



# The Planning White Paper

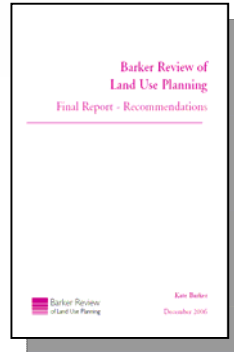
**Bernadette Kelly**  
Director, Planning reform

12 July 2007

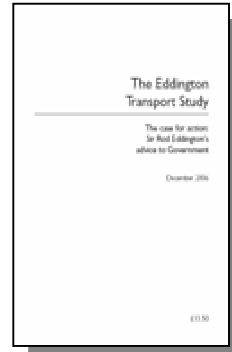




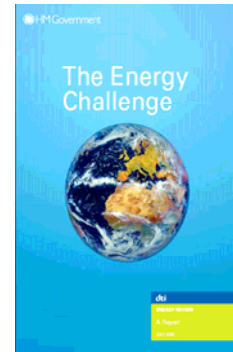
# The Planning White Paper...origins



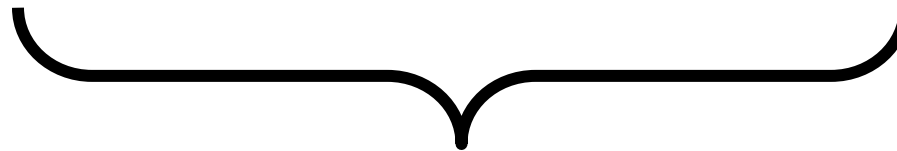
Barker



Eddington



Energy



<b>Town &amp; Country Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support sustainable economic growth</li><li>• Strengthen planning at the heart of local government</li><li>• Place shaping</li><li>• Streamlined processes</li><li>• Evolution not revolution</li></ul>	<b>MIPs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National policy statements: transport, energy, water, waste</li><li>• New consent regime</li><li>• Independent Planning Commission</li></ul>
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## Background

- **Planning is important because....**
  - it helps shape communities, towns and cities
  - it balances need for economic development with need to protect the environment
  - it enables people to have their say
- **Good progress has been made...**
  - sustainable development at the heart of planning
  - speedier decisions
  - more houses being built
  - more retail development in town centres
- **But long term challenges are increasing...**
  - climate change, energy security
  - economic development, globalisation
  - increasing population and demographic change
- **So we need to do more....**
  - better system for major infrastructure
  - speed up and simplify the system as a whole
  - to ensure climate change goals are met



## Principles for reform

- For the first time, a cross-Government approach to planning looking at all planning systems:
  - TCPA Act – housing and commercial development, airports
  - Electricity and Gas Acts – energy infrastructure
  - Transport and Works, Harbours Act – road, rail, ports
  - Water Act
- Core principles for planning:
  - Responsive to long term challenges
  - Streamlined, efficient, predictable
  - Full and fair opportunities for public consultation and community engagement
  - Transparent and accountable
  - Decisions at the right level



## Nationally significant infrastructure projects – the case for reform

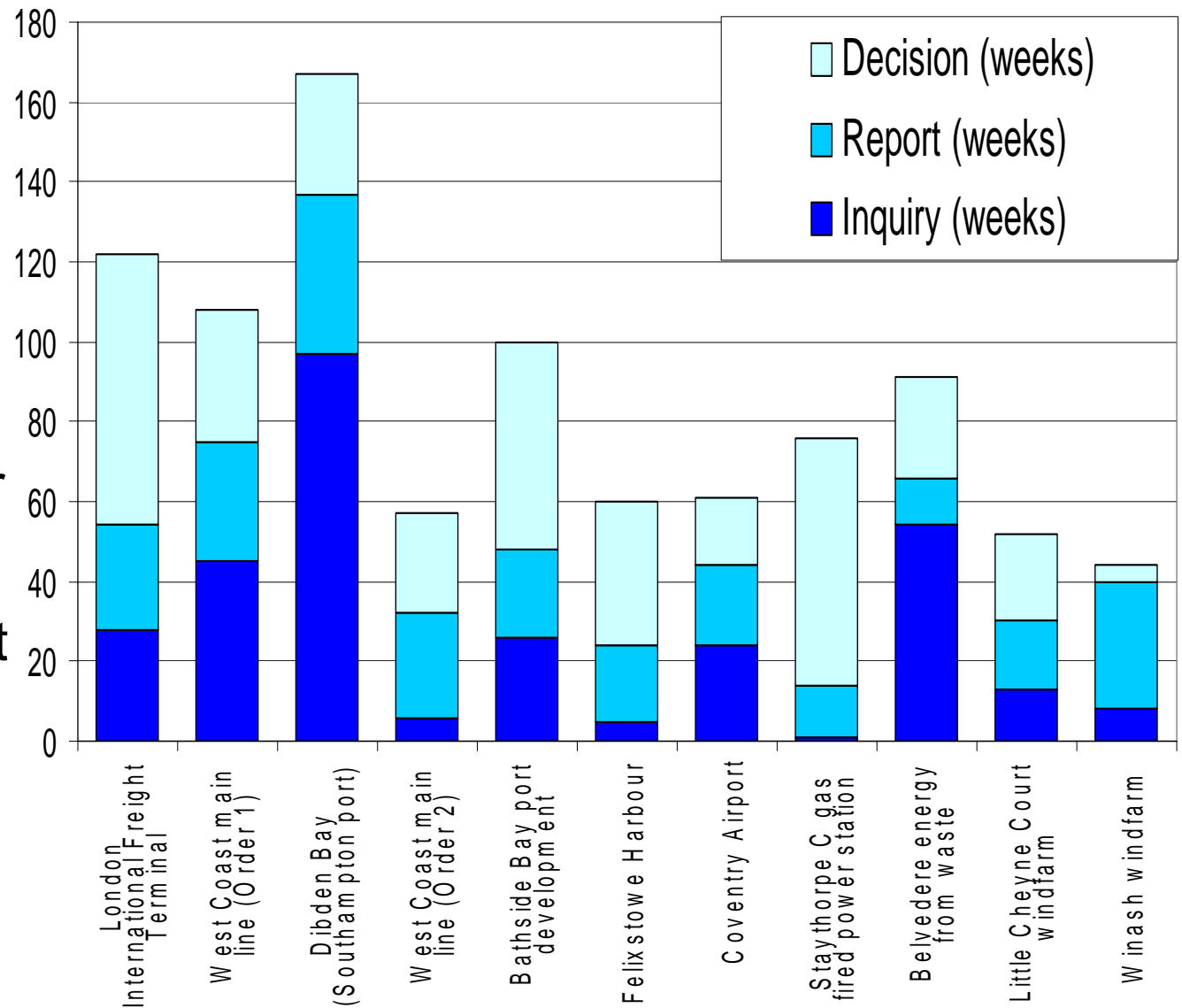
- Planning process for largest projects has been unacceptably slow:
  - national policy unclear
  - applications sometimes not prepared well
  - adversarial inquiry process
  - two-stage decisions
  - overlapping and multiple consents regimes
- Results:
  - Uncertainty and blight for individuals and communities
  - High costs for developers
  - UK competitiveness adversely affected
  - Necessary infrastructure delayed



