

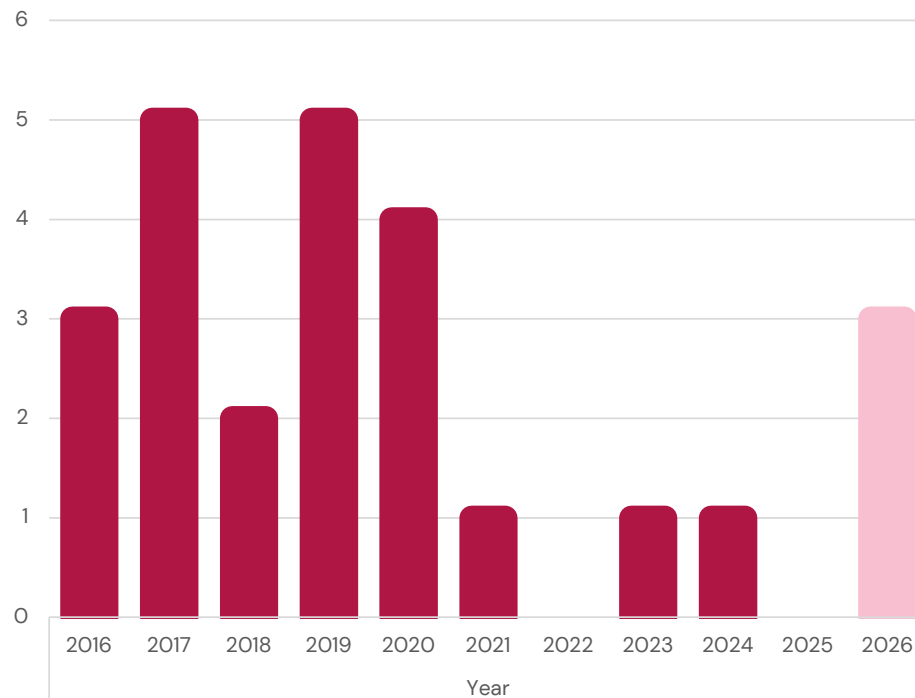
# New v Legacy Local Plans

## An East Midlands Overview

Clare Clarke, Director

# Recent Trends in Plan Making

Number of Local Plans Adopted  
in the East Midlands



- Average of 2 plans adopted a year
- High of 5 adoptions in 2017 & 2019
- Low of 0 in 2022 and 2025
- Consistently low numbers for past 5 years

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# Local Plans at Examination

Local Plans	Submission	Exam Length
Ashfield	29 April 2024	2 years
Rutland	28 February 2025	1 year, 2 months
Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan	22 December 2025	4 months
Melton	27 March 2026	1 month
Harborough	17 April 2026	

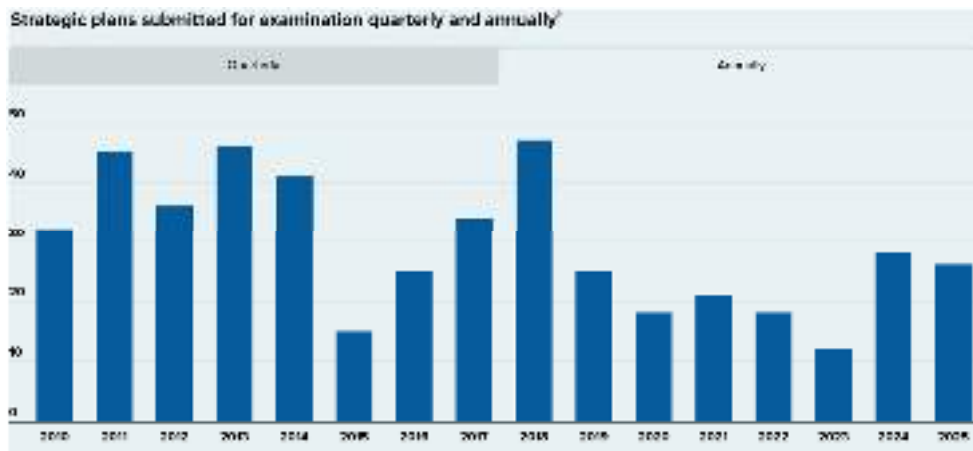
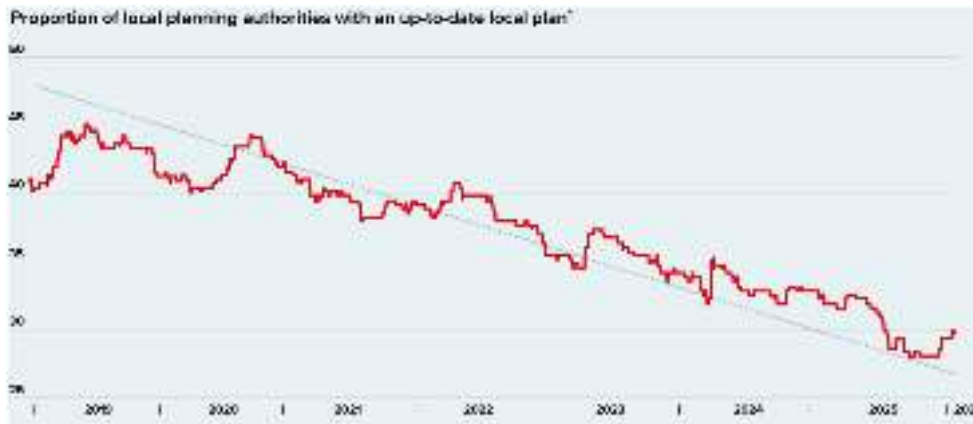
# Recent Trends in Plan Making



- 12 plans submitted
- 2 withdrawn
- 5 adopted
- 3 at examination
- 2 newly submitted

