

the Government. Most authorities are desperately underfunded and therefore fear refusing permission for major developments which might bring resources to the area. Local authorities, in addition, cannot afford more than a limited number of Public Inquiries or Planning Appeals per year. Such Appeals and Inquiries can result in substantial costs being awarded against an authority. It is not surprising, therefore, that local authorities try wherever possible to avoid costly public hearings. In order to improve design advice and reduce the possibility of expensive conflict with developers some city authority planners form a close working alliance with architects and urban designers. This is also, in part, a response to the emphasis now placed on Urban Design. The expert advice received from qualified professionals in the fields of urban design and architecture lends more weight to negotiations with developers to improve the quality of urban design in preparing projects. The benefits of this imaginative approach to teamwork between the professions are beginning to emerge in the form of more sensitive development. This design team approach is appropriate for all types of development from a change of use application to major projects.

There has been little development and construction by local authorities in recent years since their finance has been depleted. It is still expected by landowners, developers and the general public that local government should continue to provide all the ancillary services for housing developments. This includes not only the maintenance of existing services but also the provision of new services such as new parks, schools, community facilities, leisure centres and any other requirements of the local community. This service expectation has a revenue implication for the local authority. When a local authority develops its own land it is assumed that all the capital realized from the sale is at the disposal of the local authority. However, at present the local authority will only be allowed to spend 50 per cent of any financial gain resulting from development. There is the expectation that the local

authority will provide facilities in the neighbourhood where the land sale takes place, an assumption that is misplaced. All local government spending involves deciding priorities in the allocation of public money which is likely to involve a political decision based on need across the whole of the particular local authority.

These tighter financial constraints under which local government operates has led to the development of planning gain or betterment. Planning gain operates primarily through what has come to be known as the Section 106 process. Local authorities can no longer provide many of the services required to make a community function and so it is incumbent upon planners to co-ordinate negotiations with developers in an attempt to get necessary services provided as part of the development. This makes the process of planning lengthier and enables developers to negotiate with a number of authorities in an effort to develop land where the planning requirements are less stringent.

There is in developers' negotiations an emerging view that development opportunities should be seized wherever they arise, provided the public is consulted at every stage. Opportunities may arise throughout the development process and may take a number of different forms; the submission of a planning application which may lead to negotiations for improvements both on and off the site in terms of uses, links, vitality, mix of uses; the development of written advice and guidance for sites; the application of funding from organizations such as City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget, Capital Challenge, Lottery Funding, English Partnerships or Urban Villages Forum; or through Planning Gain, as already mentioned.

IDENTIFYING SITES

All too often site development and its integration into the surrounding urban structure is limited by individual land holdings. Although local authorities