 'New Regionalism' (Keating 1998) growing attention has been paid to the regional level of policy making and implementation since the 1990s. In the view of many authors these developments at regional level are part of wider processes of restructuring and rescaling of the state. These processes relate to the distribution of state activity and powers between different levels and different sectors. Against this backdrop this study investigates the extent to which recent developments in regional planning and, more specifically, the PMM approach have been affected by changing state forms and, in turn, to what extent regional planning is part of these processes of state restructuring.

As much has been written about regions and regional planning in Britain over the years only a short overview of the history and present situation of regions in England is provided at this point. References to fuller accounts are made throughout the text and more detail about the current arrangements for regional planning is given in Chapter 3. For structural reasons a crude distinction is again made between the Conservative era (1979-1997) and New Labour (1997 to date). For the reasons given above descriptions of the Conservative period, and of the changes introduced by New Labour, are only sketched very briefly here. Rather the discussion concentrates on interpreting recent developments at the regional level and placing them into wider debates about the re-distribution of state activity and the forces that lie underneath these processes of state restructuring.

2.4.1 The legacy of the Conservative era

Earlier sections of this chapter have already hinted at processes of state restructuring and rescaling which occurred during the Conservative era. One of the key features was the centralisation of control on the one hand, and a decentralisation of responsibility for implementation on the other (Flynn 2002). Central government increasingly used its legislative, policy and fiscal powers to set a tight framework which limited the scope for local discretion (Hood et al. 1999, 2000). Under Thatcher another shift between scales took

place when the government abolished the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council and transferred their functions largely to district and borough level (Breheny and Hall 1984, Flynn et al. 1985, Leach and Stewart 1984, Roberts et al. 1999). The regional level re-emerged slowly during the late 1980s and early 1990s, both in institutional terms (e.g. creation of GORs) and as regards policy making (e.g. publication of RPG), though the arrangements and distribution of power were more centralised than before the abolition of the strategic level in the mid 1980s.

As far as the distribution of power and responsibilities between different sectors is concerned the Conservative era saw the turn towards a neoliberal approach which gave greater importance to the private sector. The state 'rolled-back' significantly its function as a direct provider of services (Peck and Tickell 2002) and instead promoted market solutions to the provision of goods and services. This led to a greater reliance on the private sector and the privatisation of public services (Horton and Farnham 1999b). Although the state retreated to some extent as a service provider it retained much of its control function and powers. These were used, however, predominantly to promote the unrestricted operation of markets and private sector activity (Cope 1999, Gamble 1994).

2.4.2 The New Labour era

It has been mentioned earlier that particularly during its first term the New Labour government engaged in a programme of devolution which has given greater powers for policy making and implementation to Scotland, Wales and to a smaller extent Northern Ireland (e.g. Keating 2005, Mitchell 2003, Pilkington 2002, Trench 2004, 2005). In England, the direct election of a mayor and an assembly have increased London's self-governing capacity. In the English regions outside the capital the transfer of power has been much more limited and a distinct form of arrangements has developed since 1997 (Sandford 2005). Even though directly elected regional assemblies appear to be off the agenda for the time being, following the referendum in the North East in November 2004, there remains a substantial concentration of institutions and resources for policy making and implementation at regional level. Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Regional Assemblies⁸ continue to exist alongside strengthened GORs and other regional organisations and networks. In all eight English regions outside London the Regional Assemblies have been designated as RPBs, and as such take the lead in preparing RSSs (see Ch. 3 for more detail about the arrangements for regional planning in England). At least 60 per cent of the membership of each Regional Assembly is made up of elected members from local councils, while at least 30 per cent are drawn from other regional actors such as business, environmental or other voluntary groups.

⁸ Throughout this document the term 'Regional Assembly' is used to refer to the voluntary Regional Chambers which exist in all English regions outside London. In those cases where the text refers to the directly elected regional assemblies proposed by the government in May 2002 (HM Government 2002) this will be made clear by adding the words 'directly elected'.

However, clear differences remain compared to the Celtic nations and London. 'Regionalisation has been primarily administrative within England: outside of London, there has been no devolution of *political* authority to a regional tier. Instead, a fragmented collection of executive and spending powers located within a range of national agencies has emerged. These agencies have become surrounded by a scaffolding of networks, forums and regular relationships between regional actors' (ibid.: 2, original emphasis). These network-based arrangements in the English regions operate within, and seem to be part of, the above mentioned pattern of continuing centralisation of fiscal and policy controls and decentralisation of the responsibility for policy implementation (Belfiore 2004, Gray 2004, Hall 2003, Power 2000).

Thus during both the Conservative and the New Labour era processes of rescaling and restructuring of the state have taken place which are important in developing an understanding of the current system and practice of regional planning in England. The remainder of this section therefore sheds some more light on the processes of reshaping of state power and state activity, the driving forces behind these changes and their implications for regional planning. The starting point here is Jessop's work (1999a: 356) which has identified a transfer of state functions 'upwards, downwards and sideways'. More specifically Jessop (1999b, 2000a) has suggested three interrelated processes are at play, namely, 1) a 'denationalisation' of the state in which state capacities and functions are moved from the nation state upwards and downwards, 2) a 'destatisation' of politics which comprises a shift from government to governance, and 3) an 'internationalisation' of policy regimes.

Much has been written about changes in the territorial organisation of administrative and political power and intervention into social and economic processes (cf. Brenner 2004a, Brenner et al. 2003a). The term 'reterritorialisation' has been used to describe the transfer of state power and state activity between different spatial scales (Brenner 1999). From the 'denationalisation' perspective this involves particularly a transfer from the nation state to supranational (e.g. European Union) and sub-national (e.g. regional, city-regional or local) levels (Jessop 1999b, also Brenner et al. 2003b). However, the nation state continues to be important and influential albeit by using more indirect forms of control. Although numerous functions and responsibilities have been shifted to other levels and agencies, the nation state retains a steering function through its regulative, fiscal and policy making powers (Peck 2001). In what has become (or remained) a multi-scalar state system the nation state exists alongside, and interacts with, other levels (Swyngedouw 2000). And whilst the role of the nation state and its institutions has been rearticulated they continue to have a key function in defining the roles of, and relationship between, different levels as well as in regulating socio-economic processes (Morgan 2004). In other words the nation state keeps a steering capacity through its 'strategic selectivity' in that it has the power to initiate, design and regulate the distribution of state activity (Jessop 1990, 1999b, 2000b, also Jones 1997).

As regards devolution in Britain under New Labour the transfer of responsibilities and particularly of powers to the English regions has been comparably small (Sandford 2005). Even in Scotland and Wales central government retains direct control in key policy fields such as transport and energy (Allmendinger et al. 2005a). It has therefore been suggested that while the regional level has gained in importance overall this does not relate so much to the 'power to decide' which 'remains largely located at the national and supra-national scales in the EU' but rather to the 'power to transform' (Morgan 2004: 872). Whereas policy design remains largely at national and supra-national levels, the responsibility for policy delivery has been decentralised. The recent reform of the planning system in England and other initiatives like the Sustainable Communities Plan have also resulted in a shift of power between scales, towards the regional and in particular the national level (Allmendinger 2003, Marshall 2004).

Besides changing scales, the restructuring of the state also involves changes in the roles of, and relationship between, different sectors. The notion of 'destatisation' refers to shifts from a state-centred view of governing to a system of governance (Jessop 1999b). There are many accounts about the emergence of governance systems (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003a, Kooiman 2003, Rhodes 1997, Swyngedouw 2000, 2005), including numerous contributions in planning (Cars et al. 2002, Healey 1997a, Herrschel and Newman 2002, Salet et al. 2003, Vigar et al. 2000). In essence, governance can be understood as 'institutional arrangements of 'governing' which give a much greater role in policy-making, administration and implementation to private economic actors on the one hand and to parts of civil society on the other hand in self-managing what until recently was provided or organised by the national or local state' (Swyngedouw 2005: 1992). The role of the state has decreased relative to the involvement of non-state actors, public-private partnerships and interagency networks.

The rise of governance does, however, not imply a direct replacement of government nor a linear shift of power from government to governance. The state is not abolished but it transforms in order to adapt to changing economic, social and political circumstances (Brenner et al. 2003b, Cooke and Morgan 1998). Although the state relies increasingly on cooperation with other actors in implementing its policy it still plays a significant role. In drawing on Jessop's work, MacLeod and Goodwin (1999: 522, original emphasis) conclude that 'governance still operates in the shadow of government'. The state keeps the power to set or at least strongly shape the arrangements, rules and agendas of governance networks, for example, through regulatory and fiscal mechanisms. The creation of governance systems therefore represents to some extent an active strategy of the state in which power is transferred to non-state agents 'that can be trusted', i.e. to actors or institutions which are likely to follow the objectives of the state (ibid.).

Different explanations have been put forward as regards the forces which lie beneath the processes of state restructuring and rescaling (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Ward and Jonas 2004). It has been suggested that economic globalisation and the change from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production rendered the nation state unable to regulate the economy in traditional ways, and required new forms of

state organisation and operation (Ohmae 1995, see also Brenner et al. 2003b). The emergence of regions and city-regions has also been accredited to the changing requirements of the post-Fordist economy which is thought to rely on regional clusters and networks (Morgan 1997, Scott 1998, Storper 1997). However, these approaches may be criticised for tending to overstate the role of such 'external' determinants. Swyngedouw (1997) has argued that historically spatial scales have never been 'fixed' but that institutions and processes of governance are actively constructed. In particular, the state appears to assume a key role in shaping the processes of restructuring. National states should not be regarded as 'passive recipients of some global logic' but rather as 'active agents' in reorganisation processes (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999: 506). The state draws on its 'strategic selectivity' in order to maintain and reaffirm its influence under changing economic, social and political conditions (Jessop 1990, 1999b). The steering capacity of the state is employed to actively shape the distribution of power, responsibilities and resources between sectors and, in the sense of 'spatial selectivity', across spatial scales (Jessop 2000b, Jones 1997, MacLeod 2001, Peck 2002, Swyngedouw et al. 2002). In this light processes of restructuring and rescaling can be explained to a significant extent as 'spatial strategies' of the state in an attempt to retain influence in changing circumstances (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Brenner 2003a).

Even though the state clearly plays a crucial role, the question remains to what ends it uses its steering capacity. In this respect especially the relationship between state reform and neoliberalism has attracted growing attention (see various contributions in Brenner and Theodore 2002). In many cases the rearticulation of state space appears to be driven to a significant extent by neoliberal ideas and a concern for the operation of free-markets and international competitiveness. The reorganisation of sub-national governance systems, for instance, in many European regions and metropolitan areas has aimed particularly at promoting the economic competitiveness of those areas (Brenner 2003b, 2004b, Ward and Jonas 2004). Peck and Tickell (2002) take the view that neoliberalism should not be understood as an external logic which inserts change from the outside but much more as a political strategy of active 'neoliberalisation' of space and state form. On this note the creation of the RDAs in England has been considered as an attempt of the nation state to increase above all the economic performance and competitiveness of its territories (Gibbs and Jonas 2001, Jones 2001, Tewdwr-Jones and Phelps 2000). However, despite the importance of the economic competitiveness 'imperative', the reorganisation of the state has also been shaped by other factors such as fiscal and political considerations or issues of legitimacy and social control (Ward and Jonas 2004, see also below).

As for planning, Brenner (2004a: 227) argues that 'spatial planning has become a major institutional arena in which the rescaling of state space has been promoted, in significant measure as a means to facilitate the mobilization of locational policies within major urban regions'. In many European countries planning systems and spatial development policies have been reshaped to support economic growth and international competitiveness, especially of globally competitive cities and city-regions, for example

through the provision of infrastructure such as transport and housing and the reduction of planning controls. These changes have been orchestrated largely by the national level and, in effect, have removed or bypassed restrictive planning rules and local democratic control (Brenner 2004a). In relation to the recent reform of the planning system in England Allmendinger (2003: 327) suggested that 'the doctrine of the current government amounts to a presumption that planning regulations and development plans are a burden on competitiveness and economic growth and should be reduced'. There are several examples of central government intervention into planning and development processes too, particularly in the Greater South East, which appear to be motivated predominantly by economic concerns (e.g. Allen et al. 1998, John et al. 2002b, Peck and Tickell 1995, While et al. 2004).

The above accounts have effectively taken a rather structuralist, top-down perspective which emphasises the importance of wider structuring forces such as economic structure and state strategy in the reorganisation of the state. Although this view seems to be very useful in understanding processes of state restructuring it has been broadened by an appreciation of agency-based, bottom-up considerations which give greater attention to the influence of local circumstances (Brenner 2003a, Haughton and Counsell 2004, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Peck and Tickell 2002, Ward and Jonas 2004). From this perspective the actual configuration of the state in a particular locality is also the product of political struggles between different forces and interests for control over state space and policy. The state has to work with and through other agencies and needs to reconcile competing interests and pressures which exist in a specific locality. On the one hand, this suggests that the state will attempt to use its strategic selectivity to put in place state forms which help to deal with these interests and pressures (Haughton and Counsell 2004). On the other hand, it means that the reorganisation of the state is contingent on specific historic, geographical, socio-political circumstances and therefore outcomes may well be different in particular places at particular times (Brenner et al. 2003b, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999).

2.5 Governmentality, knowledge and power in planning

The final section of this chapter brings in another theoretical dimension which offers a useful approach to investigating and interpreting the practice of PMM in regional planning. Foucault's concept of governmentality has been increasingly applied in social and political science to research ways of governing and the use of governmental tools as means of shaping the behaviour of actors. Governmentality therefore promises to give additional insights into the use and functioning of PMM. Closely related to this is the way in which knowledge is used in planning. One of the main justifications for introducing PMM has been the aim to make planning more 'evidence-based'. Therefore attention needs to be paid to the role of knowledge in planning, how it is produced and used in practice and how knowledge relates to issues of power.

2.5.1 Governmentality, governmental tools and planning

Foucault's governmentality concept provides an analytical tool for the study of government (Dean 1999, Foucault 1979, 1991, Miller and Rose 1990, Raco 2003). In a general sense government here refers to the way in which individual and collective behaviour is directed or, in Foucault's words, the 'conduct of conduct'. More specifically governmentality has been used to analyse how the state seeks to control the thinking and behaviour of actors. As a result of the processes of rescaling and restructuring, the state has to work increasingly with and through other actors, and mediate between competing interests. As the scope for direct control over these actors decreases, the state needs to complement mechanisms of direct control with more indirect ways of steering and mobilisation (Miller and Rose 1990). An important means is to draw on the 'self-government' or 'self-regulation' capacities of individuals and collectives (Dean 1999). The aim is to define specific ways of thinking and acting which once accepted and internalised by the target group become shared norms which direct the behaviour of actors. Such 'governmental rationalities' (Gordon 1991) which can include shared values, beliefs, goals, concepts, rules, vocabularies, procedures or techniques are used to 'normalise' ways of thinking and acting and thus 'to structure the field of possible action' (Dean 1999: 14).

'Expertise', especially in the form of technical and scientific arguments, constitutes an important persuasive power in the process of normalisation (Miller and Rose 1990). Reference to 'expertise' and 'knowledge' is widely accepted as the dominant mode of defining issues, objectives and the ways of achieving these objectives (Gottweiss 2003; see also 2.5.2). Therefore expertise plays a crucial role in providing 'legitimacy' in the normalisation process (Foucault 1991). In addition, a spectrum of 'governmental techniques' is employed to shape and normalise the behaviour of individuals and collectives. This refers to 'apparently humble and mundane mechanisms which appear to make it possible to govern: techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the invention of devices such as surveys and presentational forms such as tables; the standardization of systems for training and the inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; building design and architectural forms – the list is heterogeneous and is, in principle, unlimited' (Miller and Rose 1990: 8).

In planning governmentality has been applied to investigate planning practice and the use of particular planning approaches and techniques, for example, in the fields of planning for housing (Murdoch 2000, Murdoch et al. 2000, Murdoch and Abram 2002), sustainable development (Counsell and Haughton 2003a, Haughton and Counsell 2004) and urban policy (Imrie 2004, Raco and Imrie 2000). Planning tools such as sustainability appraisals and housing numbers can be understood as governmental techniques. At one level such tools are believed to 'rationalise' and 'de-politicise' planning processes by drawing on scientific methods and thus making decisions more 'objective' (Counsell and Haughton 2003a). At another level, however, the use of a particular planning technique shapes planning practices in a specific way.

Through the selection and definition of a planning tool those who select the tool and define its parameters draw the boundaries in relation to what issues are deemed important (and which are not), how issues are to be addressed (and how not) and what outcomes planning is to produce (and which not). 'Seen from this perspective, debates over the adoption and adaptation of planning techniques should be seen as not a dry discussion about 'neutral' mechanisms or technologies, but manifestations of how planning is constituted as a political subject, and how political objectives come to be incorporated within the techniques themselves.' (ibid.: 5).

The state frequently uses governmental techniques to define the terms of discourses and action in planning according to its preferred approach and objectives (Murdoch 2000, Murdoch et al. 2000, Rydin 2003b). As a means of 'political strategising' central government in Britain has used its strategic selectivity to shape planning debates by selecting and defining specific planning approaches and techniques (Haughton and Counsell 2004). The development of particular planning approaches and tools and their diffusion into practice can be achieved through several routes, for example, by permeating government policy, providing 'good practice guidance', setting up expert bodies and controlled pilot schemes (Counsell and Haughton 2003a). Through these practices the state attempts to align or 'discipline' the actions of other actors and to impose its preferred rationality onto the planning system (Murdoch and Abram 2002, also Murdoch 2000). However, the development and diffusion of planning techniques does not occur in a simple top-down process as different actors seek to champion, challenge, reject or reformulate the government's preferred approach (Counsell and Haughton 2003a, Haughton and Counsell 2004). There are 'normalising and counter-hegemonic tendencies' but in the case of the British planning system central government is in a powerful position to establish the terms, approaches and techniques of planning (Haughton and Counsell 2004: 203).

2.5.2 The use of knowledge in planning

It has been mentioned above that 'knowledge', 'expertise' and 'information'⁹ play an important role in our societies (Giddens 1990, Gottweiss 2003). This often implies 'scientific' knowledge and 'technical' or

⁹ At this point it seems necessary to clarify the terms 'information', 'knowledge', 'expertise' and also 'data' and how they are used in this study. Although the terms are frequently used interchangeably it has been pointed out that they are not synonymous (Bouthillier and Shearer 2002, Stenmark 2002, Wilson 2002). There have been many attempts at finding appropriate definitions but a blurred picture still remains. 'Data' is often described as simple observations and discrete facts which are somehow measurable or collectable (Wilson 2002), although others argue that there is no 'raw' data as its collection is already affected by cognitive processes (Tuomi 1999). 'Information' is characterised as being more structured and contextualised than data, in the sense that it is 'embedded in a context of relevance to the recipient' (Wilson 2002). Information is more tangible or 'factual' than knowledge in that it is seen as representing objects outside the human mind (cf. Stenmark 2002). 'Knowledge', in turn, involves more profound mental and cognitive processes; it is about comprehension, understandings, learning, experiences, interpretations, judgements and beliefs, including beliefs about what counts as 'truth' (cf. Bouthillier and Shearer 2002, Stenmark 2002, Wilson 2002). Different forms of knowledge have been distinguished, for example, 'collective' as opposed to 'tacit' or 'personal' knowledge which relates more to personal experience (Polanyi 1958, 1967). In this context the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term 'expertise' as 'expert opinion or knowledge, often obtained through the action of submitting a matter to, and its consideration by, experts'. After all, however, rather than having clear boundaries the terms data, information and knowledge remain intertwined and interrelated (Stenmark 2002). Being aware of the complicated nature of these terms, the crucial issues in the context of this study seem to be the degree of mental and cognitive processes involved and, in particular, the extent to which 'facts', 'data', 'information' or 'knowledge' are believed and accepted to count as 'true' (see 2.5.3).

'professional' expertise which are considered the basis of 'rational' thought and decisions (Campbell 2002, Campbell and Marshall 2005, Innes 2002). This has been linked to issues about legitimacy. For decisions to be regarded 'legitimate' they need to be the result of a 'rational' decision making process based on (scientific) knowledge or 'evidence' (Foucault 1991, Sanderson 2002, Rydin 2003b). In this respect the New Labour government has advocated the notion of 'evidence-based' policy making which has affected practice across a wide range of public policy areas (Davies et al. 2000, Sanderson 2002, 2003, Solesbury 2002). There are close connections between this and the 'modernising government' and 'what works' agendas and the drive towards promoting (and demonstrating) 'accountability' and improvement of public services (Great Britain 1999, National Audit Office 2001). Under the 'evidence-based' approach policy and practice are expected to be based on 'evidence' about 'what works' as solutions to identified problems. Research, auditing and performance monitoring are to be used to establish 'what works' and to provide accountability (Sanderson 2001, 2002). The concept of 'evidence-based' policy making has also been discussed in planning (see e.g. Böhme 2002, Campbell 2002, Healy 2002, Innes 2002) and has underpinned much of the recent and current reforms of the planning system in England, in particular the introduction and practice of PMM (see Ch. 3 for details).

On the one hand, 'evidence' or, as it is called in the remainder of this thesis, information and knowledge can provide valuable resources in policy making and implementation in that they can help to develop an understanding of the issues at hand and inform the development and implementation of possible solutions (Solesbury 2002). The use of information and knowledge can contribute to broadening policy debates, questioning the 'taken-for-granted' and showing alternative options (Sanderson 2003). It can help to avoid a 'ready, fire, aim' approach to policy making which is overly reactive, short-term and not informed by analysis and reflection (Innes 2002). On the other hand, there are also serious concerns about the (over)reliance on information and knowledge, the 'dark side' of such an approach and the reality of policy making and implementation (e.g. Fischer 1990, Flyvbjerg 2001). In particular, there are questions around the extent to which information and knowledge *can* provide a basis for making and implementing policy (i.e. the feasibility) and whether they *should* be the basis (i.e. the desirability) (Sanderson 2003).

In terms of feasibility there is a danger of adopting an overly simplistic view of the ability to understand the world and of neglecting the limitations of obtaining and using information and knowledge. The knowledge-based approach has practical limits, for example, resulting from the complexity of the issues involved (Sanderson 2002, 2003, Walker 2001; see also Ch. 3). Moreover it risks taking too general a view and not paying sufficient attention to the specifics of a situation in the sense of 'what works for whom and in what circumstances' (Solesbury 2002: 94). Public policy making is not just a purely technical exercise but also a political one (Albrechts 2003, Benveniste 1989, Fischer 2000, Johnson 1993). There is therefore a risk of ignoring the political and social context and power structures which shape policy making and implementation (Fischer and Forester 1993, Flyvbjerg 1998, Forester 1993, Majone 1989; see also 2.5.3).

There are also issues about the desirability of an 'evidence-based' approach. Besides the influence of political and other factors on policy making, there are also doubts about the very existence of 'exact', 'neutral' or 'objective' information and knowledge (Sanderson 2002, Toulmin 2001). Policy making and evaluation have also been characterised as deliberative activities in which different information, knowledge, arguments, values, interests, beliefs, interpretations and views are brought into the process (Etzioni 1968, Majone 1989). This raises fundamental questions about what is accepted to count as 'evidence' (and what is not), what and whose 'evidence' is used in the process (and what and whose is not) as well as what or who decides what 'evidence' is accepted, rejected, used and left out in the policy process (Böhme 2002, Flyvbjerg 1998, Sanderson 2003, Solesbury 2002; see below). Furthermore under the cloak of 'evidence-based policy' information and knowledge may be misused and lead to an approach closer to 'policy-based evidence' (Glees 2005). This refers to the selective use, omission and manipulation of information and knowledge in an attempt to legitimise or discredit particular views and proposals (Healy 2002, Sanderson 2002).

2.5.3 Knowledge, discourse and power in planning

The above discussion has already raised questions about the existence of a single 'truth' or body of knowledge. From a post-structuralist perspective 'facts' can mean different things to different people, in different contexts, in different institutional settings etc. (Fischer 2003, Forester 1989, Gottweiss 2003, Sandercock 1998). Thus social and political phenomena and problems are seen as being socially constructed, which means multiple knowledges and truths can exist at the same time, each of which contains an element of subjectivity. In policy making processes these different views and 'discourses' of what constitutes 'reality' compete with each other (Gottweiss 2003, Rydin 2003b). In this regard Foucauldian discourse theory has been employed to draw attention to the discursive practices through which meaning and knowledge are produced, challenged and disseminated in policy debates (Fairclough 2001, 2003, Hajer 1995, Richardson 1996, 2002). Here the policy making process is understood as a discursive struggle in which different actors seek to take control over meanings, knowledge and ultimately events and practices. Various mechanisms are used for the production, contestation and reproduction of discourses, including the definition of the terms of a policy debate, the inclusion and exclusion of certain issues or arguments from a discourse and the reference to (scientific) rationality or 'expert' knowledge as a source of legitimacy. Against this background it is important to consider the structures and practices which set the conditions of a policy discourse and which allow certain interpretations to become hegemonic, excluding other interpretations from the debate (Hajer 1995, Richardson 2002).

This, again, leads to some concluding remarks about the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power. It has already been highlighted that the reference to knowledge, in particular to 'scientific' or 'expert' knowledge, can constitute an effective source of power in policy debates. In the words of Flyvbjerg

(1998, 2002), 'knowledge is power' in that actors can use, reject or withhold knowledge to support particular arguments (see also Forester 1989, Innes 1988). By referring to 'knowledge', actors try to establish, challenge or reproduce the hegemonic discourse of policy debates. On the other hand, Flyvbjerg (1998, 2002) strongly advocates the view that, more importantly, 'power is knowledge' too. Power can be used to produce, withhold, challenge, reinterpret, support or oppress information and knowledge. Here power refers, for example, to the ability to initiate, design and control policy debates, to set agendas and terms of reference, to control the access of actors and knowledge to policy debates, and to take formal decisions in the policy making process. When different discourses seek to dominate a policy debate, the argument continues, it is the play of power which ultimately determines which of these discourses takes precedence.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter a contextual framework has been developed which constitutes the so-called *macro* dimension of the study. This dimension refers to factors in the wider context of regional planning which assist in conceptualising and investigating the practice of PMM. In particular, five areas have been identified that are used to examine, understand and explain the operation and implications of PMM in regional planning. First, political ideologies and governmental agendas in Britain have been discussed. Although there are differences between the Conservative and New Labour governments of the last 25 years, the high degree of continuity in key aspects is more striking. This includes an adherence to neoliberal ideas, a concern for economic growth and a state which works in support of market mechanisms and private sector activity. In relation to the attitude towards, and the practices in, the public sector there has been even more continuity over the past 25 years. Under both Conservative and New Labour governments policy making and control have become more centralised, whereas responsibilities for policy implementation have been decentralised to lower levels and executive bodies. This has gone hand in hand with an increase in central control through a range of 'New Public Management' techniques such as target setting, incentive structures as well as performance monitoring and management schemes. These changes in the public sector have also affected the planning system and show strong connections to the introduction of a PMM approach in regional planning.

In terms of the English planning system the emphasis on spatial planning and the promotion of planning at strategic level have been refreshing new impulses under New Labour. However, the growing influence of the Treasury, the Prime Minister's office and other New Labour ministers over planning and spatial development matters has shifted central government's agenda back to a narrower interest in planning. A critical view has become hegemonic as regards the impact of planning on economic growth and competitiveness, and there appears to be a strong bias towards a centrally controlled, 'speedy', 'flexible' and business-friendly planning system.

The discussion of the restructuring and rescaling of the state has described the transfer of state functions 'upwards', 'downwards' and 'sideways'. Although supra- and sub-national levels and other sectors have gained in importance relative to the nation state, the latter has retained a substantial steering capacity which it employs to shape reorganisation processes. In many cases, including spatial planning, this has been used in pursuit of neoliberal goals, such as to facilitate the operation of markets and international competitiveness. Finally, the chapter introduced the governmentality concept which promises valuable insights into the way in which governmental practices and techniques such as PMM are used to shape the behaviour of actors. As one of the main justifications for introducing PMM has been to make planning more 'evidence-based', the chapter has also highlighted the need to consider issues around the use, construction and power dimension of knowledge and information in planning.

3 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in regional planning

The previous chapter set out the broader context in which regional planning operates, and discussed factors which influence and can help to explain the practice of PMM in regional planning. For the purpose of this study this has been referred to as the *macro* level of the investigation. This chapter expands the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the research by describing what is called the *micro* dimension of the study. This relates to the practical nature of PMM, the characteristics of this approach to planning, its component parts and techniques as well as the arrangements for, and operation of, PMM. As outlined in Chapter 1 the practice dimension covers four aspects in particular, namely technical and methodological issues, organisational questions, issues about actors and power, as well as the substantive outcomes of PMM. These aspects have guided the development of the *micro* dimension of the conceptual framework and of the empirical work and also run through this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, it describes the practical background of PMM in regional planning by placing it into the regional planning system in England and by depicting the PMM approach introduced by the New Labour government (3.1 and 3.2). On the other hand, theoretical approaches to PMM and its component parts are discussed (3.3 to 3.6).

3.1 Regional planning in England

The previous chapter already provided a brief introduction to current institutional arrangements and the planning system in the English regions. Changes in regional planning and development in England since 1997 have also been discussed at length elsewhere (e.g. Baker et al. 1999, Marshall 2003, Mawson 2000, Murdoch and Tewdwr-Jones 1999, Roberts 2000a, 2000b, Roberts and Lloyd 1999, Sandford 2005, Stephenson and Poxon 2001, Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill 2000). Therefore only a brief description of the present arrangements for regional planning is provided here. This focuses on the instruments of regional planning, in particular Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs), and the organisational and procedural arrangements for planning in the English regions.

3.1.1 Instruments of regional planning

The publication of PPG11 on regional planning in October 2000 (DETR 2000b) aimed to achieve a shift from a land use planning approach to one of spatial planning. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) was to develop into a spatial strategy which goes beyond land use matters and integrates a whole range of issues such as housing, economic development, health, culture, energy and waste. Also, in order to promote integration, RPG was to incorporate a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). In the wake of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* (Great Britain 2004a) RPGs have been replaced by RSSs.

Through this the move towards a spatial planning approach has been re-emphasised. An RSS is to provide 'a spatial framework to inform the preparation of LDDs [Local Development Documents, see below], Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities' (ODPM 2004a: para 1.2). As 'a broad development strategy for the region for a fifteen to twenty year period' (ibid.: para 1.3) an RSS is to 'articulate a spatial vision' for the region and 'provide a concise spatial strategy for achieving that vision' (ibid.: para 1.7). With the introduction of RSSs more attention has also been paid to planning at sub-regional levels (ibid.: paras 1.13-1.15, see also ODPM 2003c). In relation to housing, for example, an RSS is to 'provide housing figures for individual districts or appropriate sub-regional housing market areas' (ODPM 2004a: para 1.5).

The 2004 Act also strengthened the status of RSSs (ibid.: paras 1.9-1.10). First of all, it instituted the abolition of county structure plans and Part 1 Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). In addition, local plans and Part 2 UDPs have been replaced with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and their component parts, the Local Development Documents (LDDs). In an important move the RSS has become part of the statutory development plan and as such possesses more weight in planning decisions at lower levels. LDDs, including minerals and waste LDDs, have to be in general conformity with the RSS. Furthermore, planning applications generally have to be determined in accordance with the RSS unless other material considerations take precedence. As regards other regional and sub-regional strategies such as Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs), Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) and Regional Housing Strategies (RHSs) there remains, however, a non-hierarchical 'two-way' relationship (ibid.: para 1.2) in that the RSS should 'be consistent with and supportive of' these other frameworks and strategies (ibid.: para 1.7). Finally, the 2004 Act and the related *Planning Policy Statement 11* place strong emphasis on the implementation (or 'delivery') and monitoring of RSSs (see 3.2.5). An RSS is to include an implementation plan which sets out how each of the policies is to be implemented, by whom and when. Under the 2004 Act monitoring has become statutory as RPBs are required to prepare Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs).

3.1.2 Arrangements for regional planning

The process for preparing, implementing and reviewing an RSS can be broken down broadly into four stages, i.e. the preparation of a draft RSS, an Examination-in-Public (EiP) stage, the finalisation of the RSS and the stage of implementation and monitoring (see Figure 4). The principal responsibility for preparing a draft RSS or draft RSS revision rests with the Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) which in all eight regions are the Regional Assemblies (see 2.4.2). The RPB has to prepare a project plan for the RSS revision which describes the issues to be covered in the revision as well as the arrangements and timetable for the revision process. The project plan needs to be agreed with the relevant Government Office for the Region (GOR) and is subject to public consultation. After that the RPB, in 'partnership' with

other actors, has to develop options and policies and finally publish a draft RSS revision. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which also meets the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) needs to be carried out as an integral part of producing the draft RSS. The publication of the draft RSS is followed by a period of formal consultation in which written representations on the draft RSS can be made. These provide a key input into the next two stages, the EiP and the finalisation of the RSS.

Source: ODPM 2004a: 17

Figure 4: Stages in the RSS revision process

At the EiP the draft RSS is discussed and tested before a panel which is appointed by the Secretary of State. The panel has to test the 'soundness' of the draft RSS in relation to its content and preparation

process (see 3.2.5). The matters which are considered and the participants at the EiP are selected by the panel in consultation with the RPB and GOR. Following the EiP the panel prepares a report which is a key consideration in finalising the RSS. The actual finalisation of the RSS remains in the hands of the Secretary of State who, through the relevant GOR, may propose changes to the draft RSS. After a period of formal consultation by written representation on any Proposed Changes the Secretary of State finalises and issues the RSS. Due to its content and status a range of actors is responsible for implementing the RSS although, as shown above, the level to which the RSS is binding on these actors varies significantly. It is the RPB's responsibility to monitor the implementation of the RSS and to prepare AMRs (see 3.2.5).

Government policy and guidance on regional planning stresses the importance of 'partnership working with regional stakeholders and community involvement' (ibid.: 2.17). To this end 'stakeholders and the wider public' should have opportunities to get involved throughout the RSS revision process (ibid.: 2.18). The RPB has to produce a statement of public participation which sets out how bodies and individuals were involved in the preparation of a draft RSS, the key issues that were raised and how those issues were considered in the production of the draft RSS. A wide range of mechanisms is proposed to facilitate such involvement during the preparation of a draft RSS, including written representations, consultation events and participation in steering and working groups. The EiP also provides the opportunity for more direct involvement in the process. During the later stages of the revision process, which are led by the Secretary of State, the scope for involvement is, however, much more limited and restricted mainly to the possibility of making written representations to the Proposed Changes to the draft RSS.

3.2 Government policy on 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

The notion of PMM entered policy debates in regional planning during the late 1990s and at the turn of the millennium became an official formula in the government's approach to planning. In what follows the background to the introduction of PMM and the development of government policy in this field are set out. This includes a detailed description of the purpose, elements and processes of PMM as established by the New Labour governments since 1997. As is shown below, official government policy needs to be distinguished to a certain degree from theoretical approaches to PMM which are discussed in the latter parts of this chapter.

3.2.1 From 'Predict and Provide' to 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

The early 1990s saw the re-emergence of regional planning in England with the introduction of RPG. Given the absence of strategic planning exercises and capacities prior to the preparation of RPG it may be of little surprise that early results of these efforts showed several weaknesses (Minay 1992, Roberts 1996). In particular the first RPGs were criticised for their narrow content, which was restricted to land use

matters, a lack of strategic vision and not being sufficiently regionally specific but rather reiterating national policy. Moreover, the arrangements for the production of RPG were subject to criticism. While local authority-led groupings prepared initial drafts in the form of 'advice', central government retained strong control over the content of final RPGs which in relation to housing, for example, led to significant tensions with local views (Baker 1998). In addition to the centralised nature of the process, there was concern about a lack of transparency and insufficient scope for debate and wider participation during early RPG exercises. However, as the coverage of RPG expanded across England some of these weaknesses in content and process were addressed (*ibid.*, Roberts 1996).

Ever since the introduction of RPG issues about the provision of new housing have been central to regional planning (Baker and Wong 1997). As RPG had a pivotal role in setting figures for the provision of additional housing and given the political tensions over levels of house building, especially in England's southern regions, RPG housing numbers and the way in which they were arrived at received much attention. The approach to planning for housing which was taken in many of the RPGs during the 1990s has been termed 'predict and provide' (e.g. Cullingworth and Nadin 2002). Housing figures would generally be based on longer-term household projections issued by central government and provision would be made in RPG for the anticipated demand for housing arising from these projections. Thus centrally established figures for housing demand would cascade down the planning hierarchy as lower levels had to follow and provide for the nationally established numbers (Murdoch 2000). The housing numbers in RPG were in a sense treated as being 'fixed' over the 15 to 20 year lifespan of the RPG document until the next revision of the guidance.

The 'predict and provide' approach came under increasing pressure during the second half of the 1990s. It was criticised for methodological reasons such as the underlying technical assumptions and the potential errors and uncertainties involved in forecasting the number of households (Baker and Wong 1997, Murdoch 2000). The approach gave undue weight to centrally established household projections which were largely extrapolations of past trends and also neglected local information and other policy considerations. More importantly, however, the 'predict and provide' approach came under attack amid growing political tensions over the level of new house building in England, particularly in the Greater South East (Breheny 1999, Cullingworth and Nadin 2002, Murdoch 2000). New household projections published in 1995 suggested an increasing demand for housing, especially in the south of England, a view that was supported by business interests. Simultaneously there was growing opposition to additional house building from local authorities, residents and environmental groups, again in particular in the Greater South East, and to what was considered an imposition of excessive house building levels on these localities by central government. This resulted in contentious debates over the level of house building that would be required (i.e. the 'need' for new housing) and that should/could be accommodated in a particular locality (i.e. the

physical and political 'capacity' for accommodating additional housing). These tensions were at the heart of the revision of RPG9 for the South East of England which took place from 1997 to 2001 (see Ch. 6).

In the face of fierce opposition to its approach to planning for housing, central government published *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (DETR 1998c) in which it proposed a shift away from 'predict and provide'. The new approach was to bring about a 'more flexible way' of, and a 'more responsive methodology' for, handling household growth and allow for 'a more bottom-up approach and greater sense of local ownership of the housing figures' (ibid.: para 25). The aim was to find a better balance between the 'need' for new house building and the 'capacity' of an area to accommodate it (DETR 1999c). The new approach to planning for housing, now called 'Plan, Monitor and Manage', was formally launched in March 2000 with the publication of revised PPG3 (DETR 2000a), and represented a cornerstone of the government's Proposed Changes to RPG for the South East which were published at the same time (DETR 2000c, GOSE et al. 2000). PMM was to allow a more 'flexible' and 'responsive' approach which reduced the relative weight given to longer-term household projections and promoted regular monitoring and review of housing need, capacity and provision at regional and local tiers (see 3.2.4 for details on PMM). By balancing need and capacity, reducing the binding nature of longer-term household projections and giving lower levels greater responsibility for establishing housing numbers the government's new approach was also an attempt to lower political tensions over new house building (Murdoch 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

3.2.2 'Modernising Planning' – Regional planning modernised?

The above discussion has shown that PMM emerged for the first time in regional planning debates during the late 1990s in relation to planning for housing. In parallel to these developments the government started work on a wider reform or 'modernisation' of planning (DETR 1998a, 1999a). Much of what was proposed related to procedural issues and reflected a concern with the 'speed' and 'efficiency' of the planning system (e.g. Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000, Tewdwr-Jones 2002). Planning processes were to become more 'open' and 'transparent' as well as to provide more scope for 'participation', 'stakeholder involvement' and decentralised 'ownership'. The most tangible proposals were restricted for the most part to procedural issues, including the introduction of the 'Best Value' system into planning which was to increase the speed, efficiency and effectiveness of planning services (DETR 1999a; see 3.2.3 for details).

The 'modernisation' initiative also made specific proposals for regional planning (DETR 1998b). To some extent these followed the above concerns with procedure and speed in, for example, that the process of preparing RPG was to be made more 'transparent' and 'inclusive' and to allow for greater 'regional ownership' of RPG. However, the proposals went beyond such procedural aspects and set out more fundamental changes to regional planning. These included the above mentioned shift from land use to spatial planning and the expanded scope and content of RPG. More importantly for this study the

proposals heralded the application of key elements of the PMM approach which was developing in the field of housing to regional planning as a whole. This related particularly to the use of quantified targets and an emphasis on monitoring and review. More attention was to be paid to 'monitoring the implementation of RPG' and RPBs should make 'much more systematic use ... of regional and sub-regional targets that can be directly related to the achievement of land-use policies' (ibid.: para 6.12).

Furthermore 'regular monitoring reports of progress in relation to these targets and indicators should be produced, possibly on a bi-annual basis, resources permitting' (ibid.: para 6.13). As far as the review of RPG is concerned the proposals rejected fixed five-yearly review cycles and suggested that 'it may be more appropriate, depending on the extent to which meaningful targets and indicators can be developed, for reviews to be triggered in part or in whole by the results of this monitoring' (ibid.). In addition, the process of producing RPG was to be 'speeded up' and the government proposed a 'target' or 'indicative' timetable for the main stages of the RPG preparation. These proposals were a crucial step towards what this study terms the 'mainstreaming' of PMM in regional planning which is described in more detail below (see 3.2.4). Before that another strand of developments needs to be considered which has also had a bearing on the shape and practice of PMM in regional planning.

3.2.3 Performance management and the planning system

The 'Modernising Planning' agenda was, to some extent, part of a wider 'modernisation' of government in Britain (Allmendinger et al. 2005b, DETR 1998d, DTLR 2001c, Great Britain 1999; see also 2.2.2). Of particular importance in this context are the move towards a 'performance'-based orientation of the public sector, and the extended use of performance management and monitoring systems (e.g. Audit Commission 1999, 2000, HM Treasury et al. 2001). Central elements of these systems are the setting of performance targets and performance-related funding of governmental bodies and agencies (e.g. Hindmoor 2005, Hyndman and Eden 2002). The Treasury especially has used such mechanisms to steer policy making and implementation in the public sector, for example, through the introduction of Public Service Agreements (PSAs) (HM Treasury 2004). Under the PSA regime governmental bodies and agencies are required to commit themselves to achieving specific targets for the provision of services within a specified timescale and the funding of those organisations depends to a certain degree on the realisation of these targets. These performance-based mechanisms also apply to local authorities in the form of local PSAs (DTLR 2001d, ODPM 2003d) and so-called Local Area Agreements which are contracts between local and central government on agreed levels of service provision (ODPM 2005e).

The New Labour government introduced two schemes for performance monitoring and performance-related funding which apply particularly to the local level. One of them is the Best Value regime which aims at improving the 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and 'economy' of local service provision (DETR 1998d). Local councils are required to prepare five year Best Value Performance Plans which need to include local

targets for the provision of services as well as performance standards set by central government. Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are used for regular external monitoring undertaken by the Audit Commission of the 'performance' of councils against the targets and standards. For 2005/6 a total of 94 BVPIs existed covering a whole range of local services and including planning, housing, transport and environment (ODPM 2005g). Local councils which perform well against the targets receive more funding and/or freedom and flexibility while 'poor' performance is sanctioned by cuts in funding or other remedial action. Specific BVPIs and performance standards exist for planning services (see Figure 5) and the funding of local planning authorities, including the allocation of the Planning Delivery Grant¹⁰ (PDG), depends on their 'performance' against these indicators and standards (ODPM 2004c, 2005h)¹¹.

In addition to the Best Value regime, local councils are subject to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scheme which brings together a range of existing performance information, including Best Value, and additional information and is linked to a system of rewards and sanctions (Audit Commission 2005, Broadbent 2003). There have been proposals that CPA and other performance managements systems should be extended and replace other strategies and planning documents or requirements of local government (DTLR 2002, ODPM 2002d). However, further changes in this field may occur as a White Paper on local government due in autumn 2006 is expected to propose the replacement of CPA with a new performance management framework (Planning Resource 2006b). Finally, performance management and monitoring systems are presently developed for planning within the 'Planning and Regulatory Services Online' (PARSOL) project which is part of the local e-government initiative (PARSOL 2004). These systems are designed to enable the electronic use of performance information in planning services and also include online applications for data collection and provision for monitoring land use planning (TerraQuest Solutions 2005). On the whole there has been a continuous rise in the use of performance management and monitoring in local government which has affected planning services and, as shown below, the shape and functioning of PMM in regional planning.

¹⁰ Allocations of the 2004/5 Planning Delivery Grant were based on the performance of planning authorities against 'development control targets, plan-making performance, housing delivery in areas of high housing need, location of Enterprise Areas and performance at appeal' (ODPM 2005h: para 1.11). Against the background of the importance attached by the New Labour government to increased house building (see below and Ch. 2) proposals emerged in March 2006 that local authorities which support the government's plans for the delivery of housing numbers could received higher PDG allocations (Planning Resource 2006a).

¹¹ Further details on the application of Best Value in planning are provided below in 3.3.3, 3.4.2 and 3.5.

BVPI Code	BVPI Description	Target/Standard ¹²
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	(Local targets)
BV 109a	Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks	60%
BV 109b	Percentage of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	65%
BV 109c	Percentage of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks	80%
BV 179	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	(Local targets)
BV 200a	Did the local planning authority submit the Local Development Scheme (LDS) by 28th March 2005 and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme?	(Yes/No)
BV 200b	Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out?	(Yes/No)
BV 200c	Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of the last year?	(Yes/No)
BV 204	The number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications, as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications.	(Local targets)
BV 205	The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist	(Yes/No)

Source: based on ODPM 2005g

Figure 5: Best Value Performance Indicators for Planning 2005/06

3.2.4 PPG3 & PPG11 of 2000 – The formal inauguration of PMM

As described above, the term PMM was first invented in relation to planning for housing and formally became government policy with the revision of PPG3 (DETR 1999c, 2000a). In a proclaimed break with the 'predict and provide' approach PMM was to allow a more 'flexible' and 'responsive' way of planning which appreciates uncertainties about the future, e.g. about longer-term housing demand (DETR 2000c). According to PPG3 of March 2000, plans should no longer set a fixed total for the level of housing provision for the whole plan period but rather 'plan' by using figures for the annual rate of development

¹² For 2005/6 central government set formal performance standards only for BV109a, BV109b and BV109c. It is worth noting that during the whole Best Value cycle 2005/6 central government only set five performance standards, three of which are the above standards for planning services whereas the remaining two relate to waste and recycling (see ODPM 2005g). There are no centrally-set performance standards for the other Best Value indicators but local authorities are required to set local targets and their 'performance' against these targets and indicators affects their Best Value assessment and funding levels.

and adjust these annual figures if circumstances change (DETR 2000a)¹³. Besides numbers for the level of housing provision, PPG3 also promoted the use of other quantified targets, for example, for the re-use of previously developed land and housing densities. An essential feature of PMM is the regular 'monitoring' of the achievement of such targets and of housing need (DETR 2000d). This monitoring is to inform the 'manage' process which is about maintaining an adequate housing supply through a phased release of land (DTLR 2001e) and keeping housing requirements and figures in plans under regular review. Taken together PMM therefore embodies a continuous process of planning, monitoring and managing that is responsive to new information and changing circumstances. And although problems have emerged in actually implementing PMM it has already had significant effect on the practice of planning for housing (ODPM 2003e).

However, despite the indisputable importance and dominance of housing in the PMM debate the argument here is that with the publication of PPG11 in October 2000 PMM has been extended in many ways to regional planning as a whole. Although not formally called PMM¹⁴, in effect, many of the key characteristics of PMM underlie the post-2000 model of regional planning. This comprises, in particular, a flexible and responsive approach which is to arise from a continuous process of plan making and implementation, monitoring and review (see Figure 6). This model has been introduced through government policy on regional planning (DETR 1999b, 2000b) and related 'good practice' guidance (ODPM 2002a).

A Continuous Planning Process

'In meeting the timetable it is important that RPBs recognise the value of a continuous planning process. Once the core regional strategy is in place it should seldom be necessary to review everything all at once. Indeed it would be difficult to implement the strategy through structure and local plans if the core strategy had to be comprehensively changed every few years. A robust regional strategy is needed with clear objectives, targets and indicators. This should provide the context within which selective review and up-date can occur in response to monitoring information and new policy imperatives'.

Source: DETR 2000b: para 2.11

Figure 6: Regional planning as a continuous process

In terms of the 'plan' element the PMM approach poses specific requirements for the format and content of RPG. More consideration is given to implementation issues in that 'Each topic chapter [in RPG] should set

¹³ Although the government's approach to PMM indicated more flexibility it has been criticised as, in effect, it still sets figures for the whole plan period (expressed as annual figures split in five year blocks) which only a plan review can alter. The level of responsiveness is therefore limited (Wenban-Smith 2002a; see 3.6.1).

¹⁴ Although PMM is not referred to explicitly as an approach to regional planning as a whole in legislation or formal government policy (as set out in PPS11) the latest version of the good practice guide on RSS monitoring suggests that PMM has in fact become an approach to be applied to the whole of regional planning. 'An important aspect of the new arrangements [for planning resulting from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004] is the flexibility to update components of the RSS to reflect changing circumstances, reinforcing the new *plan, monitor and manage* approach' (ODPM 2005f: para 2.3, italics added).

out for each policy how it is to be implemented, by when and by whom with output and process targets and indicators identified' (ODPM 2002a: para 3.2.9). Closely linked to this is the increased usage of quantified targets and indicators (DETR 2000b, ODPM 2002a, also ECOTEC 1999). RPG objectives and policies should be accompanied by quantified targets which show the intended direction and magnitude of spatial development. In combination with related indicators these targets are to be used to measure the implementation of RPG policies and, eventually, the 'delivery' and 'success' of RPG (DETR 2000b: paras 3.08 and 16.01). According to government guidance, RPG targets are to be 'SMART', i.e. 'specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound' (ODPM 2002a: 19). The focus should be on so-called 'output' targets which relate to 'real world developments that can be directly influenced by RPG' such as housing completions (*ibid.*: para 2.2)¹⁵. In PPG11 the government suggested a list of topics for which output targets and indicators should be considered which later developed into a list of national core output indicators (see 3.2.5). In addition to output targets, RPBs are advised to set 'process' targets in the form of 'dates by when RPG policies are to be translated into specified plans and strategies or the actual policies, programmes and proposals which RPG expects to see in these plans and strategies within specified time periods' (*ibid.*: para 2.2).

Government policy and guidance also attach significant importance to 'monitoring' in regional planning, albeit there is some ambiguity as far as the purpose and object of such monitoring are concerned. On the one hand, monitoring is given a rather narrow remit in that it should focus on the 'implementation' or 'performance' of RPG (e.g. DETR 2000b: 4, ODPM 2002a: para 2.2): 'An essential feature of new style RPG is that both its implementation, through development and local transport plans and other means, and its real world outputs should be monitored. In this way a check can be kept on whether the strategy is working and if any changes are necessary to it.' (DETR 2000b: para 16.01). According to PPG11, the new approach to regional planning should have 'a new focus on outputs with annual monitoring of performance against targets and indicators to ensure that RPG is kept up-to-date' (*ibid.*: 4). Elsewhere in government guidance, on the other hand, monitoring is granted a broader remit which goes beyond measuring the 'implementation' or 'performance' of RPG. Here monitoring is seen as being 'part of a feedback loop that helps inform any subsequent revision of the strategy' and which 'leads to more informed policy and decision making' (ODPM 2002a: para 4.1.2). In this function monitoring is to establish spatial development trends, act as an 'early-warning' to disclose emerging issues and to 'evaluate whether the original assumptions upon which the RPG was developed remain valid' (*ibid.*: para 3.3.3). On balance, however, the 'performance' and 'delivery' measurement stance still dominates the language of government policy and guidance on monitoring (see Figure 7).

Initially RPBs were expected to prepare regular monitoring reports 'possibly on a bi-annual basis, resources permitting' (DETR 1998b: para 6.13) but PPG11 specified that 'monitoring reports of progress in

¹⁵ The degree to which RPG can in fact influence such 'real world developments' is, however, not as clear-cut as this quote may suggest (see 3.3.1).

relation to targets and indicators should be produced on an annual basis if possible' (DETR 2000b: para 16.09). These Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are to focus on 'output' targets and indicators to measure the effect of RPG on real world developments (ODPM 2002a). Furthermore process indicators are to evaluate the implementation of RPG objectives 'through the inclusion of appropriate policies in development plans, local transport plans, and other types of plan and strategy' (ibid.: para 2.3). Additional 'contextual' indicators should be used selectively to monitor issues on which RPG has only indirect influence and which help to understand the context in which RPG operates. The government also introduced a set of 'national output indicators' which all RPBs are expected to report on in their AMRs (ODPM 2002a). These indicators have been 'derived from some key national objectives' (ibid.: para 2.11) and are to 'reflect the RPG's role in delivering national policy and to allow inter-regional comparison' (ibid.: 24). Moreover, the use of a common set of indicators is to promote consistency between regions as regards RPG monitoring. Alongside the national output indicators RPBs are also required to 'keep track of progress' towards relevant local PSA targets and accompanying Best Value Performance Indicators (DETR 2000b: para 16.07, also ODPM 2002a).

Key elements of monitoring RPG

'Key elements in the monitoring process are:

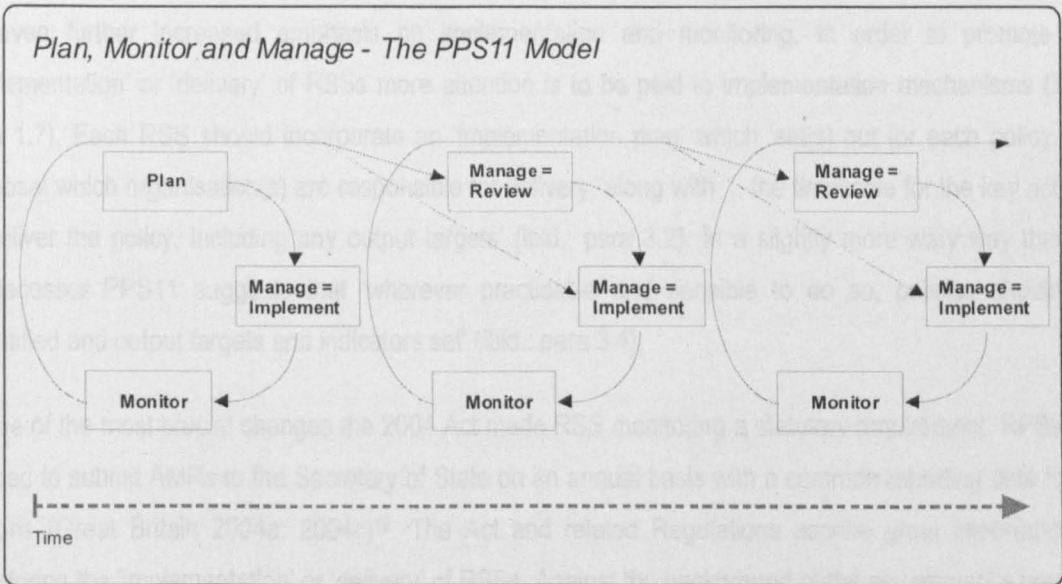
- identify key objectives, policies, output targets and related indicators;
- identify means of delivery in implementation programme, including any process targets;
- scrutinise the relevant plans and strategies for accord with RPG targets;
- consider action if a plan or strategy is not in accord;
-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

Source: ODPM 2002a: para 2.7

Figure 7: Key elements of monitoring in ODPM Good Practice Guide 2002

As far as the 'manage' element of PMM in regional planning as a whole is concerned, government policy and guidance seem to suggest that this is mainly about reviewing RPG (see also 3.6.1). In the 'continuous planning process' advocated by PPG11 flexibility and responsiveness are to be achieved primarily through the review of RPG. That is, the primary response to the results of monitoring and other new policy considerations would be a revision of RPG (see DETR 2000b, ODPM 2002a; also Figure 8). PPG11 rejects 'fixed' review cycles for RPG and states that 'it is more appropriate for selective reviews of the more urgent issues to be triggered by the results of .. monitoring' (DETR 2000b: para 16.09). Although RPG will need to be reviewed in full from time to time, there is an emphasis on 'selective' revisions of particular aspects or topics of RPG which are to be carried out 'under a faster track process' than a complete review (ibid.: para 16.10). In this understanding of PMM responsiveness is to be brought about

by cutting down the timescale for the revision of RPG. PPG11 sets a 'target timetable' for the production of a full RPG review of 31 months which 'The Government firmly expects ... to be achieved or bettered' (ibid.: para 2.10). As for 'selective' RPG reviews these are expected to be conducted within a 'significantly shorter timescale' (ibid.: para 2.11). The RPB has to agree a 'project plan' with the GOR to set out how the 'target timetable' is to be met (ibid.: para 2.10). All in all such speedy reviews are to keep RPG responsive and 'up-to-date'.



Source: author

Figure 8: Plan, Monitor and Manage – The PPS11 Model

3.2.5 Implications of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*

Ever since the publication of PPG11 the main characteristics of PMM as described above have remained central to the government's approach to regional planning. The changes to the planning system which started with the 2001 Green Paper and led to the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, however, have brought about some modifications and new emphases. These are enshrined in the Act itself and related Regulations¹⁶ as well as in the replacement of PPG11 with PPS11 in September 2004 (ODPM 2003f, 2004a) and a revision of the guidance on RSS monitoring in December 2005 (ODPM 2005f). As explained earlier (see 2.3.2), key elements of these reforms were concerned with 'speeding-up' the planning system and reducing the levels of planning (cf. DTLR 2001a, ODPM 2002e). In addition, there has been growing influence of issues around housing supply, particularly about levels of house building in the Greater South East, embodied in the Sustainable Communities Plan and the 'Barker I' review. As is shown in the following, many of the recent changes to PMM in regional planning can be linked to these broader developments.

¹⁶ The PCPA received Royal Assent on 13 May 2004 and the related Regulations on *Initial Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning* (Great Britain 2004b, 2004c) came into force on 28 September 2004.

The new PPS11 (ODPM 2004a) confirmed many of the PMM elements, including the continuous process of plan making and implementation, monitoring and revision, the use of quantified ('SMART') targets¹⁷ and indicators and the responsibilities and procedural arrangements for regional planning. The 'target timetable' for a full RSS revision is now 30 to 35 months and 'Meeting the timetable agreed with the [Government Office] is a key element on which RPB performance will be judged, which in turn could affect future RPB funding' (ibid.: para 2.32)¹⁸. PPS11 re-emphasises the possibility of partial RSS reviews which are to be carried out under a shorter timetable. The most significant changes that affect PMM arise from an even further increased emphasis on implementation and monitoring. In order to promote the 'implementation' or 'delivery' of RSSs more attention is to be paid to implementation mechanisms (ibid.: para 1.7). Each RSS should incorporate an 'implementation plan' which 'set[s] out for each policy and proposal which organisation(s) are responsible for delivery, along with ... the timescale for the key actions to deliver the policy, including any output targets' (ibid.: para 3.2). In a slightly more wary way than its predecessor PPS11 suggests that 'wherever practicable and sensible to do so, policies should be quantified and output targets and indicators set' (ibid.: para 3.4).

In one of the most crucial changes the 2004 Act made RSS monitoring a statutory requirement. RPBs are obliged to submit AMRs to the Secretary of State on an annual basis with a common reporting date for all regions (Great Britain 2004a, 2004c)¹⁹. The Act and related Regulations ascribe great importance to monitoring the 'implementation' or 'delivery' of RSSs. Against the background of the government's housing agenda specific provisions are made for monitoring housing completions which place RPBs under a statutory duty to report on the numbers of dwellings built (Great Britain 2004c). Accordingly, PPS11 and revised monitoring guidance (ODPM 2005f) emphasise the importance of monitoring RSS implementation and the delivery of housing, although monitoring is also given broader functions in these documents (see Figure 9). This includes, for example, the identification of 'follow-up actions' that should be taken in response to the results of monitoring such as a revision of policy or adjustments to implementation activities and mechanisms (ibid.: para 3.3). Furthermore the role of monitoring has been expanded in that RPBs now have to fulfil the monitoring requirements arising from Sustainability Appraisals and the related European Union Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (see ODPM 2005f, 2005n).

¹⁷ In a change of wording the previously described 'output' targets are now referred to as 'policy targets' in the latest version of the guidance on RSS monitoring, albeit these still relate to 'the outputs of the RSS such as provision for housing' (ODPM 2005f: para 7.4).

¹⁸ However, PPS11 also states that 'Other key factors to judge performance include comprehensiveness of stakeholder engagement and robustness of policy output' (ODPM 2004a: para 2.32), although the criteria for measuring these factors are not specified.

¹⁹ Regulation 5 [see Great Britain 2004c] requires an annual monitoring report to be submitted by the RPB to the Secretary of State on the 28th of February of the following year to which it applies' (ODPM 2004a: para 3.7). Similar requirements exist at local level, although the submission date for LDF AMRs is the 31st of December of each year (ODPM 2005j, 2005k).

Content of an Annual Monitoring Report

'In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the Regulations, and associated Government guidance, the main purposes of the monitoring and review of RSS implementation are to reveal:

- whether policies and related targets in the RSS have been met or progress is being made towards meeting them or, where they are not being met or not on track to being achieved, the reasons why;
- whether numbers of net additional dwellings built in the region during the period covered by the AMR and since the policy or policies concerned were first published by the Secretary of State are on target...;
- what significant effects implementation of the policies is having on the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area and whether these effects are as predicted by the [Sustainability Appraisal] of the RSS;
- whether the policies need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended;
- whether the way the RSS is being implemented needs to be changed to ensure delivery; and
- whether the policies need changing to reflect changes in national policy or because circumstances have changed since the preparation of the existing RSS and new issues need to be addressed.

The above purposes may overlap.'

Source: ODPM 2005f: para 3.1

Figure 9: Required content of an Annual Monitoring Report

The revision of policy on regional planning and PMM has also been affected by the present government's drive for 'evidence based' policy making (see Ch. 2). The new PPS1 requires planning bodies and authorities to ensure that 'plans and policies are properly based on analysis and evidence' (ODPM 2005i: para 26). This has resulted in various provisions and proposals aimed to improve the 'evidence base' of planning. As part of the EiP the Panel is to test the 'soundness' of the draft RSS, including 'whether [the RSS] is founded on a robust and credible evidence base, ... whether it is robust and able to deal with changing circumstances, ... [and] whether it has clear mechanisms for monitoring and implementation' (ODPM 2004a: para 2.49, also ODPM 2005j, Planning Inspectorate 2005). The government has also brought forward specific initiatives targeted at 'improving the economic evidence base' of RSSs (ODPM 2005m) and in relation to 'supporting' the evidence base for housing policies such as a 'national advice unit' (ODPM 2004d)²⁰. Finally, a revised set of 'core output indicators' for RSSs has been published which are 'to help ensure a consistent and cost-effective approach to monitoring implementation of key national objectives and targets' (ODPM 2005i: 3; see Figure 10)²¹.

²⁰ This 'National Housing and Planning Advice Unit' was established in November 2006 (DCLG 2006a).

²¹ A similar set of national indicators exists for monitoring LDFs (see ODPM 2005k).

Core Output Indicators for Regional Planning

Business Development

- 1a Amount of land developed for employment by type: by local authority area.
 1b Amount of land developed for employment by type, which is in development and/or regeneration areas defined in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
 1c Percentages of 1a by type, which is on previously developed land: by local authority area.
 1d Employment land supply by type: by local authority area.

Housing

- 2a Housing trajectory showing:
 (i) net additional dwellings over the previous five year period or since the start of the RSS period, whichever is the longer;
 (ii) net additional dwellings for the current year;
 (iii) projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the RSS period or over a ten year period from its publication, whichever is the longer;
 (iv) the annual net additional dwelling requirement; and
 (v) annual average number of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall housing requirements, having regard to previous years' performances.
 2b Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.
 2c Percentage of new dwellings completed at:
 (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare;
 (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and
 (iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare: by local authority area.
 2d Affordable housing completions: by local authority area.

Transport

- 3 Percentage of completed non-residential development complying with the car-parking standards set out in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS): by local authority area.

Regional Services

- 4a Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development respectively: by local authority area.
 4b Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development respectively in town centres.

Minerals

- 5a The production of primary land won aggregates (tonnes): by minerals planning authority.
 5b The production of secondary/recycled aggregates (tonnes): by minerals planning authority.

Waste

- 6a Capacity of new waste management facilities by type: by waste planning authority.
 6b Amount of municipal waste arising and managed by management type and the percentage each management type represents of the total waste managed: by waste planning authority.

Flood Protection and Water Quality

- 7 Number of planning permissions, by local authority area, granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on grounds of flood defence or water quality.

Biodiversity

- 8 Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:
 (i) priority habitats and species (by type); and
 (ii) areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional significance.

Renewable Energy

- 9 Renewable energy capacity (MW) installed by type: by local authority area.

Source: ODPM 2005i

Figure 10: Core Output Indicators for Regional Planning

3.2.6 The 'Barker Effect' – Forward to the past?

It has already become clear in the above that the government's concern about housing supply has had a noticeable impact on the reform of the planning system brought about by the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. The emphasis on the 'delivery' of housing has permeated legislation, policy and guidance on regional planning such as the statutory requirements for monitoring. As mentioned in Chapter 2 the persisting interest of key elements of government in the supply of housing, embodied in the first 'Barker Review', has set in motion further proposals for change of the planning system which are highly relevant to PMM. The government re-emphasised its intention to increase housing supply (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005c) and issued first proposals for a revision of housing policy which give greater attention to housing markets and demand (ODPM 2005d). An update of PPG3 in January 2005 aimed at 'supporting the delivery of new housing' on commercial and industrial land and buildings (ODPM 2005c).

In July 2005 the course of possible further changes to the planning system took more shape (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005b, ODPM 2005a). In publishing its proposals on planning for housing the government set out to achieve 'a step-change in housing supply' (ODPM 2005a: 9). One of the cornerstones of these proposals aims at 'making the planning system more responsive to the housing market' (ibid.: 5). These ideas have been taken forward in a proposed new PPS3 on housing which was published in December 2005 in response to the first Barker Review (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005a, ODPM 2005b). In order to respond better and faster to 'housing demand' greater attention is to be paid to housing market considerations (ODPM 2005b: 1). When establishing housing figures in RSSs and allocating and releasing land for new houses, planning bodies and authorities are to give more weight to housing market pressures. At local level, LDFs are required to allocate sufficient 'developable' land to meet the demand which is predicted for the first five years of the plan period. For the following ten years of predicted demand LDFs should allocate sufficient land 'wherever possible' (ibid.: 11). Moreover the draft PPS argues against the phasing of land release within the five year supply. In essence, the approach proposes to meet housing demand where it arises (ibid.: 10) and thus can be characterised as far more driven by housing 'markets' and 'demand'.

If implemented these proposals could have major implications for the way planning is conducted and for any PMM approach to planning. In the view of some commentators, the proposed changes would imply the 'abolition of the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach' to planning for housing (Planning Resource 2005). The author of PPG3 of 2000 described the new proposals as 'a return to 'predict and provide' planning' (Planning Resource 2006c, also 2006d). The proposed approach is regarded as being too 'market-driven' and the emphasis on meeting market demand would increase pressure on areas of high demand and work against the objective of urban regeneration. However, as the government's proposals were introduced after the empirical part of this research had been completed they are not discussed here in more detail. Reflections on potential implications for regional planning and PMM are, however, made in

the concluding chapter (see Ch. 8) alongside some remarks on the government's latest initiative, the *Barker Review of Land Use Planning* (HM Treasury and ODPM 2005a, 2006). 'Barker II' is concerned with the impact of planning on economic growth and prosperity and could lead to even more far-reaching changes to planning, potentially giving more weight to economic and business concerns.

3.3 Theoretical underpinnings of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

PMM has become a prominent term in government policy and planning discourse since the late 1990s and early 2000s but, as mentioned earlier, the concept of PMM has roots which go back to planning and decision making theory and practice of the 1960s-80s. The remainder of this chapter therefore discusses key theoretical underpinnings of PMM. This section (3.3) deals with PMM as a whole. Starting from a description of key characteristics of strategic spatial planning, PMM is linked to the Strategic Choice approach to planning and to theories about performance management in the public sector. The later sections (3.4 to 3.6) then provide more detail on particular aspects of the 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' elements.

Each of the sections (3.3 to 3.6) follows a similar underlying structure and purpose in that each describes theoretical approaches in relation to PMM and its component parts respectively, and discusses key issues and concerns as regards the application of these approaches in practice. In each section so-called 'design principles' are identified which describe an 'ideal type' PMM approach from a theoretical perspective²². The theoretical framework developed in the remainder of this chapter and particularly the design principles have been used 1) as criteria for investigating the practice of PMM in the empirical work (i.e. current practice has been assessed against these theoretical issues and design principles), 2) to explain observed practice (see Ch. 7), and 3) to inform the development of recommendations for improved policy and practice of PMM (see Ch. 8).

3.3.1 Approaches to strategic spatial planning

In Britain and elsewhere in Europe strategic spatial planning has (once more) aroused growing interest in both academia and planning practice (Albrechts 2004, Albrechts et al. 2001, Breheny 1991, Friedmann 2004, Healey 1997b, Healey et al. 1997, Salet and Faludi 2000). In order to establish key characteristics of planning at a strategic level, broadly speaking, two major approaches to planning can be identified (see also Figure 11)²³. These differ from each other particularly in relation to the function and status of plans,

²² The design principles can be found in particular in Figure 15, section 3.3.4, section 3.4.1, Figure 20, section 3.5.3, Figure 25 and section 3.6.2.

²³ This discussion draws heavily on writings about 'conformance' vs. 'performance' views of planning which has been developed in particular by scholars in the fields of implementation research (e.g. Barrett and Fudge 1981b; see below) and planning theory (e.g. Faludi 1989, 2000, Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997, Mastop 2000; see also in relation to monitoring 3.5).

the relationship between planning and implementation, as well as the actors responsible for, and involved in, preparing and implementing plans.

The first approach has been described as 'technocratic' or 'blueprint' planning (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997). Under this approach a plan represents a blueprint for the future development of the area in question. The technocratic model assumes that planning operates in a 'context of control', i.e. the body which prepares the plan possesses sufficient powers and responsibilities for plan implementation and/or the plan itself carries enough weight to ensure its implementation. In either case there are clear and direct links between planning and implementation. However, the appropriateness of the 'blueprint' view of planning has been questioned once applied to spatial planning at strategic level. Even at times when regional planning and the public sector were comparably strong the implementation of regional plans was identified as a key problem (Glasson 1978) and there was often a significant gap between intent and actual impact (Mastop 1997, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). The 'blueprint' model may be more applicable to project planning but it neglects the complexities and uncertainties involved in strategic planning and the rather indirect relationship between plans and their implementation (Alexander and Faludi 1989).

	Project plans	Strategic plans
Object	Material	Decisions
Interaction	Until adoption	Continuous
Future	Closed	Open
Time-element	Limited to phasing	Central to problem
Form	Blueprint	Minutes of last meeting
Effect	Determinate	Frame of reference

Source: Faludi 1989

Figure 11: Project vs. strategic plans

The second approach to planning could be described as 'sociocratic planning' (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997), 'planning as learning' (Faludi 2000) or plans being 'frames of reference' for subsequent action (Faludi 1987, Mastop 2000). In this model planning operates in a 'context of accommodation' where powers and responsibilities for planning and implementation are dispersed among a variety of 'competent' and largely autonomous actors (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997, Mastop and Faludi 1997). At strategic level the relationship between planning and implementation is complex and indirect, for plan implementation depends on factors and actors on which a strategic plan and those responsible for its production have often very limited influence²⁴. Thus, in order to be implemented, strategic planning has to

²⁴ The field of 'implementation studies' has paid particular attention to the relationship between policy making and implementation (e.g. Alterman 1982, Barrett 2004, Barrett and Fudge 1981a, Exworthy and Powell 2004, O'Toole 2004, Schofield 2004, Schofield and Sausman 2004, and in relation to the implementation of development plans see Healey et al. 1982, 1985). It highlights the processes involved in making and implementing public policy and the factors that affect the translation of policy into action. There is a need to appreciate the complexities involved in implementing public policy such as the wide range of actors involved and the degree of influence of public bodies on these actors. As a result of this there is often no direct, top-down link between policy making and its

'influence' or 'frame' the decisions²⁵ of others actors, in particular those decisions which lead to changes 'on the ground'. This has been described as 'driving from the back seat' (Needham 1997: 273).

Under this second model the role of strategic spatial planning is to guide and improve the quality of subsequent decisions of other actors (Faludi 2000). Here planning is a type of 'forethought' in that it is to offer advice for those making decisions in relation to spatial development (Hoch 2002). Strategic planning is to assist decision makers in understanding the situation they are faced with, explain the problems and challenges that exist and what should be done about it. The guidance provided by a strategic plan itself is the 'visual product' of planning. Quite importantly, guidance will also be provided by the 'invisible product' of the planning process such as mutual learning, the development of a common understanding of problems and desirable solutions which can contribute to behavioural change and, eventually, the implementation of the plan (Faludi 2000, Friend and Hickling 1987, Glasson 1978, Needham et al. 1997)²⁶. This view emphasises the importance of the plan making process which can shape opinions and influence decisions and thus help to mobilise support for the implementation of the strategic plan (Mastop and Faludi 1997, Needham et al. 1997).

As far as RSSs in English regional planning are concerned, one could argue that government thinking and policy to some extent contains elements of the 'blueprint' view of planning (see 3.1.1 and 3.2). An RSS is part of the statutory development plan and as such it is binding on the local level of planning, for local plans and planning decisions need to be in general conformity with the RSS. The emphasis on 'implementation' and 'delivery' in government policy on regional planning also seems to support the 'blueprint' view. On the other hand, the relationship between an RSS and its implementation is much more complex and indirect than government policy may suggest. The implementation of an RSS through the local planning system is not all that straightforward as it has to stand up to other factors and material considerations. Also by virtue of being a spatial planning document which goes beyond land use matters, an RSS includes many policies and proposals which are beyond the scope of development control decisions. Its implementation therefore depends very much on the activities of largely autonomous actors (e.g. central government funding of infrastructure projects, activities of RDAs and a wide range of other local, sub-regional, regional, inter-regional, national and supra-national actors) on which an RSS is not binding – see, for example, the non-hierarchical relationship with other regional and sub-regional

implementation. Rather, the relationship between policy formulation and implementation involves complex, iterative and multi-directional processes of negotiation, bargaining and compromise.

²⁵ In this context the term 'decision' is understood in a wide sense and refers, for example, to the decision to prepare a plan or programme, decisions about the content of these plans and programmes, decisions about what action is to be taken 'on the ground', the decision to take action and the action itself.

²⁶ Dutch planners use the expression *doorwerking* ('working through') to refer to the assimilation of plans and policies into the deliberations that follow the formal adoption of a plan (Mastop 2000, Mastop and Faludi 1997). Similarly, the term *voorwerking* is used to describe a situation in which a plan already has effects on other decisions even before its formal adoption as potential addressees of the plan may already use it, for example, assuming the formal adoption of the plan.

strategies (ODPM 2004a: para 2.11). Against this background an RSS could be characterised as coming much closer to the 'framework' model of planning.

