

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIC LAND USE PLANNING: NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES IN SCOTLAND

MG Lloyd

INTRODUCTION

Land use planning is a specific form of government activity which seeks to secure a community interest in the development of land and property resources. A key characteristic of land is its fixed absolute supply. This, when combined with an increasing demand for land through population and economic change, makes land development a valuable commodity for landowners and property developers. The lessons of an unfettered land market, however, resulted in government intervention being introduced to secure a pattern of land use and development that reflected the wider social interest (Cherry 1983). To this end, development rights in land were nationalised under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 whilst use rights in land were retained for the individual land owner. The development of land was made subject to statutory control by local planning authorities. The conventional rationale for development control may be formally explained in terms of the perceived need to control the private externalities and spillover effects associated with the development of land. Government intervention through local authority activity was perceived to be the most appropriate means of controlling and managing private land development in the wider social interest.

M.G.Lloyd is a lecturer in the Department of Land Economy, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen AB9 2UF. He would like to thank the Nuffield Foundation for providing the financial support for the research project on which the paper is based. He would also like to acknowledge the considerable help of Professor Jeremy Rowan-Robinson (Aberdeen University) and Professor Derek Lyddon (Heriot-Watt University), and a referee for very helpful critical comments.

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The post-war land-use planning system in Britain has subsequently demonstrated certain key qualities. These have included deliberate attempts to relate the detailed management of environmental change to broader national and regional strategies; a concern with the relations between town and country; the comprehensiveness of the legislation; its practical traditions; and its value structure which has emphasised access to environmental quality for all (Healey 1988). Central to land use planning practice have been attempts to secure a strategic perspective on land development. This seeks to provide a broader framework for policy implementation by individual planning authorities so as to secure a consistent approach to the allocation of land uses and the management of property development (Diamond 1979). Unfortunately, those attempts at achieving a strategic planning perspective over land use and development have been less than ideal in practice (Bruton and Nicholson 1985).

It is important to acknowledge, however, that a distinctive feature of land use planning practice in Scotland has been the extent to which attempts have been made to secure a strategic approach to land use planning policy formulation and implementation (Begg and Pollock 1990). Indeed, strategic planning policy guidance has been achieved for a number of years by the (then) Scottish Development Department by means of a number of individual but complementary policy instruments. These have included Circulars, National Planning Guidelines and Planning Advice Notes. Circulars have provided statements of ministerial policy on a range of land use planning issues, information about legislative changes implementing government policy, and advice on procedural matters. The National Planning Guidelines identified land resources having national significance which should be safeguarded from or for development, such as with respect to prime agricultural land resources, single-user high amenity sites for technology development and land for skiing developments. The Planning Advice Notes set out advice to planning authorities on specific issues, such as the siting and design of new housing in the countryside. Together these principal instruments contributed to the operation of a positive land use planning system (Nuffield Foundation 1986).

In 1991, the Scottish Office Environment Department (SOEnD), the renamed Scottish Development Department (Parry 1992), put into effect a rationalisation of its strategic planning policy framework. A significant change was the replacement of the National Planning Guidelines by National Planning Policy Guidelines. Notwithstanding the similarity of the nomenclature, the two sets of policy instruments differ both in substance and detail (Lloyd and Rowan-Robinson 1992). This means that, in effect, the

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distinctive contribution of the National Planning Guidelines as a specific policy instrument for securing the national interest in land development in Scotland has come to an end in that particular format.

This paper examines the contribution of National Planning Guidelines to land use planning in Scotland. It sets out the origins of the Guidelines and traces their subsequent development. In particular, the paper identifies flexibility of policy guidance as a key characteristic to the policy instrument.

THE ORIGINS OF NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

National Planning Guidelines were uniquely Scottish. The policy instrument represented a pragmatic yet radical and innovative departure from conventional traditions of British land use planning. Land use planning traditions have tended to be primarily regulatory or negative in nature and in effect (Pearce 1992). National Planning Guidelines, however, were an attempt to set out a positive framework of indicative planning for local decision making over land and property development by individual planning authorities.