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# National Context



- Up to date Local Plans:
  - 27% in England
  - 14% of East Midlands LPAs
- Submissions up in 2024 & 2025
  - 28 & 26 submitted in England
  - 2 each year in East Midlands

# Legacy v New Local Plans

## 8 LPAs with **up-to-date** Local Plans

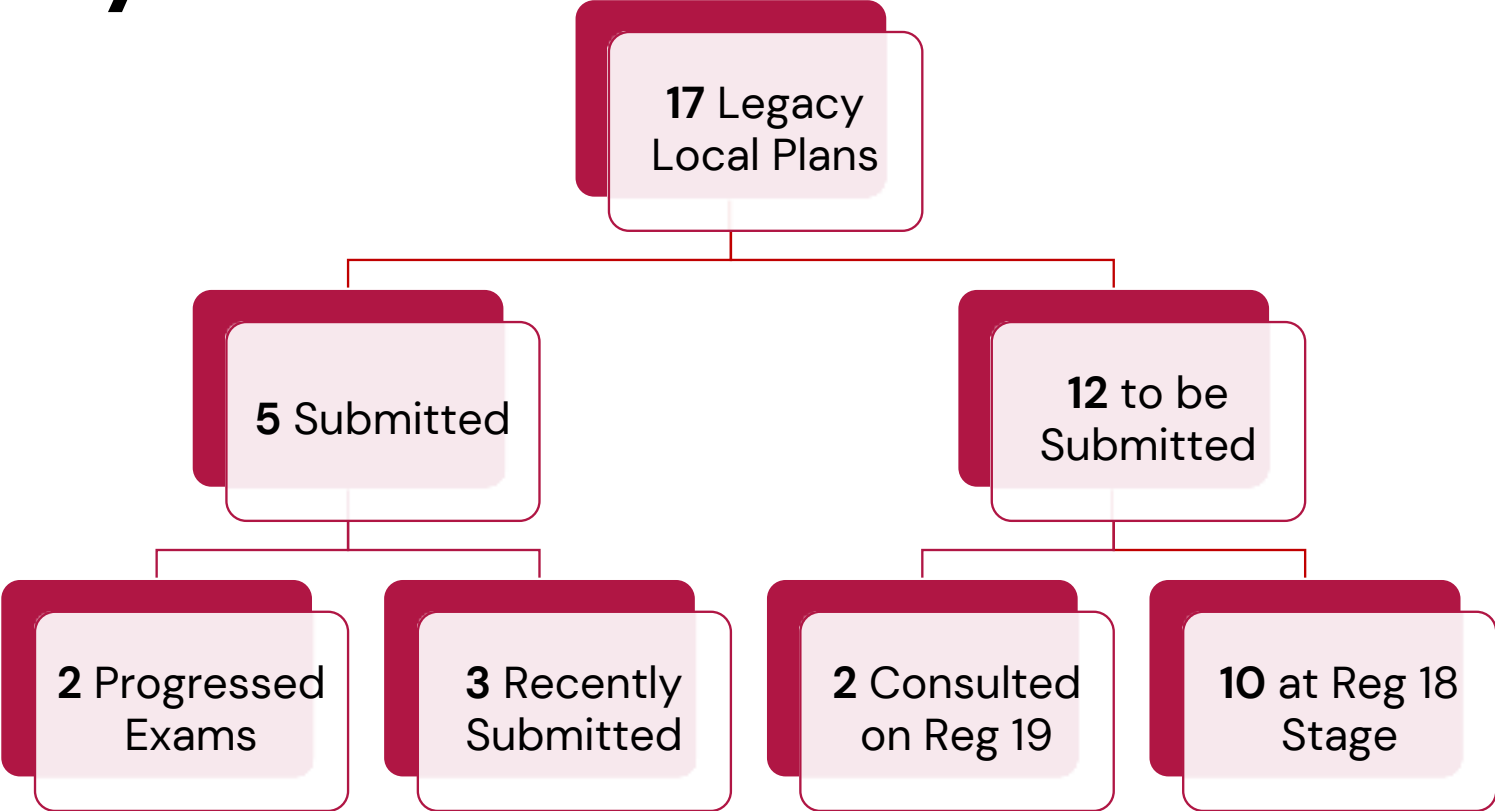
- 1 required to progress New Style Local Plan
- 1 Progressing a Legacy Plan
- Remaining 6 will prepare new style plans at the appropriate time

## 27 LPAs with an **out-of-date** Local Plans

- 18 Progressing Legacy Plans
- 8 Progressing New Style Local Plans
- 1 Progressing Both Legacy and New Local Plans