3.3.2 Strategic Choice – The roots of PMM

The above discussion raised issues of complexity and uncertainty which are central to planning, especially at strategic level. The treatment of uncertainty has featured in planning theory and practice for some time (Abbott 2005, Bryson et al. 2004, Dijst et al. 2005) and underpins the influential Strategic Choice approach which was developed from the late 1960s onwards (Friend and Hickling 1987, Friend and Jessop 1969)²⁷. The fundamental assumption of Strategic Choice is that uncertainty is inherent in any future-related activity and Friend and Jessop (1969) distinguish between three types of uncertainty (see Figure 12). Strategic spatial planning has to fulfil seemingly conflicting requirements. It is to provide long-term direction for the spatial development of an area and, at the same time, deal with the uncertainties involved which require some degree of flexibility to adapt to unforeseen events and changing conditions (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1997). This balance between long-term guidance and responsiveness to change has been a long-lasting concern in British planning (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002)²⁸ and is also central to current debates about PMM in regional planning (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a).

The acceptance and handling of uncertainty lie at the heart of Strategic Choice (Friend and Hickling 1987, Friend and Jessop 1969)²⁹. The approach aims to recognise the sources of, and to reduce uncertainty before decisions are made, especially before making irreversible decisions. Strategic Choice attempts to manage change over time as options are kept open as long as possible in order to enable reaction to change (Wenban-Smith 2002a). Through a 'balance between exploratory and decisive progress' (Friend and Hickling 2005: 11) decisions are taken when required, while a degree of flexibility is retained to allow responsiveness to unforeseen events, new information and changing circumstances.

²⁷ Like strategic planning in general the Strategic Choice approach has had a chequered tradition in spatial planning but still receives significant attention today (see e.g. Bryson et al. 2004, Burns 2004, Faludi 2004, Faludi and Mastop 1982, Friend 2004, Friend and Hickling 1987, 2005, Friend and Jessop 1969, 1977, Needham 2004, Yewlett 1983).

²⁸ Different approaches have been advocated in British planning and elsewhere to achieve such a balance. The 'survey-analysis-plan' approach (Geddes 1915) emphasised the importance of information gathering and analysis and of gaining a better 'understanding' of reality as a basis for making plans. Others believed that planning processes have been too slow and too cumbersome and thus restrain the responsiveness of planning. This has led to repeated attempts at 'streamlining' planning processes and regulations (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002). Drawing on the systems school (Chadwick 1978, McLoughlin 1969) the 'rational' planning model of the 1960s and 1970s also aimed at developing a better understanding of the reality. It explicitly recognised the dynamic nature of the world and the need to be responsive to change. Based on analysis and modelling a cyclic process of strategy making, implementation, monitoring and review was to achieve such responsiveness (Glasson 1978, McLoughlin 1969). The 'rational' model had some impact on planning practice and was applied, for example, in structure planning during the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Batey and Breheny 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, Breheny and Roberts 1978).

²⁹ The term 'strategic' does not imply that this approach to planning and decision-making applies only to a strategic 'level' but rather to a 'way' of planning that can be applied at all levels (Friend and Hickling 1987, Friend and Jessop 1969). In fact it has been applied to many fields of planning and management (see Friend and Hickling 2005: Ch. 13), including strategic spatial planning in the 1970s (e.g. Booth and Jaffe 1978, DoE 1974, Hickling 1978). The Strategic Choice approach is still influential nowadays and, as mentioned earlier, underlies the concept of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM), in particular in the field of housing (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a), and has also been considered in other policy fields (DfT 2004).

Types of uncertainty and practical responses

Uncertainties about the environment (UE): uncertainties about the external environment in which planning operates, including current and future patterns of the physical, social and economic environment and the effects of interventions into the external environment. Potential responses: Information gathering such as conducting research.

Uncertainties about relationships (UR): uncertainties in the knowledge about future intentions in related fields of choice, e.g. future decisions of other actors and the relationships between these decisions. Potential responses: consultation and coordination with other actors as regards their future intentions.

Uncertainties about value judgements (UV): uncertainties about appropriate value judgements which includes the relative importance attached to particular choices and the related consequences. Potential responses: Political decisions, policy guidance, public participation.

Source: adapted from Friend and Jessop (1969) and Wenban-Smith (2002a)

Figure 12: Types of uncertainty and practical responses

Similar to the 'Mixed Scanning' approach (Etzioni 1967), Strategic Choice proposes a distinction between strategic guidance (*strategy*) and operational decisions (*tactics*) (Alexander and Faludi 1989, Faludi 1987, Wenban-Smith 2002a). First, a strategic framework needs to be formulated which provides long-term direction for detailed action and which should remain stable at least over the medium term. Second, operational decisions should be guided by this strategic framework as well as informed by, and responsive to, up-to-date information about circumstances and events (see also 3.6.1). The Strategic Choice approach stresses the importance of the second element, i.e. the process of making decisions over time to deal with uncertainties and changing conditions (Friend and Hickling 1987, Friend and Jessop 1969). The figure below (Figure 13) shows how Strategic Choice can be translated into PMM in regional planning.

Strategic Choice translated into 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

- **Plan:** formulate a strategic framework (e.g. the general scale and distribution of housing provision) and more detailed policies (e.g. criteria for the process of land release).
- **Monitor:** monitor plan implementation and detect changing circumstances and unforeseen events (e.g. comparison of actual housing provision and development of housing requirements over time).
- **Manage:** monitoring should identify the need for tactical action (e.g. release more or less land for housing) and/or for the revision of the strategic framework and/or of the detailed policies.

Source: based on Wenban-Smith 2002a: 37

Figure 13: Strategic Choice translated into PMM

This approach entails a continuous, iterative and adaptive process of decision making in which longer-term goals guide a series of tactical decisions and each of these decisions is informed by information obtained through frequent monitoring (Bryson et al. 2004, Wenban-Smith 2002a)³⁰. Whereas the strategic level of planning is responsible mainly for setting out an overall strategy and the process for managing change, tactical decisions such as the release of land are largely taken at lower tiers (see Figure 14 and 3.3.4). Unlike traditional planning exercises, which have tended to focus too much on the 'plan' phase, Strategic Choice requires more attention to be paid to the 'monitor' and 'manage' elements (Wenban-Smith 1999). The gathering of information is crucial to the success of this approach as it helps to improve the understanding of issues and to reduce uncertainty (Floyd 1978, Wenban-Smith 2002a; see also 3.5). As a result the Strategic Choice approach aims to move beyond a 'snapshot' view of planning and decision-making and towards a more 'dynamic' process which pays regard to uncertainty and complexity and which combines longer-term guidance or 'commitments' with operational flexibility or 'adaptiveness' (Friend and Hickling 2005, Friend and Jessop 1969)³¹.

Source: Wenban-Smith 1999: 27

Figure 14: Strategic and tactical levels of planning, monitoring and managing

³⁰ This understanding of planning as a continuous and adaptive process has also been a feature of the 'rational' planning model: 'But [the implementation stage] is not the end of the process. Planning, as envisaged in contemporary studies, has no end-product. It is part of a continuing process which must be kept under review and amended where necessary in the light of the monitoring of the key indicators of the region's condition' (Glasson 1978: 266).

³¹ As described in more detail below (see 3.6) the PMM approach as enshrined in government policy on regional planning in England since 2000 differs markedly from this version of PMM which is based on Strategic Choice (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a).

3.3.3 Performance management approaches

It has been described above (see 2.2 and 3.2.3) that past and recent changes to the planning system in England also need to be seen in the light of general developments in the public sector. Government initiatives such as Best Value are part of the attempt to apply performance measurement and management systems to public services (e.g. Ashworth et al. 2002, Carmona and Sieh 2004b, 2005, Cave et al. 1990, Imrie 1999, Pollitt and Harrison 1992, Rogers 1999). These systems are to fulfil several functions. First, performance management is used to hold public bodies to account and to increase the transparency of the activities of these bodies (Hughes 2003, Hyndman and Eden 2002, Rouse 1999). Second, measuring their performance is to assist public organisations in learning about the strengths and weaknesses of service provision which can be used to inform policy making and service delivery (de Bruijn 2002). Thirdly, as performance management is often linked to sanctions and/or rewards it is to provide an incentive for improving performance (Boyne et al. 2002, Hughes 2003). Finally, performance management can be used to steer the activities of public bodies and to ensure that they contribute to defined policy priorities (de Bruijn 2002)³².

Broadly speaking, performance management systems involve the specification of desired levels of service provision, including (quantified) output targets (Cave et al. 1990). Indicators are then used to compare planned and actual performance in terms of the achievement of these targets (Carter et al. 1992, Jowett and Rothwell 1988, Rogers 1999). The approach includes incentive structures to stimulate the performance of individuals and organisations, for example, in that the level of funding of a public body depends on the achievement of targets (Ayres and Pearce 2005, Rogers 1999). There has been vigorous debate about the difficulties and limitations involved in performance management (e.g. Ashworth et al. 2002, de Bruijn 2002, Dent et al. 2004a, HoCPASC 2003, Rouse 1999; see also below, especially 3.5.3). This relates to conceptual, methodological and practical problems but, more fundamentally, also to a general concern about the possibility of applying corporate management techniques to the public sector. Some of the New Public Management literature therefore suggests a more moderate and realistic view of the potentials of performance management. It can provide a useful tool (among others tools) to inform policy making and implementation but those designing and using performance management need to recognise the problems and limitations that are involved and consider the specific characteristics of the public services it is to be applied to (de Bruijn 2002, Rogers 1999). Against this backdrop the following principles for the design and use of performance management systems have been identified which should guide the application of such systems (see Figure 15).

³² Generally, performance management can be defined in a 'narrow' sense where it is seen as a set of tools to measure and manage performance with a focus on performance *measurement*. In a 'wider' understanding performance *management* is seen as a way of thinking and acting which goes beyond the measurement of performance and pays more attention to the way in which performance is and can be defined and improved and to the process of judging performance (Rogers 1999). At present a 'narrow' understanding appears to dominate much of the literature on public management and current policy and practice in that it is more about *measurement* and evaluation rather than *management* (Radnor and McGuire 2004, Rogers 1999).

Design principles for performance management in the public sector

Variety: As the provision of public services is often complex, as it has to meet different, sometimes conflicting objectives and interests, and as performance information is used for different purposes, there cannot be a single product definition or way of measuring performance. In order to do justice to this variety and to show a more complete picture of an organisation's performance there will need to be various product definitions, various indicators and ways of measurement (de Bruijn 2002).

Focus and Differentiation: Since PM can hardly be both comprehensive and manageable at the same time it should focus on those products that are most relevant to the activities of an organisation (ibid.). Instead of 'one-size-fits-all' approaches performance management needs to be adapted to the characteristics of the activity in question and its specific context (Flynn 2002).

Integration: As part of a tool for planning and implementation performance management should be fully integrated into the working practices of an organisation to enable the development of a systematic performance management framework (Rouse 1999).

Trust: Performance management needs to be non-threatening and based on trust, esp. between tiers in a hierarchy, to enable co-production, to avoid perverse behaviour and hierarchical misuse, and to create an organisational culture of trust and commitment rather than of sanctions and fear (de Bruijn 2002, Rouse 1999, Turner et al. 2004).

Learning: Performance management should encourage and facilitate reflection and learning, the development of a shared understanding of complex issues, a problem-solving approach, ownership of performance and responsiveness to new circumstances in order to help identify ways of improving performance (de Bruijn 2002, Rogers 1999, Rouse 1999).

Consequences: There should not be simplistic, direct links between production, appraisal and reward/sanction, e.g. 'poor' performance should not be sanctioned automatically. Instead indirect links should be used where, for example, failure to achieve targets raises questions about the reasons for such performance before choosing any actions (Flynn 2002). However, a clear set of rules on the process from production to reward/sanction must be agreed upon in advance to avoid the misuse of this flexibility (de Bruijn 2002).

Interdependency and Interaction: In planning, analysing and interpreting service delivery it needs to be appreciated that performance in the public sector can only be achieved 'in a network of dependencies' of a variety of interdependent actors and activities (ibid.: 56). As a result, stakeholders should be involved at each stage of the performance management process (Boyne et al. 2002, McAdam et al. 2005). This includes the design of the system (e.g. clarification of functions and users, definition of 'products' and of what is 'performance', selection of indicators, and target setting) and the process of assessing, interpreting and explaining performance.

Politics and Autonomy: Performance management should not be understood as a 'technocratic' exercise which concentrates on the delivery of public services and where performance is seen as 'unpolitical' and only a question of 'good' management. Performance in the public sector is a highly political issue since both definition and achievement of performance involve various actors who may have different or even conflicting interests (Rouse 1999). In addition, actors might want to use performance management for political purposes, such as promoting their individual agendas. In order to ensure impartiality and to avoid strategic behaviour and misuse of PM it needs to be 'shielded' from undue political influence (RSS 2003). In addition, performance information should not to be used for political purposes such as demonstrating one's own success and/or other's failure (Flynn 2002).

Dynamic and Stability: Performance management needs to do justice to the (internal) dynamics of service provision (e.g. development of new products and processes of service provision) and the (external) dynamic context in which it takes place (e.g. new problems and challenges). Thus performance management systems need to be kept 'lively' and adjustable to these dynamics (de Bruijn 2002). This needs to be balanced, however, with the need for some degree of stability (e.g. the indicators used for monitoring) to track development and to make comparisons over time.

Source: compiled by the author

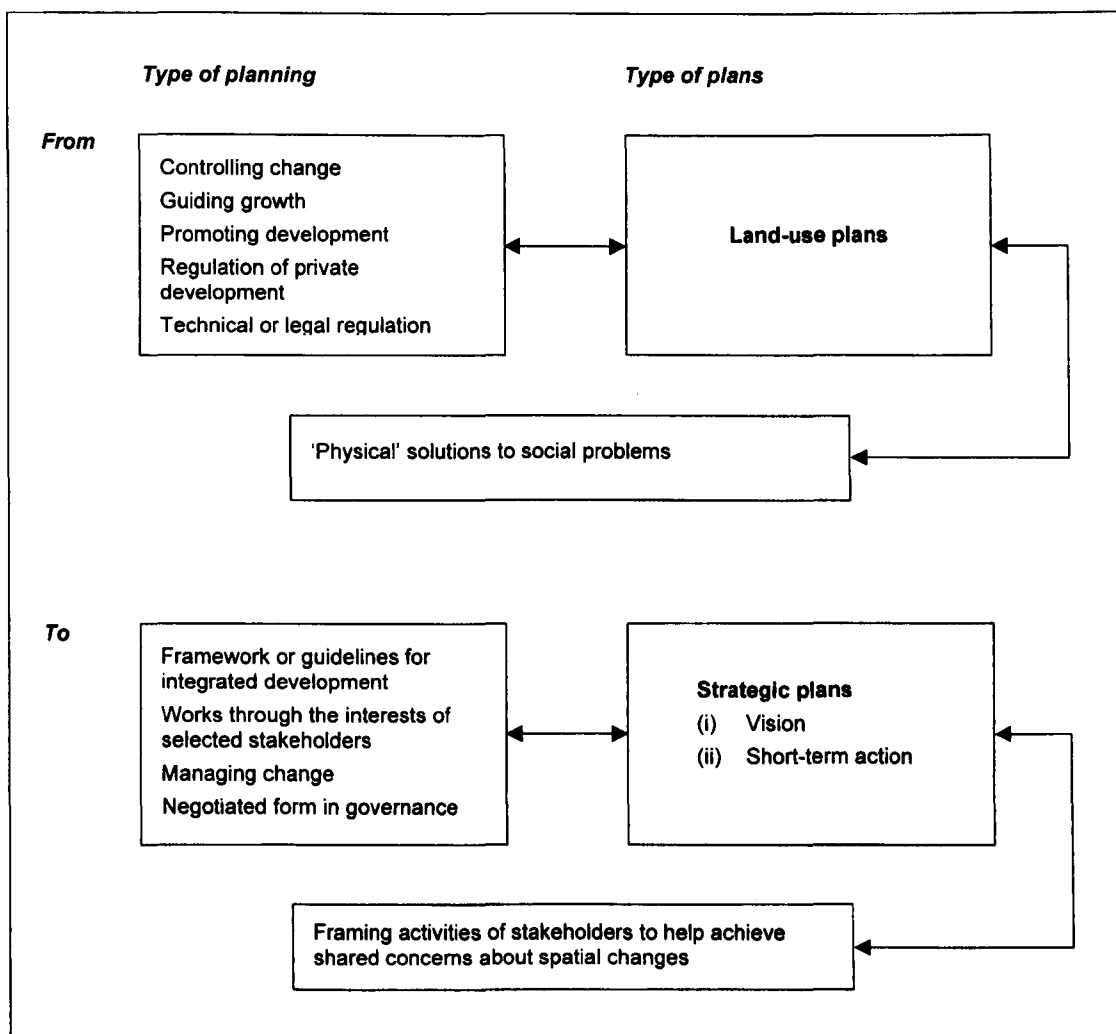
Figure 15: Design principles for performance management in the public sector

3.3.4 Implications for PMM in regional planning

Drawing on the above discussion of strategic spatial planning, Strategic Choice and performance management this section reflects on some of the implications of these approaches for PMM in regional planning. This focuses on the purpose of planning at strategic level, the relationship between different planning tiers as well as the arrangements for, and processes in, planning. Strategic Choice suggests that planning needs to acknowledge and manage uncertainty which is to be achieved through a continuous planning process which allows adaptation to changing circumstances. As shown above, this thinking has been translated into the PMM approach. Moreover, there has been a shift from land use planning to strategic spatial planning as regards the types of plans, ways of planning and institutional arrangements (Albrechts 2004; see Figure 16). Thus, 'the chief purpose of spatial planning at the level of regional, and even more so national planning is to give guidance in situations that are characterised by uncertainty and conflict around spatial development where there needs to be mutual learning. The guidance is for the benefit of subsequent decision makers and concerns their decision situations' (Faludi 2000: 304). Strategic spatial planning is about coordinating and informing the planning and implementation activities of largely autonomous actors who have a bearing on the spatial development of an area (Albrechts 2004, Healey 1997b). Its purpose is to frame subsequent decisions by clarifying decision situations, helping decision makers to gain a better understanding of the context in which they operate and what choices could and should be made (Faludi 2000, Mastop and Faludi 1997).

The distinction between *strategy* and *tactics* has implications for the interplay between different planning tiers and the content of spatial plans (Albrechts 2004, DfT 2004, Needham 2000, Wenban-Smith 2002a). The role of regional planning is principally to provide long-term direction for future activities and guidance for the process of making operational decisions. In turn, the responsibility for 'managing', in the sense of taking shorter-term actions such as the release of land for development, and much of the detailed 'monitoring' work such as the assessment of housing supply and need in 'real time' lies largely with lower levels (Wenban-Smith 2002a)³³. Consequently spatial plans at strategic level should contain longer-term perspectives for spatial development which could take the shape of 'strategic organizing ideas' and 'spatial organizing concepts' (Healey 1997c; see 3.4.1). There should be less emphasis on details and water-tight regulation and more on promoting the use of the plan, for example, through engaging actors in the preparation process and through leaving some discretion for the local level to fit strategic policies to specific circumstances (Damme et al. 1997).

³³ However, the relationship between strategic planning and operational decision making is not linear, sequential and top-down but should rather be understood as a two-way process which is shaped by interactions between those who make strategies and those to be influenced by the strategy (Friend 2000).



Source: Albrechts 2004: 748

Figure 16: The shift from land use planning to strategic spatial planning

The role and status of strategic plans and debate about state restructuring (see 2.4.2) also have implications for the arrangements for strategic spatial planning. In a 'shared power world' (Bryson and Crosby 1992) planning relies to a significant extent on interaction between a variety of actors (e.g. Healey 1997a, 1997c, 1998). Although 'collaborative' approaches to decision making involve limitations and pitfalls³⁴, there seems to be a need for deliberative planning practices (Albrechts 2004, Bryson et al. 2004, Fischer 2003, Fischer and Forester 1993, Friend and Hickling 1987, Healy 1992, 1997a, Innes 1995, Motte 1997). The involvement of relevant actors in policy making, monitoring and review is intended to improve the quality of the plan by drawing on the knowledge of different actors, to develop common understandings and goals, to gain support for or 'ownership' of the plan and, ultimately, to improve implementation and effects of planning. However, given the potential problems of collaborative practices it is important to actively design and control deliberative planning processes (WRR 1999; see Figure 17), e.g. to balance the abilities of actors to get involved in and influence the process, to separate the

³⁴ Critiques of the concept of collaborative planning can be found, for example, in Flyvbjerg 1998, Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones 1998, 2000, Richardson 1996, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998, Tewdwr-Jones and Thomas 1998; see also 2.5).

representation of individual interests from the formation of preferences and to ensure that final decisions rest with elected representatives.

- | |
|--|
| <p>Design principles for participatory policy making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'Political formalisation of the relationship between participation and decision-making, ■ a choice based on substantive considerations between internal administrative deliberation or the weighing of interests based on dialogue and confrontation, ■ the ongoing structuring and reformulation of the problem throughout the planning process, ■ active process control with a clear division of roles between the parties, ■ transparent weighing of interests by means of dialogue and the confrontation of perceptions, ■ feedback of agreements (partial or otherwise) reached to all parties, ■ clear communication of the plans to the government'. |
|--|

Source: WRR 1999: 61

Figure 17: Design principles for participatory policy making

3.4 The 'Plan' element of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

While the previous section discussed the foundations of PMM in strategic spatial planning as a whole, this section adds some details in relation to the 'plan' element of PMM which refers basically to the preparation of strategic spatial plans. As mentioned earlier, much has already been written about the preparation of the first round of PPG11-style RPGs³⁵. Therefore this study pays particular attention to the 'monitor' and 'manage' stages as well as the interplay of the three components of PMM. As far as the 'plan' element is concerned several points have already been made in the previous section, especially in connection to the role of strategic spatial planning as well the implications for planning processes and the function of plans. The following elaborates on two aspects of the 'plan' element which are particularly relevant for this study, namely the format and content of strategic spatial plans and the use of targets under PMM.

3.4.1 Format and content of strategic spatial plans

Given their role of providing long-term frameworks, and the uncertainties involved, strategic plans need to avoid a high level of detail and instead set out general principles for spatial development (Damme et al. 1997, Faludi 2000, Wenban-Smith 2002a). A plan is the interim product of an ongoing planning process, hence it needs to remain flexible and responsive to new information and changing circumstances. Responsiveness and flexibility have to be built directly into the plan itself (Wenban-Smith 2002a; see 3.6.1). To this end a strategic spatial plan should include both substantive and procedural norms

³⁵ E.g. Baker et al. 2003, Haughton and Counsell 2004, Marshall 2002a, 2002b, 2004, Marshall et al. 2002, Pattison 2001, Sennett 2002; see 1.2.

(Needham 2000). The former relate to *what* kind of spatial development is to take place, and a strategic plan should define the desired objectives or 'qualities' of the development of an area. The latter are about *how* the objectives and qualities are to be achieved and *by whom*. Therefore a strategic spatial plan should also set out the process and criteria for the 'manage' stage in which actors are to work towards the achievement of the objectives and qualities for spatial development (Albrechts 2004, Healey 2002, Vigar et al. 2000, Wenban-Smith 2002a).

Generally strategic spatial plans should focus on key issues and decision areas which need to be addressed at supra-local level (Albrechts 2004). The plans should specify future decision areas and choices, clarify contextual conditions for subsequent action, including relevant actors, and demonstrate possible ways ahead (Mastop 2000). As a plan represents a 'snapshot' which may often be overtaken by changing circumstances and new information, it should not be too detailed but rather be 'broad-brush and flexible enough to allow room for elaboration, deviation, and partial revision' (Needham et al. 1997: 874). Although there may be a need for a higher degree of specificity in some cases, in general, 'Spatial plans that are strategic usually specify the desired spatial order only in outline, for the agency that makes the strategic plan cannot ensure implementation in detail' (Needham 1997: 271). An example of how such an approach could be applied to policies in an RSS is provided below (see Figure 25).

3.4.2 The use of targets in strategic spatial planning

As mentioned before, the New Public Management school and successive governments have endorsed the use of quantified targets in the public sector. Such targets are to be used as tools for steering the provision of public services and for holding public bodies to account (Rogers 1999, Rouse 1999). The use of targets is attractive to politicians and higher-level managers as it offers a seemingly simple approach to dealing with complex issues in the sense of 'management by numbers' (Rogers 1999). As with other management techniques the use of targets can be *one* of a range of tools for managing public services. However, the use and potential benefits of targets need to be considered against the limitations and pitfalls expressed by various practitioners, academics and politicians (e.g. HoCPASC 2003, RSS 2003, 2005).

Due to the variety and complexities of public sector objectives and activities it can prove difficult to narrow planning objectives down to quantified targets and to establish links between targets and objectives (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). There is a risk in concentrating performance management and resources on those issues which can be easily measured and which are covered by targets, resulting in neglect of those issues which do not directly relate to the targets or cannot be measured easily in quantitative terms (HoCPASC 2003, Higgins et al. 2004, Pollitt 2003). Targets in the public sector often focus on issues around quantity and procedure but tend to disregard the quality of outcomes (Ahmad and Broussine 2003). At present performance management systems emphasise short-term targets and

immediate delivery and assessment but neglect longer-term goals, results and benefits (ibid., Imrie 1999). As far as Best Value in planning is concerned there has been a continuing concern that the targets and indicators used are limited to procedural issues such as the 'speed' of the development control system but fail to consider qualitative issues such as the appropriateness of decisions (Carmona 2003a, Carmona and Sieh 2004b, Cullingworth and Nadin 2002, Hull 2002, Imrie 1999; see Figure 18 and 3.5.3).

Source: Cowan in Planning 21 January 2005

Figure 18: Performance targets in planning I – (Non)Sense?

The use of quantified targets seems to suggest a direct relationship between a target and the activities of the public service in question. In reality, however, the links are often much more indirect and complex, and public bodies may not possess the level of control required to achieve the targets (Albrechts et al. 2003, Pollitt 2003, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Targets and incentive structures also run the risk of causing dysfunctions or 'perverse' effects, without improving the quality of services (de Bruijn 2002, Pidd 2005, Pollitt 2003). An organisation is likely to concentrate on achieving those targets against which its efforts will be assessed, while other areas may be neglected which may, however, be judged important from a professional perspective (Broadbent 2003, Pidd 2005, Wilson 2004). As service providers focus their activities on meeting targets, the actual needs and objectives which are to be met by the public service may get lost from sight (Gray 2004, see Figure 19).

The extensive use of targets – or 'Targetitis' as it has been called (Pollitt 2003) – may also result in 'measurement fatigue' among public bodies (Broadbent 2003). This can lead to forms of ritualistic compliance amongst those who are regulated, without any change in working practices or outcomes (Ashworth et al. 2002, Broadbent 2003). It has also been argued, that in the British public sector, target setting and performance management have been used more as a means of external, top-down control than for internal management purposes (Boyne et al. 2002, Hood et al. 2000, Rogers 1999). Performance targets tend to be set by central government with only limited involvement of those responsible for delivering the services which raises issues as regards the balance between national and local priorities as well as the neglect of local knowledge and the specific circumstances of the service in question (Carmona 2003a, Geddes and Martin 2000, Martin and Davis 2001, Rogers 1999). Having regard to the limitations involved some principles for the use and design of targets can be identified (see Figure 20).

Source: Cowan as reproduced in Carmona and Sieh 2004b

Figure 19: Performance targets in planning II – Perverse effects?

Design principles for the use of targets

Plurality of tools: Given the limitations involved targets should be seen as *one* of several tools which – in combination – can be used to manage public services. Targets should not be used in a simplistic way in the sense of 'management by numbers' (Rogers 1999).

Involvement: Targets need to be designed carefully, involving those responsible for their achievement and being accompanied by broader methods of judging performance (HoCPASC 2003).

Soundness: Performance targets need to have a sound basis, i.e. they need to be based on prior assessment of what can realistically be achieved within given timescales, taking account of existing evidence and the resources available (RSS 2003).

Uncertainty and complexity: In setting targets, especially where new policies are concerned, due consideration must be given to uncertainty about what may be achievable and about sources of variation in performance, as well as to the complex and dynamic context of service delivery (*ibid.*).

Specificity: Targets need to be specific to the particular circumstances of the service in question. Targets should not be simply cascaded down from national to lower levels (*ibid.*).

Implications: The detection of a deviation between targets and reality is not the end but the start of the assessment process in that it raises questions as to whether the deviation is significant, what are the underlying causes etc. (Wedgwood-Oppenheimer et al. 1975).

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 20: Design principles for the use of targets

3.5 The 'Monitor' element of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

'Monitoring' has been a long-standing issue in planning and, as mentioned above, is a key component of the PMM approach introduced by the current government. Recent work in England has looked at the use of indicators in monitoring (e.g. Morrison 2002, Morrison and Pearce 2000, Wong 2003) and methods for measuring 'quality' in planning (Carmona 2003a, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, 2004b, 2005)³⁶. There has also been fresh interest in monitoring elsewhere in planning³⁷. This section compares different approaches to monitoring in planning, discusses methodological and practical issues around monitoring and proposes principles for the use of monitoring in strategic spatial planning.

Monitoring and evaluation have been applied in planning for a long time. The 1960s and 1970s saw great interest in *ex-ante* evaluation which was used to compare alternative options during the preparation of

³⁶ This latter stream of work includes a critique of performance management systems such as Best Value introduced in the British public sector and planning in particular and strives to develop a more 'holistic' framework for judging 'quality' in planning. It provides useful reflections on the effects of the Best Value system on planning and proposes an improved system. However, the focus lies on local planning and development control and the approach seems to be very much concerned with defining and finding ways to 'measure' the 'quality' of planning in terms of its services, organisation and products. Monitoring seems to be seen rather from a public sector management angle and less as a tool for forward planning. Therefore the relevance for planning and monitoring at strategic level is somewhat limited.

³⁷ E.g. Albrechts et al. 2003, Birkmann 2003, Carmona 2003b, Hoering and Seasons 2004, Hull 2002, Hull et al. 2002, Miller 2003, Nankervis 2003, Schultz et al. 2003, Seasons 2003; see also 3.5.1 below.

plans (Booth and Jaffe 1978, Delft and Nijkamp 1977, Lichfield et al. 1975, Shefer and Voodg 1990). In particular since the mid 1970s *ex-post* evaluation or 'monitoring' has gained greater importance (Alexander 1986, Borri et al. 1997a, Shefer and Kaess 1990, Talen 1996a, 1996b, Taylor 1998). Here monitoring often performs a 'control' function as it is used to assess the implementation and impacts of existing plans and programmes to inform the review of policies or implementation activities. This view of monitoring has also been promoted by the New Public Management school (e.g. Hoering and Seasons 2004, Houghton 1997; see also 3.3.3). From the Strategic Choice perspective monitoring is a crucial tool for dealing with uncertainty in that it provides information about past and potential future developments and issues (Brown 1984, Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975, Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a).

3.5.1 Approaches to monitoring in planning

The introduction to this section has shown that there are various views on the function and purpose of monitoring in planning. Similarly, different approaches to monitoring can be identified depending on the functions assigned to planning and monitoring itself (cf. Alexander and Faludi 1989)³⁸. In what follows several approaches to monitoring in planning are discussed, i.e. *what* monitoring is about and *what* should be monitored.

Conformance vs. performance monitoring

Following the differentiation between 'blueprint' and 'framework' planning two monitoring schools can be distinguished, namely the 'conformance' and the 'performance' school³⁹. These differ from each other as regards the definition of what functions and 'impacts' of planning should be monitored. Under the conformance view (e.g. Talen 1996b, 1997) monitoring is about assessing whether or not real world developments conform with what is set out in the spatial plan in question. The test for the 'success' of the plan is whether it is implemented and whether the development 'on the ground' conforms with the plan (Alexander and Faludi 1989). This approach to monitoring has been criticised for taking a rather mechanistic view of the relationship between plans and real world developments as it suggests direct

³⁸ The variety of approaches to monitoring can be illustrated by a survey of different countries. In Switzerland, for example, target- and indicator-based monitoring, controlling and benchmarking systems have been introduced into spatial planning at the level of Cantons which draw heavily on public sector performance management thinking (e.g. Amt für Gemeinden und Raumordnung 2004, INFRAS et al. 2001, Keiner 2002, Keiner et al. 2001, Schultz et al. 2003). In Germany spatial observation systems are used in planning which again utilise indicators (Birkmann 2003). In contrast academics and practitioners in the Netherlands have developed a monitoring model which follows the principles of 'framework' planning and takes a specific view on the 'performance' of spatial planning (e.g. Coenen et al. 2002, Woltjer and Meynen 2001; see below).

³⁹ Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. (1975) make a distinction between three types of planning and control systems and related monitoring approaches. These are 'implementation monitoring' at the operational level of planning and control, 'impact monitoring' at the management level of control, and 'strategic monitoring' at the strategic level of planning and control. The first two types resemble the 'blueprint' and 'conformance' school in that they assume a high level of control over the implementation of plans and focus on assessing implementation and impacts of plans respectively. In contrast, as the understanding and control of the environment at the strategic level of planning is limited 'strategic monitoring' is about gathering information about the effects of past and existing policies and possible futures. This approach emphasises a future- and learning-oriented function of monitoring (see below). Alternatively, Alterman (1982) distinguishes between six types or 'modes' of planning which all have different implications for the relationship between planning and implementation and for the criteria for assessing implementation.

'means-ends' relationships and neglects the complexities and indirectness involved, especially as regards strategic spatial planning (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Even if a plan is implemented it may not have the desired effects, for example, as it may have undesired (and unpredicted) impacts or as circumstances may have changed since adoption of the plan (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1997, Floyd 1978). In turn, disconformity between planned and actual outcomes does not necessarily say much about whether a plan fulfils its purpose as the plan may be ignored or as other considerations may be regarded more important (Damme et al. 1997). More fundamentally, the conformance view can be criticised for concentrating on the assessment of the 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' of given policies (Fischer 1995). It neglects, however, to evaluate the appropriateness of these policies themselves and of the continuing correctness and relevance of the assumptions that underlay the original plan (ibid., Sanderson 2003, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975).

Dutch scholars especially have developed an alternative approach to monitoring, the so-called 'performance' view⁴⁰. Based on an understanding of strategic planning as 'planning as learning' the objects of monitoring are not primarily real world developments, but the decisions that are to be informed by a plan. In other words, 'As frames of reference for subsequent action, it is [the plans'] use not their outcome which needs prime attention' (Mastop 2000: 143). Hence monitoring has to examine to what extent a strategic plan influences the decisions of other actors, i.e. whether it helps decision makers to get a better understanding of the choices they face and whether the plan contributes to well informed, 'soundly-justified' decisions which are 'adequate' to the particular situation (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1997, Mastop 2000). Individual decisions may diverge from the plan, but this cannot necessarily be interpreted as a failure of the plan since decision-makers need to consider the specific circumstances of a decision and the changes in circumstances which may have occurred since adoption of the plan (Faludi 1987). A strategic plan is 'performing' when it informs these decisions and 'the quality of strategic plans must be measured in terms of the performance of plans in facilitating decision making' (Faludi 2000: 305).

However, the performance school may be criticised for concentrating too much on the 'usefulness' of plans for those who take decisions (cf. Mastop and Faludi 1997) and for paying insufficient attention to the final outcomes and to the objectives for spatial development set out in plans (Alexander and Faludi 1989). This view also underplays to some extent the formal power a strategic plan may have as, for example, an RSS is generally binding on local plans⁴¹. Therefore a middle way between the 'conformance' and 'performance' views has been suggested which combines elements of both approaches and 'where implementation [i.e. conformance] is still important but where, as long as outcomes are beneficial,

⁴⁰ See Damme et al. 1997, Driessen 1997, Faludi 1989, 2000, 2001, Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997, Lange et al. 1997, Mastop 1997, 2000, Mastop and Faludi 1997, Mastop and Needham 1997, Needham et al. 1997. However, the distinction between 'conformance' and 'performance' goes back to studies on the relationship between policy making and implementation (Barrett and Fudge 1981b).

⁴¹ Although it can also be argued that the inclusion of RSS policies in local plans does not ensure that these policies are actually implemented 'on the ground' since various factors shape the implementation, e.g. the extent to which development control decisions are taken in accordance with the local plan and whether other considerations are given more weight than plan policies etc.

departures from plans are viewed with equanimity' (ibid.: 127; see also 3.5.2). While paying due regard to the characteristics of strategic planning (and limitations regarding implementation, direct influence on subsequent decisions, and on the achievement of planning goals), monitoring should assess 'performance', 'implementation' and 'goal achievement' (Lange et al. 1997).

Monitoring plans and their outcomes vs. monitoring processes

There has been criticism that monitoring often focuses on the comparison of plans and outcomes 'on the ground'. It is argued that strategic planning is not only about the production of a plan document but also about the *processes* involved in preparing and using the plan (e.g. Borri et al. 1997b, Driessen 1997, Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997, Mastop and Needham 1997). Earlier strategic planning has been described as deliberative learning processes designed to lead to behavioural change among those actors involved (e.g. the concepts of *doorwerking* and *voorwerking*, see 3.3). Therefore more attention should be given to monitoring these processes and the interaction between plan makers and those actors who can help to implement the plan and to achieve its objectives respectively (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1997). This can lead to a better understanding of the forces that determine the outcomes of planning processes (such as the politics of policy making and implementation, and the different interests involved) and also why plans and policies are being implemented or not (Alexander and Faludi 1989, Khakee 1997, Mastop and Needham 1997, Shefer and Tsubari 1990). Specific criteria have been suggested for process-oriented monitoring which are described further below (see 3.5.2).

Past-/control- vs. future-/learning-oriented monitoring

Another view criticises the fact that monitoring has often been used merely as a past-oriented control activity, assessing implementation and impacts of plans in order to detect departures from the plans (Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). In the light of the characteristics of strategic spatial planning and the Strategic Choice approach monitoring should be much more oriented towards the future, with an emphasis on its 'learning' function (Brown 1984, Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). As part of a continuous planning process monitoring is about gathering information to reduce the uncertainties involved in planning. In this sense monitoring should, for example, aim to provide information about the state of the planning environment and the activities of relevant actors, disclose unforeseen events and anticipate future issues and areas of choice. This kind of future- and learning-oriented monitoring plays a vital role in informing policy making and implementation, raising awareness about issues and securing commitment of actors to planning (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975).

3.5.2 Methods for monitoring in planning

Corresponding to the above approaches to monitoring (i.e. *what* to monitor) different monitoring methods have been suggested (i.e. *how* to monitor). There is no common view on the methodology for monitoring in planning (Hull 2002) and in what follows some of the methodological issues in relation to different approaches to monitoring are discussed.

Conformance-/implementation-oriented method

A common method for monitoring in planning which has been frequently assigned to the conformance school uses indicators to compare the objectives in a plan with actual outputs, outcomes and impacts of planning (e.g. Hoering and Seasons 2004, Morrison and Pearce 2000, Wong 2003)⁴². This is seen as a useful method for the evaluation of complex systems as indicators help to reduce complexity. At the beginning planning objectives are specified which are then accompanied by (quantified) targets and indicators. The assessment stage comprises one or more of the following tests, namely 1) to what extent the plan is adhered to at lower levels (e.g. in local plans), 2) whether the plan is implemented 'on the ground' (e.g. number of houses built) and 3) whether the changes 'on the ground' have the desired effects in relation to the objectives of the plan (Needham 1997). It has been argued that monitoring should focus on intermediate outcomes (e.g. houses built or area of land reclaimed) as these are 'more tangible and hence usually measurable and relate more directly to the outputs of the planning system' (Morrison 2002: 98).

However, this methodological approach has been criticised for a number of reasons (see also 3.5.3). The relationship between plans (esp. those at strategic level) and implementation is more indirect and complex than the indicator model seems to imply. The emphasis on quantification through targets and indicators runs the risk of taking a somewhat simplistic view of the issues involved and focusing too much on the aspects represented by targets while neglecting others. At the strategic level, however, 'the monitoring function needs to be more concerned with the ability to perceive more quickly changes in the factors relevant to the Region, whether or not they had been considered during the planning stage' (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975: 12).

Performance-oriented method

According to the performance school 'strategic spatial plans must be evaluated, not primarily in the light of their material outcomes, but for how they improve the understanding of decision makers of present and future problems they face. Where having such plans increases this understanding, they may be said to perform their role, irrespective of outcomes' (Faludi 2000: 300). The method used for monitoring the

⁴² There has been great interest in the use of indicators for monitoring in planning both in Britain and abroad, see also e.g. Albrechts et al. 2003, Birkmann 2003, Carmona 2003b, Hemphill et al. 2004a, 2004b, Innes 1990, Morrison 2002.

performance of strategic planning examines the decisions of relevant actors in order to establish whether the plan and/or participation in the planning process have informed those decisions (ibid., Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994, 1997). Although conformance is not the final assessment criterion itself, it needs to be evaluated first if a decision conforms with the plan (Mastop and Faludi 1997). Those cases where decisions have been informed by the plan and also conform to it are a clear example of performance⁴³. If plan and decisions are not conforming with each other it needs to be examined how (if at all) the plan has influenced decision-making. The plan can still perform a useful function even though decisions are not being taken in conformity. For example, the plan can inform decision makers about the implications of their decisions which are then taken into account in making operational decisions (Faludi 2000, Mastop and Faludi 1997)⁴⁴.

According to the performance school evaluation needs to pay due regard to the (institutional, organisational, local etc.) context in which subsequent decisions and actions are undertaken 'if one wishes to understand fully why and how a policy and its implementation is successful or not' (Mastop 2000: 147). However, one of the main methodological difficulties of the performance-oriented method is to demonstrate causal relationships between plans and the decisions of actors. As mentioned earlier, the approach has also been criticised for not paying sufficient attention to the outcomes 'on the ground' and the achievement of planning objectives. Therefore a 'middle way' has been proposed which attempts to reconcile the conformance and performance perspectives (Alexander and Faludi 1989; see Figure 21). This approach, in turn, may be criticised for not necessarily overcoming the limitations of its two parent approaches and for its potentially high demands in terms of necessary information, resources and skills.

A middle way between conformance and performance monitoring?

The 'middle way' approach uses the following criteria to evaluate planning:

- (i) 'conformity', i.e. operational decisions and outcomes compared to policies and intentions,
- (ii) 'rational process', i.e. completeness of information use and *ex ante* evaluation, consistency in approach and participation of relevant actors,
- (iii) 'optimality *ex ante*' of a plan in terms of proposed means and ends,
- (iv) 'optimality *ex post*' of the plan, and
- (v) 'utilisation' of the plan as a frame of reference in subsequent decisions.

Source: Alexander and Faludi 1989

Figure 21: A middle way between conformance and performance monitoring?

⁴³ However, an important distinction has to be made between 'formal' and 'material' conformance. The former refers to 'the citation or restatement of, or reference to, the initial policies' whereas the latter concerns 'the extent to which the material contents' of the policies and decisions of different actors conform with the plan (Lange et al. 1997: 852).

⁴⁴ Alternatively, a three step approach to evaluating performance is possible where the former is seen as a prerequisite for the following step: 1) measurement of communication, i.e. 'the degree to which the agents addressed are aware of the policies under consideration', 2) measurement of conformance, i.e. 'whether objectives and goals in subsequent spatial plans of the other governmental bodies are the same as, or comparable with' the policies under consideration, and 3) measurement of use (or 'application'), i.e. 'whether the agents concerned in day-to-day decisionmaking make deliberate use of the policies' in the plan or of their own adopted variants (Lange et al. 1997: 848).

Process-oriented method

The process-oriented method analyses the nature of the planning process, its 'products' and the effects on those involved (see Figure 22). On the one hand attention is being paid to how actors are involved and interact with each other and whether certain procedural rules are followed. On the other hand process monitoring is to establish to what extent the planning process has influenced the thinking and actions of those involved (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1994). This includes, for example, whether actors have developed a shared understanding of relevant issues, to what extent the plan has entered into the thought worlds of actors and whether it is used by them in making decisions.

Criteria for evaluating collaborative planning

- (i) Level and nature of involvement of relevant actors and public participation,
- (ii) active organisation, support and facilitation of the planning process,
- (iii) development of a shared definition of the problem or task, joint search for solutions and reaching agreement through consensus,
- (iv) effects of the process on the relationship between actors (e.g. in terms of trust, working relations and arrangements, resolution of conflicts, coordination of activities), and
- (v) effects of the process on subsequent decisions of actors (e.g. inform plans and actions, implementation of plans).

Source: based on Alexander and Faludi 1989 and Margerum 2002

Figure 22: Criteria for evaluating collaborative planning

Future-/learning-oriented method

From a future-/learning-oriented perspective monitoring should shed light on several aspects which can inform policy making and implementation. Past developments and the impact of existing policies should be monitored in so far as getting an understanding of these issues can inform future decisions (Floyd 1978). Also, the assumptions that underlay the plan when it was produced should be examined in terms of correctness and continuing relevance (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). A key task from this perspective of monitoring is to identify areas and issues of future choice (e.g. land supply and demand, migration patterns) which then need to be kept under observation. Similarly, the development of the environment in which choices are taken needs to be observed and forecasted, including likely policies and actions of relevant actors. While numeric indicators can help to characterise this environment and its development, this type of monitoring has to draw to a large extent on 'softer' forms of information such as personal verbal exchanges, informal memoranda and personal judgements (Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975).

3.5.3 Monitoring in strategic planning – Issues and design principles

Against the backdrop of the different conceptual and methodological approaches to monitoring introduced above some key issues and problems in relation to monitoring in planning are now discussed. Subsequently principles for the design and use of monitoring in strategic spatial planning are developed.

Issues and limitations of monitoring

Monitoring (including New Public Management performance measurement⁴⁵) in planning and in the public sector in general are liable to various conceptual, methodological and practical problems (see e.g. Figure 23). These need to be recognized and considered when developing and using monitoring systems. 'Success' can be difficult to judge since public services like planning often have to fulfil multi-dimensional and sometimes conflicting objectives (Borri et al. 1997b, de Bruijn 2002, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Pollitt 2003, Wilson 2004). 'Performance' in the public sector can also be defined in several ways and different actors may have different views on what counts as 'good' or 'bad' performance which makes measurement complex and contestable (Boyne et al. 2002, McAdam et al. 2005, Voogd 1997).

Performance measurement possible	Performance measurement problematic
An organization has products	An organization has obligations and is highly value-oriented
Products are simple	Products are multiple
An organization is product-oriented	An organization is process-oriented
Autonomous production	Co-production: products are generated together with others
Products are isolated	Products are interwoven
Causalities are known	Causalities are unknown
Quality definable in performance indicators	Quality not definable in performance indicators
Uniform products	Variety of products
Environment is stable	Environment is dynamic

Source: de Bruijn 2002: 13

Figure 23: Conditions under which 'performance' measurement is possible and problematic

Especially conformance-oriented approaches seem to suggest simple direct lines of control between a plan and developments 'on the ground' (Faludi 2000, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). In reality the relationship is far more complex and indirect, for example, as the implementation of a plan relies on a variety of autonomous actors (de Bruijn 2002, Seasons 2003) and is affected by 'external' influences and constraints which are beyond the control or awareness of the public service in question (Andrews et al. 2005, Seasons 2003). Whereas present monitoring systems are often geared towards detecting change

⁴⁵ It is important to highlight that there are fundamental differences between the meaning of the term 'performance' as used by the 'performance school' of planning and the way the term 'performance' is used by the 'performance measurement and management school' in the context of public sector management. Whereas the former relates to how plans and planning processes inform subsequent decisions, the latter defines 'performance' as the implementation of plans and the achievement of specific targets which is, in essence, a 'conformance'-oriented approach (see 3.5.1). These differences need to be borne in mind and are highlighted where necessary in the following when using the term 'performance'.

immediately and facilitating short-term action, there can be a significant time-lag between the production of a plan and its implementation so that its effects can only be measured in the longer run (de Bruijn 2002, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Rouse 1999).

More fundamentally, though, monitoring in planning as in the whole public sector faces substantial methodological and practical problems due to the complexities and uncertainties involved. There is only an impartial understanding of causal relationships between planning and developments in reality (Alexander and Faludi 1989, Borri et al. 1997b, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, 2005, Morrison 2002, Wong 2003). Moreover it is often very difficult (or virtually impossible) to separate the effects of planning from those of other influences and contextual factors (Brown 1984, Hyndman and Eden 2002, Morrison 2002, Sanderson 2002, 2003, Seasons 2003, Wong 2003). However, such an understanding about causes and effects, and about the influence of different factors would be required to judge the 'performance' of planning and to inform policy making and implementation (Carmona and Sieh 2005, Sanderson 2000, 2003, Seasons 2003, Wilson 2004).

The emphasis on quantitative information and measurement which underlies much of the conformance- and indicator-based approaches entails several limitations and risks. Public services such as planning often fulfil a number of more general aims and objectives (e.g. liveability, safety, integration) which can be very difficult to quantify and measure (Broadbent 2003, de Bruijn 2002, Cullingworth and Nadin 2002, Morrison 2002). There is a risk that such monitoring over-emphasises those things that are quantifiable and easy to measure whilst neglecting other aspects of a public service which cannot be easily expressed in quantitative terms (Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Miller 2003, Seasons 2003). The explanatory power of quantified data may be limited if taken for itself and there is a danger that much data is collected but the information it contains is of limited value for policy making and practice (Hoering and Seasons 2004). This may result in an incomplete picture of the 'performance' of an organisation or service as important information, e.g. about the influence of different factors and the uncertainties involved, which is difficult to quantify, may not be considered (de Bruijn 2002, Rogers 1999, RSS 2003).

It has already been flagged up above that current performance management systems such as Best Value tend to be concerned largely with issues around economy, efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. speed of development control) but pay insufficient regard to quality issues (e.g. the quality of planning decisions) (Carmona 2003a, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, 2005, Hull 2002, Imrie 1999, Miller 2003). Public services are also highly process-oriented, e.g. need for consultation and negotiation, a characteristic which is not sufficiently recognised and valued in output-oriented monitoring systems (de Bruijn 2002). There is a concern that monitoring systems in the public sector in Britain have been determined too much in a top-down fashion, reflecting the priorities of central government and its strive for comparative data (Carmona 2003a, Carmona and Sieh 2004a). However, nationally determined indicators may be of limited value for

lower levels so that local planning and monitoring run the risk of turning into a 'tick box activity' (Imrie 1999: 112).

Monitoring is not just a technical activity for 'experts' but intrinsically includes political dimensions too (Hoering and Seasons 2004, Voogd 1997, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Many of the decisions which are made in, and the conclusions that are drawn from, monitoring can be highly political, for example, whose objectives and values are used for monitoring, how conflicting objectives are treated or who is to be held accountable when planned effects are not achieved. It needs to be recognised that policy making and monitoring are often based on value judgements and thus contain subjective and political elements (Borri et al. 1997b, Khakee 1997).

There are other practical limitations too. In the public sector monitoring has to compete with other tasks (e.g. plan production, development control) and it often takes the back-seat as resources are limited (in terms of time, staff, financial resources etc.) and/or as other planning tasks are (perceived to be) more important or more pressing (Seasons 2003, Wong 2003). Some have also identified a lack of expertise and skills in planning and monitoring, not only amongst the 'professionals' but also among other participants such as politicians (Seasons 2003). In addition, monitoring is impeded by problems in the availability of data such as data inconsistencies over time and in-between local authorities (Ashworth et al. 2002, Carmona 2003b, Seasons 2003, Wong 2003). Finally, there are issues in relation to organisational cultures and attitudes towards monitoring, including a lack of interest in, or priority given to, monitoring as well as a reluctance to understand and apply monitoring as a tool for learning (Pollitt 2003, Seasons 2003).

Design principles for monitoring in strategic spatial planning

Despite these issues and pitfalls monitoring can still play a vital role in planning. The previous discussion of problems of monitoring has already provided clues about how monitoring can be applied to public services. Building on this discussion, some principles are now defined which should guide the design and use of monitoring in strategic spatial planning. An overarching principle is that monitoring systems need to be specific to the activity they are applied to and to the purpose they are to serve. Often 'one-size-fits-all' solutions are not desirable as monitoring should be tailored to specific purposes, priorities and circumstances (HoCPASC 2003, Hoering and Seasons 2004, Pollitt 2003, Rogers 1999). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the characteristics of strategic spatial planning such as its role, the complexities, uncertainties and level of control involved in strategic planning as well as the resulting requirements for monitoring (Brown 1984, Mastop 1997; see 3.3). A more realistic and pragmatic approach to monitoring has been advocated (Hoch 2002) which recognises the inherent limitations of monitoring and pays due regard to factors such as prevailing political and administrative cultures, the existence of different views on the objectives and 'performance' of planning, and the resources and skills available (also Pollitt 2003).

As far as strategic spatial planning is concerned monitoring should serve both a control and a learning function. The former relates to the appropriateness and achievement of planning objectives and policies, including issues about accountability⁴⁶. Bearing in mind the limitations of the 'conformance' view monitoring should not only ask 'if' policy is implemented or not but also 'how' and 'why' (Barrett 2004, Barrett and Fudge 1981c)⁴⁷. In this respect it is important to take account of the context in which public policy is made and implemented and how this context affects process of policy formulation and implementation (Schofield and Sausman 2004). Besides the evaluation of policy outcomes (what can be called 'first-order' evaluation) there needs to be an assessment of the appropriateness of underlying policy goals ('second-order' evaluation) (Fischer 1995). As mentioned earlier, monitoring at strategic level should have a very strong information gathering and learning function (Brown 1984, Floyd 1987, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). This includes learning about the effects of existing plans and their continuing relevance but also, very importantly, gathering information to reduce uncertainty, identify unforeseen problems and opportunities and new issues that need to be addressed. Within the framework of these overarching principles for the design and use of monitoring in strategic spatial planning some more detailed design principles should be followed (see Figure 24).

⁴⁶ Against the background of issues around 'accountability' and 'legitimacy' in planning Alexander (2002a, 2002b) reflects on what criteria should be used to evaluate planning. He proposes the idea of 'planning rights' which include 'transparency', 'consistency', 'human dignity', 'equality', 'property' or 'public interest'.

⁴⁷ Barrett (2004) argues that under the managerialist approach to the public services (see also Ch. 2.3) policy evaluation has focused too narrowly on measuring outcomes and that a better balance between outcome-/conformance- and performance-centred view was needed. Also more attention needed to be paid to understanding and explaining the processes of policy making and implementation (also Barrett and Fudge 1981c). This includes the factors which affect the formulation of policy and the translation of policy into action, e.g. the different interests involved as well as the organisational, political, social and economic circumstances. Such an approach can lead to a deeper and better understanding of the (non)effects of policy.

Design principles for monitoring in strategic spatial planning

Selectivity: Instead of taking a 'broad brush' approach or dealing with those aspects which are simple to assess strategic monitoring needs to be selective and concentrate on issues of strategic importance (Floyd 1978, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Such a selection needs to be based on a clear understanding of the purpose and key objectives of strategic planning and of issues of particular relevance for strategic planning (Hoering and Seasons 2004).

Triangulation: In order to overcome the limitations of individual types of information monitoring needs to draw on different sorts and sources of information, both quantitative and qualitative (Brown 1984, Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Seasons 2003). Quantitative measurement may act as a 'trigger', 'signal' or 'tin-opener' by giving an initial assessment which then needs to be analysed in more depth, often by using qualitative measures and interpretation (de Bruijn 2002, Hoering and Seasons 2004, Pollitt 2003). 'Practical wisdom' and 'informal' tacit knowledge can be valuable sources of information, e.g. as regards interrelationships, local circumstances and the influence of specific factors (Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Hoch 2002, Sanderson 2003).

Making meaning: The collection of information should not be an end in itself but rather the starting point for further analysis (Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Flynn 2002). The information needs to be interpreted and given a 'meaning', e.g. why have certain objectives not been achieved, what factors have led to observed developments or what uncertainties are involved (Andrews et al. 2005). Such investigation of the 'reality behind the numbers' needs to be accompanied by an analysis of the 'reality beyond the numbers', i.e. discover issues which are not expressed by the data but which provide further insights into the issues in question (cf. Pollitt 2003).

Indicators: The role of indicators is to contribute to the explanatory process rather than to provide exact numbers about the 'performance' of a public service (Rouse 1999). They should be used as 'screening devices' and not be over-interpreted (RSS 2003). Indicators need to be carefully selected and used⁴⁸.

Use of monitoring: Monitoring should not be primarily about measurement and auditing with a focus on data gathering, but should be used as a management tool to inform policy making and implementation, e.g. explain past and anticipate future developments and identify policy implications (Hoering and Seasons 2004, Radnor and McGuire 2004). The reporting of monitoring information should not be an end-point in the process but rather a basis for discussion with actors, e.g. to seek further information and to get a fuller picture of the impacts of planning and future issues (Floyd 1978).

Impact: The results of monitoring may still be interpreted differently by different actors and thus may have multidimensional or even contradictory impacts (Broadbent 2003, RSS 2003). In reporting the results it needs to be made clear what the data means, how it is to be interpreted and what uncertainty exists so that no invalid conclusions are drawn. A balance needs to be found

⁴⁸ Useful detailed advice on the design and use of performance indicators can be found elsewhere (e.g. RSS 2003, 2005). This includes the preparation of a PM protocol which addresses issues such as clear definitions of indicators, how they are to be used and for what, the uncertainties and potential side-effects involved in using indicators, users of and contributors to monitoring as well as the data and resource requirements. This work also draws attention to issues around the potential of indicators to identify change and the impact of policies, the availability and quality of data and the uncertainties and context-dependency involved in performance monitoring. In general, indicators need to possess the 'statistical potential' to identify changes (which are caused by policies/actions) within the intended timescales, their 'technical properties' need to be adequate (response rate, precision, unambiguity etc.), they should be sufficiently disaggregated and not impose an undue burden on those providing the information (RSS 2003). To get a full picture of performance a mix of different indicators should be used, e.g. short- and long-term, process, output and context, effectiveness and equity indicators (de Bruijn 2002). Whilst there may be some benefits of having comparable data which can be aggregated at higher levels indicators should be tailored above all to local circumstances and priorities (Carmona and Sieh 2004a). There should also be some degree of stability in terms of the indicators which are used in order to obtain consistent time series (ibid.).

between keeping information transparent and understandable without omitting important information which is necessary to judge and understand 'performance'.

Integration of monitoring: It is important that monitoring is not carried out as an independent activity but it must be fully integrated into the planning and implementation process (Hoering and Seasons 2004, Seasons 2003, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). In the PMM approach monitoring plays a key role in tracking the implementation of policies and in informing policy review and operational decisions. Monitoring needs to be institutionalised, e.g. by setting up a formal monitoring group or unit, which also helps to raise the profile, standing and influence of monitoring (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Moreover monitoring in planning should be linked to other data collection and monitoring activities, e.g. strategic environmental assessment, in order to share information and experience and avoid duplication (Carmona and Sieh 2004a, Hull 2002, Lichfield 1997).

Multiple interests: Monitoring should not be seen as a purely technical exercise but attention needs to be paid to the existence of a multitude of interests, values, objectives, views and interpretations (Boyne et al. 2002, Hoch 2002, Rouse 1999). Therefore questions need to be asked, for example, as to who defines what counts as 'good/bad performance' and how it is to be judged and not only 'what works' but 'what works for whom and in what circumstances' (Solesbury 2002: 94; see 2.5.2).

Deliberative practices: Monitoring should be based on deliberative practices and dialogue between relevant actors (Fischer 1995, 2003, Hajer and Wagenaar 2003b). To this end monitoring should provide a framework for deliberative evaluation where different views and interpretations come together to come to a shared understanding of issues (Hoch 2002)⁴⁹. 'Meaning-making' should not be the monopoly of a single actor but rather involve various actors (de Bruijn 2002). The Strategic Choice approach emphasises the need for interaction between different actors, e.g. to deal with uncertainty and complexity (Bryson et al. 2004, Friend and Hickling 1987, Friend and Jessop 1969). For example, deliberative practices allow to draw on practical wisdom and local knowledge of actors (Sanderson 2003). In addition to the provision and interpretation of information, actors should also be involved in discussing actions to follow from monitoring (Floyd 1978). The involvement of actors in the monitoring process can raise awareness and have a learning function for those involved (Owens et al. 2004, Shefer and Tsubari 1990). The aim should be to establish and institutionalise 'interpretative communities' in which actors' knowledges and understandings come together, i.e. 'developing arenas and forums in which knowledge can be debated and interpreted in relation to relevant policy issues' (Fischer 2003: 222).

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 24: Design principles for monitoring in strategic spatial planning

3.6 The 'Manage' element of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

This section is about the 'manage' component of PMM. Much of what has already been discussed in the previous sections (3.3 to 3.5) also applies to this PMM element. This includes the remarks about the format and content of strategic spatial plans and the arrangements and processes in PMM. This section

⁴⁹ Deliberative evaluation practices can also help to understand the nature of social action, including the links between actors' values and motives and their actions (Fischer 1995). Against the background of issues around the social construction of information and knowledge (see 2.5) deliberative practices can also improve the openness and transparency of evaluation in that different knowledges and viewpoints are made explicit.

adds some more details on the 'manage' component. First, it discusses different understandings of, and approaches to, the 'manage' element. Second, some additional points are raised in respect of arrangements for 'managing' in PMM.

3.6.1 Approaches to 'Managing' in strategic spatial planning

As mentioned earlier (see 3.2.4), the 'manage' approach laid down in government policy needs to be distinguished to some extent from another approach which is said to follow more closely the ideas of Strategic Choice (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a). The government's approach envisages a continuous and responsive process of preparing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing an RSS (ODPM 2004a: para 2.1). In essence, such responsiveness is to be achieved above all through the revision of an RSS. 'An important aspect of the new arrangements is the flexibility to update components of the RSS to reflect changing circumstances, reinforcing the new plan, monitor and manage approach. The ability to focus on specific sub regional policy areas and to be able to undertake partial reviews, as opposed to revising the entire RSS, allows RPBs to respond quickly to changing priorities for development in their area' (ODPM 2005f: para 2.3). Thus, in order to make regional planning more responsive the government has sought to 'speed-up' the process of revising RSSs by introducing a target timetable and by promoting the use of fast-track selective reviews.

The emphasis on 'management as strategy review' is also evident in the government's view of the main purpose and consequences of monitoring (see 3.2.4). According to government policy, monitoring should assess primarily the implementation of an RSS. Such monitoring should, above all, inform or result in the revision of an RSS, especially in those cases where policies and targets have not been met (ODPM 2004a: para 3.9, 2005f: para 3.1)⁵⁰. As far as the frequency of an RSS revision is concerned, PPS11 argues against fixed five-year review cycles and states that RSSs should be revised 'periodically' in a way which is responsive to certain triggers (ODPM 2004a: para 2.1). These review triggers include the results of monitoring – particularly in the case 'that policies in the existing RSS are not working as they should' – and 'changes in national policy' (*ibid.*).

The government's approach has been criticised for only pretending to institute a flexible planning process (Wenban-Smith 1999, 2002a). Although housing numbers, as one example, are now expressed in annual figures an RSS still makes provision for the whole plan period of 15-20 years which can only be altered through a strategy review. In essence, that means housing numbers are fixed at least until the next review of the RSS. This approach, however, is unlikely to be sufficiently responsive to changing circumstances

⁵⁰ Although government guidance on RSS monitoring also states that monitoring should examine both the need to revise an RSS and to adjust implementation activities (ODPM 2005f: para 3.3) there still seems to be a bias towards an understanding of 'managing' as primarily about the review of an RSS. For example, PPG11 stated that monitoring should check 'whether the strategy is working and if any changes are necessary to it' (DETR 2000b: para 16.01) and this approach has been kept in present government policy and guidance (see ODPM 2004a: para 3.9, 2005f: para 3.1).

given the long timescales involved in reviewing an RSS (ibid.)⁵¹. The government seeks to address this problem mainly by pushing towards a reduction in the time required for an RSS revision. The feasibility of this attempt has been questioned on the grounds that the level of responsiveness which is necessary to deal with uncertainties and changing circumstances cannot be achieved through a revision of an RSS and because of the significant resource demands of a review-based approach (ibid.).

Therefore an alternative way of achieving a sufficient degree of responsiveness has been suggested which is based on the Strategic Choice approach (ibid.). This aims to make planning responsive without the need to review the strategic plan by drawing on a distinction between *strategy* and *tactics* (see 3.3.2). Here responsiveness is not to be achieved through a plan review but it should rather be built into the regional plan itself. As the plan needs to be robust to uncertainty and changing circumstances it should avoid a high level of detail which only a plan review can alter. A strategic spatial plan should therefore set out 1) the intended long-term pattern of spatial development and 2) the process of how to achieve this pattern, i.e. the principles for managing change (Wenban-Smith 2002a; see Figure 25). Within this strategic framework much of the management element of PMM would be left to the local planning level, for example, 'real time' assessment of actual housing need and responsive decisions on the required scale of land release (see also 3.3.4). This 'manage' approach relies heavily on the use of 'up-to-date information in real time' to inform tactical decisions (ibid.: 46). There are, however, issues around the feasibility of such an approach, for example, as regards the availability of the necessary information in 'real time' (Wenban-Smith 1999).

Strategy and Tactics – An example of managing housing provision

- (i) In relation to planning for housing an RSS should outline the intended long-term amount of housing development and its distribution between sub-regions but 'the rate of development required and the consequential need to release land depend on factors which cannot be forecast with confidence more than a very few years ahead'.
- (ii) Therefore the strategic plan 'should not seek to fix a rate, but should establish the process by which the appropriate rate should be regularly assessed and set on a rolling basis'. The strategic plan should set the principles for managing the identification and release of land.
- (iii) Within this strategic framework the actual identification and release of land for housing is undertaken at the local level in response to up-to-date information about the level and type of land supply and housing need, available resources etc. Mechanisms such as phasing of land release are used to control the rate, type and location of development.

Source: based on Wenban-Smith 2002a: 45-46

Figure 25: Strategy and Tactics – An example of managing housing provision

⁵¹ Although one could argue that the government's approach leaves much of the 'managing' to the local level (e.g. phased release of land) the high level of prescription in RSSs (esp. as regards housing numbers) means that responsiveness at regional level still requires the review of an RSS.

3.6.2 Arrangements for 'Managing' in strategic spatial planning

In terms of the arrangements for 'managing' much of what has been said in previous sections (esp. at 3.3.4) also applies to the 'manage' element of PMM. As with the 'planning' and 'monitoring' stages 'managing' is not the task of a single organisation but requires the involvement and action of a variety of actors. At this point one more aspect needs to be addressed in terms of the arrangements for 'managing' and PMM as a whole. This relates to the linkages and interplay between the 'manage' and the other elements of PMM. The much quoted 'plan-implementation dichotomy' can be seen, at least to some extent, as a result of a preoccupation of plan and policy makers with policy making and a lack of attention being paid to implementation and monitoring (Mastop 1997). Similarly the relationship between monitoring on the one hand and policy making and implementation on the other hand has been described as a missing link (Hoering and Seasons 2004, Seasons 2003). Often monitoring and research activities are conducted in isolation and not used sufficiently to inform policy review and implementation activities. Although a significant amount of information is collected, its relevance for policy and implementation is sometimes low (Innes 2002).

An approach which follows the Strategic Choice concept and the view of 'managing' described above relies greatly upon a close interplay between the three elements of PMM. They should not be treated as separate activities but decision making and monitoring need to go hand-in-hand in a continuous process (Friend and Hickling 1987, Hoering and Seasons 2004, Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975). Therefore there needs to be 'a strategy for assuring that the information would be integrated into actual policy making' and a stronger focus 'on the process by which information can make a difference or on understanding how policy making actually works' (Innes 2002: 103). This needs to be reflected in the organisational and procedural arrangements for PMM and its component parts. Also monitoring and research activities need to be conducted with the users and the policy making and implementation process in mind to ensure the collected information is 'useful' and 'useable' (Solesbury 2002).

3.7 Summary

Following the description of the *macro* dimension of the study in Ch. 2, this chapter has established the *micro* level of the investigation. This has completed the theoretical and conceptual background to the study. Whereas the *macro* level defined the broader context in which regional planning operates, the *micro* perspective has introduced the conceptual, theoretical and practical underpinnings of PMM in regional planning. At the beginning of this chapter the present shape of regional planning in England was outlined in terms of organisational and procedural arrangements. Changes to the instruments of regional planning, namely the shift from land use planning to spatial planning and the introduction of statutory RSSs were also highlighted.

Subsequently the chapter has provided, for the first time, a comprehensive discussion of the development and current state of government policy on PMM in regional planning. The origins of the government's approach to PMM have been traced back to debates around planning for housing in the late 1990s when PMM was introduced to overcome practical and political problems in the 'predict and provide' model. A central argument of this study is that with the publication of PPG 11 in October 2000 a 'mainstreaming' of the PMM approach has occurred in that key characteristics of the model developed in the field of housing are now applied to regional planning as a whole. In essence, regional planning is to become more flexible and responsive by creating a continuous process of plan making, implementation, monitoring and review.

As Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of the broader context in which regional planning operates, the introduction of PMM into regional planning has also been linked to recent reforms of the planning system and related initiatives in England since 1997. This has covered the effects of the 'Modernising Planning' agenda for 'speeded-up' planning processes, and the impacts of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* with its emphasis on implementation and monitoring of RSSs. In addition, the growing importance of the 'delivery' of housing numbers in the wake of the 'Barker I' agenda, and simultaneous developments in the management of public services such as performance management have had implications for regional planning.

Building on this, theoretical approaches to PMM and its component parts have been discussed in the second half of this chapter (3.3 to 3.6). Particular attention has been paid to the purpose and characteristics of strategic spatial planning. One of the key challenges for strategic planning is the treatment of uncertainty. The Strategic Choice approach has been discussed as a way of dealing with uncertainty and being able to react to changing circumstances. This has been translated into a theory of PMM which, by distinguishing between *strategic* and *tactical* elements of planning, aims to achieve responsiveness through operational decisions guided by longer-term strategy. This, as has been shown, differs from the PMM approach set out in government policy which seeks to be responsive through fast strategy review. In addition, the three component parts of 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' have been treated in more detail. This introduced issues around the content and format of plans, and the use of targets in regional planning. In discussing different approaches to, and methods for, monitoring in spatial planning their strengths and limitations have been highlighted, resulting in the identification of principles for the design and use of monitoring.

As explained earlier, the theoretical framework developed in sections 3.3 to 3.6 of this chapter and in particular the design principles have been used in the study 1) as criteria for investigating the practice of PMM in the empirical work (i.e. current practice has been assessed against these theoretical issues and design principles, see Chs. 4 to 6), 2) to explain observed practice (see Ch. 7) and 3) to inform the development of recommendations for improved policy on, and practice of, PMM (see Ch. 8).

PART THREE – Empirical Investigation

4 'Plan, Monitor and Manage': Practice across England

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the practice of PMM in English regional planning since the introduction of this approach in the late 1990s/early 2000s. While the two subsequent chapters (Chs. 5 and 6) provide comprehensive accounts of the situation in two regions, this chapter aims to establish an overarching background by illustrating how PMM is undertaken and what implications this approach has across England. In addition to giving a national picture, this element of the empirical work has also been used to identify and test issues for more detailed investigation in the two case studies. The work on the practice of PMM across the country is also applied later to place observations made in the case study regions into a broader perspective (see Chs. 5, 6 and esp. 7).

This chapter draws mainly on the accounts, experiences and expectations of key actors involved in regional planning, namely RPBs and GORs. It is largely based on the results of a questionnaire survey of regional planners of all eight RPBs and GORs (see 1.4 and Appendix 2). It treats the arrangements for regional planning in the eight regions (4.1) and specific issues about the three component parts of PMM (4.2 to 4.4). Furthermore, some light is shed on the experience to date and future expectations in relation to PMM as a whole (4.5). While the primary focus of attention is on regional planning, the survey has also been used to obtain a concise overview of strategy making, implementation and monitoring activities of RDAs and Regional Observatories (ROs). This work has been applied to provide further insights which help to explain and aid the development of PMM in regional planning. As the overall focus of this chapter and the study is on PMM in regional planning, the text and figures in this chapter concentrate on the results of the RPB and GOR survey, whilst material from the RDA and RO survey is used mainly in the text.

The survey consisted of questionnaires which were sent to and filled in by the respondents (see Appendix 2). The questionnaires mainly comprised closed questions in order to ensure as high a degree of comparability of responses as possible. However, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide comments and further explanation. In fact, many respondents made use of this and provided further insights, several of which have been included as direct quotes in this chapter. The results of the questionnaire survey represent the situation across England in mid-2004 and thus need to be seen as a snapshot at that time. In what appears to be a fast moving field, significant developments both at national level and in regional practice have occurred subsequently⁵². However, the chapter provides valuable insights into the practice of PMM across England and, as such, the basis for the case study investigation and the analysis and conclusions which follow later in this thesis.

⁵² For example, the provisions made in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* have come into force only after the survey was conducted. Also, as is shown in the detailed case study accounts below, the practice of PMM in the regions has continued to develop.

4.1 Arrangements for planning in the regions

The previous chapters have alluded to issues and requirements in respect of the arrangements and resources for regional planning entailed by adoption of a PMM approach. Therefore a brief overview of the arrangements for regional planning in the regions and of the shape of two of the main organisations responsible for regional planning, namely RPBs and GORs, is provided at this point. In mid-2004 the size of planning teams at the RPBs (i.e. Regional Assembly secretariats) ranged between five and sixteen (full time equivalent) members of staff who were responsible for the preparation, review, implementation and monitoring of RPG (often including administrative staff)⁵³. The variation in the size of RPB planning teams can be explained to some extent by the fact that some regions have adopted more decentralised working arrangements in which RPG work is undertaken to a larger extent by other organisations, especially by local authorities (see below). In comparison, planning teams at most GORs comprised between two and four, with in one region, six staff involved in preparing, reviewing and monitoring RPG. However, not all of these staff at GORs work full time on RPG matters, their involvement varies over time, depending particularly on overall work pressures and priorities (e.g. the demand on GORs is particularly high during the EiP and Proposed Changes stages). In some GORs regional planning staff also work on other matters and, conversely, members from other GORs teams may take on RPG work at certain points⁵⁴.

As regards the amount of time spent by planning teams at the RPBs on the different tasks involved in PMM there are differences between regions, and very importantly, variations over time, largely depending on the stage in the RPG process. A common feature is that RPB staff frequently contribute to different tasks and change between areas over time, often working in those areas where work is most pressing. For example, the workload involved in the review of RPG is often so high that staff resources at RPB planning teams are concentrated in this area, which implies a shift away from other activities such as monitoring. Generally, in most regions work on preparing or reviewing RPG took up the bulk of the overall staff work time at the RPBs. As at mid 2004 most RPBs also worked on the implementation of RPG, although the amount of time spent on this task was still significantly less than on review work. The staff resources dedicated to monitoring varied between regions and over time but generally this is the area on which the smallest amount of time (and smallest number of staff) was spent overall.

