Planning in the Public Interest?

Looking for the 'public interest' in English plan-making

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the public interest and how it is articulated in English plan-making practices. It is about recognising that the public interest can be conceptualised in multiple ways and exploring which of these conceptions are apparent in planning practices.

The literature tells the story of a concept that is simultaneously a crucial justification for planning activities, and an empty signifier, following its disputed conceptual coherence and historic use. The thesis therefore develops an understanding of the different ways in which it has been conceptualised. The resulting conceptual framework draws together process and outcome focussed conceptions of the public interest and suggests that the use of scale, in terms of both time and geography, might help in differentiating their use.

To understand how these different conceptions are influencing contemporary planning practices, qualitative methods are used to explore two cases that differ from the English tradition of making plans for a single local authority. The first is Central Lincolnshire, formed by merging the plan-making functions of three local authorities. The second case is the Peak District National Park, whose designation similarly gives the authority the power to plan for large parts of other local authorities within its boundary. However the cases contrast in their history; the Peak District was nationally designated, nearly seventy years ago, whilst Central Lincolnshire is a far more recent, locally driven construction.

The cases suggest how national policy reduces the space for local deliberation about what is in the public interest, with a tendency for each case to be dominated by particular intended outcomes. However this story is told differently for each case, by virtue of the different scales at which each authority aims to have an impact. In turn this has significant implications for how planning theory and practice might account for the public interest.

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For those who have been through the process it won't come as any surprise that writing this thesis has veered from feeling part of a collective; a Research School full of students with similar aims and struggles, to feeling entirely alone; these are my words and my responsibility. I am grateful to have this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to those who have minimised the moments of loneliness.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Public Interest as the Justification for Planning

This thesis is concerned with the 'public interest' as the basis for intervening in land and property, under the label of 'planning'. Planning interventions such as green belt policies, New Towns and high rise living have had a dramatic impact on people's everyday quality of life; arguably planning exists with the aim of improving quality of life, but where this has not always been borne out in practice. As the justification for these interventions the public interest merits exploration. However it is also necessary to recognise that the public interest is a normative concept in nature; it represents a particular ideal that planning should achieve but not necessarily an ideal that is universally subscribed to.

At one end of the spectrum is the assertion that the right to make changes to the physical environment belongs to anyone with the means to make those changes; if those who own land and property wish to develop it they should be allowed to do so as they see fit. In this scenario decisions about land and property only need account for the interests of those who initiate them, with little need for planning. However it can be argued that the historical acceptance of the need for planning is underpinned by the recognition that the consequences of decisions about land and property are not generally confined to those who will directly profit from them; in its minimal form planning activities seek to ensure that decisions about land and property do not adversely impact those who do not stand to profit directly from them.

At the opposite extreme is the suggestion that any such changes to the physical environment should only be made when they serve the collected interests of the 'public'. This is a definition of planning that recognises how decisions about land and property create the physical environment that sets the context for social interaction; effective planning is not only about creating a high quality physical environment but contributes to improving quality of life in a much broader

manner. Planning, in this sense, is about being creative, sharing and debating ideas, and thinking deeply about the consequences of those ideas for how humans live together.

At both extremes planning is therefore about intervening in decisions to ensure that they account for the interests of a wider public, where this collective stake is more commonly, if not exclusively, referred to as the 'public interest'. It is an aim that is highly admirable in the abstract, but one that immediately opens up questions of who and what constitutes this wider public, and how interventions are made on the public's behalf; if planning is about accounting for the public interest who constitutes the public and who may legitimately intervene on its behalf? It is these questions that act as a reminder that the public interest is a normative concept, where what is in the public interest becomes a matter of judgement. Yet it is such questions that also underpin the rationale for the study; without the public interest as its justification it can be argued that there would be very little reason for the discipline of planning to exist.

Recording Collective Interests in a Plan

If the principle that planning decisions should account for the interests of the wider public is accepted the logical next step is to ask how far the 'public' extends? Should planning decisions account solely for those living presently or for future generations to come? Should the public be defined at the global scale or at the scale of the street? Each of these points to a very different idea about who and what planning decisions should favour, but also starts to hint at the different ways in which collective interests might be accounted for. Moreover ideas of collective interest in their contemporary form are themselves historically and contextually embedded. The public interest in particular is not a concept that can be adopted without examining its history; to do so would be to ignore how its legitimacy as a justification is regularly called into question.

This thesis is focussed on the English context. Here the longstanding tradition has been to record what the future of places should look like in a written plan, intended to account for collective interests in how such places shape quality of life. English planning law embeds the expectation that these plans will be taken into account in deciding whether individual planning applications are approved. The thesis is therefore concerned with exploring how the public interest is embedded in the preparation of the forward plan, and the ways in which it influences development decisions. The importance of exploring the plan-making process is highlighted by considering an example, one which suggests that how collective interests are taken into account is not always clear.

An Example from Practice: The Plan as a 'Black Box'

The following is a typical example of the process that takes place at the Local Planning Authority (LPA) when preparing a new plan in England. It is a fictitious example, but one assembled from the author's own experience[1], intended to clarify the problem that this work seeks to explore:

Here is the Core Strategy. It has been put together by a small team of planners working in a relatively bright and pleasant open-plan office, free from people wandering through now it is separated from the corridor. Any suggestion of isolation is deceptive; the planners have been collaborating with colleagues from four other local authorities to try and achieve an overarching vision for five very different areas, with very different political make-ups.

The strategy is the product of a process that began three years ago, a process that has included three rounds of extensive 'public' consultation One strand of consultation consisted of consuming a lot of tea and coffee, whilst sitting around large maps in village halls, and standing in cold shopping spaces, debating the state of the traffic with members of the public. Another strand involved visiting schools and talking to teenagers about where they wanted to live. Yet another involved an event, open only to landowners and developers.

The strategy has attracted hundreds of letters of objection and a smattering of praise. It has been covered by the media on a handful of occasions, once to cover the school workshops, on another occasion to report the shocking inclusion of some rather big housing sites and the resultant outrage of selected members of the public. It has survived the upheaval of major shifts in national planning policy. Of much relief to the team is the culmination of this in approval, first of all by the locally elected members and then by the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State.

It is a document 90 pages long, setting out pleasant but somewhat generic visions of the future, backed by highly worthy strategic policies. It is the first stage in replacing a Local Plan that has remained mostly unchanged for two decades, and should have expired two years ago. In the time it has taken to write and adopt the Core Strategy central government have decided to return to a system of 'Local Plans'[2], leaving the planners to scratch their heads about how to continue. Meanwhile their colleagues down the corridor, whose role it

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[1] The author spent 15 months between June 2008 and August 2009 working for an English LPA, in the forward planning section. The experience covered a range of activities, including working on the initial stages of preparing a local spatial plan, including a major public consultation. Other activities engaged in include the preparation of housing capacity studies, which were prepared in conjunction with multiple local authorities.

[2] As a result of the 2011 Localism Act the Local Development Framework has been replaced with a return to the Local Plan, as part of a streamlining of English planning policy through the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012).

is to recommend how decisions on planning applications should be made, have been left to decide how the Core Strategy fits with the old Local Plan and new national policies.

The intention of the example is to start to unpick the complexity of the contemporary plan-making process and the variety of potential influences on its final content. At face value public consultation is the mechanism through which the concerns of the 'public' are taken into account. Yet what the example suggests is that this must compete with a whole range of other influences, many of which may also be constructed as representing what is best for the public. As a result the plan may be characterised as a 'black box'[3]; it is presented as durable and solid, making it difficult to challenge. However it quickly loses cohesion and persuasive power, if the many contestations and assumptions that lie behind it are unpicked (Murdoch and Abram, 2002; Murdoch et al., 1999).

In addition there is a temptation to conflate the terms 'planning', 'plans', 'planners' and 'planning systems', where any of them could be constructed as leading to the interventions outlined. Not least there is a need to separate planning as a regulatory activity, carried out within the confines of a legally constituted planning system, and the broader idea of planning as about improving quality of life by creating better places. Planners tend to be thought about as the people who conduct planning activities and produce plans, within the confines of this system; planners are constructed as the 'experts' most able to create better places. Central to this work, however, is a need to explore whether this arrangement can appropriately account for collective interests, in light of the many interests involved in plan-making, highlighted by the example. To this end the rationale for the study can be described as about understanding whether those involved in plan-making can legitimately justify their activities by calling on the public interest, in an era where the legitimacy of both is challenged. The need to explore this underpins an initial formulation of the problem that the work aims to address.

An Emerging Research Problem

Planning, at its most generic, is rooted in the idea that decisions to develop land and property should not detract from the quality of life experienced by a wider public. In turn planning for the future is about the idea that all those individual decisions can contribute to a quality of life that is better than that experienced today. In the English context the tendency has been to codify this vision in a written plan, but where the example illustrates the range of interests that seek to

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[3] Latour (1999) defines 'blackboxing' in the language of machinery, such that a black box is an assemblage of parts that becomes invisible by running efficiently, where only the inputs and outputs are noticed, but not the moving parts inside. However when the machine breaks down it becomes necessary to open up the 'black box', to examine its parts.

influence this process. This raises questions about how the public interest is being articulated through the preparation of the plan and its use in decision-making. Looking at contemporary plan-making processes using the concept of the public interest as a lens provides an opportunity to both examine the challenges for planning practice in accounting for collective interests, and, in turn, to consider the implications for the development of planning theory.

The Structure of the Thesis

To address these issues the thesis is structured through several chapters, both literature based and rooted in the empirical material, where each tries to build upon the last to develop a deeper understanding of the research problem. The content of each chapter is set out below:

Chapter 2: From Abstract Notions of the Public Interest to its Impact on Everyday Planning Practices

Chapter 2 explores how the public interest has been thought about in both the wider theoretical and political contexts, as well as its historical relationship with planning. This leads to a consideration of the key ways in which planning has been thought about intellectually. Ultimately the chapter concludes that both process and outcome focussed approaches to planning are necessary to thinking about how the public interest is fulfilled.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework: The Public Interest & Scale

Chapter 3 presents a framework based around normative conceptions of the public interest and scales of time and geography. However, adopting the principle that theory should act as a lens for practice, the framework provides a model to which planning practice can be compared. The ideas bound up in this framework are translated into a research aim and broken down into research questions, marking the point at which the thesis turns from the literature to the empirical research.

The final part of Chapter 3 is about breaking down the conceptual framework into a series of key questions to allow the analysis of the empirical material. The answers to these questions are framed as continuums as a way of structuring the analysis without making normative judgements. The use and explanation of these concepts also play an important role in linking the material examined through Chapter 2 to the data collected through the empirical research.

Chapter 4: Designing and Undertaking the Fieldwork

Following from the research questions Chapter 4 sets out the qualitative methodology for the empirical research, detailing the case study approach adopted. The chapter outlines the case study

approach, the characteristics of the chosen cases and the methods used; semi-structured interviews contextualised by document analysis and opportunities for observation. Finally it sets out the practical details of the research and how it accounts for the need to act ethically.

Chapter 5: Central Lincolnshire: Forward Planning Through Joint Working & Chapter 6: The Peak District National Park: Local Planning with a National Purpose

Chapters 5 and 6 tell the story of each case, drawing on the data collected using the methods outlined in Chapter 4. The chapters highlight incidents and practices that underpin how the public interest is articulated, whilst giving a sense of the contrasts between how planning takes place in each area. This is about signposting where decisions are framed as having impacts over particular scales, enrolling particular conceptions of who the public are, and bringing into play particular interests. The chapters are intended to communicate the complex and dynamic nature of each case, in order to provide the basis for analysing how the public interest is articulated.

Chapter 7: Analysing the Cases Using the Continuums & Chapter 8: Conclusions

Chapter 7 makes the links between the empirical material presented in Chapters 5 and 6 and the continuums set out at the end of Chapter 3, in order to construct, for each case, an understanding of how the public interest is articulated through planning practices. The continuums are used to develop a structured understanding of the empirical material. This sets the context for Chapter 8, which draws together the thesis' implications for both planning theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2: FROM ABSTRACT NOTIONS OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO ITS IMPACT ON EVERYDAY PLANNING PRACTICES

PART 1: CONCEPTUALISING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Introduction

Drawing on the inherently sociable nature of human beings Chapter 1 suggested that planning should be about addressing collective interests, as they manifest themselves in the environment in which humans live. Plans for the future of places are made and planning applications are judged because there is a deeply embedded belief that self-interested parties should not be able to pursue their own ends without accounting for how they might impact on the wellbeing of others. Planning is therefore about articulating and accounting for what contemporary parlance terms the public interest, but where the conflation of 'collective' and 'public' is, in itself, normative. Accounting for the public interest should ensure that the outcome is desirable for the public at large, but where attention is needed as to how a collective interest comes to be defined as 'public'.

Flathman (1966) considers the public interest to be a commendatory term; something that is in the public interest should represent a normative way forward. This has its roots in Aristotelian ideas of the 'state' and the village as forms of association necessary to achieve territorial economic independence; the individual acting alone can only satisfy their daily subsistence needs but if they interact with others they can fulfil needs and desires beyond this. Aristotle did not discern a state/society divide and did not consider it possible to separate individual needs from what was

best for society as a whole. This leads to a question as to who is ultimately able to judge what constitutes society's collective interests?

