

The development management project: implementing change in England

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ABSTRACT

In England over the last decade a new approach to planning has been pursued, referred to as spatial planning. Despite being broadly accepted as the country's progressive theoretical and professional currency, the terminology has become politicised following a change of national government and as a result has fallen from prominence. An often overlooked component of the spatial planning approach is the decision making and implementation function, development management; and yet this concept is potentially very relevant to the challenges facing planning in England today. This paper will consider the current relevance of the development management approach; its impact to date, and the potential for it to support the current government's agenda, which is based around a concept of 'localism' whereby communities and neighbourhoods take on new planning functions.

The development management concept, in contrast to the reactive process orientated DC approach of the past, is based around operating a multi-faceted end-to-end delivery and implementation orientated process utilising implementation tools/mechanisms, organisational approaches, front loading, monitoring and feedback with an emphasis upon skills and culture change within the profession.

Development management is intended to focus upon *outcomes* (i.e. meeting needs) rather than *outputs* (the implications of permitting/refusing development through the determination of a planning application - normatively related to the regulatory development control ("DC") function).

The paper reflects upon the evolution of the development management approach and its theoretical underpinnings. We question the reality of development management, critique its impact in practice, and consider the value of the concept to planning today. The paper will also explore the approach's significance in the context of proposed neighbourhood planning and participation methods currently being introduced in England.

1. Introduction

The spatial planning approach was introduced in England in 2004 by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. It made "*substantial reforms*" to the English planning system and has provided for a "*widened scope*" of interest (Nadin, 2007:43). Notwithstanding this extended remit, the national guidance of the time, Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM, 2005, paragraph 31), stated that "*development plan documents form the framework for taking decisions on applications for planning permission*". This reinforced the retention of the plan led approach which has historically underpinned the English system, including the discretionary methodology for decisions on individual planning applications. Since 2004 questions have been levied at the concept of spatial planning and its application in practice. This paper will specifically critique the impact of the attempts to reform the decision making process for new development proposals (the 'Development Management' (DM) process) and will consider the current relevance of the development management approach, its impact to date, and its potential for the future.

2. Controlling development

The English planning system is plan-led. Development plans set out policies and land allocations to which decisions on individual planning applications/proposals should conform. Development control (DC) is the process whereby proposals to carry out development (including engineering operations and changes of use of buildings or land) are assessed by local planning authorities (LPA) to determine their suitability in a given location. When considering a proposal decision should be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, an important factor which underpins the discretionary approach utilised in England. DC is fundamentally therefore a regulatory function that reacts to the submission and content of applications for planning permission. The requirement to apply for planning permission in this manner was introduced by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the system today remains based upon these foundations.

The origins of the British planning system can arguably be found in the Assize Courts and the Assize of Nuisance from 1275. Historically control such as this over the use of land sought to prevent nuisance between neighbours, rather than pursuing a "*vision of public interest*" (Booth, 2003, p.9). Public benefit was largely related to practical issues such as preventing fire, safeguarding public health and ensuring

appropriate width of carriageways. The modern (post 1947) planning system, conversely, operates to safeguard public interests of acknowledged importance as opposed to providing a mechanism for protecting private concerns – although the distinction between the two is notoriously ambiguous and the impacts of one neighbour onto another can constitute a wider public interest issue, with value-laden phraseology such as 'protecting amenity' being used to justify decisions.

Post war redevelopment gave planning an “*elevated status... reflecting its ideological status as part of modernity and social reform*” (Tewdwr-Jones, 2008, pg.673). However, by the 1950s planning was already being seen as a restrictive activity by the incoming Conservative Government. The spread of urban areas during the 1950s led to a battle between town and country, which was further exacerbated by increased mobility through rising car ownership (and with it the new road-building programme). In response, the green belts circular (1955) sought to halt outwards urban expansion.