⁵³ If not stated otherwise, the figures in this chapter are based on the questionnaire survey which represents the situation as at mid 2004. Several respondents highlighted that some of these figures were rough estimates, e.g. the exact number of staff was sometimes difficult to calculate. As the survey was undertaken before the 2004 Act, which led to the replacement of RPGs with RSSs, came into force most of this chapter refers to RPG, apart from those occasions in which the questionnaires asked specifically about (forthcoming) RSSs.

⁵⁴ In comparison to this, the RDAs employ between two to ten (full time equivalent) staff with a main responsibility for preparing and reviewing RESs, although in some cases these are supported by staff from other teams during the review process. In addition to this between three to eight (full time equivalent) members of staff are responsible for monitoring the RDAs activities. However, this relates mostly to monitoring the RDAs core activities and a significantly higher number of people are involved in programme and project monitoring (e.g. in one RDA overall around 50 staff are involved in monitoring).

Within the national legal and policy requirements each region has set up its specific arrangements for regional planning. There is some variation between regions in terms of the formal working structures, the role of local authorities and other organisations and the involvement of regional actors in different activities of PMM. On the whole local authorities and other regional actors either take a leading role or are involved on a continuous basis in many of the RPG related activities. In some regions the RPB planning teams are rather small and have more a coordinating, steering or facilitating function, while local authorities and other actors undertake much of the actual RPG work, especially in the RPG preparation and review. Other regions have adopted more centralised arrangements in which the RPB conducts more work in-house, often with advice from 'technical' or 'stakeholder' working groups. Nearly all RPBs have set up advisory or working groups in one way or another which include elected members and/or technical staff from local authorities and other regional organisations. These undertake work and/or provide advice, for example, on specific topics or issues during the review of RPG. As far as different tasks of PMM are concerned, generally speaking, regional actors are more strongly involved in the preparation and review of RPG, whereas their involvement in monitoring is less strong. Asked about their level of engagement in the RPG process GORs mostly stated that they are strongly involved in the preparation and review of RPG, especially after the submission of draft RPG, and significantly less in implementation and monitoring work⁵⁵.

4.2 The 'Plan' element

In the previous chapter the use of targets in the public sector, particularly in planning, and the implementation of planning have been identified as important issues in strategic spatial planning (see 3.4.2). Therefore regional planners at RPBs and GORs were asked about their views on targets and implementation in the post-2000 model of regional planning in England.

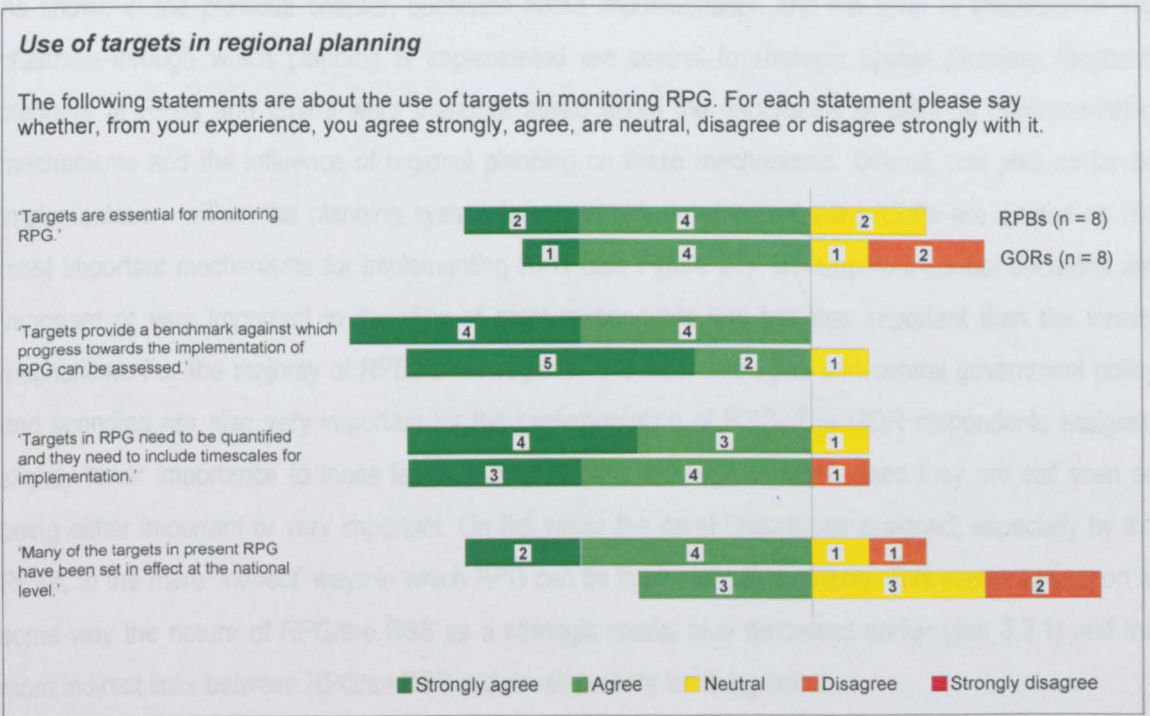
4.2.1 Role of targets

As regards the role of targets the large majority of RPB and GOR respondents thought that targets are 'essential' for monitoring RPG (see Figure 26). There was also a very high level of agreement from both RPBs and GORs that targets provide benchmarks against which progress towards the implementation of RPG can be assessed, and that targets in RPG need to be quantified and include timescales for implementation. However, whereas overall targets are seen as important tools in RPG monitoring, several respondents highlighted issues and problems involved in setting and using targets (concerns about the

⁵⁵ However, the level of GOR involvement varies between regions. According to their own assessment, a small number of GORs is strongly involved in all stages of the PMM process (e.g. as members of working groups), whereas in most regions GORs are more involved in preparation and review and less in implementation and monitoring work.

use of targets have also been voiced, even to a larger extent, in the related survey of RDAs⁵⁶). In the view of some RPB and GOR respondents it is easier to set quantified targets for some aspects of RPG but other objectives or aspects are more difficult to measure in quantitative terms. This, these respondents suggested, can be due to the absence of necessary data or, more fundamentally, since the issues in question and the desired outcomes of planning are difficult to quantify.

In this respect one GOR respondent commented that 'not everything which is important can be measured and not everything which can be measured is important'. Another GOR respondent highlighted difficulties in setting targets and explained that 'Targets are difficult as to be useful they must be realistic and take account of many aspects that may not be known when targets are set. E.g. 60 % new built houses on PDL [previously developed land] is fine as a sound bite but too often is set without any local context – it can be used as an aspirational baseline but if a region has little PDL then it gives a false picture'. On the one hand, several respondents therefore saw a need for using 'qualitative' or 'directional' targets. On the other hand, the last quote also expresses a need to consider local circumstances and the risks involved in a simple cascading of targets down the planning hierarchy.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 26: Use of targets in regional planning

⁵⁶ Whereas the majority of RPB and GOR respondents said that targets are essential for monitoring there was much less support for this among RDA respondents with the majority of respondents being neutral or disagreeing. One RDA respondent commented that 'Targets should be used to focus priorities and drive behaviour. However, their value is limited. Much of what RDAs do is qualitative and cannot be measured by metrics'. Another RDA respondent highlighted the 'Difficulty in measuring the attribution from output to outcome level, esp. since outcomes are regional over which RDAs only have limited influence'. These quotes, which to some extent could also apply to regional planning, highlight the complexities involved in implementing strategies and the difficulties of this for assessing the influence of a single organisation on observed developments.

In fact, there were marked differences between RPB and GOR respondents in terms of the influence of different governmental levels on targets in RPGs. Six out of eight RPB respondents strongly agreed or agreed that many of the targets in RPGs had been set in effect at the national level. In contrast, only three out of eight GOR respondents agreed to this, while the rest were neutral or disagreed. The use of targets is also widespread among RDAs and the related survey of RDAs showed that, similar to the views of RPB respondents, there was large support for the statement that many of the targets in the RESs had been set in effect at national level. In addition, the majority of RDA respondents agreed that targets set by central government are used as a means of ensuring coverage of national policy and targets in the RESs⁵⁷. Overall there appears to be a feeling among RPBs and RDAs that many of the targets cascade down from national level. This raises questions about what level targets are set and by whom, and also about what issues and whose agendas and priorities the targets represent. These matters will be picked up again in more detail in the following chapters.

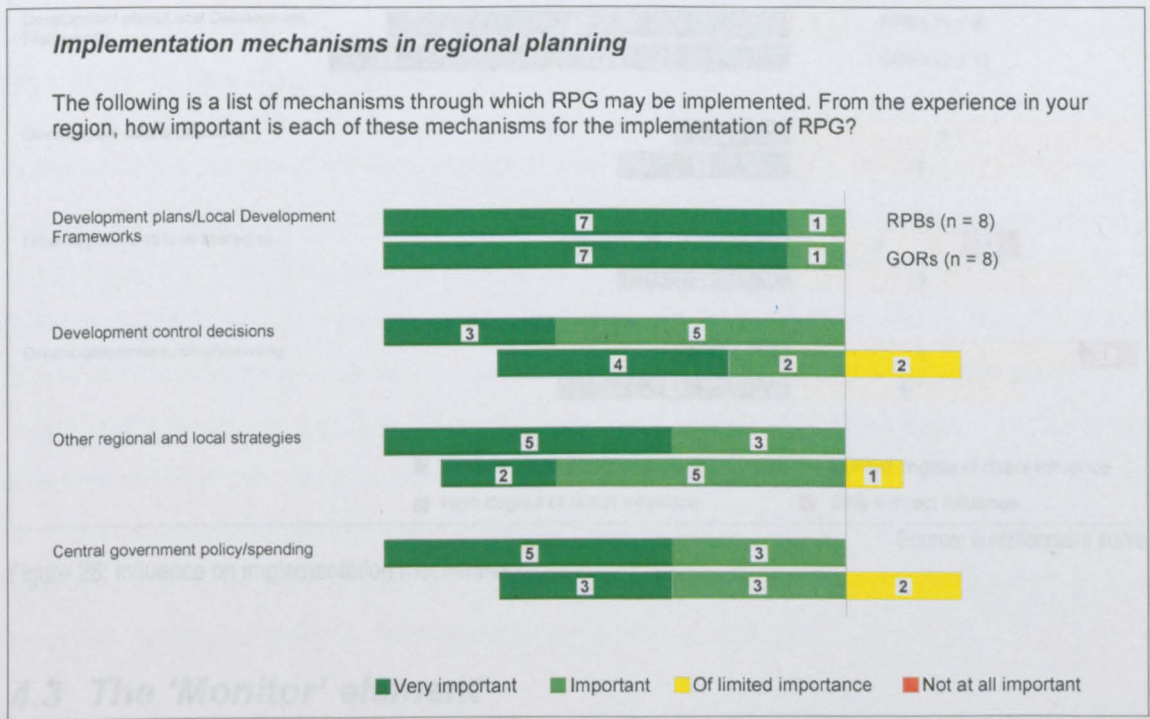
4.2.2 Implementation in regional planning

As shown in the previous chapter, questions about implementation and the level of influence on the channels through which planning is implemented are central to strategic spatial planning. Regional planners at RPBs and GORs were therefore asked about the importance of different implementation mechanisms and the influence of regional planning on these mechanisms. Overall, and also as far as implementation 'within' the planning system is concerned, development plans/LDFs are viewed as the most important mechanisms for implementing RPG (see Figure 27). Development control decisions are important or very important in the view of most respondents too, but less important than the former mechanism. For the majority of RPBs other regional and local strategies and central government policy and spending are also very important for the implementation of RPG. The GOR respondents assigned slightly lower importance to these last two mechanisms, although in most cases they are still seen as being either important or very important. On the whole the great importance assigned, especially by the RPBs, to the more 'indirect' ways in which RPG can be implemented is striking. This seems to support in some way the nature of RPG/the RSS as a strategic spatial plan discussed earlier (see 3.3.1) and the more indirect links between RPG/an RSS and developments 'on the ground'.

The importance assigned to different implementation mechanisms is one matter, but the actual influence or control regional planning can exert on these mechanisms is another, but vitally important matter. In the view of RPBs and GORs, RPG has by far the highest degree of direct influence on development plans/LDFs (see Figure 28). In contrast, the influence on development control decisions is much more limited with the majority of RPBs and GORs only seeing a limited degree of direct influence on these

⁵⁷ This relates to the so-called 'Tier 2' targets which were set by central government and which all RDAs were required to work towards and to monitor. However, following substantial criticism of their appropriateness from the RDAs these targets were in the process of being replaced when the survey was conducted.

decisions. In terms of the level of influence of RPG on other regional and local strategies and central government policy and spending the views were more divided. Whereas RPG has a high degree of direct influence on these mechanisms according to some RPB and GOR respondents, overall, the majority of respondents think that RPG has limited direct influence or only indirect influence in these fields. In the light of these results it seems to be clear that a strategic spatial plan like RPG/an RSS is implemented through a number of channels and by a variety of actors. RPG is not perceived to be 'binding' but has to 'influence' other plans, strategies and actions. However, the degree of control varies significantly and is highest in relation to other plans and strategies, whereas the influence on actions 'on the ground' such as development control or spending decisions is much more limited and indirect. This to some extent contrasts with the situation of the RDAs. The responses from the RDAs suggest that they possess a higher degree of influence on those mechanisms which are viewed as those most important for the implementation of RESs⁵⁸. Indeed, on the whole, those mechanisms over which the RDAs have a high level of influence are those closer to implementation 'on the ground' such as the funding of concrete projects.

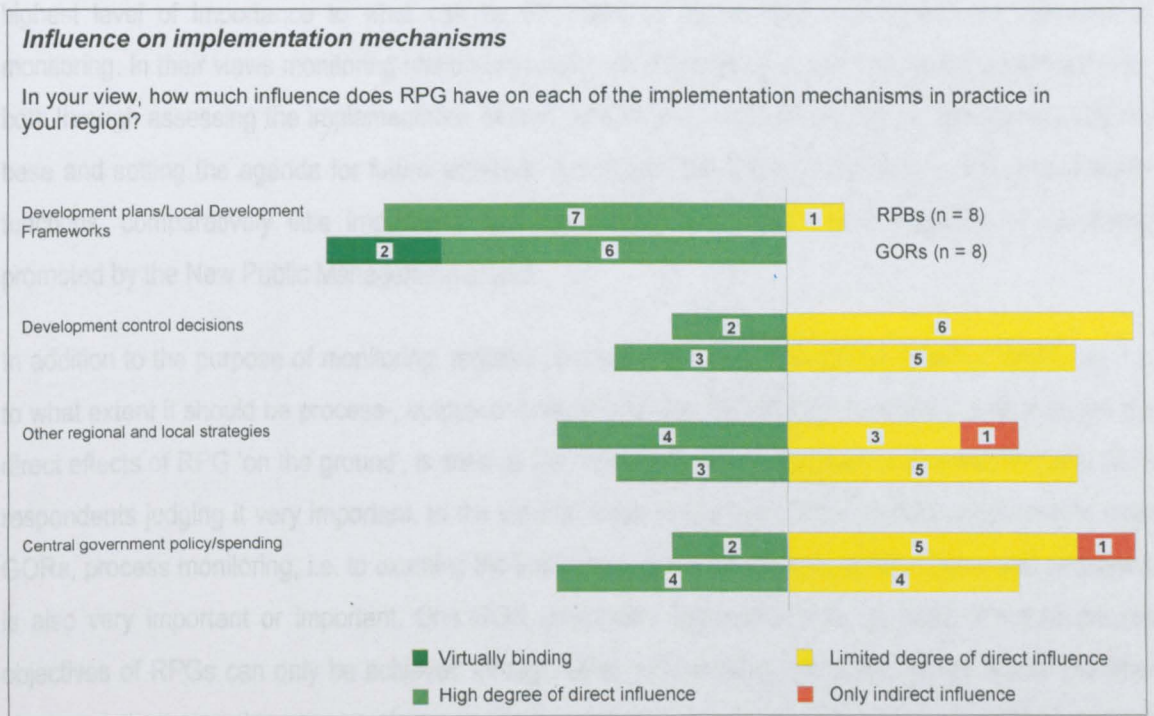


Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 27: Implementation mechanisms in regional planning

⁵⁸ According to the responses from the RDAs the two most important mechanisms through which an RES is implemented are the RDAs' own activities/spending and partners working on behalf of or contracted by an RDA. These are also the two mechanisms on which, in their view, the RDAs have a high degree of influence. Other implementation mechanisms are also thought to be very important or important, including central government policy/spending, RPG and other regional and local strategies as well as local planning decisions. In the view of RDA respondents their influence on these mechanisms is lower by comparison.

All eight RPB respondents and six out of eight GOR respondents thought that the reforms set out in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill*⁵⁹ would improve the extent to which RPG/RSS was being implemented. In the view of many respondents this was due to the granting of statutory status to the RSS which was to (and has) become part of the development plan. According to one RPB respondent, 'Making the RSS a statutory document with direct lever through the LDF and [development control] system will vastly increase its influence.' This was echoed in the comments of another RPB respondent who stated that the shift 'More from guidance to a statutory document which LDFs must be compliant with will clearly improve [the] extent to which regional planning has influence on the ground'. In the view of several RPB respondents, other changes would also improve the implementation of RSSs. RPBs were to (and have) become 'statutory consultees' on certain planning applications and RSSs were to (and have) become 'material consideration in development plan inquiries'. However, at the time of the survey it was too early to say to what extent the reforms would really improve the implementation of RSSs in practice.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 28: Influence on implementation mechanisms

4.3 The 'Monitor' element

It has been demonstrated earlier that government policy and theoretical approaches to PMM place strong emphasis on monitoring. Therefore the survey aimed to capture the views of regional planners at RPBs and GORs on some of the key issues in respect of monitoring in regional planning, namely on the purpose and object of monitoring, questions about data and indicators as well as the arrangements for monitoring in the eight regions.

⁵⁹ At the time the survey was sent to RPBs and GORs the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill* had not passed through Parliament. However, most of the proposals in the Bill later became law in form of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*.

4.3.1 Purpose and object of monitoring

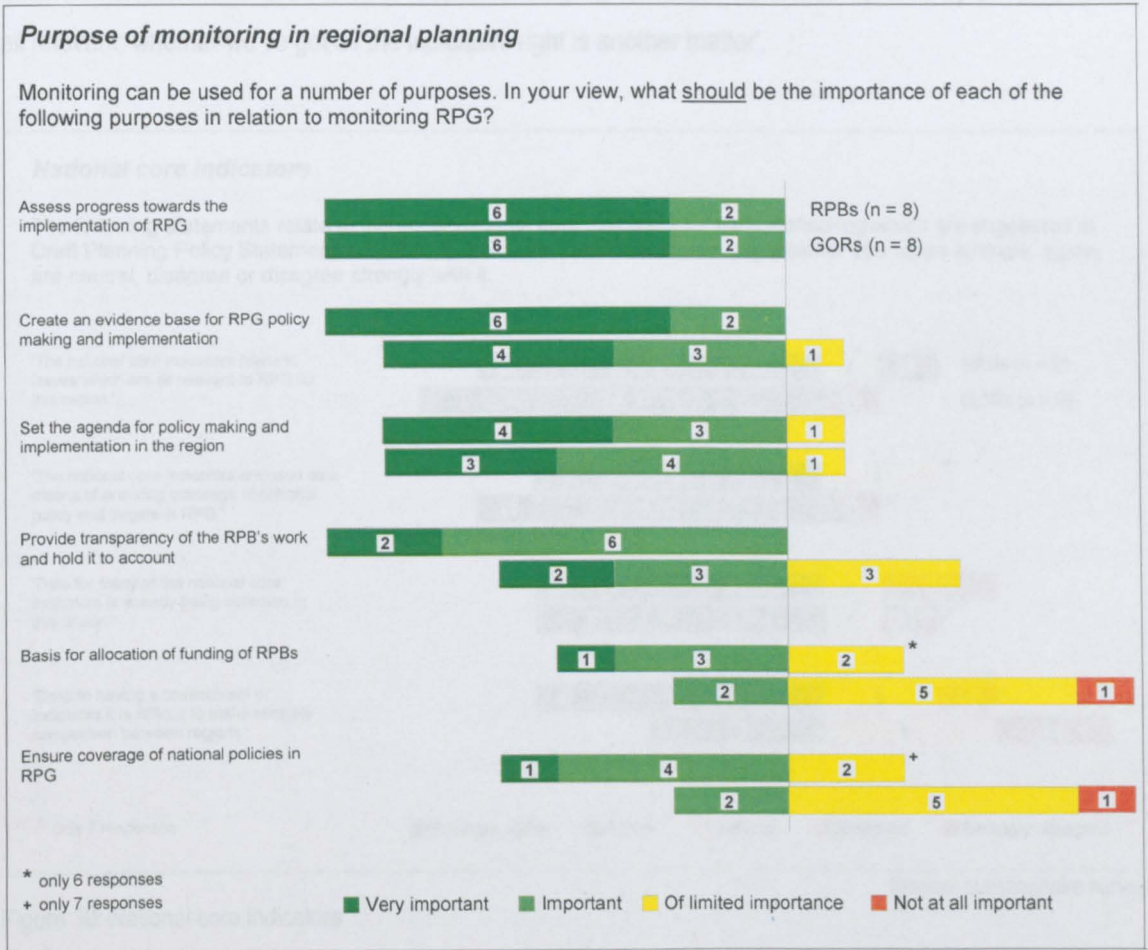
Regional planners were asked about what, in their view, should be the purpose of monitoring RPG (see Figure 29). Most of both RPB and GOR respondents believe that monitoring is very important to create an evidence base for RPG policy making and implementation and to assess progress towards the implementation of RPG. Monitoring is also seen as an important means of setting the agenda for policy making and implementation in a region. Especially in the view of respondents from the RPBs, monitoring also has an important function in providing transparency and an account of the RPBs' work. However, the majority of both RPB and GOR respondents feel that monitoring should be of limited importance as a basis for allocating the funding of RPBs. Likewise, there is little support for a role for monitoring in ensuring the coverage of national policies in RPG⁶⁰. On the whole, regional planners have assigned the highest level of importance to what can be described as future- and learning-oriented purposes of monitoring. In their views monitoring has an important role in informing policy making and implementation, both through assessing the implementation of past policies and, very importantly, in creating an evidence base and setting the agenda for future activities. In contrast, apart from transparency and accountability functions, comparatively little importance has been assigned to the control functions of monitoring promoted by the New Public Management school.

In addition to the purpose of monitoring, regional planners were asked about the object of monitoring, i.e. to what extent it should be process-, output- or context-oriented. Monitoring of outputs, i.e. to examine the direct effects of RPG 'on the ground', is seen as the most important of the three, with most RPB and GOR respondents judging it very important. In the view of respondents from RPBs, but also according to most GORs, process monitoring, i.e. to examine the implementation of RPG through other plans and strategies, is also very important or important. One GOR respondent highlighted that 'as most, if not all desired objectives of RPGs can only be achieved through either joint working with stakeholders and/or via other plans and strategies, this process element of implementation is important to know how the objectives have been achieved'. This view reflects the rather indirect way in which RPG is implemented and the importance assigned to implementation through other plans and strategies.

According to the majority of RPB and GOR respondents context-oriented monitoring, i.e. monitoring issues which RPG influences only indirectly, but which inform the formulation of RPG policy, is also judged important, albeit less than output- and process-oriented monitoring. In terms of the object of monitoring, the responses from the RDAs show that context-oriented monitoring is only undertaken to a limited extent, and that their focus is on monitoring the implementation of concrete projects 'on the ground' such as

⁶⁰ A similar picture emerged in the survey of RDAs who were also asked about their views on the purpose of monitoring. According to the RDA respondents monitoring has an important function in providing transparency and accountability and in assessing progress towards the implementation of the RESs. It is also important in creating an evidence base and in setting the agenda for policy making and implementation. Like the RPB and GOR respondents the responses from RDAs suggest that monitoring should only be of limited or no importance in relation to ensuring the coverage of national policies in the RESs, or as a basis for the allocation of funding of RDAs.

number of jobs created. The importance assigned by the RDAs to implementation monitoring may be explained by the fact that they appear to have more direct influence on implementation 'on the ground'. Whereas regional planners also emphasise the importance of implementation (i.e. output- and process-oriented) monitoring, context-oriented monitoring to inform policy making seems to play a greater role in regional planning.



Source: questionnaire survey

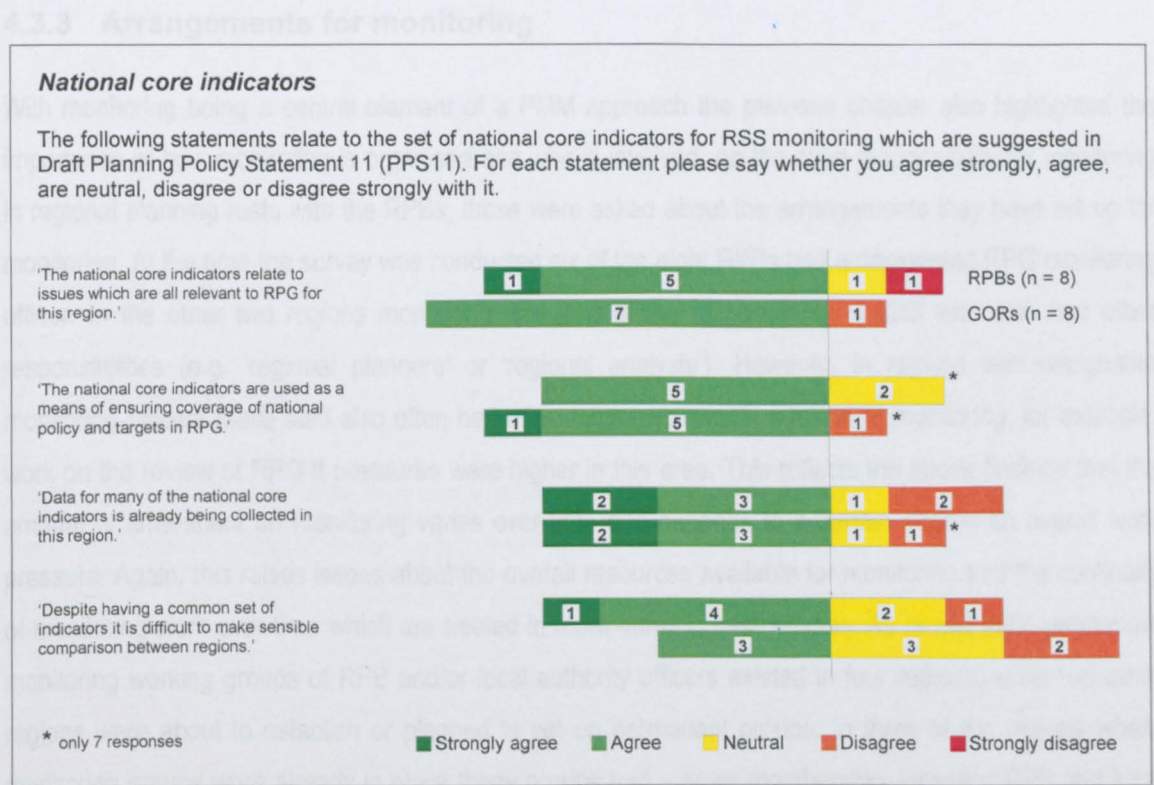
Figure 29: Purpose of monitoring in regional planning

4.3.2 Indicators and data for monitoring

The previous chapter explained that the government has introduced a set of indicators for monitoring which RPBs are expected to report on in their AMRs⁶¹. The theoretical discussion has raised several issues in relation to the use of indicators in monitoring (see Ch. 3) and the set of national core indicators has been subject to substantial debate (and some controversy) between ODPM and the RPBs. Therefore

⁶¹ The first set of national core indicators was included in the good practice guide on RPG monitoring of November 2002 (ODPM 2002a). At the time the survey was conducted a revised list of these indicators had been published in draft PPS11 (ODPM 2003f). The current set of national core indicators was published as a separate document in December 2005 (ODPM 2005i). While there have been some changes to the indicators and the detailed definitions of some of the indicators, the discussions at the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group suggest that the views expressed in the survey still apply to a large extent to the current list of national core indicators.

the survey asked regional planners at RPBs and GORs about their views on the set of core national indicators (see Figure 30). The large majority of RPB and GOR respondents agreed that the national core indicators relate to issues which are all relevant to the RPG for their regions. However, there was some concern, especially among some RPBs about some of the indicators and/or the detailed definitions of indicators. One RPB respondent commented that 'We have significant objections to some of the core national indicators' and another RPB respondent highlighted that 'The issues covered by the core set are all relevant; whether we've got all the indicators right is another matter'.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 30: National core indicators

According to the majority of RPB and GOR respondents data for many of the national core indicators was already being collected in their regions. On the other hand, a number of respondents from both RPBs and GORs disagreed with this and, overall, a lack of comprehensive and consistent data for monitoring appears to be a problem in most regions (see 4.5). There are also questions about the purpose or benefit of having a common set of indicators for RPG/RSS monitoring. There are varying views on the use of the core indicators in regional planning for comparison between regions. The majority of RPB respondents think that despite having a common set of indicators it is difficult to make sensible comparison between regions⁶². According to one RPB respondent, 'There have to be concerns about the inter-comparability of this data in the absence of a methodology agreed by all RPBs. The imposition of a methodology would

⁶² This view was in a way reflected in the survey of RDAs. Similar to the core indicators in regional planning, central government published the set of Tier 2 targets (see above) which the RDAs are required to monitor. All RDA respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that despite having a common set of Tier 2 targets it is difficult to make sensible comparison between regions. One RDA respondent explained that 'Tier 2 targets have two fundamental problems: 1) They assume that all regions are the same. 2) They rely on data which is often not available on a regular basis'.

have major implications for those regions ... with an established tradition/timeseries of data since methodological changes will inevitably lead to discontinuity of data'. In addition, respondents from RPBs and GORs widely agreed that the core indicators are used as a means of ensuring coverage of national policy and targets in RPG. Overall the survey therefore raised several issues about the use of indicators in regional planning such as the definition of indicators, data availability and what indicators are used for. These aspects are investigated in more detail in the case studies below.

4.3.3 Arrangements for monitoring

With monitoring being a central element of a PMM approach the previous chapter also highlighted the importance of how monitoring is organised and who is involved. As the main responsibility for monitoring in regional planning rests with the RPBs, these were asked about the arrangements they have set up for monitoring. At the time the survey was conducted six of the eight RPBs had a designated RPG monitoring officer. In the other two regions monitoring was part of the responsibility of staff who also had other responsibilities (e.g. 'regional planners' or 'regional analysts'). However, in regions with designated monitoring officers these staff also often had other responsibilities in addition to monitoring, for example, work on the review of RPG if pressures were higher in this area. This reflects the above findings that the amount of time spent on monitoring varies over time and depends to a certain degree on overall work pressure. Again, this raises issues about the overall resources available for monitoring and the continuity of monitoring work over time which are treated in more detail in case studies. As at mid 2004 permanent monitoring working groups of RPB and/or local authority officers existed in four regions, while two other regions were about to establish or planned to set up permanent groups. In three of the regions where monitoring groups were already in place these groups had a wider membership, including RPB and local authority officers but also representatives from other organisations such as GORs, ROs or RDAs.

In all regions regional actors such as local authorities, statutory agencies and other regional organisations are involved in monitoring RPG, albeit the way in which they contribute varies between regions and, quite importantly, also between different monitoring activities⁶³. In some regions regional actors take a leading role in many of the tasks involved in monitoring, whereas in other regions their involvement is largely restricted to consultation. On the whole local planning authorities have a central role in monitoring across all regions while the level of involvement of other actors varies. According to the responses from the RPBs, in four regions local authority officers do monitoring work on behalf of the respective RPB, for example, in the form of Service Level Agreements under which local authorities agree to undertake monitoring work in return for financial reimbursement.

⁶³ The survey of RPBs and GORs asked about the level of involvement of regional stakeholders in relation to the 'development and review of the RPG monitoring framework', 'data collection/provision for RPG monitoring', 'analysis and interpretation of RPG monitoring data' and 'deciding on what needs to follow from the results of RPG monitoring'.

Whereas in the majority of regions regional actors perform a leading role in the collection and provision of data for RPG monitoring, their involvement in other monitoring related activities (i.e. development and review of the monitoring framework for RPG, analysis and interpretation of monitoring data, and decisions on what actions need to be taken as a result of monitoring) varies significantly between regions, ranging from actors taking a leading role to regular involvement or occasional consultation. Several respondents expressed a need for greater involvement of regional actors in monitoring, especially in the analysis and interpretation activities, but highlighted difficulties of such involvement, e.g. whether or not actors have the time/resources to get involved in such activities. There has been some discussion about the role of ROs in monitoring RPG and key findings of the survey of ROs which was conducted as part this study are summarised below (see Figure 31)⁶⁴.

The role of Regional Observatories⁶⁵

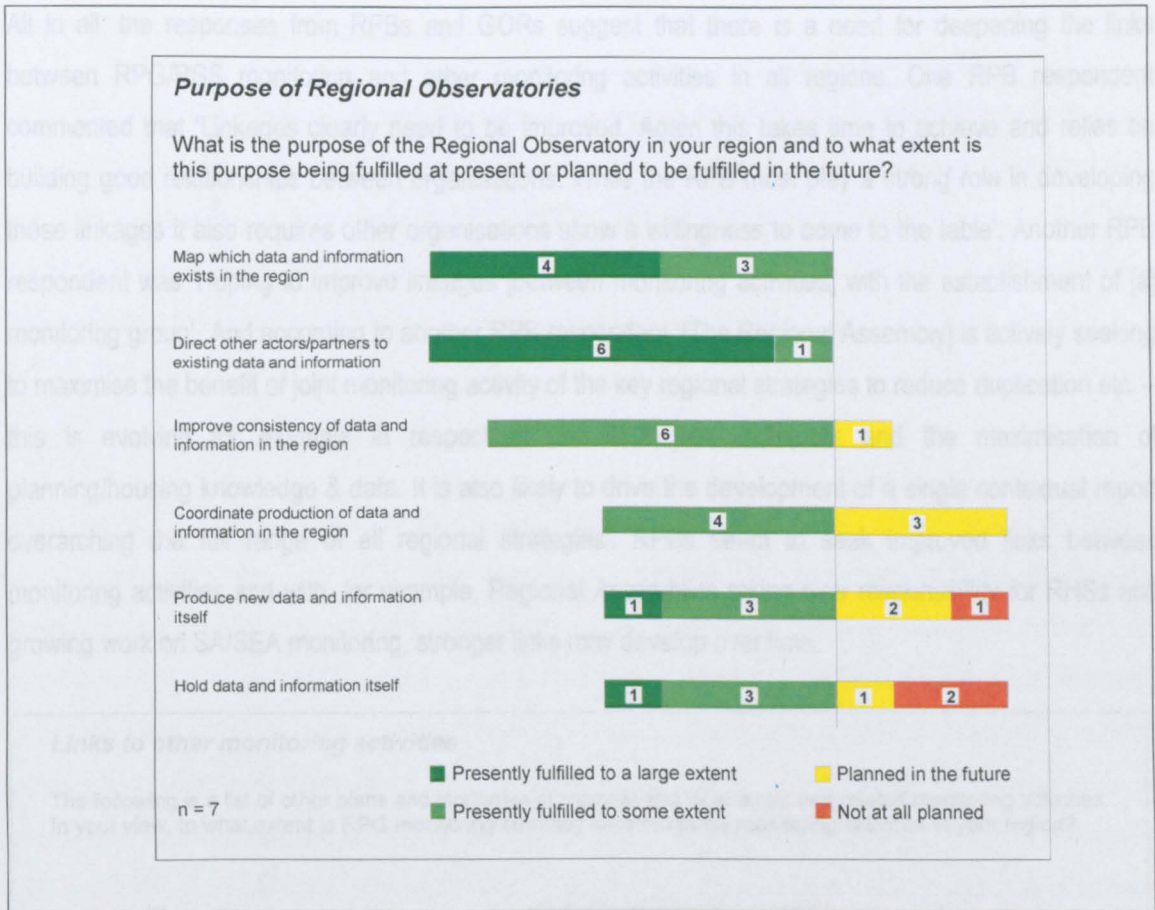
According to government guidance on regional planning, ROs could play an important role in regional planning, especially as regards RPG monitoring and the provision of data (e.g. ODPM 2002a, 2005f). There has also been some debate (and uncertainty) in practice about the potential and actual contribution of ROs to regional planning. The survey which has been conducted as part of this study aimed to shed some light on this issue. At the time the survey was conducted a very diverse situation existed with significant variation between regions as regards the arrangements for ROs, their size, purposes and activities. In many regions the shape of ROs was still developing and potentially subject to change.

As far as their organisational arrangements are concerned, ROs are more formalised and institutionalised in some regions, while other ROs have adopted rather informal and fluid arrangements. In about half of the English regions the RO is an independent organisation and/or part of another organisation but with an independent core unit with staff working exclusively for RO purposes. In the remaining regions the RO is part of another organisation, often the RDA. Although the size of ROs was difficult to quantify precisely (e.g. as staff who do RO work are spread over different organisations), the number of staff working for the ROs varies significantly between the regions, ranging from about one to fourteen full time equivalent staff. In several regions the RO is supported by staff from other organisations, e.g. the Regional Assembly or Environment Agency, who take on RO related work. Many of the ROs draw on in kind contributions from a range of public and private sector organisations as well as on working groups made up of representatives from these organisations.

At the time of the survey nearly all ROs served at least two purposes, albeit to varying extents (see also diagram below). These are, mapping what data and information exist in the regions and directing other actors to existing data and information. Related to these purposes most of the ROs also work towards improving the consistency of data and information in the regions, although this is performed less intensively than the previous tasks. Several ROs have or plan to have a role in coordinating the production of data and information, in producing new data and information, and in holding data and information. However, these roles are currently not exercised to a large extent and, in several regions, are only planned or possible options for the future.

The involvement of ROs in the preparation and monitoring of regional strategies differs significantly between the regions. Whereas in one region the RO is involved in the production and monitoring of several regional strategies, there are several regions where the ROs are not involved in such work at all. There is also significant variation in the type of their involvement. Many ROs contribute to the provision of data and to a lesser extent through commenting on draft strategies. In contrast, only a small number of ROs is involved in the analysis of data or in monitoring regional strategies. The highest level of involvement can be found in relation to the preparation and monitoring of RESs and Regional Employment and Skills Frameworks which can probably be explained by the fact that in several regions the RO is part of, and largely funded by, the respective RDA. As far as RPG is concerned, two RO respondents stated that their ROs were not at all involved in regional planning, while in the other regions ROs mainly contribute by providing data and commenting on draft RPG. In just two regions the RO respondents said their organisation was involved in monitoring RPG.

⁶⁴ Further details about the questionnaire survey on ROs can be found at Appendix 2.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 31: The role of Regional Observatories

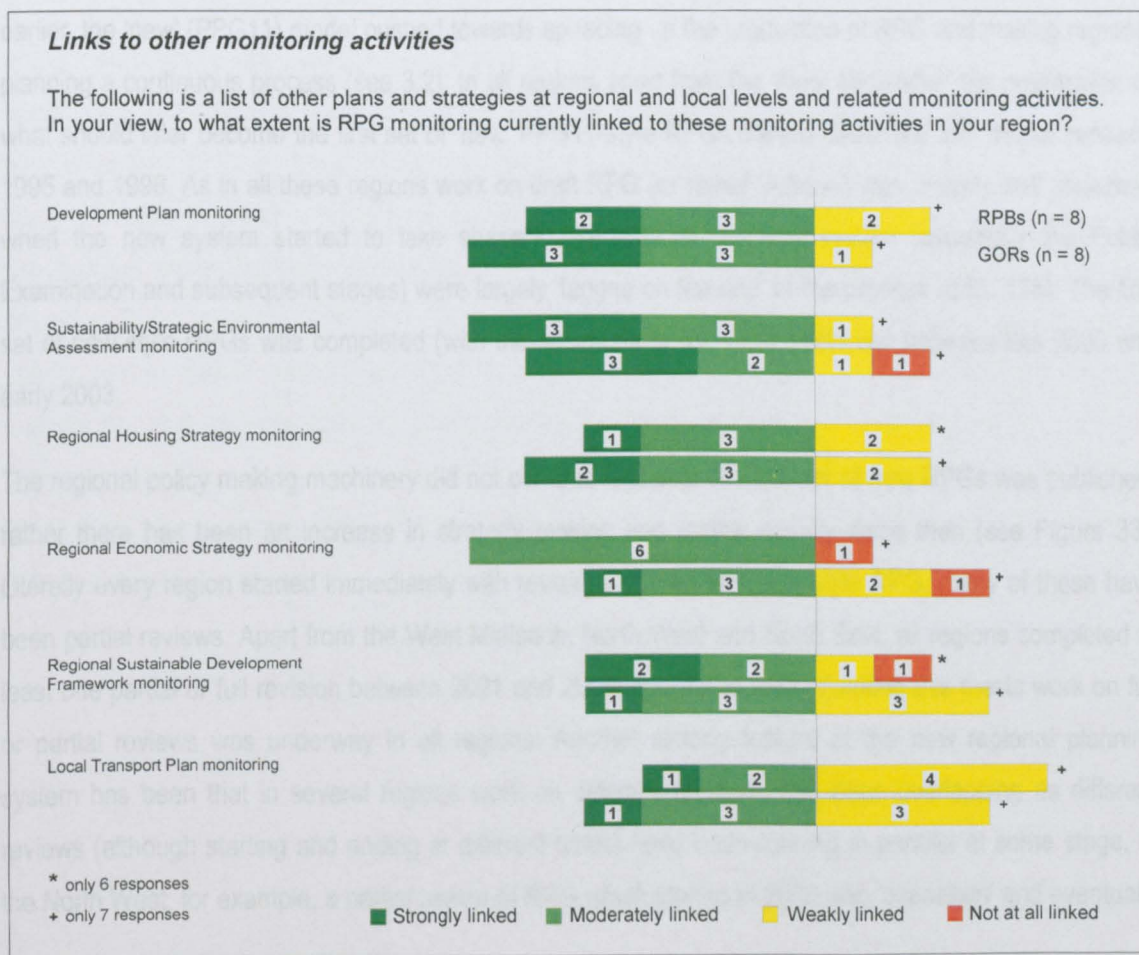
Another aspect of interest is the relationship of monitoring in regional planning to other monitoring activities in the regions. According to the responses from RPBs and GORs, overall the links between RPG monitoring and other monitoring activities are either moderate or weak in the majority of cases (see Figure 32). There are variations between regions and, quite importantly, significant differences in level of connectedness of different monitoring activities. Generally speaking, in the view of many RPB and GOR respondents RPG monitoring is linked most intensely to development plan and SA/SEA⁶⁵ monitoring (i.e. mostly either strong or moderate links). The links to RES and RHS monitoring are predominantly moderate, while RSDF and LTP monitoring show the weakest links with RPG monitoring.

⁶⁵ The term 'Regional Observatory' is not used in all regions for the organisations in question but some use different names, for example, 'Regional Intelligence Network'. For simplicity the term 'Regional Observatory' (RO) is used in this study.

⁶⁶ As regards the responses in relation to SA/SEA monitoring some caution seems to be needed. Other sources of information, e.g. discussions at the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group and a review of RPG/RSS AMRs (see Chs. 5, 6 and 7), suggest that little work on SA/SEA monitoring in planning exists and that there were limited links between RPG/RSS and SA/SEA monitoring in practice at the time of writing. Therefore it is likely that many respondents referred to the appraisal part of SA/SEA and not so much to SA/SEA monitoring. SA/SEA monitoring in regional planning is still evolving and stronger links with RSS monitoring may therefore be expected in future as SA/SEA monitoring is to be an integral part of RSS monitoring. This view may be supported by the comment of one RPB respondent who stated that 'There will be a strong link with the SEA work, in that it will become part of the AMR process. Given the stage we have reached with RSS (about to submit a draft) and the requirements of the [SEA] Directive, we are only now beginning to address SEA requirements'.

All in all, the responses from RPBs and GORs suggest that there is a need for deepening the links between RPG/RSS monitoring and other monitoring activities in all regions. One RPB respondent commented that 'Linkages clearly need to be improved. Again this takes time to achieve and relies on building good relationships between organisations. While the RPB must play a strong role in developing these linkages it also requires other organisations show a willingness to come to the table'. Another RPB respondent was 'Hoping to improve linkages [between monitoring activities] with the establishment of [a] monitoring group'. And according to another RPB respondent '[The Regional Assembly] is actively seeking to maximise the benefit of joint monitoring activity of the key regional strategies to reduce duplication etc. – this is evolving for example in respect of the RHS joint indicators and the maximisation of planning/housing knowledge & data. It is also likely to drive the development of a single contextual report overarching the full range of all regional strategies'. RPBs seem to seek improved links between monitoring activities and with, for example, Regional Assemblies taking over responsibility for RHSs and growing work on SA/SEA monitoring, stronger links may develop over time.

from the start of the work to the publication of the plan



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 32: Links to other monitoring activities

4.4 The 'Manage' element

As explained in the previous chapter, government policy on PMM seems to suggest that in regional planning the 'manage' element is mainly about the review of RPGs/RSSs. Therefore some attention is now drawn to the nature and shape of RPG/RSS reviews that have been developing under the PMM model. This includes questions about the factors or 'triggers' which lead to the decisions to review RPG/an RSS and about the influence of different actors and levels of government on these decisions.

4.4.1 'Manage' as the review of spatial strategies

Under the 'old' (pre-PPG11) model, RPG was published at around the same time in almost all regions between late 1993 and early 1996. The timescales involved in the preparation of these RPGs were thought to be relatively long, with the first set of these documents taking a total of approximately four years from the start of the work to the publication of the final guidance (Marshall 2002a). Therefore, as described earlier, the 'new' (PPG11) model pushed towards speeding up the production of RPG and making regional planning a continuous process (see 3.2). In all regions apart from the West Midlands⁶⁷ the preparation of what should later become the first set of 'new' PPG11-style RPGs started under the 'old' model between 1995 and 1998. As in all these regions work on draft RPG (or rather 'Advice') was already well underway when the new system started to take shape⁶⁸, elements of the new system (especially the Public Examination and subsequent stages) were largely 'tagged on the end' of the process (ibid.: 178). The first set of new style RPGs was completed (with the exception of the West Midlands) between late 2000 and early 2003.

The regional policy making machinery did not come to rest after the first set of new RPGs was published, rather there has been an increase in strategy making and review activity since then (see Figure 33). Literally every region started immediately with revisions of their first new style RPG, many of these have been partial reviews. Apart from the West Midlands, North West and North East, all regions completed at least one partial or full revision between 2001 and 2004, and at the time of writing this thesis work on full or partial reviews was underway in all regions. Another striking feature of the new regional planning system has been that in several regions work on different revisions has been overlapping as different reviews (although starting and ending at different times) have been running in parallel at some stage. In the North West, for example, a partial review of RPG which started in 2003 was 'overtaken' and eventually

⁶⁷ The West Midlands is a special case in that it was the only region to complete a review of the first 'old' style RPG in 1998, i.e. before the new system started to emerge. As a consequence the region did not start with the preparation of a 'new' style RPG until January 2000, well after all other regions (see also Ch. 5).

⁶⁸ As described in detail in Chapter 3, the reform of regional planning started in January 1998 (DETR 1998b) (key proposals: no fixed 5 year review cycles, process of preparing RPG to be speeded up, 'target timetable', selective reviews of sections of the guidance to be produced under a faster track process), with a draft PPG11 in February 1999 (DETR 1999b) (emphasising continuous planning process, 'target timetable', up-dates of particular parts, review RPG on a theme or subject area basis) and final PPG11 confirming most of these proposals in October 2000 (DETR 2000b).

replaced by a full review which commenced one year later⁶⁹. Similarly, before the completion of a partial revision of the first new style RPG for Yorkshire and the Humber the RPB already began another full review.

The RPG review activity has been particularly intensive in the Greater South East. The East of England, East Midlands and South East regions all completed partial reviews of their first new style RPGs (with the East Midlands having even completed both a partial and a full review) and, at the time of writing, these regions were again already working on full reviews. The South East of England stands out from all other regions in that it has been conducting a number of partial revisions of different topics following the completion of the last full review in March 2001. These partial revisions have been overlapping with each other and to some extent also with work on another full review. This raises interesting questions, for example, how the fact that several reviews have been running in parallel has affected the coordination between these different policy making exercises. These issues are picked up in much greater detail in the chapters that follow.

In the light of these observations the continuous nature of regional planning seems to have become a reality. Over the past five years or so there has been a continuous flow of policy making activity in all regions as first RPGs and now RSSs have been almost constantly reworked, rounded off or 'updated'. Many of these alterations have been partial revisions, some on specific topics, others on certain geographical areas, but within two years of the completion of the last full review most regions already started work on another full revision. Much of this policy work has been overlapping at certain stages, starting and ending at different times but running in parallel at some points. This continuous nature of regional planning has potentially significant implications, for example, on the function of RPG in providing longer-term guidance and certainty, or on the ability of actors to influence the process (Marshall 2002a, 2004). Reflections on some of these implications are provided below (see 4.5) and treated in much greater detail in the following chapters.

⁶⁹ Following the publication of the first new style RPG in March 2003 the RPB immediately worked on a partial review and a draft revision was formally submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2004. Although work on a full review had started in July 2004, a Public Examination into the draft partial review was conducted in late 2004 on which the Panel reported in early 2005. However, the Secretary of State then decided to withdraw the partial revision arguing that the partial review should be replaced by the full review which was running in parallel to the partial revision (see Figure 33).

	North West		North East	Yorkshire & Humber		West Midlands			East Midlands			East Anglia/ East of England		South East								South West	
1 st 'old' style RPG	May 1996		Sep 1993	Mar 1996		Sep 1995			Mar 1994			Jul 1991		Mar 1994									Jul 1994
Revised 'old' style RPG	n/a		n/a	n/a		Dec 1998			n/a			n/a		n/a									n/a
Start of work 1 st 'new' style RPG	1998		1998	1998		Jan 2000			1997			1995		1996									1996
1 st draft 'new' style RPG	Jul 2000		Dec 1999	Oct 1999		Nov 2001			Nov 1999			Aug 1998		Dec 1998									Jul 1999
Public Examination	Feb/ Mar 2001		Jun/ Jul 2000	Jun/ Jul 2000		Jun/ Jul 2002			Jun 2000			Feb 1999		May/ Jun 1999									Mar 2000
Panel report	Aug 2001		Oct 2000	Oct 2000		Oct 2002			Oct 2000			Jul 1999		Oct 1999									Aug 2000
Proposed Changes	May 2002		Apr 2001	Mar 2001		Sep 2003			Mar 2001			Mar 2000		Mar 2000									Dec 2000
1 st final 'new' style RPG	Mar 2003		Nov 2002	Oct 2001		Jun 2004			Jan 2002			Nov 2000		Mar 2001									Sep 2001
Start of work 1 st 'new' style RSS	(PR) 2003	(FR) 2004	(FR) 2003	(PR) 2002	(FR) 2003	(PR) 2004/ 05	(PR) 2005	(PR) 2006	(FR) 2002	(PR) 2001/ 02	(FR) 2005	(PR) 2001/ 02	(FR) 2002	(PR) 2001/ 02	(PR) 2001	(PR) 2002	(PR) 2002	(PR) 2001/ 02	(PR) 2002	(PR) 2002	(FR) 2003	(FR) 2004	
1 st draft 'new' style RSS	Mar 2004	Jan 2006	Jun 2005	Jun 2003	Dec 2005	~May 2006	~Jun 2007		Apr 2003	Jul 2003	~Sep 2006	Jul 2003	Dec 2004	Jan 2003	Jul 2003	May 2003	May 2003	Jul 2003	Mar 2004	Mar 2004	Mar 2006	~May 2006	
Public Examination	Nov/ Dec 2004	~Oct/ Nov 2006	Mar/ Apr 2006	Feb 2004	~Sep /Oct 2006	~Jan 2007	~ early 2008	(work put on hold in 2006)	Nov/ Dec 2003	Mar/ Apr 2004	~ early 2007	Mar/ Apr 2004	Nov 2005- Mar 2006	Jul 2003	Dec 2003	Nov 2003	Nov 2003	Mar/ Apr 2004	Oct 2004	Oct 2004	~Nov 2006- Mar 2007	~Feb /Mar 2007	
Panel report	Mar 2005	~Mar 2007	~Jul 2008	May 2004	~Feb 2007	~Apr 2007	~ mid 2008		Mar 2004	Aug 2004	~ mid 2007	Aug 2004	~ Jun 2006	Sep 2003	Feb 2004	Mar 2004	Mar 2004	Aug 2004	Jan 2005	Jan 2005	~ Jul 2007	~Aug 2007	
Proposed Changes	n/a	~May 2007	~Oct 2006	Jul 2004	~Mar 2007	~Jul 2007	~ mid 2008		Jul 2004	Oct 2004	~ early 2008	Oct 2004	~Nov 2006	Mar 2004	Apr 2004	Jul 2004	Jul 2004	Oct 2004	Aug 2005	Aug 2005	~Sep 2007	~Nov 2007	
1 st final 'new' style RSS	n/a	~Sep 2007	~Feb 2007	Dec 2004	~Sep 2007	~Nov 2007	~ late 2008	~ 2009	Mar 2005	Mar 2005	~ early 2008	Mar 2005	~May 2007	Jul 2004	Jul 2004	Nov 2004	Nov 2004	Mar 2005	~ mid 2006	~ mid 2006	~Feb 2008	~ early 2008	

Notes: 'FR' = 'Full RSS review', 'PR' = 'Partial RSS review'. The table represents the situation as at April 2006.

Source: Marshall 2004 and author

Figure 33: RPG/RSS revision timetables 1990s-2000s [previous page]

Whereas the continuous planning process has apparently become a reality, the government's aim of cutting down significantly the timescales for revising RPG/an RSS has yet to be achieved. The preparation of the first set of new style RPGs which were published between 2001 and 2004 took on average some four years or more, and thus was well above the target timetable of 2.5 years set in PPG11⁷⁰. Many of the revisions carried out since then have been partial reviews which were conducted in less time than the previous full reviews, albeit in most cases it took still between three to 3.5 years from the start of the work until the publication of the final revision. This is at odds with the 'significantly shorter timescale' for partial reviews envisaged in PPG11 (DETR 2000b: para 2.11). This situation does not seem to be set to change in the near future as many of the full revisions underway at the time of writing were expected to take four years or more (e.g. in case of the South East of England, see Ch. 6).

4.4.2 Triggers of strategy review

Regional planners at RPBs and GORs were asked about the importance of different factors or 'triggers' which led to the decision to review RPG (see Figure 34)⁷¹. According to the responses from both RPBs and GORs, the filling of gaps in existing RPG and central government policy have been 'deciding factors' in the majority of cases and 'important' factors in the decision to review RPG in most other cases. As far as the filling of gaps is concerned the importance of this factor may be explained to some extent by the fact that, at the time of the survey, all but one region had completed only their first post-2000 style RPG and thus many of the 'gaps' might have been due to the transition towards the new regional planning system. As regional planners were also anticipating the replacement of RPGs with RSSs the conversion from the former to the latter might have also been considered as a filling of gaps. Potentially this trigger may therefore be less important in future as initial gaps get filled, and as the transformation to the new RSS system is made. On the other hand, the question remains what counts as a 'gap' that needs to be addressed in a strategy review and who defines these 'gaps'. These issues are picked up again in more detail in the chapters which follow.

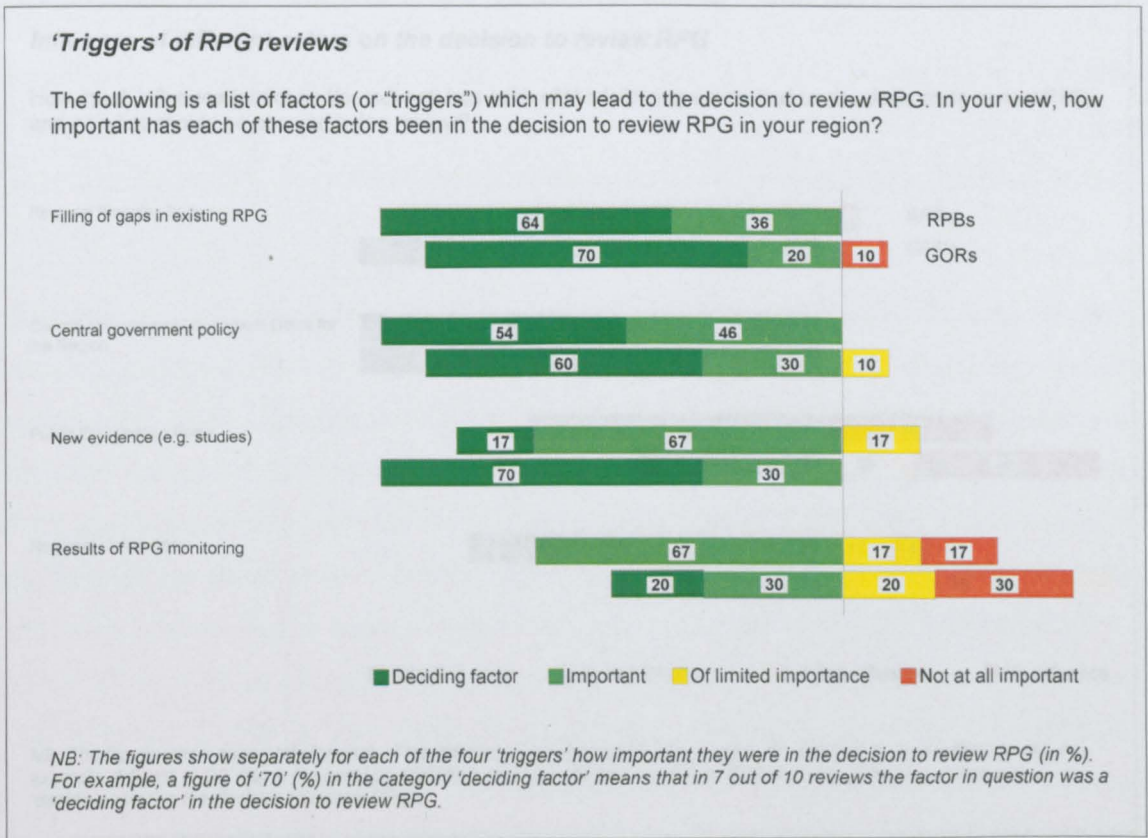
Overall the weight assigned to central government policy as a review trigger is a striking feature (see also influence of central government/GORs on review decisions below)⁷². In their additional comments several respondents highlighted that the Secretary of State had already defined issues in existing RPGs which

⁷⁰ As explained in Chapter 3, the target timetable for a full RSS revision in PPS11 is now 30 to 35 months (ODPM 2004a).

⁷¹ RPB and GOR respondents from the same region did not necessarily refer to the same review. Also the respondents could chose multiple answers, e.g. several factors could be identified as being important. The aim here is to show the overall picture of the importance of different review triggers.

⁷² A similar picture has emerged in the survey of RDAs. Here central government policy has been judged the most important factor in triggering the reviews of RESs. This can be explained to some degree by the fact that central government requires RDAs to review their RESs every three years. As in the responses from RPBs and GORs 'new evidence' and the 'filling of gaps' have also been important in the decision to review RESs. Like in regional planning, monitoring has also been a significantly less important factor in the decision to review RESs.

central government expected to be dealt with in 'early' reviews of RPG (see also Chs. 5 and 6). In the view of GOR respondents, 'new evidence', such as studies, had also been a deciding factor in many RPG reviews. According to the responses from RPBs, new evidence had been less a deciding, but often an important factor. In contrast, the results of monitoring have been significantly less important in the decision to review RPG in the view of both RPB and GOR respondents. Whereas in some cases monitoring was still seen as a deciding or important factor, there are also numerous cases in which monitoring has been of limited or no importance in the decision to review RPG. On the one hand, some degree of caution may be needed since monitoring in regional planning is still developing and thus may only gain in importance over time. On the other hand, these findings still raise questions about the role and importance assigned to monitoring and about the links between monitoring and policy making. These issues are investigated in more detail in the case studies.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 34: 'Triggers' of RPG reviews

In addition to the importance of different triggers, regional planners were also asked about the influence of different actors on the decision to review RPG and on what should be covered in the review (see Figure 35). In the view of both RPB and GOR respondents, in most cases, the RPBs and central government/GORs had by far the strongest influence on decisions about the need for, and topics of, RPG reviews. According to the responses from RPBs, central government/GORs were marginally more often judged the deciding actor, whereas in the view of GOR respondents the influence of RPBs and GORs has

been almost equal overall⁷³. In comparison with this, the influence of the EiP panels on the decision to review RPG varied significantly. In a number of cases the panels have been rated as decisive or strongly influential actors. For example, one respondent commented that, in its report, the EiP panel identified issues for which a partial review of RPG should be conducted. However, in other cases the EiP panel had limited or no influence on the review decision according to the respondents. As far as the influence of other regional actors are concerned there are significant differences in the assessments from RPBs and GORs. Overall, the responses from RPBs suggest that other regional actors had strong influence on the decision to review RPB in the majority of cases. The GOR respondents, in contrast, felt that in most cases other regional actors had only limited influence on the decision to review RPG. All in all, current regional planning practice raises issues about the triggers of RPG reviews and the influence of different actors, and these are therefore taken up again in more detail in the following chapters.

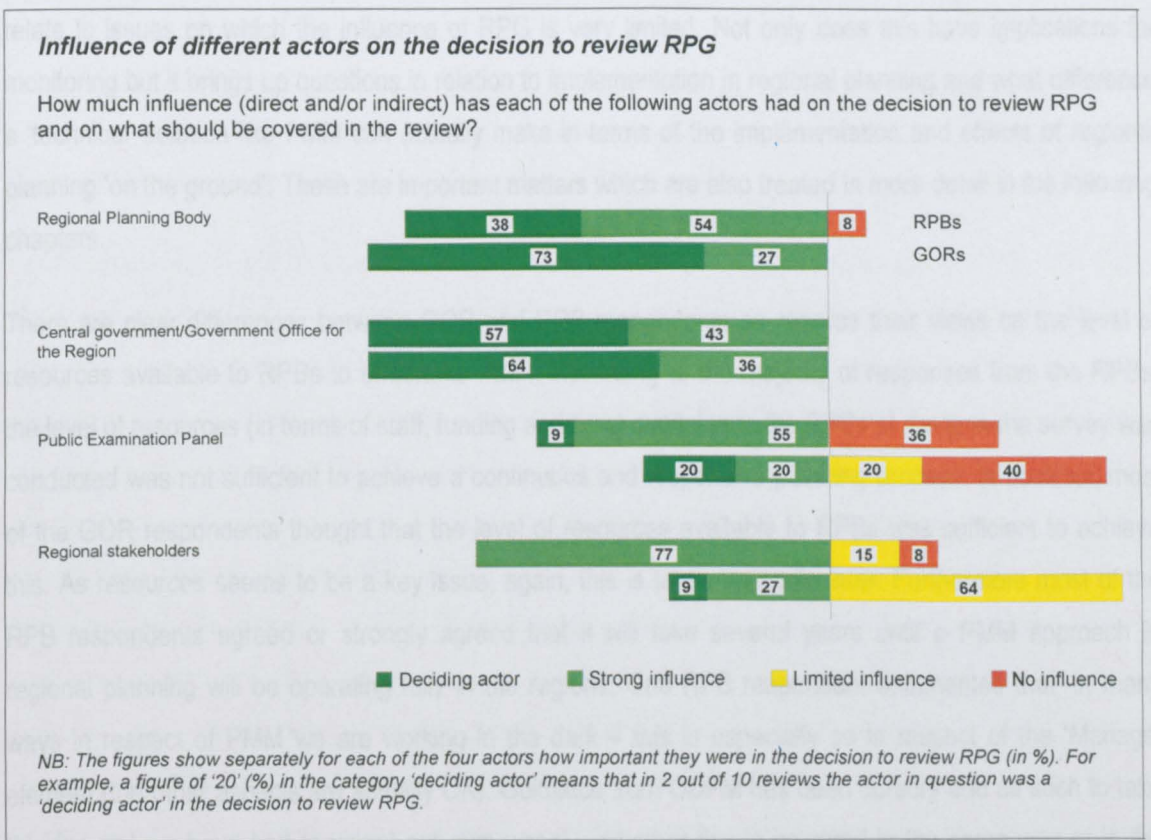


Figure 35: Influence of different actors on the decision to review RPG

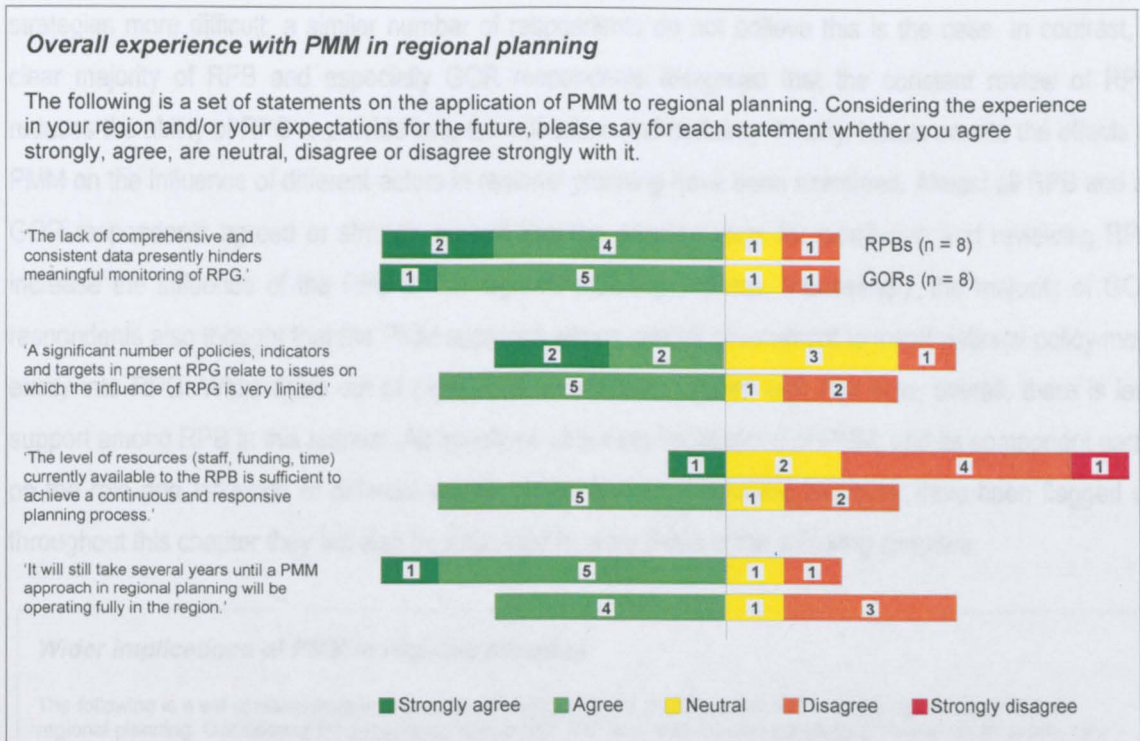
⁷³ As far as the RDAs are concerned many RDA respondents highlighted that government requires RDAs to review their RESs every three years. Therefore, the overall decision whether to review RES is literally not at the RDAs' discretion. However, asked about the influence of different actors on the decision to review an RES and on what should be covered in the review almost all RDA respondents said that the RDA has been a deciding actor. In two out of six cases central government was also seen as a deciding actor and in another two cases as having strong influence of the decision. Similar to the RPB respondents most RDA respondents thought that regional stakeholders also had strong influence on the review decision. In general, a key difference between the situation in regional spatial planning and regional economic planning is that, in terms of the latter, central government introduced a requirement to review RESs on a fixed basis and thus central government influence could be seen as an overarching determinant. On the one hand, there is no such fixed requirement in relation to RSSs and thus, arguably, less 'obvious' overarching central steering. On the other hand, it could be argued that there are still important means of central control over RSS reviews, e.g. the issues for 'early' review set out by the Secretary of State in all existing RPGs/RSSs. However, these questions need to be addressed in more detail in the chapters that follow.

4.5 PMM 'as a whole': Expectations and early experience

Shifting the attention from individual elements of PMM to an overarching perspective, regional planners at RPBs and GORs were asked about their experience in relation to the application of PMM to regional planning and, as it was still early in the process when the survey was conducted, and experience might have been limited, also about their expectations about PMM in the future (see Figure 36). First, there appear to be some issues which could be called technical and methodological, and limitations which affect the practice of PMM in regional planning more or less across the whole country. A large majority of both RPB and GOR respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a lack of comprehensive and consistent data presently hinders meaningful monitoring of RPG⁷⁴. As monitoring is to play a key role in PMM this raises issues about the functioning of the approach as a whole. In addition, the majority of all RPG and GOR respondents together thought that a significant number of policies, indicators and targets in present RPGs relate to issues on which the influence of RPG is very limited. Not only does this have implications for monitoring but it brings up questions in relation to implementation in regional planning and what difference a 'technical' solution like PMM can actually make in terms of the implementation and effects of regional planning 'on the ground'. These are important matters which are also treated in more detail in the following chapters.

There are clear differences between GOR and RPB respondents as regards their views on the level of resources available to RPBs to undertake PMM. According to the majority of responses from the RPBs, the level of resources (in terms of staff, funding and time) available to the RPBs at the time the survey was conducted was not sufficient to achieve a continuous and responsive planning process. In contrast, most of the GOR respondents thought that the level of resources available to RPBs was sufficient to achieve this. As resources seems to be a key issue, again, this is taken up again later. Furthermore most of the RPB respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it will take several years until a PMM approach in regional planning will be operating fully in the regions. One RPB respondent commented that 'In many ways in respect of PMM we are working in the dark – this is especially so in respect of the 'Manage' element (the other aspects are actually OK). Guidance from ODPM has been cursory and as such to take this forward we have had to invent our own wheel – whether this is powered in the same way or is the same size as other regions' wheels remains to be seen'. In contrast, the views of respondents from GORs in this respect were less univocal with half of the GORs agreeing that more time is needed until PMM operates fully while three out of eight disagreed.

⁷⁴ Issues around the availability of data were also raised in the survey of ROs. There appears to be significant variation in terms of the availability of data between regions and between different topic areas. Whereas in the view of all RO respondents much demographic and economic data is available, data on the environment, transport, housing and social issues is significantly less available. One RO respondent commented that 'Much is available, but there is considerable variation within each of these [topic] fields, and in the RO skills to analyse them (social being a weakness in this regard)'. According to the responses from the ROs substantial time series of data are available in only two regions to a large extent with another three respondents stating that time series are available to some extent. The same picture emerged as regards the consistency of data. According to the survey there is also little collection of qualitative data such as anecdotal evidence in most regions.



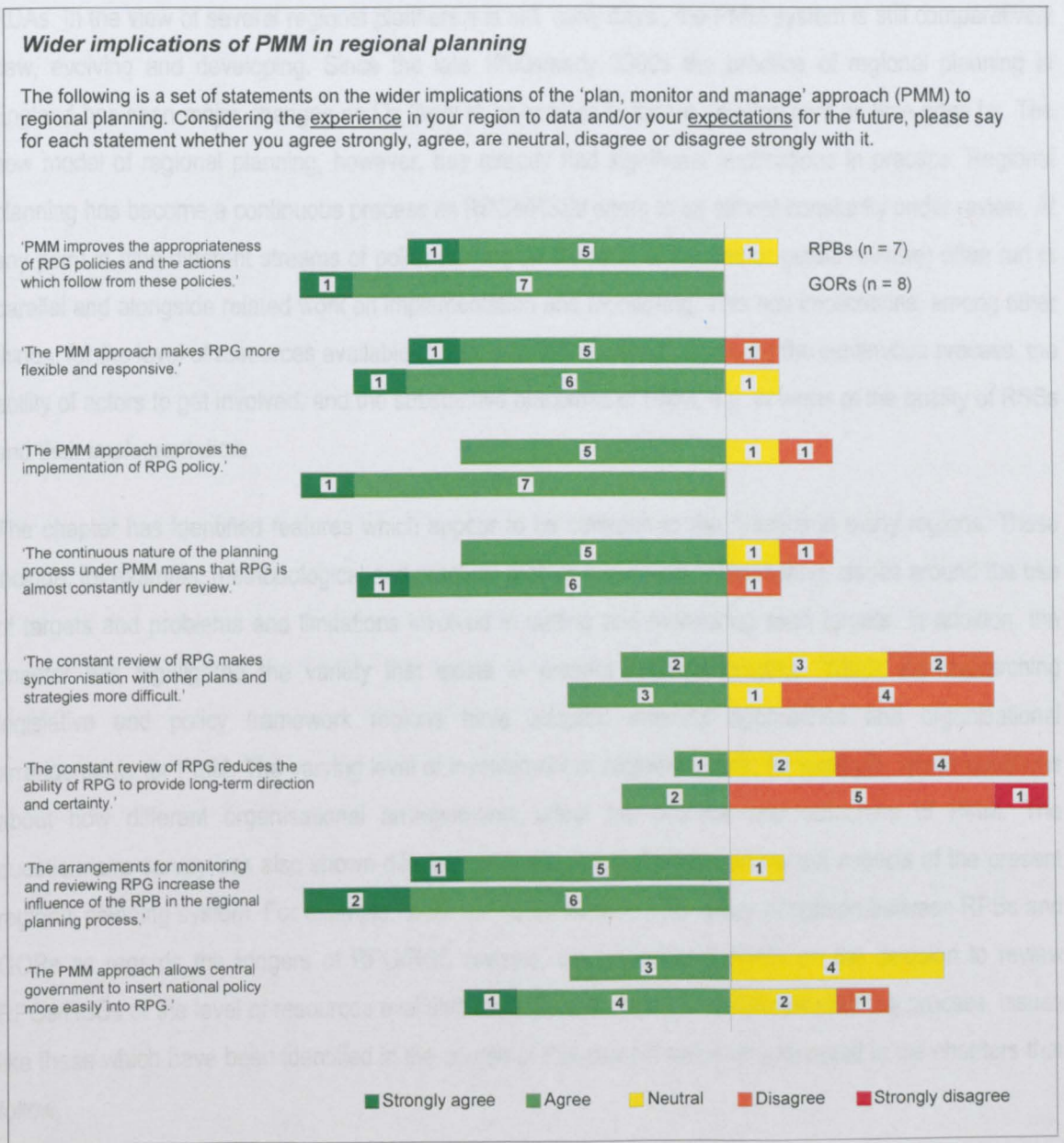
Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 36: Overall experience with PMM in regional planning

Finally, the work on the national picture gauged the opinions of regional planners at RPBs and GORs about wider implications of the PMM approach to regional planning (see Figure 37). Again, as PMM is still new and experience to date may still be limited, regional planners were also asked to include their expectations for the future. As regards some of the potential 'substantive' outcomes of PMM the large majority of both RPB and GOR respondents agreed or strongly agreed that PMM improves the appropriateness of RPG policies and the actions which follow from these policies. Similarly, most respondents believe that the PMM approach makes RPG more flexible and responsive and that it improves the implementation of RPG. There was also a high level of support for the statement that the continuous nature of the planning process under PMM means that RPG is almost constantly under review. However, one GOR respondent commented that in his/her view 'there is a mistake in seeing PMM as meaning that RPG needs to be constantly under review. I think that PMM means that we need to be more flexible and honest about scenarios and options so that we can respond better once we know more about how trends actually are working out' (original emphasis). Even though this position appears to be in contrast to the view of the majority of respondents that, in reality, RPG is almost constantly under review it could also indicate a difference between the continuous review of RPGs/RSSs in current practice and the actual 'need' to revise RPGs/RSSs constantly. This important point is addressed in more detail in the chapters that follow.