Broadly this idea is captured in the suggestion that "a just society involves reasoning together about the meaning of the good life" (Sandel, 2009a, p.261). However a key subject for this chapter is how the concept's history rather belies this notion, having come to be associated with technocratic imposition. Furthermore whilst notions of collective interest are labelled with the term 'public interest' the same ideas have been dealt with variously under the headings 'public good', 'common good' and greater good'. The chapter therefore begins with the aim of developing a theoretical understanding of the public interest, in order to contextualise an examination of the concept's meaning through particular traditions of political thought. This provides the foundations for tracing the concept's meaning through the evolution of planning practice and planning thought.

The 'Public' of the Public Interest

Pitkin (1967, cited by Campbell and Marshall, 2002a) conceives of interest as about either paying attention to something or having a stake in something; whilst the former of these is the definition of the public interest applied in the media – literally what is the public interested in? – it is the latter definition that is the concern of this thesis; what does the public have at stake?

For a practical definition of why an interest might be conceived of as public it is useful to draw on the work of John Dewey. Dewey's approach has been summarised in the phrase "reality has practical character" (Moore, 1961, p.262), suggesting that understanding the meaning of an idea requires understanding its practical consequences. To this end Dewey (1954) asserts that something moves from being private, to being public, when its consequences spill over from only affecting the parties directly involved in the decision. Particularly this gives a sense of why 'public' might also mean 'collective', but why 'collective' doesn't necessarily mean 'public':

> "The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for." (ibid, p.15-16)

Framed this way the word 'public' has a more nuanced meaning than the word 'collective'. Being part of the public means having a common interest at stake, in the sense that the public is created by a decision's consequences, but where those affected cannot directly influence decisions affecting that interest. Instead, the responsibility to 'systematically care' for these indirect consequences is ceded to a particular person or institution, introducing the idea of the 'state'.

The context for Dewey's work is the machine age; a period of increasing social complexity in the face of early 20th Century industrial mechanisation. Dewey (1954) characterises this mechanisation as both making it difficult to identify where decisions have wider consequences, and disrupting the small communities previously thought of as coherent publics. In the same context, Walter Lippmann's (1925) position is characterised by Robbins (1993) as suggesting that citizens couldn't be expected to organise into a public in their spare time, after work and family commitments; Lippmann's conclusion was that public matters should be left to an elite. In contrast Dewey's definition arguably facilitates the practical definition of who and what constitutes the public in the face of social complexity, giving it continued relevance in the contemporary context.

Dewey rejects any notion that the public might inherently exist without explicitly identifying its common interests, suggesting that the possibility of a universally inclusive public is disproved by the historically evident need for multiple countries with different laws[4]. Consequently it is arguable that his definition positions the public interest as only ever resulting from the exercise of private interests, where the spillover consequences might be characterised as resulting from the assumed self-interested nature of private decision-making. However Dewey benevolently asserts that they result from the private individual's inability to imagine the wider consequences of their decisions, compared to the public's greater collective capacity for imagination. In turn Dewey goes on to consider the intent of laws to regulate possible consequences and make them predictable, giving private individuals a degree of certainty about the outcomes of their actions. Not least this has been put forward as an argument for making spatial plans. To this end a public with the ability to predict possible consequences must exist prior to any decision being made; Dewey's suggestion is that a coherent public emerges through experimentation, setting a context for examining how this might be informed by public debate, and the public sphere, as the setting for this.

The Public Sphere

The thrust of Dewey's view is to maintain space for private action where it does not have spillover consequences. However the possibility of predicting consequences before they occur arguably makes conceptual space for articulating what constitutes the good life as an imaginative exercise, rather than a reactive one. Conversely how, and by who, the scope of such indirect consequences is defined and how, and by whom, the stake of the resulting public is systematically cared for are questions where it is rather more difficult to settle upon one answer.

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[4] The extent to which this argument stands in the contemporary context is given further consideration in Part 3 of this chapter.

Whether the public interest is seen as overspilling from private decisions or as existing prior to those decisions being made, and therefore acting upon those decisions, a space is needed to decide what is in the public interest. Habermas, for example, describes the public sphere in which "private people come together as a public" (1989, p.27), in order to engage in dialogue about their common interests. The use of the term public sphere is intended to specify a domain that, in common with terms such as public opinion, is normatively positioned outside of the state, suggesting the need to see the state and society as analytically separate.

In relating the history of the public sphere Habermas notes the organisation of Ancient Greek and Roman society around explicitly public and private spaces, where public life was constituted through dialogue. Habermas locates this space in the political realm, between the private realms of the family and of commodity exchanges, and the realm of the state and legal institutions. Fundamental to its effective operation are considered to be basic rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Writing with specific reference to the post-Socialist era Fraser (1996) notes the importance of the analytical separation of the public sphere from the state in allowing criticism of the state. It is, however, worth noting that this positioning of the public sphere is based on a particular formulation of the line between public and private, something that is returned to later in this part of the chapter, when thinking about how the recognition of society's diversity underpins criticism of the suggestion that society can have homogenous shared interests.

Describing a normative construction of the public domain[5], using the word 'public' is suggested by Marquand (2004) to embed a very different way of measuring the right thing to do; it is not about the market distribution of goods. It is not about satisfying family connections. It is instead about "the domain of equity, citizenship and service, whose integrity is essential to democratic governance and social well-being" (ibid, p.1). For Flathman (1966), when decisions are made by elected representatives on behalf of their constituents, the claim to be acting in the public interest must therefore be beyond personal relationships, so as to avoid any appearance of partiality.

Marquand's (2004) formulation requires collective interests to be defined through openly debate and contestation. This echoes a diverse literature that seeks to reclaim space for deliberating what is in society's collective interest (See for example Marquand, 2004; Sandel, 2009a; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). For Aristotle this went as far as seeing political participation and deliberation as

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[5] Marquand describes the public domain as "the domain where the public interest is defined and public goods produced" (2004, p.26). Therefore the public domain and the public sphere are essentially interchangeable terms, if Marquand's inclusion of the production of public goods, for example clean air and open space, suggests less concern about the separation of state and society than in the Habermasian formulation of the public sphere.

essential to living a virtuous life (Sandel, 2009a). Equally it accords with Dewey's view of democracy as including participation in deliberation (Asen, 2003), leading to his characterisation of the public as having collective imagination. The result is to emphasise the importance of a sphere in which dialogue can take place in order to articulate what is in the public interest.

The transparency that characterises the public sphere is fundamental to Flathman's (1966) view that the public interest is misused if its use is not underpinned by descriptive explanation. This is essential to both moving beyond its use simply to express a preference, and preventing it from becoming a hollow concept, cited to obfuscate one's true motives. This also suggests that the public interest can only ever be subjectively defined (ibid); accounting for the public interest requires making choices about what to do and is therefore inherently political in nature.

The Public Interest as Political

To assert that something is political is to say that there is a choice to be made, and therefore a decision to be made (Hay, 2007). Dewey (1954) refers to the public as coming into existence when its members have collective interests but are not sufficiently closely associated to address these interests amongst themselves. In this sense the ability to collectively predict and organise to regulate the consequences of decisions, to organise into a public, is a form of political association.

For Hay (2007) when something is political it encompasses the elements of choice over the course of action; the capacity for agency to make a difference; deliberation over the right course of action; and the social interaction that is implied by deliberation and the efficacy of agency. The public interest is political because it is about making choices over what constitutes collective wellbeing. The public sphere is equally political but, in the construction described above, commits to these choices being made in a transparent and ultimately democratic way, thereby including space for deliberation. However the form that this democracy takes; the extent to which it is about collective deliberation or representation, is more of an open question.

Echoing Marquand (2004) and Habermas (1989), Hay (2007) identifies a continuum between the non-political sphere (the family, the realm of necessity) and the formal government (party-political) sphere. Hay further classifies these spheres as formal government or non-government, where the non-government is separated into the public, private, and family/necessity. If necessity might be characterised as day-to-day living, and the private realm as about the family, public life can be seen as more political, espousing Marquand's (2004) ideas about the public domain. In turn Hay's (2007) positioning of the 'public' outside of the sphere of formal government reinforces the

normative siting of debates about what is in the public interest in the public sphere, with the intention that the state should respond to the outcomes of such debates. Elsewhere the realm of family strongly reflects Dewey's (1954) ideas about the possibility of being so closely related as to not require political organisation to achieve particular aims, a further reminder that 'collective' problems are not always 'public' problems.

In line with the pragmatic tradition Dewey's (ibid) formulation of issues as public suggests that the spillover consequences of decisions practically exist but that recognising them as such is a matter of interpretation; the characterisation of a decision as public is the result of framing it as such. To this end Hay suggests that issues may move between spheres through processes of politicisation and de-politicisation. To politicise an issue is to frame it as a matter of choice over what action might be taken to address it. To de-politicise an issue is to suggest that there is no choice; the course of action is a matter of technical necessity. In turn the movement between spheres strongly reflects the idea that an issue moves from the private to the public sphere when the consequences spill over from the parties directly involved; although there might not be a choice over the course of action to address public issues it is an inherently political course of action to frame a decision as having public consequences. The processes of politicisation and de-politicisation provide a useful way of thinking about how issues become the focus of public deliberation, but also how they are removed from the public sphere.

Hay further describes a process of de-politicisation where those within the explicitly party-political formal government sphere have the power to devolve certain responsibilities to the market, or to quasi-governmental agencies (QUANGOs), reframing them as technical in nature. An example is the management of carbon emissions through carbon markets. Equally the power is retained to recover issues, to reframe them as matters of choice. As such the processes of politicisation and de-politicisation, and the continuum between private and government spheres provide a useful framework for understanding how the public interest has been articulated through different traditions of political thought. In turn this sets the context for looking at the public interest through different traditions and theories of planning, in Parts 2 and 3 respectively.

The Public and the 'State'

In 'caring for' the spillover consequences that cause a decision to become a public matter Dewey (1954) constructs the need for the public affected to appoint 'officials' to care for its interests by regulating these consequences. For Dewey this necessitates a construction that might look like a 'state'. This applies a functional definition of the state, in that it exists purely to address the

spillover consequences of decisions (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987). In turn it reiterates the normative separation of state and society, at odds with Aristotle's conflation of the two, but echoing his construction of the state as about fulfilling collective interests. In common with Dewey's construction of the responsive state Habermas (1989) notes that whilst institutions may bear the description 'public', this does not necessarily denote them to be generally accessible, but instead denotes their function to address matters with implications for the public interest.

However the use of the word 'state' is not entirely helpful. It is intended by Dewey (1954) as an abstract construction to convey the functional need for an entity to act on the public's behalf with the capacity to mitigate these spillover consequences. Yet it is difficult to disassociate from the historically embedded organisational conception of the sovereign state as self-perpetuating, formally elected government, with control over a series of bureaucratic institutions and a formally defined geographical territory (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987). Indeed Dewey (1954) is critical of the self-reinforcing political mechanisms that lead to the assumption that the state should take a particular organisational form, instead asserting that the form of the state should be responsive to the indirect consequences that need to be cared for.

The Scale of the Public

Dewey (1954) asserts that the extent to which the organisation of officials to look after the public interest might look like the embedded idea of the sovereign state, as a construction that sits apart from the public, is dependent upon temporal and geographical localisation; it is possible to be too closely associated to have any need to be politically organised, or for different groups to be too isolated to share any meaningful collective interest that requires systematically caring for. Practically a public can only emerge at a scale where the group is sufficiently localised to have a collective interest in the consequences of a decision, but where it is too large or insufficiently localised to meaningfully participate in making that decision, a question of balance.

To this end Healey notes that formal institutions of governance have been expected to pursue the public interest as the "collective interest of the majority of citizens in a formal political and administrative jurisdiction, such as a nation, a region or a municipality" (2007, p.15). This expectation embeds the idea that the definition of the 'public' depends on the geographical scale at which one is working. However to arrange formal institutions in this way exemplifies Dewey's criticism of the embedded organisational form of the state, and the assumption that a public inherently exists within discrete administrative boundaries. Equally to conceive of the public interest as being cared at discrete scales does not address the need for decisions to deal with

conflicting interests at different scales, or ideas of place as relationally constructed[6]. Both suggest the need for a more fluid conception of scale. Conversely the public interest has traditionally been accounted for in a manner owing rather more to the sovereign nation-state.

The Public Interest in Political Thought

The recognition of the public interest as political sets the scene for thinking about how what is in the public interest has been framed through different traditions of political thought. In turn these can be compared with the normative construction of the relationship between state and society as mediated in the public sphere, through the identification of particular categories into which each conception of the public interest fits. The first distinction is whether what is in the public interest is being defined objectively or subjectively; as a matter of technical knowledge or value-led choice. Flathman (1966) suggests that it can only ever be defined subjectively but this has not prevented the framing of the public interest as something arrived at in an apolitical, technical manner.