Since the 1970's the focus of DC has been on speed of determination: resolving delay in the system to the detriment of all else (Booth, 2003). However, what constituted 'delay' was not defined (the eight week deadline originating in 1933 failed to take account of how the function had since changed). DC was seen in the context of managerialist efficiency i.e. problems arose through administrative failures rather than any elemental weaknesses in the design of the system. The mechanics of the systems were the focus, not the *nature* of the system.

Planning in the 1980s was characterised by the theme of removing barriers to economic development. Development control was seen as a reactive, administrative and bureaucratic process that was a barrier to economic growth and new development, a criticism that was also levelled at the planning system as a whole in some regards. However, Cullingworth & Nadin (2006) argue that in the prioritisation of economic development and the relaxation of planning controls to achieve this was in many cases largely rhetoric, with politicians' actions not matching their words. Indeed, by the late 1980s the Conservatives' paternalist intentions to the environment were heralded which would result in a greater amount of restriction placed on development that affected 'green' interests and subsequently those relating to built heritage. Development control, despite some minor alteration, ultimately emerged from this period effectively unchanged and unchallenged.

During the labour administration of the late 1990s an increased role for regional government attempted to give planning a more strategic overview, particularly in terms of housing land allocation, whilst at the same time seeking to increase community involvement. This was compounded during the first decade of the 2000s by the addition of a regional tier to the development planning system. The intended consequence of gaining greater strategic control across local authority boundaries was not matched in ambition by the resources made available to the regions for such an important role and the wider limitations of this top-down approach was frequently exposed, particularly in the context of housing. Significantly however, during this

period the development control approach was given greater scrutiny than it had arguably witnessed previously. This was as part of what was presented as a step-change in the manner in which the planning system operates:

‘We want a system that is capable of reaching decisions that command public confidence and which is seen to be open and fair. A system that underpins our desire to improve productivity by being capable of reaching a proper balance between our desire for economic development and for thriving communities. A system that is clear and comprehensible, that comes to robust decisions in sensible time frames... It is time for fundamental change’

(DTLR green paper, ‘Planning: delivering a fundamental change’, 2001, paragraph 1.8)

This was to become known as the spatial planning approach and the associated 2004 Act was the key driver for change at this time. Although the focus arguably remained elsewhere, this Act did also effectively underpin the emergence of the development management approach. It was significant that when the Labour government introduced spatial planning into England and Wales in 2004, they also sought a culture change in the way planning delivered its ‘product’. The regulatory framework has evolved rather than been comprehensively redesigned since its introduction, with the fundamental workings of the decision making process broadly unchanged from those introduced in 1947. It was noted at this time that the development control function was too reactive, based on regulatory function, and do not actively seek to engage with those outside of the ‘silo’. Development management was the solution to this issue.

It would be wrong to solely associated the last Labour administration with a top-down approach to governance, indeed much was achieved in increasing community participation and empowerment in this period, and yet in some respects this has been lost in the politics of the last election and the emergence of the ‘localism’ agenda under the Coalition Government. Spatial planning, as a term at least, has become politicalised and although the principles of this approach remain in most cases, the terminology has fallen out of favour alongside Core Strategies and other matters that emerged out of the 2004 Act. Where, then, does this leave development management?

3. Development management in a new world order: Decision making in a world of spatial planning

Prior to the 2004 Act there was, perhaps, a prioritisation given to plan preparation without explicit consideration of the implementation tool. Given that the planning system is ‘plan-led’ this is appropriate. However, a plan won’t, in itself, make anything happen: *“Development control isn’t a second order activity - it’s what makes things happen. Actual forward planning and LDFs don’t make anything happen”* Andrew Whitaker, head of planning, Home Builders’ Federation). Delivering on the plan, implementing it, is clearly key. This implementation is

achieved, in part, through the delivery of new development, supported and approved through the development control/management process. It is therefore the necessary mechanism through which sustainable development, economic growth, environmental protection and sustainable communities are delivered.