While the large majority of respondents agreed that under PMM RPG is almost constantly under review, there were varying views in relation to the possible implications of this. Whereas some RPB and GOR respondents believe that the constant review of RPG makes synchronisation with other plans and

strategies more difficult, a similar number of respondents do not believe this is the case. In contrast, a clear majority of RPB and especially GOR respondents disagreed that the constant review of RPG reduces the ability of RPG to provide long-term direction and certainty. Finally, issues around the effects of PMM on the influence of different actors in regional planning have been examined. Almost all RPB and all GOR respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing RPG increase the influence of the RPB in the regional planning process. Interestingly, the majority of GOR respondents also thought that the PMM approach allows central government to insert national policy more easily into RPG. While three out of eight RPB respondents agreed with this view, overall, there is less support among RPB in this respect. As questions about the implications of PMM, and its component parts, on the role and influence of different actors and levels in the planning hierarchy have been flagged up throughout this chapter they will also be examined in more detail in the following chapters.



Source: questionnaire survey

Figure 37: Wider implications of PMM in regional planning

4.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been twofold. On the one hand, it has provided an overview of the early practice of PMM in regional planning across England. The chapter has illuminated current regional practice as well as issues and implications that have emerged in the regions. As such the cross-regional perspective is used as a backdrop for the detailed case study accounts. On the other hand, as well as presenting findings of the empirical work on the national picture the chapter has also served to identify and confirm issues and questions which are addressed in much greater detail in the case studies and the overall analysis (Chs. 5 to 7).

The account has been based mainly on the views of practitioners from key organisations involved in regional planning, namely RPBs and GORs. This has been complemented by a related survey of ROs and RDAs. In the view of several regional planners it is still 'early days', the PMM system is still comparatively new, evolving and developing. Since the late 1990s/early 2000s the practice of regional planning in England has seen major changes and is likely to be subject to further development as time goes by. The new model of regional planning, however, has already had significant implications in practice. Regional planning has become a continuous process as RPGs/RSSs seem to be almost constantly under review. At any point in time different streams of policy making (in the form of full and/or partial reviews) often run in parallel and alongside related work on implementation and monitoring. This has implications, among other things, for the level of resources available to deal with the workload caused by the continuous process, the ability of actors to get involved, and the substantive outcomes of PMM, e.g. in terms of the quality of RSSs and their implementation.

The chapter has identified features which appear to be common to the practice in many regions. These include, for example, methodological and practical problems involved in monitoring, issues around the use of targets and problems and limitations involved in setting and monitoring such targets. In addition, the chapter has highlighted the variety that exists in present regional practice. Within the overarching legislative and policy framework regions have adopted different approaches and organisational arrangements for PMM. The varying level of involvement of regional actors, for example, raises questions about how different organisational arrangements affect the practice and outcomes of PMM. The questionnaire survey has also shown differences in the views of actors on certain aspects of the present regional planning system. For example, there are some marked differences of opinion between RPBs and GORs as regards the triggers of RPG/RSS reviews, the influence of RPBs on the decision to review RPGs/RSSs or the level of resources available to RPBs to facilitate a continuous planning process. Issues like these which have been identified in the course of this chapter are now addressed in the chapters that follow.

5 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in the West Midlands

This chapter provides a detailed account of the practice of PMM in regional planning in the West Midlands. It broadly follows the structure of the two previous chapters. Following a brief introduction to the planning and governance background of the West Midlands the overall approach to PMM in regional planning is examined. After that the 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' elements are treated in turn. The rest of the chapter then pays attention to the implications of PMM in terms of technical and managerial matters, organisational arrangements and governance as well as substantive outcomes of the PMM approach. The main purpose of the chapter is to give an account of planning practice in the region. The issues described in this chapter are picked up again in the final part of this thesis where, in conjunction with the account of the South East of England (Ch. 6) and the national picture (Ch. 4), they form the basis for the synthesis and analysis of the empirical work.

As described earlier (see 1.4), the case study account draws on various sources of information, including a variety of documents, interviews with a wide range of actors involved in regional planning and observations made at meetings and events in the case study region. A detailed list of the interviews, meetings and events can be found at Appendix 1.

5.1 *Planning and governance background*

The West Midlands region possesses a large spatial diversity which ranges from highly urbanised areas to remote rural parts. The region's Major Urban Areas (MUAs) include the West Midlands conurbation (i.e. Birmingham and Solihull and the Black Country towns of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton), Coventry and the Northstaffordshire conurbation around Stoke-on-Trent (see Figure 38). These metropolitan areas are surrounded by a ring of Shire counties. Whereas the remoter Shire areas are sparsely populated, those closer to the MUAs have experienced significant growth mainly due to overspill development from the metropolitan areas. Still the MUAs account for more than half of the region's population of 5.3 million (Murie et al. 2003).

There are strong spatial interrelations between the metropolitan areas and their hinterlands which are the result of pressures from growth and expansion of the MUAs, particularly of Birmingham, since industrialisation. These interlinkages increased further in the wake of the need for reconstruction of the MUAs after the Second World War and a period of economic boom in the post-war era which was based in particular on the region's large manufacturing sector. In response to this a strategy of dispersal was pursued for much of the second half of the last century. While efforts were made to renew the inner parts of the MUAs, development which could not be accommodated in the conurbations was dispersed to the

urban fringe and existing towns in the surrounding Shires within commuting distance of the MUAs (Cave 2000, Wannop 1995). Ever since there has been debate and tension between the metropolitan authorities and the Shires about the level of development outside the MUAs and especially on the urban fringe.

Source: adapted from WMLGA 2001b

Figure 38: The West Midlands region

Although housing development has probably been the single most important issue in the post-war period, in the 1970s and 1980s the West Midlands saw growing concern about economic development and physical decay, not only in the MUAs but also in other parts of the region. The region was hit severely by

the decline of manufacturing industry, and experienced continuing outward movement of people and businesses from the MUAs into the surrounding Shire areas which has led to increased economic and social polarisation (Murie et al. 2003). Nowadays there are areas of population and employment growth outside the MUAs, such as in parts of Warwickshire, urban regeneration and growth in the service sector, particularly in the centre of Birmingham, as well as concentrations of economic, social and physical deprivation. In addition, transport has become a major issue of concern as the region suffers from congestion on the strategic road network and underinvestment in the region's rail infrastructure (Deegan 2002).

In contrast to the other English regions (except for the South East of England), the West Midlands has a long history of continuous voluntary cooperation between authorities (Thomas 1999, Wannop 1995). In the absence of a single administrative body for the region⁷⁵ voluntary collaboration was required to deal with the above spatial development pressures which range across the boundaries of metropolitan and Shire authorities. It has already been mentioned that the relationship between the region's local authorities has not been free of tensions. The metropolitan authorities and, in particular, Birmingham have been reluctant to concede planning powers and have sought to expand to meet their development needs in the neighbouring Shire areas, whereas authorities in the Shires have largely opposed development around the edge of the MUAs (Wenban-Smith 2002b). However, good and continuous working relationships at officer level have helped to reduce or overcome political tensions and to find solutions which were widely accepted but at times took the form of rather weak compromises (ibid.). The strong role of central government is another factor which has promoted cooperation between local councils. Despite the differences between them local authorities in the region have worked together in voluntary fora to prevent central government from taking over control (Pearce 1999, Wannop 1995).

The West Midlands also possesses a long tradition of planning at strategic level. This includes early attempts at integrating regional land use, transport and economic planning (Wannop 1995) and a history of spatial monitoring and analysis, for example, by a Joint Data Team which was established by the seven metropolitan districts in the 1980s (Cave 2000, Thew and Watson 1988). More recently the region pioneered new approaches to regional planning which have since become part of central government policy introduced by PPG11 in 2000. Most prominent amongst these were efforts to involve a wide range of organisations and sectors in the preparation of the region's Advice on RPG in the early 1990s, including an informal examination in front of an independent panel (Finney 2000, Murie et al. 2003). In substantive terms planning in the West Midlands has, for some time, allowed and even promoted the process of outmigration from the MUAs. The RPGs of 1995 and 1998 identified the dispersal process as a problem but still allowed it to continue, albeit at a reduced rate than previous strategies.

⁷⁵ As part of the reorganisation of local government in 1974 the West Midlands County Council was created in the main conurbation which comprised the seven metropolitan boroughs. The late 1970s and mid 1980s then saw the abolition of the Regional Economic Planning Council and West Midlands County Council (Pearce 1999, Wenban-Smith 2002b).

However, by the time the most recent full review of RPG for the region began in early 2000, the reversal of outmigration and regeneration of the MUAs had moved to the top of the agenda (WMLGA 2000b, 2001a). Draft RPG which was published in November 2001 sought to achieve 'a fundamental change of strategy direction' (WMLGA 2001b: para 1.9) by putting the 'renaissance' of the region's major urban and deprived rural areas at the core of the strategy. This aim has fed through into final RPG⁷⁶, issued in June 2004 (GOWM 2004), which defines the Spatial Strategy Objectives set out in Figure 39.

- 'The following strategic objectives provide a context for the policies in the topic Chapters:
1. to make the MUAs of the West Midlands increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest;
 2. to secure the regeneration of the rural areas of the Region;
 3. to create a joined-up multi-centred Regional structure where all areas/centres have distinct roles to play;
 4. to retain the Green Belt, but to allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration;
 5. to support the cities and towns of the Region to meet their local and sub-regional development needs;
 6. to support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion;
 7. to ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Region;
 8. to improve significantly the Region's transport systems;
 9. to promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region; and
 10. to promote Birmingham as a world city'

Source: GOWM 2004: para 3.14

Figure 39: Spatial Strategy Objectives for the West Midlands

As far as the governance and administrative structure is concerned the West Midlands comprises a total of 38 local authorities, including seven metropolitan districts, the four Shire counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, the three unitary authorities of Herefordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford and Wrekin, as well as 24 Shire districts (Deegan 2002). The strong history of collaboration in the region, especially between local authorities but also other agencies, is important in understanding changes to the governance of the region since 1997. Today a wide and complex patchwork of public, private and voluntary organisations, 'partnerships' and other institutions exists which are involved in policy making and implementation in the West Midlands (Ayres et al. 2002).

In response to the regionalisation process the local authorities in the region formed the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) in order to better represent their interests on the emerging regional stage (ibid., Sennett 2002). WMLGA built on an existing Regional Forum of local authorities and

⁷⁶ In the wake of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* and related Regulations (see Ch. 3) RPG11 of June 2004 has since become the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands.

was the RPB for the region until this function moved to the Regional Assembly in 2003. In its role as RPB the Association was responsible for the preparation of draft RPG of November 2001. In addition to the WMLGA a voluntary Regional Chamber was set up in 1999 which became the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) in 2001. Besides its scrutiny role of the RDA, and a wider role in promoting and facilitating the development, coordination and implementation of regional policies since 2003 the WMRA is also responsible for regional planning in its function as RPB. The Assembly Council has 100 members; 68 from local authorities reflecting the party-political and geographical split, 16 from the business sector and 16 from other stakeholder groups (such as trade unions, health, education, environment and voluntary sectors). The Assembly is served by a secretariat of some 25 staff which is co-located and works closely together with the WMLGA secretariat.

Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the Regional Development Agency, was established in 1999 and employs some 300 staff, including Agency and seconded staff (AWM 2005). AWM prepared its first RES in 1999 which was revised in 2002 and at the time of writing was again under review. The Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) was set up in the early 1990s to coordinate and implement central government policy and activities in the region. In 2004/5 some 360 staff worked at GOWM (GOWM 2005). Since its formation the role and responsibilities of GOWM have been strengthened significantly and it is now a key actor in regional planning. In addition to these key players, a wide and diverse array of organisations and arrangements exist in the West Midlands, ranging from small voluntary organisations to strong interest groups, e.g. in the business and environmental sectors (Ayres et al. 2002, Pearce 1999, Sennett 2002).

5.2 Overall approach to PMM

This section considers some overarching aspects of how PMM in regional planning is approached in the West Midlands. First, the way in which different actors understand PMM and how it should work in practice is described. Second, the organisational arrangements for regional planning in the West Midlands are examined, including a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing arrangements.

5.2.1 Understandings of PMM

There is quite wide agreement among those involved in regional planning⁷⁷ that PMM implies a continuous process of planning, implementation, monitoring and review. For example, an official of GOWM anticipated that 'It is likely in the future that Regional Planning Guidance will be in a constant state of review in much the same way that Local Development Frameworks are'. Beyond this general understanding of PMM as a

⁷⁷ As described earlier, the case study account is based to a large extent on interviews with actors involved in regional planning in the case study region (see 1.4). A list of the interviewees can be found at Appendix 1.

continuous planning process there is much more variation in views about the detailed nature of PMM and, in particular, some uncertainty around what the 'manage' element is about.

Debates and practical work on the 'manage' element in the West Midlands have been confined largely to the field of housing. Reflecting the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 3, a fundamental issue is the extent to which 'manage' is about 'implementation' or 'tactical decisions' as opposed to strategy 'review'. According to the Panel which conducted the Public Examination for the last full review of RPG 'manage' includes both 'managing the supply of new housing land' at local level (e.g. through phasing the release of housing land) and reviewing the housing numbers in the RSS (Swain and Burden 2002: para 5.4.2). This view underlies the approach taken in the current RSS (see Figure 40).

Managing housing land provision

'In managing the release of housing land local planning authorities should have regard to the advice in "Planning to Deliver" in determining the most appropriate approach for their area [i.e. phasing etc.].

The RPB will *monitor* permitted supply and demand on a sub-regional basis and provide an opportunity for the results to be discussed with other stakeholders at an annual seminar. The seminar will address the qualitative and quantitative impacts of the housing developments on the delivery of the Spatial Strategy.

The RPB will then issue advice to local planning authorities on whether there need to be any *short-term changes in supply* in particular areas to reinforce the Spatial Strategy. The RPB should also comment on the extent to which any policies may need to be reviewed or more strongly enforced.

The results of this monitoring process will also inform any decision on the need for a *review* of this RPG.'

Source: GOWM 2004: paras 6.26-6.29, italics added

Figure 40: Managing housing land provision in the West Midlands

Manage as strategy review

Although the above seems to suggest a neat combination of the two views of 'managing', the debates in practice raise some questions about the feasibility of such an approach. One side of the argument supports the view of 'manage as strategy review', in which responsiveness is to be achieved through fast revisions of the RSS. One senior planner⁷⁸ at WMRA highlighted difficulties in controlling the rate of development at the local level, especially difficulties in holding back land from development once allocated (see below). Therefore a 'cautious' plan should be prepared which, particularly in areas of high demand, identifies land in a rather restrictive way (i.e. enough land to meet short term demand) to avoid oversupply and excessive rates of development. Land take up and demand should be monitored and a review of the

⁷⁸ If not stated otherwise the term 'regional planner' is used in this context to refer to the planners working at the WMRA secretariat and the local authority officers who lead on RSS work which were interviewed (see Appendix 1 for details).

plan should be used to adjust land supply. However, this approach requires plan reviews to be carried out quickly in order to be sufficiently responsive.

To some extent the review-based view reflects government policy on PMM in regional planning which advocates frequent and speedy RSS revisions (see Ch. 3). However, there has been concern about the ability of such an approach to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to new information and changing circumstances. Given the high level of detail of an RSS, which now has to incorporate district level housing figures, responsiveness relies strongly on the review of the strategy. But several interviewees argued that in practice RSS revisions take too long to facilitate responsive planning. This concern was echoed at the Public Examination and, more fundamentally, in the view of the Panel highlights the difficulties involved in implementing government policy on PMM in practice:

'Monitoring is intended to inform periodic reviews of RPG's housing strategy at least every 5 years or sooner "*if there are signs of either under or over provision of housing land*" [PPG3, para 8]. This oft quoted phrase is easy to understand but complex to implement, given the time lags inherent in collecting and analysing data, and in reviewing development plans following a review of RPG. This led CPRE to seek a greater level of flexibility in the monitoring, review and implementation arrangements (within the strategic direction set by RPG) to allow adjustments in the rate of development in response to changing circumstances between formal plan reviews. Boyer and DLP also expressed similar concerns about the inflexibility of the process to respond to the changes of patterns of demand or other circumstances. This is a national issue which goes to the heart of implementing PMM' (Swain and Burden 2002: para 5.4.7, original italics).

Manage as short-term action

Various actors felt that responsiveness should be achieved without the need to review the RSS and different proposals were made on how flexibility could be built into the strategy. In the view of a representative of the HBF the RSS should include a 'contingency plan' in case the predictions which underlie the plan prove wrong and/or the strategy cannot be implemented. The RSS should, for example, provide an extra 'contingent' of housing together with defined triggers for the release of land from this contingent (e.g. if demand is higher than expected the contingent could be drawn on without a need to revise the RSS). A former senior planner in the West Midlands conurbation also saw a need to build some degree of flexibility into the regional plan, e.g. to outline the intended scale and broad distribution of development and set out mechanisms for phasing of land release in the RSS. The phasing mechanism should then be used at local level to control the release of land.

At the Public Examination representatives of the RPB argued that within the framework set by the RSS responsiveness would be achieved through annual monitoring and based on this the issuing of 'advice' to local authorities on necessary changes to the supply of land. This view has been generally supported by the Panel and underpins the approach taken in the final RSS (see Figure 40). However, the Panel and

several interviewees have highlighted difficulties in implementing such short-term responsiveness in practice. Various 'lags' are inherent in the planning system which limit the scope for controlling the rate of development, e.g. existing commitments⁷⁹.

One senior planner at WMRA explained that the short-term action approach risks adopting a rather mechanistic approach and that such 'fine-tuning' is difficult to apply in practice. To be efficient the action-based approach is thought to require a separation of political and technical decisions. While decisions on objectives and strategy should be a result of the political process, decisions involved in 'managing' (e.g. decisions on the release of land) are seen as a technical exercise by planners. In practice, however, what are seen as 'technical' decisions can be highly political and thus are subject to political consideration. The fact that the RPB has not yet published any formal 'advice' to local authorities, although monitoring suggests that action is needed (see 5.4), can be explained partly by the political sensitivity of such decisions. Furthermore, a flexible approach can be liable to short-term pressures which undermines longer-term planning concerns. Once sites are allocated in a plan the rate of development can be difficult to control, for example, as developers may take legal action to push towards the release of land in the short term. The preference of the HBF representative for a flexible 'contingent' seems to support such concerns. Finally, there are problems involved in the techniques proposed for short-term action. As far as phasing of the release of land is concerned research conducted for WMRA identified a lack of phasing in local practice and a need for further mechanisms to control the rate of development (GVA Grimley 2005).

5.2.2 Organisational arrangements for regional planning

The RPB in the West Midlands has adopted a decentralised working structure (Deegan 2002, Sennett 2002). The RPB itself has only a small secretariat which has a mainly coordinating and facilitating role. The actual policy development, implementation and monitoring work is undertaken largely by officers from local planning authorities. During the last full RPG review the RPB had a very small planning 'team' of three officers at the WMLGA. Since then the RPB function and its secretariat have been transferred to WMRA which has subsequently increased its staff numbers. As at early 2006 the WMRA secretariat had a core team of six officers with main responsibility for RSS work⁸⁰. WMRA also employs a group of policy advisors with responsibility for specific topics such as environment, housing and transport. These officers contribute to RSS work where necessary but also have other responsibilities (e.g. preparation of the RHS).

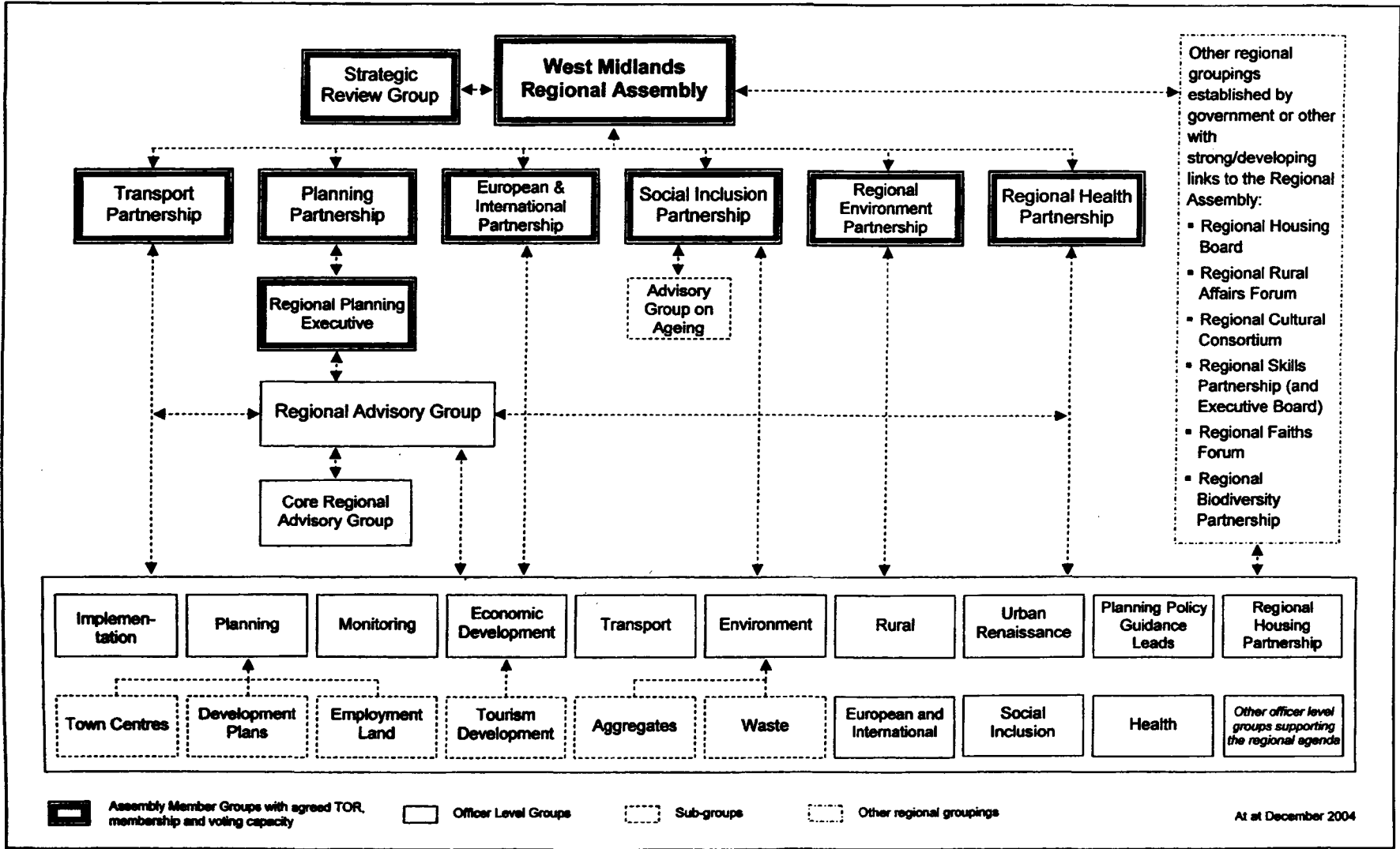
While the RPB secretariat coordinates and facilitates RSS-related work, the policy making, monitoring and conformity work is done mainly by officers from local planning authorities (mostly from metropolitan borough or county councils). Each of these officers leads on a specific policy field, including urban and

⁷⁹ Several planning officers pointed out that the legacy arising from existing supply (i.e. land allocations in local plans and outstanding planning permissions) has led to rates of housing development well above RSS targets, for example, in Warwickshire.

⁸⁰ One RSS review coordinator, four 'advisors' on review, conformity, monitoring and implementation as well as one assistant planner.

rural renaissance, economy and employment land, town centres, housing, environment, transport, minerals and waste. They take the lead in developing the draft RSS, are responsible for writing the annual monitoring report and advise the Assembly on issues of LDF conformity. For a number of topics officer working groups exist which are centrally involved in policy development, monitoring and implementation work (see Figure 41). Most of these officer groups are structured around policy sectors (e.g. transport, employment land, town centres and environment) whereas 'cross-cutting' groups have been established for monitoring, implementation and conformity work. The working groups are made up largely of officers from local authorities. Key regional organisations, especially GOWM and AWM, attend the meetings of several of these groups. The involvement of other regional actors in the officer groups is generally limited, although the membership of some groups such as the monitoring working group has been expanded to include representatives from government agencies and other regional organisations (see also 5.4.1). A Regional Advisory Group provides advice to the groups of Regional Assembly members which take the formal decisions on policy and process. In addition, WMRA has set up a series of 'Partnership Groups' which largely reflect the make up of the full Assembly (see 5.1).

The influence of the working arrangements on the application of a PMM approach has turned out to be a key issue in the West Midlands. In particular, the decentralised working structure adopted by the RPB shows various strengths and weaknesses in facilitating PMM. In the view of many interviewees the decentralised model builds on the tradition of cooperative working and on established links between local authorities in the region. The new planning system and additional responsibilities have led to a significant increase in the amount of work for WMRA (see 5.6.1). This includes, for example, work on RSS monitoring and implementation, assessment of LDF conformity, sub-regional work, 'stakeholder involvement' and SA/SEA requirements. The decentralised working structure means that the workload arising from regional planning work can be more evenly distributed. In addition to this, the decentralised model helps to draw on the expertise of local authority officers who are closer 'to the ground' and can contribute their local knowledge. This is useful, for example, in relation to monitoring and the interpretation of monitoring information (see 5.4). Under a more centralised model such local expertise may get lost. Finally, a senior planner at WMRA stressed that the decentralised model facilitates direct involvement and active engagement of local authorities. This helps to pursue a consensus-oriented approach and local ownership and support of regional planning which could be at risk under more centralised arrangements.



At at December 2004

Figure 41: WMRA working arrangements

Source: based on a figure provided by the WMRA secretariat

Whilst the above points can be seen as advantages of the decentralised working structure, it also involves various weaknesses. One of these is the risk of a lack of policy integration. The decentralised arrangements are prone to the adoption of a 'silo' approach as the responsibilities for different policy fields are spread between different officers from different local authorities. In the view of several interviewees the WMRA secretariat does not have the role and capacity to provide more steer and ensure coordination of policy work. Partly as a result of this a lack of integration of topics within RPG became evident during the last review (cf. Sennett 2002). The decentralised working structure also affects the integration of policy making, implementation and monitoring which, in theory, is a central element of the PMM approach. In practice, however, the interaction between different working groups, such as the monitoring and topic officer groups, is limited. This contributes, among other things, to a lack of consideration of the implications of monitoring for policy and action (see 5.4). The adopted structure involves a large number of working groups and related meetings, papers etc. which creates a high workload and slows down the process of decision making.

Many interviewees pointed out that the decentralised model relies heavily on contributions (and the 'goodwill') of other organisations, especially local authorities. However, the capacities and commitment of local authorities to contribute to regional planning vary significantly. Strategic authorities have relatively large planning teams which can take on regional planning work, while the small districts in the West Midlands have few planning staff to shoulder additional work. Even for the officers who lead on the various topics, RSS work is largely an 'evening job' which has to be done in addition to their responsibilities in their individual local authorities. As a result of this, regional planning work tends to be a secondary priority and gets neglected if work pressures in a local authority are high (e.g. during the preparation of an LDF). It is, however, not only the resources available to local authorities which affects their involvement in regional planning, but also their commitment to regional working. While some authorities take on regional planning work rather proactively (e.g. Staffordshire County Council provide several lead officers), others are less committed. In 2004 the decentralised working model came under significant strain as a result of tensions around the new role of county councils under the PCPA⁸¹. The central role of local authorities in the current arrangements in the West Midlands (i.e. voting majority on the Assembly and local authority-led officer structure) make the system liable to pressures 'from below'. In the view of a former senior planner in the conurbation the decentralised model relies on a consensus-based approach which leaves the Assembly with 'no grip' on individual local authorities. This can mean that local authority officers who take on regional planning work wear the 'hat' of their individual authorities rather than taking a regional perspective. It also makes it difficult to take hard decisions, for example, in relation to the assessment of

⁸¹ There was considerable opposition among some counties about their limited role under the new planning system. Especially Warwickshire County Council fought hard at national level to retain a formal role under the new system. In this context Warwickshire withdrew from its role as a secretariat for the WMRA officer working group on monitoring. At the end of 2004 the decentralised working model had come under so much stress that the WMRA secretariat was considering introducing a working structure that was less dependent on local authorities and would allow more work to be done by the secretariat. However, these changes have not been pursued further since.

LDF conformity or the identification of actions that are required to implement the RSS (see 5.3.2 and 5.4.4).

5.3 The 'Plan' element

As far as the 'plan' element of PMM is concerned much has already been written about the preparation of the first set of new-style RPG (see 1.2). In this thesis the attention therefore focuses on two aspects of the 'plan' element which are especially relevant for the adoption of a PMM approach. First, the format and content of the RSS in the West Midlands are analysed in respect of the use of targets. Second, the section examines the way in which implementation is treated in the RSS⁸².

5.3.1 The use of targets in regional planning

An ambiguous picture emerged as regards the role and use of targets in regional planning in the West Midlands. At a general level targets are seen as important planning tools. Under the current planning system targets function as powerful steering devices, especially in the field of housing where they are used most widely. Once a target is set, e.g. for the scale and distribution of new housing development, it defines the measure against which action 'on the ground' is assessed. Regional actors alluded to this steering function of targets and thus seek to influence the setting of targets. The representatives of both CPRE and HBF, for example, were very keen to get involved in work on the establishment of district level housing numbers for the revised RSS.

However, while targets play an important role in some policy fields, especially housing, there is a significant degree of caution, in particular among regional planners, towards a wider use of targets and their application to other topic areas. One topic lead felt that targets are 'quite important' but also that there is a risk of giving them too much importance and thus that issues get narrowed down to a simple target, though they are much more complex in reality. Several interviewees saw the risk that numbers would be 'fiddled' to meet a target and referred to the classic example of planning applications being processed in time, while actual decisions may lack quality. Another topic lead argued that the government's approach to the use of targets was an attempt at 'fine tuning', as targets are understood as 'target points' that are to be achieved. In planning, targets should be seen as 'target areas' or 'guiding lights' which show the intended direction of development but which are not taken as fixed end states. The system promoted by central

⁸² Implementation has been defined earlier as part of the 'manage' element of PMM and, strictly speaking, should therefore be treated under the 'manage' section of this chapter. However, at the time the research was conducted the preparation (and revision) of RPGs/RSSs dominated regional practice and implementation of the new strategies was still in its infancy. In preparing and revising the RSS for the West Midlands a fair amount of work has been conducted on how the strategy can be implemented, what mechanisms can be used etc. These aspects are therefore covered under the 'plan' section, while the 'manage' section focuses on RSS revisions which dominate the 'manage' debate and work in practice. Some of the early (and anticipated) effects of PMM on the implementation of the RSS are discussed at the end of this chapter (see 5.6.3).

government is seen to take, as one interviewee phrased it, a somehow 'Stalinist' approach, which is geared towards meeting the targets. It was suggested that targets should be understood and used as 'tolerances' which define boundaries or 'triggers' that help to establish when action is needed (e.g. define tolerances for the release of additional land for development). There is a danger of concentrating on whether targets are being achieved or not while a more detailed examination of the reasons for the (non-) achievement of targets or the continuing appropriateness of a target does not happen.

In practice the RPB has been reserved about the use of targets. Other than common targets such as housing numbers the definition of targets (and related indicators) was treated as an afterthought during the last full review of RPG in the early 2000s. The RPB developed some targets before submitting draft RPG but this was more to meet government requirements (and in response to pressure from GOWM) rather than from belief in the usefulness of targets. The general caution about targets described above seems to be one of the main reasons for the reserved use of targets by the RPB. In addition, regional planners highlighted the difficulties involved in setting targets. These include a limited understanding of the links between policies and targets, as well as difficulties in determining what targets can be realistically achieved. The latter point also relates to issues around implementation and the problems involved in defining what actions are required and by whom to implement an RSS (see 5.3.2). Besides these more methodological/technical concerns the reservation about the use of targets also has a political side. The definition of targets can be very political and thus actors can be reluctant to set them. For example, the WMRA has rejected setting a target for employment land development on brownfield sites as planners and politicians are concerned that this could place the West Midlands at a competitive disadvantage given the absence of such targets in other regions.

As a result draft RPG of November 2001 (WMLGA 2001b) did not include targets for a large number of policies. In the government's view draft RPG lacked targets and thus, in the later stages of the process, GOWM inserted additional targets to comply with government guidance in PPG11. However, in doing so GOWM staff experienced significant difficulties in the shape of a lack of time and knowledge to develop meaningful targets. Some of the targets were based on historical rates of development, others on national surveys and studies, such as the government's multi-modal transport studies (MMSs). For the RPB a number of the targets included in the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes (GOWM 2003a) and in the final RSS (GOWM 2004) are not plausible and appear to be unrealistic⁸³.

⁸³ GOWM organised a seminar to overcome the shortfalls of the targets and indicators in the government's Proposed Changes to RPG. However, the discussion at the seminar focused on the selection of indicators for monitoring RPG, while the setting of targets was hardly discussed (see 5.4). This can be seen as another indication of the reservation about the use of targets among regional planners.

5.3.2 Implementation issues

As described above, as far as implementation is concerned the interest here is in how it has been considered in preparing the present RSS⁸⁴. There is wide agreement among regional actors in the West Midlands about the importance of implementation in regional planning. This relates to both an acknowledgement of the importance assigned to implementation under the new planning system and the need to work towards the implementation of the RSS for the region. The Panel of the Public Examination noted that 'All parties at the Examination recognised the critical importance of implementation, ie having the means available to translate the strategy and its policies into action on the ground' (Swain and Burden 2002: para 11.1.1).

As with targets and indicators, implementation issues were considered rather late in the process of preparing draft RPG. The RPB commissioned consultants to undertake work 'towards an implementation framework' for RPG but the consultant's report (GVA Grimley and ECOTEC 2002) was completed only after the submission of draft RPG. A key finding of the report, which was echoed in the interviews with regional actors, was the wide range of channels through which the RSS needs to be implemented. Although LDFs and the development control process are seen as crucial implementation mechanisms, it has been stressed that the implementation of the RSS depends on the activities of a wide range of actors. As a consequence the implementation framework developed by the RPB after the Public Examination is not only concerned with implementation 'within' the planning system but also gives much attention to other mechanisms⁸⁵. In addition, the WMRA has created the post of an advisor on implementation and set up an implementation group as part of its working structure which includes a wide range of regional actors. Following the PCPA the Regional Assembly has also employed a conformity officer who coordinates a number of conformity advisors from the region's strategic planning authorities who undertake the actual assessment of LDFs on behalf of the Assembly. A development plan conformity working officer group has also been established which has developed a protocol which guides the process of assessing the conformity of LDFs and major planning applications.

While implementation is deemed an important part of a PMM approach, many interviewees highlighted difficulties in actually implementing the RSS 'on the ground'. In terms of the implementation 'within' the planning system there is an expectation that the statutory status of the RSS and the requirement of general conformity are likely to improve implementation. On the other hand, several interviewees raised concerns about the politics involved in implementing the RSS as local authorities may have other priorities. The limited 'grip' of the WMRA on local authorities under the decentralised working structure

⁸⁴ Some of the early (and anticipated) effects of PMM on the implementation of the RSS are discussed later in this chapter (see 5.6.3).

⁸⁵ The Implementation Framework is structured around the so-called '4 A's', namely 1) awareness raising of the RSS among implementers, 2) alignment of actions to the RSS, 3) advocacy of the RSS outside the region and 4) actions and priorities (e.g. investment priorities).

may make it difficult to take strong action⁸⁶. However, implementation 'outside' the planning system was an issue of greater unease. Many interviewees identified a mismatch between the importance of various implementation channels (e.g. government spending) and the limited influence of planning on these mechanisms. For example, while there is wide agreement that the urban renaissance envisaged in the RSS relies heavily on significant improvements to the region's transport system, the Public Examination Panel expressed 'reservations about whether the Region has sufficient delivery mechanisms at its disposal' (Swain and Burden 2002: para 11.1.9). These concerns about the transport side of the West Midlands RSS are reflected in research by Ayres and Pearce (2004: 245) who identify a 'lack of mechanisms to turn 'paper strategies' into delivery' and 'widespread anxiety that fragmented structures, blurred accountabilities and dependence on uncertain funding streams, determined by national bodies, inhibited the delivery of regional transport priorities'.

Another important issue under a PMM approach to regional planning is the relationship between implementation and monitoring. While matters of monitoring the implementation of the RSS are considered below (see 5.4.1), the issue at hand here is the extent to which efforts to implement the RSS are linked to monitoring and vice versa. The Public Examination Panel, for example, stressed the important role monitoring information can play in forming an opinion on the conformity of LDFs and major planning applications with the RSS (Swain and Burden 2002: para 11.1.13). In practice, however, the links between implementation and conformity work on the one hand, and monitoring on the other are still rather limited. At the time the research was conducted the implementation working group, for example, was seen as being a bit 'distant' from other officer working groups. Until now neither the implementation group nor the conformity officer group have been much involved in monitoring or the preparation of AMRs. Conversely the extent to which AMRs identify actions for implementation has been rather limited so far (see 5.4.3 and 5.4.4).

5.4 The 'Monitor' element

As mentioned earlier, the West Midlands have a long tradition of monitoring and using this for planning purposes. This section describes how monitoring is understood and used in the region and how central government requirements have affected regional practice. It also examines the arrangements for monitoring in the West Midlands and identifies their strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore some of the technical and methodological issues involved in monitoring are discussed. Finally, the way in which monitoring and other information are actually used in regional planning is investigated.

⁸⁶ The process of conformity assessment provides an illustration of the politics involved in implementing the RSS. The conformity working group of WMRA developed a protocol which is used for assessing the conformity of LDFs and major planning applications with the RSS. However, the process of agreeing on the protocol was quite difficult as local authorities were reluctant to give the Regional Assembly too much influence on local planning. At the time of writing it was too early to assess whether these arrangements for conformity assessment are working in practice.

5.4.1 Understandings of and approaches to monitoring

At a general level, in the view of many interviewees, monitoring or, more broadly speaking, the use of information are important elements of planning. Similarly, many generally support the increased emphasis on monitoring under the new planning system. Local authorities are expected to take monitoring more seriously as a result of the statutory requirement to prepare AMRs which is also thought to improve the data base for regional monitoring. However, at a more specific level different understandings about the purpose and use of monitoring exist among regional actors. For some monitoring is about gathering information or 'intelligence' on what is happening in the region, what issues need to be addressed and whether existing policies are working and being implemented. Here monitoring is seen as an activity which informs the making, implementation and review of policies (see 5.4.4). While most regional actors would sign up to this view in principle, it is not reflected as widely as may be expected in regional practice. In a number of cases monitoring tends to be seen mainly as the collection of data or, in the understanding of a local authority officer who is involved in RSS monitoring, as 'writing the chapter of the AMR'. Here the intelligence function of monitoring and its use for policy making and implementation tend to be limited.

Although a series of factors can explain the ambiguous understanding and practice of monitoring (see 5.4.3), several interviewees argued that regional practice is influenced strongly by central government which, in their view, sends mixed messages. On the one hand, the government's drive towards 'evidence based policy' is meant to promote the use of information in policy making. On the other hand, much of the monitoring regime set up by government (e.g. Best Value, LTP, LDF and RSS monitoring) is felt to focus too narrowly on monitoring policy implementation and outputs. Many interviewees agreed that monitoring is also about assessing the implementation and the effects of the RSS and thus about assessing the 'effectiveness' of policies, whether they 'are working' etc. However, regional planners especially felt that the government's approach puts too much emphasis on implementation monitoring and the use of targets and indicators. This runs the risk of making rather crude comparisons of targets and development on the ground and neglecting the wider intelligence function of monitoring.

In practice the approach to RSS monitoring adopted by the RPB has been strongly driven by and geared towards meeting government requirements. This relates to the process of annual monitoring which is arranged around the date for submitting AMRs set by government. It also relates to substantive issues such as the 'objective-led' monitoring model promoted in government guidance with its emphasis on indicators and targets, and the use of core national indicators which the region is expected to monitor and report on (see Ch. 3). As is shown in more detail below government requirements have raised various issues and problems in the region. Especially the first AMRs which were produced under the PPG11-based system in 2003/04 were prepared largely to meet ODPM requirements and were of limited value for regional practice. The tight deadline for the submission of the reports to government entailed a lack of time for the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information which meant that the AMRs largely presented

data but hardly considered any implications for policy or implementation (see 5.4.3). Although this situation has changed with the preparation of additional monitoring reports which are geared more towards the RPB's needs (see below) the requirements coming from national level are still largely seen as an 'add-on' which is of limited benefit to the region. In the view of several regional planners the ODPM needed to be clearer about what it wanted to get out of monitoring and what monitoring should be used for. This is echoed in a concern about a lack of advice from GOWM on monitoring, e.g. the absence of feedback on the AMRs the RPB has submitted to government so far.

5.4.2 Arrangements for monitoring

In line with the overall working model of the RPB the arrangements for monitoring also take a decentralised structure. An officer at the WMRA secretariat is responsible for coordinating and facilitating monitoring work whereas much of the actual monitoring work is led by officers from local authorities (see 5.2.2). The RPB has set up an officer group on monitoring which is made up largely of officers from local government, including all RSS topic leads. More recently the membership of the group has been expanded to include representatives from other regional organisations such as GOWM, AWM, the West Midlands Regional Observatory (WMRO) and the Environment Agency. However, the involvement of these organisations varies and the RPB sees a need for expanding the membership of the group further. Monitoring data is collected and provided to the RPB by a range of organisations, mainly by local authorities (e.g. data on housing and employment land development) but also by other organisations such as statutory agencies. The RPB secretariat holds a seminar with local authority monitoring officers each spring to discuss issues around the collection and submission of data, e.g. to inform them about changes to the data specifications.

Building on a tradition of producing monitoring reports the RPB has produced a series of AMRs following the publication of draft RPG in 2001. The 'main' AMR is prepared on an annual basis and submitted to government on the formal deadline date (see WMLGA and WMRA 2003a, 2003b, WMRA 2003, 2005a, 2006a). This AMR broadly follows the structure of the RSS with an overarching chapter on urban and rural renaissance and topic chapters on housing, economy, environment and transport. Each topic lead officer is responsible for preparing the section in the AMR which falls into their topic area. Out of a concern that the deadline for submitting AMRs does not allow enough time for data analysis and interpretation the RPB has produced additional monitoring reports on specific topics⁸⁷. These are usually published in late spring which is intended to provide more time for analysis and interpretation (see 5.4.3). In 2004 and 2005 the publication of the supplementary reports was followed by a 'stakeholder event'. While at the first event the AMRs were mainly 'presented', the event in 2005 included thematic workshops which allowed more time

⁸⁷ The RPB has produced annual supplementary reports on housing and employment land (WMRA 2004a, 2004b, 2005b, 2005c) and occasional reports on other topics such as green belt and waste (WMRA 2005d, 2005e).

and space to discuss specific issues in more detail (see 5.4.3). More recently the RPB commissioned WMRO to prepare a 'contextual' monitoring report on 'urban and rural renaissance' (WMRO 2006). This report aims to establish a 'baseline position' that can be used in future monitoring rounds to assess progress towards the renaissance agenda of the RSS⁸⁸. Through the production of the contextual report the RPB hopes to create a 'common evidence base' which is used by regional actors for the preparation and implementation of their strategies such as the RSS/RTS, RHS and RES. This is intended to promote the coordination and integration of regional strategies.

A key issue in this study is the way in which the organisational arrangements in the West Midlands affect the analysis and interpretation of monitoring data, the identification of actions and, very importantly, from a PMM perspective, the links between monitoring and policy making and implementation. Under the current model monitoring and particularly the preparation of AMRs lie very much in the hands of the topic leads. In producing the AMRs these work mainly in isolation from each other, which works against any analysis that cuts across different topics. A small 'team' of officers from two county councils work together on the housing side of the AMRs, which contributes to the analysis of monitoring data. In contrast, the environment topic lead, for example, has had to do much of the analysis and interpretation on his/her own, while members of the environment officer group have been hardly involved in this work.

The monitoring officer group plays an important role in coordinating and discussing monitoring work, e.g. in relation to technical and procedural matters. However, apart from the individual contributions of the topic leads the involvement of the group in the actual preparation of the AMRs is limited. The analysis and interpretation of monitoring information is done individually by each topic lead, but the monitoring group is not used much as a forum for discussion of the results or for identifying issues for future action. Even more crucial from a PMM angle seems to be the limited extent to which monitoring work and policy making and implementation are interconnected. The input from other officer groups into the preparation of the AMRs is very limited. Although most topic leads circulate their draft chapter for the AMRs to the members of the relevant officer topic group and 'ask for comments' (e.g. in the case of the employment land and town centres groups) there is little discussion or feedback from these groups. The topic groups could play an important role in analysing and interpreting monitoring information and, very importantly, in identifying any implications of the results of monitoring for policy and implementation. In practice, however, the involvement of the topic groups is very limited and tends to take more the shape of a 'consideration' of monitoring results 'after the event' rather than pro-active engagement throughout the process.

Overall the working arrangements for monitoring rely heavily on contributions from the region's local authorities, be it through the topic leads, the officer working groups or the provision of data by local

⁸⁸ In 2004 WMRO also prepared a 'State of the Region' report (WMRO 2004) which presents data on a wide range of issues and which is updated on an annual basis (WMRO 2005). WMRO also conducted a 'Regional Lifestyle Survey' which aimed 'to explore residents' attitudes towards lifestyle, environmental and wider quality of life issues' (WMRO and WMPHO 2005: 3).

planning authorities. Much of what has been said about the strengths and weaknesses of the decentralised model (see 5.2.2) also applies in relation to monitoring, e.g. the value of drawing on local expertise (see also 5.4.3) or the varying ability and commitment of local authorities to contribute to regional monitoring (e.g. several topic leads highlighted a lack of time for preparing and discussing the AMRs due to other commitments in their authorities). Up to now the topic advisors who work at the WMRA secretariat have not been much involved in monitoring. Similarly, the contributions from other regional actors have been restricted largely to the provision of data. The annual meeting with local authorities and, in particular, the two 'stakeholder events' on monitoring provide valuable opportunities to get local authorities and other regional actors involved which has had a positive effect on the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information (see 5.4.3).

5.4.3 Technical and methodological issues around monitoring

Besides organisational matters, monitoring in the West Midlands has been analysed in relation to what could be called technical and methodological issues. This includes the monitoring framework which has been put in place and, in particular, the indicators which are used for RSS monitoring. Closely related to that, issues around the availability of data for regional monitoring are discussed. Subsequently the way in which monitoring information is interpreted and linked to RSS policy and the factors which affect such interpretation are investigated.

Monitoring framework

As with implementation, monitoring was considered rather late in the process of preparing draft RPG in the early 2000s as technical, policy and consultation work took precedence. The RPB commissioned consultants to develop a monitoring framework but this work was published only after draft RPG had been finalised (JDT/Mott MacDonald 2002a, 2002b). Similarly, the ODPM good practice guidance on monitoring (ODPM 2002a) became available only after the Public Examination. In the absence of detailed technical work and government guidance on monitoring, each RSS topic lead proposed indicators for their individual topic area, but this was done only shortly before the submission of draft RPG. There was little consideration of the proposed indicators in the monitoring officer or topic officer groups. As a result of the way in which the monitoring framework was developed there was significant variation between the topic chapters as regards the number and type of indicators that were proposed and their usefulness for monitoring the strategy. Following discussions with regional actors at a seminar on indicators during the Proposed Changes stage, the RPB suggested a revised set of indicators which was largely included in final RPG. In the view of many regional planners, the revised monitoring framework represents an improvement, for example, as the very high number of indicators contained in the Proposed Changes (GOWM 2003a) has been reduced.

Despite these improvements the current monitoring framework still raises various concerns. The indicators which are used vary in terms of their usefulness for regional planning purposes (e.g. many of the environmental and transport indicators relate only very indirectly to RSS policies)⁸⁹. In the view of a former strategic planner, the approach seems to try to monitor 'everything', while one of the topic leads felt that there is a tendency to think 'the more indicators the better' and that some of the indicators had been selected on the basis of 'whatever information is available' and not necessarily on their usefulness. The large number of indicators which are currently used causes a high workload and, quite importantly, runs the risk that the key issues and messages from monitoring get lost. One planner at the WMRA felt that more thinking was needed to identify the 'right' questions and issues that monitoring should look at. This includes the identification of issues which cut across the topic-based structure adopted in the AMRs. At present there is a tendency to look at issues in isolation (e.g. separate chapters on environment, employment land, housing and transport) but little attempt at establishing links between issues and considering interrelationships. In this context a consultant who undertakes monitoring work for the RPB argued that government guidance promotes a 'tick box' approach to monitoring which focuses too much on monitoring outputs and neglects the broader function of monitoring. Many of those involved in RSS monitoring seem to be aware of the problems and limitations that exist. One regional planner described a dilemma the RPB faces in developing and applying a monitoring framework in that a balance needs to be found between what is 'desirable' (e.g. what indicators and data should be used) and what is 'achievable' (e.g. what data, resources, time, expertise, commitment are available).

The national core indicators for RSS monitoring set by ODPM (see Ch. 3) have caused some concern to regional planners in the West Midlands. There is a commonly held view that the indicators for RSS monitoring should, above all, meet regional needs and not central government priorities. Against the background of limited resources and the shortcomings of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, regional needs should take priority in selecting and using indicators. There is also concern about some of the indicators themselves, as some of them use definitions which are different from those currently used by the RPB. In these cases the adoption of the core indicator definitions would break with existing time series of data. Moreover, some of the data required by the core indicators has not been collected in the West Midlands in the past and is not likely to become available due to a lack of resources. The intention of ODPM to revise the list of core indicators frequently is another issue of concern. Regional planners emphasised the need for some stability of the monitoring framework so that time series of data can be produced and issues be observed over a longer period of time. Frequent changes to the indicators would render time series useless and entail significant resource implications. In monitoring practice, the core indicators have received limited attention and seem to be of little value to the RPB. In the 2006 AMR (WMRA 2006a), for

⁸⁹ In addition to the usefulness of some of the indicators there are also concerns about a lack of data to monitor some of the indicators. For example, in finalising RPG the Secretary of State inserted several transport indicators on the assumption that data would be available through the LTP monitoring process. In practice the data has not been collected in LTP monitoring and thus is not available for RSS monitoring purposes.

example, the core indicators are dealt with in an annex. Where data on the national output indicators is available it is presented, but no reference is made to the RSS or how the indicators are used for regional planning purposes.

Data availability

A substantial amount of data is available in the West Midlands, some of which is collected specifically for planning purposes, while much of the data comes from the monitoring activities of a range of organisations. However, there is significant variation in terms of the usefulness, completeness, accuracy, consistency (between geographical areas and over time) and timeliness of existing data and the availability of time series. Planning authorities in the region carry out annual surveys on housing and employment land development which reach back to the 1980s. For these topics much planning-specific data is therefore available, although several interviewees highlighted a lack of wider information in these fields such as details on demand side issues. As far as other topic areas are concerned data, availability is much more patchy and much of the data that is available relates only indirectly to regional planning. In the case of transport and environmental data, for example, this makes it difficult to relate the data which is presented in the AMRs to the RSS, and to draw conclusions from the results of monitoring (see also below)⁹⁰. Generally the emphasis tends to be – as one topic lead called it – on 'hard measuring' (i.e. the use of quantitative data) and much less use is made of more qualitative or 'softer' information. This connects to concerns about a lack of analysis and interpretation of the data in the AMRs (see below).

The data which is currently used for RSS monitoring comes from a wide range of organisations which collect data for different purposes, to different timetables, for different geographical areas etc. Local authorities play a central role in collecting and providing data for RSS monitoring but the availability of data varies significantly between them. This can be explained to a large extent by differences in the ability and commitment of local authorities to collect data and to use it for planning purposes. While the region's larger authorities such as the metropolitan districts and the county councils generally have well staffed and resourced research or data units, some of the smaller rural districts especially have very small planning and monitoring teams which limits their ability to collect data. In addition, monitoring is not always deemed important or has to take a backseat as other activities are given priority⁹¹. However, several interviewees, including local authority planners, expect that the availability of data at local level is likely to improve as local authorities are now required to prepare AMRs for their LDFs and to undertake sustainability appraisals and related monitoring. However, a degree of caution is required since it could take some time

⁹⁰ For example, the AMRs feature data on the number of road accidents, woodland planting schemes, listed buildings or the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, but it is not clear how this relates to the RSS, what the data means for policy making and implementation etc.

⁹¹ For example, even a larger authority like Solihull has experienced difficulties in providing monitoring data as staff were busy with the preparation of a local plan. In numerous cases monitoring or data collection are 'at the bottom of the pile' and tend to get neglected, e.g. as authorities prioritise tasks which affect their Best Value assessment such as development control work.

until the new requirements show effects in all local authorities, and as data availability is affected by more fundamental constraints (e.g. available resources, commitment, workload, time etc.).

Interpretation of monitoring information

As described earlier, in order to make PMM work it is important that monitoring data is sufficiently analysed and interpreted and linked to policy making and action. The extent to which this happens in the West Midlands and factors which affect such interpretation of data are discussed in the following. The first AMRs which were produced for the current RPG in 2002/03 were intended to establish a 'baseline' for future monitoring and thus mainly presented data (cf. JDT/Mott Mac Donald 2002b, WMLGA and WMRA 2003a, WMRA 2003). The more recent AMRs, particularly the supplementary reports, include more data analysis and interpretation although the amount, type and level of sophistication of this vary significantly⁹². As a first but important step, improvements to the structure of the AMRs have been made which means that in many cases the links between RSS policies and the data which is presented are established more clearly (e.g. the extent to which observed development is in line with the RSS). On the other hand, there are still numerous indicators on which data is presented, but little or no connection is made to RSS policies.

Generally the amount of commentary on the data in the AMRs has also increased, e.g. how observed developments can be explained (such as reasons for a rapid increase in retail floorspace in one year). In a number of instances, however, data is presented without any commentary although this seems necessary. The extent to which AMRs reflect on what action is required as a result of monitoring has also increased recently. Such reflection has been promoted by the adoption of a structure in the AMR which requires a section of data analysis and reflection in each topic chapter. Nevertheless the amount and nature of such reflection still varies significantly. In many cases data is simply presented but the AMR contains little or no reflection on what the observed development means for the RSS, whether changes to policy and/or implementation activities are necessary etc. In several cases the data which is presented seems to suggest such action would be required but there is no mention of it in the AMR⁹³. In several cases the AMRs earmark issues that require further analysis or investigation (e.g. a need for more detailed studies on certain issues) or highlight areas in which the monitoring framework needs to be developed further (e.g. changes to indicators).

⁹² There are significant differences between policy areas. Housing is generally the most advanced side of RSS monitoring. The indicators which are used for monitoring housing relate relatively well to RSS objectives and policies and the availability of data is generally good. Especially the supplementary monitoring reports on housing (WMRA 2004a, 2005b) contain a substantial amount of analysis and interpretation and identify issues that need further attention or action. As far as employment land is concerned the data base for RSS monitoring is also well developed. However, the AMRs include only a limited amount of data interpretation and identify few actions in this policy field. The transport and environment sides are the least advanced. Many of the indicators which are used relate only very indirectly to regional planning and the AMRs contain very little interpretation and identification of action points for RSS policy making and implementation.

⁹³ For example one AMR (WMRA 2005c) shows a high rate of employment development outside the MUAs which runs against RSS objectives and policies, but there is no reflection as to whether or how this should be addressed.

The purpose of the 'stakeholder' events on monitoring is to raise awareness of the AMRs and the issues identified in the reports as well as to provide a forum for feedback and discussion. The thematic workshops especially, which were run at the 2005 event, facilitated valuable discussion of the AMRs. In the workshop on housing, for example, various regional actors came together to look into some of the key issues identified in the supplementary AMR in more detail (WMRA 2005f). The workshop provided the opportunity to obtain further information and interpretations from participants, to assess the extent to which RSS objectives are achieved and policies are implemented, and to identify issues that need to be addressed by policy or implementation (although little concrete action was proposed). Overall, the 2005 event has been an important step towards improving the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information. However, it is not clear how the issues identified at the event will be taken forward and feed into the process of policy making and implementation. This applies also to the issues identified in the AMRs which indicates missing links between monitoring and action (see 5.4.4). Due to budgetary and timetable constraints no 'stakeholder' event on monitoring was held in 2006 which raises concerns about a lack of continuity of this element of the monitoring process. On the other hand, the event with regional actors cannot replace detailed discussion of monitoring results by RSS topic leads and officer working groups which, however, up to now has been limited.

Factors affecting data interpretation

The interpretation of monitoring information is affected by a variety of methodological, technical, organisational and other factors. The topic leads who write the AMRs described problems arising from the complexity of the issues involved in spatial development and planning. Because of a lack of knowledge about the interrelationship of issues and the indirect links between policies in the RSS and development 'on the ground', the interpretation of data is a difficult task. Spatial development is affected by a wide range of factors and, in the view of one topic lead, this 'background noise' makes it difficult to attribute the effects of regional planning. In fields such as housing development a better understanding exists compared to areas like the environment. The indicator- and topic-based approach to monitoring helps to reduce complexity but means that links between issues tend to get neglected. Another topic lead highlighted the interconnectedness of policies and the fact that policies may be pulling in different directions. 'Good' performance on one policy may have negative effects on another policy which again highlights the need for interpretation and integration of monitoring information. As described earlier, the organisational arrangements under which the responsibility for different topics is spread between different officers and groups has not helped to achieve such integration.

Several interviewees felt that more detailed information and knowledge about spatial development patterns is needed to understand these patterns and to develop appropriate policy responses. One planner at the WMRA argued that in the field of housing, for example, RSS monitoring focuses largely on 'land use' data (e.g. number of completed dwellings) but would benefit from looking at wider/more detailed

information (e.g. details on housing need/demand, migration patterns and motives). The interpretation of monitoring data often requires knowledge about the specific local circumstances and such information is also necessary to consider any action that needs to be taken. However, the topic leads who prepare the AMR do not necessarily have such detailed knowledge.

Another more fundamental factor which affects data interpretation (and strategic spatial planning in general, see 5.6.1) is the level of knowledge and expertise. According to a number of interviewees, there is less expertise in strategic planning and monitoring than in the past. This is seen to be, to a significant extent, a result of the reshaping of the planning system since the 1980s with less emphasis on strategic planning and a shift of priorities to project planning and development control. One WMRA officer stated that if taken seriously 'monitoring is a real skill' but there appears to be a lack of skills or interest. Many of those involved in monitoring, especially at local level, tend to be data experts who may not necessarily be familiar with the policy background or have a wider understanding of the issues involved, while monitoring is often not attractive to policy makers. This, again, contributes to a lack of links between monitoring and policy making and implementation.

The interpretation of monitoring information is also affected by how those involved understand, and are committed to, RSS monitoring. The housing side of monitoring in the West Midlands is well advanced compared to other topic fields. This is not only due to the availability of data but also due to the amount of thinking by a small group of dedicated and experienced officers which has gone into the development of a monitoring framework and the actual analysis and interpretation of monitoring information in the AMRs. In other cases the understanding of, and commitment to, monitoring may be more limited. One topic lead understood RSS monitoring as 'writing the chapter of the AMR' which in practice means that data is largely presented without much analysis, interpretation or discussion with colleagues or other actors.

Finally, there are issues around the timetable for the preparation of AMRs and, in particular, the date for the submission of AMRs set by government which is now the end of February each year (see Ch. 3). There was wide agreement among regional planners that the February deadline places artificial constraints on the monitoring process as there is not enough time between the point at which data becomes available and the date for submitting the AMR. Much of the data is not available until late in the autumn and the preparation of the AMR involves many 'hoops' (data collation, chasing of data providers, data checking, analysis and interpretation, verification with data providers, identification of actions, endorsement of the AMR by the Regional Assembly). The requirement to meet the submission deadline does not leave much time for data analysis and interpretation, or for considering the AMR in the various officer groups⁹⁴. Because of the time constraints for the production of the main AMR, the RPB has decided

⁹⁴ According to one topic lead the first AMR which was prepared to meet ODPM requirements (WMRA 2003) was produced 'in a rush' to meet the deadline at end of December. Since then government has changed the submission date for RSS AMRs to the end of February each year but, in the view of most regional planners, this still does not give enough time for analysis and interpretation given the resource restrictions and the number of hoops through which the AMR has to go.

to prepare supplementary monitoring reports. These are published around three months after the main AMR to allow more time for analysis and interpretation.

5.4.4 Use of information in regional planning

As far as the use of information and the links between monitoring and policy making and implementation in the West Midlands are concerned, a somewhat ambiguous picture emerged. In a sense, a distinction needs to be made between 'potential' uses of information, i.e. the role information *can* play in the view of regional actors, and its 'actual' use, i.e. how information *is* used in practice.

The role of information in planning

At a general level the notion of 'evidence based policy' has permeated planning discourse in the region. A large number of interviewees use the term and perceive 'evidence based policy making' to be a central element of the current planning system. This is understood as the requirement to create an 'evidence base' (through studies, monitoring, 'soundness tests' etc.) which provides justification for policies and their effectiveness. However, although there was a general feeling that there is stronger emphasis on monitoring and the use of information than some years ago, many interviewees stressed that this has always been a key part of planning practice.

According to many interviewees information is used in planning to support arguments. One topic lead stated that information provides 'ammunition' in discussions with other actors and helps to gain support from others actors for proposals. A senior planner at WMRA argued that, in those cases where the Assembly decides to go against central government policy, it would need to base its position on 'evidence'. Information can also play a role in the implementation of the RSS. Both the Public Examination Panel (Swain and Burden 2002: para 11.1.13) and the conformity officer at WMRA highlighted the potential for using monitoring information in conformity assessments. In addition, the use of information is seen as a means through which issues can be 'de-politicised' and put on a 'technical' and more 'objective' basis. For example, according to one WMRA officer work on a 'shared evidence base' for housing is to be used in discussions with local authorities on the contentious issue of district level housing numbers. The Assembly has also carried out studies on other contentious issues such as town centres, airports or car parking standards.

Links between 'monitoring' and 'managing'

The RPB has undertaken much work to create an 'evidence base' as part of the preparation and review of the RSS. A large programme of studies has been carried out for the partial RSS revisions (see Figure 42). The WMRA has also been leading work on the RHS (WMRA, GOWM and Sustainability West Midlands 2005) and the related development of a 'shared evidence base' which is to inform both the RHS and the

RSS. Such ('one-off') study work is explicitly aimed at informing the process of policy formulation. In contrast, the links between RSS monitoring and the policy making and implementation process are less well developed. It appears that more thinking (and awareness raising) is required about how these elements of PMM can be connected. One WMRA officer felt that monitoring currently tends to be about 'ticking boxes after the event' and presenting numbers rather than an integral part of policy formulation and implementation.

Phase 1 Revision	Phase 2 Revision
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long Term Economic & Employment Strategy for the Black Country (2005) ▪ Black Country Employment Land Capacity Study (2005) ▪ Comparison of Forecasts for West Midlands Region (2005) ▪ Floorspace Requirements and Land Density Assumptions West Midlands Region (2005) ▪ The Black Country Incubation Strategy (2003) ▪ Accommodating Technology and Service Related Companies in the Black Country (2005) ▪ Logistics Technical Report (2006) <p>Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study of Black Country Centres (2005) ▪ Economic Impact of the Expansion of Brierley Hill/Merry Hill (2006) ▪ Assessment of Future Market Shares & Accommodating Future Needs (2006) ▪ Comparison of Out of Centre Retail Outlets (2006) ▪ Investment Analysis & Future Investment Potential of the Black Country Retail Centres (2006) ▪ Complementary Centres Strategy Dudley MBC (2006) <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRISM: Black Country Study Prism (2005) ▪ PRISM: Black Country Transport Strategy (2006) ▪ Transport Investment Project Prioritisation - Connecting to the Black Country (2006) <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Technical Report 'Quality of Place' (2005) ▪ Broadening Horizons: A Vision of The Black Country Urban Park (2004) <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black Country Housing Market Thinkpiece (2004) ▪ Black Country Study: Developing a Housing Market Restructuring Framework (2005) ▪ Black Country Telford Housing Market Renewal Area Phase One (2005) ▪ Black Country Urban Housing Capacity Study (2005) ▪ Black Country Study Population and Household Scenario Forecast 2001-2031 (2004) <p>Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity and the Black Country Study. Black Country Country Consortium: The Need for a Diversity Strategy (2006) <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability Appraisal <p>Source: http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/supporttechdocs.asp?ses= (on 21 June 2006)</p>	<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West Midlands Regional Logistics Study (2005) ▪ West Midlands Regional Freight Study ▪ Migration Report, Average Annual Migration 1999-2004 ▪ Regional Centres Study Technical Paper 1 - Review of national, regional and sub-regional planning policy Technical Paper 2 - Socio Economic context Technical Paper 3 - Regional Investment Market - retail, office and leisure sectors Technical Paper 4 - Qualitative review of centres, aspirations and physical capacity Technical Paper 5 - Quantitative need in the retail and leisure sectors Technical Paper 6 - Office forecasts ▪ Employment Land Study <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Airports Economic Study (2005) ▪ Air Transport - surface access & environmental issues ▪ Parking Standards Study - Draft Scoping Report ▪ West Midlands Strategic Park and Ride Strategy <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Waste Scenarios Study (2005) ▪ West Midlands Waste Facilities - Future Capacity Requirements ▪ Waste Treatment Capacity Survey ▪ Waste Residues Report (2006) <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RSS Affordable Housing Study (2005) ▪ RSS Housing Phasing Study (2005) ▪ Regional Housing Land and Urban Capacity Study (2004) ▪ Housing Demand Study <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability Appraisal ▪ Sub Regional Foci Study <p>Source: http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=121 (on 21 June 2006)</p>

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 42: Technical work for WMSS partial reviews

As far as the review of the RSS is concerned the influence of monitoring has been limited, while other factors have been more important in deciding whether an RSS review was required and what issues should be addressed in the review (see 5.5.1). Many regional planners argued that this was not surprising as it was too early to draw conclusions from monitoring the existing RSS. One topic lead stated that it would take time until the RSS could show effects and argued that 'in a couple of years there may be findings' about whether the RSS is being implemented and whether it needed to be revised.

In terms of the relationship between monitoring and implementation activities, the above discussion has shown that, so far, there has been limited consideration of what actions need to follow from monitoring (see 5.4.3). The AMRs contain some reflection on whether RSS policies are being implemented and whether RSS objectives are being achieved. Although issues are described in the AMRs on which actions seem to be required (e.g. housing development outside the MUAs), such actions have not been identified or taken. For example, the RPB has not yet issued any 'advice' to local authorities to control housing development as set out in the RSS (see 5.2.1). As mentioned above, monitoring and policy making and implementation activities are not sufficiently linked in procedural and organisational terms either. RSS monitoring information is to a large extent not considered by other officer groups. In turn, there is a lack of involvement of those groups in the preparation of the AMRs and especially in considering what actions need to follow from monitoring.

Different interpretations and contested evidence

Although the role of monitoring itself is rather limited at present, information in general is very important in policy debates. It is so important that actors are keen to get involved in the production of information and try to use information to pursue their individual objectives. An officer from the CPRE stated that information (e.g. in the form of studies) plays a central role in the development of policies as it is used to support and challenge arguments. Therefore CPRE conducts or commissions studies to support its arguments in planning debates. CPRE also tries to get involved in studies carried out by the RPB in order to influence the preparation and outputs of those studies. The representative of the HBF took a similar stance. For example, in the HBF's view work on sub-regional housing markets conducted by the Regional Assembly was very important as it could lead to conclusions on housing demand and provision which could be used by the HBF to challenge the existing RSS.

Different actors may also interpret the same information in different ways and draw different conclusions as to what policy response is needed. These interpretations are often based on actors' beliefs or preconceptions and reflect the particular interests of those actors. For example, monitoring information has shown that the rate of housing development in parts of the region has not been in line with housing targets in the RSS. While some felt it was too early for the RSS to show effects 'on the ground', others argued that changes to the RSS would be required, with the house builders arguing in favour of more

development outside the MUAs, while the CPRE wanted greater efforts to promote development within the MUAs (see e.g. WMRA 2005f).

Housing development in the West Midlands is a good example to illustrate the politics involved in the use of information. Although 'evidence' may suggest that action (in the form of policy making or implementation activities) is required, actors may refuse to take such action for political or other reasons. For example, successive AMRs have shown that housing completions in some local authorities outside the MUAs have been above the scale of development set out in the RSS. While regional planners think this needs to be addressed, some of the affected local authorities do not want action to be taken. As described earlier, local authorities are in a key position under the current structure of WMRA. This, according to one topic lead, makes it difficult to 'name' local authorities which do not adhere to RSS policy and to decide on remedial action. This assessment was mirrored by an official from GOWM who argued that the Regional Assembly has been reluctant to engage in 'naming and shaming' of local authorities, and to take steps against these authorities. This is one of the reasons why the RPB has not yet issued 'advice' on housing development to local authorities as set out in RSS (see above).

Finally, there are cases in which actors use information selectively in policy debates to support their own arguments and to challenge the arguments of other actors. For example, monitoring information may be interpreted in a specific way to undermine existing RSS policy. Many house builders in the West Midlands are unhappy with the housing numbers in the existing RSS as the strategy aims to channel development into the MUAs and, in turn, reduce the level of house building in the Shires. The HBF representative stated that, if monitoring showed that housing targets for the MUAs were not achieved, the house builders would argue that the current RSS was not working. The HBF would use this interpretation of monitoring information during RSS or LDF consultation exercises, at EiPs or in planning appeals to support its argument for higher levels of house building outside the MUAs. An alternative response, e.g. to investigate the reasons for lower completions rates in the MUAs and to find ways to increase house building in those areas, was not something the HBF would consider.

5.5 The 'Manage' element

This section looks into the way in which the 'manage' element of PMM is treated in the West Midlands. As described earlier (see 5.3), the focus here is on 'managing' understood as the 'review' of the RSS. First, attention is paid to the factors which 'trigger' the revision of the RSS. Second, the way in which the review is organised is investigated and the strengths and weaknesses of the approach of 'multiple' partial reviews adopted in the region are discussed. Third, the section considers substantive issues around how this 'multi-track' approach affects coordination between different tracks of the review. Finally, the procedural dimension of the review process is examined.

5.5.1 Triggers of RSS revisions

During the last full RPG review in the early 2000s the Panel of the Public Examination noted that 'All participants [at the Public Examination] agreed that draft RPG is not clear on the circumstances that would trigger a review' (Swain and Burden 2002: para 11.3.1). The Panel suggested that 'the next review of RPG is more likely to be a partial review, and that this could be triggered by *external circumstances* such as new national policy and procedural guidance, as well as regional trends revealed by *monitoring*' (ibid.: para 11.3.4, italics added). Moreover the Panel identified a number of subjects which should be included in such a partial review (see Figure 43)⁹⁵. Most of the subjects were taken forward in one way or another by the Secretary of State and included in a list of issues for review in final RPG (see also Figure 43).

The list in final RPG also included some issues which had not been recommended by the Panel such as a review of employment land commitments and a study into options for waste management (cf. GOWM 2003a, 2003b). Several of the additional issues set out by the Secretary of State relate to developments in central government policy which are to be considered in RSS reviews, such as work on locations for energy facilities following an Energy White Paper or consideration of an Air Transport White Paper, 'To reflect the latest position on national policy issues' (GOWM 2003b: 311). In drawing up the work programme for the RSS review the RPB has largely followed the list of issues identified in final RPG (see Figure 43). The RPB has not included any additional issues apart from new developments in central government policy (particularly the consideration of draft PPS3) and new household projections. The identified issues are treated in a series of partial reviews, a so-called 'multi-track' approach, which consists of three 'phases' (see 5.5.2).

Although it was for the RPB to 'consider the priorities and programme for each of these elements [earmarked for an RSS review], together with any other issues which need to be addressed' (GOWM 2004: para 1.34), central government has provided a strong steer. This relates to the question *whether* a review was needed, *what* issues should be covered and *when* and *how* such a review should be carried out. When issuing final RPG in June 2004 the Secretary of State expected that 'An early review of certain aspects of RPG11 will be undertaken in 2004/5 to develop particular issues identified in this guidance [see Figure 43] and make the document more Regionally specific and concise' (ibid.: para 1.31). The Secretary of State also stressed that 'A particularly important study is underway for the Black Country to assist in resolving the many inter-connected issues affecting this part of the Region. ... This Study should be completed by summer 2005 and feed into a subsequent review of this guidance' (ibid.: para 1.32).

⁹⁵ The Panel recommended other changes to draft RPG which were to be done in finalising RPG. Thus these are not included in the Panel's list of issues for review. Government did not address all these recommendations in finalising RPG but included those issues in the list of areas in which further work was needed (i.e. some of the issues for further review in final RPG which are not included in the Panel's list of issues for future reviews go back to Panel's recommendations for finalising RPG).