The second distinction is to ask whether different conceptions of the public interest are focussed on the outcomes or consequences of actions; a teleological focus, or on the process of deciding what action to take; a deontological focus. As an example the conceptualisation of the public sphere presented is, superficially, deontological in nature; concerned with allowing everyone to participate on an equal footing, rather than with the outcomes that they collectively seek. However, whilst the public sphere may be normatively positioned as the space in which reasoning about the 'good life' takes place, the extent to which this reasoning is teleological or deontological in nature is less settled. The contrast between process and outcome is further addressed in Part 3 of this chapter, in relation to normative theories of planning. However, having set out these categories, the chapter now turns to consider how the public interest has been conceived of in the traditions of political thought that have dominated the 20th Century.

The Utilitarian Public Interest

Originating in social reform movements of the 19th Century (Campbell and Fainstein, 2012; Campbell and Marshall, 2002a), Utilitarianism is characterised as the pursuit of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, but where, in its original Benthamite form, no one form of happiness is considered to have greater merit than another. In this sense only the individual can know if they have something at stake with pleasure as the only test of the consequences of actions

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[6] These ideas draw on an understanding of place, not as a container, but as relational; products of multiple geographies of space and time, thereby allowing for a far wider range of influences (Graham and Healey, 1999).

(Campbell and Marshall, 2002a). Drawing on the categorisations set out above this is a highly subjective measure. Indeed Sorauf (1957) notes that the appeal of defining the public interest as the greatest happiness of the greatest number lies in being able to encourage individuals to continue pursuing their own private interests. This is a deontological formulation, but one that arguably removes any suggestion that decision-making processes have public consequences.

However, although Utilitarianism is considered to centre on the individual, when it comes to questions of public choice it positions the state as arbiter; it is the state that decides what constitutes the greatest happiness, a teleological focus (Campbell and Marshall, 2002a). Indeed Moroni (2004) notes that Utilitarianism is incompatible with liberalism's pursuit of individual freedom because ideas of collective utility do not respect individual morality. In turn this is a conception of the public interest that adheres to ideas of the 'common good'; the principle that humans share basic values that should govern how decisions are made.

In contrast Mill's (1861, cited by Sandel, 2009a; Campbell and Marshall, 2002a) later reformulation of Utilitarianism distinguishes between higher and lower forms of pleasure, with the distinction to be made by those who have experienced both; in this form of Utilitarianism the privileged elite are positioned as the best able to decide the right course of action, where utility can be measured objectively. Essentially the privileged elite have the power to define what constitutes the common good (Campbell and Marshall, 2002a). Furthermore Mill (1859, cited by Sandel, 2009a) asserts that individual freedom will lead to the greatest human happiness over the long term, but only so far as the individual pursuit of freedom does not do harm to others. This is a formulation of the public interest that is compatible with Dewey's (1954) distinction between decisions that are either public or private, but less compatible with normative constructions of the public interest, or common good, as being articulated in the public sphere by virtue of its privileging of elite interests.

The result is an approach that sees the public interest defined in a teleological manner, where it is the role of the state to decide what is in the public interest by trading off the utility of one group against another, to achieve the greatest possible happiness (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987). It is therefore suggested to act as the theoretical foundation for measures such as cost-benefit analysis, measures with a tendency to be presented as highly objective (Howe, 1994), in contrast to the view that what is in the public interest can only be subjectively defined (Flathman, 1966).

The Welfare State

Campbell and Marshall (2002a) highlight the role of Utilitarianism as a basis for the welfare state as it began to emerge in the first half of the 20th Century with a focus on material equality through redistribution. In this sense the post-war welfare state has at its root the common good, but where ideas of what is good for society as a whole are imposed by the sovereign state.

In the UK the welfare state is typified by Clement Atlee's post-1945 Labour government. Atlee's government legislated to introduce large-scale welfare programmes such as the National Health Service, National Parks and a universal system of benefits supporting the unwell and the unemployed, systems that continue to survive in modified form, whilst nationalising many industries. However it has been suggested that it has its roots in a fear of civil unrest dating to before the First World War, with social security intended to undermine the threat of revolution by reconciling relations between the labouring classes and their employers (Marquand, 2004).

Marquand (ibid) notes how this dramatically increased the size and scope of the state. In this sense it is a model that allows the democratically elected state to define the public interest, where the public is seen as a homogenous group (Campbell and Fainstein, 2012). Conversely Fraser (1997) suggests that the method of redistribution used tends to reinforce income divisions in society, rather than promoting collectivity. Sorauf (1957) classifies this type of public interest as receiving priority because it is inherently correct, but suggested that this made it not very 'public' in nature, being very much defined within the sphere of formal government, rather than in the public sphere.

The Summatory Public Interest

The summatory model is most easily characterised as being about the balance of collective opinion, or the representative summation of individual interests. It is a conception of the public interest that is again normative in nature. In this sense it can be regarded as highly democratic, being very much about the collection of preferences together, so that what is in the public interest is decided by the majority's opinion. In this sense Campbell and Marshall (2000) suggest that it is the conception of the public interest that has continued to thrive in recent decades. Accordingly such a definition is deontological (process oriented), with a greater concern for maximising individual choice than any judgement of those individual choices. However the extent to which it is subjective or objective is more difficult to settle upon; whilst this is an objective definition to the extent that it is exemplified by counting votes, the individual preferences that inform such votes are arguably far more value-led in nature. It is also dismissed by Sorauf (1957) as not very, given its concern with the balance of interests over pursuing a single collective interest. However there can be discerned a role for the public sphere, as the space in which individual interests are shaped.

Furthermore the democratic nature of this form of public interest ensures that citizens can directly influence the philosophy of the sovereign state, if not its actions.

Despite the focus on individual choice any temptation to liken the summatory model to the utilitarian principle of achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be avoided; although the maximisation of individual choice is one element of Utilitarianism explicitly public decisions are made by the political elite (Campbell and Marshall, 2002a; 2000). Instead the more contemporary neo-liberal conception of the public interest is positioned by Campbell and Marshall (2000) as an example of the summatory in its pursuit of individual freedom.

The Neo-liberal State

Fundamental to the political regimes that resurged in the 1970s, and arguably continue to dominate Western economies, is a belief in the market as a distributive mechanism for goods. This challenges state intervention in the market but instead charges the state with strengthening the market (Low, 1991). The adoption of a neo-liberal ideology de-politicises issues, substituting deliberation over a choice of actions for the assumption that allowing the market to operate with minimal interference will lead to the best distribution of goods.

In defining the public interest the neo-liberal state adopts the same principle as Utilitarianism; what is in the public interest is defined by the political elite, where only those matters that can be rationally agreed upon can be the concern of the minimal state (Hayek, 1944, cited by Low, 1991). Consequently the public interest is reframed in terms of achieving economic efficiency, measured through performance indicators. This positions the market as the mechanism for redistributing resources, allowing individuals to express their preferences through market participation. The result is an objectively defined measure of the public interest, with a deontological focus on maximising individual choice, in turn discouraging the emergence of a public with collective interests. However it has been suggested that this actually increases inequality, particularly during economic difficulties where cuts to state programmes impact disproportionately on poorer parts of society (Campbell and Fainstein, 2012; Fainstein, 2010; Low, 1991).

The Public Interest in the Contemporary Context

Table 1, below, attempts to summarise the two conceptions of the public interest set out above. Despite their differing aims they have in common the state's position as arbiter in deciding what the common interests of the public are; particularly the welfare state assumes a homogenous

public unable to conceive of its own interests. To return to the relationship between society and the state, both assume that deliberation about what is in the public interest takes place inside the formal sphere of government, legitimised by representative democracy.

Public Interest Conception	Welfare State	Neo-Liberal
Normative Theoretical Basis	Utilitarianism	Summatory
What is the aim?	Redistribution	Efficiency
Are decisions framed as subjective or objective?	Objective	Subjective
How are decisions made?	Judgement about the common good	Individual pursuit of the good life

Table 1: A Framework of Generalised Public Interest Conceptions

That ideas of a deliberated public interest have not been successfully revived in the contemporary context is apparent in feelings that the public are ignored and treated with a lack of respect, exacerbated by a state that responds to public concerns as they are overhyped by the media, rather than risk allowing public debate (Healey, 2012). In turn the media charged with reporting 'public' opinion tends to be privately owned and profit motivated, at odds with the intention that the public sphere should be based on equal participation (Fraser, 1997). Equally Habermas (1989) highlights the growing inseparability of state and society, fuelled by tendencies for the state to 'stage-manage' its relationship with society, leading to the manipulation of public opinion.

The role of the state in responding to society's collective interests is further rendered problematic by generally low levels of trust in politicians, accompanied by a generational decline in formal political participation that has been particularly sharp in the UK (Hay, 2007). This is exacerbated by the ability of political elites to misuse the concept of the public interest. An example is the 1990s export of arms to Iraq, where British Members of Parliament cited the public interest as a reason for indemnity from disclosing their own personal involvement in such matters, rather more about selfishly avoiding embarrassment than protecting the public (Marquand, 2004).

Moreover trends towards the de-politicisation of issues at the national level, driven by central government, are also considered to reduce the potential for a deliberated public interest; Owens and Cowell (2011) note that the formalisation of solutions to Climate Change through national policy reduces the potential for citizen activists to engage meaningfully with debates about its mitigation by removing them from the public domain. This leads to ideas of what is good for the

national welfare becoming rhetorical (Forester, 2011). The result is not the neutral state that responds to the collective will of the public conceived of by Dewey (1954) but tends more towards Hobbes' description of the oppressive state as Leviathan; the state guarantees order and stability if citizens surrender their rights to oppose the state (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987).

Simultaneously Hay highlights a considerable increase in alternative political actions, such as boycotting products and other, less formal, forms of political expression. These trends support the re-conceptualisation of democratic legitimacy[7] as the ability to participate in collective decision-making, labelled as discursive, or participatory, democracy (Dryzek, 2002). Dryzek characterises discursive approaches as about citizens confronting their state, situating this in the public sphere. However Habermas' (1989) admission that such confrontations cannot be assumed to have an impact on the state's activities, without suggesting an alternative approach has been criticised (Fraser, 1997). The result is uncertainty about whether such discursive approaches can ever be co-ordinated sufficiently to replace the state in fulfilling collective interests that are formulated at scales other than the highly localised. This contrast between modes of democracy sets the scene for examining competing theorisations of planning, examined in Part 3 of the chapter, particularly in as a discursive conception of democracy underpins a communicative approach to planning.

Pluralistic Critiques of the Public Interest

Following greater recognition of society's diversity, the homogenising tendencies of a welfare state conception of the public interest have been criticised, to the extent that authors such as Sorauf, writing in the 1950s, believed that the public interest could no longer be a viable concept:

> "By becoming all things to all people, the public interest has found at best a superficial acceptance and achieved only the survival of the innocuous." (1957, p.618)

This inability to settle on a particular definition was felt by Sorauf to make the concept useless as a tool of analysis. Instead he suggests that, in the face of a burgeoning number of interests, the pursuit of the public interest was politically comfortable; therefore its most appropriate use would be as a process for accommodating different groups, rather than for pursuing particular outcomes. To this end Sandercock cites the Marxian perspective; that the public interest is always about the

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[7] Schmitter defines legitimacy as "a shared expectation among actors in an arrangement of asymmetric power such that the actions of those who rule are accepted voluntarily by those who are ruled" (2001, p.2); simply one may have the power to act but being able to claim legitimacy is about one's actions being accepted by those with less power. Research in rural deliberative arenas and urban, community based institutions; arenas that can't claim democratic legitimacy, has suggested legitimacy to be situated, its conception being context dependent. This becomes relevant in the supposed move away from democratic legitimacy (Connelly, 2011; Connelly et al., 2006).

particular interests of the powerful, failing to recognise the multiplicity of cultures and communities; "multiple publics" (1998, p.197). Consequently Sandercock describes the public interest as a modernist notion; the modernist state sees a homogenous public, and the public interest is about disinterested experts working within the state to rationally analyse a problem.

These homogenising tendencies are echoed in the suggestion that the Habermasian public sphere rules out any difference that gets in the way of rational reasoning, felt to be necessary where the public sphere is seen as a single construct, but less important in a pluralistic approach (Robbins, 1993). Robbins (ibid) notes that Habermas was writing in an era where the public sphere was closed off to large tracts of society, including women, African-Americans and homosexuals. Equally Sennett (1977) notes that being in public was seen as good for men, but less good for women, further noting the tendency of the public domain to enshrine particular norms that make it difficult to truly express one's views. Expecting those participating in the public sphere to 'bracket' their social status and interact on equal terms is both unrealistic, and reinforces marginalisation through loss of political power, limiting the public sphere's potential as a mechanism for undermining inequality (Purcell, 2009; Fraser, 1997; Young, 1990). In this context Robbins (1993) suggests that those associated with feminism tend, instead, to see the free market as public; given the state's role in contributing to exclusionary practices, the market is seen as better accounting for social diversity. This rather contrasts with the earlier described view of the state as public.