# Slow and uncertain decision-making

Time from start of inquiry to decision

- application to decision on Heathrow T5 took 7 years
- North Yorkshire Power Line over 6 years
- Dibden Bay Port nearly 4 years





## Nationally significant infrastructure projects – proposed solutions

- New single regime for nationally significant infrastructure with three key stages:
  - **Government** sets out national policy statements for key infrastructure sectors
  - Better project preparation by **developers**
  - Independent **infrastructure planning commission** to take decisions on individual projects – ie clear division of policy and decision-making



## (1) National Policy Statements

- Led by relevant government department
- Establish the national case for infrastructure development and set the policy framework
- Will vary in detailed content from sector to sector, especially on location, but core criteria:
  - Integrate social, economic and environmental objectives
  - thorough and effective public consultation essential
  - Parliamentary scrutiny
  - Long term –time frame 10-25 years
  - Review every five years or sooner if necessary



## **(2) Preparing applications**

- Promoter identifies scheme taking national policy into account
- Commission confirms project meets qualifying criteria
- Promoter works up options and starts to gather information and to scope relevant issues e.g. for EIA
- Promoter consults local community and statutory consultees on options and, if appropriate, preferred option
- Application and Environmental Statement submitted to commission



### **(3) Taking decisions – the infrastructure planning commission**

- Applications normally considered and decided by panel of 3-5 commissioners
- National policy statements would be the primary consideration in decisions – but IPC would also consider local impacts of proposals
- Statutory time limit of nine months for inquiry and decision – longer by agreement with SoS



## What projects would the new regime include?

- transport, energy, water and waste projects
- most currently decided by Ministers
- likely to number 10-25 a year
- IPC may also determine key energy transmission and distribution projects
- options for smaller infrastructure projects under consideration

### **Specific examples:**

- Power stations above 50 megawatts onshore
- Pipelines above 10 miles in length
- Major gas infrastructure
- Major airports (eg runways > 2,100 metres or terminals > 5 million ppa)
- Major rail projects
- Enhancements to the strategic road network
- Waste plants producing more than 50 megawatts of electricity
- Reservoirs above 10m cubic metres
- Waste water plants serving population above 150,000



## Improving local planning for renewables

- Energy projects below thresholds which are not nationally significant will continue to be delivered through TCPA
- PPS on climate change sets positive framework for renewable and low carbon energy
- Local and regional plans will need to have regard for national policy statements
- Legislation will clarify role of local authorities in relation to climate change
- Better training and speedier appeals for renewables



## **(1) Improving public participation- National Policy Statements**

- National policy statements will provide clear framework for public debate on need for infrastructure:
  - Drafts to be based on thorough consideration of evidence
  - Consultation on NPSs will follow best practice standards with key requirements in legislation
  - Consultation will need to involve local and regional bodies
  - Where NPSs are location specific, effective community engagement will be essential



## **(2) Improving public participation pre-application stage**

- Statutory requirement on promoters to consult public
- Local authorities to have key role in ensuring community views are taken into account
- Statutory consultees to include environmental, transport and safety agencies, CABE, transport agencies, regional bodies, devolved administrations
- IPC to provide advice and guidance on consultation including on community engagement
- IPC can refuse to consider application if consultation is inadequate



### **(3) Improving public participation – the inquiry stage**

- Streamlined inquiries will create more level playing field and increase accessibility
- Commissioners, not QCs, to test and cross-examine evidence
- Most evidence to be submitted in writing
- Open floor hearings will allow public to give views in person
- Increased resources for Planning Aid to provide expert help for local communities and hard to reach groups



## Improving accountability

- National Policy statements will ensure Ministers are clearly accountable to public and Parliament for policy
- Independent Commission will ensure decision making is objective, fair, and transparent:
  - Duties, functions and powers set in legislation
  - Policy framework for decisions set by Government
  - Accountable to Ministers and Government for performance
  - Will give reasons for decisions
  - Appointments subject to Code of Practice
- Defined rights of legal challenge to NPS and IPC decisions



## Next Steps

- Consultation on White Paper until 17 August
- Planning Reform Bill to give effect to MIPS in next session
- How can these proposals be further developed to improve public participation and accountability?