Panel recommendations (Swain and Burden 2002)	Final RPG/RSS (GOWM 2004)	WMRA RSS revision programme (WMRA 2006b)
<p>The following subjects should be included in such a review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any sub-regional strategies, including our proposals for a Black Country strategy; • more comprehensive consideration of social inclusiveness and equality issues; • consideration of the role of arts, culture and tourism; • guidance on triggering individual sub-regional foci; • setting target replacement rate guidelines for particular parts of the Region; • re-consideration of a pipeline MIS for north Staffordshire; • identification of additional Regional Logistics Sites; • guidance on where major retail growth should take place; • inclusion of more restrictive maximum parking standards in certain areas; • guidance on road user charging; • consideration of quantified public transport accessibility criteria; • further consideration of the influence of flood risk on the regional distribution of new dwellings; • further details of the application of the environmental (or quality of life) capital approach if found to be appropriate at the regional level; • longer term renewable energy targets with further guidance on broad locations for different technology types; • more detailed guidance on promoting CHP; • a more regionally specific waste policy framework.' (Swain and Burden 2002: R11.10) 	<p>An indication of the other work areas that will need to be undertaken as part of future reviews is set out below:</p> <p>Topic Area Issue</p> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies to be more Regionally specific <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Country sub-regional Study • Identification of inter-regional sub-areas <p>Rural Renaissance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritise the critical rural services for different parts of the Region. <p>Communities for the Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of roles for each of the sub-regional foci • Assess the provision of replacement dwellings for cleared housing stock • Identification of previously developed land targets for 2011-2021 <p>Prosperity for All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of existing strategic employment land designations and identification of broad locations for additional provision • Identification of number and broad location of Regional warehousing and distribution facilities • Identification of investment priorities within the strategic network of centres <p>Quality of the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Regionally significant assets and areas for improvement and enhancement as the focus for prioritising action • Development of criteria for an integrated approach to consideration of wider benefits • Identify strategic gaps in recreational provision • Investigate agricultural land quality/distribution of development • Identification of Regionally significant flooding areas • Identification of Regionally significant poor air quality • Identification of unacceptable and preferred areas for the location of particular energy technologies • Study of Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for waste management in the region • Set targets and priorities for sub-regional waste management facilities • Assessment of facilities required to treat all major waste streams • Development of criteria for locating waste management facilities <p>Transport and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of strategic park and ride sites • Implications of the Air Transport White Paper West to East Midlands MMS • Parking Standards • Guidance on road user charging <p>Monitoring and Implementation</p> <p>Refinement of targets and indicators taking into account Monitoring. Regional Planning Guidance – Good Practice on targets and indicators (when published).’ (GOWM 2004: para 1.33)</p>	<p>Phase 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Country Study <p>Phase 2</p> <p>Communities for the Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A re-examination of regional housing needs and requirements in the light of the publication of draft PPS3 the Government’s response to the Barker Review, any advice from the proposed National Advice Unit, and further work on the shared evidence base, and taking into account the updated national household projections, once available, from the ODPM. The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) will provide a general context for this work. • A re-examination of Urban Capacity across the Region, particularly within the Major Urban Areas (including direct links with Black Country Study outputs) and the implications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision of replacement dwellings for cleared housing stock (para 6.17 RPG11) the identification of previously developed land targets for 2011-2026 (para 6.20 RPG11) • A consideration of the role of the Sub-regional Foci (para 6.7 RPG11), including whether Burton should also be so identified. • This work will lead to detailed housing numbers for each Local Planning Authority area and a rethink of affordable housing policies linking to the RHS, up to 2026. ... <p>Prosperity for All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A re-examination of employment land needs and requirements for the period to 2026 in light of updated evidence base. • A re-assessment of existing strategic employment land designations (para 7.33 of RPG11). • The identification of the number and broad location of regional warehousing and distribution facilities (para 7.46 of RPG11). • The identification of investment priorities within the strategic network of centres (para 7.58 of RPG11). ... <p>Quality of the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management issues identified by the Secretary of State (paras 8.81-8.91 of RPG11) ... <p>Transport and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of broad locations for Strategic Park and Ride sites (para 9.39 of RPG11). • Implications of the Airports White Paper (para 9.7 of RPG11). • Parking Standards (Policy T7 of RPG11). • Guidance on road user charging (Policy T8 of RPG11).’ (WMRA 2006b: 11) <p>Phase 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘regionally significant environmental issues, • critical rural services, • recreational provision, • gypsies and travellers • plus any other areas subsequently identified as requiring Revision’ (WMRA 2006b: 14)

Figure 43: Issues for the revision of the RSS

Source: compiled by the author

Initially the RPB intended to treat the issues listed in final RPG in a single 'partial' review. However, in the second half of 2004 there was strong pressure from Ministers in the ODPM to progress the above mentioned study on the Black Country quickly. Although it was initially planned only as a 'study', Ministers urged the RPB to conduct this Black Country Study (BCS) as a 'freestanding fast-track' partial revision of the RSS. The immense central government interest in (and steer on) the BCS had specific intentions. According to several interviewees, ODPM Ministers and officials wanted to use the BCS as a 'test case' or 'guinea pig' for the regional planning system introduced since 2000. The ODPM aimed to demonstrate that its idea of a responsive system of fast partial RSS reviews was working. In addition, the BCS was to be used as a showcase for the government's emphasis on sub-regional planning within the RSS⁹⁶. While there was only limited steer on the content of the BCS, ODPM Ministers wanted to see 'early results' and thus GOWM pressed the RPB to complete this partial review within a very tight timetable (see 5.5.4).

In general, regional planners would have preferred not to start immediately with a review of RPG but to give the strategy some time to progress towards implementation, especially to feed into the new LDFs. The Public Examination panel also emphasised that 'The West Midlands should have a sensible period of policy stability for its spatial strategy to take effect' (Swain and Burden 2002: para R11.9). According to a senior planner at WMRA, the RPB also had other 'important priorities', so instead of starting an instant RPG review the RPB would have preferred to use its limited resources for implementation, conformity and monitoring work. On the other hand, the RPB recognised that some issues had not been dealt with fully in the last review and that final RPG contained several gaps and shortcomings. Regional planners also largely agreed with the list of issues for further work specified in final RPG. However, in their view, the aim of any further work had to be to keep the core strategy in place and only develop elements of existing RPG further. Regional planners emphasised that any early review of RPG should be used to 'clarify' and 'refine' issues and to 'fill gaps' and thus not to 'rework' but to 'improve' the existing strategy.

As mentioned above, the RPB generally agreed that further work on many of the issues identified by the Public Examination panel and in final RPG was required. Some of this work was to close 'gaps' in existing RPG or to deal with 'leftovers' which had not been treated fully in the last review. According to numerous interviewees, the shift to the PPG11-style system meant that the past review had to fulfil many new substantive and procedural requirements (spatial planning approach, 'stakeholder involvement', monitoring and implementation work etc.) and at the same time be carried out within a short timescale. This meant, for example, that there was insufficient time to conduct all the technical work or to establish agreement within the RPB on some contentious issues. In relation to other topics the early review was understood as an 'updating' of the strategy to take on board developments such as the preparation of a Regional Energy Strategy. In other cases a revision was deemed necessary because of the change to the

⁹⁶ Some interviewees also had the impression that Ministers wanted to use the BCS to show that central government was 'doing something' for the Black Country in the run-up of the General Election in May 2005 as the Labour party had lost seats in the May 2004 local elections in those constituencies.

new planning system under the 2004 Planning Act. With the abolition of structure plans and the transformation of RPG to an RSS, the new RSS needed to include district level housing figures and more guidance on employment land development. Regional planners also saw a need for action in the Black Country and thus perceived the BCS as an important contribution to the RPB's urban renaissance agenda. However, despite their general support of the BCS, regional planners have been concerned about the tight timeframe central government has demanded for this partial review (see 5.5.4).

Finally, as far as monitoring is concerned the WMRA task group which has drawn up the work plan for the partial reviews suggested that issues arising from monitoring should also be considered in identifying topics for the review, and the group wanted to get advice from the monitoring officer group. In practice, however, monitoring has not played a role in determining the issues which are treated in the partial reviews. While regional planners felt that it was too early to draw conclusions from monitoring, it could be argued that several issues have been identified in the AMRs on which action seems to be required (e.g. an underprovision of affordable housing) but these issues have not been identified for partial review⁹⁷. However, regional planners argued that information gathered through monitoring would still be used to inform the partial reviews, e.g. by feeding into technical work.

5.5.2 Approaches to RSS review: Full, partial or 'multi-track' revisions

As described above, the RPB initially wanted to do a single 'partial' review which, in effect, would have almost amounted to a full review given the comprehensive list of areas of further work identified in final RPG. Following the government's request to progress the BCS as a 'freestanding' partial revision, the RPB decided to adopt a staggered 'multi-track' approach. Under this approach different subjects are treated in a series of partial reviews which start at different points in time and work to different timetables but run to some extent in parallel (see Figure 33). While regional planners believed that a 'multi-track' approach was possible in principle, they saw a need to treat some of the issues together and to keep the number of 'tracks' to a minimum. This was deemed necessary to promote coordination between topics such as housing and employment land development (cf. WMRA 2006b), and to keep the review process manageable (e.g. to keep the number of separate SEAs, consultation exercises, EiPs etc. to a minimum). Therefore the RPB decided to 'bundle' issues and treat them together in the same review. Three 'tracks' or 'phases' have been formed (see Figure 43). The first one is the BCS which started first and reached draft RSS stage in May 2006 (WMRA and BCC 2006). Many of the issues identified for review are covered in 'Phase Two' of the RSS revision for which the final project plan was published in March 2006 (WMRA 2006b). The remaining topics are to be dealt with in 'Phase Three' but work on this track was put on hold in 2006 due to resource restrictions at the RPB (see below).

⁹⁷ It should be noted that the issues which have been raised by monitoring do not necessarily have to be addressed in the form of a review of policy. Another response could be changes to implementation activities. However, the point which is to be made here is that up to now monitoring information has to a large extent not been considered in identifying issues for the revision of the RSS.

While there was little experience with the 'multi-track' approach in the West Midlands at the time this research was conducted, several interviewees anticipated that the adopted approach could have various strengths. Certain aspects of an RSS can be treated in more detail in a partial revision than is possible in a full review where work has to be spread over a wide range of subjects. Undertaking a partial review also means that work on pressing issues can go ahead (in a separate review) without having to wait for other, slower streams of work. For example, regional planners argued that through the BCS progress towards the implementation of the RSS could be made without the need to wait for other fields of work. Also, in a full review it may be difficult to decide at what point the necessary preparatory work is complete and thus the progress of the whole review may be held up by one slow element. The staggered approach can also help to deal with limited resources as work can be stretched over time. The RPB wanted to commence with the BCS and hold back the start of the other phases to have more time to consider how the later phases could be arranged. In the view of a senior planner at WMRA, an area-based partial review such as the BCS can be used to test issues for future full reviews (e.g. the BCS could pioneer work on car parking standards which could be rolled out to the rest of the region in a later RSS review).

On the other hand, a 'multi-track' approach can also entail various problems and challenges. Regional planners were uncertain about the extent to which decisions in the first track of an RSS revision could and should be seen as 'fixed' in the following tracks (see 5.5.3). There was some concern that decisions taken in the first track may tie the hands of subsequent reviews. Conversely, there is a risk that later tracks are used to 're-open' decisions made in the previous track which can create uncertainty and a lack of guidance. Then again, a senior planner at WMRA saw the potential advantage that the first track could be 'one part of the jigsaw' and thus could function as a building block which provides some certainty for the following tracks of the review. This also relates to matters about coordination. First, as far as coordination of 'substance' is concerned the question is how a 'multi-track' approach facilitates or obstructs policy integration (see 5.5.3). Second, there are issues about the coordination of 'process', for example, as to how the various activities involved in revising an RSS can be arranged and coordinated, e.g. different streams of technical work, SEA, 'stakeholder involvement' (see 5.5.4).

As the first two phases of the RSS review progressed in 2005 and 2006, there was growing concern about the workload involved and the short timetables within which revisions had to be carried out. According to planners at the WMRA secretariat, the amount of work has been increasing under the 'multi-track' model as many streams of work run in parallel such as technical studies, development of options and policies, and consultation for each of the tracks. Furthermore, work on the various elements of the different tracks has to be undertaken alongside monitoring, implementation and other activities. Resource constraints at the RPB meant that alternative 'solutions' had to be found to facilitate the 'multi-track' approach.

First, the different tracks were spread out over time meaning that later phases of the revision started only after the previous phases had been well progressed. Second, work on the BCS was undertaken largely by

the Black Country Consortium (BCC), a body which is run by the four local councils, the Black Country Business Link and the Black Country Learning and Skills Council. Although the WMRA, in its function as RPB, remained responsible for taking formal decisions, the BCS was essentially 'outsourced' to the BCC and thus additional resources from local authorities were brought into the process. Third, more time was made available in the course of 2006 by postponing the start of Phase Three and a delay of the submission of draft Phase Two revision by six months. Fourth, according to a senior planner at WMRA, the WMRA secretariat reached at one point a 'crisis point' due to the workload involved in the revision process. The secretariat was forced to put work on implementing the existing RSS on hold and deploy the implementation officer on the BCS.

5.5.3 Substantive issues of RSS review

The adoption of a system of partial reviews and especially the 'multi-track' approach raise questions about policy coordination between different partial reviews or 'tracks' and between a partial revision and the existing RSS.

Coordination between partial reviews

As far as coordination between different partial reviews or tracks is concerned there has been a significant degree of uncertainty among regional planners about the extent to which issues can be treated separately (i.e. in separate partial reviews). The RPB's original intention to do only one single 'partial' review was based on the aim of achieving policy integration. Even under the 'multi-track' model the RPB has kept the number of tracks to a minimum in order to treat issues together and not separately from each other. When the decision was made to adopt the 'multi-track' approach regional planners were still uncertain about the feasibility of this in terms of policy integration. An official at GOWM recognised that coordination between tracks may be a problem but took the view that it should be 'possible'. In GOWM's view, coordination could be achieved by clear 'project management' and the development of an understanding of how the process needed to be organised.

However, regional planners were concerned about a lack of time (due to the tight timetable set by government) to develop an understanding of the interrelationship between issues which was deemed necessary to decide which topics needed to be treated in the same track. As the review process progressed policy integration and the relationship between the different tracks has remained an issue of concern. The RPB has established a set of 'rules' for managing the relationship between different tracks (see Figure 44). Arguably the most important (and difficult) of these is the rule that the BCS should be a 'fixed input' into subsequent phases.

Rules for managing the interrelationship between partial reviews

- a) '... unless there are exceptional circumstances, where a policy decision is made in Phase One this will act as a *fixed* input to Phase Two.
- b) With the *technical work* it has been agreed that *everything available* from whatever phase, including any different approaches, should *be taken into account* when decisions are being made in any phase of the Revision. ...
- c) At each stage in the process [of Phase Two], the *policies* being developed are *considered by all RSS Policy Leads* to make sure that they are integrated with all other RSS policies, including those not being looked at in this phase of the Revision – eg Environment.
- d) The *Sustainability Appraisal process* helps with this...' (WMRA 2006b: 14, italics added).

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 44: Rules for managing the interrelationship between partial reviews

In practice, however, it appears not to be so straightforward to treat issues as 'fixed' or, in other words, to treat issues in separate partial revisions. The BCS, for example, proposed housing numbers for the Black Country. During the course of the BCS central government published new household projections which could not be considered before the submission of the draft BCS. As these projections suggest a significant increase in the number of households in the West Midlands, the revision of the housing numbers in the RSS, including those which had just been proposed for the Black Country, is a key issue for the Phase Two revision. If adopted by the RPB the new household numbers could require higher levels of housing development in the Black Country than proposed in the BCS. The BCC, however, is concerned about the implications of higher housing numbers for the overall strategy of the BCS. According to a senior planner at WMRA, the technical work which underlies the BCS has shown that an increase in the scale of housing development could lead to a shortage of employment land in the area and thus have a negative impact on the aim to promote economic regeneration in the Black Country.

Although planners at the WMRA appreciate these concerns of the BCC, they argue that in the face of the new household projections it could not be ruled out per se that the Phase Two revision would propose increased levels of housing development for the Black Country. In the view of a senior planner at WMRA, it is important to keep 'a degree of flexibility'. It could be argued that such flexibility has been introduced through the backdoor as the RPB insisted that the housing figures proposed by the BCC represent 'minima' (cf. WMRA and BCC 2006: 22). This implies that, if necessary, Phase Two could lead to housing numbers for the Black Country which are above the 'minima' set out in the BCS⁹⁸. Thus, in this case, the rule of treating the first phase of the RSS revision as 'a fixed input' into later phases appears to be difficult to apply.

⁹⁸ According to a senior planner at WMRA, the BCC initially argued that housing numbers in the BCS should be defined as 'set targets' (and not just as 'minima') which should be 'fixed' and not be reconsidered in Phase Two of the revision. However, the RPB 'convinced' the BCC to adopt the 'minima' definition in order to keep 'a degree of flexibility' for Phase Two.

Coordination between partial reviews and the existing RSS

The partial review model also raises questions about the extent to which a part of the RSS can be revised without changing the rest of the strategy. The RPB has defined 'principles' for the relationship between the partial reviews and the existing RSS which are to guide the partial revisions. According to these principles 'The Revisions to the RSS ... will lead to the further development of policies to support the underlying strategy – not a review of fundamental principles' (WMRA 2006b: 9). However, there is some indication that the partial reviews may lead to proposals which would require significant revision of the existing strategy.

In the view of a senior planner at WMRA, the new household projections not only affect the BCS but are also 'very challenging' for the housing numbers in the other MUAs and the RSS strategy as a whole. The existing RSS aims to increase the level of housing development within the MUAs, while at the same time reduce the number of completions in the rest of the region (cf. GOWM 2004: para 6.11). The new household projections suggest a need for higher levels of house building but regional planners are concerned that the ability of the MUAs to accommodate higher levels of housing development may be limited (e.g. due to difficulties in bringing sufficient previously developed land forward). Therefore higher rates of house building outside the MUAs may be required which would run against the balance of development between MUAs and other areas envisaged in the existing RSS. Higher overall levels of housing development would also raise questions about the adequacy of the infrastructure provision which underlies the existing RSS. Regional planners argue that as the capacity of the region's infrastructure is already stretched (e.g. the transport system but also facilities such as schools) higher levels of growth require additional infrastructure provision. Against this background it could be argued that the Phase Two partial review may well have significant implications for the overall strategy which may necessitate substantial changes to the existing RSS.

5.5.4 Procedural dimension of revising an RSS

This section looks into procedural issues around the 'multi-track' RSS revision model and, in particular, the implications of the 'fast' partial reviews envisaged in PPS11. As far as Phases Two and Three of the RSS revision in the West Midlands are concerned, the organisational arrangements basically follow those adopted during the last full review (see 5.2.2). The RPB secretariat has a coordinating function, while the main policy work is undertaken by topic leads and officer working groups. A key difference has been the role of the strategic authorities which, on the basis of the 2004 Planning Act, have prepared 'initial advice' on the draft revision to the RPB. As mentioned earlier, special arrangements were put in place for the BCS which was carried out by the BCC as an 'agent' of the RPB. The day-to-day work was done by a small study team at the BCC, based on an initial study undertaken by consultants (cf. BCC 2006).

In the early stages there was some concern among regional planners that the BCS was 'semi-detached' from the working structure of the RPB, as the BCC led the work with little involvement from the RPB⁹⁹. After the decision was made to convert the BCS, which only started as a 'study', into a formal RSS revision the RPB had to become more heavily involved. According to a senior planner at WMRA, this has been achieved as the RPB (through the policy leads and the Regional Planning Partnership) has been involved at all key stages of the BCS and had to approve the final draft. In the view of the senior planner, a sub-regional revision like the BCS should be led by the sub-region, while the RPB remains responsible for taking the final decisions. It would not have been possible for the RPB to conduct the BCS under such a tight timetable within its normal working arrangements and resource constraints. By effectively 'outsourcing' the BCS to the BCC additional resources were made available.

Time constraints have been a major issue in all of the partial revisions. The RPB has been concerned about the 'artificial' time pressure for the BCS created by ODPM. The short timetable for the preparation of the draft revision meant that there has not been much time to undertake the necessary technical work and policy development, and at the same time meet the procedural requirements of PPS11 (project planning, SEA, 'community' and 'stakeholder' involvement etc.). According to several regional planners, there have been difficulties in getting the RPB's officer groups and other regional actors involved. GOWM asked the RPB to keep the arrangements 'streamlined' to allow the BCS to progress quickly. Compared to the last full review, the BCS process has been much less 'open, transparent and inclusive'. Partnership groups, which promoted the involvement of a wide range regional actors in last review, were not set up, and the amount and length of consultation exercises have been kept to a minimum. During the consultation on the first draft BCS some respondents expressed disquiet about what they perceived as a limited period of consultation and limited resources which did not allow full consideration of the draft (Consensus Planning Ltd 2006).

The ability to conduct partial reviews 'quickly' has also been affected by the working arrangements of the RPB. The decentralised working model requires a significant amount of coordination (e.g. between officer groups) and involves a large number of 'hoops' (officer groups, Assembly Member groups, 'stakeholder involvement' etc., in addition to the formal requirements of PPS11). This makes it difficult to work to short timetables for the partial reviews. In GOWM's view, the present arrangements are 'too slow' and it has repeatedly demanded 'streamlined' working structures. Several regional planners expected that the 'multi-track' approach would represent a challenge to the officer working structure, as topic leads and officer working groups had to deal with the workload arising from the large number of work streams that run in parallel.

⁹⁹ Some of the initial options which were developed by the BCC were in fact contentious and in some cases would go against the existing RSS (e.g. the BCS considered levels of housing growth and town centres designations which were not in line with the RSS).

The 'multi-track' approach also appears to increase the complexity of the revision process. Regional planners have been uncertain about how to organise the process and meet the formal requirements for an RSS review, for example, whether there should be separate EiPs, SAs and consultation exercises for each of the tracks or whether these should be integrated. There has been a general concern among regional planners that the 'multi-track' model requires a high degree of coordination, in terms of both policy integration and coordination of process. As the decentralised working structure increases the need for coordination even further, several regional planners argued that a greater central coordination capacity was required. The WMRA secretariat, however, is too small to provide additional steer and coordination.

5.6 Overarching implications of PMM

Whereas the previous three sections focused on the component parts of PMM, this section identifies some overarching and cross-cutting implications of the practice of PMM in the West Midlands. This covers technical and managerial concerns, the organisational and governance dimension of PMM as well as the substantive outcomes of this approach to regional planning.

5.6.1 Technical and managerial issues

Technical and managerial matters of PMM have already been dealt with throughout the previous sections, e.g. in relation to monitoring or the coordination of partial reviews. At this point some overarching issues are identified which affect the PMM approach as a whole. One of the key areas of concern is the quantity of formal requirements entailed in the current model of regional planning. According to a senior regional planner at WMRA, central government has introduced a 'very formalistic' system where the requirements in terms of substance and procedures have been constantly increasing. This applies to all elements of the PMM approach, including monitoring and the creation of an 'evidence base', SA/SEA, 'stakeholder' and 'community' involvement, implementation activities, EIP and consultation events, sub-regional planning work and conformity assessments and other planning related activities of the Regional Assembly such as the RHS. Even a partial RSS revision involves a large number of formal steps which require a significant amount of resources and which work against the aim to make the process more 'streamlined' and 'speedy'. For example, the requirement introduced by the PCPA to ask strategic authorities for 'initial advice' at the beginning of an RSS revision has increased the complexity of the process and the need for coordination. In the early stages of the Phase Two revision the WMRA secretariat and topic leads had to spend a considerable amount of time preparing briefs for the strategic authorities and on coordinating, analysing and refining the 'initial advice'.

There has also been widespread concern in the West Midlands about a mismatch between the increased requirements arising from the new regional planning model and the resources which are available to meet

these requirements¹⁰⁰. Regional planners argued that central government had not recognised the resource implications of the new planning system. This relates not only to the RPB but also to the local level where demands on local authorities have also risen in the wake of the new planning system (e.g. preparation of LDFs within short timescales, monitoring, SAs/SEAs, 'community involvement', sub-regional work). Due to reliance on contributions from local authorities, regional planning in the West Midlands has also been affected by resource constraints at the local level. The funding which has been made available through the government's Planning Delivery Grant has been welcome in the region, but has not been sufficient to meet increased demand. Resource constraints are evident, for example, in delays to the RSS revision process (see below) or the RPB's objection to GOWM's request to include additional topics in the Phase Two (the RPB argued it had insufficient resources to do this extra work). In 2006 the preparation of the supplementary monitoring reports had to be postponed by several months as the topic leads were busy with the partial RSS reviews and thus could not work on monitoring.

The mismatch between formal requirements and available resources is probably most prominent in terms of time constraints. On the one hand, there is a strong drive towards tight timetables for RSS work, including review and monitoring activities. On the other hand, the increased formal requirements described above mean that regional planning entails a large number of 'hoops' which requires time. These conflicting demands create tensions which have emerged in various ways. An official from GOWM acknowledged that a good level of 'stakeholder involvement' was achieved in preparing draft RPG in the early 2000s but argued that this also contributed to difficulties in keeping to the timetable. Conversely, in the case of the BCS the tight timetable set by ODPM meant that the process was much less 'inclusive, open and transparent' than the previous review. Time constraints have also affected the Phase Two of the RSS revision. The RPB decided to postpone the submission of the draft revision in order to have more time to consider the implications of new household projections, including more time to undertake technical work and to reach agreement among local authorities. Similarly, work on Phase Three of the revision had to be postponed in 2006 due to budgetary constraints at the RPB. According to regional planners, GOWM is 'aware' of these tensions but asserts it had little scope for discretion on timetable decisions which were strongly controlled by the planning ministry at national level.

Time, funding and staff levels are important resources which are necessary to facilitate the complex, fast-moving PMM process. It has been described earlier how PMM in regional planning also places high demands on 'skills' or 'expertise'. This relates, for example, to skills in undertaking monitoring and using information (see 5.4) but, more generally, to the 'skill' of planning at strategic level. In the view of one interviewee who has been involved in planning in the West Midlands for a long time, 'expertise [in strategic planning] has diminished significantly'. Several interviewees argued that during the late 1960s and early 1980s local planning authorities in the region had larger numbers of experienced staff and could do more

¹⁰⁰ The term 'resources' can be understood in a broad way here and includes staffing levels, time, funding, skills, technologies and methods.

work 'in-house'¹⁰¹. Nowadays regional planning and the adoption of a PMM approach in the region is seen to be constricted by a legacy of cut-backs in the research and intelligence function of planning authorities and a focus on project planning and development control since the 1980s. According to one interviewee, this has led to a shortage of 'strategic thinkers' who can make connections between issues and a general lack of resources for strategic spatial planning.

5.6.2 Organisational and governance dimension

Various issues around the organisation of the PMM process in the West Midlands and the role of different actors have already been covered in the preceding sections of this chapter. This included, for example, the working arrangements which have been put in place for PMM and the advantages and disadvantages of the decentralised model adopted in the region. At this stage some overarching implications of PMM for the organisation of the regional planning process and the role of actors are discussed. On the one hand, practice in the West Midlands shows that the PMM model entails a set of characteristics which affect the involvement of actors. On the other hand, there are considerable differences in the ability of actors to deal with the requirements arising from PMM and to get involved in the PMM process.

The level of involvement and influence of different actors has been a key issue during the preparation of RPG in the early 2000s (i.e. the 'plan' element of PMM). The RPB aimed to achieve an 'open, inclusive and transparent' process and compared to earlier planning exercises quite a wide range of actors got involved. Although the efforts of the RPB were widely appreciated, considerable differences in the level of involvement and influence remained (cf. Marshall 2002a, Sennett 2002). The preparation of draft RPG especially was subject to somewhat conflicting demands as a significant amount of technical work and 'stakeholder involvement' had to be conducted within a tight timetable. However, the ability of actors to cope with the work pressures arising from the fast-moving process and thus their level of involvement varied significantly. In general, the process worked in favour of well resourced actors who were able to respond to its demands and get involved in various ways such as through membership of working groups, informal discussions or contributions to formal consultation. Officers from the region's larger planning authorities and, particularly at later stages, officials from GOWM were centrally involved on a day-to-day basis. As far as interest groups are concerned existing research has found that 'Although PPG11 encourages the involvement of a much wider array of voluntary sector organisations, the streamlined process may have had the effect of consolidating the effective participation of organisations such as the CPRE and the HBF who were already established at the regional level' (Sennett 2002: 14-5).

¹⁰¹ Especially the strategic authorities had relatively large planning departments with expertise in strategic planning and large research and intelligence units. For example, one interviewee who worked in strategic planning over a long period pointed out that the Tyne and Wear Structure Plan in the 1970s/80s was produced and monitored by a team of 15 to 20 experienced staff. By comparison the current system in the West Midlands (as in other regions) was deemed under-resourced in terms of both staff numbers and expertise in strategic planning.

While activities during the early 2000s concentrated on the production of RPG (i.e. the 'plan' element) work on the other elements of PMM has been increasing since then, including the development of an implementation framework, monitoring activities and the preparation of AMRs, as well as partial revisions of the RSS. Under the PMM model various streams of work run in parallel and there is a continuous flow of regional planning activities which have to be undertaken in a fast-moving process. The 'multi-track' review approach and the decentralised and inclusive working structure of the RPB (many working groups, meetings, papers, studies, 'stakeholder' and consultation event etc.) also contribute to the increased complexity and amount of work involved in regional planning. Taken as a whole, the continuous, complex and labour-intensive nature of the PMM process requires considerable and ongoing commitment and involvement. Given the varying abilities of actors to deal with the workload now involved in regional planning, the PMM process tends to consolidate or even increase differences in the level of involvement and influence of actors.

The balance between regional discretion and central government control under PMM is another key area of interest for this research. Most of the actual work involved in the PMM process is carried out by the RPB and other actors in the region. This includes the preparation of draft revisions and related consultation and technical work as well as implementation and monitoring activities. On the other hand, the practice in the West Midlands shows that the present regional planning system offers central government opportunities to take, or at least strongly influence, decisions at various points in the PMM process. Central government, through GOWM, is a central player in regional planning who is involved in all key working groups and elements of the process. For example, central government performs a controlling function in the 'plan' element of PMM. During the preparation of draft RPG in the early 2000s GOWM was less concerned about policy substance, but provided a strong steer on process. According to a senior planner at WMRA, the RPB had 'captured' the government's urban and rural renaissance agenda which meant there was less need for government intervention (the main exception being transport policy where GOWM and DfT had strong input and made substantial changes to draft RPG¹⁰²). As far as the process of preparing draft RPG is concerned GOWM exerted considerable pressure on the RPB to keep to the timetable set out in PPG11.

As described earlier central government has also provided a steer on monitoring activities in the West Midlands, especially by requiring the production of AMRs (see 5.4). However, the level of government control (and interest) in this area has been less extensive than in other fields of PMM. The discussion of

¹⁰² In the view of a senior planner at WMRA, transport was the only area where 'real problems' existed during the preparation of RPG. The MMSs were conducted by DfT in parallel to, but in isolation from, the preparation of draft RPG (even ODPM had little influence on the MMSs). The proposals coming out of the MMSs were 'parachuted in' at the end of the process which caused concern about a lack of integration with the rest of draft RPG. In finalising RPG GOWM, with strong involvement from DfT, undertook a significant re-writing of the draft RTS. According to an official from GOWM, the role of the GOR was to 'vet' draft RPG and, in particular, to make sure final RPG did not put obligations on government, e.g. in terms of transport investments. As a result the RPB has been concerned that central government offers only limited financial support for RPG's urban renaissance agenda, especially as far as transport investment is concerned.

the 'manage' element (see 5.5) has shown that central government has strongly shaped the RSS revision in terms of both process and substance. The Secretary of State defined the topics for the review of the RSS which have been widely followed by the RPB. Central government policy has also had considerable influence in the decision to review the RSS. In relation to housing, for example, the RPB decided to consider the implications of draft PPS3 even though that policy statement was still only a draft. A senior planner at WMRA explained that 'The government's agenda on housing is clear' and that 'We [the RPB] can't put our head in the sand'. In terms of the revision process central government has pressed the RPB to carry out the BCS as a 'freestanding fast-track' revision and to put in place 'streamlined' working arrangements for all phases of the review which facilitate fast progress towards tight timetables.

5.6.3 Substantive outcomes of PMM

This section looks into various substantive outcomes of adopting a PMM approach to regional planning in the West Midlands. In the view of many interviewees, it was still too early to come to firm conclusions in this respect at the time the research was conducted as the present regional planning model was still new and developing. Therefore the following findings are tentative and, in the absence of 'hard' evidence 'on the ground', to some extent speculative.

Quality of policy and action

The first matter of interest is the extent to which PMM in regional planning affects the 'quality'¹⁰³ of policy and actions. The experience to date sends somewhat ambiguous messages. In the view of many interviewees, the continuous process of strategy making, implementation, monitoring and review allows regular adjustment and, as a result, can lead to more appropriate policy and action. A GOWM official argued that the continuous planning process enables continuous 'evolution' of the RSS as strategy and actions can be updated, refined and improved on an ongoing basis. This view is reflected in the comments from regional planners who saw partial reviews as opportunities to fill gaps in an RSS, refine and improve existing policies and react to new information and developments in policy (see 5.5.1).

On the other hand, it can be argued that, up to now, the continuous, complex and fast-moving PMM process has also had some negative effects on the quality of policy. As described earlier some of the 'gaps' in the existing RSS were, to some extent, caused by the tension between the large number of formal requirements and the tight timetables involved in the current regional planning model. According to many regional planners, there was a lack of time and resources during the early 2000s review to carry out some of the necessary technical work and to integrate different policy fields. Similarly, the initial work for the Phase Two revision has also been affected by time constraints. The strategic authorities did not have enough time to consider the implications of higher levels of housing growth and the capacity of the

¹⁰³ See Chapters 1.3.1 and 3.3 for an explanation of what 'quality' refers to in this context.

region's infrastructure to support such growth. Finally, the role of monitoring has so far been rather limited and it has not been widely used to inform policy and action.

Responsiveness vs. long-term guidance

Another issue is the effect of PMM on the responsiveness of regional planning on the one hand, and the ability to provide long-term guidance on the other. Many interviewees agreed that, in principle, regular review of policy and action makes regional planning more responsive to new information, policy developments and changing circumstances. Hence it can help to keep strategy and action up-to-date and make them appropriate to the decision situation at hand. The option to undertake partial reviews can also increase responsiveness to policy developments in other policy fields and at other levels and, thus, facilitate better alignment of the RSS with other strategies (i.e. horizontal and vertical integration, see also below).

In contrast, the attempt to achieve responsiveness through frequent RSS reviews has also been questioned. In the view of a senior planner at WMRA, there is a danger of trying to be 'too sophisticated' and to 'fine tune' things, while reality is too complex to be perfectly controlled. It has been described earlier that many of those involved in regional planning in the West Midlands stressed the need for some degree of policy stability to give the RSS time to feed through the system and show effects (see 5.5.1). The frequent review of an RSS may result in 'throwing out the baby with the bath water', i.e. there is a risk that policies are changed too quickly if they do not show immediate effects without investigating the reasons for that. The frequent adjustment to policy developments at other levels or in different policy fields also brings the danger that regional planning is driven too much by these developments and does not provide sufficient guidance to other levels or policy areas. A senior planner at WMRA argued that being too responsive to short term pressures may also 'send the wrong message'. For example, if developers know that planning will react to market pressures they will act accordingly and may decide not to develop brownfield sites but wait for a plan review which allows more greenfield development. Similarly, a system of frequent RSS revisions may be used to 're-open' issues and to undermine the existing strategy (see the example of the HBF which wants to use the Phase Two revision to argue for higher levels of housing development outside the MUAs, see 5.4.4).

Policy integration and synchronisation

There are also issues around how PMM affects horizontal policy integration (of different policy fields) and vertical policy integration (between different levels). As discussed above, in principle, the continuous planning process allows frequent re-adjustment of the RSS to developments both in other policy fields and at other levels. On the other hand, the current PMM model also provides some challenges for policy integration. The approach to undertake partial RSS reviews, for example, involves issues about integration. The RPB has been concerned about a potential lack of integration under the 'multi-track'

model and has therefore kept the number of tracks to a minimum and bundled many of the issues in Phase Two of the revision. The tight timetable during the last full review caused problems as there was insufficient time to achieve integration between the different topic sections in draft RPG (cf. Sennett 2002). Then again, it can be argued that integration is also strongly affected by factors which go beyond the influence of the PMM model such as the persistence of thinking and working in 'silos' (see above example of MMSs).

There are different views among those involved on how PMM affects synchronisation between the RSS and LDFs. An official from GOWM anticipated that under the new planning system LDFs and the RSS will be in a 'constant state of re-adjustment' which will reduce the time-lags until regional policies feed into local plans. This would be facilitated by the reduction in the levels of planning (abolition of structure plans) and the 'folder approach' under which LDFs and their component parts could be revised and thus adapted to a revised RSS more quickly. In contrast, the continuous planning process and frequent revisions of the RSS may also make synchronisation with LDFs more complicated. Frequent change of RSS policy requires regular adjustment of LDFs, but there are doubts as to whether local planning authorities are able and willing to adjust their local policies so frequently. A senior planner at WMRA argued that the multi-track approach can affect coordination between regional and local levels as it may be difficult for local authorities to keep up with what is happening at regional level (due to the complexity and speed of the process).

Implementation of the RSS

As described above, there was a general consensus among practitioners that it was still too early to assess the full effects of PMM and this applies in particular to issues around the implementation of the RSS. One topic lead emphasised the impact of time-lags in the planning system which mean that it takes some time until RSS policies are fed through to LDFs and often even longer until they are implemented 'on the ground'. For example, current monitoring of completed development and existing land supply in the region would still reflect the effects of 'old' RPG and 'old' local plan policies which allowed outmigration from the MUAs. It was expected that it will take more time until the impact of the 'new' RSS which was adopted in 2004 can be observed in LDFs and 'on the ground'.

Several interviewees argued that the inclusive process of preparing draft RPG has increased awareness among regional actors about the strategy and also contributed to a consensus-based approach. This is expected to have a positive effect on the implementation of the RSS. However, existing research found that the fast process of preparing draft RPG had a negative effect on opportunities to build consensus and to make local authorities sign up to the draft (Sennett 2002). Thus the positive effects of the collaborative working arrangements were partly thwarted by constraints arising from the tight timetable. In the view of a planner at WMRA, it may be more difficult to make actors sign up to the RSS if the strategy is constantly

under review. Actors may simply be uncertain over how the strategy may change and thus wait until policy becomes clearer and more settled before they sign up. There is also a risk that actors do not sign up to the RSS but wait for the next review to re-open issues with which they do not agree (see above). On the other hand, several interviewees argued that the partial review model has the potential benefit that policies and implementation mechanisms can be put in place more quickly. The BCS, for example, is seen as a means of working towards the implementation of the RSS (in a partial review) without having to wait for the review of other, 'slower' elements of the strategy.

5.7 Summary

At this stage only a very brief summary of the chapter is provided as the findings of this case study are summarised and analysed in detail in Chapter 7, together with the findings from the case study on the South East of England. The purpose of this chapter has been to give a detailed account of how the PMM approach to regional planning works in the West Midlands region. This included the way in which PMM is understood and the arrangements which have been put in place in the region to adopt the PMM model of regional planning. The chapter has shown how the 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' components are addressed in practice and has shed some light on the implications of the 'new' planning model in the West Midlands region. This covered technical and methodological issues, the organisation and governance of the PMM process as well as some of the substantive outcomes of this planning model. Together with the national picture (Ch. 4) and the account on the South East of England which follows in the next chapter, the findings on the West Midlands provide the basis for the synthesis and analysis of the empirical work in the final part of this thesis.

6 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' in the South East of England

In this chapter a detailed account of the practice of PMM in regional planning in the South East of England is provided. It adopts the same structure as the previous case study. Following a brief introduction to the planning and governance background in the South East, the overall approach to PMM in the region is examined. After that the 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' elements are treated in turn. The rest of the chapter then pays attention to the implications of PMM in terms of technical and managerial matters, organisational arrangements and governance, as well as the substantive outcomes of the PMM approach. The main purpose of the chapter is to give an account of planning practice in the region. The issues described in this chapter are picked up again in the final part of this thesis where, in conjunction with the accounts on the West Midlands (Ch. 5) and the national picture (Ch. 4), they form the basis for the synthesis and analysis of the empirical work.

As explained earlier (see 1.4), the case study account is based on various sources of information, including a variety of documents, interviews with a wide range of actors involved in regional planning and observations made at meetings and events in the case study region. A detailed list of the interviews, meetings and events can be found at Appendix 1.

6.1 *Planning and governance background*

The boundaries of the South East region have changed over time. RPG9 of March 2001 (GOSE et al. 2001) covered a large region which included London and the ring of shire counties surrounding the capital. Since then London has become a separate 'region' (with its own Spatial Strategy produced by the London Mayor) and the three counties of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire have become part of the East of England region. The current South East of England region comprises the county areas of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex and several unitary authorities (see Figure 45) and has a population of some eight million people. The region has been described as being less cohesive than some of the other English regions. Regional identity is weak and there is a low level of support for regional institutions while local government, sub-regional coalitions and partnerships play an important role in the governance of the region (John et al. 2002a, 2000b). The present South East region could also be seen as an 'artificial' entity as the actual 'heart' of the region (London) lies outside the regional boundaries (Allen et al. 1998, John et al. 2002b).

The spatial development of the South East has been strongly shaped by its relationship with London. For a long time the region has accommodated overspill from the capital and experienced significant levels of

growth in transport, housing and economic development. In addition to decentralisation from London, there has been dispersal from the region's larger urban areas (Williams 2002). This has resulted in significant socio-spatial imbalances and inequalities (John et al. 2002a), with areas of affluence and growth, especially to the west of London, and decline and deprivation in eastern parts and coastal towns. Continued growth in economic performance and in the number of households has led to considerable rates of development. This, in turn, has caused various problems and tensions, such as concerns about the environmental impact of growth, transport problems and strong 'antigrowth sentiments', particularly against housing development in the Shire areas (Counsell and Haughton 2003b).

Source: <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/assembly/map.html#>

Figure 45: The South East of England region

Together with the West Midlands the South East is one of the two English regions with a long tradition of continuous cooperation between local authorities (Thomas 1999, Wannop 1995). Despite different paths of development and interests, local authorities have seen a need to cooperate at regional or sub-regional levels to deal with issues which cannot be addressed locally. On the other hand, 'Within the region there is significant political fractionation. Not only do all political parties have power bases, but also there is significant competition between local authorities within the region for influence and power' (John et al. 2002b: 736). The region also has a long-standing history of strategic planning. The London and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN) was founded in the early 1960s as a voluntary body of local authorities (Graham and Hebbert 1999, Thomas and Kimberley 1995). Until the early 2000s

SERPLAN acted as the non-statutory planning body for London and the South East and, among other things, was responsible for preparing 'Advice' (or draft RPG) during the 1990s.

For a long time planning in the South East has had to deal with economic and population growth and the pressures arising from that growth, socio-spatial imbalances and regeneration as well as rifts between pro- and anti-development interests. The level of housing development has been the single most prominent and contentious issue in the region. A review of RPG started in 1995 and was well underway when the PPG11-style model took shape. The 'Advice' prepared by SERPLAN effectively became draft RPG and SERPLAN also 'piloted' some of the elements of the PPG11-style system, including a Public Examination into draft RPG (Counsell and Haughton 2003b). The draft strategy (SERPLAN 1998) aimed to rebalance spatial development in the region by containing development within London, promoting regeneration of areas in need, and controlling growth in the booming areas to the west of the capital. The draft also placed constraints on housing development in the South East and proposed housing numbers which were significantly below government household projections¹⁰⁴.

In its report the Panel of the Public Examination (Crow and Whittaker 1999) stressed the importance of economic growth in the South East for the national economy and argued that RPG should seek to support and not restrict growth in the region. Among other things, the panel recommended a significant increase in the housing figures in line with government household projections to support economic growth. In finalising RPG9 (GOSE et al. 2001) the Secretary of State adopted higher housing numbers than SERPLAN's draft but, amid a political backlash, especially in the Shire counties, stayed significantly below the level recommended by the Panel. The controversy over housing numbers also led the government to invent its PMM model of planning for housing which was announced as a move away from 'Predict and Provide' (see 3.2). This PMM model underpinned the Proposed Changes to draft RPG9 (DETR 2000c, GOSE et al. 2000) and the revision of PPG3 (DETR 2000a) which were published simultaneously in March 2000. While heralded by central government as a technical solution to planning for housing, the approach has also been described as a rhetorical device to reduce political tensions over new house building (Murdoch 2000; see Ch. 3).

However, it did not take long until issues about house building in the South East moved up the political agenda again with vigour. In 2003 the government published the *Sustainable Communities Plan*, a key plank of which was to increase housing provision and affordability in the South East (ODPM 2003a, 2003g). This included the promotion of housing development in four 'growth areas' which had been earmarked for further growth in RPG9¹⁰⁵. Two of these growth areas have been taken forward in partial reviews of RPG9 (see 5.5) and work towards implementation has progressed in all four areas. In the light

¹⁰⁴ Household forecasts which were published by central government in 1995 suggested an increase in the number of households in the South East by 1.1 million between 1996 and 2016 (Breheny 1999, Murdoch 2000).

¹⁰⁵ These growth areas are Ashford in Kent, the Thames Gateway to the east of London, the Milton Keynes & South Midlands area which spans across the South East, East Midlands and East of England regions, and the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor.

of continuing debates about housing development in the South East which have been fuelled by the government's *Review of Housing Supply* (Barker 2004; see Chs. 2 and 3), the scale of housing development has also been at the centre of the preparation of the so-called *South East Plan* (SEP), a full revision of RPG9 which started in 2003 (see below).

In terms of governance and administrative arrangements the South East of England region comprises 74 local authorities, namely seven county councils, twelve unitary councils and 55 district councils. The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) was established in 1999 and became the RPB for the region after the dissolution of SERPLAN in 2001. In 2006 the Assembly had 112 members, 74 of whom were local councillors from each of the region's local authorities. The remaining members included three elected councillors representing town and parish councils, one representative of the New Forest National Park Authority, 17 representatives of the business sector and 17 members representing social and environmental organisations. The Assembly is served by a secretariat which in early 2006 had some 36 staff (see 6.2.2).

A wide range of other organisations, groupings and partnerships is involved in the governance of the region (John et al. 2002a). As mentioned earlier, local government and sub-regional coalitions play a prominent part, for example, the South East Counties network which has been very active in regional planning (see 6.4.4). Since its establishment in 1994 the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) has been a key actor in the governance of the region. Over the past few years GOSE has been restructured to better reflect central government priorities. This included the creation of a Housing Completions Team which promotes house building in the region, and area-based teams which drive the implementation of the growth areas identified in the *Sustainable Communities Plan*. The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) was set up in 1999. The agency published its first RES in October 1999, a revised version in 2002 and another draft revision in early 2006. Alongside these key actors many other organisations are involved in the governance of the region, e.g. well-resourced interest groups such as the HBF and CPRE and a plethora of voluntary and community organisations (John et al. 2002a, 2002b ; see also 6.6.2).

6.2 Overall approach to PMM

This section considers some overarching aspects of how PMM in regional planning is approached in the South East of England. First, the way in which different actors understand PMM and how it should work in practice is described. Second, the organisational arrangements for regional planning in the South East are examined, including a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing arrangements.

6.2.1 Understandings of PMM

There are different understandings or interpretations among regional actors of what PMM means and what this approach to regional planning entails. While some of those interviewed related PMM to the regional planning system as a whole, the large majority of interviewees understood PMM primarily as an approach to planning for housing.

PMM – A rhetorical device?

PMM has been described as a departure from the previous model of 'predict and provide' (see Ch. 3). Some interviewees maintained, however, that 'predict and provide' was never implemented fully in regional practice. First, regional strategies such as SERPLAN's draft RPG of 1998, and to lesser extent RPG9 of 2001, sought to shift development from areas of high demand to the less prosperous parts of the region and, thus, did not simply predict and follow demand but attempted to steer development. Second, RPG housing numbers have not materialised 'on the ground', and there has always been an element of 'managing' in that housing numbers have been revised in plan reviews in the light of new information, e.g. revised household projections¹⁰⁶.

In the view of some interviewees, the invention of PMM in the South East could therefore be seen more as a change in rhetoric than of substance. According to this interpretation, PMM has been used to alter the terms of regional planning debates in an attempt to overcome the perception that planning in the South East took a 'predict and provide' approach. An official at GOSE argued that PMM has been introduced to 'reframe' the discourse, for example, by shifting the debate away from aggregate housing targets for the whole plan period to annual figures. However, as illustrated below, the way in which housing numbers are understood and used in debates and regional practice suggests that, to some extent, PMM appears to be about meeting housing numbers. For example, another GOSE official stated that 'We are still doing predict and provide' (see below).

'Plan, Monitor and Review'

Like in the West Midlands, there has been some ambiguity in the South East about the meaning of PMM and particularly about the 'manage' element. A senior regional planner¹⁰⁷ argued that, at regional level, PMM should be understood as 'plan, monitor and review'. In the officer's view, 'managing' in the sense of controlling the supply of housing land is not possible at strategic level as there is little direct influence on

¹⁰⁶ On the other hand it could be argued that, in the past, RPG housing numbers largely followed household projections and, thus, the intention was to predict demand and provide for it. The fact that housing numbers did not materialise accordingly 'on the ground' can be explained by various factors, e.g. political resistance, land availability, lack of developer interest or other barriers to the development of sites.

¹⁰⁷ As in the West Midlands, the case study on the South East of England is largely based on interviews with actors involved in regional planning and observations made in the region (see 1.4). A list of interviewees can be found at Appendix 1. If not stated otherwise the term 'regional planner' is used in this case study to refer to the planning officers working at the SEERA secretariat.

the implementation of policies. Therefore actual 'management' in terms of controlling levels of development has to take place at the local level. The officer also highlighted that 'managing' the release of land requires short-term action, but RSS reviews take too much time to allow rapid adjustments. At regional level 'manage' should therefore be understood as the regular review of the plan. This view was echoed by a Member of the Assembly who argued that once the RSS is in place it will not be 'set in stone' for the next 20 years. Instead the strategy was likely to be reviewed at regular intervals. In this context several interviewees stressed the importance of monitoring in informing RSS reviews.

'Plan, Monitor and Implementation'

According to many interviewees, one of the key features of the new regional planning model is a strong emphasis on implementation. One regional planner felt that under the new model regional planning is not only about making policies and setting targets but also about specifying the mechanisms through which the plan is to be implemented. Consequently, the RPB and others have conducted a considerable amount of work on implementation issues during the preparation of the SEP (see 5.3.2). In the view of a senior regional planner, the role of monitoring under the new model is to look into the implementation of the RSS (e.g. whether it is implemented, why not etc.) and to inform implementation activities (e.g. how to address shortages in the supply of housing). Here, 'managing' is about making adjustments to improve the implementation of the RSS which, in many cases, does not mean a review of the RSS but changes to the way the existing strategy is implemented. However, one regional planner stressed that whilst the enhanced emphasis on implementation is welcome it should not lead to an approach that is overly reactive and focused on the short-term. Planning and implementation needed to take a long-term perspective, e.g. in many parts of the region housing development depends on the provision of infrastructure which needs to be planned and provided in advance of housing development.

'Plan and Deliver'

Finally, it could be argued that the current practice of regional planning in the South East which is heavily shaped by central government takes, at least in some respects, what could be called a 'plan and deliver' approach. Various officials at GOSE stressed that 'delivery' was a key plank of the new planning system, in particular as regards the provision of housing. This applies especially to the South East where GOSE has been under immense pressure from the centre to increase house building levels in the region¹⁰⁸. For example, GOSE has set up a Housing Completions Team whose role is to ensure the 'delivery' of housing figures. The team has the duty to report the number of housing completions directly to the Prime Minister's office on a quarterly basis. In the view of several GOSE officials, the purpose of monitoring is therefore to assess whether targets for housing completions in the RSS and local plans are met 'on the ground'.

¹⁰⁸ According to GOSE officials, at the time of the research housing provision in the South East was on the Prime Minister's 'Top 10' priority list and officials from the Prime Minister's office and ODPM took great interest in increasing the supply of housing in the region (see also Chs. 2 and 3).

GOSE has developed tools such as 'housing trajectories' which are geared towards 'delivering' housing targets and which have since become part of government policy and guidance on regional and local planning (cf. ODPM 2004a, 2005f, 2005j, 2005k).

The 'plan and deliver' view seems to underlie the government's approach to planning in the South East, particularly when it comes to the *Sustainable Communities Plan* and the recommendations of the first Barker review. The CPRE has claimed that the *Sustainable Communities Plan* represents a 'dictate and provide' model (Planning 2005) while, if implemented, some of the Barker recommendations 'would replace 'plan, monitor and manage' with 'demand dictates supply' (CPRE 2005: 92). The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee has taken a similar view on the *Sustainable Communities Plan*.

'The approach to housing advocated by the Government at a local level in its planning guidance of "*planning, monitoring and managing*" supply does not seem to apply when it comes to housing provision at a regional and national level. The Government has taken the approach of predicting significant levels of demand for housing in the South East Region and planning to meet this demand without any attempt to manage growth or to shift it to other areas. The [Sustainable Communities Plan] simply predicts growth in the South East and sets out to provide for it. This *predict and provide* approach makes no attempt to rebalance housing demand and economic development in the country as a whole' (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2005: para 61, italics added).

This view was mirrored by an official from GOSE's Housing Completions Team who argued that in relation to planning for housing 'We are still doing 'predict and provide''. Although housing figures are no longer expressed in aggregate numbers for the whole plan period but as annual targets, in effect, these targets would still be treated as 'fixed' until the next plan review and once a target is set it would be about meeting it. In the view of the same GOSE officer, the current planning system (e.g. housing trajectories) aims at short-term action to rectify shortages in housing completions in the short-run. A 'pure' PMM approach would take a longer-term perspective, allow more time for the implementation of plans and look at longer-term trends rather than try to rectify shortages on a year to year basis, the officer explained.

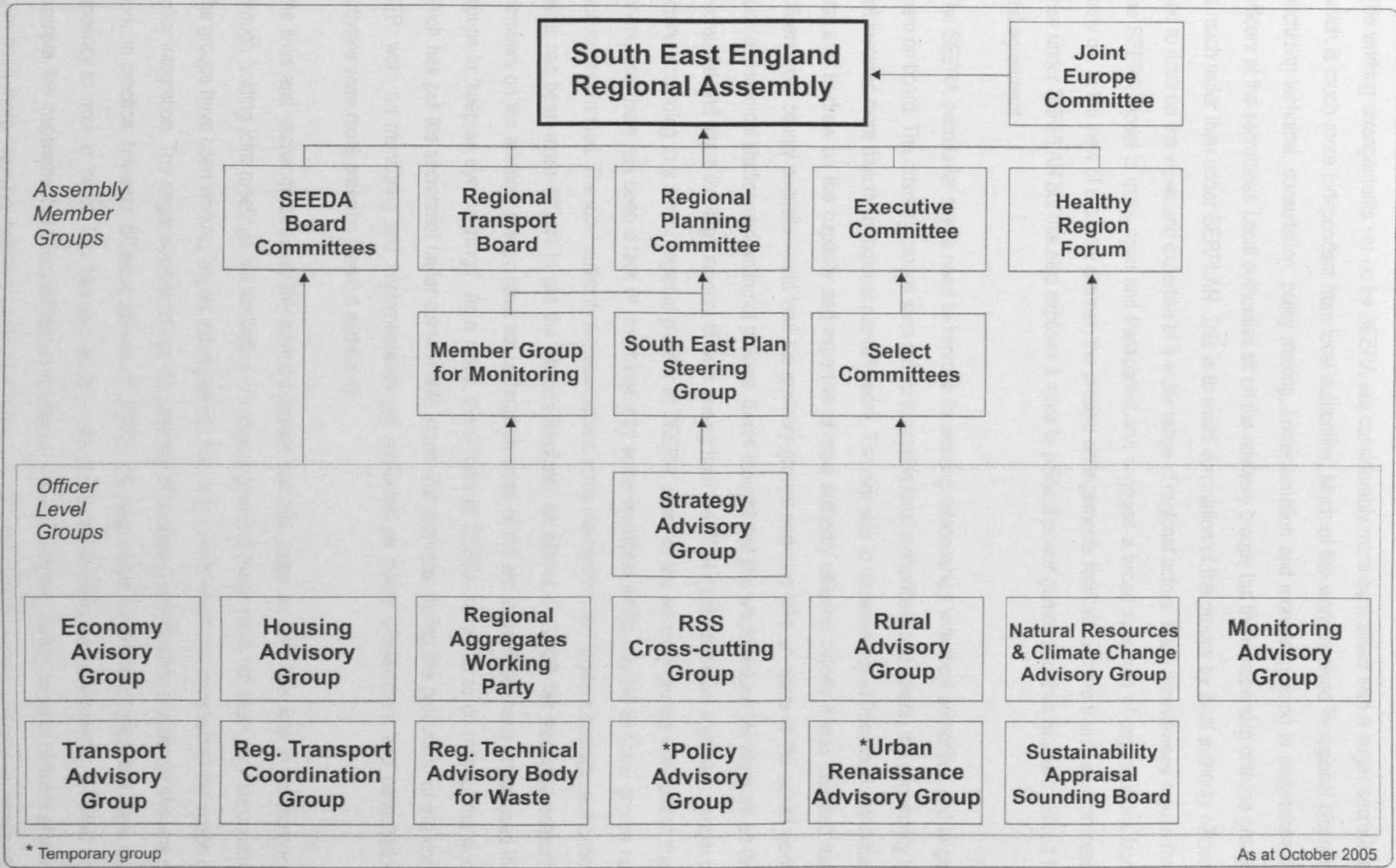
6.2.2 Organisational arrangements for regional planning

The SERPLAN model under which draft RPG9 of 1998 was prepared lay firmly in the hands of local authorities, especially of the county councils. SERPLAN had a full-time secretariat which was directed by a local authority conference and much of the actual work was undertaken by officers from county councils and working groups of local authority officers. With the disbandment of SERPLAN and the creation of SEERA the working arrangements for regional planning in the South East have changed significantly. In the view of a GOSE official, the arrangements of the RPB have become 'fairly centralised' compared to the SERPLAN model. Local authority officers are less dominant and much of the day-to-day work is

conducted by officers at the SEERA secretariat. Compared to the RPB in the West Midlands, SEERA has retained much of its funding 'in-house' and increased its staff levels and, thus, the capacity at the secretariat. As at early 2006, SEERA employed some 36 full time equivalent staff, including 14 regional planners (plus four administrative support staff), two regional analysts and one housing policy advisor.

The regional planners are responsible for coordinating and undertaking technical work and consultation activities, developing policies and contributing to the preparation of AMRs. Most of these officers specialise on specific topics and issues, including transport, housing, economy, urban and rural issues, environment, tourism and sub-regional and conformity work. SEERA has also established a series of 'advisory groups' (see Figure 46) whose role is to advise the secretariat. The groups involve representatives of a wide range of organisations such as local authorities, GOSE, SEEDA, statutory agencies, business, environmental and voluntary sectors. Most of the groups work on specific policy fields, e.g. economic development, housing or transport, while some have cross-cutting remits. For example, the Strategy Advisory Group, which includes the chairs of the thematic groups and other representatives of local authorities and other organisations, has a coordinating function. While some of the advisory groups meet on a regular basis, others have been active mainly during the preparation of the draft SEP (e.g. Cross-cutting Group) or have subsequently been disbanded (e.g. Policy Advisory Group). Only recently, in September 2005, SEERA established an advisory group on monitoring (see 6.4.2).

The transfer of the RPB function from SERPLAN to SEERA entailed a distinct shift from a decentralised model dominated by local authorities to more centralised working arrangements. This has had major effects on regional planning practice, including the role of local authorities and the relationship between local and regional levels. According to a former chief county council officer, the SERPLAN model was for a long time an officer-led, 'technical' process (Williams 2002). The SERPLAN secretariat, officers from local authorities, mainly the county councils, and working groups of local authority officers did the work involved in regional planning. According to the above officer, the central role of local authorities helped to build consensus and to make local authorities sign up to regional strategies (*ibid.*). It also provided the opportunity to draw on local knowledge and to take account of local circumstances.



* Temporary group

As at October 2005

Figure 46: SEERA working structure

Source: author

The working arrangements set up by SEERA are considerably more centralised with a larger secretariat which is much more independent from local authorities. Much of the work involved in regional planning (including technical, consultation, policy making, implementation and monitoring work) is undertaken by officers at the secretariat. Local authorities sit on the advisory groups but the membership of these groups is much wider than under SERPLAN. This is to avoid domination of the groups by local authority officers and to draw on the views and expertise of a wider range of regional actors. Many interviewees argued that the SEERA model is more open and transparent and engages a broad spectrum of organisations from early on. In the view of a county planner, the present arrangements facilitate a 'more transparent process' than under SERPLAN but this also exposes it more to political power games and thus makes it difficult to find agreement.

The SEERA secretariat saw a need to improve its working relationships with local authorities and to get them on board. The advisory groups were set up to provide local authorities (and others) the opportunity to get involved more directly in regional planning work. The aim was to increase buy-in from local authorities and also to draw on the capacity and expertise of local authority officers. Initially it was intended that officers from county councils would lead the advisory groups and also take on some of the actual work, such as technical studies and writing of policies. It was thought that this would reduce the pressure on the secretariat and share the large amount of work arising from the PMM model between a greater number of actors. According to a senior regional planner at SEERA, some of the advisory groups work better than others, and there has been a lack of commitment by some members which has led to some groups not working as planned. The local authority representatives come mainly from the region's strategic authorities but it has been more difficult to get the districts involved. An official of GOSE felt that local authority members on the advisory groups have not undertaken much of the actual work but have rather used the groups to 'keep an eye on things'. As a result, the officers at SEERA have had to do most of the work which has put the secretariat under considerable strain. For example, during the production of the draft SEP, work on monitoring and implementation got neglected as policy development and consultation activities were more pressing (see 6.4 and 6.6.1).

The links and exchange between the advisory groups has also been limited. This was to be improved through holding joint meetings but according to regional planners these have not been very successful. The groups have been working largely independently from each other which has constrained the scope of policy integration. The larger secretariat has the potential of achieving coordination of different streams of work. In practice, however, different officers at SEERA are responsible for different topics and there is a tendency to work in 'silos'. This has also led to a lack of integration between the elements of PMM. For example, the involvement of policy officers in monitoring has been limited, mainly as other streams of work have been more pressing, but also partly due to the lack of commitment of some officers to monitoring (see 6.4). The split of responsibilities between officers has also meant that there has been little cross-

cutting analysis of monitoring information. Similarly, the topic advisory groups have not been much involved in monitoring activities such as considering the implications of monitoring results for policy and implementation.

While the current working structure is less dominated by local authorities, the new regional planning system still depends to a significant extent on their contributions. This relates to technical work and policy making where the secretariat has attempted to draw on the expertise and resources of local planning authorities. It is also visible in relation to monitoring as regional planners depend on monitoring information collected by local authorities. The interpretation of monitoring information and the identification of actions especially require local knowledge which officers at the secretariat do not necessarily possess (see 6.4.3). Moreover, the role assigned to strategic authorities in the PCPA has severely affected the regional planning process in the South East. Much of the sub-regional work for the SEP has been led by county councils but the quality of this work has been hampered by time pressures and political tensions (see 5.5). In the view of one county planner, the county councils still have a strong role under the new system but there has been a tendency towards a 'lowest common denominator' approach. The officer also saw a risk of an ownership problem with the SEP as there have been conflicting views on the appropriate levels of growth among Assembly Members, SEERA officers, local authorities and central government during the SEP preparation (see 5.5).

6.3 The 'Plan' element

As explained in the previous chapter, the investigation of the 'plan' element concentrates on two aspects which are particularly relevant to PMM. The first one refers to the use of targets in regional planning and the second to the way in which implementation is treated in the RSS¹⁰⁹.

6.3.1 The use of targets in regional planning

In the view of several interviewees, targets can be useful tools and they are regarded as important in planning practice. One senior planner at SEERA stated that through using targets 'it will be more clear what is expected' for the implementation of a plan and the actions which are required by those responsible for implementing the plan. Housing development was by far the most quoted field in which targets are seen to perform an important and influential function. Various GOSE officials saw targets as a crucial tool to achieve planned levels of housing development. The 'housing trajectory' approach developed and promoted by GOSE and ODPM essentially compares past rates of housing completions to targets in plans

¹⁰⁹ Like in the case study on the West Midlands, implementation issues are covered under the 'plan' element as implementation activities in practice have been mainly restricted to identifying implementation mechanisms as part of the preparation of RSSs. Some of the early (and anticipated) implications of PMM on the implementation of the RSS in the South East are described at the end of this case study (see 5.6.3).

in order to identify the completion rate required in the future to achieve planned targets. Although a GOSE officer explained that such trajectories should be used to raise issues rather than to provide final answers about required completion rates, in practice, the approach seems to be geared strongly (and simply) towards meeting the numbers. For example, according to another official at GOSE local authorities are expected to show whether they are 'ahead or behind' of their targets in submitting housing trajectories to GOSE.

While several other interviewees saw some value in using targets (especially in relation to housing), they also expressed caution and highlighted the limitations of, and conditions for, the use of targets. One regional planner felt that targets help to make clear what the priorities are, e.g. what type of development is to be achieved. However, targets should not be used in a simplistic way the officer maintained. For example, housing targets needed to be based on an assessment of housing need, and in setting targets those involved needed to make clear what is required to achieve the targets. There is concern about the use of what could be called 'blanket targets', i.e. a single target that applies to all parts of the region even though there may be significant differences between these parts. For example, a single regional target on affordable housing can be problematic since a higher proportion of affordable housing may be attainable in areas of high demand whereas the same rate may be difficult to achieve in areas of low demand.

A representative of the CPRE stated that quantities in a plan can help to provide an indication of what is desired or required. On the other hand, the interviewee warned against a mechanistic understanding of targets, i.e. the tendency that once a target is set it must be achieved at any cost, regardless of whether it continues to be appropriate. Targets also tended to suggest direct links between policy and implementation but in reality that relationship was normally much more complex and indirect. The Panel of the Public Examination into draft RPG9 generally supported the use of targets and indicators but also expressed a considerable degree of caution about the way in which these are understood and used. As illustrated in the quote below, the Panel stressed that targets should not be used in a 'mechanistic' way but as tools that help to make judgements.

'In our view, the *urban system* ... is *not a piece of machinery* and is not necessarily amenable to the monitoring and correction techniques appropriate to the control of machinery. For this reason we do *not* consider that it is either *desirable or practical* to treat *targets as triggers*, which, when a given numerical value is attained, lead automatically to action of a specified kind. ... in the real world, what action is to be taken in relation to changes in the indicators must be a *matter of judgement*, having regard to the nature of the policies concerned. Yet this is not to say that targets are of no value. If they are realistic then they can *illustrate (rather than define)* the policy concerned, even if to a degree they are aspirational in character, and they assist in tracking progress in the achievement of policy objectives. ... The receipt of a monitoring report indicating divergence from targets should always be the cause of *standing back to think* whether it is the world that is out of joint or only the plan' (Crow and Whittaker 1999: paras 13.22-13.24, italics added).

In practice, RPG9 of 2001 (GOSE et al. 2001) included a number of targets, although these varied in nature. Some of the targets were specific and quantified, in particular in the fields of housing and transport. However, many 'targets' took the form of statements of objectives or direction without any quantification (e.g. 'make best use of existing properties', 'increase skills levels', 'reduce the amount of municipal waste'). As far as the draft SEP is concerned, the use of targets varies considerably between topic areas. The draft includes numerous quantified targets on environmental issues and several housing targets. In several other policy fields, and for the cross-cutting policies targets are hardly set (cf. SEERA 2006e). Overall, therefore, a rather ambiguous picture emerged in the South East which is similar to the situation in the West Midlands. At a general level targets are deemed useful tools as long as the limitations of using them are recognised. In practice, targets are influential and contentious in some policy fields, e.g. district level housing numbers (see 5.5), but on the whole they are not widely used.

6.3.2 Implementation issues

As explained earlier, the emphasis at this point is on how implementation has been taken into account in preparing regional planning strategies in the South East. There is widespread agreement that, under the present regional planning system, more attention is paid to issues around implementation than in the past. One planner from a county council explained that the government's emphasis on 'implementation and delivery' is evident in the new planning system and in government initiatives such as the *Sustainable Communities Plan*. The implementation of such initiatives is also a priority for GOSE which is involved heavily in work towards the 'delivery' of housing completions and growth areas.

Although the development of policies dominated the preparation of the draft SEP, work on implementation gained momentum during the process. This has been partly due to an increased awareness among regional actors of the need to consider more deeply what is required to achieve the objectives and implement the policies of the RSS. Issues around implementation have also come to the fore as a result of the debates on the scale of housing growth in the draft SEP. A key question has been the infrastructure (in terms of transport, water, energy, social services etc.) required to facilitate planned levels of growth and how the provision of this infrastructure can be secured. According to a senior planner at SEERA, the RPB has taken the view that a 'package approach' is needed which clearly states that housing growth has to go hand in hand with the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

Against this background, the RPB undertook a considerable amount of work on these issues as part of developing an implementation plan for the SEP (e.g. Hewdon Consulting 2005, SEERA 2006b, 2006f). This included an assessment of infrastructure requirements in terms of type, scale and cost, as well as the identification of delivery mechanisms. The implementation plan is to form a 'business plan for the region' which 'identifies what needs to happen, when it needs to happen and who needs to take the action' (SEERA 2006b: para 1.3). It recognises the need to align the actions of a wide range of actors who are

deemed critical to the implementation of the SEP. The RPB has suggested an 'Infrastructure Concordat' between central government, its delivery agencies and the region, in which levels of housing growth are bound to the provision of infrastructure. In addition, a proposed 'Regional Infrastructure Board' is to set priorities for infrastructure development and investment across a range of services and could potentially govern a 'Regional Infrastructure Fund'. Furthermore, the RPB has the intention to put in place a joint implementation plan for the SEP and the RES (SEERA 2006g).

While large infrastructure investment is deemed necessary to support growth in the South East, there has been great concern about a lack of mechanisms to ensure the provision of infrastructure. A county planner argued that the current arrangements and responsibilities for implementation are not appropriate, e.g. as the delivery of strategic infrastructure depended on a wide range of actors but regional planning or the region did not have the levers to ensure implementation through these actors. According to a regional planner, housing growth in the South East requires significant improvements to water and energy infrastructure but these services lie in the hands of private companies, and thus largely outside the control of planning. There have also been doubts about the willingness of public sector bodies, particularly central government and its delivery agencies, to provide the necessary infrastructure. Whereas GOSE and the ODPM appear to be aware of the need to match housing growth with infrastructure provision, other departments such as DfT and the Treasury seem less prepared to contribute to the implementation of the SEP. The RPB has proposed the 'Infrastructure Concordat' but, according to a senior regional planner, there have been no firm assurances from government that it will fund the necessary infrastructure.

From a PMM perspective, the links between implementation and monitoring activities are also of significance. According to the implementation plan of the draft SEP, monitoring is to assess progress towards targets and 'It may also identify issues associated with the implementation of the South East Plan that need to be addressed' (SEERA 2006b: para 2.2). For example, monitoring is to be used to identify if there is a 'need to work with an organisation to address a specific implementation issue' or whether the implementation plan or the SEP itself needs to be revised (*ibid.*: para 2.3). In practice, however, the links between monitoring and implementation activities have been limited so far. Although the extent to which the implementation of policies is examined in the AMRs has been increasing recently, there is still limited reflection on the implications of the results of monitoring for policy and implementation (see 6.4.3). One regional planner explained that there has been little expertise available in establishing links between monitoring and implementation work, but future AMRs are to deal with this relationship more extensively (see 6.4.3). The RPB has also got more engaged in the process of assessing the conformity of LDFs and major planning applications (cf. SEERA 2006c). Up to now, however, these activities have not been integrated with monitoring, e.g. the monitoring framework does not draw on process indicators on the inclusion of RSS policies in LDFs (see 6.4.3).

6.4 The 'Monitor' element

This section examines how monitoring is understood and used in the South East and how central government requirements have affected regional practice. It also describes the arrangements for monitoring in the region and discusses their strengths and weaknesses in facilitating a PMM approach. Moreover, some of the technical and methodological issues involved in monitoring are treated. Finally, the way in which monitoring and other information are actually used in regional planning is investigated.

At the time the bulk of the research was conducted monitoring in the South East was still very much evolving. The account below shows that the practice of monitoring has faced various challenges and limitations, including the way monitoring itself has been conducted and its links to other elements of PMM. After the main fieldwork had been completed, the RPB started several initiatives to enhance monitoring activities in the region. While these recent developments are considered as far as possible below, their full effects on monitoring practice remain to be seen.

6.4.1 Understandings of and approaches to monitoring

As far as monitoring is concerned, a somewhat ambiguous situation exists. Actors in the region have differing understandings of what monitoring should be about, and there is some divergence between actors' understandings and how monitoring is used in practice. Many practitioners argue that monitoring has been getting more important. According to a local planning officer, monitoring has been the 'Cinderella of planning' for some time, but its importance both at regional and local levels is deemed to be increasing under the new planning system. The region has a long history of monitoring, for example, SERPLAN collected data on housing completions and employment land for many years. This monitoring was largely past-oriented, i.e. recording past rates of development, and, in the view of a regional planner, served to get a clearer picture about 'what is going on' in the region.

GOSE officials have stressed the government's emphasis on 'delivery', particularly as regards the provision of housing, and that monitoring should be used to show whether policies are being delivered. One GOSE officer maintained that 'There is a need to deliver [housing, economic growth, urban renaissance etc.] and AMRs are the means to help prove delivery has occurred'. This rather narrow understanding of monitoring has led to some criticism by planners in the region. The focus on housing completions may produce a misleading picture of the 'performance' of a local authority since influence on completions is much lower than on land allocations and planning permissions. There is also a risk of measuring against the 'wrong targets', e.g. by focussing too much on the overall number of completions and not the type and location of development. The housing trajectory approach and annual reporting have been criticised for tending to compare figures on a year-to-year basis. One regional planner argued that

such comparisons are not useful as trends are visible only over a longer period of time. More generally, the implementation or 'delivery' focus reflects a rather limited, control-centred understanding of monitoring.

The RPB has sent somewhat mixed messages in terms of the purpose and importance of monitoring. For some time monitoring has not been a priority for the RPB as policy development has dominated. As a result, thinking and work on monitoring has been limited and it is not fully integrated into the working practices of the RPB. One regional planner argued that monitoring in its present form (e.g. indicator and data limitations, year-on-year comparison, lack of time for data analysis; see below) is of little value. The monitoring framework developed for the SEP places much emphasis on monitoring the 'performance and/or implementation' of the SEP (SEERA 2006e: para 2.1). In the view of a senior planner, monitoring the implementation of the RSS has become more important under the new planning system. The officer stressed, however, that this has to go beyond a simple comparison of policies and targets in the RSS with development 'on the ground'. Monitoring should assess the implementation but, very importantly, also examine the reasons for observed development, e.g. in cases where policies are not being implemented. The implementation plan for the SEP also refers to such a wider understanding of monitoring (cf. SEERA 2006b: para 2.3).