Writing in the North American context Schön (1983) notes that a working consensus was assumed around what constituted the public interest until the mid-1960s, when unintended consequences, such as the high profile failure and subsequent demolition of modernist social housing projects, prompted the formation of special interest groups around particular issues. These influenced particular, but often conflicting, laws, dispelling any idea that a set of universal beliefs and values could be discerned amongst diverse societal interests (Habermas, 1989; Flathman, 1966; Davidoff, 1965). The change in terminology from 'public good' to 'public interest' is suggested to be embedded in this move to fulfilling individual interests as the goal of politics (Flathman, 1966).

The recognition of diverse interests in wider society has been accompanied by the theorisation of the relationship between the state and its citizens as pluralist, where the diversity of groups in society is suggested to prevent any one group from becoming too powerful and where policy is the result of ever changing coalitions of interests succeeding in bringing pressure to bear on those making policy. Such a view tends towards the liberal tradition in which the role of the state is to facilitate the individual pursuit of freedom. However, for Moroni (2004) this also raises questions

as to whether individuals are truly aware of what is in their interest? Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987) characterise those in favour of pluralism as also being in favour of multi-scalar government, in order that political decisions may satisfy more of the people, more of the time. This provides a further clear contrast with the centralist tendencies apparent in the welfare state.

On the other hand, if the main thrust of the pluralist critique is that society is too diverse to have widely shared common interests, this leaves society open to creeping neo-liberalisation as economic efficiency becomes the only measure that different groups can agree upon (Fraser, 1997). Purcell (2009) considers how neo-liberalism actively tries to incorporate resistance to embedded ideas of representative democracy, to feed its need for democratic mechanisms that either don't or can't challenge existing power relations and, by extension, the neoliberal hegemony. Purcell's call is for counter-hegemonic movements that try to undermine neo-liberalism. However Fraser's (1997) argument is that neither multi-culturalism, nor radical democracy, provides a comprehensive vision of society that may take the place of Socialism because they fail to address the continued requirement to exchange goods.

Dewey (1954) asserts that his own formulation of the public is pluralistic in nature, but suggests that a key facet of pluralism as it has been advanced in political thought is its limiting of the state's role to resolving conflicts between different groups. Addressing this concern Sennett's (1977) view pre-dates Marquand (2004), in seeing the public domain as about associations and mutual commitments between those who aren't familial or intimately connected. Sennett's conclusions ground these impersonal associations in the city, as the place in which people come together as a public. However his conclusion is that "Community becomes a weapon against society, whose great vice is now seen to be its impersonality" (1977, p.339); fear of the impersonal becomes a barrier to recognising diversity. This is strongly echoed in Young's (1990) assertion that organising into communities tends to exclude those seen as different; Young also constructs the city as where those from different backgrounds come together, constituting the city as their common interest.

Addressing the space between widely shared values and the needs of particular groups Sandercock (1998) similarly calls for a participatory democracy where different groups are formally represented and are supported in their ability to self-organise, but where it is necessary for these groups to appeal to some overarching principles of justice when arguing for their ideas. The purpose of this is to recognise that these groups are part of a wider society, with an intertwined destiny; this is "not to reinvent a discredited public interest" (p.198, ibid) but, in the spirit of the arguments put forward by Sennett (1970) and Young (1990), is instead about

"togetherness in difference" (p.199, ibid). Recommending a similar model Fraser (1997) considers the merits of such a model in recognising multiple public spheres, allowing the equal participation of different groups in an unequal society, but where representatives of these different publics communicate with each other from their positions of difference in an overarching public arena. For Fraser the remaining question is how a model encompassing multiple public spheres can be certain of influencing the actions of the state, whilst remaining critically distant from it; in articulating the public interest when is it more appropriate to defer to democratic representatives and when is it more appropriate to engage directly with the state in making decisions?

Conclusions

The descriptions of the public and the public sphere, and resulting ideas about the collective interest of the public, set out at the beginning of this section set a normative framework for how the public interest might be articulated and accounted for. However they generally assert that the public interest does not exist a priori even if individuals know what they wish to achieve. Instead, under this framework, what is in the public interest must be arrived at through deliberation and contestation, reflecting Flathman's (1966) assertion that it should only ever be subjectively defined, despite attempts to frame what is in the public interest as a matter of technical necessity.

The descriptions are also a reminder that the conflation of 'collective' with 'public', as about a particular way of deliberating and achieving collective outcomes, is explicitly normative. Indeed an equally useful analytical distinction can be made between thinking about whether what is in the public interest is arrived at deontologically; with attention to the process, or teleologically; it is in the public interest to achieve particular outcomes or consequences. Conceiving of the public and the public sphere in the manner outlined does not implicitly assume a role for the state in achieving collective wellbeing and this distinction is worth bearing in mind when considering the context in which different strands of planning theory have been formulated. The importance of this debate is captured in the question of whether democratic legitimacy is bestowed through representative or participatory democracy, at a time when the answer seems less than settled, in turn providing a framework for discussing different theoretical approaches to planning.

The normative arguments put forward in this section tend toward participation and deliberation, encompassing the assumption that what is in the public interest emerges through force of argument. In reality, however, the public interest has come to be associated with the action of the sovereign state, as it has come to be embedded in popular imagination; the tendencies of the

state to impose the will of powerful elites in the name of the public interest means that it cannot come as a surprise that the relationship between state and society and has come to be seen as parasitic rather than symbiotic. Particularly calls to reject the concept of the public interest originate in the way such imposition sees a homogenous public, ignoring difference. Consequently there is a danger that continuing to pursue the public interest overstates the potential to identify widely shared common interests. However, in the context of the recognition of society as pluralistic, many continue to suggest that group action should be based on fundamentally shared principles of justice, or that collective interests in the face of difference may be constituted through the shared experience of place. This suggests that some sort of action to address these interests is still needed. The remaining question centres on asking who should make the final decision about a course of action, something that is given further attention in Part 3 of the chapter.

Having set the scene for the thesis by exploring the concept of the public interest in a rather abstract manner and examining how it is thought about in the broader political context, the chapter next turns to think more specifically about the concept's relationship to planning activities, both historically and in the contemporary context.

PART 2: THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN PLANNING
Introduction

Part 1 started from the point of considering when the spillover effects of private decisions bring into existence a public with a shared interest. This can similarly be said about decisions within the purview of planning activities, those relating to the development of land and property:

> "The legitimation of planning has, in the period since World War 2, rested on the proposition that state intervention in land and property development is necessary to safeguard the public interest against private and sectional interests." (Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p.308)

Arguably without the public interest there is little reason for planning to exist; without the recognition that interventions in land and property contribute to a collective quality of life those with the means would be able to build as they wished, introducing the architect to the builder without intermediary. In turn this view of planning as an activity embedded in the state is consistent with the separation of state and society. Following from the Introduction, whether planning is defined as about reacting to the spillover effects of private decisions; development management, or acting to shape how decisions are made; forward planning, both can be united through notions of "planning as an idea...that is fundamentally about making choices, with and for others, about what makes good places" (Campbell, 2002, p.274).

Conversely the difficulty encompassed in this characterisation is apparent in the multiple ways in which these choices might be made, and a certain fuzziness about how far the word 'collective' extends. These differences are highlighted by the multiple ways in which what is in the public interest might be arrived at. Furthermore the previous section's critique of the concept's use to legitimise state intervention can also be applied to planning activities:

> "What constitutes the public interest has always been contentious but its value as a legitimising concept has been increasingly called into question in the recent past. It is a term which has often been used to mystify rather than clarify...it is frequently used as a device to cast an aura of legitimacy over the final resolution of policy questions where there are still significant areas of disagreement." (Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p.308)

Yet, in spite of such difficulties, the pragmatic imperative for pursuing the public interest through planning lies in the value that it is more appealing to the social nature of humans to live together,

in settlements, rather than in isolation. Ultimately planning as an idea is fundamentally about pursuing collective wellbeing, regardless of the terminology used to frame this:

> "Although the idea of the public interest is often scorned by contemporary planning theorists...it nevertheless remains the pivot around which debates about the nature of planning and its purposes turn." (Campbell and Marshall, 2002a, p.181)

It is therefore useful to explore how different conceptions of the public interest have manifested themselves through different approaches to planning, drawing on the distinctions set out in Part 1.

The Public Interest in Planning History

Planning has a lineage that can be traced back thousands of years to the fundamental organisation of early human settlement; from the arrangement of ancient Mesopotamian cities around the 'grid-iron' pattern, through the organisation of Ancient Greek cities around spaces and buildings with specialised uses, and the Roman concern with grand but efficient infrastructure. Particularly the previous section showed how the organisation of Ancient Greek and Roman cities acted as a spatial expression of the idea that *free* citizens should engage in public life, promoting forms of collective interest (Habermas, 1989). Planning has a long history of imposing urban form with an inherent concern for bringing people together.

Equally it is important to recognise that the English planning system, as the institutional structures that shape the everyday practice of planning activities in England, is a system that has evolved over more than a century. This part of the chapter focuses on this evolution, narrating the transition from an independent reformist movement; individual 'planners', pursuing their own vision of the good life, to an activity embedded in government structures, with distinct regulatory and forward looking elements, operated by a distinctive set of institutions. To this end a key aim is to consider how different conceptions of the public interest are intertwined with this history.

Regulating the Spillover Consequences of Development

The notion of curtailing individual property rights, in favour of considering others around them, can be traced back considerably further than might be expected. Booth (2003) initially suggests that the true origins of development control may lie in the issuing of model bylaws by central government in 1858, with the purpose of controlling the form of new development. However Booth then traces the origins of urban form control back to 1580 and further, eventually to London's 1275 Assize of Nuisance; regulations that controlled the form of windows, walls and guttering. However it is the 19th Century when such ideas became far more strongly embedded in

England. Where early manifestations of planning focussed on the ordering and reordering of cities, the public health acts of the 19th Century introduced a regulatory mode of planning that starts to comprehensively embed planning as about regulating private development for the collective good, through minimum standards for sewerage, ventilation and privacy, amongst other concerns.

The rise of regulation has been characterised as a response to the failure of the market to solve social problems, such as poor sanitation, water supply and the lack of profit motivation to build good quality homes. The necessity for the state to intervene in such problems arose from their costs being borne by the taxpayer (Pendlebury, 2015), in turn embedding the idea of the state as intrinsic to regulating public spill-over effects from private decisions. Following early 19th Century local government reform, to create a two-tier county council and borough system, the regulations addressing these problems were very much locally driven, through the creation of local byelaws (Ward, 2004; Booth, 2003). As such this section also shows how regulatory approaches to planning have a much longer history of being embedded in the state than ideas of planning as about planned new settlements, though the next section indicates how this was to change.

Imposing the Common Good: 'Ideal' Settlement Projects

Alongside state regulation, ideas of planning as about a vision for complete settlements that promoted particular modes of living together also have a strong history in the British context. These approaches strongly echo a welfare state model of the public interest, in that they seek to improve living conditions for the disadvantaged, but by imposing particular idealised models.

Such ideas begin outside of the state, encouraged by those in favour of land and housing reform, particularly as ways of subverting the class distinctions perpetuated through land ownership and promoting social and political reform. This diverse range of actors coalesced into a strong political movement of which Ebeneezer Howard was a key member (Ward, 2004; Reade, 1987). Howard's Garden City ideals were partially realised in Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities, and in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Early efforts such as Robert Owen's New Lanark had their roots in highly socialist principles. However other ideal settlement projects in England were the result of 19th and early 20th Century industrial philanthropy with a slightly different aim; Port Sunlight, Bournville and Saltaire were designed with the intention of creating a better life for their inhabitants, through generally lower density, better quality housing (Ward, 2004; Cherry, 1974), but, in turn, promoting increased productivity for their employers. Despite these varied motives such settlements still strengthened the town planning movement, with George Cadbury, the industrialist behind Bournville, becoming one of its key members (Cherry, 1974).

Superficially such developments appear to be strongly influenced by utopian traditions. However Cherry (ibid) has suggested that demand for planning in England arose predominantly as a reaction to 19th Century social and economic change, the result of significant urbanisation trends. From the 1820s onwards political intervention tended towards "comprehensive community regulation" (ibid, p.7), with the popular imagination being captured by the significant urban growth associated with the Industrial Revolution, exemplified by the statistical correlation between higher infant mortality and higher population density.

From an Independent Reform Movement to an Activity of the State

The success of town planning as a reformist movement can be seen in its political influence; the Liberal Party was strongly influenced by ideas around land reform and, following its 1906 election, adopted them in government This led to the embedding of planning as a state sanctioned activity, amongst the gradual expansion of state intervention in social issues with collective consequences. Superficially such an arrangement resembles the debate of such issues in the public sphere, in turn influencing state actions, if the motives cannot always be characterised as collective in nature.

Whether its uniting ideology; subverting the influence of the landed classes, was a true attack on embedded power structures or simply publicly popular and politically convenient remains debatable (Reade, 1987). However the close of the 19th Century and first two decades of the 20th Century saw the coining of the term 'town planning', the birth of the Town Planning Institute[8], the beginning of planning education and the first 'Town Planning' legislation in the form of the 1909 Housing, Town Planning Etc. Act (Ward, 2004; Cherry, 1974).