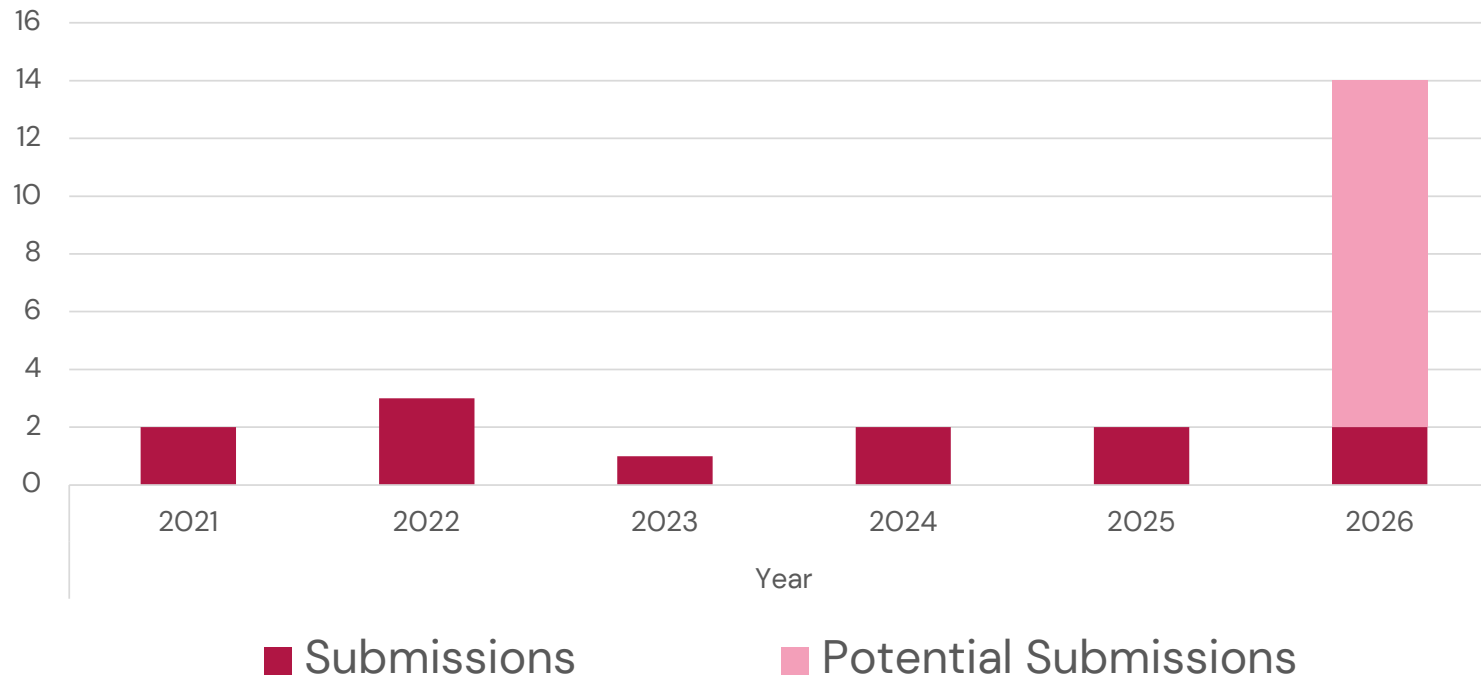
# Legacy Plans



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# Implications

## Local Plan Submission Forecast



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# New Local Plan Deadlines

Local Plans	Notice	Gateway 1
Newark & Sherwood North Northants	31 March 2026 27 April 2026	1 September 2026 August 2026
Rutland Amber Valley	30 June 2026	31 October 2026
Bolsover East Lindsay Erewash High Peak South East Lincolnshire LPs not submitted by Dec 26	31 December 2026	30 April 2027

# Consultations in 2026



Current	May	June	July	August	Sept	Unknown
Oadby & Wigston	Mansfield	Gedling	Hinckley and Bosworth	Blaby	NE Derbyshire	Rutland Scoping
South Derbyshire Part 1 Pre-Exam Mods	North Northants Scoping	Mansfield	North West Leics	Derbyshire Dales	West Northants	Amber Valley Scoping
			Derby City		South Kesteven	High Peak
			Newark & Sherwood Scoping			Chesterfield

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## Clare Clarke

Director

E: [clare.clarke@pegasusgroup.co.uk](mailto:clare.clarke@pegasusgroup.co.uk)

T: 07929835436

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# East Midlands Combined County Authority Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)

East Midlands Council  
Planning CPD event

14 May 2026



# East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)



- Mayoral combined authority.
- Formed 2024.
- Mayor Claire Ward.
- Duty to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).



# EMCCA SDS - started preparation

- 9 March EMCCA Board gave approval to start preparation.
- Ambition to adopt SDS by 2028. Opportunity to lift the East Midlands up.

**Decision:**

EMCCA Board

- a) Note the statutory requirement for the Combined Authority to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).
- b) Approved the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and noted the intention to submit for adoption SDS by 2028.
- c) Approved the following approach:
  - i) Regular updates to be considered through the Housing and Land Committee and periodic consultation of the Governance and Security Committee to inform recommendations to the EMCCA Board of the adoption stages.
  - ii) Initial consultation stages of disassociated interests to be agreed by the Housing & Land Committee with engagement of the Governance & Security Committee.
  - iii) Final public engagement including the publication of the final draft SDS submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and final adoption to be agreed by the Board following consultation in line with i) and ii) above.
  - iv) Regularly review the approach to inform regulatory requirements and good practice.



# Relevant National Legislation and Policy

## Summary:

- Planning & Infrastructure Act - Royal Assent Dec 2026
- Regulations – expected Summer 2026. These will set the formal process.
- National Planning Policy Framework NPPF draft for consultation – closed in March. This will set further guidance on SDS. Expected to be finalised Summer 2026.
- Other things that are relevant and/or emerging:
  - Replacing environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA)
  - Devolution Act - next
  - Local Transport Plans

# SDS Role and Remit

What the Act says we must do:

- SDS must set the strategic policies on development and land use - reflect strategic growth vision, ambition, scale, nature and location.
- It must meet the strategic growth need of the area; including housing and employment apportionment and broad locations; strategic infrastructure; climate change; biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Must be in consistency with national DM policies. Must not allocate specific sites.
- Must be published for consultation and seek views. Must be subject to independent examination by Planning Inspectorate (PINs).
- SoS/Gov can direct modifications before adoption.