Up to now the practice of monitoring in the South East has been strongly affected by government guidance and priorities. In the face of the government's concern about house building in the South East, GOSE and ODPM have taken significant interest in monitoring housing completions and put pressure on the RPB and local authorities to improve the availability and quality of data on housing completions (see 6.4.3). The AMRs prepared by the RPB, especially those in the first few years, have been geared very much towards government requirements. The preparation process is structured around the submission date for the AMR to ODPM. According to regional planners, this has caused severe problems as the February deadline does not allow sufficient time for the preparation of the AMRs, particularly for data analysis and the identification of actions (see 6.4.3). As a result, the first AMRs especially have been of limited use for the RPB's purposes. In 2005, the RPB produced a separate document which identified actions to be taken in response to the results of monitoring. This work was done after the submission of the AMR to government to allow more time for analysis and interpretation.

6.4.2 Arrangements for monitoring

The arrangements for monitoring follow the centralised working structure of the RPB. Most of the main monitoring work is undertaken by staff at the SEERA secretariat. A small group of regional analysts is responsible for coordinating the process of data collection and the preparation of the AMR. The SEERA policy officers are involved at different points in the monitoring process, albeit to varying degrees. As with policy development, each of these officers is responsible for monitoring in a specific policy field. Based on the data collated by the regional analysts, each policy officer writes a chapter for the AMR. SEERA has

prepared four AMRs since 2002 which broadly follow the structure of RPG9 (SEERA 2002, 2003a, 2005a, 2006d). The AMRs monitor both the policies in the RSS and the objectives in the Integrated Regional Framework¹¹⁰.

The data which is used for monitoring comes from a wide range of sources. Key data on housing and employment land is collected by the region's local authorities who provide the data through an annual survey conducted by the RPB with assistance from county councils. The rest of the data is drawn from numerous organisations, including central government and its executive agencies. The SEERA secretariat holds an annual meeting with local authorities to discuss matters of monitoring such as data requirements, changes to the annual surveys or the process of data collection and provision. Apart from the provision of data, regional actors have been very little involved in the monitoring activities of the RPB. GOSE's interest and involvement has been restricted largely to issues around monitoring housing development. Interest groups such as HBF or the CPRE seem to hardly know about the annual monitoring process and their interest focuses on issues related to monitoring housing development.

During the final stages of this research, the RPB started various initiatives aimed at improving its monitoring activities, including changes to the organisational arrangements. In September 2005 an advisory group on monitoring was established which is made up of officers from local authorities, GOSE, SEEDA, the Regional Observatory, the Environment Agency and English Nature. The group normally meets four times a year to advise the RPB on monitoring issues, such as the monitoring process, data sources and indicators. Simultaneously, a Monitoring Working Group has been set up as a sub-group of the Regional Planning Committee (see Figure 46). This group is to oversee the development of the Assembly's monitoring activities at a 'high level' and act as a 'sounding board' for the Regional Planning Committee so that the Committee itself does not have to deal with monitoring at length.

From a PMM perspective, the question is to what extent these organisational arrangements facilitate or work against the linking-up of monitoring activities with the development and implementation of policies. This involves the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information as well as the identification of implications of monitoring for policy and action. So far practice in the South East has been affected by what could be described as a lack of a 'space' or dedicated capacity for monitoring and for the integration of the elements of PMM. Regional planners and topic advisory groups have not spent much time or thought on developing indicators which has led to concerns about the consistency and usefulness of the current monitoring framework.

The preparation of AMRs is essentially in the hands of regional planners at the secretariat. As far as monitoring is concerned, these have often worked in isolation from each other which has caused a lack of

¹¹⁰ The Integrated Regional Framework (SEERA et al. 2004) which has been prepared by key organisations in the South East comprises a shared vision and objectives for the development and implementation of regional strategies.

discussion and consideration of cross-cutting issues. Up to now there has been little attempt at establishing links between policy fields in the AMRs. Regional planners have been occupied with other streams of work, especially with policy making and consultation activities, while monitoring was neglected (see 6.4.3 and 6.6.1). In addition, commitment to, and expertise in, monitoring varies among those involved (see 6.4.3). The involvement of the topic advisory groups in the preparation of the AMR has also been rather limited. A draft of the AMR is circulated to the groups, but there is little discussion of the document in the groups. Other actors are essentially only involved in as far as they provide raw data to the RPB, but there is not much involvement in the interpretation of data or the consideration of necessary actions. All these factors have affected the monitoring process and, in particular, the preparation of AMRs. The first AMRs especially largely presented data, while little attempt was made to identify implications for policy and action (see 6.4.3).

The creation of the monitoring advisory and Members working groups was aimed at improving monitoring and specifically at enhancing the links between monitoring and policy development and implementation. As these modified arrangements have been in place for only a limited period of time it may be too early to come to any conclusion about the effectiveness of the new organisational structure. So far, however, the impact of these new groups has been rather limited. The work of the monitoring advisory group has focused on data availability, the selection of indicators and the presentation of the AMR, but it has not been involved in data analysis or interpretation. Similarly, the input from the Monitoring Working Group of the Regional Planning Committee has been limited largely to presentational issues and the format of the AMR. It has given little consideration to the actual results of monitoring and the implications of monitoring for policy and implementation. According to one regional planner, the group is still 'in its infancy' but it is intended that the group will get more involved in discussing the AMR and the implications of monitoring in the future.

6.4.3 Technical and methodological issues around monitoring

This section looks into some technical and methodological issues around monitoring in the South East. It examines the monitoring framework which has been put in place and, in particular, the indicators which are employed. After that issues concerning the availability of data for regional monitoring are discussed. Finally, the way in which monitoring information is interpreted and linked to RSS policy, and the factors which affect such interpretation, are investigated.

Monitoring framework

The monitoring framework which underlies the existing AMRs has evolved over time and is the result of various strategy making and review exercises. RPG9 of 2001 (GOSE et al. 2001) only included a provisional monitoring framework and identified a limited number of 'potential' targets and indicators. While

some of the proposed indicators were not very useful for regional monitoring, additional indicators were still to be developed, including in key areas like housing and transport. During the partial reviews of RPG9 some of the existing indicators were revised and new indicators were added. Generally, monitoring tended to be treated with little vigour in the reviews as limited thought was given to the selection of indicators. For example, in finalising the RTS (GOSE 2004a) the Secretary of State inserted indicators although no data was available to monitor them. Some of the indicators were poorly defined so that the RPB was unclear about what should be monitored and what data could be used¹¹¹.

Work on monitoring has also had to take a backseat during the preparation of the draft SEP as policy making and consultation activities took precedence. The topic advisory groups were asked to propose indicators but the quality of their proposals varied. Some groups did not give much thought to monitoring, while others proposed a large number of indicators, some of which were of limited use or relevance. The regional planners at the secretariat did not spend much time on revising the monitoring framework either. As a result, the proposed monitoring framework (SEERA 2006e) largely adopts the existing indicators. Some new indicators have been added, e.g. on employment land and some of the national core output indicators.

The monitoring framework contains a large number of indicators which span across a wide range of issues. There is, however, considerable variation in the type of indicators and their appropriateness for RSS monitoring. A significant proportion of the indicators relate only very indirectly to regional planning¹¹² which makes it difficult to draw conclusions for RSS policy and implementation. According to one regional planner, the policies and objectives in the RSS were the starting point for the selection of indicators but this had to be balanced against the availability of data. In effect, many indicators seem to have been selected on the basis of data availability. The contextual nature of some indicators can also be explained by the fact that the AMRs are also intended to monitor the Integrated Regional Framework which has much broader objectives than the RSS. Overall, it is often uncertain how the indicators relate to RSS objectives and policies and, in the AMRs, the presentation of data has been dominant, whereas links to policy making and implementation have been limited (see below).

The monitoring advisory group has expressed concern about some of the indicators which are used. At the time of writing, the group intended to set up task groups to develop the monitoring framework and the AMRs for the SEP. In the view of a senior regional planner, more use of other types of information should be made such as process indicators on the inclusion of RSS policies in LDFs, or an analysis of the extent

¹¹¹ For instance, one of the indicators proposed in the RTS reads 'improvements in rural transport' (GOSE 2004a: para 9.104) but this does not represent an 'indicator' but rather an objective. It is not clear what 'rural transport' relates to, what counts as 'improvements', how to measure them, what data could be used etc.

¹¹² For example, indicators such as crime rates, satisfaction with local area, condition of listed buildings, condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, mortality rates, life expectancy, area of ancient woodland, birds population, Gross Value Added per capita, qualification/skills levels, tourist overnight stays, serviced accommodation occupancy, distance travelled per person per year, road accidents, average travel time.

to which investment programmes and priorities of other actors are in line with the RSS. According to one regional analyst, the RPB plans to use process indicators more widely, especially as regards the implementation of the RSS through LDFs, but this was likely to be something for the 'longer term' and was not expected to be in place 'for some time'.

Regional planners have expressed some concern about the core output indicators which the region is required to report on to ODPM (see Ch. 3). First, there have been problems of data availability. Although local authorities are required to prepare AMRs for their LDFs which cover all the regional core indicators, many authorities do not have the data which means it is not available for regional monitoring. Second, some of the core indicators use definitions which differ from those used in the region but the RPB wants to continue using its own definitions and existing time series of data. Third, the appropriateness of some indicators has been questioned. For example, one regional planner argued that car parking standards should not be set at regional level but in LDFs and LTPs because of significant variation between different parts of the region. In practice, the RPB has given little importance and consideration to the core indicators so far. Many of the indicators have not been reported on in the AMRs, and in other cases different indicator definitions are used, e.g. regional figures instead of local authority level figures.

Data availability

The availability of data or, more precisely, a lack of data is an issue of concern in the South East region. Although a lot of data is available in the region in general, problems exist in relation to data required for the purpose of RSS monitoring. As described above, there are questions about the usefulness and relevance of some of the data for monitoring the RSS. Furthermore, limitations exist as regards the completeness, accuracy, consistency and timeliness of data. The database on housing is relatively good as far as key land use data such as completions and land supply is concerned. The RPB conducts an annual survey of data from local authorities which goes back well into the time of SERPLAN. However, there are significant data gaps, e.g. several local authorities have not provided data on housing completions or densities. One regional planner stressed that, while key land use data is available, there is a lack of other information such as on housing demand or migration patterns.

SEERA also carries out an annual survey on industrial and commercial land but the returns from local authorities remain incomplete or inconsistent. Up to now the AMRs have included little data on employment land development. As regards other data, the RPB draws on a wide range of sources. Much of the data on economic development, transport, environment and other policy fields, which is currently used in the AMRs, is of a contextual nature. This makes it difficult to establish links to objectives and policies in the RSS and to consider implications for policy and implementation. Some of the data is not

available on an annual basis but becomes available only at longer intervals¹¹³. The RPB also draws heavily on data from national sources but much of this information is only available for the region as a whole which makes it difficult to draw detailed conclusions for policy and implementation. Overall, the emphasis is on the use of quantitative data, while qualitative information is hardly collected or employed. However, such information would often be required to understand developments and to draw conclusions for policy and action (see below).

Local authorities are seen as crucial data providers but the availability of data varies considerably between authorities. According to one regional analyst, some local authorities collect much data and prepare regular data or monitoring reports, whereas others are less able or committed to collecting data and to providing it to the RPB. For example, some of the local authorities in the South East are small and have only limited capacity for data collection and monitoring work. In some parts of the region county councils collect data on behalf of the districts and sub-regional monitoring working groups are in place to promote and support monitoring activities. According to one regional planner, some authorities perceive the provision of data to the RPB as a 'burden'. There is a general feeling among actors that the availability of data is likely to improve due to the requirement to prepare AMRs for LDFs. On the other hand, local planners indicated that in many planning authorities monitoring still is 'at the bottom of the pile'. The availability of data may therefore not improve as quickly or widely as the new requirements imply. In 2006, SEERA started work on developing a tool for electronic data collection in order to simplify and improve the process of data provision from the local level.

Interpretation of monitoring information

Under a PMM approach, monitoring should be about analysing and interpreting information and drawing conclusions for the development and implementation of policy. The first two AMRs produced after the publication of RPG9 (SEERA 2002, 2003a) largely presented data but included little commentary. In some cases data was compared with objectives, policies or targets in the strategy but in many other cases data was only presented and not linked to RPG, and there was no reflection on the implications for policy and action. The more recent AMRs (SEERA 2005a, 2006d) generally contain more commentary and interpretation but the amount, type and quality vary considerably. In relation to housing completions, for example, the latest AMR compares the rate of completions with housing targets in the RSS, identifies areas of under- and overprovision, reflects on the reasons for underprovision and outlines actions the RPB and others have taken and policies proposed in the draft SEP which are to address underprovision. In contrast, there are numerous cases in which data is mainly presented with little or no reflection on how it relates to the RSS. In other cases, issues of concern are highlighted in the AMRs (e.g. a lack of

¹¹³ For example, regional planners expressed concern that household projections become available only at longer intervals which means that RSS often have to be prepared on the basis of rather old figures. The 2003-based household projections were not available in time for the preparation of the draft SEP and, thus, regional planners had to use 1996-based projections which were published in 1999.

development on previously developed land) but it is not clear what could and is to be done to address these issues.

In order to address these shortcomings and to improve the links between monitoring and policy development and implementation, the RPB undertook further work after the publication of the AMR in 2005. Regional planners proposed an 'Action Programme' which outlined actions the RPB and other actors should take in response to the results of monitoring. Some of the actions sought to improve the monitoring framework and process (e.g. availability of data), while other action points related to implementation activities (e.g. preparation of housing allocations strategies). The proposed actions were more detailed and specific in the field of housing but as far as other policy fields are concerned many of the action points took the form of statements of objectives¹¹⁴.

The most recent AMR (SEERA 2006d) adopts a different structure than previous reports as at the end of each chapter a section on 'implications for policy and implementation' has been added. Again, however, the length, type and level of sophistication of these sections vary. In many cases the AMR simply refers to policies proposed in the draft SEP which was published shortly after the AMR. According to one regional planner, the RPB recognises the need for giving more time and thought to the analysis of monitoring information and reflection on necessary follow-up actions. One idea is to split future AMRs into two parts, one covering contextual data and indicators and the other specifically assessing the implementation of the SEP.

Factors affecting data interpretation

The problems and shortfalls which exist in relation to the interpretation of monitoring data can be ascribed to a series of factors. One county planner who has been involved in strategic planning and monitoring for some time explained that the collection of data is only the first step and that data interpretation 'is where the challenge comes'. It has already been described how several of the indicators which are used relate only very indirectly to regional planning. This can make it difficult to establish links between development on the ground and the RSS, and to draw conclusions for policy and action. Several interviewees emphasised that only a partial understanding exists of what has led to observed development and of the influence of different factors, including planning. The lack of knowledge about issues and their interrelationships hampers the interpretation of monitoring information and the identification of necessary policy responses. Furthermore, there is uncertainty about how long it takes until RSS policies can show effects, and at what point it can be concluded that policies or implementation activities need to be changed.

¹¹⁴ For example, one action point refers to reducing 'car-based travel' but the Action Programme does not specify how this is to be achieved, e.g. whether policy in the RSS needs to be modified, what actions local planning authorities and other actors should take etc.

The interpretation of spatial development requires quite detailed knowledge about the issues involved, including knowledge about specific localities and local circumstances. The data which is used for regional monitoring does not normally lend itself to developing such a detailed understanding. Regional planners are aware of the need to obtain detailed knowledge in order to better understand patterns of spatial development and to be able to decide on what action is required. In 2002, for example, planners from the SEERA secretariat held a meeting with policy officers from strategic planning authorities to discuss monitoring data, to get more detailed information and to find out about reasons for observed development. However, this was a 'one-off' exercise which has not been repeated since. In general, local authorities and other actors are only involved in monitoring through the provision of 'raw' data but there is very little discussion of the data or involvement in interpretation. In the view of a county planner, however, monitoring and data interpretation has to be about 'tapping into the experts and getting their views on the issues'. As a first step, the monitoring working group has proposed that in future the regional surveys on housing and commercial development should also ask for reasons in cases where RSS targets have not been met.

The timetable for the preparation of AMRs is another important factor which affects the interpretation of monitoring information. Many of those involved argued that as data only becomes available in November there is insufficient time for data analysis and discussions of monitoring results with data providers, or in advisory groups before submitting the AMRs to government¹¹⁵. Tensions also exist between the submission deadline for AMRs and the various formal 'hoops' in the monitoring process, e.g. consideration and endorsement of the AMRs by the Assembly's Regional Planning Committee. Several interviewees stressed that sufficient time is required to consider and agree on actions, in particular if politically sensitive issues emerge. But so far drafts of the AMR have become available only relatively shortly before the submission date, which has left little time for consideration by the Regional Planning Committee. In the view of several of those involved, more time is needed for analysing and interpreting monitoring information and for identifying implications for policy and action. According to one regional planner, the secretariat has been considering the preparation of an additional report a couple of months after the formal submission of each AMR which focuses on actions points for policy making and implementation.

Monitoring activities and the preparation of the three most recent AMRs have also been severely affected by the development of the draft SEP. As work on the draft SEP was more pressing or deemed more important, the RPB secretariat has been occupied with plan making activities (drafting of policies, technical work and studies, coordination of sub-regional work, consultation etc). Monitoring has had to take a backseat and not much time has been available for the production of AMRs. Since the RPB still sought to

¹¹⁵ One SEERA officer explained that even the extended submission date for RSS AMRs (from December to February) has not increased the amount of time and work spent on the preparation of AMRs. Instead of using the additional time for more analysis and interpretation, the production of the AMR has simply been put back further since the RPB has been busy with work on the draft SEP. Thus, although in theory more time has been available for preparing the AMR, it has not been used to improve the quality of the document in terms of analysis and interpretation.

submit the AMRs by the required date, the emphasis was on putting the data together, while data analysis and interpretation was neglected. Regional planners expect that this situation is likely to continue in late 2006 and early 2007 as data collection and the production of the AMR will run in parallel to the EiP into the draft SEP which is likely to tie up staff resources.

The way in which those involved understand, and are committed to, monitoring also has an impact on monitoring practice and particularly the interpretation of data. One SEERA officer stated that 'some planners [at the SEERA secretariat] like monitoring more than others'. While some regional planners spend more time and thinking on monitoring, including the development of indicators and the drafting of AMRs, others are less involved. For example, one regional planner said 'I hate monitoring' and perceived it as 'a distraction'. The planner felt that 'monitoring [is] only about data' and saw it as a task for the 'specialists' (data providers, regional analysts) in which as an officer they did not want to get involved. In the view of another SEERA officer, the level of interest and involvement of regional planners in monitoring has generally been increasing, although differences still remain.

Finally, it could also be argued that there is a lack of a 'space' or 'forum' for data analysis and interpretation. Each planner at the SEERA secretariat prepares their chapter for the AMR largely in isolation, and there is little or no discussion of the findings among regional planners or with other actors. According to one SEERA officer, members of the topic advisory groups have become more involved in preparing the AMR, albeit not so much as groups but rather on an individual basis. SEERA officers prepare drafts which are then circulated to the topic groups. However, the draft AMRs are often not considered by the groups but individual members provide comments to SEERA officers on data, analysis or actions in their particular fields of interest or expertise. The establishment of the monitoring advisory and monitoring working groups was intended to create a 'space' for discussing monitoring related issues. So far, however, these groups have provided little input into the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information.

6.4.4 Use of information in regional planning

Monitoring and the use of information are important elements of the PMM model. This section investigates how monitoring and information in general are used in the policy making and implementation process in the South East. It refers to the role actors assign to information in planning, and to the way in which information is used in regional practice.

The role of information in planning

As in the West Midlands, 'monitoring' and 'evidence based policy' are perceived to be very important in the South East, especially under the new planning system. For example, one local authority planner stated that 'We are now in a new era of 'evidence based' planning'. Many of those involved argued that planning at regional and local levels is expected to be 'evidence based' and that this has to be demonstrated in monitoring reports and 'soundness tests' at EiPs and Public Inquiries. According to a planner from a county council, monitoring data and other sorts of information have been used in strategic planning to inform the preparation and revision of plans and to provide justification for proposals. In the view of a SEERA officer, information 'is really important' in planning as it informs policy debates and puts them on a 'technical' or 'objective' basis. This is seen as being particularly important in dealing with contentious issues such as levels of housing development or the prioritisation of infrastructure investment.

Links between 'monitoring' and 'managing'

In practice, a distinction needs to be made between the use of 'one-off' studies during the preparation of a plan and the way in which monitoring is connected to the development and implementation of policies. As far as the former is concerned, the RPB undertook a considerable amount of technical work during the production of the draft SEP (see Figure 47). These studies cover a wide range of topics, including innovative work on implementation, 'futures research' and visioning activities. While this sporadic work was conducted specifically to underpin the development of the draft SEP, the role of monitoring has been limited.

As described earlier (see 6.4.1), the RPB intends to use monitoring to inform both implementation activities and the review of the implementation plan and the RSS itself. However, the above account has shown that the links between monitoring and policy making and implementation have not been strong up to now. Monitoring tends to be treated as a technical exercise which is somewhat separate from the policy process. This applies to the work of the RPB secretariat where the involvement of regional planners in, and their commitment to, monitoring varies. It also applies at a broader level, for example, in that the topic advisory groups are little involved in monitoring, or consideration of the implications of the results of monitoring for policy and action. As mentioned above, the RPB has recognised that further efforts are required to improve the links between monitoring and policy making and implementation. The impact of recent initiatives, such as the creation of the two monitoring groups, remains to be seen.

<p>Cross-Cutting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment ▪ Stabilizing the Ecological Footprint in the South East Plan ▪ South East England in North West Europe: Trends and Messages from POLYNET (Polycentricity, Connectivity, Service Networks, Policy Implications) ▪ Audit of Implementation Documents ▪ Delivery Mechanisms for Infrastructure ▪ Planning for the Future - Futures Research ▪ Symbiosis or Sibling Rivalry - The Future Links between London and the South East <p>Economy and Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research into the Spatial Requirements of Key Sectors in the South East ▪ Research into Home Based Businesses in the South East of England ▪ Use of Business Space and Changing Working Practices ▪ Impact of Offshoring on the South East Economy <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-regional Housing Markets Study ▪ Additional Advice on Affordable Housing Policy (February 2006) ▪ District Housing Distribution Process Appraisal (February 2006) ▪ Need for Intermediate Housing in the South East (July 2005) ▪ Housing Need in the South East - Update (July 2005) ▪ Urban Housing Potential Stage 2 ▪ Dwelling-Based Population and Household Projections ▪ South East Plan: Revised Advice on Preparing the District Level Housing Distribution ▪ Housing Need: Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (December 2004) ▪ Housing Needs - Good Practice Guide ▪ Urban Housing Potential - Good Practice Guide ▪ Housing Markets <p>Communications and Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit of Transport Schemes ▪ Car Parking Standards (March 2003) ▪ Strategic Transport Model STM Evidence ▪ Lennon Ticket Data (March 2006) ▪ Bus and Coach Network ▪ The Implications of the Future of Air Transport White Paper for South East England: Understanding the Evidence Base ▪ Journey to Work Research ▪ Parking Standards ▪ South East Regional Air Study ▪ Prioritisation Framework 	<p>Sustainable Natural Resources Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy ▪ Waste Management ▪ Water Supply and Demand ▪ Minerals ▪ Creating a Better Place: Planning Water Quality and Growth in the South East V 10.4 (June 2006) ▪ Water Resources – Environment Agency commentary to the Assembly on draft SE Plan housing provision (May 2006) ▪ Update of Model for future waste management capacity needs in the South East - ERM (September 2005) ▪ Energy Supply in the South East (May 2005) ▪ Water Resources Report (April 2005) ▪ Overview of Hazardous Waste in South East England (May 2005) ▪ Water Supply and Demand Report ▪ Air Quality and Noise Report (November 2004) ▪ Planning for the Future (May 2004) ▪ Waste Management Capacity Analysis ▪ Waste Strategy Appraisal <p>Countryside and Landscape Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning for Sustainable Rural Economic Development ▪ Spatial Dimensions of Rural Policy <p>Management of the Built and Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes to Higher Density Development ▪ Neighbourhood Revival: Towards More Sustainable Suburbs in the South East ▪ Property Markets: Towards Sustainable Suburbs in the South East ▪ Councillors Toolbox: Making the Best Use of Land <p>Town Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retail Scoping Study: Comparative Methodologies for Analysis of Town Centre Uses and Retail Data ▪ Town Centre Futures: Volume 1 - The Need for Retail Development in the South East ▪ Town Centre Futures: Volume 2 - Appendices ▪ Town Centre Futures: Volume 1 - Addendum <p>Social, Cultural and Health Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spatial Dimensions of Health Care Provision <p>Source: http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/publications/research_reports.html (on 17 July 2006)</p>
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Source: compiled by the author

Figure 47: Technical work for the preparation of the draft South East Plan

Different interpretations and contested evidence

The practice of regional planning in the South East provides interesting insights into how information is used, produced, challenged and reproduced in policy debates. Actors recognise the importance of information and produce and use it to support their arguments, and to challenge the position of competing interests. This can be well illustrated by debates about the scale of housing growth during the preparation of the draft SEP. There have been sharply opposing views among actors on the level of housing growth

that should be planned for, and on what basis housing numbers should be established¹¹⁶. Roughly speaking, there have been two main 'camps' in the debate.

On one side there have been those in favour of lower levels of growth which included most of the county councils and some districts (mainly those held by the Conservative party and/or in areas which have experienced significant growth in the past) as well as some environmental groups. This 'camp' argued that housing numbers in the SEP should reflect historical rates of development in the region and take into account the pressures created by considerable past rates of development (e.g. environmental problems and infrastructure constraints). Those advocating this view maintained that the SEP should plan for a level of development that could 'realistically' be achieved and referred to the average rate of housing completions over a five year period (i.e. 25,000 dwellings per year).

The other 'camp' comprises those who support higher levels of housing growth in the region, including some local councils (e.g. Oxford, Portsmouth and Southampton), the business community and organisations from the social sector, as well as central government. According to this side, housing numbers in the SEP should meet projected demand, including the needs of the economy (e.g. for 'key worker housing') and local needs (e.g. affordable housing to tackle homelessness). Proponents of this view argued that housing completions had been higher in recent years (28,000 dwellings per year) and referred to technical work undertaken by the SEERA secretariat which suggested a need for even higher levels of growth (32,000 to 36,000 dwellings per year¹¹⁷).

In the debates on the level of growth the various actors referred to the need to make 'rational' decisions which are based on 'evidence' and presented 'evidence' to support their own rationality claims and to challenge the arguments of the opposite side (see Figure 48).

¹¹⁶ A very similar situation existed during preparation of RPG9 in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the level of housing that should be adopted in the strategy caused contentious debates (cf. Counsell and Haughton 2003b, Murdoch 2000, Williams 2002). Broadly speaking, those in favour of higher levels of development argued that housing provision should meet projected demand, while those opposed to higher growth levels questioned the view that projections should be met and raised doubts about the accuracy of the projections themselves and the capacity to accommodate higher levels of housing growth. For example, SERPLAN undertook various studies to challenge the high levels of housing development implied by government household projections.

¹¹⁷ According to a senior planner at SEERA, more recent ODPM household projections suggested even higher housing numbers of 37,000 dwellings per year, while the early proposals of the first Barker review suggested housing numbers of 42,000 to 48,000 or more dwellings per year.

Competing 'evidences' and claims to 'rationality'

At its plenary session on 29 November 2004 the Regional Assembly debated and voted on the first draft of the SEP. The debate was dominated by issues around the provision of housing and, in particular, the levels of housing growth that should be planned for. The initial draft prepared by the SEERA secretariat (SEERA 2004a) suggested growth levels between 29,500 and 36,000 dwellings per year. However, an amendment was proposed (and finally adopted) which sought to reduce the scale of growth to levels between 25,500 and 32,000 dwellings per year.

One Assembly Member who represented the economic partners argued that the SEP should plan for higher growth levels than proposed in the amendment to ensure the SEP was in line with intended rates of economic growth and thus to achieve a 'balanced' SEP. Another Member who was in favour of higher levels of growth urged the Assembly, especially those supporting the proposed amendment, to consider the 'real needs of the region'. A representative of the National Housing Association maintained that the technical work of the secretariat was the 'best information available at this time' and thus the Assembly should stick to 'evidence based numbers'. Similarly, a representative of the Confederation of British Industry urged the Assembly to follow 'forecasts of need' and rejected calls for lower numbers as being 'neither evidence based nor realistic'. He continued by saying that the technical work was the 'best available evidence base' and therefore should be 'the' evidence base for the SEP. On the other side of the spectrum one of those Assembly Members supporting the proposed amendment suggested the Assembly should plan for levels of housing growth that were 'achievable' (i.e. the lower housing numbers proposed in the amendment). This was echoed by another supporter of the amendment who argued that the proposed lower scale of housing growth was 'more realistic'.

Source: author's observations

Figure 48: Competing 'evidences' and claims to 'rationality'

The debate about the scale of housing growth in the SEP also demonstrates how actors actively 'produce' evidence in an attempt to support their own arguments and to undermine opposing views. Those in favour of lower growth levels claimed that additional housing development would overburden the region's infrastructure, including transport, water and waste system, schools and hospitals. To this end, the county councils in the region, which are generally opposed to higher levels of housing growth, commissioned a study to estimate the cost of the infrastructure thought to be required to support housing growth in the South East (Roger Tym & Partners 2005). The report concluded that additional growth would only be possible if matched by a substantial increase in government spending on infrastructure.

At the other end of the debate, those in favour of higher levels of growth also produced 'evidence' to underpin their arguments. Central government has been very concerned about the decision of the Regional Assembly to adopt lower levels of growth¹¹⁸. In an attempt to counter the argument of a lack of infrastructure funding GOSE produced a report which showed the allegedly high level of government investment in the South East (GOSE 2005b). Furthermore, central government (and others) argued that

¹¹⁸ As described above, at its Plenary in November 2004 the Assembly decided to consult on lower levels of housing growth than suggested by the SEERA secretariat, i.e. 25,500 to 32,000 instead of 32,000 to 36,000 dwelling per year (cf. SEERA 2005b). The final version of the draft SEP (SEERA 2006a) sets a rate of 28,900 dwellings per year which is much below the scale of development central government deems necessary (e.g. GOSE 2005a, see also 5.6.2).

the level of growth proposed by the Assembly was not based on 'evidence' (e.g. GOSE 2005a). In order to bolster its position ODPM and GOSE commissioned a study into 'Augmenting the Evidence Base for the Examination in Public of the South East Plan' (Roger Tym & Partners 2006). This study concluded that levels of housing growth significantly higher than proposed in the draft SEP could be accommodated in the region. Not surprisingly, the Chair of the Regional Assembly, himself a proponent of lower levels of growth, dismissed the findings of the research. He was quoted as saying 'These figures are pure fantasy. There is no clear evidence base behind the figures...' and, 'This is back of the envelope stuff compared to the robust evidence base developed by the assembly' (Planning Resource 2006e)¹¹⁹.

While the above examples show how 'evidence' has been produced and used selectively, the debates and decisions on the scale of housing growth in the South East also demonstrate the way in which information competes with other factors in the policy making process. What is often regarded as a 'technical' process has been determined to a significant degree by political considerations and power struggles. One planner at SEERA argued that when politicians and politics get involved in debates 'anything can happen'. According to officers at the SEERA secretariat, a significant amount of technical work had been conducted which underpinned the housing requirement proposed by the officers (i.e. 32,000-36,000 dwellings a year). One senior planner at SEERA maintained that, 'That's what the numbers tell us'. In the view of many of those involved, the decision of the majority of the Regional Assembly to adopt lower levels of housing growth has been based on political and other considerations. Various reasons and motives have been cited for the Assembly's decision. For the county councils and Conservative-led districts the housing debate provided an opportunity to challenge the Labour party and a Labour central government in the run-up to the General Election and county council elections which were held in May 2005. Amid significant local opposition to further housing growth in the South East, the Conservatives employed this issue in their election campaign¹²⁰. Then again, there are those who explain the Assembly's decision by a genuine concern about the scale of growth the region has experienced over past decades and the impact of further growth on the environment and infrastructure.

¹¹⁹ The production of 'evidence' can also be illustrated by another example. During the preparation of the draft SEP different surveys were conducted to gauge 'public opinion' on the draft SEP and issues related to regional development. The RPB commissioned a series of opinion polls which used a 'representative' sample (MORI 2004a, 2004b, 2005). The county councils commissioned a telephone survey (ICM 2005) which asked different questions and thus showed different results as regards the acceptance of further housing growth in the region. Moreover, the RPB wanted to gauge public opinion on the initial draft SEP. Those on the Assembly opposing higher levels of growth, especially the county councils, argued that a household questionnaire should be distributed in the region. Those in favour of higher growth levels, including ODPM and GOSE, opposed the idea of a household questionnaire as it was expected to attract a higher response rate from those opposed to growth. This side of the argument wanted a 'more representative' survey to be conducted. In the end, the Assembly decided to undertake both a household questionnaire survey and an opinion poll with a selected sample.

¹²⁰ Again, a very similar situation existed during the preparation of RPG9 in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The low housing numbers proposed by SERPLAN were not seen as a result of a 'technical' process but rather the product of party-political power games between Conservative-led local authorities and a Labour central government, as well as the resistance of many authorities to higher levels of housing growth (Williams 2002).

6.5 The 'Manage' element

This section investigates how the 'manage' element of PMM is applied in the South East. As explained earlier (see 6.1.1), this focuses on 'managing' understood as the 'review' of the RSS. First, the factors which 'trigger' the revision of the RSS are examined. Second, the way in which the revision is organised is explored and the strengths and weaknesses of the adopted approach of 'multiple' partial reviews are analysed. Third, the section examines how this multiple review approach affects the coordination between the different parts of the RSS. Finally, procedural aspects of the revision process are investigated.

6.5.1 Triggers of RSS revisions

In its report into draft RPG9 the Public Examination Panel recommended many changes to the document. The Panel did not say much about the review of the guidance though. Its main remarks related to triggers of future RPG reviews, especially the role of targets and monitoring (see 6.3.1), and review cycles. The Panel recommended that 'there should be no fixed review cycles for RPG' (Crow and Whittaker 1999: para 13.27). As the Panel most likely expected that the recommended changes to the document would be made during the finalisation of RPG9, it did not propose any issues for future reviews (unlike the Public Examination Panel in the West Midlands, see 5.5.1). However, in the final version of RPG9 (GOSE et al. 2001) the Secretary of State specified various elements of the document which the government expected to be reviewed (see Figure 49). In devising its programme for future RPG reviews the RPB very closely followed the list of issues identified in final RPG9, and did not include any other issues in the review. Subsequently, the RPB has carried out a sizeable number of partial revisions, some of which started straight after the publication of RPG9 (see Figure 33). In 2003, the RPB also embarked on a full review of RPG9, i.e. the production of the SEP.

Central government has been exercising a significant level of control and influence over the review process. In terms of *whether* a revision of RPG9 was required, government argued that 'this guidance, in its present form, does not fully accord with the advice in PPG11 on the scope and format of RPG. ... In order to develop regional policy in a number of aspects, further work will be required as part of the updating and review process' (GOSE et al. 2001: para 1.7). Government also emphasised *when* such work ought to be undertaken and made clear that 'The Secretary of State expects *early* reviews of this RPG' (ibid., italics added). Moreover, the Secretary of State stated *what* issues government expected to undergo such 'early review' and defined a list of subjects in final RPG9 (see Figure 49).

The issues identified by the Secretary of State fall into various categories. First, further work was deemed necessary to make the strategy more 'regionally specific', e.g. in respect of transport and renewable energy policy. Second, through the review the results of studies such as numerous MMSs carried out by DfT were to be taken on board. Third, the RPG was to be adjusted to developments in government policy,

e.g. to new guidance on minerals and waste. Fourth, the review was to ensure alignment with other regional strategies, including the regional tourism and cultural strategies. And, finally, further work was requested on what could be described as 'outstanding' or 'unresolved' issues, in particular housing provision and related areas for potential housing growth identified in RPG9.

Final RPG9 (GOSE et al. 2001)	SEERA RSS revision programme
<p>'The Secretary of State expects early reviews of this RPG particularly in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ transport, particularly the success of the parking strategy, the need to devise a more regionally specific ports policy and to update the Regional Transport Strategy following the completion of current transport studies; ▪ minerals, particularly in view of the proposed update of MPG6 (<i>Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England</i>); ▪ waste, in view of the advice in PPG10 (<i>Planning and Waste Management</i>) on the development of regional strategies for waste management and the need to set regional targets; ▪ tourism provision, including sport and recreation, in the light of regional tourism and cultural strategies; ▪ retail strategy in accordance with guidance in PPG11 (<i>Regional Planning</i>); ▪ renewable energy, to deliver regional renewable energy targets once these have been defined; ▪ monitoring system, as result of the completion of the Sustainable Development Frameworks, relevant national advice and consideration of the operational arrangements' (GOSE et al. 2001: para 13.11). <p>'Other aspects of the strategy may require review subject to the outcome of monitoring' (GOSE et al. 2001: para 13.12).</p> <p>In relation to housing, central government made it clear that 'It will be particularly important to monitor the adequacy of the housing provision set out in chapter 8 as part of the plan, monitor, manage approach' (GOSE et al. 2001: para 13.12).</p> <p>Government explicitly expected an 'early' review of 'Housing provision and distribution in the light of monitoring and the results of urban capacity studies and potential growth area studies' (GOSE et al. 2001: para 1.7).</p>	<p>Partial revisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Transport Strategy (completed in July 2004) ▪ Ashford Growth Area (completed in July 2004) ▪ Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (completed in November 2004) ▪ Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation (completed in November 2004) ▪ Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (completed in March 2005) ▪ Waste (completed in June 2006) ▪ Minerals (completed in June 2006) ▪ Gypsies and travellers (Draft Project Brief scheduled for September 2006) <p>Full revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South East Plan (started in 2003)

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 49: Issues for the revision of the RSS

Against this background, the RPB had little discretion about whether RPG was to be reviewed nor about the topics of such a revision. In drawing up its work programme, the RPB did have some scope to decide which of the issues identified by government should be reviewed and at what point. The decision was made to treat the topics in a series of partial revisions. Officers at SEERA, in discussion with GOSE, selected the issues according to the progress of technical work, and the urgency of the work. However, the RPB had no discretion as far as the growth areas were concerned. According to a GOSE official,

central government wanted to see 'early results' and thus work on the growth areas started shortly after the publication of final RPG9.

Planners at SEERA generally agreed that a review of RPG9 was necessary. Some issues had not been dealt with fully during the last review and, as a result, RPG9 had some gaps or deficits when it was published. For example, the RTS did not provide sufficient guidance for the preparation of LTPs and, similarly, the waste policies needed to be improved in order to inform the production of local waste plans. According to regional planners, some of the gaps in RPG9 were due to a lack of time to carry out work during the preparation process, e.g. in relation to retail policies. As far as renewable energy was concerned, a study became available too late in the process to be included. In addition, new information became available which raised issues that needed to be addressed in RPG/the RSS, e.g. a looming 'waste crisis' which required further work on waste treatment facilities.

In the view of planners at SEERA, some of the reviews were used to take on board or to 'insert' policy developments at national level. This included the growing importance attached nationally to renewable energy, new government guidance on minerals, and developments in national transport policy. Probably the strongest steer on both process and substance was provided in relation to the growth areas. According to regional planners, central government made its intentions very clear (especially with the publication of the *Sustainable Communities Plan*) and there was very little room for manoeuvre for the RPB. Government questioned the adequacy of the housing provision made in RPG9 for the period after 2006, and sought to provide additional housing in the growth areas. The government's concern about housing supply in the South East was also a key factor in triggering the full review of RPG9, i.e. the preparation of the SEP. GOSE officials and regional planners at SEERA argued that a full review was also required to adjust the RSS to the new boundaries of the South East region which changed after RPG9 had been finalised (see 6.1).

In 2006, the influence of central government on the decision to review the RSS became evident once again. During the preparation of the draft SEP issues around the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers shot up the government's agenda. The RPB was therefore requested to include relevant policies in the draft SEP. However, government policy on this subject was still evolving at that time and a government Circular (ODPM 2006) became available too late to be considered in the draft SEP. Consequently, the government has required the RPB to start a partial review of the SEP on this subject immediately following the submission of the draft SEP. Finally, as far as monitoring is concerned, this has not played a role in triggering the review of RPG9 (arguably apart from housing completions figures) and has not been referred to as a factor in shaping the development of policy in the revisions.

6.5.2 Approaches to RSS review: Full, partial and multiple partial revisions

The issues for review identified by the Secretary of State in final RPG9 affected much of the strategy but the SEERA secretariat did not want to undertake a full review straight away. The RPB function had just been transferred to SEERA and the secretariat was still in the process of setting itself up. Therefore the decision was made to start with partial reviews to give the new team the opportunity to gain experience with the RPG process. The partial review approach was also adopted since less contentious matters could be treated first and the frictions caused by the housing debate during the RPG9 process could be allowed to ease. The review of housing provision, which would also have required a full revision, was therefore put back. Against this background, the RPB decided to treat the issues identified by central government 'step-by-step' in a series of seven partial reviews. The revisions were organised in a staggered process, i.e. the partial reviews started at different points in time but ran to some extent in parallel (see Figure 33). Most have been revisions of particular topic chapters of RPG9 (e.g. transport, minerals), but the review programme also included two area-based revisions, i.e. one for the Ashford Growth Area, and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-regional Strategy which spans across parts of the South East, East of England and East Midlands regions¹²¹.

The South East was the first region to conduct partial reviews under the PPG11-style planning system and thus it has been very much a learning process for the RPB, GOSE and others involved. Planners at SEERA believe that the multiple partial review approach generally worked well and that undertaking partial revisions has several advantages. The approach can increase responsiveness as, under a system of partial reviews, topics can be treated when work on them is needed and not just in a fixed review cycle. The RPB could also progress with issues which were felt to be most pressing. For example, an early review of the RTS was required so that it would be in place for the preparation of the next round of LTPs. Similarly, the approach also suited government as work on the growth areas was progressed quickly. A senior planner argued that partial reviews also speed-up the planning process as they can be carried out within a shorter period of time than a full review. However, it can also be argued that in practice the partial reviews still took between three to four years from the start of work to the publication of the final versions, significantly longer than anticipated in PPS11 (see also 6.6.1 and 6.6.3).

As described above, the partial review approach provided the opportunity to start with less controversial issues and leave contentious matters such as housing numbers for a later date. This meant that work on certain topics could go ahead and was not held up by more contentious issues. Several interviewees highlighted the learning effects of the partial review approach. First, the partial reviews enabled the SEERA secretariat as a whole and new members of staff to learn the RPG process and to get prepared

¹²¹ The partial reviews comprised the RTS (SEERA 2003d, GOSE 2004a), Ashford Growth Area (SEERA 2003e, GOSE 2004b), energy efficiency, renewable energy, tourism and related sport and recreation (SEERA 2003b, 2003c, GOSE 2004c), Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (East of England Regional Assembly et al. 2003, GOSE et al. 2005), and Minerals and Waste (SEERA 2004b, 2004c, GOSE 2006a).

for the next full review. Second, the staggered process meant that at any point in time RPG related work was underway which gave new staff at SEERA and GOSE, as well as other actors, the possibility to get involved and to learn about the process straight away without having to wait for the next review cycle.

A number of interviewees explained that topics can be treated in more detail in a partial review than under a full review. For example, a significant amount of time was devoted to issues such as transport, waste and tourism in terms of both technical work and time for discussion at Public Examinations. Regional planners also saw the partial revisions as 'building blocks' for a later full review of the RSS¹²². The partial reviews have been taken as 'given' and inserted largely unchanged into the draft SEP which meant that no major work was required in those areas during the full review. According to planners at SEERA, this freed capacity during the full review, as work could concentrate on issues which had not been covered in the partial reviews, especially housing numbers and sub-regional strategies. It was expected that this would also enable the full review to be carried out more quickly (although in practice the preparation of the draft SEP still took much longer than planned, see 6.5.4).

While some issues lend themselves to partial reviews, some topics have to be treated as part of a full review. Planners at SEERA and GOSE stated that issues such as housing provision affect, and are intertwined with, a wide range of other topics. These interconnections and interdependences are difficult to deal with in partial reviews and therefore such topics require a full review of the RSS. The partial review approach has also raised questions in relation to the coordination and management of the process. Although work on the various revisions started at different points in time, some of the reviews were 'bundled' at the draft RPG stage and went through the rest of the process together (i.e. consultation on draft revision, EiP, Proposed Changes and final RPG)¹²³. This 'bundling' was not done in order to better coordinate the reviews in substantive terms but rather to keep the number of consultation events and EiPs to a minimum, and thus to simplify administration of the process. However, a GOSE official argued that too many partial reviews were still running in parallel which placed significant pressures on those involved, e.g. four EiPs were held within nine months. In the view of the GOSE officer, it would have been better to conduct the partial reviews in a more staggered way.

The multiple review approach has made the regional planning process quite complex, as several partial reviews, one interregional partial review and a full review have been running in parallel. According to a senior regional planner, the management of the process was not an issue of concern and the RPB secretariat managed to keep an overview of, and deal with, the different streams of work. However, others expressed concern about the complexity of the multiple review approach. As mentioned above, several

¹²² For example, a number of 'transport hubs' were defined in the partial review of the RTS which have been used in developing options for the spatial strategy of the draft SEP (e.g. one of the options was to concentrate growth in identified hubs). However, there are questions about the extent to which elements of the partial reviews such as the transport hubs can be treated 'as given' in the subsequent full review (see 6.5.3).

¹²³ Energy efficiency and renewable energy were bundled with tourism and related sport and recreation (SEERA 2003b, 2003c, GOSE 2004c), as were minerals and waste (SEERA 2004b, 2004c, GOSE 2006a).

EiPs were held within a short period of time which, in the view of a GOSE officer, caused problems. The Public Examination Panel, for example, had to conduct one EiP, while at same time producing a report on the previous examination and preparing for the next EiP. This created a large workload, as well as difficulties in keeping an overview of the process and the interrelationships between the various partial reviews. This presented a significant challenge to other actors too, especially to those who have not been involved on a day-to-day basis.

6.5.3 Substantive issues of RSS review

The approach of multiple partial reviews adopted in the South East has raised several issues in relation to the coordination of policy between the various partial revisions, as well as between the partial and the full reviews of the RSS.

Coordination between partial reviews

The coordination of policy between the various partial reviews of RPG9 was not considered a major issue of concern by those involved. Regional planners maintained that it is generally possible to review certain topics separately and that this applied to the issues which had been identified for partial review. According to a senior regional planner, the partial revisions were seen as being largely 'self-contained', i.e. that the issues could be reviewed individually. It was argued that policies in the RSS on topics such as renewable energy, tourism or waste were rather general in nature in that they only outline the broad policy direction. Therefore RSS policies on such topics would not interrelate so much and could be treated to some extent separately from another. Moreover, many of the partial reviews were regarded as essentially filling gaps in existing RPG9 and adding more detail. Consequently, regional planners argued that the existing strategy provided a common framework which helped to align the partial reviews.

On the other hand, there appear to be limitations to the partial review approach too. According to one planner at SEERA, for example, there has been some uncertainty about the relationship between the partial reviews on tourism and the RTS. Those responsible for tourism wanted the RTS to consider the transport side of tourism, whilst transport planners held the view that the tourism review should instead draw lessons from the revision of the RTS. More fundamentally, there seem to be differences between topics as regards their suitability for partial review. In the view of regional planners, some issues such as tourism and renewable energy could be treated well in partial revisions, while other topics need to be part of a full(er) review. As mentioned above, the SEERA secretariat has left the review of the provision of housing to the full revision of RPG9. Regional planners argued that housing is intertwined with and affects many other policy fields and thus needs to be treated in combination with other topics. In addition, one regional planner maintained that, while some issues can be treated in partial revisions, there is a need for periodic full reviews to ensure that connections between topics are maintained or (re-)established.

The 'cross-cutting' advisory group which was established during the preparation of the SEP to coordinate the different streams of work did not exist for the partial reviews. There was also little communication between the topic advisory groups, and it was mainly restricted to the exchange of papers. The SEERA secretariat organised joint meetings of the groups but these meetings did not happen very often and were not deemed particularly successful. Therefore it was effectively left to the secretariat to make connections between the partial reviews. Different officers at the secretariat were responsible for and involved in the different partial reviews. As far as waste, minerals and renewable energy are concerned, the same officer led each of the partial reviews and tried to make connections between the topics. In the view of regional planners, arranging the partial reviews around policy fields has had the advantage of matching the areas of expertise of SEERA officers. On the other hand, it could be argued that the adopted model is prone to a 'silo' approach under which connections between topics get neglected.

There is some indication that the establishment of links has not been pursued as a priority during the preparation of the draft partial revisions. While attempts at making connections were made in some cases (see above example of waste, minerals and renewable energy), on other occasions this was left to the EiP stage. Regional planners felt that the EiPs have provided useful mechanisms to establish links between the partial review and to coordinate different topics. The key members of the Panel were the same for all EiPs which, in the view of several interviewees, put the Panel in a position to keep an overview, and to make connections between the reviews. However, a GOSE officer argued that as various streams of work ran in parallel in a staggered way it was difficult for the Panel and other actors to keep such an overview.

Coordination between partial and full reviews

As the partial reviews were underway, most at advanced stages, the RPB started a full revision of RPG9, i.e. the preparation of the draft SEP. According to regional planners, the partial reviews have been used as 'building blocks' for the full revision in that policies developed in partial reviews have been 'slotted in' to the draft SEP. SEERA officers maintained that as the partial reviews had just gone through the formal review process the policies were up-to-date and could therefore remain largely unchanged¹²⁴. For the preparation of the draft SEP little work was deemed necessary, for example, on transport policies as regional planners have brought forward policies from the RTS which had just been partially reviewed. Rather than spending more time on policy work the RPB could therefore concentrate on adding detail to the existing transport strategy, e.g. through additional work on priorities for transport infrastructure investment.

While regional planners felt that the partial reviews could remain largely unchanged or only required updating, there are cases in which a simple 'slotting in' may not be feasible or appropriate. The potential problems of integration between partial and full reviews can be illustrated by the relationship between the

¹²⁴ For example, as far as energy efficiency and renewable energy are concerned regional planners argued that the policies in the partial review had been adopted only very recently. Therefore the policies have been 'rolled forward' into the draft SEP (SEERA 2006d: 92).

existing RTS and the overarching spatial strategy which has been developed for the draft SEP. The RTS (GOSE 2004a) identified a number of 'Regional Hubs' which were to act as foci for development. During the preparation of draft SEP different options for the distribution of housing growth were considered. One of the options aimed at focussing development on the 'Regional Hubs' identified in the RTS. In this case, it could be argued, the RTS and overall spatial strategy would fit well and the relevant RTS policies could be simply 'rolled forward' into the draft SEP. However, the RPB also considered different patterns for the spatial distribution of growth which would not have fitted easily with the hubs of the RTS. Here changes to the RTS would have been required to align the transport policies with the overarching strategy. Although neither of the initial options has been adopted in the final draft SEP (SEERA 2006a) and the hub concept has been kept (albeit in a modified way), this example shows the potential difficulties involved in integrating different RSS revisions, treating issues separately and keeping policies 'fixed'¹²⁵.

6.5.4 Procedural dimension of revising an RSS

Besides substantive issues, the procedural dimension of the various RSS reviews in the South East has been examined. According to regional planners, the partial review model has enabled the RPB secretariat to control and manage the workload involved in revising the RSS. The amount of work arising from the numerous issues earmarked for review in RPG9 of 2001 would have put considerable pressures on the secretariat had all issues been treated together in a single full revision. By undertaking partial reviews the RPB could work on selected topics and thus seek to adjust the workload to the level of resources available¹²⁶. Work on the various topics has been spread over time (as the partial reviews started at different points in time) and also between different officers at SEERA (as different officers were involved in different topics).

However, while the staggered approach has enabled the secretariat to a certain degree to manage the workload (especially as regards technical and policy work), the multiple reviews have also led to problems or at least challenges in terms of the amount of work and complexity involved. Under the multiple partial review approach many activities have been running in parallel, including different streams of technical work, numerous consultation exercises and EiPs. This has placed significant demands on those involved, not only as far as keeping an overview of the process is concerned but also in relation to the ability of actors to get involved in the various strategy making activities (see 6.6.2). For example, officers at SEERA

¹²⁵ Although it was initially thought that the RTS could largely remain unchanged in the SEP, in reality, policies of the RTS were eventually reviewed and changed during the preparation of the draft SEP 'to ensure the RTS supports, and contributes to, the overall spatial strategy set out in the draft South East Plan' (SEERA 2006d: 77).

¹²⁶ As described earlier, SEERA had just taken over the RPB function and the secretariat was still in the process of setting up working arrangements and recruiting additional staff. The capacity at the secretariat was therefore limited at the beginning (in terms of both the number of staff and the experience of some of its staff with the RPG process) and the partial review model was adopted to match the resource constraints and to give the officers, the secretariat as a whole and other actors the opportunity to gain experience. Moreover, the partial review approach meant that topics which required a significant amount of technical work and consensus-building activities such as housing numbers and retail could be left for a later date.

stated that the amount of work arising from the partial revisions has been very stretching at some points for the secretariat. In the view of one regional planner, the multiple review approach has not necessarily reduced the overall workload as individual topics have been treated in greater detail than they would have been in a full review.

As far as the organisational arrangements of the RPB are concerned (see 6.2.2), the SEERA secretariat initially thought the advisory groups could do much of the technical and policy work involved in preparing the partial reviews and the draft SEP. In this way the workload could have been shared between a larger number of actors which would also have reduced the pressure on the secretariat. In practice, the contributions of the advisory groups have varied substantially. Some of the groups have been involved quite actively in technical work and drafting policies. On the whole, however, the groups have tended to act more as 'sounding boards', commenting on drafts prepared by SEERA officers, while much of the actual work had to be conducted by the secretariat.

The arrangements for preparing sub-regional strategies for the draft SEP have been novelties in the organisational arrangements for regional planning in the region. Work on these elements has been led by the sub-regions, especially the strategic authorities, which have been working to briefs prepared by the SEERA secretariat. On the one hand, the RPB relied heavily on contributions from the strategic authorities, not only because of their statutory role, but also as the secretariat would itself have been unable to produce sub-regional strategies within the tight timescale. On the other hand, the contributions from the sub-regions and strategic authorities have differed considerably, partly due to the opposition of some local authorities, in particular county councils, to their role under the new planning system and/or the levels of housing development proposed by the secretariat. As a result, the sub-regional strategies in the initial draft SEP (SEERA 2004a) varied significantly in terms of their approach, format and content.

The timetables involved in the RSS revisions have been a matter of considerable concern in the region. The strategy for the Milton Keynes & South Midlands growth area, for example, had to be produced under a very tight timetable. There was strong pressure from central government to carry out the review quickly, using streamlined working arrangements. According to a regional planner, the preparation of the strategy therefore largely represented an expert process which was dominated by officers from key organisations, while the involvement of Assembly Members, the affected local authorities and other actors was rather limited. Time constraints have also been a major issue during the preparation of the draft SEP. In the project brief of September 2003 the submission of the draft SEP was planned for July 2005 but this timetable (which already went beyond that envisaged in PPG11/PPS11) caused considerable problems. The development of options, in particular the scale and distribution of housing growth, turned out to be very contentious and thus took longer than regional planners initially expected. The delay in agreeing on spatial options meant that other streams of work had to be postponed or progressed in the absence of agreed spatial options.

As the process progressed it turned out to be unfeasible to keep the initial timetable. More time was needed especially to develop the sub-regional strategies and to establish district level housing numbers, including technical work but also consultation and consensus building efforts. As a result, the submission of the draft SEP was postponed several times and eventually happened in March 2006, some eight months later than initially planned (which meant that the preparation of the draft SEP took around twice as long as expected in PPS11). Overall the timetable constraints in combination with the large amount of work and formal requirements involved (see also 6.6.1) placed a considerable burden on the SEERA secretariat and other actors. This has put significant pressure on individual officers, 'stakeholders' and the working structure of the RPB. It also meant that there has been a lack of time for preparing the draft SEP. For example, one GOSE official stated that the initial sub-regional strategies had to be 'rushed'.

6.6 Overarching implications of PMM

Whereas the previous three sections looked at the component parts of PMM, this section examines overarching and cross-cutting implications of the practice of PMM in the South East. It deals with technical and managerial concerns, the organisational and governance dimension of PMM, as well as substantive outcomes of this approach to regional planning.

6.6.1 Technical and managerial issues

In addition to the various technical and managerial issues which have already been treated in the preceding sections, some overarching implications of the PMM model are discussed at this stage. The South East provides important insights into one of the key elements of the PMM model of PPS11, namely the emphasis on undertaking partial RSS revisions in order to speed up the regional planning system and make it more responsive. While regional planners principally support the concept of partial reviews, the model introduced by central government is not deemed feasible. In the view of a senior regional planner at SEERA, the PMM model as currently enshrined in government policy and guidance is geared towards a system of full RSS reviews. The officer expressed concern about the 'amount of procedure' involved in the PPS11 model and maintained that the numerous formal requirements create an 'onerous' process.

This includes the various stages which have to be completed (project brief, options, draft revision, consultation, EIP, Proposed Changes, final revision) and other procedural and substantive requirements such as implementation planning, SA/SEA and 'community involvement'. According to one regional planner, the new requirement to seek advice from strategic authorities has had a 'huge bearing on how [the RPB] work[s] and what is possible to deliver in the required timetable'. Officers at SEERA argued that the government has underestimated the implications of this requirement which, in their view, has made the process even more complex, labour- and time-intensive. Against this background, regional planners

maintained that the current system is too inflexible as it does not allow the omission of elements of the formal process in a partial review despite some of these requirements not being necessary from a practical angle. In the view of regional planners, the current system is not suitable for a partial review approach due to the workload and complexity arising from the formal requirements, in particular if multiple partial revisions are carried out at the same time.

It has already been mentioned that the time dimension of the present regional planning system has been a major concern in the South East, especially during the preparation of the draft SEP. Central government has required the RPB to work to a timetable which has been described by some regional planners and Assembly Members as 'incredibly tight', 'impossible' or 'completely impractical'¹²⁷. In particular, conflicting demands arise from the tight timetable on the one hand, and the numerous activities and formal requirements involved in the regional planning process on the other hand. The time constraints have had implications in both procedural and substantive terms. In several cases there has not been sufficient time to carry out or complete necessary technical work (e.g. on retail and urban capacity) and to consider key information (e.g. Census and journey to work data) or the results of SAs/SEAs. These time constraints have had negative effects on the quality of the RSS (see 6.6.3).

From a procedural perspective, the tight timescales have placed actors under considerable strain. Officers at SEERA, Assembly Members and others have frequently described the process as being 'rushed' and very 'stretching' for those involved. The SEERA secretariat aimed to prepare the draft SEP in an open and inclusive way and has carried out a large programme of involvement and consultation. This has not gone easily with the tight timetable required by government in that it caused a considerable workload for the secretariat and other actors, while in other cases insufficient time has been available to resolve differences or build consensus. Moreover, the example of the Milton Keynes & South Midlands strategy shows that the tight timetable and streamlined arrangements for this partial review led to a rather exclusive process and a lack of involvement of some actors (see 6.5.4 and 6.6.2).

The PMM approach also has implications in terms of the workload and resources required in regional planning. Overall, the amount of work has increased substantially due to the multitude of tasks involved in preparing, implementing, monitoring and revising the RSS. As demonstrated above, a large number of formal requirements have to be met during the review of the strategy. These cause a considerable workload not only for the RPB but also for other actors. For example, a GOSE official explained that the multiple partial review approach has led to an overall increase in the amount of work for GOSE. The partial

¹²⁷ On a similar note, central government expected that it should be possible to prepare the draft partial revision of the SEP on gypsy and traveller sites in one year. In the view of one regional planner, this timescale is 'completely unrealistic'. The officer argued that given the numerous formal requirements that have to be fulfilled the preparation of the draft partial review is likely to take about two years from the draft project plan to formal submission of the draft revision to government. Even though the partial revision will probably contain only a very limited number of policies, it is expected to require much more time than government anticipated. The RPB has asked the strategic authorities for initial advice but these authorities want to get the districts involved and carry out consultation in the sub-regions. Due to the contentious nature of the issues involved and a lack of experience with treating them in regional planning, the secretariat expected that more time will be needed to allow sufficient consultation, debate and consensus building.

review model has helped to reduce 'peaks' in GOSE's workload which are higher in a full revision. On the other hand, the partial reviews have also required constant input into the regional planning process. In the view of planners at SEERA, the partial reviews have, however, reduced the amount of work required in the full review as the partial revisions have fed directly into the preparation of the draft SEP (see 6.5.3).

In the face of resource and time constraints the different elements of PMM are in a way competing with each other. The high amount of work involved in reviewing the RSS has affected implementation and monitoring activities. Although the RPB has conducted a significant amount of work on implementation issues (see 6.3.2), this work only gained momentum in the later stages of the preparation of the draft SEP as the development of policies took up most of the available resources. Monitoring activities have been affected even more severely by the RSS revisions. Officers at the RPB secretariat and others have been occupied with review work (technical work, consultation exercises etc.) so that very little time has been available for monitoring. The monitoring activities have been geared towards producing the AMRs by the submission date required by government, but the lack of time and staff capacity has had a negative impact on the quality of the documents (see 6.4). One SEERA officer explained that, as the resources of the RPB are limited, 'there is very little leeway for compromise' between the different streams of work involved in PMM. As work on the review of the RSS is seen as more pressing, other areas of work such as monitoring are neglected.

6.6.2 Organisational and governance dimension

Issues relating to the organisational arrangements for PMM in the South East have already been discussed throughout this chapter. This section reflects on some of the overarching implications of the PMM model on the involvement and influence of different actors in regional planning. Under SERPLAN the planning process was rather exclusive and dominated by a small number of actors, including local authorities, central government and interest groups, especially HBF and CPRE (cf. Williams 2002). The model put the county councils in a dominant position, while districts and other regional groups tended to be sidelined¹²⁸. In contrast, the SEERA model and the preparation of the draft SEP in particular have been much more inclusive and transparent. In producing the draft SEP the RPB has carried out a large quantity of consultation activities, including opinion polls, consultation events in all sub-regions and special events for particular sectors. In the view of a county planner, the process is no longer a 'local authority show' but involves a 'whole raft of new players'.

While the SEERA secretariat now leads the day-to-day work of revising and monitoring the RSS, the organisational arrangements of the RPB and the formal requirements for regional planning still put local

¹²⁸ For example, according to the lead technical officer of SERPLAN in the late 1990s 'the county by county allocation of housing was agreed 'in a smoke filled room' between the County Planning Officers and the Chief Planner for [the London Planning Advisory Committee] and then ratified by [SERPLAN's] conference' (Williams 2002: 238).

authorities and particularly the county councils in a very influential position. Due to the set-up and voting rules of the Regional Assembly many decisions are still largely in the hands of local authorities. For example, the local authority majority on the Assembly overturned the levels of housing growth in the initial draft SEP recommended by the secretariat (see 6.4.4). The strategic authorities also benefit from the arrangements for preparing 'initial advice' and sub-regional strategies. County councils have used their formal role to pursue their interests and there has been concern about a lack of involvement from districts and other actors in the sub-regional work.

The PMM model has certain characteristics which affect the involvement and influence of actors. PMM has increased the complexity of regional planning as it entails a large number and variety of activities. At any point in time various streams of work run in parallel, including technical and policy work, implementation and monitoring activities. Moreover, different revisions of the RSS (partial and full) have run in parallel which has added to the complexity of the process. Whereas some actors have been engaged on a day-to-day basis, it has been very challenging for others to keep an overview of the numerous work streams. More fundamentally, involvement in regional planning under PMM requires a considerable amount of resources. This relates to the numerous activities which have to be undertaken in a highly technical and fast-moving process. For example, the preparation of the draft SEP has on its own been very work- and meeting-intense since technical work, drafting of policies and consultation events have gone in parallel at both regional and sub-regional levels. The demands arising from the various activities involved in PMM are amplified by the time constraints under which the current model operates. An officer of the CPRE argued that the SEP process has been 'rushed' and has not given actors enough time to understand the process and to get involved. In the officers view, there has been a perception that decisions have been taken 'behind closed doors' as the process has moved so quickly.

On the one hand, the PMM model entails considerable demands in terms of resources, workload, skills and experience. On the other hand, the abilities of actors to cope with these demands and thus to get involved in and influence the regional planning process vary substantially. Officers at SEERA have been centrally involved on an ongoing basis, and thus able to shape the process and its outcomes to a significant degree. The county councils have also exercised significant influence. They have used their resources (in terms of experienced staff and financial resources) to get involved in working groups and carry out or commission work (e.g. an infrastructure study and opinion polls). While the county councils have also taken advantage of their formal role under the new planning system, districts have found it much more difficult to get involved in the fast-moving process.

Considerable differences in ability to deal with the demands of the PMM model and in actual involvement in regional planning also exist as far as interest groups and other actors are concerned. Organisations such as the HBF and CPRE are relatively well equipped and possess the resources and experience to get involved in various ways, e.g. through membership of working groups, responses to consultation exercises

and attendance at EiPs. The Environment Agency, for example, commissioned and was involved in technical work and seconded one of its members of staff to the SEERA secretariat who could feed the interests of the Agency into the preparation of the draft SEP. On the other side of the spectrum there are many actors such as local and parish councillors or a large number of voluntary and community organisations which have little capacity to get involved in regional planning. An organisation, Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE), has been set up in the region to represent and support organisations from the voluntary and community sector in policy making processes. RAISE also hosts a so-called Regional Assembly Partners' Support Unit which supports and advises the social, environmental and economic partners on the Assembly. Although these activities have improved the standing of such groups, substantial disparities in the level of involvement and influence in regional planning remain.

Central government has had a strong interest in regional planning and development in the South East for a long time. In some respects the PMM approach has enabled the centre to steer or strongly influence the regional planning process. Central government, especially in the form of GOSE, has been in a position to cope with demands arising from labour-intense and fast-moving processes. GOSE is a key player, involved on a continuous basis throughout the process, e.g. by attending Assembly and working group meetings, advising the SEERA secretariat and controlling the later stages of the revision process.

Government influence on regional planning in the South East has probably been most visible and powerful in relation to review and implementation. This concerns both the *process* of revising and implementing the RSS and policy *substance*. As described above (see 6.5.1), central government provided a strong steer on the decision to review RPG9 and the SEP, and has used these revisions to a considerable degree to insert government policy into regional planning. This applies particularly to the partial reviews on the growth areas. The centre has been very clear about the level of growth it expected in these areas and about the streamlined way in which the sub-regional strategies were to be produced and implemented. In a very similar manner, there has been a very strong steer by central government in relation to the process and content of the SEP. At the beginning of the process GOSE sent a letter to the RPB in which it set out 'government's expectations' for the preparation of the SEP (cf. SEERA 2004d). These 'expectations' related to the timetable for the revision and levels of housing growth. According to a senior regional planner, the RPB has had 'very limited discretion' over the timetable for preparing the draft SEP. As far as the level of housing growth is concerned, central government has repeatedly sought to influence the process, e.g. by responding to decisions made by the RPB (e.g. GOSE 2005c, 2006b) and commissioning the above mentioned study into higher levels of housing growth in the run-up to the EiP (Roger Tym & Partners 2006).

6.6.3 Substantive outcomes of PMM

This section examines various substantive outcomes of the PMM approach in the South East. As in the West Midlands, many interviewees argued that it was too early to draw definite conclusions in this respect at the time of the research. In the view of a senior regional planner at SEERA, the preparation of the draft SEP has been a learning process and 'road testing' of the new regional planning model. Therefore, the following findings on the South East region are also tentative and, in the absence of 'hard' evidence 'on the ground', to some extent speculative.

Quality of policy and action

The PMM approach appears to have mixed impacts on the quality of policy and action in regional planning¹²⁹. It has been described earlier (see 6.5.1) that the partial reviews of RPG9, and regular RSS reviews in general, are seen as opportunities to fill gaps in existing strategies, to take new information on board and to adjust the RSS more quickly to developments in related fields and at other levels (e.g. to new household projections or central government policy). For example, regional planners explained that the partial reviews on transport and waste helped to overcome 'deficits' in RPG9 and thus provide better guidance for LTPs and local waste plans. (On the other hand it can be argued that some of the 'deficits' have been the result of pressures arising from the PMM model, in particular the tensions between formal requirements and tight timetables, see below as well as 6.5.2 and 6.5.3.) In the view of planners at SEERA, the partial reviews also meant that topics could be treated in greater detail than in a full review of the RSS which has improved the quality of policies.

Some of the effects of the time constraints inherent in the current PMM model have already been discussed. Due to the tight timetable for preparation of the draft SEP and the dominance of housing issues, other topics had to be neglected. Also work which should have been carried out sequentially had to be conducted in parallel. For example, the sub-regional strategies had to be developed in parallel to the overarching spatial strategy or, as one regional planner phrased it, to some extent in a 'spatial strategy vacuum'. The initial sub-regional strategies varied significantly in terms of content and format and became available only three days before the initial draft SEP was finalised so that there was literally no time to produce a consistent and integrated strategy.

While, in theory, monitoring and the use of information are to improve the quality of policy and action, this has turned out to be much more difficult to achieve in regional practice. On the one hand, the links between monitoring and policy making and implementation are still rather weak, both within the SEERA secretariat and across the working arrangements of the RPB (see 6.4). On the other hand, information has to compete with other factors and is instrumentalised in the decision making process. As shown above,

¹²⁹ See Chapters 1.3.1 and 3.3 for an explanation of what 'quality' refers to in this context.

the decision of the Regional Assembly on levels of housing growth in the draft SEP has not followed the technical work undertaken by regional planners but has been affected by political and other considerations.

Responsiveness vs. long-term guidance

One of the main objectives of introducing the PMM approach has been to make regional planning more responsive. In the past, according to one county planner, it could take up to ten years to prepare structure plans or local plans and between four to five years for the production of RPG. As a result, those documents risked being already out-of-date when they came into force. There is generally an expectation among those involved that, under the new planning system, plans will in place more quickly and thus are likely to be more up-to-date and appropriate. It has been described earlier that a system of partial reviews especially is seen as providing the opportunity to deal with topics when work on them is needed and not just in a fixed review cycle. In the view of regional planners, this has enabled the RPB to progress with issues which were felt to be the most pressing, e.g. an early review of the RTS so that it has been in place for the preparation of the next round of LTPs. The partial reviews also meant that the RPB could react faster to new information, e.g. work on waste treatment facilities in response to a looming 'waste crisis'.

On the other hand, there are concerns that the current planning system is not necessarily faster and more responsive or, conversely, that the increased time pressures work against the quality of planning. The problems in relation to substance and process caused by time constraints have already been described at several points in this chapter. As far as the speed of the planning system is concerned, it has been demonstrated that the numerous activities and formal requirements involved in preparing, implementing, monitoring and revising an RSS have created a complex and resource-demanding process. This applies not only to regional planning but also to the new system of LDFs which, again, has a bearing on the regional level, e.g. in terms of the contribution of local authorities to monitoring and revising the RSS. These constraints seem to run counter to the fast, flexible and responsive system envisaged in PPS11. In practice, even the partial reviews of RPG9 took between three to four years from the identification of issues to the publication of the final revision, significantly longer than expected in PPS11. Similarly, it has not been possible to keep to the timetable for preparing the SEP and, if it is finally published as planned in early 2008, the production will have taken some four and a half years, which considerably exceeds the 30 to 35 months aspired to in PPS11.

Policy integration and synchronisation

Under the PMM model the process of policy development has become quite complex as various streams of policy work have run in parallel to each other, including various partial reviews, interregional partial reviews, a full review and work on sub-regional strategies. This complexity poses considerable challenges to the integration of policies within the RSS. As regards coordination between different partial reviews

there has been some uncertainty about their interrelationships, and there are also limits to the possibility of revising certain topics separately (see 6.5.3). The benefits and difficulties of integrating partial reviews as 'building blocks' into a full revision have also been highlighted earlier. Furthermore, the fast-moving process of preparing the draft SEP has affected coordination between the overarching spatial strategy and the sub-regional elements of the Plan. As a result, sub-regional work had to be carried out in parallel to the development of overall spatial options instead of being guided by the spatial strategy, and there has also been a lack of direct coordination of the sub-regional strategies.

As far as coordination with policies and actions at different levels and in other policy fields is concerned, the frequent revision of the RSS under PMM can make it possible to react to and inform other policy making and implementation activities more quickly. A planner from a county council argued that under the new planning system plans are to be in place more quickly and, as there is also one level less in the system, LDFs can potentially be synchronised with the RSS more quickly and more frequently than in the past. On the other hand, several interviewees were concerned that local authorities have difficulties in coping with the workload arising from the present planning system. Therefore local authorities may not be able to follow the continuous development and review of policy at regional level and align their LDFs to frequent changes of the RSS. In addition, the continuous process of policy review appears to have made RSS policy more 'fluid'. This raises questions as to what extent LDFs should follow the existing RSS, as opposed to policy which is emerging through the review process before it has been formally adopted. Planners at SEERA argued that the further evolving policy has gone through the formal process, the more weight it should receive at local level. As regards the SEP, for example, regional planners expected that after the publication of the EiP report it would be clearer what direction the SEP may take (and what changes government may make) so that local authorities should give more importance to the emerging policies from that stage on.

Implementation of the RSS

The implications of the PMM approach are probably least developed or evident in relation to the implementation of the RSS. This concerns the extent to which the RSS is taken forward in other strategies and plans, and particularly the effects of the RSS on development 'on the ground'. According to many of those involved, it is still too early to come to firm conclusions and it will take some time until the PMM model shows effects in this respect. On the one hand, the preparation of the draft SEP has demonstrated that issues around the implementation of regional planning are now considered more widely than in the past. The RPB has conducted a large amount of work in the wake of developing an implementation plan for the SEP (see 6.3.2). As it becomes clearer what is required to turn RSS policies into reality (in terms of implementation mechanisms, actions, actors, timeframes and funding) the chances that implementation occurs may increase. On the other hand, the implementation of the RSS is still uncertain, not least as it is affected by a range of factors. One of the key concerns which has emerged during the preparation of the

draft SEP is the question of 'whose' strategy the SEP is going to be. In the face of strongly conflicting views on what the SEP should seek to achieve, in particular as regards the scale and distribution of housing and related issues, there is a risk of a lack of 'ownership' of the Plan. As actors, such as some local authorities, may not agree to the proposals, they may not sign up to the SEP which casts some doubts over the implementation of the strategy.

6.7 Summary

At this stage only a very brief summary of the chapter is provided as the findings of this case study are summarised and analysed in detail in Chapter 7 together with the findings of the case study on the West Midlands. This chapter has provided a detailed account of how the PMM model of regional planning has taken shape in the South East of England. It examined the way in which PMM is understood and the arrangements which have been put in place in the region to adopt the PMM model. The case study has demonstrated how the 'plan', 'monitor' and 'manage' components are addressed in regional practice and shed some light on the implications of the 'new' planning model in the South East. Besides technical and methodological issues, this related to the organisation and governance of the PMM process as well as some of the substantive outcomes of this planning model. In conjunction with the account on the national picture (Ch. 4) and the case study on the West Midlands (Ch. 5), this provides the foundation for the synthesis and analysis of the empirical work which now follows in the final part of this thesis.