For the first time the 1909 Act gave local government the opportunity to prepare statutory land-use schemes. If approved by central government these would set out road patterns and regulations for development and sanitation that developers would be obliged to follow, but would not need to acquire permission to do so (Ward, 2004; RSCOI, 1992). As Booth puts it; the act "made the assumption that the plan itself was the instrument of control" (2003, p.77). This is a decidedly radical notion in the contemporary context, but one that harks back to the need to think about the relationship between plans, planners and planning.

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[8] Later the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), following the granting of a Royal Charter in 1959. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the professional body that represents planners predominantly in England, but increasingly worldwide. Today, to be eligible for chartered membership members must have completed an RTPI accredited higher education course to Masters level and pass an Assessment of Professional Competence, based on at least two years post-graduation experience. In 2014 the Institute celebrated its centenary year.

On the other hand Booth (2003) is critical of the 1909 Act's use of poorly defined terms such as amenity and its permissive rather than mandatory nature, resulting in the rather uneven use of its provisions. Indeed, whilst such land-use schemes were made mandatory in 1919, a 1926 deadline for their preparation was first extended and then abolished (RSCOI, 1992). Elsewhere it has been critically noted that had its provisions for betterment taxes[9] been workable it could have been the roots of a very different planning system based on highly socialist principles (Reade, 1987), perhaps better approximating 'public' measures of the good. Overall however this can be characterised as the period where English planning started to transition from independent reform movement, to a professionalised activity enshrined in state legislation; a move from the agency of individual planners toward the structures associated with plans and the planning system.

In addition to questions of ideological legitimacy the relatively rapid shift from reform movement to state-sponsored activity needs to be situated in a political context where unionisation was on the rise, bringing with it the threat of mass strikes. Planning was positioned by powerful reformist interests as part of the solution (Ward, 2004). Conversely this might also be characterised as the state appeasing the working classes so as to maintain its power, exemplifying the potential, highlighted in Part 1, for the public interest to be used to obfuscate the true intentions.

Notions of planning as being about creating better places to live for the working masses were reinforced in the aftermath of both the First and Second World Wars, the era of the welfare state. It has been recorded how the colossal human cost of the First World War sharpened the need for the state to take on board the concerns of the working class, reacting to the perceived risk of a popular uprising in the wake of the Russian Revolution (Ward, 2004; Reade, 1987). In due course this led to a huge programme of council housing construction, mandated by a series of Housing Acts that adopted the high space and layout standards proposed by the Tudor Walters Committee. Certainly the intertwined nature of politics and planning highlights how perceived collective interests were at the heart of the push for more planning in this era of the welfare state.

Ward (2004) details at length the Town and Country Planning Acts of the 1930s though it is sufficient to note here how the power of local authorities to plan varied with the political context and, particularly, the ideology of the political party in power. Indeed the importance of political context was again highlighted by the Second World War, where Ward notes how the evacuation of urban areas led to the mixing of classes, making plain the deep inequalities in British society for

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[9] Betterment is a tax on the increase in land value brought about by granting planning permission for a higher value use. It is based on the principle that this increase in value belongs to the state rather than the landowner, who didn't do anything to 'earn' the increase.

the first time. It is the end of this devastating war and the need for significant reconstruction that leads to a moment that has done more than most to shape contemporary English planning.

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the Welfare State

Part 1 characterised the 1945 Atlee Government as embodying a welfare state conception of the public interest. The same government also enacted the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, a watershed moment in establishing the basis for the English planning system as it continues to operate in the contemporary context. Grounded in the principles that social relations are environmentally determined, through appropriate urban forms (Reade, 1987), the Act formalised planning in England as a twin-track state activity, with both forward planning and development control provisions. However the biggest change was the Act's nationalisation of development rights over land and property development, to ensure that they accounted for the wider interests of society, the fundamental principle that still underpins planning as it is thought about it England.

Originally it was also intended that the Act would facilitate the state appropriation of the increase of land value once development was approved, based on the principle that private individuals should not profit financially from the increase in land value resulting from a decision made by the state to grant planning permission. Such a tax brought with it the potential for considerable wealth redistribution. Fully implemented it would have effectively ended the accumulation of wealth through land ownership, fulfilling a key aim of the early 19th Century land reform movement, though it should be noted that the proposed tax did not extend to the profit to be made in actually developing the land (Reade, 1987; Ambrose, 1986). However it was quickly abolished by the 1951 Conservative Government. This was retrospectively justified by the 1991 Conservative Government through the suggestion that land value increases are taxed through Capital Gains tax and general taxation (RSCOI, 1992). However it has been suggested elsewhere "to render the 1947 Act ineffective" (Reade, 1987, p.52).

The basis for the 1947 Act was a comprehensive definition of development that also continues broadly unchanged (Booth, 2003), setting out a highly technical basis for the activities that planning would have formal jurisdiction over. Following this definition all development proposals would require approval through the development control process, a radical departure (Ward, 2004; Booth, 2003). However the use of technical standards, for example number of dwellings per hectare, can be seen to obfuscate the values behind such standards, so that it becomes unclear whether aiming for a particular housing density is in the public interest or not (Booth, 2003). In turn this reinforces the Introduction's characterisation of the plan as a 'black box'. Compared to

considerable public concern about planning earlier in the 1930s and 40s, to the extent that bestselling books were written about it, this technocratic framing of planning detached it from the public and lead to a waning of societal concern about how it was practiced (Ward, 2004).

Statutory Development Plans, Discretionary Planning

The introduction of the development control process was strengthened by not implementing a zoning system, such that the plan was a material consideration, but not the final word in decisions over whether to permit development. This consideration of each case on its merits contrasts strongly with the provisions of the 1909 Act, giving those making planning decisions in the post-1947 English context greater agency. Indeed it is the 'discretionary' nature of the development plan, and the negotiations involved in implementing it, that distinguishes the English system from countries such as France, where the plan is legally binding. Particularly this highlights the contrast between views of planning as constraining market efficiency, and of the development plan as providing certainty over what development is considered acceptable, thereby reducing risk and uncertainty for private developers (Ward, 2004; Healey, 2003). However this also characterises the English planning system as an arena where multiple scales both interact and conflict.

The 1947 Act also strengthened the forward planning process, placing a greater emphasis on the plan as a structuring influence. Although LPAs could already prepare town planning schemes under the 1909 Act, the 1947 Act made their preparation statutory, requiring the production of Town Maps and County Maps through careful survey and analysis. The resulting plans were the very much about land-use planning, setting out detailed plans for how land was to be used at the end of their intended twenty year life. In reality it has been noted that the relationship between this technical work and a plan's objectives was often less than clear (Ward, 2004; Faludi, 1973), a contrast further examined in Part 3. Conversely Ward (2004) suggests that plans produced under the 1947 Act were more sophisticated than previous plans, through the incorporation of phasing and more detailed proposals for particular areas. The Act also strengthened the ability of authorities to implement the plan's proposals through the introduction of compulsory purchase powers, allowing LPAs to impose the purchase of land to meet collective needs.

The strengthening of forward planning positioned the public interest as intended to be protected by the relationship of planners as subordinate to elected politicians; plans were presented as complete to the public, legitimised by their approval through representative democracy (Ward, 2004). This designated the LPA as the body most appropriate to look after the public interest, despite the tension between this and the LPA's own direct interests in land development, often

through considerable land ownership. This relationship suggests that a Welfare State model of the public interest is espoused by the 1947 Act, in its intention that what is in the public interest is best addressed by technical experts, overseen by a political elite, in turn reinforcing the suggestion that planning takes places within the formal government sphere. Although the next sections suggest how the provisions of the 1947 Act continued to evolve, the fundamental principle that planning is a state activity, legitimised through representative democracy continues to underpin contemporary practice and, in turn, sets the context for the empirical work.

Planning as Technical-Rational Activity

Following the expectation that plans should be based on surveys and analysis the 1950s can be characterised as a period in which planning moved from being an activity embedded in the Welfare State, to a technical activity, framed as apolitical. This was reinforced by the Town Planning Institute's push for planning to be a unique profession with its roots in design, rather than an activity conducted by people from multiple disciplines (Reade, 1987). Indeed Thomas (1994) notes that the acceptance of the planning profession has hinged on the notion that planning is able to claim a "specialised technical expertise" (p.1), suggesting that this is reinforced in the English context by the tradition that planners should serve the government in power impartially, regardless of its political ideology. Embedded within this is the assertion that only those with appropriate expertise can have a role in looking after society.

Equally the 1950s was the decade in which the development of the New Towns began to take place, each developed by a corporation with wide ranging powers, with the aim of addressing significant post-war housing shortages (Ward, 2004). This has been characterised as an extension of the aforementioned Garden City movement, their 'clean sheet' design allowing innovations in layout such as the separation of pedestrian footpaths and roads (Pendlebury, 2015). This can be characterised as a continuance of the welfare-state approach to the public interest, but in a way that captured the possibility of designing places from scratch, using new urban forms. This approach can be described as 'modernist' in nature.

The 1960s to the 1980s: The Rise of Pluralism and the Neoliberal State

Moving into the 1960s the poor interpretation of Le Corbusier's modernising ideals led to poor quality concrete tower blocks springing up in English cities, surrounded by barren green space, resulting more recently in the high profile demolition of many of these. These were intended to capture the spirit of the age in their use of new technologies to achieve high density housing that

could contribute to addressing considerable housing shortages. However growing social problems associated with high rise living and the poor quality of the towers themselves, illustrated by the 1969 Ronan Point explosion, have been suggested to lead to their downfall (Ward, 2004). Furthermore the extent to which the slum clearance programmes broke up communities to replace them with these anonymous blocks lead to calls for much greater public involvement (Campbell and Fainstein, 2012), reflecting the shift from the welfare state to pluralist politics. The use of the public interest to justify the imposition of modernist urban projects has been characterised as a key driver in the problematisation of the public interest as a legitimising concept (Fainstein, 2010).

From the 1960s onwards planning in England tended to reflect the broader political trends identified in Part 1 of the chapter, the welfare state's embodiment of the public interest as an imposed common good being challenged in favour of recognising the plurality of interests in society. Not least the technocratic framing of planning activities came to be seen as a grave concern in light of tendencies of planning decisions to favour powerful interests and for development plans to accept and accommodate existing commercial interests (Davies, 1982). Davies (ibid) concluded that ultimately planning is about political choices but asserts that planners persisted in framing decisions as matters of technical necessity. Echoing this was a lack of opportunities in the system for public concerns to be taken into account, leading to suspicion, reaching its height in the 1970s, that LPAs were making inappropriate deals with private developers and giving inappropriate weight to their proposals (Booth, 2003).

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act introduced a system of Local Plans and county scale Structure Plans that survived superficially until the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. It has also been noted how the decade saw growing recognition of the extent to which land use policies interacted with wider social and economic trends, leading to more complex forward plans (Murdoch and Abram, 2002). However the more radical change brought about by the 1968 Act was the enshrining in law of requirements for LPAs to both publicise the preparation of Structure Plans and Local Plans, and to invite public participation in their preparation (CPPP, 1969). For Thomas (1996) participation starts from the principle of giving people a greater say over planning, thereby lessening the interests of others and, in turn, leading to some rebalancing of uneven power relations.

In setting out how this might be practically achieved the Skeffington Committee's report on public participation in planning (ibid) echoes Arnstein's (1969) well known 'Ladder of Citizen Participation'

in its emphasis on the need for planning authorities to move beyond simply publicising plans when they are finalised, too late for public participation to make any meaningful difference. Indeed Arnstein asserts that inviting participation without an accompanying redistribution of power to ensure that participation is taken into account is an empty gesture, echoing aforementioned concerns about the relationship between the state and the public sphere. The Skeffington report is more restrained, recognising that participation has the power to improve decision making, but asserting that decisions over adopting and implementing development plans should continue to rest with LPAs and their elected members. Not least the report cites the continued need for professional expertise in making these decisions. However Ward (2004) situates this restraint in terms of the Committee's limited remit, allowing it to address planning procedures but not the wider structures necessary to permit the redistribution of power. The resulting contrast between Arnstein's proposals and the less radical changes brought about by the Skeffington Report has set the context for how public participation has developed in the English planning system in the intervening decades, with implications for how the public interest is articulated.

The election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979, bringing with it a free-market ideology, again emphasises the importance of political context and arguably marks a key moment of change in how the public interest is conceived of in planning activities. The following decade saw the social objectives of English planning discarded, in favour of reframing planning as an activity intended to enable rather than constrain development; a substantial repurposing of planning in England, but one achieved without much change in the basic legislative framework (Booth, 2003; Newman and Thornley, 1996). These aims are reflected in a book written for the later 1991 Conservative government (RSCOI, 1992), to explain the planning system for the general public; it cautions that elected councillors may not consider the need for development and appearance and notes that, prior to 1991, it was assumed that planning applications would be approved without clear reasons for their refusal. The influence of political ideology is apparent in the book's articulation of the public interest in terms of economic efficiency, according with the neoliberal state's privileging of the market as the distributive mechanism for goods, in turn intended to promote intended to promote individual freedom (Ward, 2004).