The former Labour government's agenda to join-up services, to link 'outcomes' and to apply the spatial planning approach can be seen as central to the emergence of development management as opposed to a system based on control. Writing about the emergence of the spatial planning approach Nadin (2007:43) reflected on the goals of planning reform, "*to put planning at the centre of the spatial development process... as a proactive and strategic coordinator of all policy and actions*". The interrelationship between policy areas is an important facet of spatial planning. Nadin neatly sums up the difficulty of policy integration stating that making "*broad policy statements is one thing, application of these principles is another*" (2007:53). The intention was for DM, as a part of the post-2004 spatial planning approach, to empower the spatial planning approach to be enabled throughout the process of development, embracing the application decision making process and the associated elements occurring prior and post decision.

The central government department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) defined DM as, "*...end-to-end management of the delivery chain for sustainable development*". The Planning Officers' Society provide a little more clarity in their definition, "*...an integral part of the spatial planning process; it puts spatial plans into action and seeks to achieve good design and sustainable development*", but again this requires a fair bit of explanation. Put simply DM is the delivery mechanism for putting 'wish-lists' into practice.

In the context of making planning decisions upon individual development proposals, the development management concept was intended, in contrast to the arguably reactive process orientated DC approach of the past, to be based around the operation of a multi-faceted end-to-end delivery and implementation orientated process utilising implementation tools/mechanisms, organisational approaches, front loading, monitoring and feedback with an emphasis upon skills and culture change within the profession. Development management was intended to focus upon *outcomes* (i.e. meeting needs) rather than *outputs* (the implications of permitting/refusing development through the determination of a planning application - normatively related to the regulatory DC function).

Development control, in its simplest form, consisted of the following:

- receiving and validating a planning application;
- undertaking consultations;
- assessing against policy;
- negotiating between parties;
- preparing a recommendation report;
- issuing the decision notice; and
- enforcing against breaches

Figure 1. Development Control

By contrast development management is presented as involving a range of other functions. It is something more; something bigger. The CLG (December 2009) consultation paper on Development Management sets out seven key elements that a DM service should involve:

1. Convening role - Proactive discussions with landowners, agents, developers, community groups, parish/town councils to provide the foundations for partnership and constructive relationships
2. Links matters which can be considered in the determination of planning proposals more closely to the community's vision for the area – look to see if additional benefits can be gained from the proposal that meet the dev plan vision
3. Pre-applications – communication, consultation, negotiation, advice to derive community benefits and timeliness in decision making
4. Proportionate approach – effectively manage limited resources within planning authorities
5. Engagement - wider liaison and partnership working with parties to achieve holistic solutions. Link to convening role of local authorities
6. Proactive delivery - focus upon delivery, not process and targets – greater use of masterplans and site briefs and a more cautious or restrained approach to the use of conditions, particularly pre-commencement conditions.
7. Monitoring implementation to continually develop best practice and ensure delivery of desired outcomes. Enforcement, to reinforce the legitimacy of the system and instil public confidence

The set this against the former development control approach it can be seen that development embraces a broader remit:

Figure 2: Development management

The additional aspects, often outside of the DC team and often their department, introduced by the development management approach are presented as sitting around the core regulatory ‘DC’ element.

Critiques however might argue that development management actually just represents best practice in development associated regulatory control activities and it is of note that the current government continue to see issues with the planning system and again, as in 2011 as in 2001, *fundamental reform* is being spoken of:

“Instead of planning being seen as the forum and the discipline whereby people can shape the places where they live for the better, it has become a crucible for controversy and acrimony...This Government is proposing fundamental reform... we have proposals which go back to first principles - not just tinkering with processes, but rebooting the way we think about planning altogether.” (Greg Clark MP Minister for Decentralisation and Cities – Speech 2/2/11).



With further reforms being promoted now is a pertinent time to consider where we have come from. What was the reality of the development management approach?