# SDS Emerging Detail

What Draft NPPD says we need to do:

- SDS must provide a positive, strategic vision for growth for at least 20 years.
- It must identify and map broad locations for new settlements, major urban extensions, cross boundary development.
- Must apportion housing need across authorities in its area based on objectively assessed need.
- Must plan for the infrastructure need to support growth including transport, utilities, school, health, green and blue infrastructure
- Must consider Green Belt role and potential changes a strategic level

# SDS Stages

What we know and anticipate:

- **SDS Timetable** – submit programme to Secretary of State (SoS has 4 weeks to direct changes; if none, publish and it takes effect)
- **Formal consultation** – publish draft SDS (minimum 12 weeks)
- **Submission** – submit to Planning Inspectorate (usually 3months from here to EIP)
- **Examination in Public (EIP)** – independent Planning Inspectors panel tests whether the SDS is sound and publishes findings and recommendations (between 6-15 months)
- **Submit to Secretary of State** – confirm final version with any modifications (at least 6-week SoS decision window)
- **Adoption** – EMCCA Board will need to formally adopt the SDS

# Our Approach

- **To deliver the ambitions set out** in EMCCA Growth Plan, Vision for Growth, Inclusive Growth Framework spatially
- **Build on what we have** - EMCCA, local authorities, partners strategies, plans, evidence
- **Draw from existing first** - avoid duplication
- **Engagement and collaboration key** – partners, stakeholders and public
- **Opportunity** to gain economic advantage on national playing field
- **Opportunity** to provide stability and certainty during time of change
- **Opportunity** having a plan in place asap provides certainty to realise the growth potential, we will then look to update post LGR

# Our Approach

## Our Regional Strategy

**East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission**

We established an Inclusive Growth Commission in 2024 to develop a practical set of recommendations for achieving inclusive economic growth across the region. The Commission's independent chair and range of national and local experts engaged extensively with local leaders, businesses, and communities to identify the region's strengths and challenges.

One of the Commission's central recommendations was the adoption of an Opportunity Escalator approach – ensuring people and places across the East Midlands can access the support, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive. The Commission also emphasised the importance of recognising the diverse needs and assets of different communities, and the unique potential created by establishing EMCCA and electing the first regional Mayor of the East Midlands to take a truly strategic, region-wide approach.

The evidence base and recommendations from the Commission's Interim and Final Reports published in March and September 2025, respectively, underpin our regional strategy for inclusive growth.

**East Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework**

Our regional strategy for inclusive growth is guided by a core mission: to deliver growth that raises prosperity and opportunity for all, to ensure it is truly inclusive. The Framework articulates our long-term mission and six ambitions for the region to drive collective action with partners to 2040.

The Framework provides the basis for EMCCA to work with our system partners in the public and private sectors, and at local, regional and national level, towards common goals. Our ambitions are defined so that growth is not only faster, but also fairer. We want to see everyone, regardless of postcode or background, reach their potential.

**East Midlands Growth Plan**

Our Growth Plan is the first major step in delivering our core mission. It translates the ambitions of the Framework into a clear set of actions and investment priorities for inclusive economic growth from 2025 to 2035.

This Growth Plan also sets the priorities for our place across a wider context of strategic plans, including our upcoming Mayor's Transport Plan, Get East Midlands Working Plan and Spatial Development Strategy. Together, they form a coherent, outcome-focused approach to inclusive growth.

This plan will also guide the development of an East Midlands Investment Pipeline, supported by project spotlights that showcase priority investment opportunities.



To deliver the ambitions set out in EMCCA Growth Plan



# Our Approach

## The East Midlands Vision for Growth: Seven Growth Strategies

We have identified seven emerging Growth Strategy Areas, each offering a range of opportunities for growth and investment.

Our current investment focus is on the Trent Arc, Canal Corridor, and Supercluster. At the same time, we are actively working with partners and stakeholders to shape and develop deliverable plans for the Peaks and Dales, Heartlands, Derwent Valley Mills, and The Loop.



**KEY**

- Growth Strategy Areas
- Growth Opportunities

<b>Canal Corridor</b> CC1 - Explore Park Investment Zone CC2 - Markham Vale Enterprise Zone CC3 - Chesterfield Town Centre CC4 - Hartington and Staveley Investment Zone	<b>Trent Arc</b> TA1 - Nottingham City Centre TA2 - Tinsley and Clifton TA3 - Batsford Power Station (freight) TA4 - Intility Park Investment Zone & South Yorkshire Growth Zone TA5 - Willington Power Station TA6 - DMF (freight) TA7 - Derby City Centre	<b>Derwent Valley Mills</b> DVM1 - Derwent Valley Mills <b>Peaks and Dales</b> <b>Heartlands</b> <b>The Loop</b>
<b>Supercluster</b> SC1 - West Burton Power Station SC2 - Cuffley Power Station SC3 - High Marnham Power Station		

To deliver the ambitions set out in EMCCA Vision for Growth



# Guiding Principles for our Preparation

These principles guide the SDS as it supports delivery of the EMCCA Growth Plan, Vision for Growth and Inclusive Growth Framework:

1. **Collaborative:** Developing and shaping the SDS through collaboration and engagement.
2. **Adaptable:** Providing long-term strategic certainty while remaining responsive to change.
3. **Long-term:** Planning to 2050 and beyond.
4. **Integrated:** Linking economy, housing, health, environment and transport.
5. **Inclusive:** Tackling inequality so that growth benefits every community.
6. **Digital-first:** Using digital tools and modern methods for policy-making.
7. **Evidence-based:** Using robust, public and shared data.
8. **Sustainable:** Supporting climate commitments, clean energy and biodiversity improvements.
9. **Quality:** Setting high standards for new development and infrastructure.
10. **Add value:** Focusing on strategic issues rather than duplicating local plans.