This efficiency aim is further emphasised by the Thatcher Government's experimentation with planning tools such as Enterprise Zones, Simplified Planning Zones and Urban Development Corporations; tools intended to promote regeneration but tools that sat outside the formal planning system, allowing them to bypass the concerns of residents and elected members alike

(Newman and Thornley, 1996). To this end Healey (1989) discusses the 1980s as a time when policy processes were only selectively accountable, where government was overly centralised and where access to planning processes was far from fair and even. Healey suggests that this was in era where the welfare model of the state had reached its limits in the face of an expanding range of demands. Meanwhile the creeping neo-liberalisation of the 1980s and 1990s was reflected in the increased managerialisation of local government, as well as the growth of un-accountable executive agencies and performance criteria for planning decisions (Campbell and Marshall, 2000).

The 1990s: The Plan as a Structuring Influence

The 1990s, particularly the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act, reiterated the role of the Local Plan as the most important consideration in making decisions about individual planning applications. This ensured that plan-making processes were paid greater attention by different groups seeking the inclusion of their interests, in turn encouraging greater participation in their preparation (Murdoch and Abram, 2002; Newman and Thornley, 1996). In contrast it has been noted how national level planning policy, in the form of Planning Policy Guidance, allowed central government to both promote consistency amongst Local Plans, and ensure their responsiveness to central government priorities (Murdoch and Abram, 2002). To this end the English planning system has been characterised as far more centralised than those of European neighbours, such as France and the Netherlands, with strong centralised control through written policies but a lack of significance given to national and regional plans (Newman and Thornley, 1996). In turn it has been characterised as less participatory (ibid), such that it can be argued that the English system is inherently less concerned with collective interests as they might be defined through participation.

Consequently the rhetoric of participation in planning had arguably become dominant by the 1990s and can be regarded as a structuring influence on planning activities, but one that has failed to transform how it is practiced (Healey, 2003); planners know how to encourage participation, but not why (Campbell and Marshall, 2002b). This is reflected in Thomas' (1996) call to pay greater attention to what participation aims to achieve, noting that Arnstein's (1969) ladder highlights the possibility of labelling a wide range of activities as participation, such that its very meaning becomes a matter of political choice. Indeed Campbell and Marshall (2000) observe that public involvement requires considerable time and resource, at odds with increasing concerns for economic efficiency. This narrative is reinforced by those who note that trust in the planning process continues to decline due to the system's technocratic nature and the perception that it is still dominated by powerful interests, rather than allowing citizens to come up with their own

ideas that more effectively represent their interests (Tait, 2011; Swain and Tait, 2007; Davies, 2001, Low, 1991; Davidoff, 1965). As a result a public interest articulated through participation is positioned apart from both the Welfare State and Neo-liberal conceptions of the public interest that have contextualised English planning practices for most of the post-war period.

Despite their association with the imposition the idea of radical settlement projects has never quite died. New Labour's Pathfinder and New Deal for Communities programmes revived ideas of large scale redevelopment in the early 2000s. If the post-war new towns adopted similar modernist principles in addressing post-war housing shortages, the more recently proposed Eco-towns and the Town and Country Planning Association's proposal to start thinking about garden cities for the 21st century return full circle in trying to address contemporary housing shortages, embodying a collective interest that is characterised as national in scale (TCPA, 2011; DCLG, 2007). The political popularity of such ideas is apparent in the commitment of the UK government to building a 'garden city[10]' at Ebbsfleet, a very recent example of the state defining an outcome to address a perceived collective need for more housing. However it is worth noting these are initiatives that have put forward by central government, rather than resulting from the plan-making system operating at the LPA scale, reflecting the suggestion that urban regeneration initiatives have tended to be the subject of separate legislation, removed from the planning system (Newman and Thornley, 1996).

The 2000s: Re-purposing Planning in England

Overall the evolution of English planning since 1947 is most usefully summarised as a transition from a planning system concerned with the specific implementation of a fixed development plan, considered appropriate to the public sector development of 1950s new towns, to a more contemporary notion of planning as about negotiating the implementation of the plan, starting with 1960s Structure Plans taking an approach based on principles and regulations, rather than proposing specific land use developments (Healey, 2003). Despite this the scales at which plans were prepared remained remarkably unchanged until New Labour's election in 1997. However, since this time it can be suggested that planning activities have been contextualised by constant reforms of the national policy context in which they operate. It is the reforms undertaken in 2004 and 2010 that set the context for the empirical work.

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[10] Though the Ebbsfleet development is named as a garden city it is less clear that the resulting development will pay any attention to Howard's garden city ideals, such as capturing the rise in land values for the benefit of the community. Instead it is arguable that the romantic connotations attached to the term are being appropriated for political convenience, a matter of framing rather than substance.

It has been suggested that the purpose of the English planning system was to pursue the public interest until the early 2000s, but where the concept's wide-ranging meaning has allowed central government to pursue different policy emphases through planning, all in the name of the public interest (Hart et al., 2015). Consequently the role of planning, and the conception of the public interest that it embodies, has arguably changed more radically; planning in England has moved from being an activity inseparable from the welfare state to an activity concerned with promoting economic efficiency, in line with a neoliberal conception of the public interest. Indeed it is felt that contemporary trends towards managerialisation and consumerism reduce the space to deliberate and make judgements about appropriate courses of action, where this is evidenced in planning activities by a lack of creativity in Local Plans, a consequence of their approval by central government (Vigar, 2012). In line with the changing objectives of planning such trends move planning activities further away from the idealised conceptualisation of public deliberation about what is in the public interest, set out in the first part of the chapter.

The extensive reforms introduced to planning by the 1997 Labour Government through the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act saw the streamlining of Planning Policy Guidance into Planning Policy Statements, the replacement of Regional Planning Guidance with Regional Spatial Strategies and eventually Regional Strategies and the replacement of Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The county level Structure Plans disappeared in this shake-up. This rethinking was couched in the rhetoric of improving community participation, speeding up the process, and devolution to regions, if there was some suspicion that this was simply a cover for the private concerns of developers at a planning system getting in the way, echoing the 1970s reframing of the system (Booth, 2003) and indeed hinting at the political convergence of the Labour and Conservative Parties around ideas of un-inhibiting the market. Furthermore Hart et al. (2015) highlight how the 2004 Act replaces the public interest with the equally broad purpose of pursuing sustainable development.

Following on from the gradual transition from highly prescriptive 'blueprint' planning to more flexible development plans the 2004 Act advocated a move from land-use planning to what is termed 'spatial planning', a shift intended be practically realised in the preparation of the LDF as the new form of the local spatial plan. For Healey spatial planning "demands attention to the interplay of economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political/administrative dynamics as these involve across and within an urban area" (2007, p.3).

Echoing these broad principles in a statement described by Campbell (2012b) as bold and surprisingly political the RTPI (2001) in their New Vision characterised spatial planning as encompassing the challenge of thinking beyond statutory systems and beyond the regulation of land use to take a much broader view of how planning can work to fulfil social needs, through co-ordinating the impact of other sectoral policies on the constitution of places. This is about both the short and long term; both responding to fast changing circumstances and thinking about the long term consequences of policies, at all geographical scales. It is also a discipline that integrates multiple sectors and includes multiple voices, strongly echoing Arnstein (1969) in its assertion that public participation is about collaboration that gives voice to the most disadvantaged communities; those with a "direct interest in creating a better 'world' but little power to influence it" (RTPI, 2001, p.4). However the evidence has suggested that this ideal was not borne out by reality, where LDFs were slow to prepare and resource intensive, whilst failing to tackle poor public participation and cross boundary issues (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009; Watson, 2009). In turn spatial planning is not a characterisation of planning that has survived a further round of reform.

Post 2010 Reforms

The extent to which planning is party-political in nature is well illustrated by the planning reform processes initiated by the 2010 Coalition Government, which introduced a new set of tools to replace those introduced by the 2004 Act. Crucially it is this process of reform that sets the national context for the cases examined by the empirical work, such that it is useful to detail it in some depth. The reforms further illustrate the ability of central government to set objectives for the planning system, introducing an economic growth imperative highlighted particularly by the NPPF's controversial introduction of a presumption in favour of 'sustainable' development, a measure intended to bias the system toward permitting development. This is a presumption not dissimilar to that in operation prior to 1991, under the Thatcher government. In turn the NPPF was the subject of prominent debate, between those against its introduction, led by the National Trust and the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and those for, consisting of pro-development interests.

The power of framing is illustrated by how the case for reform has been made by characterising planning as undermining economic growth. This is captured in a speech made by Prime Minister David Cameron, characterising planners as 'enemies of enterprise', citing the rules, regulations and time delays that impede business (Cameron, 2011). It is further echoed by the Chancellor George Osborne's citing planning as an example of 'red tape' getting in the way of 'enterprise' (Osborne, 2012). The use of the word 'enterprise' frames economic growth as about innovation

and excitement, in turn framing planning as obstructive and parochial. In turn the Coalition moved to abolish Regional Strategies and their accompanying apparatus, such as Regional Development Agencies; to streamline more than twenty Planning Policy Statements into the very concise National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLG, 2012)[11]; and to rename Local Development Frameworks back to Local Plans. As a result statutory policy survives at only the national and local authority scales; respectively the NPPF and National Policy Statements, and the Local Plan, with the new option to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan at the neighbourhood or parish scale.

The importance placed on planning was underlined by the publication, prior to being elected, of the Conservative Party (2009) green paper entitled 'Open Source Planning', which previewed many of the changes outlined. Highly party-political in its use of persuasive language setting out the perceived failings of the 1997 Labour administration, the paper sets out a number of measures intended to address these. The paper characterises planning as crucial to a strong economy, but pledges to abolish undemocratic regional planning, and puts forward intentions to increase the scope of permitted development. Additionally it is noteworthy for suggesting that local plan-making should be undertaken on the basis of 'collaborative democracy', outlined in terms that echo participatory democracy in involving the wider public in decision-making. Equally the paper recorded that Local Development Frameworks "are not expressions of a vision of the locality that emerges from the people of that locality" (p.8), additionally suggesting that efforts to make Neighbourhood Plans would be incorporated as modules in the Local Plan. The efficacy instilled in the resulting Local Plan is reinforced in the paper's closing suggestion that the extension of permitted development rights will free up planners to engage in "designing and implementing visionary plans for the development of their areas" (p.23).

Many of the tools aimed at addressing these critiques of planning were introduced by the 2011 Localism Act; in addition to Neighbourhood Planning this introduced the Duty-to-Co-operate. This is intended to replace Regional Plans in fulfilling the strategic planning function, by requiring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to positively co-operate on cross-boundary issues. The Duty also requires LPAs to consult with a number of QUANGOs including the Local Enterprise Partnership, Network Rail and the Environment Agency, where evidence of positive engagement with these bodies has been embedded as a test of 'soundness' for the eventual plan, to be tested through the plan's Examination in Public (DCLG, 2012).

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[11] The final National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012 is 59 pages long (DCLG, 2012). In comparison the previous Planning Policy Statement 12 (CLG, 2008) setting out the requirements to prepare a Local Development Framework was 30 pages long and one of some twenty such statements.

Local Enterprise Partnerships were introduced by the 2010 Local Growth White Paper (HM Government, 2010) under the guise of decentralising decisions that drive economic growth. They are formed of representatives of local authorities, private sector businesses and other organisations such as universities. Local Enterprise Partnerships have, at first glance, no powers to undertake planning activities, but are brought into the planning process by virtue of the Duty-to-Cooperate, highlighting the Coalition's underlying concern for economic growth.

Neighbourhood Planning can be most easily characterised as devolving to a designated neighbourhood forum the ability to draw up planning policies and site allocations for a designated neighbourhood area or parish. It is useful to note that Neighbourhood Plans are given the same framing as other measures, in the way that they are seen by the NPPF (DCLG, 2012) as tools to enable development. With the intent of kick-starting this process of making plans for a new, more localised scale, central government provided funding for an initial tranche of 100 Neighbourhood Plans, known as 'Frontrunners'. The characteristics that set Neighbourhood Plans apart from Area Action Plans and Parish Plans are, for the former, that such plans are prepared by communities themselves, rather than for the latter, and for the latter their statutory status; their provisions must be taken into account by LPAs when making decisions about planning applications. In March 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government recorded that 1408 areas had applied to be designated as Neighbourhood Forums, with 61 Neighbourhood Plans having been successfully adopted through a referendum of neighbourhood residents (Duggan, 2015).

The Public Interest in Contemporary Planning Practice

Examining English planning practices in a historical light sets the context for contemporary planning practice, specifically for examining how the public interest in the contemporary context. This section considers some of the research that has looked at how practitioners think about the concept, relating them back to the different meanings of the public interest set out in Part 1.