4. Development management in practice

The introduction of the development management approach was largely given to the Planning Advisory Service¹ (PAS) to champion. It was emphasised that development management was not just a new name for development management; it was something new, something bigger, something significant. The previously mentioned concept of ‘end-to-end’ delivery suggested that development management would break down the silos within local authorities and move to an arrangement where the regulatory process is a mechanism, not the core driver, within the approach. Despite this, the fundamental regulatory framework remained relatively unchanged. As such it can be argued that this was further evolution, despite the rhetoric of fundamental change. This is effectively acknowledged in the PAS approach deployed with evolution rather than revolution sought through a transition from *controlling* development to *managing* it. This was seen as a matter of embracing ‘soft’ (culture) change rather than instigating ‘hard’ (regulatory) measures. The clearest evidence of the development management approach can therefore be found where new approach and techniques are utilised, but working within the extant legislation.

4.1 Flexibility

Local Development Orders (LDO) allow for discretionary local variation in permitted development rights. Wycombe District Council prepared an LDO (July 2010) to encourage economic regeneration in an historic area of High Wycombe that was experiencing high shop vacancy rates. The LDO, which covers a 0.7 hectare area of the town’s historic centre, allows for material changes of use of ground floor premises without requiring planning permission. The area has been suffering from high vacancy rates and the order, which has a three year life span, allows businesses to change between retail, professional and financial services, café, bar, restaurant, office and institutional/public uses without the need to secure formal approval from the planning authority as would normally be required. The intention is to provide a more flexible approach within the defined area, allowing the market to lead on the future proportion and distribution of occupancy types. It has received strong support from Members. Although twelve months later all changes in use have involved retail uses, which would have been permitted anyway, it is suggested that this system sends a strong message to businesses of the Council’s willingness to adopt a proactive approach to utilising tools to increase flexibility where appropriate. There are clear parallels between this approach and the current government’s proposed Neighbourhood Development Orders which are envisaged to be deployed in a similar manner, but would be instigated by the Parish Council, rather than introduced by the higher level local authority.

¹ The Planning Advisory Service is a government programme funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

4.2 Community involvement and responsibility

As well as simply changing permitted development rights in a given area, an LDO can also be used as a tool to support community engagement and empowerment. Using the existing LDO mechanism, Cornwall Council led a pilot scheme with Feock Parish Council to enable the parish to direct minor development within a defined geographical ward (Carnon Downs). The LDO extends residential permitted development rights for proposals that comply with the requirements of a published design guide, produced in partnership by the two councils and the local community. The LDO came into effect in June 2011 with officers initially supporting the Parish committee in determining proposals, although in the longer term it is envisaged that officer time will be freed up to work on other planning matters. This approach has had the added benefits of: increasing transparency in decision-making through real community involvement in the planning process; increasing community confidence to meaningfully engage in pre-application discussions based on their design guide; and forging excellent working relationships between the councils with all parties learning from each other.

4.3 Project management

A key element of the cultural change is in the way in which proposals are managed, including through the formal planning application process.

Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) are effectively project management tools designed to facilitate the effective coordination of all aspects of the development proposal relevant to the planning process. They are designed to bring together all the key actors with an interest in the scheme together around the table, including in some instances appropriate community representatives, to manage the implementation process in accordance with an agreed timescale with marked significant milestones. Examples have already been seen in Bristol, Lancaster and Westminster, and the potential exists for more widespread use. The main hurdle to the acceptance of this approach for major developments is perhaps the issue of probity and transparency in decision making, as well as managing expectations. The agreement of a PPA does not, of course, imply an approval at the end of the process. However, what a PPA can do is support the effective management of the decision making process.

Seeing a planning application as a 'project' and a case officer as a project manager, combined with project management tools for the planning relevant elements of the process of development, can be argued to represent a significant shift in culture and approach.