# EMCCA SDS Team Current Focus

- **Build team** – perm roles go live asap.
- **Programme to delivery by 2028** - balance ambition with pragmatism
- **Commission evidence and support** – now, next, later
- **Develop engagement strategy** – multi layers and methods
- **Engage and build relationships** – with partners multi level
- **Key milestones formal Draft SDS, early engagement to support** – priority

# East Midlands Councils CPD

## 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Old system lessons, new system opportunities and practical risks



**Midlands:** Sherwood Business Park  
Nottingham

**Oxford:** The Beehive  
Milton Park

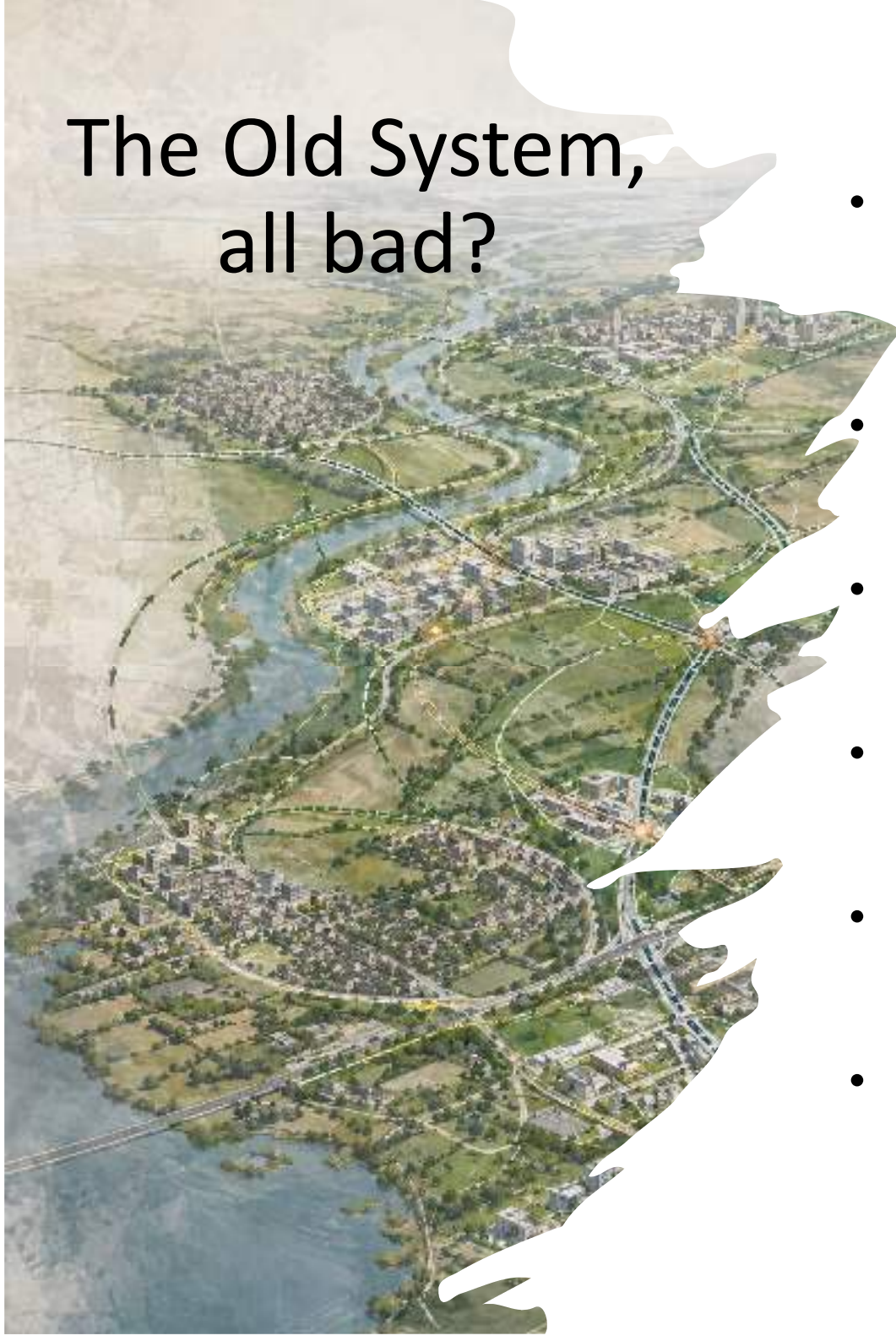
**London:** 5 St John's Lane  
London

[www.panddg.co.uk](http://www.panddg.co.uk)

# Introduction to P&DG

- Practice of 9 Planners a 3 Urban Designers
- Mix of private and public sector clients
- Wides range of sectors – residential, commercial, education, heritage

# The Old System, all bad?



- The previous system allowed local planning authorities to build a detailed understanding of place
- Evidence gathering was often thorough and locally specific
- Examination provided a meaningful test of soundness
- There was scope for difficult issues to be explored properly
- Plans, once adopted, could provide a strong platform for decision-making
- The system was familiar to officers, members, developers and communities



## Criticisms

- Plan preparation was often too slow
- Evidence bases became very large, expensive and sometimes repetitive
- Strategic matters were difficult to resolve where they crossed administrative boundaries
- Duty to Cooperate discussions could become procedural rather than genuinely strategic
- Plans could become outdated before they were adopted
- Local political risk could delay or derail plan progress
- Communities often felt they were consulted after key choices had effectively been made

## What it did Well

- It allowed complex issues to be properly understood
- It gave time for infrastructure, viability, land supply and environmental evidence to be tested
- It allowed local nuance and local identity to shape policy choices
- It created opportunities for negotiation and refinement
- It provided a clear examination forum for unresolved objections
- It helped officers develop ownership of the strategy and evidence.