The origins of National Planning Guidelines may be traced to a policy recommendation of the Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland (HMSO 1972). It is important to note, however, that ideas relating to establishing strategic indicative planning for land and economic development had been circulating for some time prior to this (Fladmark 1988). The Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland had been established in May 1971 to 'investigate the usage of land resources in the rural and urban land areas of Scotland'. The Select Committee noted that Scotland had an established land use planning system but identified the changes that were expected to have a major impact on the administration of that planning system. The anticipated changes included the proposed reform of local government, the division of development plans into a defined hierarchical relationship of structure plans and local plans, the requirements of greater public participation and involvement in the preparation of the new development plans, and Britain's imminent entry into the European Community. The Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland argued that, as a consequences of these changes, there were likely to be a number of policy issues and administrative issues for the urban and rural environments. The Select Committee reviewed the policy arrangements for land use management in Scotland and was critical of the fragmented policy responsibilities that then existed. The Select Committee expressed the view

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that such fragmentation created opportunities for conflicting policies to be adopted and posed further difficulties for accommodating the long term perspective on land management in Scotland (HMSO 1972).

The Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland accepted the need for strategic guidance to address the difficulties associated with policy fragmentation. This was viewed as particularly important in the context of structure plan preparation which was to be achieved within a broader national social, economic and physical context. The advocacy of a strategic planning approach was further refined in the Select Committee's deliberations of rural land issues. It was held that a land use strategy should not be characterised by a single-purpose approach but be responsive to the specific needs of the rural area as a whole. As a consequence of this analysis, the Select Committee advocated the preparation of an indicative plan for Scotland on a national scale which would show how it is intended to utilise the land for urban, industrial and recreational purposes. The Select Committee recommended a national structure plan embodying a national industrial strategy with a system of advance zoning for urban and rural land uses. What is striking here is that the Select Committee acknowledged the direct relationship of land use planning with economic processes and policies. It recognised that the orderly co-ordination of land use planning policy and decision making was essential to facilitate economic certainty, particularly at times of change. This was an intuitive attempt to view land use planning as an important supply side policy instrument to marshal the appropriate resources, such as land release and infrastructure, for economic development.

The Government, in its observations on the report of the Select Committee on Land Resource Use in Scotland, acknowledged the need for a more explicit top-down approach to land use planning, but rejected a rigid national structure plan as impractical (HMSO 1973). Instead, it proposed to forge a new instrument for Scotland to fill the gap between planning policy statements which contain policy instructions for planning authorities and planning advice on the distillation of good practice. On the one hand, this particular direction in government thinking may be explained by its optimism in the imminent preparation of structure plans which had the potential to provide a strategic planning context for the management of change. On the other hand, the decision may be explained in terms of a reluctance to advocate further intervention in the processes of land development. National Planning Guidelines emerged, therefore, as a response by the Scottish Office to provide strategic guidance on key land use policy issues. The Guidelines then formed the basis of Scottish strategic land use planning from the early 1970s to the early 1990s, as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1
National Planning Guidelines 1991

1. North Sea Oil and Gas: Coastal Planning Guidelines 1974
2. National Planning Guidelines for Aggregate Working 1977
3. National Planning Guidelines 1981: Priorities for Development Planning
 - land for housing
 - land for large industry
 - land for petrochemical development
 - rural planning priorities
 - national scenic areas
 - nature conservation
 - forestry
4. National Planning Guidelines 1984: Skiing Developments
5. National Planning Guidelines 1985: High Technology: Individual High Amenity Sites
6. National Planning Guidelines 1986: Location of Major Retail Development
7. National Planning Guidelines 1987: Agricultural Land

Source: Scottish Development Department

A COMPENDIUM OF NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES?

The discovery of oil and natural gas in the northern sector of the North sea in 1969-1970 led to sustained exploration activity, development of the fields and production of the oil and natural gas. The offshore activity had a marked impact on the British and Scottish economies and a number of localities in Scotland were associated in some way with the offshore oil industry (Hutcheson and Hogg 1975; MacKay and Mackay 1975; Walker 1979; Keegan 1985). A specific manifestation of the new economic activity was a demand for coastal sites to act as construction yards of oil-platforms. The

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demands on the coastal resource in the early 1970s raised a number of strategic planning issues (Turnbull 1988). In particular, the environmental problems which arose as a result of the lack of any clear strategic guidance on the location of sites for the construction of the offshore platforms resulted in the Drumbuie Public Inquiry in 1973. The policy vacuum with respect to the onshore impacts associated with the development of North Sea oil and gas provided the first critical policy test for the Guidelines.

As a consequence, National Planning Guidelines were first published in 1974 to address the planning issues associated with the development of the Scottish coast. It was considered there would be substantial benefit to be gained by encouraging the grouping of most such oil related development into specific zones and by discouraging such development in areas where conservation was considered to be particularly important. The Coastal Planning Guidelines defined sixteen 'preferred development zones' around the coast of Scotland where such development should generally be encouraged and twenty-six 'preferred conservation zones' where there should be a presumption against such development (Scottish Development Department 1974). The essential characteristic of the Coastal Guidelines was that they identified a land resource having national significance which should be safeguarded from or for development. They provided an early warning of where the national resource might be affected and an inquiry would be likely.