4.4 Democratic accountability

Redcar & Cleveland Council have been working to ensure councillors can engage effectively at the pre-application stage. The issue of bias and pre-determination

makes involvement problematic, but the value of Councillor insight and input can be extremely valuable to the decision making process. A protocol for elected members has been produced to provide a framework to work within. Training was then provided for the relevant committee members – not all members are invited to avoid any risk of pre-determination, and the presentations are in addition to, rather than instead of, any of their wider pre-application consultation carried out by the developer. Presentations on proposals are managed by officers and are designed to allow member engagement with major development projects at the pre-application stage. The protocol is clear that any subsequent discussions on each presentation is for issue identification only, rather than allowing any expression of views on the proposal. A similar approach is being operated by Chorley Council. Such an approach gives Councillors' confidence to engage in pre-application discussions without prejudicing themselves, thus improving democratic accountability in informed decision making.

4.5 Training, skills and organisational approaches

The emphasis upon cultural change carries with it a requirement to undertake wide-ranging organisational reforms and reskilling. At a fundamental level the transition from a land-use planning system to the spatial planning approach laid the foundation for this transition, providing a context that supported, perhaps even demanded, a parallel shift in the decision making and implementation functions of planning. Supporting this, organisation change, such as the merging of the national Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to form the Homes and Communities Agency provided for a coherent and coordinated organisational structure to support the wider change taking place. At the local level reorganisation and restructuring has occurred within a number of authorities creating major projects teams, delivery teams and/or undertaking internal reorganisation to integrate previously separate sections within their planning services, such as policy, development control, economic development etc.

A key further element that has been pursued is training and knowledge transfers. Led by PAS, training has been delivered for staff across not only local authorities, but also other public, private and third sector organisations who engage with them.

4.6 System changes

Although the core legislation that underpins development control/management has not been changed significantly, some key alterations have been made to bring about change. A significant area of focus in this respect is the introduction of a uniform system of application forms and submission arrangements. Previously, each local authority produced its own applications; now, a single form is used across England, unifying basic requirements. In parallel with this, e-planning initiatives have enabled electronic submissions of applications and consultation with stakeholders via emails and cloud systems.

Key mechanisms have also been revised, most significantly perhaps the parameters and approach associated with permitted development rights; those matters that are pre-determined and require only compliance, rather than needing a formal planning approval from a local planning authority following the submission of a formal application. The intention here has been to ensure that the system is proportionate, efficient and impact driven. An example of proportionality can be seen in the practices of the Planning Inspectorate, who have introduced a 'fast-track' planning appeals system for householder application appeals, streamlining the process associated with these minor cases and allowing resources to be focused where they are more required. There is an associated service improvement for those using the system through this strategy in addition to the internal benefits.

5. Impact

Although the previous section of this paper identifies good examples of best practice that have seen real benefit, it is argued that there are limitations which question the success of the DM 'project'. It is suggested that these can broadly be grouped as systems failures and failures in the profession:



Figure 3: Development management limitations

5.1 System failures

The value of Local Development Orders has been questioned for a number of reasons. In the first instance they have resource implications to establish. After being introduced there are on-going administration resource implications. To offset

there must therefore be clear benefit from their introduction, but is this the case? Where an LDO is introduced it is in circumstances where the flexibility offered is inherently acceptable. On this basis, any application that was to be submitted in the absence of an LDO would likely secure support and benefit from a relatively untroubled passage through the application process. Is certainty and flexibility therefore being formalised where it tacitly existed previously? For the local planning authority, the real cost is financial, each application now no longer required equates to a planning fee lost. There is therefore a financial cost for local authorities who can ill-afford the loss of revenue. Furthermore, the nature of an LDO is such that it will either be restrictive, or it will be flexible to an extent that it can only be deployed in a less sensitive area, such as an industrial estate or business park. Clive Dutton, who is executive director for regeneration, planning and property at the London Borough of Newham, has said on this: "I'm a little agnostic about LDOs because it's crucial to have integrity of design in the built environment, rather than letting any development of a particular use go through" (Townsend, S 2011). Potential benefits do therefore exist, but the financial model and potential environmental impacts will limit the application and value of this tool.