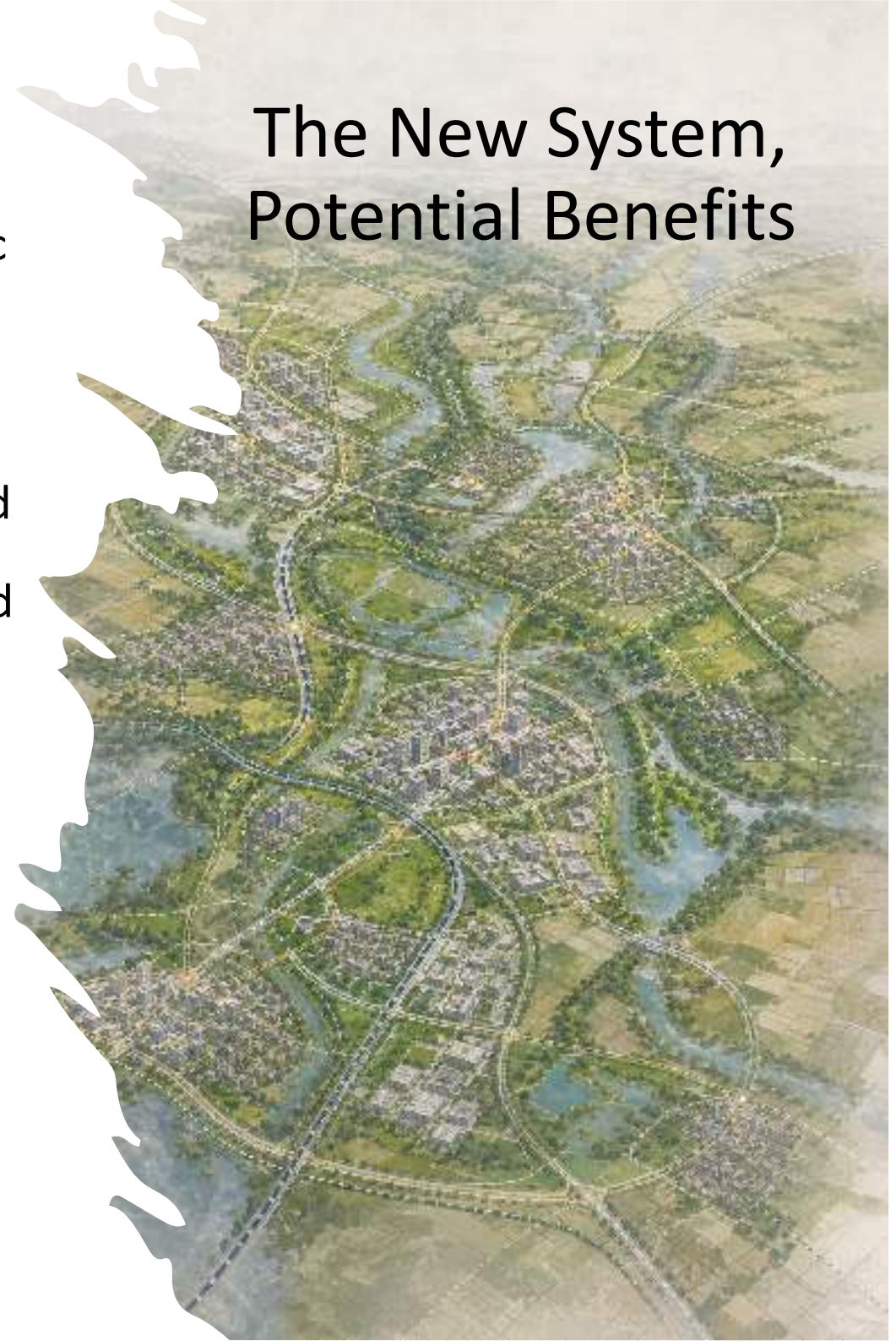


## What it did badly

- Process sometimes overtook purpose
- Plans could become defensive documents rather than positive strategies
- Evidence could be used to postpone decisions rather than support them
- Strategic growth choices were often deferred or redistributed late in the process
- Housing and employment needs were not always addressed at the right geography
- The private sector was sometimes treated as a respondent, rather than as a delivery partner
- The result could be uncertainty, speculative applications and appeal-led planning

- A clearer expectation that plans should be prepared more quickly
- Stronger separation between strategic issues and local place-based policies
- Spatial Development Strategies may help address cross-boundary growth, infrastructure and distribution of need
- Local plans may become more focused and more accessible
- Earlier checkpoints may identify problems before too much time and cost is committed
- A more standardised process could reduce duplication and procedural drift
- If successful, the new system could support greater certainty and more timely delivery