Planners have taken comfort from the assumption that planning activities must be in the public interest (Campbell and Marshall, 2000). Indeed, through its code of conduct the Royal Town Planning Institute confers a duty "to advance the science and art of town planning for the benefit of the public" (p.1, RTPI, 2012) on all its members, regardless of whether they are employed by the private or public sector. However the suggestion that planning should serve the 'collective' or the 'public' is rather an abstract one. The incoherence of the public interest as a concept is suggested by evidence that practicing planners find the public interest, as about serving communities, to conflict with their obligations to their employers, in addition finding conflict

between process and outcome focussed conceptions of the public interest (Tait, 2011; Campbell and Marshall, 2002b; 2000; Howe, 1994; Healey and Underwood, 1977). Research into how those practicing planning apply the concept of the public interest explicitly is relatively rare. However this section is intended to consider some of the research that does exist in this area.

Howe's (1994) comprehensive survey of the ethical practices of North American planners specifically addressed how they understood the public interest. The results suggested uncertainty about whether not serving the public interest would be ethically problematic, especially when compared to the much greater certainty amongst those interviewed about misrepresentation being a clear breach of ethical principles. Howe's work established that planners do express different conceptions of the public interest; all have at their heart serving the public, but the process of arriving at what was defined as in the public interest was more variable. Most commonly planners were found to express deontological (process-focussed) conceptions of the public interest, based on the balancing of different interests, followed by the protection of rights. However suggestions that planning should consider the future consequences of action and should favour the collective interests of the broader community were also popular, bringing into play teleological approaches, and doing little to address the suggestion that the public interest is far from a coherent concept. Howe further suggests that this was reflected in the roles chosen by planners, with particular variations between those who saw themselves as technocrats, in the modernist tradition, those who engaged fully in political manoeuvring, attempting to influence how choices are made, and those that were a hybrid of the two (Howe, 1994; 1980).

Evidence from planning practice in England, specifically in the development control context, suggests that the public interest is still accounted for when considering planning applications, particularly conceived of as access to public space and the principle that economic growth is in the best interest of a city as a whole (Tait, 2011). Tait suggests the second of these to be highly utilitarian in nature, arguably according with the prevailing neoliberal conception of the public interest. However both can be suggested to characterise the public interest as measurable, opening up questions around the extent to which practitioners draw upon embedded notions of the public interest, as opposed to reflecting on whether such notions are always appropriate[12].

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[12] The need to reflect on what access to public space should look like for example is seriously threatened by the movement away from the principle of public adoption of roads and open space and growing trends for the private ownership of such space. Minton (2009) gives an engaging account of this process, particularly discussing gated communities and privately owned shopping centres.

Moreover the research does support Flathman's (1966) suggestion that the public interest can act as a mechanism for the evaluation of public policy, a potentially useful notion moving forwards.

Similar themes are apparent in more recent interviews with planners in the Republic of Ireland, undertaken by Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2015). These illustrate a significant gap between the idealistic conceptions of the public interest apparent in planning theory and the process-oriented practices of planners. Murphy and Fox-Rogers found that planners conceive of the public interest as about avoiding the negative consequences of development and balancing competing interests, strongly reflecting Howe's (1994) North American survey results. Murphy and Fox-Rogers further note that, whilst planners consider the public interest to be an important guiding principle for their work, many struggle to define the concept, suggesting that this results from a lack of self-reflection. In turn this echoes Tait's (2011) questioning of the extent to which planners are acting upon deeply embedded notions of the public interest. Overall the studies outlined illustrate that, for practitioners, addressing the public interest is a practical matter. However it is evident that practitioners find it difficult to translate the normative principles outlined in part 1 into practical actions, leading the public interest to be accounted for in ways that are embedded in the system.

Conclusions

Both regulatory and forward looking models of planning in England can be seen as reactions to the 19th Century industrial city, in itself a product of the rapid urbanisation that characterised the movement of Britain from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial economy, giving them a common grounding (Ward, 2004; Cherry, 1974). However, whilst the regulatory side has always been predominantly a state-led activity, the forward looking side finds its origins in an independent reform movement that, with encouragement, has been appropriated by the state for the purposes of addressing social problems. Certainly the visionary model settlements exemplify the common good conception of the public interest, being the result of individualistic judgements for what the ideal settlement should look like.

The 1947 Act formalised the split of planning into forward planning and development control activities and this split has been reinforced by their very different histories since. The forward plan has been subject to shifting political rhetoric. Meanwhile, despite being the most direct link between land-use change and the public, the development control process is painted by the media as slow, bureaucratic, reactive and trivial, leading to arbitrary decisions that regularly permit poor quality developments (Booth, 2003). Yet more than six decades since its formal inception development control has remained a remarkably unchanged practice, if one that has become

increasingly more target driven and 'consumer' oriented. Equally it is development control that has come to dominate the contemporary societal imagination of planning in England.

The lack of change illustrates that, even at its most instrumental, development control remains a vital process for mitigating the adverse effects of development on wider society. In this sense it can be suggested to fulfil Dewey's (1954) expectation that the spillover consequences of decisions are systematically cared for. In turn development control arguably accounts for a lowest common denominator approach to the public interest. This has been shown to resonate with practitioners; defining the public interest in terms of practical values allows it to be applied through micro scale decisions, but where the public interest has come to be defined in embedded ways. This is in the context of difficulties in translating the normative principles set out in Part 1 into practical actions, setting a context for the next part of the chapter. Moreover, whilst development control safeguards a minimal approach to accounting for the public interest, this arguably serves to confirm the Introduction's interest in the forward plan-making process, as the mechanism through which planning may again accommodate the potential for deliberating about future places. In contrast the idea of forward planning survives but with each round of reform has had less time to make an impact, beginning to suggest how society has arrived at a context where planning is no longer thought about as an imaginative activity.

Equally central government reforms have eroded the extent to which the English planning system unites the two elements has the explicit aim of accounting for the public interest. The close relationship between party politics and planning has been a critical influence on how planning activities have evolved to suit political will. Particularly this is evident in the transition of English planning away from its highly progressive, even socialist, roots, towards an activity that has become pre-occupied with economic efficiency. In turn the public interest has come to be conceived of in multiple ways, according to the political context, stifling the possibility for the public interest to be articulated in a more participatory manner. Yet it can still be suggested that collective interests remain implicit, though harder to define, in the intention that planning activities in England should address sustainable development.

Consequently a key problem for this thesis can be drawn out from the RTPI's (2001) New Vision; can a model of planning that is about 'collaborating' and working for the most disadvantaged communities be compatible with a model of planning that is integrative and thinks about the long term impacts of policies at all geographical scales? This returns to questions of whose collective interest and how this is articulated. However, if such reforms may appear chaotic, it can be noted

that both national and local level policy have survived each round of reforms, suggesting an element of stability in the system that can be used to provide a focus for the empirical research. As such it is useful to now examine different theoretical understandings of planning, to understand how these provide a normative lens for practice.

PART 3: CHANGING INTELLECTUAL IDEAS OF PLANNING

Introduction

The previous section sketched out the history of planning in the English context, with the intention of suggesting how the public interest has been conceived through this history. However it is also necessary to recognise that the rise of planning education from its modest early 20th Century beginnings has not simply been about teaching static ideas of what planning is but has also actively critiqued and influenced the evolution of planning practice. Relating a history of planning suggests how it has ended up where it is today but not necessarily why. As such this part of the chapter can be characterised as starting to address why planning is thought about the way it is, building on the idealised notions of what planning should be set out in the Introduction.

Utopian Thinking and 'High Modernism'

Friedmann describes utopian thinking as "the capacity to imagine a future that departs significantly from what we know to be a general condition in the present" (2012, p.90). Similarly Levitas (1990) calls for a broad definition of utopia to encompass a range of meanings, but where these are brought together in their imagination of alternative, better worlds, considering this to be an innate part of being human. Utopian thinking is characterised as a form of thought necessary to thinking beyond the barriers of everyday experiences and difficulties, in the process leading to the rethinking of the realms of what is feasible, and giving emphasis to the characterisation of thinking about the future is an imaginative exercise (Friedmann, 2012; Levitas, 1990).

This type of thinking is arguably necessary to any attempt to revive ideas of planning as setting a vision for the future of places, the form of planning suggested to have become marginalised in Part 2 of the chapter. However utopianism can also be suggested to underpin the ideal settlement projects briefly considered at the beginning of Part 2. The resulting tension between seeing these projects as stimulating the imagination of what planning can lead to; they arguably exemplify the idea that planning can deliver better places as a whole. However their association with imposition, and tendencies to see a homogenous public were noted in Parts 1 and 2 to have contributed significantly to calls to abandon the public interest as a legitimising concept. It is worth revisiting briefly what such projects were trying to achieve, in order to set the context for thinking about how their concerns might be addressed in an era where the diversity of society is better recognised.

Despite working in different contexts and having different political values, figures such as Howard and Le Corbusier were considered motivated by a social conscience to address urban problems. This led them to pursue highly complete new urban forms that eradicated the problems of the industrial city, making the most of new technological approaches (Fishman, 2012; Ward, 2004; Hall, 2002). Intrinsic to such approaches are the idea that social relations were better engendered by well-designed buildings, accompanied by comprehensive programmes for wealth and power redistribution, strongly echoing the aims of the welfare state (Fishman, 2012; Hall, 2002). Fishman (2012) interprets such projects as about capturing the optimism and excitement of an age. In contrast Scott (1990) is rather less optimistic about such intentions, asserting that the intention that plans for new cities should be drawn up by experts, separated from politics, tries to frame them as neutral. Fishman (2012) suggests that such separation is about the unbounding of the imagination. Scott (1990) counters with the suggestion that it is about being highly authoritarian, giving power to those with the necessary expertise.

Theorising Planning as a Technical-Rational Activity

A crucial theme in Part 2 were tendencies for planning activities to be framed as technical, particularly since the 1950s, in spite of the potential for political choices to be made. Bound up with this is the embedded view of planning as a self-regulating profession, with its own code of conduct, and its own technical expertise, but where its existence as a profession is taken to mean that it is acting in the public interest (Thomas, 1991). This framing is appropriate to Howard and Le Corbusier, insofar as they see planning as a technical matter, separated from politics.

This approach has been theorised as Rational Planning by Faludi (1973), who sought to argue for a rational, process oriented theory of planning as a way of attaining the desired outcomes, through the careful analysis of information. Faludi situates this in the assertion that planning theory should be concerned with how planners operate, a focus on process over what the outcomes of planning should be, comparing planning to science in its approach. This is suggested to be premised on the ability to identify a collective public interest, against which proposals can be evaluated (Alexander, 1992; cited by Moroni, 2004), lending themselves to the articulation of what is in the public interest in technical terms.

Critiques of the technical-rational approach can be drawn together in Lefebvre's (1996) suggestion that science over-fragments the world in its attempt to create objects for analysis, overstating the potential for objectivity; Lefebvre instead suggests that planning should be the discipline that brings together all the partial and isolated knowledge about the city. Elsewhere Schön (1983)

suggests that it doesn't allow for practical competence, artistry or intuition and leads to the temptation to apply formal models at all costs, leading to an ignorance of the problems they create. Furthermore Lefebvre takes the view that planning should not simply be the purview of planners, a sentiment echoed by those civic movements that sought to participate in planning as a response to its technical framing (Fainstein, 2010). In particular the tendencies for planning to be impositional, but where these impositions are framed as apolitical, have come to problematise the notion of planning as about having vision for future places.

Marxist Understandings, Grassroots Movements

In this light Levitas (1990) discusses the tendencies of Marxism to avoid the use of the word 'utopia' precisely because of its tendency to be associated with dreams that can never be realised, at least not without imposition. To this end Scott (1990) suggests that the pursuance of utopian ideals is not inherently problematic but becomes so when it is done free of any commitment to democracy or civil rights. Instead socialism was seen as a state of mind that would come about through persuasion, rather than as a utopia with its own set of institutions and physical arrangements. It is a struggle that has been characterised as about stripping away embedded ideologies from the marginalised in order that they realise their exploitation and act to overcome it (Healey, 2006). Marxist understandings of the state see it as a tool of the dominant classes, a power imbalance that can only be overcome through class struggle and, ultimately, revolution:

> "Brave words about 'affluence' and 'modern image' become so much hot air when
> confronted by the reality of a socio-economic system which must be changed before
> planning can become desirable or possible." (Davies, 1982, p.127)

As a result planning activities come under attack for being deeply embedded in the state and therefore bearing some responsibility for the privileging of profit, whilst hiding behind the rhetoric of community and public interest (Reade, 1987). This creates a difficult tension for the planner, embedded in the state, who must constantly question whether their actions are simply legitimising the capitalist society, even when they are making efforts to improve the lives of the disadvantaged (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1982)?

The ideas embedded within the critiques; that planning processes should counteract embedded power relationships can be seen in ideas around the right to the city; the assertion that the least advantaged should have access to the same urban spaces that the most advantaged do (Lefebvre, 1996). Such ideas are developed by those who advocate grassroots or counter-hegemonic

movements in planning (Purcell, 2009; Soja, 2004; Sandercock, 1998; Scott, 1990). Equally they are returned to in thinking critically about the more recent development of communicative theories of planning. Contrasting with the modernist approach this starts to uncover the idea that planning is an activity that privileges particular values. This is an idea that warrants rather deeper consideration moving forward, particularly given the contrast between articulating the public interest subjectively and objectively.