Planning Performance Agreements are also slightly troublesome in some respects. Although the concept of project managing a development proposal has significant merit, the use of a PPA is limited by the nature of the system within which it is required to operate. The inherent flexibility that exists within the British planning system means no certainty of a positive outcome is assured at any point during the process, arguably limited the attractiveness of the system to developer, whilst the perception of the agreement may still be unpalatable to other stakeholders. It is perhaps the approach that is at fault here, the introduction of a formalised process which sits above and beyond the standard processes and practices. Instead, greater benefit may have been found in a more flexible, less formal but universal employment of project management principles across all forms of application, with a scaled approach relevant to the application type. The key therefore being the culture change, not the introduction of a formalised process for certain types and scales of development.

The changes to legislation that have been undertaken, and in particular the revisions to the permitted development rights, have been a mixed success at best. Poor drafting, an absence of definitions, and a complex series of parameters with loopholes has unfortunately been the case, particularly for the householders permitted development review. These flaws have undermined what was a well-intentioned attempt to address a system with real issues. Unfortunately, the replacement system has been found to contain more issues than the original format. The suggestion that the transition was necessary because it took the system towards a 'impact based' approach is equally flawed; what was previous system based upon if not impact?

Finally, the dark shadow of resources limitations is cast over everything. With local authority budgets reduced and resources stretched ever further, the actual ability of

local authorities to actually bring about change is unfortunately limited, further compromising the potential impact, and indeed ability to introduce in some instances, the changes that can lead to the culture change required. Too often change continues to be driven by cost, not impact. Many have acknowledged how complex and divergent the new system could become and how few resources exist to enable it to be delivered. Rydin (2011a:32) considers that communities are likely to 'require considerable support' if they are to effectively use the localism powers that seem to be heading their way and, with the untimely cut to Planning Aid funding, it is likely that this task will fall to local authority planners. All of this has an associated cost implication, in terms of both time and resources, and there remains an unanswered paradox between the stated ambitions of the Coalition Government and the perverse spending cuts being passed onto local government, compromising their ability to support the new agenda (Hambleton, R. 2011).

5.2 Failure in the profession?

It is hard to escape the fact that issues may also exist in relation to the willingness, or the ability, of the profession to bring about change. Development Control departments remain in some instances in both name and operation, many developers continue to approach the process in the same manner, and a perception of rhetoric is attached to the development management approach.

The development management approach that appeared following the 2004 Act can be seen both as a response to criticisms about the perceived delay in determining planning applications with a positive outcome and also as a way of implementing a more proactive, community engaged spatial planning approach. PAS stressed that development management is not a new name for DC. This however clearly depends upon what is understood by these terms. Those seeking to explain the difference often emphasize DC's mechanistic and administrative functions in order to provide contrast with the theoretically more proactive and dynamic DM approach. The reality though is that the previous DC functions remain within DM, and many of the approaches promoted through the DM approach were previously possible, if not always employed, under the former development control regime and associated legislation. Many practitioners would argue that development management actually just represents best practice in development associated regulatory control activities (Croft and Sheppard, 2011). The profession has therefore arguably not responded to the introduction of development management, but conversely what were they actually responding to? And, having regard to the comments concerning resources noted above, did they have the ability to respond?

5.3 Approach and change management

As has already been highlighted, PAS were very clear that DM was not just another word for DC. This was a *fundamental change*. A new way of approaching the planning application process. But in most instances is it not DC best practice laced with government rhetoric? It would be understandable and reasonable for this

conclusion to be reached when one considers that in 1980 the following statement was published: “Development control must avoid placing unjustified obstacles in the way of any development...it is, and should be seen to be...part of the process of making things happen in the right place at the right time. Local planning authorities are asked therefore to pay greater regard to time and efficiency; to adopt a more positive attitude to planning applications; to facilitate development...” (Circular 22/80 (development control - policy and practice)).