PART FOUR – Analysis and Conclusions

7 Synthesis and analysis – Pulling it together

This chapter brings together the empirical work and the theoretical foundations of the study and provides a comprehensive analysis and explanation of the operation and implications of PMM in regional planning. For these purposes, the findings of the three elements of the empirical investigation (Chs. 4 to 6) are synthesised and analysed against the background of the theoretical framework that underpins this study (Chs. 2 and 3). The first part of the chapter focuses on what has been termed the 'practical' dimension of PMM and provides an overarching analysis of the way PMM works in practice. In the second part of the chapter the functioning of the PMM approach and its implications are assessed in the light of wider theoretical debates about political ideologies, governmental agendas, public sector and state reform. In so doing the chapter fleshes out the findings of the research and provides the basis for the development of recommendations in Chapter 8.

Part 1 – The practical dimension of PMM in regional planning

7.1 Overall approach to PMM

In this section some overarching aspects of PMM in regional planning are discussed. This includes an analysis of how the concept of PMM is understood and applied in practice. Moreover, the organisational arrangements which exist in the regions are examined in relation to their strengths and weaknesses in facilitating a PMM approach.

7.1.1 Understandings of and approaches to PMM

PMM is widely understood by those involved as a continuous process of planning, implementation, monitoring and review. This continuous process has become a reality in practice which is most visible in the frequent review of RSSs across the English regions (see 4.4.1). There is some uncertainty, however, about the 'manage' element of PMM which relates to the question of how responsiveness can or should be achieved in planning, and at the regional level in particular. The two approaches discussed in the theoretical part (see 3.6.1) can also be identified in practice. Under the first view, the review of RSSs is the primary mechanism through which responsiveness is to be achieved. This approach, which reflects present government policy on regional planning, could be described as 'plan, monitor and review'. At regional level responsiveness to changing circumstances is to be attained through regular RSS visions and especially through (fast) partial or 'selective' reviews as advocated by government. This approach has been applied widely in practice, although there are questions as to whether the 'manage as review' view is

feasible and sufficiently responsive. As will be discussed in more detail below (see 7.4), RSS revisions tend to be more time and resource consuming than PPS11 may suggest which directly affects the speed and thus responsiveness of this approach. In addition, the emphasis on 'partial' reviews raises concerns about coordination in terms of both policy substance and process.

The other view understands 'managing' primarily as implementation activities. Under this approach which resembles the Strategic Choice interpretation of 'plan, monitor and manage' (see 3.6.1) the regional level is responsible for providing strategic guidance and setting out the way in which the strategy is to be achieved. An example of this is the work on implementation plans which has been undertaken in the regions (see 7.2.2). The actual implementation and responsiveness to short-term change is left to subsequent levels of decision making which can respond more quickly to change. This view has been reflected in regional practice, e.g. in developing 'housing trajectories' in the South East of England and the work on phasing and proposed annual advice to local authorities on housing need in the West Midlands. However, this approach also faces various challenges and limitations such as implementation 'gaps', time lags until policies may show effects or liability to short-term pressures.

Especially the practice of regional planning and development in the Greater South East lends itself to another interpretation of PMM. The introduction of PMM in planning for housing has been described as being to some extent a change in rhetoric (away from 'predict and provide') without much change in substance (Murdoch 2000; see Ch. 3). On the one hand, there are attempts in regional practice to adopt a more responsive approach which gives more consideration to implementation issues, new information and changing circumstances. On the other hand, there are counteracting pressures, particularly the government's approach to planning for housing which is embodied in the growth areas, housing completions work and revisions of RSS housing numbers in the south-eastern regions. In conjunction with the increased emphasis on implementation or 'delivery', these initiatives have led to an approach which could be termed 'plan and deliver'. It could be (and has been) argued that these government activities in the Greater South East come close to a 'predict and provide' approach which is geared towards 'delivering' predicted housing demand (cf. CPRE 2005, House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2005, Planning 2005). Although the proposals in draft PPS3 could be seen to some extent as a rolling-out of this approach to other parts of the country (cf. ODPM 2005b; see 3.2.6), so far it has been confined to the areas of high demand in the South.

7.1.2 Organisational arrangements for regional planning

The working arrangements for regional planning have turned out to be of considerable importance in facilitating a PMM approach. The arrangements vary across the English regions, particularly in terms of the size and function of the RPB secretariats, the role of local authorities and the involvement of other actors (see 4.1). Against this background, the case study regions represent two ends of a spectrum of

organisational forms. The West Midlands has adopted a decentralised working structure with a small RPB secretariat which fulfils coordinating and facilitating functions, while most of the detailed work is undertaken by local authority officers and working groups. In contrast, a centralised model exists in the South East where a larger planning team at the RPB secretariat carries out more of the work itself. Both models show strengths and weaknesses in facilitating a PMM approach and in many ways the advantages of one model are disadvantages of the other model and vice versa. However, there are also problems and challenges which are common to both systems.

The involvement of local authorities has emerged as a key issue. Regional planning relies to a significant degree on local authorities, including for policy development (e.g. initial advice, sub-regional strategies), monitoring (e.g. provision of information) and implementation (e.g. through LDFs and development control). The decentralised working model in the West Midlands enables the RPB to draw on local authority officers (time and expertise) and thus to better cope with the demands arising from PMM. The arrangements have also nurtured good working relationships between the RPB and local authorities and among local authorities themselves. This has led to a consensus-oriented approach and fostered local 'buy-in' to the RSS which improves the chances of implementation. In the South East region it has been more difficult to get local authorities involved, partly due to the centralised model which places local authorities in a more marginal role, partly due to political tensions between SEERA and some local authorities, especially county councils. This has raised concerns about 'whose' strategy the RSS is and to what extent local authorities will sign up to and implement the strategy.

The West Midlands RPB relies heavily on contributions from local authorities but their abilities and commitment to contribute to regional planning differ considerably. For local authority officers RSS work is largely their 'evening job' which they have to do in addition to their primary responsibilities. Thus it tends to get neglected when work pressures in their home authorities are high. The central position of local authorities is also prone to a 'lowest common denominator' approach, while the RPB has limited 'grip' which makes it difficult to take hard decisions. In the South East the RPB secretariat has greater control over the process as more work is carried out in-house. In addition, the working groups which support the secretariat in the region are less dominated by local authorities. However, the composition of the Assembly and the requirements for sub-regional work still place local authorities in a central position which has caused tensions (see 6.2.2). Whilst the centralised model enables SEERA to control the process, the workload arising from PMM has put the secretariat under considerable strain, especially during the preparation of the draft SEP, as the advisory groups have not taken on as much work as the secretariat anticipated.

The decentralised arrangements in the West Midlands run the risk of leading to a 'silo' approach which causes a lack of integration between policy fields and between policy development, implementation and monitoring. Due to its small size the capacity of the RPB secretariat to coordinate the different streams of

work under PMM is limited. Increased capacity at the centre would be required but this is not viable due to resource constraints. In principle, the centralised arrangements in the South East could contribute towards integration but in practice there is a tendency to work in 'silos'. Different officers and working groups are responsible for different topics and there is limited space for integration, e.g. officers and advisory groups working in isolation or insufficient time for making connections.

7.2 The 'Plan' element

As explained earlier, two issues of the 'plan' element of PMM have been investigated for the purpose of this research, i.e. the use of targets in preparing RSSs and the way in which implementation is treated in regional planning.

7.2.1 The use of targets under PMM

As far as targets are concerned, there is a need to distinguish between the potential role of targets in regional planning and their actual use in practice. Government policy and guidance promote the application of targets, especially of quantified 'output' targets (see 3.2). Practitioners in the regions agree in principle that targets can be useful tools in planning and monitoring the implementation of RSSs in that they help to set priorities and indicate the desired direction of development (see 4.2.1). In practice, targets are used and debated most widely in relation to housing numbers. In this context they represent important and influential steering devices which is why actors seek to use them and influence the setting of targets (see 7.7). Overall, however, the attitude towards targets is rather reserved and their use is not a priority for the RPBs. Although the number of targets in RSSs has increased, it could be argued that this is done to some extent to meet government requirements rather than out of conviction.

The case studies have illustrated some of the limitations and challenges of setting and using targets in strategic planning (cf. 3.4.2). There are limits to the extent to which issues can be quantified, and practitioners are concerned that issues get narrowed down too much by targets, while they are far more complex in reality. Similarly, the link between a target in an RSS and its achievement 'on the ground' is usually complex and indirect as implementation depends on a range of actors and factors. Therefore there is a significant amount of caution about the use of targets among regional planners. In setting targets, it is argued, it needs to be clear what can be achieved and what is required to achieve the targets, bearing in mind specific circumstances such as intra-regional variation. More fundamentally, targets should not be understood as fixed end states but as 'guiding lights' which indicate the intended direction of development. In the view of practitioners, targets assist in tracking progress towards desired objectives and can serve as 'tolerances' or 'triggers' which help to decide whether action is needed. However, instead of using them in

a mechanistic way, the role of targets should be to trigger further deliberation and thus to inform decision making (see e.g. 6.3.1).

7.2.2 Implementation in regional planning

The increased emphasis in government policy on implementation of RSSs has had noticeable effects on regional practice¹³⁰. Issues around implementation are given greater importance and there has been more thinking about the mechanisms through which RSSs need to be implemented. The development of implementation plans has become part of the process of preparing RSSs, e.g. the work on implementation mechanisms and infrastructure requirements in the South East. RPBs have also been putting institutional arrangements in place, such as implementation and conformity officers and working groups in the West Midlands.

While some of the terminology in government policy and guidance evoke a 'context of control' (e.g. 'output' targets, 'real world outcomes', 'delivery'; see 3.2), there also is a recognition of the 'framing' character of RSSs in a 'context of accommodation' (cf. 3.3.1). Regional practice demonstrates the complexities, dependencies and uncertainties involved in implementing RSSs. Implementation has to occur through a wide range of channels and actors and the level of influence of regional planning on these varies considerably, being most indirect in relation to development 'on the ground' (cf. 4.2.2). The changes introduced by the 2004 Planning Act are thought to improve implementation 'within' the planning system, especially through the conformity process. However, many of the mechanisms which are essential in turning the broader 'spatial' strategies into reality sit 'outside' the direct sphere of influence of RSSs. This is reflected in RSS implementation plans which seek to influence these important but largely autonomous implementation mechanisms¹³¹.

Under PMM, implementation should be connected to monitoring in two ways (cf. 3.5 and 3.6). First, one function of monitoring is to assess the implementation of RSSs. Second, monitoring information can play an important role in informing implementation activities. There is growing awareness of these issues in practice but the actual links between monitoring and implementation still need to be improved. While the extent to which the implementation of RSSs is examined in AMRs has generally been increasing, such analysis is not yet comprehensive and consistent (see 7.3). RPBs have also increasingly sought to use the monitoring process to draw conclusions for RSS implementation. In the AMRs more space is devoted to the identification of actions that should follow from monitoring. Overall, however, monitoring and

¹³⁰ Some of the early (and expected) effects of the PMM approach on the actual implementation of RSSs are considered later in this chapter (see 7.5.3).

¹³¹ Examples are the strategies for awareness raising, advocacy and voluntary strategy alignment in the West Midlands' implementation framework and the proposed 'Infrastructure Concordat', joint implementation plan for RSS and RES, 'Regional Infrastructure Board' and 'Regional Infrastructure Fund' in the South East.

implementation activities (such as conformity assessments) still need to be tied together more extensively (see 7.3).

7.3 The 'Monitor' element

Monitoring is a prominent feature in the PMM model which has been introduced with the publication of PPG11. This section reflects on how monitoring is understood and applied in regional practice. It analyses technical, methodological and organisational issues of monitoring as well as the way in which monitoring is utilised.

7.3.1 Understandings of and approaches to monitoring

It has been discussed earlier how monitoring can take different approaches, depending on the scale at which activities are carried out, but also on the function(s) assigned to monitoring (see 3.5). Government policy and guidance send mixed messages about the role of monitoring which range from a narrow implementation focus to a broader intelligence function (see 3.2.4). This ambiguous picture is mirrored in practice in that different views on the role of, and approaches to, monitoring exist. To a considerable extent this ambiguity can be ascribed to government policy and guidance but it has also been caused by differences in the way individuals understand and practise monitoring.

On the one hand, there is a fairly widespread recognition among practitioners that monitoring should take a broad intelligence function which should be primarily future- and learning-oriented (see 4.3.1). While this should include an assessment of RSS implementation and of the effects of policies, monitoring is seen as being about gathering information about regional development to inform policy and implementation. Government policy and guidance has to a degree promoted this understanding of monitoring, e.g. through the notion of 'evidence based policy making' and the requirement to use AMRs to identify actions in response to monitoring (cf. 3.2.5; see also 7.9). On the other hand, there are pressures to adopt a rather narrow approach to monitoring. Here it is understood predominantly as appraising the implementation or 'delivery' of policy. This view underpins monitoring regimes such as Best Value and LTP monitoring¹³² and also features strongly in government policy and guidance on RSS monitoring. This includes an emphasis on implementation monitoring, target setting and output indicators and, very importantly, the great importance attached to monitoring the 'delivery' of housing (cf. 3.2.6).

Practice in the two case study regions and in the rest of the country has been driven strongly by government requirements. The annual monitoring process is structured around the submission date for

¹³² For example, one regional planner in West Midlands argued that the way in which the transport side of the RSS is monitored has been affected by a legacy created by government requirements for monitoring under the LTP and BV initiatives. These focused on 'hard measuring' of 'outputs' and LTP monitoring was described as 'bean counting' and simple gathering of data.

AMRs required by government. In substantive terms, regional practice has also closely followed government guidance, including the use of targets and indicators and the assessment of RSS implementation. In their monitoring activities RPBs try to fulfil government requirements first, particularly by producing AMRs on time. This has caused substantial problems, for example, a lack of time for data analysis and interpretation (see 7.3.3). RPBs have sought to undertake additional monitoring work which is of greater value to their own activities such as the preparation of supplementary AMRs and monitoring seminars in the West Midlands to improve data analysis, or extra work on the identification of necessary actions in the South East. However, such additional work is carried out only where resources permit and, in practice, such monitoring work tends to get neglected due to other commitments, especially the high workload involved in revising RSSs (see 7.5.1)¹³³.

7.3.2 Technical and methodological issues around monitoring

Many of the methodological and practical problems and challenges of monitoring identified earlier (see 3.5.3) can also be detected in current regional practice. Over the past few years RPBs have gone some way towards developing their monitoring activities, putting in place organisational arrangements and devising monitoring frameworks. However, monitoring has been affected by a shortage of time, commitment and/or resources (such as funding or expertise). For example, policy making and consultation activities have dominated resources which has meant the scope for work on appropriate monitoring frameworks has been limited. Central government has provided some support and guidance but in the view of regional planners this has tended to be late and 'cursory'. Therefore monitoring activities depend to a significant extent on the time, expertise and interest of individual officers. As some have undertaken monitoring with more vigour than others this has led to shortfalls and inconsistencies.

The above factors have had a bearing on the selection of indicators which are currently used for RSS monitoring. There is significant variation between regions and between topic areas as regards the number and type of indicators and most importantly in terms of the usefulness of indicators for RSS purposes (see 7.3.3). Generally the housing and employment land sides are relatively well developed. The RPB in the West Midlands, for example, has done much thinking and work on monitoring housing issues and on establishing links between RSS and RHS monitoring. In other fields the selection of indicators has been driven strongly by the availability of data. As a result the indicators do not necessarily relate to issues which are particularly important or relevant to an RSS. Many of the indicators in fields such as transport and environment relate only very indirectly to RSS policies and thus it is difficult to draw lessons for RSS policy and implementation.

¹³³ In the West Midlands, for example, no stakeholder monitoring seminar was held in 2006 as the RPB's resources were limited by the review of the RSSs, and the production of supplementary AMRs got delayed as regional planners were busy with review work. In the South East monitoring has been even more constrained during the preparation of the draft SEP and has therefore tended to take a rather minimalist approach.

A lack of comprehensive and consistent data negatively affects monitoring across the country (see 4.5). There is significant variation in terms of the availability, usefulness, completeness, accuracy, (geographical and temporal) consistency and timeliness of data. While data availability has been improving, concerns persist about the usefulness of some of the data and the lack of in-depth, qualitative information required to draw conclusions. RPBs rely heavily on data provided by other organisations such as local authorities but, despite the general expectation that data availability is likely to improve due to the statutory monitoring requirement at local level, it appears to be restricted by more structural issues (e.g. staffing, resources, other commitments and priorities). Many of those responsible for monitoring RSSs are aware of these problems and shortfalls but operate within wider constraints which limit the scope for change.

As far as the core output indicators for RSS monitoring are concerned regional planners do not reject the idea of having a common set of indicators. The requirement assists RPBs in their efforts to obtain data from local authorities and others and to improve data consistency. On the other hand, there are limitations to indicators which are prescribed from 'above' (cf. 3.5.3). RPBs are concerned about the definition of some of the core indicators and about the lack of data on some of the indicators (see 4.3.2). More crucially, there is a general belief that, in the light of limited resources, RSS monitoring should follow first of all regional needs. In their AMRs RPBs tend to report on the core indicators only if data is readily available but the value for RSS purposes seems to have been limited so far.

7.3.3 Arrangements for and use of monitoring

In order to fully perform its intelligence function under PMM, monitoring needs to be integrated with policy making and implementation activities (cf. 3.5.3). In this respect it is important that monitoring information is analysed and interpreted with a view to drawing conclusions for policy and action. While the first RSS AMRs largely presented data to establish baselines for future monitoring, the amount of analysis and interpretation has generally increased in more recent AMRs. However, considerable differences in the amount, type and sophistication of such analysis remain. In several cases there is little or no reflection in AMRs on the conclusions that need to be drawn from monitoring. These shortfalls can be explained to a degree by methodological problems (cf. 3.5.3). Processes of spatial development are highly complex and there is only incomplete knowledge about the underlying reasons and the effects of planning.

Besides these rather well documented limitations, another set of factors has emerged in the empirical research which could be described as a lack of 'space' for data analysis and interpretation in regional practice. First, this relates to time constraints caused mainly by the deadline for submitting AMRs set by government (cf. 3.2.5). As complete sets of monitoring data are usually available only late in the year, the February deadline for AMRs leaves insufficient time for analysing, interpreting and discussing monitoring information and for identifying and agreeing on necessary actions. Because of these time constraints

several RPBs have been undertaking additional work after the formal submission of AMRs to deepen analysis and interpretation activities (e.g. supplementary reports and/or monitoring seminars).

In addition to time issues, a lack of 'space' for data analysis and interpretation can also be identified with regard to organisational arrangements. In a sense, there is a shortage of a 'dedicated' or 'reserved' capacity for monitoring and, particularly, for data analysis and interpretation. Under both the decentralised model in the West Midlands, and the more centralised arrangements in the South East monitoring work is very much up to individual officers. The way these are involved in, and work on, monitoring depends on several factors, including their overall workload and expertise in, understanding of and commitment to monitoring. In some cases there has been much thinking about indicators and data analysis, in others monitoring is seen largely as 'writing the chapter of the AMR'. In preparing the AMRs officers generally work in isolation which makes it difficult to consider issues across policy fields. Very importantly, the involvement of officer working or advisory groups tends to be limited and they are hardly used as fora for discussing the findings of monitoring and drawing conclusions (see below). Also the amount of time officers and working groups spent on monitoring is heavily affected by other work pressures. In particular the review of an RSS ties up resources which means that monitoring work gets neglected or lacks continuity (see also 7.5.1).

As regards the actual use of monitoring in regional planning, it has already been described that monitoring has not yet become fully part of the process of formulating and implementing policies. Within the constraints that exist (in terms of time, workload, expertise, data etc.), RPBs increasingly attempt to use monitoring information to identify lessons for policy and action although this is still patchy (see above). Monitoring and policy making and implementation still tend to be somewhat separate in organisational terms (cf. 4.3.3). The RPBs in the case study regions have sought to improve these links, e.g. by establishing an Assembly Members group on monitoring in the South East or by holding annual 'stakeholder' seminars to discuss the AMRs and to draw conclusions for policy and action. However, there are concerns about the effects and/or continuity of these additional activities amid resource and other constraints.

7.4 The 'Manage' element

Government policy on PMM in particular promotes the view of 'managing' as strategy review (see 7.1.1) and in practice the revision of RSSs has dominated the activities of the RPBs. Therefore this section analyses how RSS reviews have been 'triggered' and organised. It also reflects on substantive and procedural issues involved in revising RSS and, in particular, on the implications of conducting partial reviews.

7.4.1 Triggers of RSS revisions

Although RPBs are responsible for developing a project plan for RSS revisions and undertake much of the actual review work (and as such have significant influence), their discretion has been fairly limited so far. Central government has exerted strong influence on the decisions as to *whether* an RSS revision is required, *what* issues should be revised as well as *when* and *how* a review should be undertaken (see 4.4.2, 5.5.1. and 6.5.1). The case studies illustrate how government has required RPBs to revise the RSSs, either through listing topics for future review when publishing the final RSS, or by requesting specific revisions such as the BCS in the West Midlands or a partial review of the SEP. Thus, the Secretary of State has also defined the issues for RSS reviews. In various cases these issues were based on recommendations by EIP Panels, in others the Secretary of State has requested reviews to adapt RSSs to developments in government policy and priorities (e.g. MMSs, White Papers, new PPSs). As regards timing, government has normally expected 'early' reviews and pressed for 'early results' in relation to several issues. Moreover there has been strong steer on the process, including a push towards partial reviews and control of review timetables and working arrangements (see 7.4.4).

In drawing up their work programmes and conducting RSS revisions the RPBs have followed very closely what government requested. Whilst government wanted to see 'early results' for the South East growth areas and the BCS, there has been some discretion as regards the order and exact start of the other reviews. However, regional planners in the West Midlands would have preferred to leave any revision of the RSS for a later date and rather progress work on implementation which was deemed more important. Due to the workload involved in reviewing the RSS and resource constraints at the RPB, implementation (and monitoring) work tends to get neglected during revision (see 7.5.1).

On the other hand, there is wide agreement that the first PPG11-style RPGs had some gaps and shortcomings which required further work. Also, the RPBs mostly agreed with the issues for future review identified in those documents. However, regional planners have stressed that early reviews should not be utilised to change the strategy but rather to improve the existing RSS. Therefore these reviews have been described as filling of 'gaps', dealing with 'leftovers', adding more detail to elements which had not been treated fully or 'updating' the strategy to take on board new developments such as outstanding studies (see 7.4.2).

As far as monitoring is concerned, its role in triggering an RSS review or in identifying the issues for a revision has been very limited so far (cf. 4.4.2). Regional planners argue that, in many ways, it remains too early to draw conclusions from monitoring but that monitoring information would be used in the review process, e.g. by feeding into technical work. Overall, however, the links between the monitoring and manage elements of PMM are still rather weak, and more thinking and work seems to be needed on how monitoring information can be employed in reviewing (and implementing) RSSs (see 7.3.3).

7.4.2 Approaches to reviewing RSSs

The frequent review of RSSs is a cornerstone of the PMM model enshrined in PPS11 (see 3.6.1) which has become common practice across the English regions (see 4.4.1). Since the introduction of the PMM approach, RSSs or parts thereof have been almost constantly under review. In fact, many of these revisions have been partial reviews (of specific topics or for certain parts of a region) and, in several regions, different partial and/or full revisions have been running to some extent in parallel. The partial review approach possesses various advantages and disadvantages which are discussed in the following.

Partial reviews can be used to fill specific gaps in, and improve selected elements of, an existing RSS, ideally without having to touch the rest of the strategy. Work on the most pressing issues can go ahead without the need to wait for other, 'slower' topics. Similarly, less contentious matters can be progressed first, while more contentious issues are left for a later date. Thus, policies can potentially be in place quicker, which creates a more responsive system (although there are limits to such 'speeding-up', see 7.4.4 and 7.5.3). In a partial review, topics can be treated in more detail than they tend to be in a full revision. Moreover, partial reviews can act as building blocks for the next full revision, which means that the full review can be carried out more quickly and/or work can concentrate on those issues which had not been covered in a partial revision (there are also limits to the 'building block' approach, see 7.4.3 and 7.5.3).

Conversely, the partial review model raises various concerns too, most crucially about coordination in terms of substance and process (see also 7.4.3 and 7.4.4). While some topics may be treated separately and thus lend themselves to partial review, others are too strongly intertwined, so that they need to be revised together. The RPB in the West Midlands has been very anxious to include most of the issues earmarked for further work (e.g. housing and employment land) in a single review. This was to do justice to the interconnections between these issues, and hence to ensure policy integration¹³⁴. By 'bundling' issues together RPBs have also sought to keep the review process manageable, in the sense of reducing the number of separate SAs, EiPs or consultation exercises or facilitating coordination of technical work.

The partial review model enables RPBs to, to some extent, control the workload involved in revising RSSs, e.g. by adopting a staggered approach under which a revision only starts once the preceding review is well advanced. In doing so the workload can be distributed over time and better adjusted to the available resources. On the other hand, the regional planning process can become fairly complex and the overall workload can be higher if multiple partial reviews run in parallel. This has not been so much a concern to regional planners in the South East who assign greater importance to the advantages of controlling

¹³⁴ Similarly, SEERA has argued that the review of housing numbers needed to be part of a full review as these were intertwined with, and affected, many other aspects of the RSS.

workload¹³⁵. In contrast, the West Midlands RPB has been very concerned about the workload and complexity of the multiple review model as many streams of works have been running in parallel. In order to cope with these demands alternative 'solutions' had to be found such as 'outsourcing' the BCS, stretching work over time, and shifting resources from implementation and monitoring to review activities (see 7.5.1).

7.4.3 Substantive issues of RSS review

The approach of undertaking partial reviews raises several questions about policy integration. First, this concerns the possibility of treating issues in separate reviews and the relationship between different partial reviews which run in parallel. There has been a significant amount of uncertainty and caution amongst regional planners in the West Midlands about the extent to which issues can be dealt with individually. The RPB has sought to keep the number of 'tracks' to a minimum to promote policy integration. It has also established rules to govern the relationship between the different partial reviews, most importantly the principle that policy decisions taken in earlier phases should be treated as 'fixed' in later phases. In practice, however, it has been difficult to keep decisions 'fixed' (see 5.5.3).

Regional planners in the South East of England have shared the concern that some issues such as housing numbers need to be considered in combination with other matters in a full RSS revision. On the other hand, some topics were seen as being rather 'self-contained' (e.g. as policies on issues like tourism and energy were rather general in nature) and could therefore be treated in separate reviews (see 6.5.3). However, there is a risk that the partial review approach reinforces a tendency to work in silos (at officer and working group level) so that links between issues are not considered sufficiently.

Policy coordination also relates to the relationship between partial reviews and the existing RSS. A key issue of concern here is the extent to which a part of an RSS can be revised without altering the rest of the strategy. According to regional planners, so far much of the partial review activity has been about filling 'gaps' and developing the existing RSS but not about changing the core strategy. In their views, the existing strategy provides a common framework for the partial revisions and, in this way, ensures policy integration. On the other hand, the case of housing numbers in the West Midlands demonstrates that partial reviews can have significant implications for many elements of the RSS and may require substantial amendments to the existing strategy (see 5.5.3).

Finally, there are questions about how policy coordination between partial and full revisions can be achieved and, in particular, to what extent decisions made in a partial review can and/or should be treated as 'given' in a subsequent full RSS revision. On the one hand, partial reviews are understood as 'building

¹³⁵ However, for those actors which were less well equipped than the RPB secretariat it has been more difficult to deal with the workload and complexity arising from the multiple review process (see 6.5.2).

blocks' for later full reviews. For example, regional planners in the South East argued that policies which had just undergone partial review were up-to-date and could therefore be taken forward in the SEP largely unchanged (see 6.5.3). On the other hand, the example of the SEP has also highlighted limits to a simple 'slotting in' of partial reviews. It may not be feasible or appropriate to keep issues as 'given', and policies developed in a partial revision may have to be revisited and changed in a subsequent full review.

7.4.4 Procedural dimension of revising RSSs

It has been mentioned that the approach of conducting multiple partial reviews which run to some extent in parallel affects the workload and complexity of the revision process. First, the various streams of work involved in revising an RSS overlap which increases the complexity of the process and represents a challenge to those involved to keep an overview¹³⁶. Second, the extended number of activities which are conducted separately (e.g. consultation, SAs, and EiPs) tends to add to the overall workload. In the West Midlands there has been concern that the region's decentralised working arrangements may have difficulties in coping with a multiple review model. The large number of officers, working groups and work streams would require more coordination capacity at the RPB secretariat which, however, has not been possible due to resource constraints¹³⁷. According to regional planners in the South East, in contrast, the larger secretariat at SEERA has not experienced particular problems in facilitating and coordinating the multiple review process. However, both regions have sought to 'bundle' issues/reviews in order to reduce the number of separate review activities.

The time dimension of RSS reviews is a key issue. Government policy (see 3.2.4) and activity in practice have been driven strongly by the objective of revising RSSs quickly. Regional planners and other actors are very concerned about the tight timetables required by government for both 'fast' partial and full revisions. These time constraints have had various implications in procedural and substantive terms (see 7.5). In some cases there has been insufficient time to complete technical and policy work, while in other cases work has had to run in parallel though it should have been staggered. The tight timetables also affect the scope for involving actors and for building consensus.

In the West Midlands government officials have been concerned about the decentralised arrangements which, in their view, are 'too slow' to enable fast reviews. Regional planners agree that the working arrangements are time-consuming as they depend on contributions from large number of officers and organisations and involve a large number of 'hoops' (meetings, working groups etc.). For example, the short timetable for the BCS could not have been achieved under the usual working structure but only

¹³⁶ The provisions in the PCPA on the role of S4(4) authorities have increased the complexity (and workload) of the review process even further (see 7.5.1).

¹³⁷ WMRA has argued that keeping more of its funding for regional planning (especially from the PDG) centrally to enlarge the secretariat would not help because under the decentralised model local authorities do more than they are being paid for. Thus, the argument continues, the RPB gets more out of the PDG under the current arrangements than under a more centralised structure.

through 'streamlined' arrangements (see 5.5.4 and 7.5.2). In the view of the WMRA secretariat, however, the advantages of the decentralised model outweigh its limitations in this respect (see 7.1.2). The government's push for fast reviews has created severe problems in the South East too. The 'streamlined' arrangements for some of the partial reviews have limited the level of involvement, while other reviews have considerably exceeded the target timetable of PPS11.

7.5 Overarching implications of PMM

In addition to analysing the component parts of PMM, one of the main objectives of this research has been to investigate the overall working of this approach to regional planning. This section draws together and reflects on some of the overarching, cross-cutting implications of PMM, including technical and managerial matters, the organisational dimension as well as the substantive outcomes of PMM.

7.5.1 Technical and managerial issues

While those involved have made tremendous efforts to turn the PMM model into reality, current (and still early) practice has demonstrated various challenges, tensions and contradictions. The system introduced by government has been described as being 'very formalistic' and has been criticised for the 'amount of procedure' involved. This relates to the large number of formal requirements for all elements of PMM in terms of both substance and procedure. As far as substantive issues are concerned, RPBs are required, among other things, to adopt a spatial planning approach, undertake sub-regional planning, create an 'evidence base', and embark on implementation planning, conformity assessment and monitoring. From a procedural perspective, both full and partial RSS revisions have to run through a number of formal stages and procedures such as project planning, various consultation activities, 'stakeholder' and 'community' involvement, SAs and EiPs. The obligation to seek 'advice' from strategic planning authorities alone has increased the complexity and workload of the review process significantly. In sum, the formal requirements under the current system create what has been termed an 'onerous' process which is geared to periodic full RSS reviews but unsuitable for conducting frequent fast (partial) reviews.

Moreover, there is a mismatch between the demands arising from the PMM model and the level of resources available to meet these demands. PMM places considerable demands on resources, including staffing levels, time, funding, knowledge, skills and expertise, technologies and methods. These are created by the above requirements, and the fact that various streams of work and activities have to be pursued at the same time. Under the current arrangements regional planning is a continuous and fast-moving, fairly technical and political as well as labour- and coordination-intensive process. Many of those involved, especially the RPBs, who are in charge of much of the PMM work, are concerned about the level

of resources that is available (at regional and local level) to facilitate a continuous and responsive planning process (cf. 4.5).

Tensions between the demands arising from the PMM model and the resources available are very pronounced with respect to time constraints. As described above, the regional planning process involves a large number of formal requirements, steps and 'hoops' which are all time-consuming. On the other hand, government has vigorously sought to 'speed-up' regional planning by setting tight time limits. The short timetables required for RSS revisions have caused major challenges and problems. These time pressures have affected the revision process and consequently the substance or 'quality' of policy (see 7.5.3). In addition, there are tensions between the push for 'streamlined' review processes and the level of involvement of different actors (see 7.5.2). Time constraints have also had a negative effect on monitoring and its use for PMM purposes (see 7.3).

It was discussed earlier how strategic spatial planning is not only about preparing plans but, very importantly, also about promoting and monitoring their use (see 3.3.4). This is reflected in the present regional planning system which attaches much importance to the implementation and monitoring of RSSs. PMM relies strongly on the interplay of its component parts but, in practice, the amount of work and progress on each of these elements has varied considerably. The preparation or review of RSSs has been the top priority and thus has dominated the activities of RPBs and others involved in regional planning. Due to the high workload arising from making and reviewing an RSS, implementation and monitoring activities have therefore tended to take the 'backseat'. In this respect, the elements of PMM 'compete' with each other and given the above resource constraints, there is – as one interviewee called it – little 'leeway for compromise'. Thus at times when review work is pressing (and so far RSS have been almost in a constant state of review), implementation and monitoring activities tend to get neglected¹³⁸.

7.5.2 Organisational dimension of PMM

Further to the issues around the organisational arrangements for regional planning discussed so far, this section reflects on overall implications of the PMM model for the involvement of different actors in the planning process¹³⁹. The theory of strategic planning suggests that deliberative planning practices are needed to improve the quality, legitimacy and implementation of planning (see 3.3.4). Compared to the pre-PPG11 system, there has been deeper and wider involvement under the present model of regional

¹³⁸ In the West Midlands, for example, the review of the RSS demanded so much work that the implementation officer at WMRA had to work on review instead of implementation issues (see 5.5.2), the production of supplementary monitoring reports was delayed by several months and no monitoring seminar was held in 2006 (see 5.6.1). Similarly, the ongoing review work in the South East has meant that planners at SEERA have not had much time for monitoring. As a result, monitoring has been geared towards meeting basic government requirements but the extent to which monitoring could be used for regional planning purposes has been limited (see 6.4.3).

¹³⁹ The role of different actors under PMM in regional planning and, particularly, the balance between regional discretion and central government control are discussed in more detail below when the current practice of regional planning is linked to debates about the restructuring of the state (see 7.8).

planning (cf. Baker et al. 2003). In both case study regions, for example, considerable efforts have been made to achieve more open and inclusive planning processes and to expand the range of actors involved in all elements of PMM. However, significant differences in the levels of involvement and influence of actors remain. These can be explained, to some extent, by the demands arising from the PMM model and the abilities of actors to cope with these demands.

The PMM approach places high demands on those who seek to get involved. Various streams of work run at the same time (different RSS reviews running in parallel to implementation and monitoring activities) in a process which is very meeting-intensive (working groups, consultation events, EiPs etc.), involves a large number of documents (e.g. technical reports, draft revisions, monitoring reports, implementation studies) and requires a considerable range of skills and knowledge (strategic planning, technical studies, monitoring and use of information etc.). On the other hand, all these requirements have to be met in a fast-moving process which works to tight timetables. The continuous nature of regional planning under PMM means that work arises continuously and thus requires substantial commitment and involvement on an ongoing basis.

However, the abilities of actors to cope with the demands of the PMM model vary considerably. There are large differences in the resources available to different actors, including staff resources, expertise and other resources (e.g. funding to commission studies), to get involved in multiple work streams and follow the fast-moving, technical, meeting- and document-laden process. In practice, this has resulted in considerable differences in the involvement and influence of actors. Although the range of actors involved has been broadened, the PMM process favours those actors who are well resourced and positioned to deal with these demands. Due to their formal responsibilities, RPB secretariats and GORs are in a central position throughout the process and are relatively well equipped to drive the process on a daily basis.

Larger local planning authorities have both a designated role (i.e. the legal right to prepare 'advice') and resources (such as experienced staff and organisational links) and are therefore key actors under the current system. As far as interest groups are concerned, those which are well resourced and organised such as CPRE and HBF are able to get involved in various ways and on a regular, if not day-to-day basis (through membership of working groups, commissioning studies, attendance at consultation events and EiPs, written responses, informal discussions etc.). In contrast, smaller local authorities, local and regional politicians, smaller groups from the voluntary sector or the 'community' (understood as 'ordinary' members of the public) face an uphill struggle to follow the complex and fast-moving PMM process.

Whilst it has been shown that the level of involvement depends on a variety of factors, time issues once again play a prominent role. RPBs have sought to create open and inclusive processes and government policy also encourages 'partnership working with regional stakeholders and community involvement' (cf. ODPM 2004a: para 2.18). The formal requirements for involvement and the organisational arrangements

set up by the RPBs have led to a planning process which includes many 'hoops' (many working groups, meetings, consultation events, sub-regional arrangements etc.). However, such inclusive arrangements are time-consuming which does not sit easily with the government's push for speedy processes. In practice, the inclusive nature of regional planning processes has contributed to problems in keeping to timetables. In turn, in those cases where government has insisted on short timetables and 'streamlined' working structures (i.e. the partial reviews for the growth areas in the South East and the BCS in the West Midlands) the level of involvement of regional actors has been much more limited.

7.5.3 Substantive outcomes of PMM

Many of those in charge of running the regional planning system have emphasised that it is still 'early days' and that it is too early to draw firm conclusions about the effects of PMM in respect of its substantive outcomes. Bearing that in mind, this section reflects on a range of substantive outcomes of the current practice of PMM.

Quality of policy and action

An ambiguous picture has emerged as regards the effects of PMM on the quality¹⁴⁰ of policy and action. The Strategic Choice approach understands planning as a 'dynamic' process which adapts to changing circumstances (see 3.3.2). The continuous process of strategy making, implementation, monitoring and review envisaged in PPS11 aims to work, to a certain degree, in the same direction. As described earlier, the continuous nature of the planning process is a striking feature of the new system (see 4.4.1). Many of those involved generally expect that the continuous planning process helps to improve the appropriateness of policy and action. Regular monitoring and review are seen as ways of facilitating ongoing learning and adjustment of policies and implementation activities. This includes overcoming deficits in the existing RSS and its implementation as well as responding to new information and changing circumstances. Despite their limitations, partial RSS revisions enable RPBs to treat issues in greater detail which can improve policies and actions.

On the other hand, some features of the current PMM model have, in a way, negatively affected the quality of policy and action. For example, some of the deficits in existing RSSs are partly a result of the nature of, and the pressures arising from, planning under PMM. The various tasks involved in PMM, including technical work, policy development and monitoring, have to be undertaken within significant resource constraints (see 7.5.1). Time has been a particular concern to those responsible for putting the PMM model into practice. The short timetables for the preparation and review of RSSs have had an effect on the process of policy development and the quality of the documents. In some cases, there has been

¹⁴⁰ For the purpose of this study the term 'quality' has been used to refer to the extent to which policies and actions are 'relevant' to the decision situation at hand and offer solutions to identified problems in line with defined planning objectives (cf. Faludi 2000, Mastop 2000; see 1.3.1 and 3.3).

insufficient time to complete technical work, whereas in others there has been a lack of time to develop the overarching strategy before the sub-regional detail, or to establish links between policy fields. Monitoring and the production of an 'evidence base' are perceived as means to achieve better informed policies and actions. So far the role and use of monitoring in policy making has been rather limited due to methodological, technical, resource and other constraints (see 7.3.3 and 7.9).

Responsiveness and long-term guidance

The aim to combine long-term guidance with short-term responsiveness is at the heart of the Strategic Choice approach (see 3.3.2). The PMM model introduced with PPG11 envisages a 'flexible' and 'responsive' regional planning system which is to be attained in particular through regular and fast RSS revisions (see 3.6.1). Practitioners in the regions generally support the idea that the continuous planning process enables regional planning to react more quickly to new information and changing circumstances (see e.g. 4.5). As far as RSS policy is concerned, there is a commonly-held view that frequent RSS revisions, and particularly the possibility of undertaking partial reviews help to make the system more responsive. Partial revisions can normally be carried out faster than full reviews so that policies can be adopted more quickly. Very importantly, elements of an RSS can be revised when needed and not just in a fixed review cycle. In the South East, for example, the partial review of the RTS allowed the RPB to put policies in place in time to inform the preparation of LTPs. However, several regional planners have stressed that 'being responsive' does not only relate to the review of policy but similarly to the adjustment of implementation activities.

On the other hand, there are limitations to the PMM approach's aims to achieve responsiveness through fast RSS revisions. This relates to both practical problems and more fundamental concerns. While RSS reviews have so far been carried out much more frequently than under the pre-PPG11 system, the revisions themselves have not been completed much quicker than before. Even partial reviews have taken at least three years, which is not nearly as fast as aspired to in PPS11 (see 4.4.1)¹⁴¹. To some extent this could be assigned to teething problems during the shift to the new system, but the problems appear to be more structural. As described earlier, the current PMM model involves a large number of formal steps and requirements (see 7.5.1). This creates a burdensome process and, as a result, it does not seem to be feasible to carry out RSS revisions as quickly as envisaged by government. At a broader level, this illustrates the limitations of responsiveness within the 'strategy review oriented' PMM approach which have been highlighted by those advocating the 'tactical decision oriented' model (see 3.6.1).

As regards the balance between responsiveness and longer-term guidance, regional planners, especially those in the West Midlands, have expressed some degree of caution in relation to the 'strategy review

¹⁴¹ Not only has the preparation of draft RSS and draft revisions generally taken longer than anticipated in PPS11 but also the later stages which are controlled by government (see 4.4.1).

oriented' approach. Regular monitoring and, if needed, strategy review are seen as key features of strategic planning. However, having a responsive system should not mean that the RSS is constantly under review and follows every change. Some degree of policy stability and longer-term guidance is required to allow time for implementation, e.g. as policies need to 'feed through the system'. There is a risk that actors try to use RSS revisions to 're-open' issues, and that the strategy is driven by pressures from outside instead of guiding other activities. Finally, actors may not sign up to the RSS if it is constantly under review which could have a negative effect on policy implementation.

Policy integration and synchronisation

Issues around the integration of policy within the RSS, especially in cases where several reviews are undertaken in parallel, have already been discussed earlier (see 7.4.3). Those involved in regional planning are somewhat divided over the effects of the virtually constant review of RSSs on synchronisation with other strategies and plans and implementation activities. Whereas some take the view that it makes synchronisation more difficult, others argue it facilitates synchronisation (cf. 4.5). The continuous planning process allows frequent (re-)adjustment and (re-)alignment of regional planning and policy/action at other levels (vertical integration) and in different policy fields (horizontal integration). In the South East, for example, reviews of the RTS and waste policies in the RSS were aimed explicitly at improving links with lower level plans. Similarly, one of the partial revisions in the West Midlands is to be used to align the RSS with a review of the RES which has been running in parallel. Under the new planning system synchronisation with the local level of planning is also expected to improve as RSSs and LDFs are reviewed more frequently and under shorter timetables, permitting regular adjustment.

Conversely, the nature of regional planning under PMM also presents challenges to policy integration. It has been explained above that the regional planning process has become quite complex since various streams of policy work (partial and full reviews, including sub-regional work), monitoring and implementation progress at the same time. The complexity and high speed of the process raise questions about the ability (and willingness) of other actors to follow frequent policy developments and changes at regional level. As a result of the continuous planning process RSS policy becomes more 'fluid' (as it is frequently under review), which can create uncertainty as to whether other strategies and plans should follow existing RSS policy or policies which are emerging in an ongoing review¹⁴².

Implementation of RSSs

As far as the implementation of RSSs is concerned, there is broad consensus that it is too early to come to solid conclusions about the effects of PMM. Various time-lags in the system mean that it takes some time until RSS policies are taken forward in other strategies and plans and, particularly, until they have an

¹⁴² In fairness it has to be said that policy integration and synchronisation are also strongly affected by factors which go well beyond the effects of the PMM model (e.g. working in silos, dependency on a wide range of other actors, differing political agendas).

impact on development 'on the ground'. Regional planners generally anticipate that the PMM approach enhances policy implementation (cf. 4.5). Under the current model implementation issues are considered much more extensively than before and RPBs and others have undertaken a considerable amount of thinking and work on implementation plans (see 7.2.2). The partial review model can be used to move towards implementation more quickly and in a more focused way (e.g. the BCS and growth areas reviews, see 5.5.2 and 6.5.1).

The inclusive working model in the West Midlands has raised actors' awareness of the RSS and helped to create consensus and 'buy-in', which is thought to increase the chance of implementation. On the other hand, the fast moving process of preparing draft RPG meant that some smaller local authorities felt 'disenfranchised' (Sennett 2002) and thus may not take the strategy forward. It has been explained earlier that the continuous planning process can lead to a situation in which actors use RSS reviews to 're-open' issues, or in which they do not sign up to the 'fluid' RSS.

Part 2 – Placing PMM into a wider context

The first part of this chapter has considered the 'practical' side of PMM and has pulled together the elements of the empirical work and the theoretical underpinnings of PMM. It has analysed the functioning and implications of the PMM model in current regional planning as regards technical, organisational and governance matters as well as substantive outcomes. The second part of this chapter links the operation of PMM and its implications to wider theoretical debates. These relate to the broader context in which regional planning operates and include factors and structuring mechanisms which affect the practice of PMM and/or help to understand and explain its functioning and implications. In this way, the empirical information gathered during this research is utilised to place PMM into, and to reflect on, these wider theoretical debates.

7.6 Political ideologies, governmental agendas and planning

The introduction and operation of the PMM model in regional planning can be linked to key elements of central government agendas and priorities for planning (cf. 2.1 and 2.3). This can be clearly demonstrated as regards debates about the speed, flexibility and responsiveness of planning. Government's concern about the speed of planning processes has been one of the drivers of the introduction and current practice of PMM in regional planning. The reduction of the time needed to prepare and review regional planning strategies has been a central component of government policy from *Modernising Planning* through to the PCPA. The empirical work has shown that speed and responsiveness are major issues in regional practice too. RPBs are under tremendous pressure from central government to review RSSs within short timetables. While the preparation of draft RSS revisions is in the hands of RPBs, GORs have kept them on

a tight leash and firmly controlled timetables for the revision process. The practice in the case study regions has shown the intrinsic conflict between speed (or 'efficiency') on the one hand, and the level of involvement and the quality of planning on the other hand (see 7.5; cf. Carmona and Sieh 2004b, Imrie 1999).

Besides speed, the frequent review of RSSs has become a striking feature of regional planning under PMM (see 4.4.1). The BCS in the West Midlands and the growth areas in the South East are prime examples of the 'responsive' system envisaged in PPS11 and government has been pressing the RPBs in both regions hard to demonstrate that the model of fast partial reviews works. Practitioners in the regions generally agree that the continuous planning process makes the system more responsive and flexible, but significant problems exist in practice in terms of the speed and frequency of reviews, as well as the possibility of conducting partial as opposed to full(er) revisions (see 7.4).

At a broader level, the speed and responsiveness of regional planning under PMM also raise important questions about where power is located in the system. Although RPBs are responsible for undertaking most of the work and making many of the day-to-day decisions, the PMM model provides central government with various levers to steer regional practice (see also 7.8 and 7.9). Arguably the most visible and significant of these levers relate to the revision of RSSs. The empirical work has illustrated that central government effectively takes, or at least strongly controls, key decisions in the review process, including when and how an RSS is to be reviewed and what issues are to be covered in the revision. The flexibility which is embedded in the continuous planning process means that government can adjust regional planning more quickly to its current priorities. In practice, these mechanisms have been used to 'update' RSSs to ensure they are in line with government policy (e.g. new White Papers and PPSs) and to directly 'insert' or implement government priorities (such as 'delivery' of housing development through growth areas and housing numbers in RSSs). This supports concerns that the more responsive planning system plays into the hands of government and works towards centralisation in planning (Marshall 2004; see 7.8).

The operation of PMM in current regional practice has also been affected by the impact of successive reforms of the public sector and the planning system on the resources, skills and expertise in (strategic) planning (cf. 2.1 to 2.4). Strategic planning and PMM involve tasks such as the preparation and implementation of strategic plans, the creation of an evidence base and the use of information which require specific skills and expertise. This is reflected in the views of practitioners who, for example, have described monitoring and data interpretation as 'a real skill' and a 'challenge' (see 5.4.3 and 6.4.3). In practice, however, there appears to be a shortage of 'strategic thinkers', less resources and different types of expertise than there used to be during the heyday of strategic planning. The empirical work has shown, for example, how monitoring and the use of information have been affected by a lack of experience and resources in strategic monitoring and planning (see 7.3). This can be ascribed to a significant extent to reconfigurations of the public sector and the planning system by successive governments since the

late 1970s/early 1980s (cf. 2.3). Thus the legacy created by the neglect of strategic planning and a project-led planning system with a focus on development control still has a negative effect on current practice of regional planning.

7.7 Planning and public sector reform

The previous section has referred to impacts of reforms to the public sector, including planning, on resources, skills and expertise in planning. This section reflects on how PMM in regional planning is linked to the drive towards performance management and monitoring in the public sector (cf. 2.2). It has been demonstrated earlier how the thinking, language and instruments of performance management have encroached upon government policy and guidance on PMM (see 3.2 to 3.5). This relates particularly to the use of targets, indicators and monitoring, and an emphasis on assessing the implementation and 'performance' of regional planning. Some of the practical problems of monitoring and target setting in regional planning have already been discussed above (see 7.2.1 and 7.3).

Overall an ambiguous situation exists as regards the way in which monitoring and targets are used in practice and the impact of performance management initiatives. On the one hand, actors in the regions generally see monitoring as a future- and learning-oriented tool (which includes but goes well beyond assessing the implementation of RSSs) and attach less importance to NPM functions of monitoring¹⁴³ (see 4.3.1). On the other hand, the emphasis on targets and implementation monitoring in government policy and guidance has had a noticeable effect on the thinking and practice in the regions. The assessment of RSS implementation has become more central to the annual monitoring process. Whilst this is partly a result of RPBs' attempts to improve the learning function of monitoring, government policy and guidance has affected the 'thinking' of RPBs which in a way feel obliged to demonstrate RSSs are 'delivering'. In fact, the government's approach, which borrows heavily from New Public Management performance measurement, has created various problems in regional practice. Amid limited overall resources and for monitoring particularly, monitoring activities are geared first of all towards satisfying government requirements, but the narrow performance measurement focus is of little value for regional planning purposes which would benefit from a more learning-oriented understanding of monitoring (see 7.3.1).

Especially in relation to housing, central government has been using targets, monitoring and the PMM approach as steering devices to pursue its policy objectives. Most of the key changes to the PMM model instituted by the PCPA have been directed at fostering the 'delivery' of housing completions. These include particularly the statutory requirement to monitor housing completions and the use of housing trajectories (cf. 3.2.5 and 3.2.6). Regional practice shows that once a target is set it becomes the yardstick

¹⁴³ While the accountability of monitoring is generally deemed important, regional actors believe monitoring and target setting should not be used as a basis for funding allocations, or as a means of ensuring coverage of national policies in RSSs (i.e. regional actors do not feel that monitoring and targets should be used for (top-down) steering).

against which activities and development 'on the ground' are assessed. Actors are aware of the steering capacity of housing targets and thus seek to influence the targets. The shortfalls and risks involved in using such targets can also be detected in practice. Housing trajectories promote a rather simplistic use of targets and monitoring (in the sense of 'fine tuning'), while in reality it is much more difficult to control the rate of house building (cf. 3.4.2). There is also a risk that housing targets are determined, or at least heavily circumscribed, at national level and lower levels are essentially left to 'deliver' or 'meet' the numbers. In this context, the frequent review of RSSs under PMM has been used to align regional housing targets to national priorities (see growth areas and revisions of RSS housing numbers). As RSSs now include housing targets down to district level, the combined effect of this is that it provides central government with powerful steering mechanisms which contribute to centralisation in planning (see 7.8).

Whilst targets are very influential in relation to housing, the way they are applied in other fields is more ambiguous. On the one hand, many of the targets in current RSSs come effectively from the national level and, together with the core indicators, these are seen as a means of aligning regional policies to national priorities (cf. 4.2.1 and 4.3.2). On the other hand, targets appear to be less important or influential in other policy fields. The setting of targets has not been pursued as a priority and, to some extent, RPBs and GORs seem to have inserted targets into RSSs to comply with government requirements without attaching much value to the targets in practice (in the sense of 'ritualistic compliance', cf. Ashworth et al. 2002, Broadbent 2003).

Overall, assessment of the impact of the performance management agenda leaves a somewhat blurred picture. Its impact on government policy on regional planning has been considerable. NPM language and techniques are central to the government's approach to PMM ('Planning Delivery Grant', assessing 'delivery', 'quantified' targets, 'output' indicators etc.). Government guidance on PMM (ODPM 2002a, ODPM 2005f) already adopts a more balanced tone in that narrow performance measurement thinking is expanded by wider functions for monitoring. In practice, the impact at regional level appears to be much more limited thus far compared to local planning and other parts of the public sector¹⁴⁴. The targets which are used to assess the 'performance' of RPBs, for example, are rather 'soft' (e.g. submission of AMRs on time). Reporting on the core output indicators in AMRs is still patchy (see 7.3.2) and apart from housing completions (especially in the Greater South East) the role of these indicators has been fairly limited from a performance management angle.

Then again, whilst the impact has been more limited than in other fields, regional planning has already been (and may increasingly be) affected by the performance management agenda. It could be argued that, until now, it has been largely about introducing performance management thinking and techniques into government policy on PMM and regional planning practice (business and project planning, targets,

¹⁴⁴ In a way this mirrors the view of Cullingworth and Nadin (2002) who have argued that planning has been less affected by performance management and similar reforms of the public sector than other public services.

indicators, annual monitoring, performance related funding, albeit to a limited extent etc.) without applying them as vigorously as in other fields. However, there is a risk that once performance management thinking and mechanisms have been put in place they may well be used more extensively in future. For example, central government has already utilised the Best Value and PDG systems to steer planning practice and increasingly adjusts these systems to its policy priorities¹⁴⁵.

7.8 State restructuring and the planning system

Against the background of the debates about a restructuring of the state (cf. 2.4), this section aims to draw some conclusions about the role and influence of different levels and different sectors in regional planning under PMM. Various issues which are relevant in this respect have already been touched upon in the course of this chapter. As described earlier, the range of actors involved under the current regional planning model is generally wider than before (see 7.5.2), reflecting the network-based governance arrangements which have been established in the English regions (cf. 2.4.2). However, there are considerable differences in the abilities of actors to cope with the demands arising from the PMM model and, as a result, levels of involvement and influence varies significantly. Ultimately, control rests with the main actors in the process, namely RPBs and central government.

The distribution of power between different levels is a major theme in state restructuring debates, and as regards the British planning system this has focused on the role and influence of the national as opposed to lower levels (see 2.3 and 2.4). While many of the changes introduced since the late 1970s have tended to centralise control (i.e. upwards to national level), the PPG11 model was to increase 'regional ownership' of regional planning (see 3.2.2). In practice, the RPBs make many of the decisions and, together with other regional actors, carry out most of the work involved in regional planning under PMM. This incorporates the preparation of draft RSSs, including technical and consultation work, the development of implementation plans and activities towards implementing RSSs as well as monitoring activities. The present make up of the RPBs and the provisions in the PCPA place local authorities in a central position within the regional structure (see 7.1.2 and 7.5.2), albeit together with other 'stakeholders'.

Although there is a genuine regional, 'bottom-up' element, it has been shown that central government possesses numerous levers under the current PMM model to control or at least strongly shape regional practice (see 7.6). The frequent review of RSSs especially allows government to exercise control over both the process and substance of regional planning, and has been used to considerable extent to align RSSs with government policy and priorities (see 4.4.1 and 7.4). There are both constants and variations in

¹⁴⁵ In the wake of the government's housing agenda housing completions have already become one of the criteria for determining PDG allocations. Recently the government has announced its intention to give housing completions even more weight in allocating the PDG. 'For 2007/8 we propose that a significantly higher proportion of the grant will reward housing delivery, and that housing will play a key part in future local authority incentives' (DCLG 2006b: 3).

the level of government steering and intervention, in terms of geographies and 'fields' of intervention. Procedural, and particularly timetable, issues of RSS revisions have been recurring concerns of central government across the regions. RPBs have generally been under tremendous pressure to carry out RSS reviews within short timescales.

While such process steering has been virtually universal, government has also been 'selective' in the way it has applied the control mechanisms provided by the review element of PMM. For example, in those cases where government has had a particular interest in putting policies in place quickly (e.g. South East growth areas and BCS in the West Midlands) it has requested 'streamlined' working arrangements to facilitate fast progress. It has been argued that there is geographic variation in central government control of regional planning and development, with the Greater South East being a key area of government intervention (Haughton and Counsell 2004). Indeed, RSS review activities have been particularly intense in the Greater South East (see 4.4.1) and government has sought to use both partial reviews (for the growth areas) and 'early' full RSS revisions (in the East of England, East Midlands, South East and South West regions) to implement its housing agenda.

Overall, the balance of power in the planning hierarchy appears to have changed in various ways, and the PMM model in regional planning has been one of the factors which have contributed to this restructuring. Generally the regional tier of planning has become more important (an RSS is a part of the statutory development plan, including district level housing figures and greater sub-regional detail, principle of general conformity etc.), with an increased responsibility for implementation (and thus in a sense increased 'power to transform', cf. Morgan 2004). While (strategic) local authorities still play an influential role in regional planning, there is less scope for diversion at local level and less control over sub-regional planning than prior to the PCPA (cf. Baker and Roberts 2004, Marshall *forthcoming*, Roberts and Baker 2004). Central government appears to have benefited from the new planning system. It can prescribe regional and local practice through legislation, policy and guidance ('power to decide', see also 7.9) and can draw on various mechanisms to directly control and intervene in spatial planning and development (e.g. RSS review process, implementation activities such as growth areas). As shown in the empirical research and elsewhere (e.g. Haughton and Counsell 2004, Marshall 2002a, 2004), central government has been willing to use its powers, including those provided by the PMM model, to pursue its policy agendas and ensure alignment of activities at lower levels. Overall, the restructuring of the planning system and governance arrangements in the English regions therefore has led to a centralisation of control.

7.9 Governmentality, knowledge and power in planning

This section reflects on the practice of PMM from a governmentality perspective and draws some conclusions about the way in which information is used in regional planning (cf. 2.5). A key question in this respect is the extent to which PMM can be seen as a 'neutral', 'technical' tool as opposed to a 'governmental' tool which is used to discipline actors' behaviour. In line with Strategic Choice theory (cf. 3.3), many of those involved perceive PMM in regional planning as a technical instrument aimed at improving the quality of policy and action (see 7.5.3). This includes, for example, the use of monitoring and other information which is central to the present practice of regional planning (see below).

However, PMM also functions as a governmental tool which directs the behaviour of actors. Many of those involved in regional planning appear to have internalised much of the thinking, language and practices which underlie the government's approach to PMM. There is a commonly-held understanding that regional planning should be a continuous process which is flexible, responsive and implementation-focused and draws on monitoring to demonstrate that RSSs 'deliver'. This alignment of views to the government's preferred approach has been achieved through a variety of means, including legislation and government policy, good practice guidance and the day-to-day advice and direction provided by government officials. An example of this is the notion of 'evidence based policy making' which has permeated (and been absorbed in) regional planning debates and the thinking of those involved. Although it can be argued that the use of 'evidence' (in the form of studies, monitoring etc.) is by no means new to planning, the emphasis on proofing the 'soundness' of arguments and supporting them with 'evidence' has a clearly disciplining effect (cf. Healy 2002, Solesbury 2002). Arguments tend to be accepted in policy debates only if they are based on 'evidence' which meets certain 'formal' requirements or standards, while arguments which are not 'evidence based' in this way find it difficult to compete.

In the light of this, the introduction of PMM can be understood as an attempt at regulating regional planning practice by utilising the self-governing capacity of actors. Government has defined a certain way of thinking and behaving and introduced related governmental tools (such as review timetables, targets, indicators and monitoring systems) which are geared towards its specific objectives for planning (flexibility, responsiveness, speeded-up processes, housing delivery etc.)¹⁴⁶. However, while actors have internalised much of the thinking of PMM and largely 'play to the rules' defined by government, the government's preferred approach does not penetrate regional practice without being contested. In some cases regional actors comply with government guidance in a ritualistic way without really internalising the ways of thinking embedded in that guidance (e.g. use of targets, see 7.7), in other cases the government's preferred approach is actively being challenged and reformulated (e.g. the way information is used, see below).

¹⁴⁶ This mirrors findings in relation to the introduction of the PMM in planning for housing (Murdoch 2000, Murdoch and Abram 2002, Rydin 2003b) and of sustainability appraisals in planning (Counsell and Haughton 2003a, Haughton and Counsell 2004).

The governmentality concept stresses the importance of indirect steering through mobilisation of the self-governing capacity of actors. Whilst the above examples show that such control mechanisms are at play under the PMM model, government also uses more direct, overt means of control. The PMM approach gives government various opportunities to directly control and intervene in regional planning practice, including the initiation of RSS reviews (topics, timescales etc.), the control of the revision process (arrangements, timetables etc.) and the finalisation of RSSs (see 7.6 and 7.8).

It has been described above how the use of information is a central feature of PMM. The empirical work highlights a set of issues which reflect theoretical concerns around the use of information (cf. 2.5.2), namely the need to distinguish between the role information *can*, *should* and *does* play in planning. In the view of many of those involved, the increased emphasis on monitoring and 'evidence based policy' under PMM can help to improve decision making by putting it on a 'technical' or 'objective' basis. The case studies have shown that information is quite important and influential in policy debates. Actors use information to support their own arguments and to challenge the positions of other actors, making claims to 'rationality', 'realism' and 'evidence'. As they recognise the importance of information in decision making, actors produce and seek to get involved in the production of information such as studies and 'technical' work underpinning RSSs.

The debate about levels of housing growth in the South East is a vivid example of the ways in which information can be produced and used for particular purposes. For example, actors undertake studies to 'augment' the evidence base, be it to boost their positions and/or to counter the arguments of others in policy debates. Not only is information produced for particular purposes, but actors may also reproduce information selectively, interpret the same data in different ways and draw different conclusions depending on their views and objectives. Moreover, information has to compete with other factors in decision making processes. Although it is hard to separate a 'technical'/'non-political' from a 'political' sphere in the first place (Campbell and Marshall 2005, Gottweiss 2003), regional practice illustrates how 'technical' decision making can be strongly shaped by its political and social context and power structures (see e.g. decision of SEERA on housing numbers in the draft SEP against 'technical' advice of its officers). On balance, however, the essence of these findings is not a rejection of the use of information in planning, but rather a reminder of the problems and challenges involved in attempts at making 'evidence based policy'. While the PMM approach can help to improve planning from a 'technical' angle, it needs to be recognised that PMM is not just a 'technical' tool and that its design and operation is shaped by wider considerations and power structures.

8 Conclusions, reflections and recommendations

This study has investigated the operation of the PMM approach which has been introduced in English regional planning since 1997. The aim has been to disclose and explain the functioning and implications of PMM in practice, and to link it to the wider political, administrative and governmental context in which regional planning operates. In particular, the research has been led by the following objectives (see 1.2):

- 1) to describe and analyse how the PMM approach in regional planning works in practice, what is working well and what problems exist;
- 2) to disclose the implications of PMM for planning policy and practice in technical/methodological, organisational, governance/power and substantive terms;
- 3) to understand and explain the practice of PMM in terms of how the functioning and implications of this approach can be explained;
- 4) to examine how the PMM system works in different English regions and how any differences and similarities between regions can be explained; and
- 5) to contribute to developing PMM by devising recommendations for improved policy and practice.

These objectives interrelate very closely and therefore, as throughout the thesis, are dealt with in an integrated and cross-cutting way in this chapter. The chapter follows from, and is closely intertwined with, the synthesis and analysis in the previous chapter. The preceding chapter has already pulled together the main practical and theoretical issues of concern to this research, demonstrated in detail how PMM works in practice and sought to explain current practice and the factors which affect the operation of PMM. Against this background, the first part of this chapter (8.1) draws together and reflects on key findings about the operation and various implications of PMM. This includes reflections on how the operation and implications of PMM can be explained. On the basis of this, the second part of the chapter (8.2) develops recommendations as to how national policy and regional practice of PMM could be developed further.

8.1 The trajectory of PMM in regional planning so far

Although the PMM approach slowly began to take shape in 1998, it is still 'early days' to assess fully its operation, 'success' or problems, as many new and repeatedly changing requirements have had to be fulfilled (cf. 3.2). Given the scale and frequency of change, and limited previous experience with PMM, much of the practice to date has been about 'road testing' the new regional planning model. The priorities in regional practice have been to set up arrangements (e.g. working structures, monitoring frameworks,

implementation plans) and to prepare and revise new style RPG/RSSs (i.e. focus on the 'plan'/'review' element, while monitoring and implementation activities have progressed less). Those involved have made remarkable efforts and steep learning curves, and much has been achieved in a short period of time amid resource constraints and constant change at regional and other levels. The research has had to deal with a 'running target' and, consequently, the findings and conclusions are to some extent tentative.

The concept of PMM first emerged in regional planning debates in relation to housing, but a central argument in this research is that with the revision of PPG11 in the late 1990s/early 2000s a 'mainstreaming' of PMM has occurred (see 1.1 and 3.2.4). The study has shown that key ideas and elements of PMM are in fact central to current national policy and regional practice. Regional planning has become a continuous process of strategy preparation, implementation, monitoring and review. The continuous planning process (which draws on the use of targets, monitoring and frequent and 'speeded-up' RSS revisions) is deemed to increase flexibility and responsiveness, bring about more up-to-date strategies and enhanced implementation. It has been highlighted that there are clear differences between the government's PMM model and theoretical approaches to PMM, in particular as regards how responsiveness is to be achieved (see 7.1.1 and below). However, as far as key concepts and components of the government's approach are concerned, it can be said that PMM has indeed been 'mainstreamed' in regional planning.

A key issue in the theory and practice of PMM is how responsiveness can be achieved, in particular at regional level. As explained above, there are marked differences between the PPS11 approach and Strategic Choice theory (see 3.6.1). The latter understands 'managing as action' and distinguishes between strategy and tactics, reflected in a 'division of labour' between strategic level (of strategy making) and operational level (of tactical decisions). While there are attempts to adopt such an approach in regional practice, for example through phasing policies, housing trajectories and annual 'advice' on housing supply (see 7.1.1), these are not pursued widely and face various difficulties. This is partly due to 'practical' problems, e.g. a lack of data to inform phasing decisions 'in real time' (cf. 3.6.1). Very importantly, there are questions whether such 'fine tuning' is possible given the 'structural' limitations involved. These include incomplete knowledge about spatial systems, time lags in policy implementation and the politics of decision making (e.g. difficulties at regional level in taking strong decisions to control the rate of development at local level, see 5.2.1).

In contrast, the PPS11 model aims to achieve responsiveness principally through a continuous planning process and, particularly, through frequent and fast RSS reviews (see 3.2.4). In the sense of 'managing as review', RSSs are to adopt a 'folder' approach comprising a core strategy and a series of topics/themes to allow fast revision of parts of an RSS. This approach has been dominant in national policy and regional practice as RSSs have been continuously under review and especially partial review (see 4.4.1). The 'plan, monitor and review' model can have various benefits. Partial revisions in particular provide the

opportunity to deal with issues when required and thus to escape the restraints of fixed review cycles. Pressing matters can be tackled more quickly and new information and changing circumstances responded to faster, which means that policies can be in place earlier compared to a comprehensive RSS review. In addition, selective revisions can also be used to fill gaps and overcome deficits in an existing RSS, and issues can be treated in greater detail. In procedural terms, the partial review model allows RPBs to control and manage the workload involved in revising RSSs.

While RSSs tend to be revised more frequently and faster compared to the pre-PPG11 system, the review-based approach to achieving responsiveness entails various, often structural limitations and challenges. There are limits to the speed and thus responsiveness of RSS reviews, including partial revisions, as they are more time and resource consuming than government policy suggests. This is due to the numerous formal requirements of the current PMM model (formal stages in the review process, technical work, sub-regional working etc.) and, very importantly, the political and governance processes involved. Planning is not just a 'technical' process run by autonomous bureaucrats, but a political process involving a multitude of actors demanding time to consult actors, broker deals, make decisions etc. In this light frequent RSS reviews also open the door for constant challenging of the existing strategy which can create uncertainty and a lack of 'buy-in' to the RSS. The interconnectedness of issues inherent in spatial systems and planning is a major issue of concern, especially as regards partial RSS revisions. The extent to which parts can be altered without changing the rest of an RSS is clearly limited as issues are intertwined and thus need to be considered (and revised) jointly. Besides coordination of substance, the partial review approach also raises concerns about coordination of process and the ability of actors to get involved, particularly when multiple revisions are conducted at the same time.

The government introduced PMM, especially in relation to housing, as a proclaimed shift away from what has been described as a 'predict and provide' approach and to achieve a more flexible and responsive planning system (cf. 3.2). Compared to the pre-PPG11 model, regional planning has become more flexible and responsive as a result of the continuous planning process and in particular the frequent review of RSSs. An important question which has been raised by the study is what the increased flexibility is actually used for and by whom. In part it has been used to adapt RSSs to changing circumstances and new information (such as studies carried out by the RPBs) and thus to improve the strategies and to keep them up-to-date. The study has also shown that government has utilised the increased flexibility and its central role in regional planning to make sure RSSs reflect national policy and priorities (see below). In this respect particularly the case of the South East of England suggests that the flexibility offered by PMM has been used, to some extent, to insert the government's goals for house building (which essentially still follow a 'predict and provide' logic) into regional practice (this has been termed a 'plan and deliver' approach, see 6.2.1 and 7.1.1).

Government policy and the theory of PMM assign significant importance to monitoring and the use of information. In practice, RPBs and others have made substantial progress in setting up and improving monitoring systems and in producing and using monitoring information (e.g. identification of issues that need to be addressed by policy or action). However, monitoring faces considerable problems and challenges, some of which are 'technical' or 'practical' such as data availability, expertise in, understandings of, and commitment to monitoring, as well as insufficient links to policy making and implementation. So far the practice of monitoring has been driven strongly by government requirements, especially the timetable for AMR submission and the emphasis on monitoring 'delivery'. Given these and related constraints (e.g. time, resources, other priorities), monitoring activities tend to be geared first towards meeting government requirements and risk falling seriously short of serving regional needs. The government's approach tends towards a narrow New Public Management control function of monitoring but what is needed in practice is monitoring as a tool for learning. RPBs make efforts to use monitoring increasingly for their own purposes – resources, expertise and commitment permitting – but due to 'competing demands' between the elements of PMM, monitoring still tends to get neglected (see 7.3.2 and below). Whilst monitoring can inform decision making, the research has corroborated more fundamental concerns about the role information can and should play and how it is used (and misused) in practice (cf. 7.9).

PMM relies on the interplay of its elements but amid resource constraints these are in a way 'competing' with each other. So far the revision of RSSs has been dominating regional practice. As the high workload involved in the review process takes up much of the available resources, monitoring and implementation activities have been taking the 'backseat'. It could be argued that once the first 'complete' RSSs are in place (i.e. gaps in existing RSSs closed etc.) review activities may become less dominant. On the other hand, experience to date suggests that the problem may well be 'structural' and thus persist. The frequent revision of RSSs is likely to continue as RPBs aim to respond to changing circumstances and, probably more importantly, as government uses reviews to adapt RSSs to national policy. Most of the 'early' RSS revisions have been conducted at the government's behest, and as reviews allow government to insert its priorities into regional practices it is quite likely that the frequent, almost constant revision of RSSs will continue. Thus the shortage of monitoring and implementation work may well remain, raising concerns about the feasibility of PMM in practice under current circumstances.

The study has shown the progress made to date in adopting a PMM approach but also identified major problems and challenges. To a large degree these challenges and problems can be explained by various fundamental tensions and contradictions inherent in the government's model of PMM. In particular, there is a considerable mismatch between what is required and what is available to fulfil these requirements. This includes a mismatch between the considerable number of formal requirements involved in regional planning and the level of available resources (staff, funding, time expertise, technologies etc.). Formal

obligations on RPBs and others have been increasing continuously (see 7.5.1), but this has not been matched with a similar increase in resources. Resource constraints and the problems these cause are evident, for example, in the postponement of RSS review processes, the neglect of monitoring and implementation activities, gaps in RSSs and difficulties in facilitating involvement and partnership working.

Significant tensions also exist in relation to one of the key planks of the government's PMM model, namely the review-based approach to responsiveness. On the one hand, the current model envisages (and relies on) fast, selective RSS revisions and regions have been under tremendous pressure from government to turn these aspirations into reality. On the other hand, the government has put a 'very formalistic' system in place which entails many requirements in relation to both substantive and procedural issues. The large number of formal requirements works against fast, selective reviews which means that the present PMM model is geared strongly towards full RSS reviews.

The time requirements of the PPS11 model also create considerable tensions. There is huge pressure on RPBs and others to 'achieve or better' the timetables set by government (both for review and monitoring). However, the drive towards 'speed' does not sit easily with the large number of formal requirements. Government seems to have underestimated (or ignored) the amount of time required to undertake PMM which arises among other things from the complexity of the issues involved, and the political nature of planning. The constant 'rush' of the process also affects the quality of policy and action, e.g. in form of a lack of time to produce an 'evidence base' or to integrate different streams of policy work. Moreover there are conflicts between the push for speedy, streamlined processes and the aim to achieve high levels of involvement and to build 'regional ownership' of RSSs. In practice, the complex, fast-moving and labour-intensive nature of the PMM process contributes to considerable differences in the level of involvement and influence of actors (see 7.5.2).

The empirical work has raised several issues in relation to the organisational arrangements for regional planning and PMM. As explained above, there is a mismatch between the requirements involved in PMM and the limited resources available to those tasked to operate the system (staff, funding, time and expertise). As regards the working structures of RPBs, both centralised and decentralised models possess strengths and weaknesses. In some cases there is a lack of sufficient central capacity to coordinate and facilitate the PMM process. In other cases the working arrangements make it more difficult to draw on the resources of local authorities. Then again, there are problems when the regional planning process depends overly on the local level given varying degrees of resources and commitment as well as liability to pressure 'from below'.