## The New System, Potential Benefits



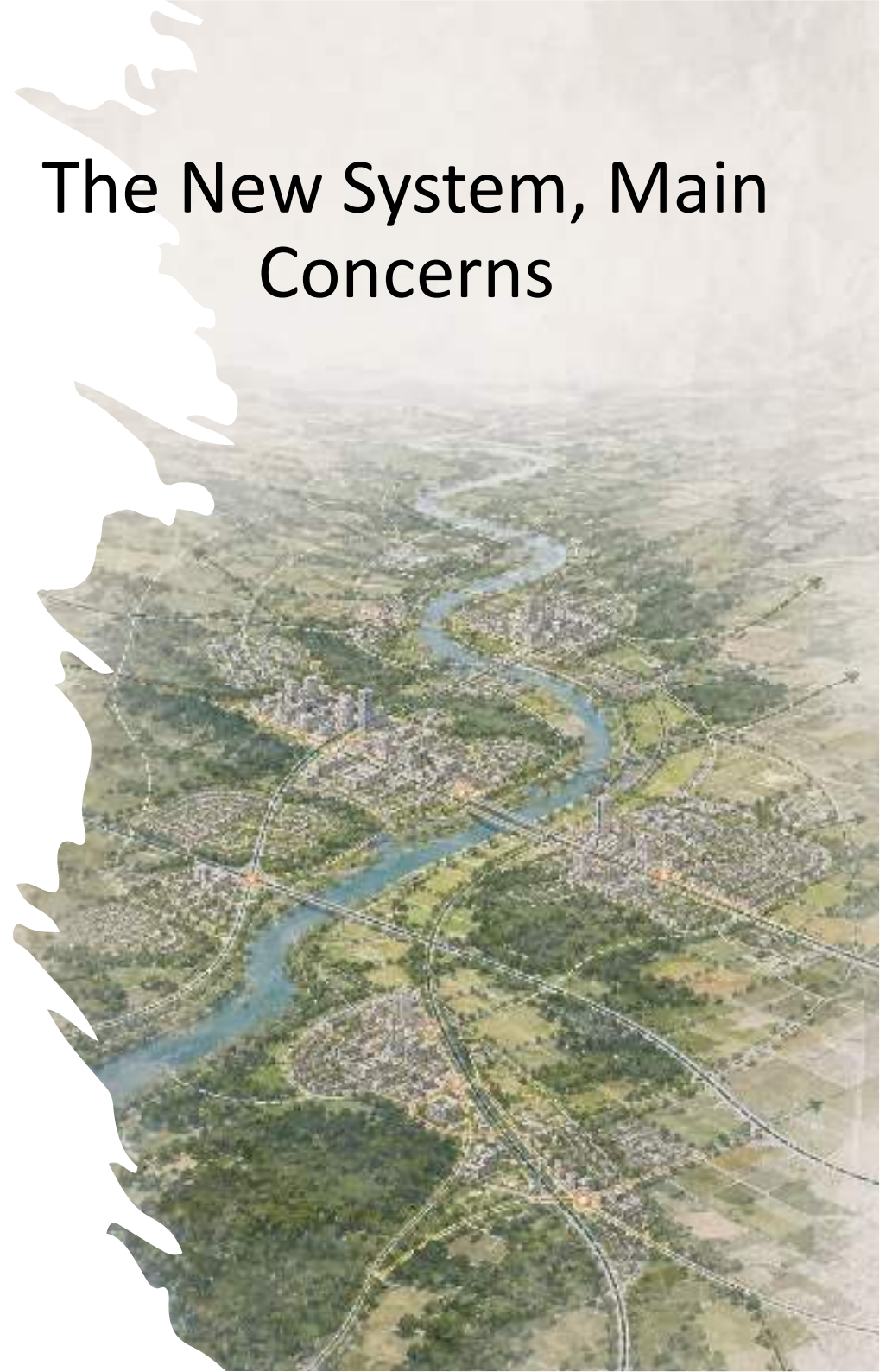
## Spatial Development Strategies, Why They Could Help

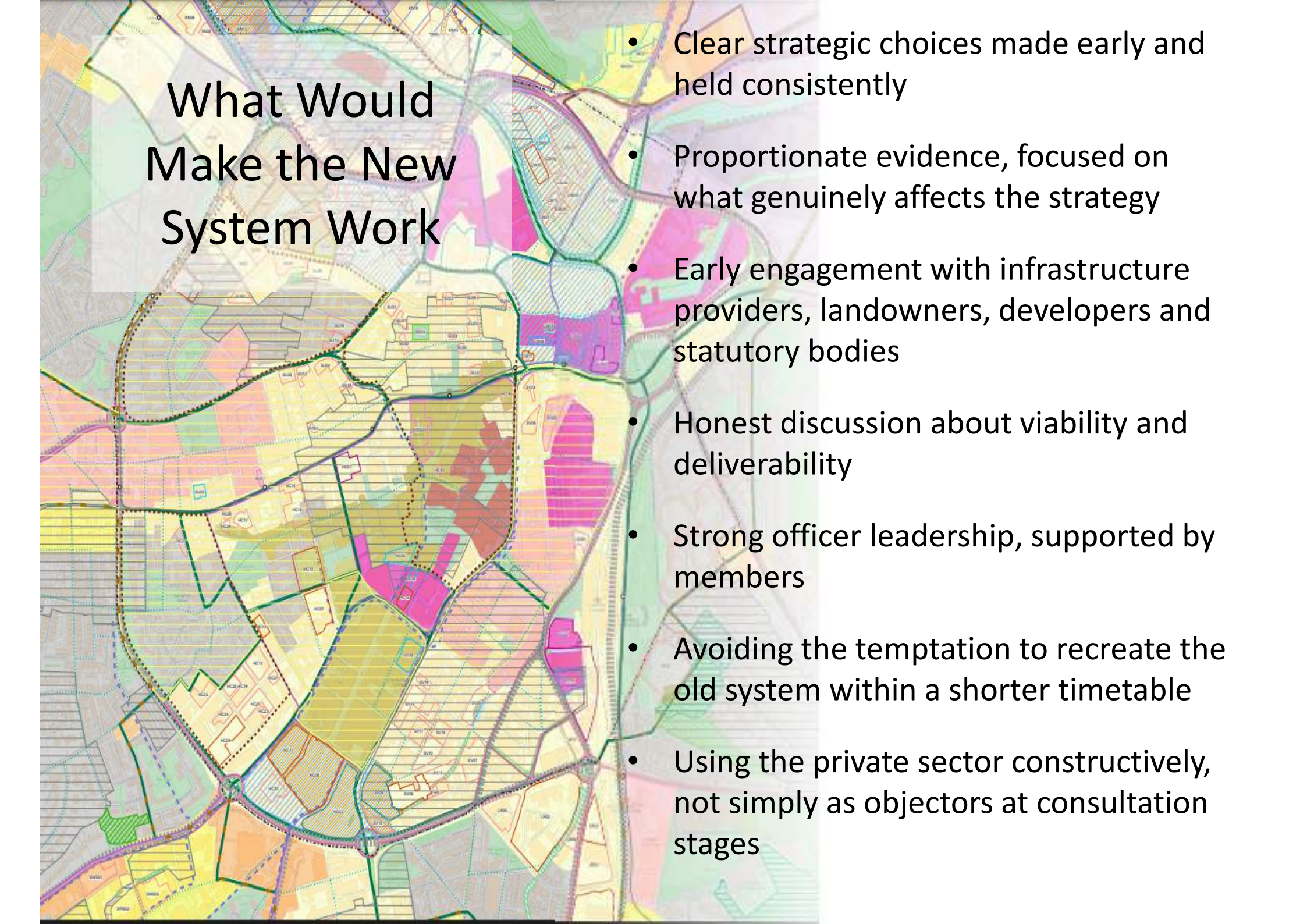


- Strategic planning needs to happen at a geography larger than many individual districts
- SDSs could help deal with housing need, employment growth, transport, infrastructure and environmental constraints in a more coherent way
- They may reduce pressure on individual local plans to solve regional problems alone
- They could provide a clearer framework for difficult distribution choices
- They may give local plans a firmer strategic platform
- They could help move debate from whether growth is needed to where and how it should be delivered