PAS noted that development management is the term that has been coined to include the range of activities and interactions that together transform the 'control of development and the use of land' into a more positive and proactive process that fits better with the ethos of spatial planning and better supports local authorities in their role as place shapers. The presentation of development management is therefore problematic because to a certain extent it is damned by association with development control. The suggestion that it could *replace* development control within planning is to associate it with the silo within which development control lived. Development management was therefore itself placed in a silo which compromised entirely its ability to be something more. By associating it with the implementation of policy removed its ability to embrace visioning, policy formulation and strategy, thus compromising the ‘end-to-end’ concept and effectively limiting it to matters associated with planning *applications* and thus development control. Promoting best practice within development control would have been one thing, to attempt to promote something more whilst constraining its ability to do so is quite another.

The approach to change failed to deconstruct the wider structures that existed, forcing development management to fit into an extant construct which prevented development management from being all that it could be.

6. Wither development management?

It is important to remember that despite the suggestion of a wider shift, the determining of planning applications remains an important aspect of the planning service and one that is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Consequently, any definition of development management needs to acknowledge this inherent regulatory function and the pressures (speed of determination, conflicting views, community interest etc.) associated with it. This, it is argued, is equally a limiting factor to the perceived impact and shape of development management. There still remains a legal requirement to process and determine valid planning applications. Consequently the regulatory function it fulfils should not be viewed as redundant and still requires appropriate resourcing.

One perspective is to see development management as development control best practice, and this has merit having regard to the benefits that can undoubtedly be seen when the system is used to its full extent and the process of development is

approached in a positive and proactive manner. But this is also to perhaps overlook the potential that the development management approach has.

The most important step is to uncouple development management from development control and instead to see the approaches and functions. It is suggested that if development management is seen as the operational implementation of the process of development within the spatial planning approach, transcending planning functions and genuinely representing an end-to-end methodology:

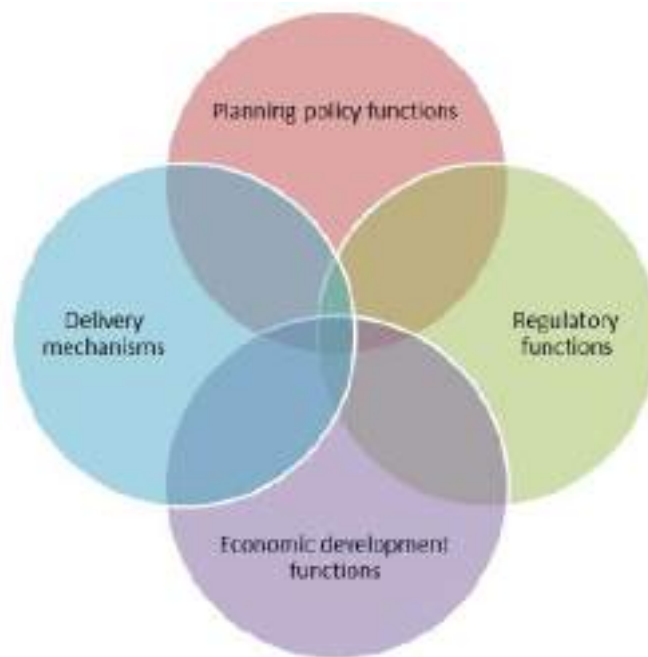


Figure 4. The development management *approach*

It is therefore suggested that whilst development management has clear limitations in the manner in which it was actually introduced, as an actual approach there is clear potential which has been somewhat lost as a result of the packaging, execution and resourcing. The development management approach requires a coherent strategy concerning the formulation of policy, the management of each proposal as a project, the coordination of activities, mediation between communities and other parties, and ensuring that the best outcome is realised.

In the context of the current localism agenda it will be necessary for many planners to further redefine their roles and work ever more closely with communities but the development management approach offers much in the emerging landscape and the best practice already seen should be championed. The development management *approach*, and the compatibility of the method with localism, should be further

explored and the true potential explored within a genuinely deconstructed approach to planning.

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