The policy initiative had now been taken by the Scottish Development Department. In 1977, it published National Planning Guidelines for 'Large Industrial Sites and Rural Conservation'. The context for the Guidelines was the effects arising from the reorganisation of local government as a consequence of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The creation of the new regional councils led to the preparation of regional reports which provided valuable information on the economic and planning circumstances within the different areas of Scotland. This, together with information provided by government agencies, such as the Scottish Development Agency and Highlands and Islands Development Board, precipitated the preparation by local authorities of the new structure and local plan process. The Scottish Development Department stated that the time was ripe to consider how land use planning at the national level should provide the context for planning by regional and district authorities (Scottish Development Department 1977). The second set of National Planning Guidelines published in 1977 encompassed: sites for large-scale industry; petrochemicals; agricultural land; nature conservation; landscape and recreation; and the management of the coast. The strategic guidance was clearly evident in the planning documents. In the context of sites for large-scale industry, for example, the National

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Planning Guidelines requested planning authorities to look for and safeguard major industrial sites in some six search areas so that a portfolio of two or three available sites (owned and zoned) could be maintained for Scotland as a whole. This approach was also evident in terms of securing opportunities for desirable petrochemical development in Scotland. Local authorities were requested to establish the potential for such development in their area and to frame their structure and local plans and development control policies so that sites could be readily identified, if and when required.

In 1978, National Planning Guidelines were published addressing the strategic planning issues associated with two specific activities, those of large-scale shopping developments and the development of aggregates. The Guidelines on large-scale shopping developments were required because of the proliferation of such developments. This had resulted in problems and conflicts between authorities. The Guidelines identified the national interest in terms of such property developments and indicated the circumstances in which a proposed development should be notified to the Minister. Similarly, the National Planning Guidelines on aggregate resources in Scotland were a direct response to the implications of a predicted shortfall in the supply of aggregates which would likely result in an increased demand for sites for extraction. The Guidelines attempted to match potential for such resources with the sensitivity of the landscape. Local authorities were asked to develop the zoning exercise and to prepare structure and local plan policies accordingly.

By 1981, nearly three-quarters of Scotland was covered by structure plans. The Scottish Development Department considered that much of the strategic guidance which had been set out in the earlier Guidelines was now implemented in the plans. It was also considered that the time was ripe for a review and updating of the series of National Planning Guidelines. There was, of course, a new political dimension here. The Conservative administration had embarked on a critical review of the objectives and nature of the British and Scottish land-use planning system. The new context for planning was one based on a redefinition of the nature and extent of public sector land use controls (Thornley 1990). This approach subsequently included primary and secondary legislative measures and administrative guidance to planning authorities to make the planning system more efficient for business as an enabling function (Rowan-Robinson and Lloyd 1986). The National Planning Guidelines published in 1981 reflected an early expression of this market-led ideology. It was considered that the Guidelines could assist in implementing the new objectives of the planning system if they established national priorities for resolving possible conflicts between land, agriculture

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and housing, industry and other uses. This, it was held, would create a more efficient administration of the planning system through simpler decision making with a resulting reduction in the number of planning appeals. In the government's terms, this would reduce the level of compliance costs on the business community in terms of its relationship with planning. Furthermore, the Guidelines would contribute to the efficiency of planning by defining those national issues in land development, thereby establishing matters which could be left to planning authorities to determine. Thus, the National Planning Guidelines published in 1981 stated that the next steps in development planning need to be based on a rigorous selection of those priorities which are most likely to lead to the release of enterprise while safeguarding the environment. The purpose of this set of Guidelines is to suggest where in the national interest these development planning priorities should lie (Scottish Development Department 1981).

The National Planning Guidelines published in 1981 encompassed a number of topics: agricultural land, land for housing, land for petrochemical development, rural planning priorities, national scenic areas, nature conservation, the coast, aggregate working and forestry. Many of these topics simply confirmed the existing strategic guidance laid down in earlier Guidelines. This was the case with the guidance on nature conservation, forestry, coastal planning and aggregate working. Other topics presaged a new approach to certain planning issues as with safeguarding outstanding landscapes in National Scenic Areas. The strategic guidance on rural planning priorities was a response to the deteriorating conditions in rural areas. Rural planning authorities were to give priority to development planning for those areas where there was the greatest potential and need for development and where competing interests were most likely to arise. The results should be carried through into local plans.