- A faster process is not necessarily a better process
- Speed may reduce the space for judgement, negotiation and local understanding
- SDSs could become another layer of process if roles are not clear
- Strategic choices may still be politically difficult, even under a new system
- Evidence may be shortened, but it still needs to be robust
- There is a risk of front-loading pressure onto already stretched planning policy teams
- Poorly prepared plans may move faster, but still fail later

## The New System, Main Concerns



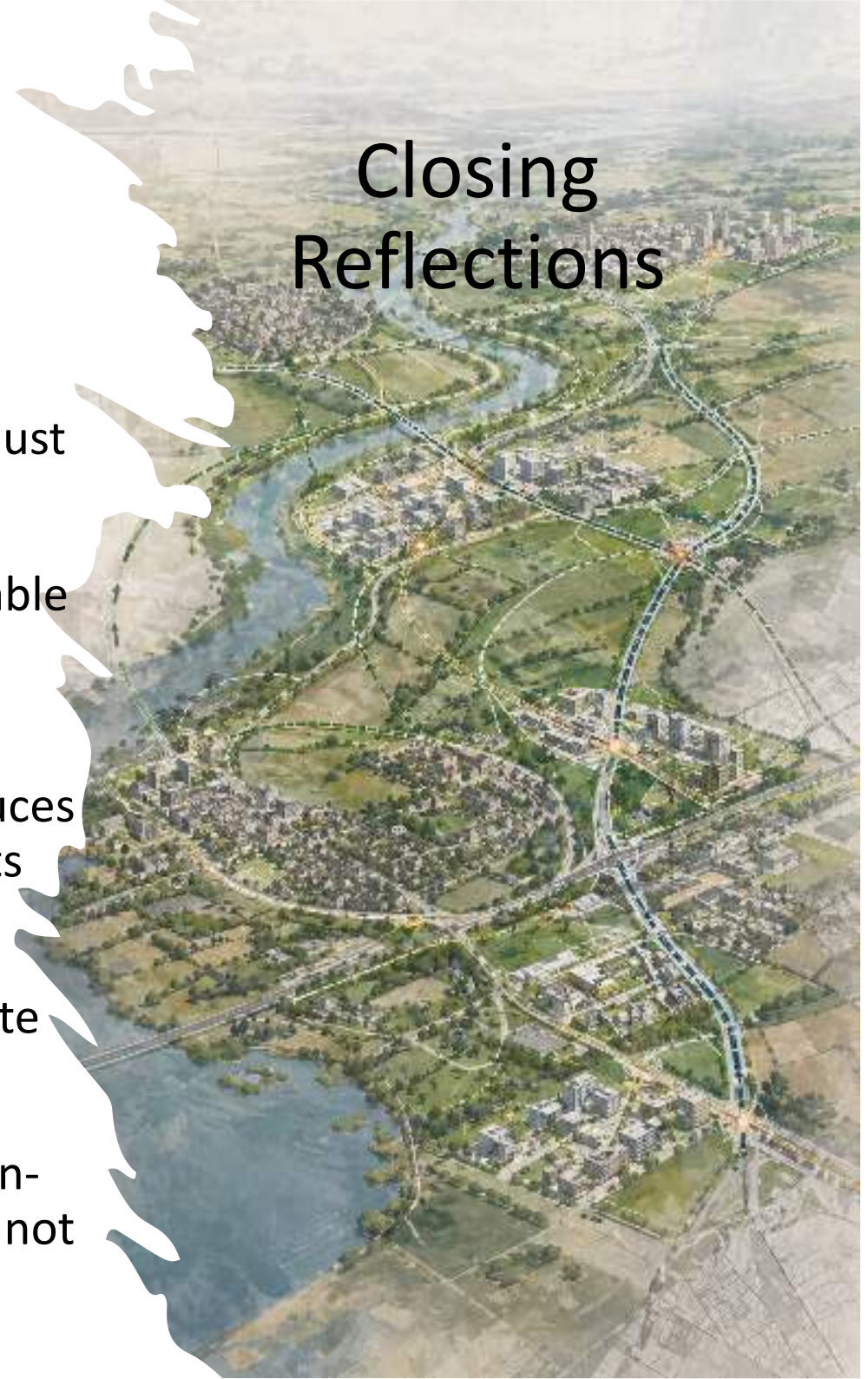


# What Would Make the New System Work

- Clear strategic choices made early and held consistently
- Proportionate evidence, focused on what genuinely affects the strategy
- Early engagement with infrastructure providers, landowners, developers and statutory bodies
- Honest discussion about viability and deliverability
- Strong officer leadership, supported by members
- Avoiding the temptation to recreate the old system within a shorter timetable
- Using the private sector constructively, not simply as objectors at consultation stages

- The old system was slow, but it was not without value
- The new system offers real opportunities, but only if it changes behaviour as well as procedure
- Spatial planning requires judgement, not just process compliance
- Local plans need to be ambitious, deliverable and capable of being understood by communities
- The key test will be whether reform produces better decisions, not just faster documents
- The planning system needs confidence, clarity and trust between public and private sectors
- Reform will only succeed if it supports plan-making as a positive act of place-shaping, not simply a statutory exercise

## Closing Reflections





# Thank You

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