

strategic and regional planning

The Government's approach to strategic planning has been based on Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) produced by regional planning boards under the auspices of the Regional Assemblies. Whilst the local authorities have had a key role in helping shape regional policy, the regional approach has enabled a wider range of cross-boundary and national issues to be taken into account when formulating policy than had previously been the case. This has enabled cross-boundary planning that has sought to be responsive to regional and subregional issues rather than to those relevant only to the particular administrative authority concerned.

As part of the regionalisation of strategic planning the RSS has become part of the development plan, replacing the old style County Structure Plans. With the move to new style spatial planning at local level, in many cases the RSS is now the only up to date part of the development plan for the purposes of development control. The RSS therefore provides the framework in which Local Development Frameworks can be drawn up, as it establishes, amongst other things, the scale of growth to be found in individual districts, the need for cross-border co-operation in delivering the growth agenda, regional strategies for sustainable development and renewable energy generation and a co-ordinated approach to environmental protection.

Delivering the regional agenda

DLP Planning Ltd has established an enviable track record in representing its clients in the preparation of regional and sub regional strategies. Our approach has relied on addressing the technical requirements that underpin emerging strategies as well as taking a capacity based view of future regional development.

As a result of its analytical work using the latest available modelling techniques and reliant on the most up to date data sources – often proving to be more up to date than the data on which the plan itself has been based - DLP Planning Ltd has secured significant changes in emerging strategies through representations on draft documents and through subsequent invitations to address key issues at Examinations in Public.

As strategic plans have become ever more complex so the scope for effective challenge has come to rely increasingly on challenging the evidence on which they are based. DLP Planning Ltd's specialist Strategic Planning Unit is well known and highly respected for its ability to make cogent, focused and effective contributions to the strategic planning debate.

Looking to the future

The ability to deliver regionalism has been increasingly opened to question. Legal challenges to some of the strategies that the Government has sought to endorse through its approval of RSSs have been successful and questions have been asked about the relationship of emerging plans and local democracy. It is possible that in the near future there may be a new agenda for strategic planning, one that relies to a much greater extent on local agendas rather than on national strategies, on sub-regions rather than regions.

DLP Planning Ltd can advise on the implications for current strategies of new demographic data, legal and political considerations and potential changes to the way the need for development is assessed and delivered. Whatever the shape strategic planning takes in the future, DLP Planning Ltd is well placed to advise on how one may best seek to influence the important link between the need for development and how it can be delivered at local level.