In 1984, new National Planning Guidelines setting out strategic guidance for skiing development in Scotland were published. This followed a lengthy inquiry into a proposal to extend skiing facilities on Cairngorm (Elliot, Lloyd and Rowan-Robinson 1987). Similarly, Guidelines dealing with 'High Technology: Individual High Amenity Sites' were published in 1985. In 1986, revised National Planning Guidelines on the location of major retail developments replaced the earlier document. These relaxed the presumption against locating large stores in 'off-centre' locations. In 1987 new National Planning Guidelines for agricultural land were issued. These reiterated the presumption against development on prime land but stressed the need to diversify the rural economy in areas of non-prime land (Lloyd, Rowan-Robinson and Dawson 1988). At the end of this period, National Planning

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Guidelines formed an impressive set of policy documents that laid down a strategic context for decision making by private and public interests involved in land development in Scotland.

A CASE OF POLICY ASSERTIVENESS?

Over the period in which the National Planning Guidelines were operational it is evident that the policy instrument evolved into an assertive strategic planning policy mechanism. Initially, however, the National Planning Guidelines were relatively tentative in seeking to contribute to more effective decision making by local planning authorities. The 1974 Coastal Guidelines, for example, were indicative of this early approach. On the one hand, the Guidelines appeared to represent a radical response by the Scottish Development Department to the land use conflicts in coastal areas created by a highly demanding industry. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Guidelines facilitated a 'reticulist' arrangement by bringing together the various interests concerned with the development potential and the environmental aspects of the Scottish coastline. In short, the Scottish Development Department used the Guidelines to ensure that jurisdictional boundaries between departments and organisations did not impede effective decision making (Fischer 1981). On the other hand, however, it has been argued that the National Planning Guidelines contained few surprises and more or less rubber-stamped what was already happening in the development of the Scottish coastline (Gillett 1983). This interpretation would suggest the Guidelines did little more than accept market determined patterns of land use and development.

Subsequent Guidelines, however, were more assertive. The 1977 National Planning Guidelines, for example, enabled the Secretary of State to move some way towards demarcating between land development proposals raising national issues which were to be notified to him and those which could be left for determination at the local or regional level. The 1981 National Planning Guidelines continued this approach by defining land resources of national significance to be safeguarded from or for development and, also, in some cases, indicating where development planning priorities should lie. The guidelines were effectively being assigned a more positive and indicative role in the planning process. This remains an important characteristic of the National Planning Guidelines. The instrument was intended to create greater consistency in decision making and, hence, greater certainty for those interests involved in land development.

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As the National Planning Guidelines became more established in the Scottish policy arena it was evident that each Guideline was based on a systematic assessment of a specific land resource in terms of its national interest or significance. An overview of the anticipated changes in the land resource together with implications for the land use planning system then completed the foundations of the strategic guidance set out by individual Guidelines. The National Planning Guidelines fell into two broad categories which were not necessarily mutually exclusive (Rowan-Robinson, Lloyd and Elliot 1987). On the one hand, the majority of National Planning Guidelines identified land resources which were held to be of national significance and, further, were held significant enough to be safeguarded from or for development. In these circumstances the National Planning Guidelines provided locational guidance as with prime agricultural land, nature conservation sites, national scenic areas, preferred conservation zones on the coast, sites for large industry, sites for petrochemical developments, primary areas for ski development, and individual high amenity sites for high technology development. On the other hand, some of the National Planning Guidelines simply indicated development planning priorities in those instances where land use conflicts involving the national interest were anticipated. These National Planning Guidelines were not principally concerned with locational guidance for specific developments but with providing broader policy guidance. The National Planning Guidelines in this category addressed the allocation of land for housing, rural planning priorities, and the location of major retail development. The complementarity of approach was a means of securing a comprehensive framework for addressing the issues associated with the strategic development of key land sectors in Scotland.

An essential characteristic of the National Planning Guidelines was the attempt to provide a strategic planning context which was flexible in the face of change (Lloyd and Rowan-Robinson 1992). The Guidelines were never intended to be rigid blueprints for determining land use change. The embryonic Compendium was to be sensitive to changing circumstances, development pressures and perceptions of where the national interest in land resource development was to be found. This resulted in a continuing process of revision of the strategic elements of the Guidelines. The National Planning Guidelines on the location of large-scale shopping centres provide an interesting illustration of this flexibility in strategic policy formulation and implementation.

STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY: PLANNING FOR CONSUMERISM

In the last fifteen years, retailing has undergone extensive organisational, ownership and managerial restructuring. This has dramatically changed the landscape of shopping developments with policy and control implications for local planning authorities (Montgomery 1990). On the one hand, planning authorities would wish to ensure that the communities which they serve benefit from the advances in competition and pricing within retailing. On the other hand, however, planning authorities have to account for the vitality of established shopping centres, the needs of special groups or neighbourhoods and the priorities of established land use policies, such as maintaining green belts. The range of issues involved and the balancing of the associated considerations have become particularly acute with respect to out-of-town shopping centres (Healey and Baker 1991). The changes in retailing clearly involve national and local interests. Thus any conflict between these interests or the various layers of interest within them results in considerable confusion and uncertainty for planning authorities and for developers. In such circumstances there is a case for a strategic planning policy perspective to provide a stabilising and consistent context within which local planning decision-making can be conducted. It can also create greater certainty for the interests involved in the financing and development of shopping facilities, including the public.

In consequence of these considerations, the Scottish Development Department published National Planning Guidelines on the location of major shopping facilities in 1978. The Guidelines noted that applications for planning approval had raised a number of critical questions as to the effects on established shopping centres and other land use policies. Furthermore, it had become evident that planning authorities and developers had expressed an interest in the planning principles which should be taken into account with respect to such developments. On the basis of certain assumptions, the Guidelines set out the objectives of planning control over new shopping developments which rested on the perceived need to strike a balance between the aim of preserving what is best of the old whilst allowing new forms of retailing to replace the obsolete and inefficient retail floorspace inherited from the past (Scottish Development Department 1978).

The National Planning Guidelines argued that planning authorities should provide a clear and early indication of planning policies and priorities for the location of major retailing developments. Such policies were to take account of the need to encourage private sector investment in depressed urban shopping centres; the need to achieve a balance between the provision of new

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kinds of shopping facilities and the conservation and improvement of existing shopping areas; the needs of special groups; and a general presumption against new superstores and hypermarkets on greenfield out-of-town sites, or other sites detached from existing town centres and not already zoned or allocated for shopping by planning authorities.

The revised National Planning Guidelines published in 1986 heralded a more liberal strategic-policy context to planning for retailing (Cox 1989). The document acknowledged the changes in the retail sector - particularly the increasing numbers of applications for larger scale developments; the increase in car ownership and shopping-by-car; the increasing importance attached to shopping environments by consumers; and that the provision of bus services by retailers had increased accessibility for those who did not own cars. The Guidelines stated that

city and town centres retain many natural advantages as shopping locations and shops make a major contribution to their character. Many have been the subject of public and private investment. Wherever opportunities exist, planning authorities should support the provision of sites for major new retail development in or adjacent to existing centres. At the same time, policies which restrict all new development to existing centres could, in current circumstances, prevent many towns and cities enjoying the benefits of major new investment in shopping and deprive consumers of the choice and convenience which the new forms of shopping provide. Retailing policies should now be tailored to the circumstances of individual areas rather than being based on overall prohibition of off-centre development as set out in the 1978 Guidelines (Scottish Development Department 1986, p2).

The 1986 Guidelines established new notification procedures whereby all retail development proposals greater than 40,000 sq.m. of gross retail floorspace must be notified to the Secretary of State for Scotland. Regional authorities are advised to review their structure plan policies for retailing particularly for shopping complexes in excess of 10,000 sq.m. and the provision for new or redeveloped off-centre locations for retail warehousing or retail parks selling durable goods. In such a way, the strategic planning policy framework was maintained in the face of changing circumstances and development pressures.

A STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Land use planning seeks to ensure that the benefits of land development are not confined exclusively to the private sector domain. It is a means (albeit far from perfect) for providing for a community interest in the allocation of land to appropriate uses, for ensuring a consistent basis for decision making to maintain equity between different interests and for resolving any conflicts associated with land development. In general terms, the planning system is viewed as an effective (but not cost free) method for addressing land use conflicts and conservation issues in society at large (Pearce 1992). In practice, however, land use planning involves the operation and inter-relationship of a variety of individual land use planning policy instruments which are employed at different levels of government so as to secure a social interest in land development. The National Planning Guidelines represented one such planning policy innovation - an indicative planning policy instrument issued by the Scottish Office to provide for a flexible but consistent framework for decision making by public and private interests in land development.

