

registry. It means that land can be bought and sold rapidly and with full confidence. However, it also means that there are strict controls over the creation of titles that are the final outcome of any subdivision consent. Thus it is an area in which the surveyor rather than the planner is likely to dominate in process terms.

The regions and the city/district councils shared some overlapping functions with regard to natural hazards, hazardous substances, the maintenance of indigenous vegetation, activities on the surface of the water and contaminated land. Creating joint responsibilities had the potential to create a 'turf war' but has in fact worked surprisingly well. In the natural hazard area, for instance, regional councils largely take responsibility for identifying and mapping natural hazards and district/city councils develop rules to control development on affected land. With activities on the surface of the water, the provisions of S33 were used to transfer this power from city/district councils to the regional council, as was done in a number of areas.

INTEGRATION BETWEEN LEVELS

Clearly, it was an overlapping mandate that would require significant co-ordination and co-operation to produce a focused and logical planning system. Consistency was essentially achieved through a series of sections in the act that originally required regional and district plans not to be inconsistent with a national policy statement and a district plan not to be inconsistent with a regional policy statement or regional plan. This first provision was changed in 2005 to require lower-level plans to give effect to national policy statements and national environmental standards, which creates a much more direct linkage. The gradual emergence of more NPS and NES will also ensure that plans, particularly at the regional level, will share similarities as there will only be limited means by which they can be given effect to and because in some cases the NPS or NES will specify how this is to happen. Equally, since 2005 city and district councils have been required to give effect to the provisions of regional policy statements and plans, which again should see more integration between the two levels as second-generation plans emerge.

A standardised approach to plan formats was not new, although the detail was, and that was probably a response to the complaints that plans varied too much across the country. There were at the time, and still are, regular calls to create some type of standardised plan that would apply across the country, an approach that ignores the variations in issues that inevitably occur and the differences that would be produced from a process with high levels of public input through compulsory consultation. Inevitably this creates plans with different concerns and ways to address those concerns.