There generally tends to be a lack of 'space' for linking the monitoring, policy making and implementation elements of PMM. For example, the analysis and interpretation of monitoring information is largely left to individual officers, while the contributions from policy officer working groups are very limited. This can be

explained to some extent by 'practical' problems such as the dominance of review activities and a lack of time to make connections between monitoring and policy (e.g. caused by the deadline for submitting AMRs). There are also more structural limits, including incomplete understanding of spatial systems, limited experience in strategic planning, deep-rooted ways of thinking and working (e.g. monitoring seen as 'bean counting', working in 'silos') and other imperatives such as political considerations (e.g. reluctance to identify 'tough' action on the basis of monitoring).

One of the research objectives has been to investigate the substantive outcomes of the PMM approach. It is still quite early to come to firm conclusions in this respect (see 7.5.3). There is a general expectation that PMM can help to improve the quality of policy and action as well as the implementation of RSSs. For example, the frequent review of RSS means that policy can be 'updated' more regularly and thus adjusted to changing circumstances and new requirements. On the other hand, problems and structural constraints remain which limit the extent to which PMM can 'make a difference' in substantive terms. These include, for example, the missing links between the PMM elements, and dependence on autonomous actors as regards the actual implementation of RSSs. The study also raises challenging questions about the relationship and balance between responsiveness and longer-term guidance. While the continuous review of RSSs allows frequent adjustment to new information and changing circumstances, it also means that regional planning policy becomes more 'fluid' (and vulnerable to opportunistic behaviour) which can create uncertainty and a lack of sign-up to the RSS. There is also the fundamental question of *what* regional planning should be responsive to. From a Strategic Choice angle this refers to new information and changing circumstances. In practice, however, it has often meant responding to (i.e. bringing RSSs in line with) developments in central government policy (see 7.4.1). In the spirit of draft PPS3, Barker I and II, it implies responding to (i.e. being supportive of) market mechanisms and economic concerns. Thus, if PMM is going to continue to work in that direction, it is likely to serve government priorities and fall short of being a tool which regions can use to improve their planning activities.

The research has set out to establish and explain regional differences and similarities in the operation of PMM. One could have assumed that the way PMM works in practice would vary significantly between regions (cf. Brindley et al. 1996). There are indeed some marked differences between regions, for example, in terms of the form and extent to which the monitoring, implementation and review elements of PMM have been progressed. These variations are caused by a variety of factors such as different regional priorities, working structures and traditions of monitoring, and the fact that regions are at different stages in the planning process. Differences in the working arrangements of the RPBs, for instance, have led to varying levels of involvement of different actors (e.g. the role of local authorities) and affect the ability of RPB secretariats to coordinate the planning process (e.g. coordinate multiple partial reviews).

Although differences exist, the similarities among regions are more striking. Many of the points raised so far in this chapter apply generally across the country, as regions face similar issues, problems and

challenges in running the PMM model. Similarities can be found in relation to all aspects of PMM, including monitoring (e.g. the appropriateness of indicators), the review process (e.g. policy coordination and the organisation of RSS revisions), the interplay between the elements of PMM, procedural issues (e.g. level of involvement of different actors) and substantive outcomes (e.g. issues around responsiveness vs. long-term guidance). These similarities can be explained by various factors. These include common 'practical'/methodological' problems (e.g. availability of monitoring data) and similar resource constraints (e.g. staff, time, data, expertise). The national legal and policy framework has been very influential (e.g. monitoring policy and good practice guidance) and government has used its central position under the current arrangements to align regional practice to its preferred approach and policy priorities (e.g. frequent review of RSSs, tight timetables, housing numbers in RSSs and monitoring 'delivery').

The balance between central government objectives and control on the one hand, and regional needs and discretion on the other has indeed emerged as a key issue in the practice of PMM across England. While RPBs and other regional actors make many decisions and undertake most of the work in the PMM process, government strongly controls regional practice and ensures it implements national priorities. Regions operate within tight constraints set by government legislation, policy and guidance, GORs provide firm steer during those elements of the process which are formally in the hands of RPBs, and the centre directly intervenes by finalising RSSs. The amount of central regulation and control has created various problems and challenges for regional practice. As explained earlier, monitoring activities are heavily circumscribed by national requirements which limits the ability of RPBs to use monitoring for their own needs. Regions have also had little discretion in relation to the review process, as government has triggered RSS revisions and provided strong steer on substance and process. Overall, central government has used the levers provided by PMM (e.g. responsiveness through frequent RSS reviews) and its central position under the current arrangements for regional planning to align regional practice to national priorities.

The study has demonstrated that the introduction and functioning of the current PMM model have been strongly shaped by the wider agendas and priorities of central government (see 7.6 to 7.8). This includes key themes of successive reforms of the public sector in Britain such as centralised steering, decentralisation of 'delivery' and the introduction of performance management thinking, language and methods. These ideas do not sit easily with theoretical approaches to strategic spatial planning and have created various contradictions and problems in planning practice (e.g. narrow performance measurement view vs. learning function of monitoring).

The PMM model has also been driven by key themes of planning reform, including speed, flexibility and centralisation of control in planning. In a sense, the trajectory of PMM mirrors quite closely the development of central government agendas for planning and regionalisation (cf. 2.3.2). One could argue

that when introduced in the late 1990s/early 2000s PMM was part of an attempt at creating a strategic, spatial and strong regional planning system which was embedded in the wider regional agenda. While satisfying government's ambitions to make planning more speedy and flexible, PMM under PPG11 supported the new strategic spatial planning approach (e.g. monitoring to inform policy making and implementation). In the wake of the 2001 Planning Green Paper, Barker I and the PCPA, the PMM model has been bended to some extent towards the government's 'delivery' and housing agendas (e.g. statutory monitoring of housing completions).

It could be argued that in drawing up their ideas for regional planning in the late 1990s/early 2000s officials in the planning ministry had the wider regional agenda in mind. The beefed-up regional tier of planning was to become a central instrument in the armoury of strong English regions. In practice, regional planning has indeed become very influential in relation to the local level of planning. However, in the absence of more powerful directly elected regional government, it is central government which uses the levers provided by the new system (including PMM) to pursue its priorities. In this interpretation, the restructuring of the planning system (and state) in England has brought about a situation in which regional planning is 'centrally controlled and regionally delivered'¹⁴⁷. This raises fundamental questions about whom regional planning and the PMM approach should actually serve and what balance between national and regional priorities is needed. Before these and other issues are addressed in the recommendations section of this chapter, it may be useful to recap very briefly where we have got to and how we got there.

The analysis of the operation and implications of PMM in regional planning has produced a fairly ambiguous picture. On the one hand, the present PMM model reflects various elements of a strategic spatial planning system and possesses potential and concrete benefits for planning (cf. 3.3 to 3.6). These arise, or are expected to arise, from an approach which is more responsive to change, draws more widely on monitoring and information, frames the policy making and implementation activities of other actors and aims to achieve more inclusive and deliberate practices. On the other hand, regional practice has shown that the current PMM model entails major problems and challenges. Some of these could be described as the 'teething problems' of a new system, others as operational or 'practical' limitations which can be explained, for example, by the way the PMM model is run in practice. Then there are wider issues such as methodological and conceptual limitations involved in policy making, implementation and monitoring. Many of the problems which have been identified can be assigned to structural limitations in the way the current PMM model is designed and resourced. It has been explained earlier that there are various inherent tensions and conflicting or essentially incompatible requirements. These include a mismatch between what is expected and the resources available to achieve this and the major problems created by the strong steer and intervention in regional practice by the centre. The requirements on those responsible for running the system have been frequently changing, unrealistic and inconsistent, reflecting the agendas,

¹⁴⁷ To borrow from Tewdwr-Jones (2002: 294) who, in describing centralisation of control in planning, referred to a system of 'centrally controlled, locally formulated development plans'.

priorities and pressures which have shaped the government's approach to planning. This has created a regional planning system which faces fundamental problems and, as it currently stands, appears to be in many ways somewhat unworkable.

8.2 Possible ways ahead

One of the objectives of this research has been to contribute to the development of the PMM model. This final section of the thesis aims to show possible ways ahead by devising recommendations for improved policy and practice. The research has analysed and explained the operation and implications of PMM, how the government's approach affects, and is applied in, regional practice, what works well and what problems exist. Given that the research has applied demanding standards to assess current practice which are based on theories of strategic planning, it may not be surprising that many problems and challenges have been identified. The critique should be understood as constructive criticism in that the theoretically informed assessment helps to explain why certain problems exist and to show where action to improve PMM is required.

As shown above, a range of factors shape and help to explain the practice of PMM and these need to be borne in mind in developing and implementing any recommendations. Some of the identified shortfalls are 'teething problems', caused by the shift to the PMM model which will possibly ease as (and if) the system settles. Other problems are the result of somewhat contradictory or unworkable elements of PMM (e.g. formal requirements vs. resources/time) which require changes to the way in which the PMM model is designed, resourced and run. And some of the shortfalls can be explained by wider determinants which demand more structural changes. The remainder of this chapter sets some markers for ways to improve government policy and regional practice of PMM. These draw on the findings of the empirical work and the theoretical framework that underpins this study, including the 'design principles' for strategic spatial planning which have been developed in Chapter 3¹⁴⁸. First, some overarching, more fundamental recommendations are made which aim to address identified structural problems and challenges. This is followed by more detailed recommendations relating to operational aspects of PMM. Whilst these more detailed changes are important and necessary, they will only work if the structural problems and challenges are addressed as well.

Regional planning and the planning system as a whole need time to settle and should not be subject to constant reform. The planning system has been undergoing considerable and continuous change and those involved have been facing an uphill struggle to meet the numerous new and constantly changing requirements which arise from PMM and related developments. The practice of PMM has been very much a learning process so far, as arrangements have been put in place and modified, new methods and ways

¹⁴⁸ The design principles can be found in particular in Figure 15, section 3.3.4, section 3.4.1, Figure 20, section 3.5.3, Figure 25 and section 3.6.2.

of working has been tested and skills and experience have been acquired. There are signs that regional practice has been improving (e.g. as regards monitoring), but it will still take some time (and other measures, see below) for the PMM system to work and probably even more time for it to show effects 'on the ground'. In this light, it appears to be too early to draw conclusions as to whether 'major structural reform' as envisaged in the second Barker review is required or sensible (cf. Dewar 2006, PlanningResource 2006f). Indeed, the interim report of Barker II (Barker 2006) provided little hard evidence of any need for such reform.

Giving the planning system time to settle does not perhaps sound fundamental, but this links to wider concerns. The constant changes to the planning system inflicted by central government have followed very closely the twists and turns in government policy and priorities. These have not just reflected initiatives coming out of the planning ministry, but the planning system has been strongly (and increasingly) shaped by the agendas of other parts of government. In particular, the recent and current waves of reform from the 2001 Planning Green Paper right through to Barker II have been driven by the Treasury and economic concerns. Given the relatively weak standing of the planning ministry in government, planning appears almost to be a 'play thing' of central government, subject to various, often competing or even inconsistent pressures and agendas. This has led to frequent changes and has created a planning system which shows inherent tensions, e.g. speed vs. involvement, policy integration vs. focus on housing delivery, sustainable development vs. market-oriented approach or regional ownership vs. centralisation. In order to address these tensions, which have contributed to the problems of the PMM model, the planning system and practice should not be driven by pressures from the 'outside', be it the Treasury or the New Public Management school. (It is hard to imagine the planning ministry telling the Treasury how to run its budget.) What is needed is a much more consistent approach to planning, the design of which needs to be driven from within the planning ministry and profession.

The recommendation that the planning system needs time to settle does not imply that the situation should remain as it is, or that no changes to planning and the PMM model are required. In light of the considerable problems and challenges described throughout the study, there is indeed a need to modify and equip the system properly in order to turn an, in many respects, 'unworkable' system into one that works. Drawing on the theories of PMM in strategic spatial planning (see 3.3 to 3.6), many of the recommendations that follow aim to retain useful elements of the present system, and improve them, whilst addressing those elements and factors which work against the proper functioning of a PMM approach. However, these recommendations do not imply only minor modifications on the edges, but question some of the key characteristics of the current arrangements for and practice of regional planning.

A key question which has run across the analysis is whom PMM and regional planning should serve and, in particular, to what extent it should be used to pursue national priorities as opposed to regional needs. Not only has regional practice been heavily circumscribed by the national legislative and policy framework

(e.g. monitoring activities), but central government has also used the levers provided by PMM to directly implement its agendas (e.g. alignment of RSSs to government priorities). Government policy, steering and intervention have created various and fundamental problems in regional practice, for example, in the form of contradictory, overly prescriptive or unfeasible requirements. There is a need for greater regional discretion in the design and operation of PMM. This applies to the components of PMM and many of the decisions which have to be made in running the system, including the purpose of and arrangements for monitoring, the monitoring process, the use of targets, as well as decisions involved in the 'manage' element, e.g. whether to review or implement, what to review, when and how (see below).

The study has shown that resource requirements and availability are key issues. There is a significant mismatch between the increasing number of formal requirements involved in regional (and local) planning and the level of resources available to meet these obligations. The current PMM model is very demanding in relation to a wide range of resources, including staffing levels, time, funding, knowledge, skills, technologies and methods. But these demands are not matched by the available level of resources. The tensions and problems this mismatch between requirements and resources causes are very evident, for example, in respect of time constraints (see 7.5.1). Government seems to have underestimated (or ignored) the resource implications of its PMM model and put in place unrealistic, conflicting or even incompatible requirements which has created an almost unworkable system.

Therefore, government in particular needs to pay more regard to the resource demands arising from the complexities, large number of actors and number of formal 'hoops' involved in preparing, implementing, monitoring and revising RSSs. A more even balance between requirements and resources is needed which could be achieved in numerous ways, including 1) reducing the number of formal requirements (such as less formalistic RSS revision processes, see below), 2) a less prescriptive/centralised system which gives regions greater discretion, 3) increasing the amount of resources available to RPBs and others charged with running the planning system at regional and local levels (including staff, funding, time, skills and technologies), and 4) providing time and support (e.g. training, appropriate guidance and tools) to facilitate learning and the development of appropriate skills and working practices. In order to produce 'quality' – in terms of both process (transparent and inclusive processes, partnership working) and substance (RSS policy, monitoring and implementation) – the planning system needs to be properly resourced. Although this refers to a wide understanding of 'resources', staff resources are a key issue. RPBs and local planning authorities need to be staffed adequately and the shortage of strategic spatial planners and thinkers needs to be addressed (an emphasis on development control, Best Value/PDG relevant tasks and one year planning degrees at Universities work in the wrong direction). Within the framework of these overarching recommendations, a series of more detailed actions and modifications are necessary.

The way in which a responsive planning system can and should be achieved is a key issue. The Strategic Choice concept suggests that responsiveness is first and foremost a matter for tactical decisions at implementation level, guided by a strategic framework at regional level (see 3.3). It is important to keep RSSs up-to-date and relevant through periodic (not constant) review, to adjust them to changing circumstances and new information. However, strategy review should not be the principal mechanism to achieve responsiveness. While partial RSS reviews can have advantages, and mean that revised policies can be in place more quickly (compared to full revisions), a considerable degree of caution is needed, not only on the grounds of concern about substantive and procedural coordination, but also as regards the actual responsiveness of a 'manage as review' based approach (see 7.4). The present system is fairly formalistic and, in order to enable (and encourage) regular RSSs revision, the review process needs to be less burdensome. For example, the selective updating of elements of an RSS could be facilitated by a less formal and rigidly prescribed process in which RPBs have more discretion as to what stages should be run through (e.g. omission of the EiP stage) and how the process should be organised.

However, due to inherent limitations in the speed of strategy reviews¹⁴⁹, responsiveness should be achieved primarily through shorter-term tactical action at lower levels. For regional planning this means that responsiveness should be built into the RSS (cf. 3.6.1). Although there are few working examples in current practice, the West Midlands' proposed approach to controlling the rate of housing development could be one way forward (see 5.2.1). For example, the RSS could set the strategic framework for housing development (i.e. level and broad distribution of housing numbers), while responsiveness is achieved through annual monitoring of housing demand and supply and the issuing of 'advice' to local authorities on the required rate of land supply/release. Admittedly, there are practical and structural limitations to such a model, e.g. a shortage of up-to-date data especially on the demand side, the politics involved in controlling the rate of development and the limited 'grip' of Regional Assemblies. But an overly prescriptive RSS, which can only be altered through review, does not offer a feasible alternative to achieving responsiveness (cf. Wenban-Smith 2002a).

Whilst much of the actual 'managing' should be left to lower levels, RSSs still need to be reviewed on a regular basis. A number of points should be considered in planning and conducting RSS revisions. So far RSSs have been almost continuously under review, which has helped to fill gaps in existing strategies and to adapt them to the new planning system. However, the continuing review has also caused problems and challenges, e.g. a lack of resources for monitoring and implementation work and concerns about a lack of policy stability. In order to fulfil their function of providing strategic, longer-term guidance, RSSs need to be granted some policy stability so that policies can feed into implementation activities. Once the first set of full RSSs is in place, the system should be given time to settle and, instead of being in a constant state of change, RSSs are likely to require regular but less frequent review. RPBs and in particular central

¹⁴⁹ In fact, the production of RSSs is not particularly slow compared to strategic plan making in other countries. In German regional planning, for example, the preparation of regional plans can easily take eight years or longer (Preuß 2003).

government need to consider carefully what should trigger a revision (and what should not) and how the objective of having up-to-date (i.e. regularly reviewed) RSSs affects, and needs to be balanced with, the aim to provide longer-term guidance. So far, RSS reviews have been used too much by central government to adjust regional policy to national priorities. Regions should have more discretion as to what their priorities are, and whether they see a need to review an RSS or rather to work towards its implementation.

Important lessons can also be learnt in relation to the organisation of the review process. This refers particularly to the question of whether partial as opposed to full(er) RSS revisions should be undertaken. When planning a review, those involved need to develop a clear understanding of 1) what issues need to be covered (taking into account e.g. the results of monitoring), 2) how these issues interrelate (including the links to and the likely effects on the existing strategy and any other RSS reviews which are underway), 3) which matters can be dealt with separately and which need to be treated jointly as well as 4) who needs to be involved in the revision process and how. This is important to ensure coordination (of substance and process) and to achieve transparency, and thus to make it easier for actors to keep an overview of what is going on and when, how it fits together, and how they can get involved and contribute. As described earlier, a significant degree of caution is needed as regards partial reviews. The scope for treating issues in separate reviews is often limited due to their interconnectedness. In cases where partial reviews are deemed appropriate the number of separate reviews needs to be kept to a minimum, and issues/reviews should be 'bundled' to reduce the complexity of the process and ensure connections between issues are made.

The increased emphasis on 'evidence based policy', 'soundness' and monitoring under the PMM model can help to improve policy making and implementation, whilst the shortfalls and limitations of the use of information need to be borne in mind (see 2.5 and 7.9). Monitoring should first and foremost serve regional needs, and this needs to be reflected in central government requirements. RPBs do not reject the statutory obligation to prepare AMRs but they should be granted greater flexibility in terms of both the process (especially timetable) and substance of monitoring. A less rigid date for submitting AMRs would give regional actors more time for analysis, and to adapt monitoring activities to overall work pressures. Some of the core output indicators are 'bread and butter' indicators which RPBs use anyway but, again, in selecting indicators regional needs should be considered first (see design principles in 3.5.3). The same applies to the use of targets which should be understood as tools which first of all support regional actors in the decision making process and should not be used by government as central steering devices (see design principles in 3.4.2).

It is important that monitoring in regional planning is understood as strategic monitoring (Wedgwood-Oppenheim et al. 1975; see 3.5.1). Monitoring should perform a learning function, i.e. identify what is going on in a region (including an evaluation of the application/implementation of the RSS) and what

needs to be done in the light of that information (see design principles in 3.5.3). This needs to be reflected in government policy and guidance which should shift attention from a narrow 'performance' measurement and control function towards a learning-oriented approach. The implementation of such an approach also means that those charged with doing the actual monitoring work need to demonstrate the necessary understanding and skills. Monitoring has to go beyond the collection and presentation of data and it is important that those responsible for making and implementing policy are closely involved in monitoring. In addition, monitoring frameworks need to be selective, not aim to monitor 'everything' but identify and focus on key issues which are relevant to spatial planning at a strategic level. In formulating RSS policy, those involved should consider whether the issues in question are truly relevant and important to strategic spatial planning. It is also important to consider interrelationships between issues and matters which cut across policy sectors, and to make connections with related monitoring activities such as RHS monitoring, as practised in the West Midlands, or the process of conformity assessments.

Monitoring has to be more than just the production of an AMR. The AMR can be used as a 'hook' or 'catalyst' for gathering information and for initiating a debate about what is going on in the region and what needs to be done about it. Such analysis and interpretation require inclusive, deliberative practices which draw on the knowledge and expertise of a range of actors (cf. 3.5.3). The organisational and procedural arrangements for monitoring, policy making and implementation should provide a 'space' which enables such deliberative practices. Examples of this are 'stakeholder' monitoring seminars held in the West Midlands or a working group established in the South West region which has looked specifically at implications for policy and action. Moreover, there is a need for continuity of monitoring activities which, so far, have been negatively affected by limited resources and other priorities, in particular the workload involved in RSS review activities. This links back to the earlier recommendations about the need for adequate resources, less prescriptive national requirements on monitoring and greater regional discretion and priority setting.

As far as the organisational arrangements for regional planning are concerned, both decentralised and centralised models have advantages and disadvantages. Although there does not seem to be a single best model, there needs to be sufficient 'dedicated' capacity for coordinating and facilitating the regional planning process. This includes a dedicated 'space' or 'capacity' for making connections between the monitoring, implementation and review elements of PMM (see 7.1.2 and 7.3.3). Decentralised arrangements like those in the West Midlands would benefit from greater capacity at the centre to control the complex PMM process, and to be less dependent on the ability and commitment of other actors, especially local authorities, to contribute to regional planning. On the other hand, the current arrangements for regional planning (e.g. small RAs with limited budgets, the formal role assigned to strategic authorities and a general dependence on staff, expertise and implementation capacity of other actors) limit the scope for adopting working structures which can cope with the demands of the PMM model. As described above,

an adequate balance between requirements and resources, as well as proper resourcing of RPBs/regions are preconditions which are required under both centralised and decentralised models.

This brings back the more fundamental question about the appropriateness of the current arrangements for governing the English regions. A demanding and quite powerful regional planning system has been put in place, but more clarity is needed as to whom it should serve and who should control the system. In the absence of directly elected regional government, it may be of little surprise that central government utilises the mechanisms provided by the current system to pursue its priorities. Similarly, it may not be surprising that the shift of control in planning from the local to the regional (and thus national) level has caused major tensions within regions and between local, regional and national levels. This raises major questions concerning the appropriateness, feasibility and legitimacy of the current arrangements. A return to regional planning 'light', in the form of weaker guidance (i.e. the 'old' RPG system) with more local discretion could be one option. Under a less detailed and rigid system less time and effort would possibly be required to produce RSSs (due to the lower level of detail and bindingness), while more work could be done on the implementation (i.e. 'framing' or 'doorwerking', see 3.3.2) and monitoring elements of PMM. Powerful, directly elected Regional Assemblies, less central government control and greater regional discretion would possibly be a preferred way forward but the window of opportunity for this to happen seems to have closed indefinitely.

At the end of this final chapter of the thesis the opportunity is now taken to reflect on the research, what worked well and what did not, what could have been done differently and to identify issues which could be investigated further. The overall approach to the study, which combined a national perspective and detailed case studies, worked fairly well. Although it meant that the research process became fairly demanding, the two case studies produced very rich, in-depth information about the current practice of PMM in regional planning. The collaboration and interaction with a wide range of actors in the regions and particularly the work placements at the RPB Secretariats proved to be extremely useful, and enabled the research to follow the regional planning process in real time and with a high level of detail. The collaboration with the planning ministry and practitioners from across the English regions, especially through the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group, helped to gain an understanding of the practice of PMM across England, and thus to place the case studies into a national perspective.

The practice-oriented approach to the study has not been free of challenges. The aim of the research to marry more practical issues with wider theoretical ideas and concerns has been a particular challenge. On the one hand, it was deemed important to address issues and make recommendations which are relevant to practitioners (to keep them 'on board' and to ensure that the study is of use to those tasked with designing and operating the PMM model) and as far as possible implementable in practice. On the other hand, from early on the decision was made to adopt a broad approach which has put PMM in regional planning into a wider, theoretically-informed context. While this broader approach was regarded as

necessary from an academic perspective to fully analyse, understand and explain how PMM works and its implications, for practitioners it might appear somewhat 'pie in the sky'. In turn, from a planning theoretical angle the study might perhaps seem too realistic, moderate or grounded.

In the light of the objectives of the research it could be argued that the chosen balance between practice relevance and theoretical underpinnings is appropriate. However, the rich empirical material collected during the research could be taken forward in at least two ways. One would be to flesh out more detailed and concrete recommendations for those responsible for designing and running the (regional) planning system. The other option would be to treat the connections between the empirical findings and the theoretical framework which has been developed in the study in a more comprehensive way, perhaps in the form of articles in academic journals. This could be linked, for example, to an investigation of the very recent changes to the planning system emanating from PPS3 and the second Barker Review, and how they affect PMM and regional planning as a whole.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of interviews, meetings and events

The empirical information which underpins this research (see 1.4) has been obtained to a large extent through interviews with a wide spectrum of actors involved in regional planning, as well as through attendance at numerous meetings and events. This included interviews, meetings and events in the case study regions and at national level. As regards the latter, interviews have been conducted with officials from the ODPM and selected individuals from across the English regions (see Table 1). The author also attended various topic-related conferences and meetings, in particular the meetings of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group.

The empirical research in the case study regions involved a large number of interviews, meetings and events (see Tables 2 & 3). This included attendance at consultation events which were part of the preparation, monitoring and review of RPGs/RSSs. In addition, the author attended meetings of Regional Assembly Groups and officer working groups. Interviews were conducted with a wide spectrum of actors involved in regional planning in the case study regions. These included officers at Assembly secretariats, policy lead officers from local authorities who undertake regional planning work on behalf of the Assembly in the West Midlands, and officers from local planning authorities. Moreover officers from other key regional organisations were interviewed, including GORs, RDAs and ROs, as well as representatives from interest groups such as CPRE, HBF and the voluntary sector.

The great majority of interviews was carried out 'face-to-face', while a small number of interviews were conducted via telephone. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured way, with a core set of open-ended questions for all interviewees plus additional questions which were adjusted to the specific context and role of the interviewees. Table 4 below shows a sample interview schedule which was used in the interviews with Regional Assembly officers, but the basic structure of that schedule was adopted in all interviews. The interviews started with questions about the interviewee, their responsibilities and involvement in regional planning as well as questions about the organisation they worked for or which they were associated to. That was followed by general questions about PMM in regional planning and the interviewee's understanding of PMM. Next, questions about the elements of PMM were asked. The interviews ended with overarching questions about the implications of PMM in regional planning.

All interviewees were assured that the statements they made would be presented anonymously, and therefore no names are given and no individuals are made identifiable in the text. As regards the planners who work for/on behalf of the RPBs a distinction is made in the text between 'senior regional planners' and 'regional planners'. The former is used to refer to the Directors of Policy and Heads of Planning at the RPB Secretariats, while the latter is used to refer to all other planners who work for/on behalf of the RPBs. This distinction was deemed useful to highlight statements made by regional planners who have a very central

position in the process and/or who have been working in strategic planning for a considerable period of time.

Table 1: Interviews, meetings and events at national level and other regions

Date	Role / Responsibility	Organisation / Membership	Comments
15 January 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
31 January 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group , Core Output Indicators sub-group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
2 May 2003	ODPM officer, RSS monitoring	ODPM	Interview
9 May 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group , Core Output Indicators sub-group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
2 July 2003	ODPM officer, transport statistics	ODPM	Interview
2 July 2003	ODPM officer, RDA Policy and Delivery Branch	ODPM	Interview
2 July 2003	ODPM officer, Planning and Land Use Statistics	ODPM	Interview
2 July 2003	ODPM officer, Strategic Environmental Assessment	ODPM	Interview
3 July 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
31 July 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group , Core Output Indicators sub-group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
October 2003	Head of Planning	South West Regional Assembly	Written response to interview schedule
6 October 2003	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
23 October 2003	Town and Country Planning Association Conference on the New Regional Planning System		Conference
10 December 2003	RPB Monitoring Sub-Group on Core Indicators Meeting	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
11 December 2003	ODPM officer, RSS monitoring	ODPM, London	Interview
3 February 2004	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
11 May 2004	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting

10 June 2004	ODPM officer, RSS monitoring	ODPM	Interview
7 September 2004	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
1 December 2004	ODPM officer, RSS monitoring	ODPM	Telephone interview
10 December 2004	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
3 March 2005	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
19 May 2005	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
13 June 2005	ODPM officer, planning; ODPM Officer, regional planning	ODPM	Interview
13 June 2005	ODPM officer, RSS Monitoring	ODPM	Interview
25 July 2005	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
9 December 2005	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
20 March 2006	English Regions Network Monitoring Officers Liaison Group	RPBs, ODPM, others	Meeting
9 May 2006	Former ODPM officer, planning	Formerly ODPM	Lecture

Table 2: Interviews, meetings and events in the West Midlands

Date	Role / Responsibility	Organisation	Comments
5 June 2003	West Midlands RPG Stakeholder Conference	WMRA	Conference
27 June 2003	Regional Monitoring Officers Group	WMRA	Meeting
9 September 2003	Regional Monitoring Officers Group	WMRA	Meeting
9 October 2003	Consultant, RSS monitoring	Mott MacDonald	Interview
9 October 2003	GOWM officer, regional planning	GOWM	Interview
10 October 2003	Officer, structure plan monitoring	Warwickshire County Council	Interview
16 October 2003	Regional analyst	WMRO	Interview
5 November 2003	West Midlands RPG Monitoring Seminar	GOWM, WMRA	Meeting
5 November 2003	Officer, research team; Officer, strategy team	Advantage West Midlands	Interview
20 October 2004	RSS Task Group	WMRA	Meeting
20 October 2004	Policy Lead officer, housing	Staffordshire County Council	Interview

28 October 2004	Regional Planning Team	WMRA	Meeting
1 November 2004	Policy Lead officer, centres	Staffordshire County Council	Interview
2 November 2004	Policy Lead officer, environment	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Interview
2 November 2004	Officer, regional strategies	Environment Agency	Interview
2 November 2004	Consultant, RSS monitoring	Mott MacDonald	Interview
3 November 2004	Regional officer	CPRE	Interview
4 November 2004	Director	WMRO	Interview
4 November 2004	Regional analyst	WMRO	Interview
5 November 2004	Policy Lead officer, transport	Staffordshire County Council	Interview
8 November 2004	Policy Lead officer, housing monitoring	Worcestershire County Council	Interview
9 November 2004	Strategic Advisor, implementation	West Midlands Regional Assembly	Interview
9 November 2004	Strategic Advisor, transport	West Midlands Regional Assembly	Interview
10 November 2004	Monitoring officer	Shrewsbury & Atcham District Council	Telephone interview
11 November 2004	Strategic Adviser, regional planning & environment	WMRA	Interview
11 November 2004	Head of Research	Warwickshire County Council	Interview
11 November 2004	Regional Adviser, Local Development Frameworks	WMRA	Interview
12 November 2004	RSS Core Regional Advisory Group	WMRA	Meeting
12 November 2004	Regional officer	House Builders Federation	Interview
15 November 2004	Strategic Advisor, housing	WMRA	Interview
15 November 2004	Member of WMRA Regional Planning Partnership	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Interview
16 November 2004	Director of Policy	WMRA	Interview
16 November 2004	RSS Review Coordinator	WMRA	Interview
16 November 2004	Two officers, regional planning	GOWM	Interview
17 November 2004	Assistant Policy Lead officer, economy	Birmingham City Council	Interview
17 November 2004	Consultant & former senior planner	Consultant	Interview
17 November 2004	Planning officer	Wolverhampton City	Telephone

		Council	interview
19 November 2004	Regional Monitoring Officers Group	WMRA	Meeting
19 November 2004	Regional Planning Executive	WMRA	Meeting
19 November 2004	Regional Planning Partnership	WMRA	Meeting
14 December 2004	Planning officer	Rugby District Council	Telephone interview
15 December 2004	Planning officer	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Telephone interview
16 December 2004	Planning officer	Bromsgrove District Council	Telephone interview
17 December 2004	Planning officer	Cannock Chase District Council	Telephone interview
31 May 2006	Head of Planning	WMRA	Telephone interview
12 June 2006	Head of Planning	WMRA	Telephone interview
3 July 2006	Strategic Advisor, monitoring & implementation	WMRA	Telephone interview

Table 3: Interviews, meetings and events in the South East of England

Date	Role / Responsibility	Organisation	Comments
2 October 2003	Structure Plan Team Leader	Oxfordshire County Council	Interview
20 October 2003	SEERA-ODPM monitoring liaison meeting	SEERA, ODPM	Meeting
18 March 2004	Regional planner, transport	SEERA	Interview
18 March 2004	Regional planner, rural issues & accessibility	SEERA	Interview
18 March 2004	Regional planner, transport	SEERA	Interview
18 March 2004	Two regional planners, various topics	SEERA	Interview
19 March 2004	Officer, Regional Planning Team	GOSE	Interview
19 March 2004	Officer, monitoring; Officer, strategy making	SEEDA	Interview
19 March 2004	Regional planner, economy/retail & SEA	SEERA	Interview
19 March 2004	Regional analyst	SEERA	Interview
19 March 2004	Head of Planning	SEERA	Interview
19 March 2004	Regional planner, transport	SEERA	Interview

22 April 2004	SEERA Spring Debate Oxfordshire, Oxford	SEERA	Meeting
25 November 2004	Member of SEERA Strategic Advisory Group and Cross Cutting Group	Oxford Brookes University	Interview
29 November 2004	SEERA Assembly Plenum	SEERA	Meeting
30 November 2004	Regional analyst	SEERA	Interview
30 November 2004	Head of Planning	SEERA	Interview
1 December 2004	SEP Coordination Group	SEERA	Meeting
2 December 2004	Transport Monitoring Group	SEERA	Meeting
2 December 2004	Regional planner, transport	SEERA	Interview
3 December 2004	Regional planner, environment	SEERA	Interview
3 December 2004	Regional planner, sub-regional work and other topics for partial reviews	SEERA	Interview
6 December 2004	Officer, Housing Completions Team	GOSE	Interview
6 December 2004	Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Sub-area Team	GOSE	Interview
6 December 2004	Two officers, Kent Growth Area Team	GOSE	Interview
6 December 2004	Officer, Regional Spatial Strategy Team	GOSE	Interview
7 December 2004	SEE-iN Coordinator	SEE-iN	Interview
7 December 2004	Regional planner, economy	SEERA	Interview
8 December 2004	Regional Planning Committee	SEERA	Meeting
9 December 2004	Demography Working Group	SEERA	Meeting
9 December 2004	Regional planner, housing	SEERA	Interview
15 December 2004	Regional planner for South East region	HBF	Telephone interview
16 December 2004	Regional Director for South East region	CPRE	Telephone interview
13 January 2005	Manager	SEERA Assembly Partners Support Unit	Interview
13 January 2005	Regional analyst	SEERA	Interview
13 January 2005	Director of Planning and Transport	SEERA	Interview
1 March 2005	Initial Draft SEP Consultation event Oxfordshire	SEERA, Oxfordshire County Council	Meeting
4 March 2005	Strategic Planning Manager	Buckinghamshire County Council	Lecture
11 May 2005	GOSE LDF Monitoring Seminar	GOSE	Seminar
11 May 2005	ODPM officer, planning	ODPM	Presentation at GOSE seminar

11 May 2005	Principal planner	Surrey County Council	Presentation at GOSE seminar
11 May 2005	Planning officer, policy	Wycombe District Council	Presentation at GOSE seminar
11 May 2005	Officer, planning	GOSE	Presentation at GOSE seminar
26 July 2006	Regional analyst	SEERA	Telephone interview
1 October 2006	Regional planner, cross-cutting	SEERA	Telephone interview

Table 4: Sample interview schedule

Interview schedule Regional Assembly Officer
<p>About the interviewee and the Regional Assembly</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you explain your role in the preparation/review, monitoring and implementation of RPG? 2. How many members of staff at the RPB work on the preparation/review, monitoring and implementation of RPG? Taking the working time of all RPB staff together, what percentage is spent on preparation/review, implementation and monitoring, respectively? 3. Could you explain the formal working structure of the RPB and the roles of the different committees and groups? Who is involved in the formal working structure?
<p>'Plan, Monitor and Manage'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What is your understanding of PMM in regional planning? 5. What problems exist in achieving PMM in your region? 6. How could the management element look like? 7. What does PMM mean for the relationship between planning at regional and local levels?
<p>Monitoring of RPG (RSS)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. In your view, what is the purpose of monitoring RPG? Do other actors, e.g. central government, have a different view of what monitoring is about? 9. What arrangements for monitoring RPG exist in your region (e.g. monitoring officer, working group etc.)? Who is involved in monitoring RPG and what is the role of the different actors? 10. What is/should be monitored in regional planning (processes, outputs, context, past-/future-related issues)? 11. Are all RPG policies being monitored? What problems/difficulties exist in relation to monitoring RPG? To what extent are quantitative data and qualitative information used for monitoring RPG? What data gaps/problems do exist? 12. What difficulties exist in establishing links between indicators and RPG policies? 13. To what extent does the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) include an interpretation of the figures (e.g. explain why targets are being achieved or why not)? To what extent does the AMR reflect on what the figures mean for review of policies and action?

14. What is the role of targets in monitoring RPG? How important are targets for monitoring RPG? To what extent are the targets in RPG in effect set at national level?
15. How relevant are the suggested national core indicators to monitoring RPG for your region? What is the benefit of having a common set of indicators? To what extent do the core indicators pre-empt policy making in the region?
16. How is RPG monitoring connected to other monitoring activities at regional and local levels (e.g. RES monitoring, LTP monitoring)? What problems do occur in this respect?
17. What are the results of RPG monitoring used for? How does monitoring relate to the review of RPG? What difference does monitoring make?

Review of RPG (RSS)

18. What factors (or "triggers") have influenced/lead to the decision to undertake several partial reviews of RPG9 (e.g. filling gaps in current RPG9, changes to the planning system, results of studies/new evidence, central government policy)? Why were these issues not covered in RPG9?
19. What is the influence of the Regional Assembly and central government respectively in deciding whether RPG needs to be reviewed? How much discretion does the Assembly have and how much is the decision predetermined by the government?
20. What are the reasons for undertaking a full review of RPG9?
21. How will the new South East Plan differ from existing RPG9 (e.g. in terms of its content, scope, format)? How much will the policies change?
22. What working arrangements have been put in place for the various reviews of RPG (e.g. working groups, written consultation, Public Examination etc.)? Have the same arrangements been used for all reviews?
23. Who has been involved in the reviews, at what stages and how? What influence have different actors had on decisions? What differences between the degree of involvement and influence exist between stakeholders?
24. Have you and/or other organisations been experiencing problems in relation to the resources which are available for conducting a review of RPG (incl. time, funding, staff)? Has the timescale for the reviews caused any problems (e.g. enough time to do the preparatory work, involve stakeholders, agree on priorities and implementation etc.)?
25. Do partial reviews make it easier or more difficult for stakeholders to get involved?
26. To what extent have the partial reviews been linked to each other?

Implementation of RPG (RSS)

27. From your experience, which are the mechanisms through which RPG is implemented? What means does the RPB possess to foster the implementation of RPG?
28. What influence does the Regional Assembly have in the regional policy arena, esp. in relation to local authorities, other delivery agencies and central government?
29. What will the Implementation Plan for the South East Plan look like? How specific will it be? As far as you can see, to what extent will all relevant actors sign up to it?
30. How long does it take until RPG policies are reflected in other plans and strategies, and until they show effects on the ground? How much "policy stability" is needed for RPG policies to have effects?
31. How will the proposed reform of the planning system (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill etc.) affect the implementation of RPG/RSS?

Implications of the PPG11 model of regional planning

This final section is about the implications of the 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM) approach to regional planning which has been underlying recent and current reforms of the planning system. What is your experience in relation to the following issues?

32. What are implications of the PMM model for the level of resources which are necessary to undertake PMM (staff, funding, time)?
33. What is gained and what gets lost by the emphasis on monitoring and (ongoing) review of RPG?
34. To what extent does PMM improve the appropriateness of RPG policies?
35. What are the implications of the continuous planning process for the balance between robustness/certainty and flexibility/responsiveness of RPG policies?
36. How does the continuous planning process affect the ability of stakeholders to get involved in the preparation of RPG?
37. What are the implications of conducting partial reviews as regards:
 - the timeliness of RPG policies,
 - the coherence of the whole RPG document (e.g. can the RTS be reviewed in isolation from the rest of the strategy?),
 - the synchronisation of RPG and other plans and strategies at regional and local level?

38. To what extent does PMM change the implementation of RPG policies?

39. To what extent does PMM alter the influence of different actors on RPG?

Finally

- Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?
- Could you provide any documents that are of relevance to the topic?

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 2 – Description of the questionnaire survey

Besides two large case studies the empirical element of the research included an England-wide questionnaire survey which was carried out in the early stages of the study. Together with other sources of information, especially observations made through membership of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group, the survey has been a key component of the empirical work on PMM in English regional planning as a whole. The purpose of this survey was to obtain an overview of the emerging practice of PMM across the country. This national picture has been used to aid the investigation and analysis of the case studies, helping to identify and test issues for the research and, very importantly, providing a background for reflecting on the findings of the individual case studies.

The central aim of the survey has been to establish how PMM in regional planning is addressed in all English regions and to identify differences and similarities in current regional practice. While the primary focus of attention has been on regional planning the survey has also been used to obtain a concise overview of strategy making, implementation and monitoring in closely related fields. This work has been applied to compare practice in the regions and, more importantly, to provide further insights which help to explain and develop PMM in regional planning. Therefore the survey also covered strategy making, implementation and monitoring activities in the field of regional economic planning (in form of the RDAs) and current arrangements for data and information management in the English regions (in form of the ROs).

The survey was targeted at key organisations in all English regions, namely all RPBs, GORs, ROs and RDAs (i.e. four organisations per region which amounted to a total of 32 questionnaires). Each questionnaire was sent to a selected individual in each of these organisations. As far as the RPBs and GORs are concerned the questionnaires were sent to officers centrally involved in regional planning who were members of the English Regions Network Monitoring Officer Liaison Group. As regards the RDAs the questionnaires were sent to the members of the Performance Monitoring Group which is a working group with representatives from all RDAs in England. Finally, the RO questionnaires were sent to RO staff whose contact details had been provided by the Association of Regional Observatories. Generally all addressees of the questionnaire were selected due to their involvement in monitoring and strategy review at their respective organisation and were, therefore, thought to be in a good position to answer the questions. However, as working structures in the organisations in question are often based on teamwork the addressees were encouraged to consult with colleagues if required.

The survey consisted of self-completed questionnaires which were sent to and filled in by the respondents (see Appendices 2a-2d). The questionnaires mainly comprised closed questions in order to ensure as high a degree of comparability of responses as possible. However, respondents were also given the

opportunity to provide comments and further explanation. In fact, many respondents made use of this and provided further insights, several of which have been included in the text (see Ch. 4). Within the overall framework set out in Ch. 1 the questions included in the questionnaires were based on the review of literature on PMM in regional planning (see Chs. 2 and 3) and initial fieldwork, in particular observations made at the RPB/ODPM Monitoring Officers Liaison Group and a first set of interviews with key regional actors (see Appendix 1). The questionnaires asked about the state, problems and effects of current practice of strategy making, implementation and monitoring. As PMM in regional planning and the related activities of RDAs and ROs were still fairly new at the time the survey was conducted many questions asked about the experience to that juncture and expectations for the future. A pre-test was conducted prior to the 'real' survey and the comments received were used to revise the questions.

The survey was carried out between May and September 2004 and thus represents situations and views at that time. The response rate was very high, with all RPBs and GORs (i.e. 100 %), seven out of eight ROs (i.e. 87.5 %) and six out of eight RDAs (i.e. 75 %) returning a completed questionnaire (i.e. overall response rate 90.6 %).

Appendix 2a – Questionnaire for Regional Planning Bodies

Research project

'The monitoring and review process in English regional planning'

Questionnaire to Regional Planning Bodies

Introductory remarks

The following questions are about the experience with monitoring and review RPG in your region. Some of the questions ask about simple 'facts' on the subject. However, your opinions, ideas and experiences are of particular value for this study and thus many of the questions ask about your views on the issues concerned. It is understood that the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing RPG are still evolving and therefore the questions are ask for your experience to date. You are reminded that all the information you provide is confidential and will only be published in summary, statistical form. You will not be identified in any way.

For most questions a set of suggested answers is provided from which you should select the most appropriate answer(s). Additional space is provided for further comments. In fact, you are very much encouraged to make additional comments, as this will give further insights and thus enhance the value of the survey. Again, if you have any difficulties or any other questions please contact me at the address provided at the end of the questionnaire.

About the Regional Planning Body

1. How many members of staff (full-time equivalent) at the RPB currently work on the preparation, review, implementation and monitoring of RPG? Insert the overall number in the box below.

No. of full-time equivalent staff

2. Taking the working time of all RPB staff together, roughly speaking, what percentage of the overall working time is spent on the following areas? Insert the percentages in the boxes below.

	% of working time spent in the area
Preparation & review of RPG	<input type="text"/>
Implementation of RPG	<input type="text"/>
Monitoring of RPG	<input type="text"/>

(Space for additional comments on questions 1-2 is provided on the next page.)

3. To what extent are representatives from the region's local authorities and/or other organisations part of the formal working structure of the RPB (e.g. as secondees, topic leaders or members of working groups) in relation to the following tasks? Tick the appropriate box.

	Leading role	Involved on a continuous basis	At some stages involved	Not part of the formal working arrangements
Preparation & review of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on questions 1-3:

Monitoring of RPG

4. Monitoring can be used for a number of purposes. In your view, what should be the importance of each of the following purposes in relation to monitoring RPG? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Provide transparency of the RPB's work and hold it to account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure coverage of national policies in RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an evidence base for RPG policy making and implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess progress towards the implementation of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set the agenda for policy making and implementation in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basis for allocation of funding of RPBs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 4:

5. Monitoring can be directed at different issues. In your view, how important are the following issues to monitoring RPG? RPG monitoring should be:- (Tick the appropriate box.)

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
<u>Process-oriented</u> (i.e. examine the implementation of RPG through other plans and strategies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Output-oriented</u> (i.e. examine the direct effects of RPG "on the ground")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Context-oriented</u> (i.e. monitor issues which RPG influences only indirectly but which inform the formulation of RPG policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 5:

6. The following statements are about the use of targets in monitoring RPG. For each statement please say whether, from your experience, you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'Targets are essential for monitoring RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Targets provide a benchmark against which progress towards the implementation of RPG can be assessed.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Many of the targets in present RPG have been set in effect at the national level.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Targets in RPG need to be quantified and they need to include timescales for implementation.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 6:

7. The following statements relate to the set of national core indicators for RSS monitoring which are suggested in Draft Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS11). For each statement please say whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'The national core indicators relate to issues which are all relevant to RPG for this region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Despite having a common set of indicators it is difficult to make sensible comparison between regions.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The national core indicators are used as a means of ensuring coverage of national policy and targets in RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Data for many of the national core indicators is already being collected in this region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 7:

8. As regards the arrangements for monitoring RPG, which of the following arrangements exist in your region? Tick the appropriate box(es).

- Designated RPG monitoring officer at the RPB
- Permanent RPG monitoring group of RPB and/or local authority officers
- Local authority officers doing monitoring work on behalf of the RPB
- Permanent wider RPG monitoring group which includes regional stakeholders
- Other (please specify in the box below)

Additional comments on question 8:

Review of RPG

11. Since October 2000, how many reviews of RPGRSS (full/partial) have been completed, are currently underway or are planned over the next 3 years in your region? Insert the number of reviews in the appropriate box(es).

	No. of full reviews	No. of partial reviews
Completed reviews	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviews currently underway	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviews planned over the next 3 years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Additional comments on question 11:

This section is about the two most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which have been completed or are currently being conducted in your region since October 2000. (If only one review has been completed/conducted since October 2000 please use the section 'Review Z' below (questions 18-23) to refer to any review which is planned over the next 3 years.) Each review is now considered in turn.

Review 1

12. Please indicate whether the review has been completed since October 2000 or is currently underway. Tick the appropriate box.

Completed Underway

13. Please indicate whether the review has been a full or a partial review. Tick the appropriate box.

Full Partial

14. Please specify the topic(s) which are covered in the review. List the topic(s) in the box below. (You can also use this space for any additional comments on questions 12-14.)

9. In your view, to what extent are regional stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, statutory agencies, other regional organisations) currently involved in each of the following RPG monitoring activities? Tick the appropriate box.

	Leading role	Regularly involved	Occasionally consulted	Not at all involved
Development and review of the RPG monitoring framework (e.g. selection of indicators)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection/provision for RPG monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis and interpretation of RPG monitoring data (e.g. assessment of recorded development against RPG policies and targets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding on what needs to follow from the results of RPG monitoring (e.g. implications for the review of RPG)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 9:

10. The following is a list of other plans and strategies at regional and local levels and related monitoring activities. In your view, to what extent is RPG monitoring currently linked to these monitoring activities in your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly linked	Moderately linked	Weakly linked	Not at all linked
Development Plan monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport Plan monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability/Strategic Environmental Assessment monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Economic: Strategy monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Sustainable Development Framework monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Housing Strategy monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 10:

15. The following is a list of ways of how regional stakeholders can be involved in the review of RPG. Which of the following ways of involvement has been applied in the review? Tick the appropriate box(es).

- Involvement in drafting revised RPG (e.g. as members of working groups)
- Consultation on draft revised RPG
- Public Examination
- Consultation on Proposed Changes
- Other (please specify in the box at the end of question 17)

16. The following is a list of factors (or "triggers") which may lead to the decision to review RPG. In your view, how important has each of these factors been in the decision to review RPG in your region? Please tick the appropriate box.

	Deciding factor	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Filling of gaps in existing RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results of RPG monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New evidence (e.g. studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box at the end of question 17)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. How much influence (direct and/or indirect) has each of the following actors had on the decision to review RPG and on what should be covered in the review? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

	Deciding actor	Strong influence	Limited influence	No influence
Regional Planning Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government/Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Examination Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on questions 15-17:

Review 2

The six previous questions referred to one of the two most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which have been completed or conducted in your region since October 2000. The following questions refer to the other of the most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which has been completed or conducted in your region since that date. (If only one review has been completed since October 2000 or if no other review is currently underway please refer to any (RSS) review which is planned over the next 3 years.)

18. Please indicate whether the review has been completed since October 2000, is currently underway or planned over the next 3 years. Tick the appropriate box.

- Completed
- Underway
- Planned

19. Please indicate whether the review has been or will be a full or a partial review. Tick the appropriate box.

- Full
- Partial

20. Please specify the topic(s) which are or will be covered in the review. List the topic(s) in the box below.

21. The following is a list of ways of how regional stakeholders can be involved in the review of RPG/RSS. Which of the following ways of involvement has been or is intended to be applied in the review? Tick the appropriate box(es).

- Involvement in drafting revised RPG/RSS (e.g. as members of working groups)
- Consultation on draft revised RPG/RSS
- Public Examination
- Consultation on Proposed Changes
- Other (please specify in the box below)

Additional comments on questions 18-21:

22. The following is a list of factors (or "triggers") which may lead to the decision to review RPOGRSS. In your view, how important has each of these factors been in the decision to review RPOGRSS in your region? Please tick the appropriate box.

Deciding factor	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Filing of gaps in existing RPO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results of RPO monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New evidence (e.g. studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 22:

23. How much influence (direct and/or indirect) has each of the following actors had on the decision to review RPOGRSS and on what should be covered in the review? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

Deciding actor	Strong influence	Limited influence	No influence
Regional Planning Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government/Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Examination Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 23:

Implementation of RPG

24. The following is a list of mechanisms through which RPG may be implemented. From the experience in your region, how important is each of these mechanisms for the implementation of RPG? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Development plans/Local Development Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development control decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box at the end of question 25)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 24:

25. In your view, how much influence does RPG have on each of the implementation mechanisms in practice in your region? Tick the appropriate boxes.

	Virtually blinding	High degree of direct influence	Limited degree of direct influence	Only indirect influence
Development plans/Local Development Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development control decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 25:

26. In your view, how will the forthcoming reform of the planning system (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill etc.) affect the implementation of the RPG/RSS? Please indicate whether the reform will improve, deteriorate or not change the extent to which RPG/RSS is being implemented. Tick the appropriate box and please briefly justify your choice in the space provided below.

Improve Deteriorate No change Not sure

Please justify your choice briefly:

Overall experience to date in applying 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

Monitoring and review are seen as central elements of the 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM) approach. This concluding section is about the overall experience to date as regards the application of PMM to regional planning in your region. Since the PMM model is still relatively new to regional planning and since experience to date may therefore be limited you can also refer to what you expect to happen in the future in your answers.

27. The following is a set of statements on the application of PMM to regional planning. Considering the experience in your region and/or your expectations for the future, please say for each statement whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'The lack of comprehensive and consistent data presently hinders meaningful monitoring of RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The level of resources (staff, funding, time) currently available to the RPB is sufficient to achieve a continuous and responsive planning process.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'A significant number of policies, indicators and targets in present RPG relate to issues on which the influence of RPG is very limited.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'It will still take several years until a PMM approach in regional planning will be operating fully in the region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 27:

28. Finally, the following is a set of statements on the wider implications of the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach (PMM) to regional planning. Considering the experience in your region to data and/or your expectations for the future, please say for each statement whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'PMM improves the appropriateness of RPG policies and the actions which follow from these policies.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The continuous nature of the planning process under PMM means that RPG is almost constantly under review.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The constant review of RPG makes synchronisation with other plans and strategies more difficult.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach makes RPG more flexible and responsive.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The constant review of RPG reduces the ability of RPG to provide long-term direction and certainty.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach improves the implementation of RPG policy.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach allows central government to insert national policy more easily into RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The arrangements for monitoring and reviewing RPG increase the influence of the RPB in the regional planning process.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 28:

Finally

Thank you very much indeed for your time and efforts. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or fax it to the number below. I would be very grateful if I could have your completed questionnaire returned to me by 28 May 2004. I am looking forward to receiving your response.

Stefan Preuss
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Appendix 2b – Questionnaire for Government Offices for the Region

Stefan Preuss
Department of Planning
May 2004

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Research project

'The monitoring and review process in English regional planning'

Questionnaire to Government Offices for the Region

Introductory remarks

The following questions are about the experience with monitoring and review RPG in your region. Some of the questions ask about simple 'facts' on the subject. However, your opinions, ideas and experiences are of particular value for this study and thus many of the questions ask about your views on the issues concerned. It is understood that the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing RPG are still evolving and therefore the questions are ask for your experience to date. You are reminded that all the information you provide is confidential and will only be published in summary, statistical form. You will not be identified in any way.

For most questions a set of suggested answers is provided from which you should select the most appropriate answer(s). Additional space is provided for further comments. In fact, you are very much encouraged to make additional comments, as this will give further insights and thus enhance the value of the survey. Again, if you have any difficulties or any other questions please contact me at the address provided at the end of the questionnaire.

About the Government Office for the Region

1. How many members of staff (full-time equivalent) at the Government Office are involved in the preparation, review and monitoring of RPG? Insert the overall number in the box below.

No. of full-time equivalent staff

Additional comments on question 1:

2. To what extent is the Government Offices involved in the preparation and review, implementation, and monitoring of RPG for your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly involved	Moderately involved	Weakly involved	Not at all involved
Preparation & review of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 2:

Monitoring of RPG

3. Monitoring can be used for a number of purposes. In your view, what should be the importance of each of the following purposes in relation to monitoring RPG? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Provide transparency of the RPB's work and hold it to account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure coverage of national policies in RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an evidence base for RPG policy making and implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess progress towards the implementation of RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set the agenda for policy making and implementation in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basis for allocation of funding of RPBs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 3:

4. Monitoring can be directed at different issues. In your view, how important are the following issues to monitoring RPG? RPG monitoring should be:- (Tick the appropriate box.)

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Process-oriented (i.e. examine the implementation of RPG through other plans and strategies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Output-oriented (i.e. examine the direct effects of RPG 'on the ground')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context-oriented (i.e. monitor issues which RPG influences only indirectly but which inform the formulation of RPG policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 4:

5. The following statements are about the use of targets in monitoring RPG. For each statement please say whether, from your experience, you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'Targets are essential for monitoring RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Targets provide a benchmark against which progress towards the implementation of RPG can be assessed.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Many of the targets in present RPG have been set in effect at the national level.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Targets in RPG need to be quantified and they need to include timescales for implementation.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 5:

6. The following statements relate to the set of national core indicators for RSS monitoring which are suggested in Draft Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS11). For each statement please say whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'The national core indicators relate to issues which are all relevant to RPG for this region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Despite having a common set of indicators it is difficult to make sensible comparison between regions.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The national core indicators are used as a means of ensuring coverage of national policy and targets in RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Data for many of the national core indicators is already being collected in this region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 6:

7. In your view, to what extent are regional stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, statutory agencies, other regional organisations) currently involved in each of the following RPG monitoring activities? Tick the appropriate box.

	Leading role	Regularly involved	Occasionally consulted	Not at all involved
Development and review of the RPG monitoring framework (e.g. selection of indicators)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection/provision for RPG monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis and interpretation of RPG monitoring data (e.g. assessment of recorded development against RPG policies and targets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding on what needs to follow from the results of RPG monitoring (e.g. implications for the review of RPG)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 7:

8. The following is a list of other plans and strategies at regional and local levels and related monitoring activities. In your view, to what extent is RPG monitoring currently linked to these monitoring activities in your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly linked	Moderately linked	Weakly linked	Not at all linked
Development Plan monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport Plan monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability/Strategic Environmental Assessment monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Economic Strategy monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Sustainable Development Framework monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Housing Strategy monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 8:

Review of RPG

This section is about the two most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which have been completed or are currently being conducted in your region since October 2000. (If only one review has been completed/conducted since October 2000 please use the section 'Review 2' below (questions 15-20) to refer to any review which is planned over the next 3 years.) Each review is now considered in turn.

Review 1

9. Please indicate whether the review has been completed since October 2000 or is currently underway. Tick the appropriate box.

Completed Underway

10. Please indicate whether the review has been a full or a partial review. Tick the appropriate box.

Full Partial

11. Please specify the topic(s) which are covered in the review. List the topic(s) in the box below.

12. The following is a list of ways of how regional stakeholders can be involved in the review of RPG. Which of the following ways of involvement has been applied in the review? Tick the appropriate box(es).

Involvement in drafting revised RPG (e.g. as members of working groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation on draft revised RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Examination	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation on Proposed Changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box at the end of question 14)	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. The following is a list of factors (or "triggers") which may lead to the decision to review RPG. In your view, how important has each of these factors been in the decision to review RPG in your region? Please tick the appropriate box.

	Deciding factor	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Filing of gaps in existing RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results of RPG monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New evidence (e.g. studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box at the end of question 14)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. How much influence (direct and/or indirect) has each of the following actors had on the decision to review RPG and on what should be covered in the review? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

	Deciding actor	Strong influence	Limited influence	No influence
Regional Planning Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government/Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Examination Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on questions 9-14:

Review 2

The six previous questions referred to one of the two most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which have been completed or conducted in your region since October 2000. The following questions refer to the other of the most recent reviews of RPG (full/partial) which has been completed or conducted in your region since that date. (If only one review has been completed since October 2000 or if no other review is currently underway please refer to any (RSS) review which is planned over the next 3 years.)

15. Please indicate whether the review has been completed since October 2000, is currently underway or planned over the next 3 years. Tick the appropriate box.

Completed Underway Planned

16. Please indicate whether the review has been or will be a full or a partial review. Tick the appropriate box.

Full Partial

17. Please specify the topic(s) which are or will be covered in the review. List the topic(s) in the box below.

18. The following is a list of ways of how regional stakeholders can be involved in the review of RPG/RSS. Which of the following ways of involvement has been or is intended to be applied in the review? Tick the appropriate box(es).

- Involvement in drafting revised RPG/RSS (e.g. as members of working groups)
- Consultation on draft revised RPG/RSS
- Public Examination
- Consultation on Proposed Changes
- Other (please specify in the below)

Additional comments on questions 15-18:

19. The following is a list of factors (or "triggers") which may lead to the decision to review RPG/RSS. In your view, how important has each of these factors been in the decision to review RPG/RSS in your region? Please tick the appropriate box.

	Deciding factor	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Filling of gaps in existing RPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results of RPG monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New evidence (e.g. studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 19:

20. How much influence (direct and/or indirect) has each of the following actors had on the decision to review RPG/RSS and on what should be covered in the review? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

	Deciding actor	Strong influence	Limited influence	No influence
Regional Planning Body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government/Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Examination Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 20:

Implementation of RPG

21. The following is a list of mechanisms through which RPG may be implemented. From the experience in your region, how important is each of these mechanisms for the implementation of RPG? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Development plans/Local Development Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development control decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 21:

22. In your view, how much influence does RPG have on each of the implementation mechanisms in practice in your region? Tick the appropriate boxes.

	Virtually binding	High degree of direct influence	Limited degree of direct influence	Only indirect influence
Development plans/Local Development Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development control decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 22:

23. In your view, how will the forthcoming reform of the planning system (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill etc.) affect the implementation of the RPG/RSS? Please indicate whether the reform will improve, deteriorate or not change the extent to which RPG/RSS is being implemented. Tick the appropriate box and please briefly justify your choice in the space provided below.

Improve Deteriorate No change Not sure

Please justify your choice briefly:

Overall experience to date in applying 'Plan, Monitor and Manage'

Monitoring and review are seen as central elements of the 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM) approach. This concluding section is about the overall experience to date as regards the application of PMM to regional planning in your region. Since the PMM model is still relatively new to regional planning and since experience to date may therefore be limited you can also refer to what you expect to happen in the future in your answers.

24. The following is a set of statements on the application of PMM to regional planning. Considering the experience in your region and/or your expectations for the future, please say for each statement whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'The lack of comprehensive and consistent data presently hinders meaningful monitoring of RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The level of resources (staff, funding, time) currently available to the RPB is sufficient to achieve a continuous and responsive planning process.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'A significant number of policies, indicators and targets in present RPG relate to issues on which the influence of RPG is very limited.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'It will still take several years until a PMM approach in regional planning will be operating fully in the region.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 24:

25. Finally, the following is a set of statements on the wider implications of the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach (PMM) to regional planning. Considering the experience in your region to data and/or your expectations for the future, please say for each statement whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
'PMM improves the appropriateness of RPG policies and the actions which follow from these policies.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The continuous nature of the planning process under PMM means that RPG is almost constantly under review.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The constant review of RPG makes synchronisation with other plans and strategies more difficult.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach makes RPG more flexible and responsive.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The constant review of RPG reduces the ability of RPG to provide long-term direction and certainty.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach improves the implementation of RPG policy.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The PMM approach allows central government to insert national policy more easily into RPG.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The arrangements for monitoring and reviewing RPG increase the influence of the RPB in the regional planning process.'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 25:

Finally

Thank you very much indeed for your time and efforts. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or fax it to the number below. I would be very grateful if I could have your completed questionnaire returned to me by **28 May 2004**. I am looking forward to receiving your response.

Stefan Preuss

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Appendix 2c – Questionnaire for Regional Development Agencies

Stefan Preuss
Department of Planning
July 2004

Research project

'The monitoring and review process in English regional planning'

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Questionnaire to Regional Development Agencies

Introductory remarks

The following questions are about the experience with monitoring and reviewing the strategies and activities of your organisation. Some of the questions ask about simple 'facts' on the subject. However, your opinions, ideas and experiences are of particular value for this study and thus many of the questions ask about your views on the issues concerned. You are reminded that all the information you provide is confidential and will only be published in summary, statistical form. You will not be identified in any way.

For most questions a set of suggested answers is provided from which you should select the most appropriate answer(s). Additional space is provided for further comments. In fact, you are very much encouraged to make additional comments, as this will give further insights and thus enhance the value of the survey. Again, if you have any difficulties or any other questions please contact me at the address provided at the end of the questionnaire.

About the Regional Development Agency

1. How many members of staff (full-time equivalent) at your RDA work on the preparation & review of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and on monitoring the activities of your organisation? Insert the overall numbers in the boxes below.

No. of full-time equivalent staff working on the preparation & review of the RES

No. of full-time equivalent staff working on monitoring the RDA's activities

Additional comments on question 1:

Monitoring of the RDA's activities

2. The following is a list of issues which can be monitored. To what extent does your organisation monitor these issues or intends to monitor these issues in the future? Tick the appropriate box.

	Presently monitored to a large extent	Presently monitored to a limited extent	Planned to be monitored in the future	Not planned to be monitored at all
Project implementation (i.e. examine the implementation of concrete projects 'on the ground', e.g. number of jobs created)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic activities (i.e. examine the implementation of strategic activities such as setting up partnerships, holding conferences, advising partners etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context (i.e. monitor issues which the RDA influences only indirectly but which inform the formulation of RES and other policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Monitoring can be used for a number of purposes. In your view, what should be the importance of each of the following purposes in relation to monitoring the activities of your organisation? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Provide transparency of the RDA's work and hold it to account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure coverage of national policies in the RES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an evidence base for RES policy making and implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess progress towards the implementation of the RES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set the agenda for policy making and implementation in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basis for allocation of funding of RDAs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on questions 2-3:

4. The following statements are about the use of targets in monitoring the activities of RDAs. For each statement please say whether, from your experience, you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Targets are essential for monitoring the activities of an RDA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targets provide a benchmark against which progress towards the implementation of the RES can be assessed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many of the targets in the revised RES for this region have not been set in effect at the national level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targets in the RES need to be quantified and they need to include timescales for implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 4:

6. In your view, to what extent are regional stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, statutory agencies, other regional organisations) involved in each of the following monitoring activities? Tick the appropriate box.

	Leading role	Regularly involved	Occasionally consulted	Not at all involved
Development and review of the RES monitoring framework (e.g. selection of indicators)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection/provision for monitoring of the RES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis and interpretation of RES monitoring data (e.g. assessment of recorded development against RES policies and targets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding on what needs to follow from the results of RES monitoring (e.g. implications for the review of the RES)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 6:

5. The following statements relate to the set of Tier 2 targets which were given to the RDAs by central government. For each statement please say whether you agree strongly, agree, are neutral, disagree or disagree strongly with it. Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Tier 2 targets relate to issues which are all relevant to the RES for this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Despite having a common set of targets it is difficult to make sensible comparison between regions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Tier 2 targets are used as a means of ensuring coverage of national policy and targets in the RES.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data on many of the Tier 2 targets is already being collected in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 5:

7. The following is a list of other plans and strategies at regional level and related monitoring activities. In your view, to what extent is monitoring of the activities of your organisation currently linked to these monitoring activities in your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly linked	Moderately linked	Weakly linked	Not at all linked
Regional Planning Guidance monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Sustainable Development Framework monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Housing Strategy monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 7:

Review of the Regional Economic Strategy

8. How many reviews of the RES (full/partial) have been completed in your region since 1999, and how many reviews are currently underway or are planned over the next 3 years? Insert the number of reviews in the appropriate box(es).

	No. of full reviews	No. of partial reviews
Completed reviews	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviews currently underway	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviews planned over the next 3 years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Additional comments on question 8:

The following questions (No. 9-14) are about the most recent review of the RES which has been completed or is currently conducted in your region. (If no review of the RES has been completed since 1999 or if no review is currently underway please refer to the next planned review.)

9. Please indicate whether the review you refer to has been completed, is currently underway or planned over the next 3 years. Tick the appropriate box.

Completed Underway Planned

10. Please indicate whether the review has been/is/will be a full or a partial review. Tick the appropriate box.

Full Partial

11. Please specify the topic(s) which have been/are/will be covered in the review. List the topic(s) in the box below.

12. The following is a list of ways of how regional stakeholders can be involved in the review of the RES. Which of the following ways of involvement has been/is/will be applied in the review referred to above? Tick the appropriate box(es).

Involvement in drafting the revised RES (e.g. as members of working groups)

Written consultation on the draft revised RES

Public conference

Other (please specify in the box below)

13. The following is a list of factors (or "triggers") which may lead to the decision to review the RES. In your view, how important has each of these factors been in the decision to undertake a review of the RES in your region? Please tick the appropriate box.

	Deciding factor	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
Filling of gaps in the existing RES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results of monitoring of the RES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New evidence (e.g. studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on questions 12-13:

14. How much influence (direct and/or indirect) has each of the following actors had on the decision to review the RES and on what should be covered in the review? Please tick the appropriate boxes.

	Deciding actor	Strong influence	Limited influence	No influence
Regional Development Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government/Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 14:

Implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy

15. The following is a list of mechanisms through which the RES may be implemented. From the experience in your region, how important is each of these mechanisms for the implementation of the RES? Tick the appropriate box.

	Very important	Important	Of limited importance	Not at all important
RDA's own activities/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partners working on behalf of/contracted by the RDA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Planning Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local plans/planning decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 15:

16. In your view, how much influence does your RDA have on each of the implementation mechanisms in practice in your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	High degree of direct influence	Limited degree of direct influence	Only indirect influence	No influence at all
RDA's own activities/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partners working on behalf of/contracted by the RDA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Planning Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local plans/planning decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other regional and local strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policy/spending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Space for additional comments on this question is provided on the next page.)

Additional comments on question 16:

Finally

Thank you very much indeed for your time and efforts. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or fax it to the number below. In order to be able to prepare my report and to provide feedback to you and to the other respondents it would be very helpful to have your completed questionnaire returned to me by 20 August 2004.

I am looking forward to receiving your response.

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Appendix 2d – Questionnaire for Regional Observatories

Stefan Preuss
Department of Planning
July 2004

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Research project

'The monitoring and review process in English regional planning'

Questionnaire to Regional Observatories/Regional Intelligence Networks

Introductory remarks

The following questions are about the Regional Observatory/Regional Intelligence Network in your region (for simplicity, the term 'Regional Observatory' will be used as a synonym for Intelligence Networks and Partnerships). Some of the questions ask about simple 'facts' on the subject. However, your opinions, ideas and experiences are of particular value for this study and thus some of the questions ask about your views on the issues concerned. You are reminded that all the information you provide is confidential. You will not be identified in any way.

For most questions a set of suggested answers is provided from which you should select the most appropriate answer(s). Additional space is provided for further comments. In fact, you are very much encouraged to make additional comments, as this will give further insights and thus enhance the value of the survey. Again, if you have any difficulties or any other questions please contact me at the address provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Arrangements for regional intelligence management in your region

1. Is the Regional Observatory an independent organisation and/or has it an independent core unit with staff working exclusively for it? Tick the appropriate box.

Yes No

If 'No', please go directly to the next question.

If 'Yes', please insert the number of full-time equivalent staff working for the Regional Observatory in the box to the right.

Additional comments on question 1:

2. Is the Regional Observatory part of, and/or its day-to-day business managed by, another regional organisation? Tick the appropriate box.

Yes No

If 'No', please go directly to the next question.

If 'Yes', please specify in the box below which organisation hosts/manages the Regional Observatory and how many staff at that organisation do Observatory-related work (e.g. 2 staff with 25% of their time spent on Observatory-related work).

3. If the answers to questions 1 and 2 were 'No' or if you like to make further comments, please describe briefly what arrangements for data and intelligence management exist in your region. Use the space provided below.

4. How are the following actors/partners involved in and/or contribute to the Regional Observatory? If appropriate, tick more than one box per actor.

	Lead partner	Member of steering group	Member of working group	Data provider/ user	Not at all involved
Regional Development Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Assembly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government Office for the Region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statutory agencies (e.g. Environment Agency)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local intelligence networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Space for additional comments on this question is provided on the next page.)

Additional comments on question 4:

5. How and by whom are decisions about the work/priorities of the Regional Observatory taken? Please briefly describe the decision-making arrangements in the space provided below.

6. Are any changes of the working arrangements and/or staffing of the Regional Observatory planned in the future?

Yes No Not sure

If 'Yes', please briefly describe the intended changes in the space provided below.

7. Where does the funding for the Regional Observatory come from? Roughly speaking, how much funding is available this financial year? Please specify in the space provided below.

Purpose of the Regional Observatory

8. What is the purpose of the Regional Observatory in your region and to what extent is this purpose being fulfilled at present or planned to be fulfilled in the future? Tick the appropriate box.

	Presently fulfilled to a large extent	Presently fulfilled to some extent	Planned in the future	Not at all planned
Map which data and information exists in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Produce new data and information itself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate production of data and information in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold data and information itself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct other actors/partners to existing data and information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve consistency of data and information in the region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 8:

Activities of the Regional Observatory

9. To what extent does the Regional Observatory presently undertake the following activities? Which of the following activities are not presently undertaken but planned to be undertaken in the future? Tick the appropriate box.

	Presently undertaken to a large extent	Presently undertaken to some extent	Planned in the future	Not at all planned
Provide a meta-database (i.e. a database on what data and information is available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Run a Geographical Information System (GIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commission research/data production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise events (e.g. seminars, conferences, workshops)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate working groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular publications (e.g. newsletters, reports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 9:

Involvement in the preparation and monitoring of regional strategies

10. In what way does the Regional Observatory contribute to the preparation and monitoring of the following regional strategies? If appropriate, you can tick more than one box per strategy.

	Provision of data	Analysis of data	Comments on draft strategy	Monitoring of the strategy	No involvement
Regional Economic Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Employment and Skills Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Planning Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Housing Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Sustainable Development Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Space for additional comments on this question is provided on the next page.)

Additional comments on question 10:

Data and information availability in the region

11. To what extent are data and information in each of the following topic areas presently available for your region? Tick the appropriate box.

	Much data available	Some data available	Little data available	No data available
Demography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments on question 11:

12. Finally, the following is a set of questions about the availability of data and information in your region. For each question, tick the appropriate box.

	To a large extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	Not at all
To what extent are data sets with substantial time series available for your region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To what extent is the data which is available consistent (i.e. same definitions, boundaries etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To what extent is the data easily accessible to actors/partners in your region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To what extent is data currently exchanged between different actors/partners in your region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To what extent is qualitative data (e.g. anecdotal evidence) systematically collected in your region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To what extent is data available in Geographical Information Systems (GIS)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Space for additional comments on this question is provided on the next page.)

Additional comments on question 12:

Finally

Thank you very much indeed for your time and efforts. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or fax it to the number below. In order to be able to prepare my report and to provide feedback to you and to the other respondents it would be very helpful to have your completed questionnaire returned to me by 20 August 2004.

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