The National Planning Guidelines demonstrate that it was possible to provide a holistic perspective on specific planning matters without necessarily eroding the autonomy or discretion of individual planning authorities. Indeed this may be taken as the very essence of a strategic approach to land use planning. On the one hand, it attempted to secure a consistent policy overview on selected land issues whilst, on the other hand, it attempted to maintain discretion for action and policy formulation by individual planning authorities. The latter aspect is particularly important in a land use planning system based on local land use policy implementation and regulation. Such an approach thereby necessitated a close inter-relationship between the Scottish Office and local planning authorities. In practice, it would appear that such a working relationship was maintained but it is also evident that there was not general agreement on the nature of the contribution of the Scottish Office.

In the context of the Coastal Planning Guidelines, for example, it was noted that the strategic guidance for the development and conservation of the Scottish coastline did little more than legitimise established patterns of land development associated with offshore oil and gas activity. This critical view would suggest that the National Planning Guidelines did little more than 'rubber stamp' land development taking place rather than assert a broader strategic dimension on the use of specific land resources which might have resulted in a different pattern of land uses. This criticism could apply to a

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number of the other Guidelines - for example, skiing, retailing and agricultural land resources - none of which directly challenged the direction of market led development. In suggesting that the Scottish Office followed market led trends in land development rather than that which represented a social interest in such development, this viewpoint dilutes the imputed contribution of the Scottish Office in creating a strategic framework for land use and development in Scotland through the publication of individual National Planning Guidelines.

Furthermore, although the Guidelines were intended to form a 'compendium' it is evident that the National Planning Guidelines were highly selective. This point also goes to the very core of the original ideas expressed by the Select Committee for a national structure plan for Scotland and the subsequent format of individual National Planning Guidelines for specific key issues. As a consequence, the National Planning Guidelines evaded certain key planning questions such as urban renewal, energy conservation and production and transport infrastructure investment. A counter argument would suggest, however, that such key matters were already the focus of other policies such as inner city regeneration and energy supply. The issue of selectivity will become more critical as government addresses its commitment to the principles of sustainable development (HMSO 1990). This introduces the need for a radically different approach to policy formulation and design (Blowers 1992) and there is a clear role being defined for land use planning as an indicative instrument (Hebbert 1992). Instruments such as National Planning Guidelines (and their successors, the National Planning Policy Guidelines) will have to embrace a wider, more pro-active role to facilitate ideas associated with sustainable development. The era of selectivity may well be over for such policy instruments.

CONCLUSIONS

The National Planning Guidelines were unique to Scotland. On balance, it is fair to suggest that the planning policy instrument represented a part of the acknowledged progressive nature of Scottish land use planning practice. In general, the Guidelines would appear to have created greater certainty for public authorities and private interests associated with the development of land in certain key well-defined sectors. Notwithstanding the selective character of the Guidelines, the instrument contributed to a more consistent planning administration by local authorities and helped create a more stable investment environment for landowners and property developers. The efficiency gains in the operation of the planning system may explain in part

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the manner in which the National Planning Guidelines survived the ideological changes effected by the Conservative administration in the 1980s. This resulted in a dramatically changed context to the operation of land use planning through a challenge to the consensus in the need for planning controls and attempts to secure the simplification of planning procedures. Interestingly, the design and format of the Guidelines conformed to the requirements of the new regime and, as a consequence, were retained by the Scottish Office. The Guidelines were used subsequently as one way for the Scottish Office to disengage from local decision making on land use thereby contributing to a more streamlined planning administration.

In 1991, the SOEnD introduced National Planning Policy Guidelines to replace the National Planning Guidelines. The new instrument was introduced in an attempt to sharpen the clarity of the strategic land-use planning guidance of the SOEnD. Circulars will not now be used to convey ministerial policy on land use planning issues, but will be confined to providing advice on legislative change and on procedural matters. The National Planning Policy Guidelines will assume more significance in conveying strategic guidance in terms of locational and policy advice to local planning authorities and potential developers. Unlike the National Planning Guidelines, however, National Planning Policy Guidelines will not be complemented by Land Use Summary Sheets which had provided a baseline of information for policy makers and had served to complement the National Planning Guidelines. In effect, therefore, the distinctive contribution of the National Planning Guidelines as a specific policy instrument for securing the national interest in land development in Scotland has come to an end in that particular format. It is to be hoped that the NPPGs can maintain the tradition of strategic planning as a basic mainstay of Scottish land use planning practice but build on the experiences of the National Planning Guidelines.

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