The Recognition of Planning and Planners as Value-Led

Lindblom's (1959) rejection of the rational-technical approach, in favour of a model of policy preparation known as 'disjointed incrementalism', can be seen as a product of the recognition that planners are driven by values, whether implicitly or explicitly. In this approach the biggest influence on the content of the plan is the plan that preceded it, recognising the futility of trying to undertake a comprehensive analysis of what policy is needed, that policy-makers cannot help but draw on their experience of existing policy, and that they should therefore do so in a more conscious manner. Lindblom contends that this approach better reflects the political reality of plan-making than the rational-technical approach.

The realisation that planners have values and, by extension, that planning cannot simply be a technical-rational process, but must also be value-led, and therefore political in nature, is credited by Healey (2006) to Davidoff (1965). Healey situates this in a broader intellectual shift in the 1970s questioning the objectivity of science and recognising that science itself is a socially produced concept. The resulting position of the planner is summarised as "both an object of blame and hostility, and the subject of our hopes for effective community regulation" (Healey, 2006, p.3).

Davidoff (1965) strongly rejects the characterisation of the planner as a technician in his assertion that planning is about examining social and political values, values that can be neither measured nor ranked. He considered a technical approach to be reductionist, reducing the space for planning to make innovative contributions, in turn leading him to assert that action cannot be decided upon from a neutral position. Offering a slightly different perspective Dunlevey (1972) problematises the idea of the value-neutral planner through his discussion of ideology as a set of internalised beliefs. For Dunlevey it is the implicit, rather than explicit, influence of one's personal ideology on one's thinking and actions that prevents the planner from ever being truly objective, but instead makes planning a discipline guided by value judgements. This is reflected in the assertion that the public interest can only ever be subjectively defined; about pursuing particular

values (Flathman, 1966), something to be reflected on in light of practitioners' tendencies to draw on embedded meanings of the concept.

Indeed, whilst utopian thinking may be part of human nature, Levitas concedes that utopia is a social construction, imagined differently by different people, leading her to ask "is the good society more than a matter of personal preference?" (1990, p.183). Levitas suggests that judgement is necessary but equally that such judgement is about making political choices. Framing this in terms of the public interest this is about asking whether such thinking is undertaken by a single person, such that the way the future is imagined is a product of their singular critique, in line with a focus on pursuing particular outcomes, or whether it is debated and pursued collectively, espousing a focus on the process of articulating what is in the public interest. This becomes particularly relevant in light of the pervasive but imperceptible shift from the modern to post-modern era, to which the recognition of society's plurality is intrinsic.

Pluralist Approaches to Planning

Part 1 of this chapter concluded that conceiving of a homogenous public with universal interests has been challenged by recognition of diverse societal interests; the characterisation of society as pluralist. In turn this homogenous public interest has underpinned the theorisation of planning as a technical-rational activity, itself challenged by the recognition of planning as a value-led activity.

Guided by Marxist critiques of planning Davidoff (1965) seeks to address this tension, between planning as a homogenising activity and society as pluralistic, by putting forward advocacy planning. Davidoff's approach reverses traditional notions of the plan as written by experts, instead making it the role of planners to support many different groups in preparing plans to compete with the official public plan. It is an approach reflected in Arnstein's (1969) assertion that participation is an empty gesture without the redistribution of power. In turn this gives a more diverse range of parties a voice, in a more open and transparent process that makes clear the values behind the plan (Davidoff, 1965). However the unresolved question is how these differing viewpoints would be brought together to achieve a shared outcome. Post-modern, pluralistic approaches can be criticised for being overly relativistic, giving everyone's opinion equal weight and further reducing the potential to find a common way forward (Campbell, 2012a; Sandel, 2009b; Healey, 1993; Squires, 1993). To this end advocacy planning offers an approach to planning that is more transparent, in the context of society's plurality, but arguably does not overcome the tension between the interests of different groups.

The 'Communicative Turn' in Planning Theory

In understanding how planning theorists have addressed the tensions associated with pluralism and the recognition of diversity it is useful to consider the loosely related movement in planning theory described as the 'Communicative Turn', as arguably the most influential set of contemporary theories about how planning should be done. It has been summarised as a way of addressing the challenge of "acknowledging different ways of experiencing and understanding while seeking to "make sense together" (Healey, 1993, p.236), drawing on the rediscovery of values, lifestyle diversity and socially constructed knowledge. In turn it is intended to problematise technical planning and 'shared' (imposed) objectives in light of their failure to deliver promised outcomes. Instead it introduces ideas of identity as constructed in relation to others, open dialogue and the expression of subjective realities, in turn requiring learning about each other's respective interests and values (Healey, 2006; 1993; Friedmann, 1987). If the reflective practitioner can be described as someone who singularly rethinks and reframes issues (Schön, 1983), Forester (1999) develops this idea to think about the deliberative practitioner, who rethinks and reframes issues together with others. In this formulation the public sphere is about coming together from positions of difference.

Particularly it is useful to situate communicative theories of planning as a way of articulating the public interest through deliberative, participative processes that position the planner in a mediating and facilitating role, to produce outcomes that are equitable and acceptable to all those involved.. This requires abandoning ideas of "the culturally homogenous community with a common 'public interest'" (Healey, 2006, p.32). For Friedmann this about the idea that "the old planning has died but we cannot do without planning" (1987, p.416). This leads him to advocate for planning as a form of social mobilisation, with the aim of reclaiming the public domain as the legitimate source of political power, in order to guide the actions of the state and private interests. To this end communicative approaches adhere to the normative construction of the public sphere set out in Part 1, as the space in which collective interests are deliberated.

To understand how planning practice might adopt such ideas this work now turns to consider Healey's (2006) influential theory of collaborative planning as a key expression of the communicative approach to policy formulation, including consideration of the process of consensus-building at its centre and its theoretical roots in 'Structuration Theory' (Giddens, 1984) and Habermasian 'Communicative Rationality' (1984).

Collaborative Planning

The collaborative approach to planning put forward by Healey (2006) can be positioned as a practical application of ideas around deliberative democracy, rooted in the idea that all stakeholders; those whom a decision will impact, should have a voice in that decision. In turn decision-making processes need to draw on all forms of knowledge and decisions should be made through the agreement of all those concerned (ibid; Dryzek, 2002). It therefore has at its heart the aforementioned public domain or sphere, as a space for deliberation, but formulated in a way that recognises multiple interests (Healey, 2006).

Following this approach the public domain becomes a space for institutional capacity building; building the capacity of locationally grounded networks, where such capacity is a product of the quality of the relational networks that are brought together. Healey (ibid) argues that such networks provide the basis for developing understandings of issues that are shared across cultural divides. In the process the collaborative approach seeks to recognise that knowledge takes many forms, thereby enrolling forms of knowledge not traditionally valued in the English planning system, where the definition of 'evidence' has traditionally tended to be very narrowly defined (Krizek et al., 2009). Aesthetic and emotional knowledges are suggested to be key examples of these missing knowledges.

The collaborative approach suggests that learning about each other's interests can only take place through social interaction, such that this recognition should see competitive bargaining eschewed in favour of consensus building, as a method for arriving at the right thing to do (Healey, 2006). The types of knowledge enrolled in this lead to it being a subjectively defined interest, if one that is arguably intersubjective; only valid at a particular time, in a particular place (Mäntysalo and Jarenko, forthcoming).

Accordingly the criteria for spatial planning that adopts a collaborative approach are both different and more numerous than the judgement of whether the process achieved its objectives; instead it is important to look at how a collaborative approach changes people's actions and ways of thinking about issues, whether social capital has been generated and whether new links have been forged (Healey, 2006). Certainly this latter consideration was also considered as a benefit by the Skeffington Report, citing public participation in plan-making as a way of getting people involved in wider community life (CPPP, 1969).

This is reinforced by the assertion that outcomes are imposed through power relations, such that destabilising these power relations through the collaborative process will have a significant impact on the eventual outcomes (Healey, 2003; 1993; Innes, 2004; Arnstein, 1969). For these reasons Healey suggests that outcomes, as "a priori assumptions of what is good or bad, right or wrong" (Healey, 1993, p.233) cannot be specified in advance. In the contrast between process and outcome focussed conceptions of the public interest collaborative planning is situated by Healey's assertion that "spatial planning efforts should therefore be judged by the qualities of the process" (2006, p.71). The potential to achieve this is indicated by a discussion of consensus building, considered in depth by Innes (2004), when responding to critics of the approach.

Consensus-Building

Consensus building can be defined as the process of making a decision through the uncoerced agreement of all parties present, during the deliberation of issues that will lead to a decision being made one way or another (Innes, 2004). Innes provides a list of conditions that an effective consensus-building process will satisfy, including the need to ensure that a full range of stakeholders are able to participate effectively. This is facilitated by making resources available to weaker interests, such that they may hire experts to participate on their behalf, echoing the pre-requisites for advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965). Further conditions are that participants set the agenda and the ground rules for reaching a consensus. Innes notes the importance of practical considerations in making the process successful; the skills of an experienced mediator with the ability to act as a neutral arbitrator are considered essential[13].

It is suggested by Innes that the capacity building referred to by Healey (2006, 2003) can build arenas for long term collaboration and dialogue. In turn these can be used in collective actions other than plan-making, such that Innes describes consensus agreements as "punctuation marks in an ongoing deliberative process" (2004, p.9). Accordingly any insincerity amongst participants about their interests is expected to dissipate as participants get to know each other over months and years. However this is a fragile process, requiring ongoing commitment (Forester, 1999). Equally Innes (2004) is quite specific about the circumstances in which consensus-building is appropriate, seeing it as an alternative when traditional approaches to decision-making are not delivering results, for example when no one party has sufficient power to make something happen. In this sense consensus-building can be very much seen as product of the North American context, but is interesting to think about in the changing English institutional context for planning.

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[13] Forester (2009) writes at length about the ability of a skilled mediator to facilitate highly productive dialogue.

Theoretical Foundations: Communication, Power and Structuration

Collaborative planning is grounded in Giddens' structuration theory, the idea that structure and agency are mutually constitutive and continually interacting (Healey, 2003; Giddens, 1984). Crucially structuration recognises that social relations do not occur naturally, thereby problematising a technical approach, but equally recognises that privileging values without any consideration of context is overly relativistic (Squires, 1993). Instead it characterises such relations as structured by forces such as history and power, but posits that these can be dismantled with sufficient agency (ibid; Healey, 2003). It is with this in mind that Healey asks whether spatial planning should be about reinforcing those power structures or attempting to challenge them?

Whilst acknowledging the complex relationship between power and agency Giddens (1984) suggests that a simple underlying principle can be discerned; agents need to be able to deploy power in order to make things happen. Giddens recognises the popular suggestion that power is limited by one's specific circumstances, regularised by the stability of social structure, but that this narrowing of choices does not remove the ability to act. This is strongly reflected in the assertion that planners become powerless by ignoring those in power, instead requiring them to develop a strong understanding of power relationships in order to empower communities. Planners are suggested to be frequently overwhelmed by the exercise of political power, by the exercise of economic power by private interests and, in some instances, by a combination of the two (Forester, 1999; 1989).

The consequence is a need to recognise political and institutional context as a constraint on the ambitions of planning, opening up questions around who actually influences planning decisions (Newman, 2008; Forester, 1989). However a divergent viewpoint is offered by Forester (1999), who argues that rather than constantly recognising power's corrupting influence planners need to get on and do something about it, a pragmatic counterpoint to the Marxist perspective. Indeed, reflecting the ethos of structuration in making space for agency, planners are considered to have power in influencing public participation; to choose to empower or disadvantage particular groups by choosing who is invited to participate, the issues to enrol and how to deploy information (Healey, 1993; Forester, 1989). Accordingly it should not be assumed that planners are autonomous but that they are able to find space for autonomy (Forester, 1999).

For Newman this suggests that empirical work should seek to understand how those actors on the ground "assess the challenges, opportunities and the incentives necessary for collaboration" (2008, p.1382). This is a perspective that strongly accords with the focus of Forester's (1999; 1993; 1989)

own empirical work on unique cases that reveal the potential for more communicative approaches to transform practice, justifying his calls for each planning situation to be judged on its individual properties and dismissing the idea that standard planning solutions can be applied (ibid; Campbell, 2006). Such ideas are slightly at odds with an ideal collaborative approach but instead accord with a more pragmatic approach, where analysts look for examples of best practice in creating democratic spaces and seek to understand how they can be institutionalised (Hoch, 1996, cited by Fainstein, 2010), and where mistakes are to be expected and learnt from (Healey, 2012).

Communication

In the spirit of the public sphere Forester considers communication the most important aspect of planning, suggesting that planners should focus on analysing "who says what, when and how" (1999, p.53), This is about understanding and probing claims, rather than simply accepting them as the truth, in order to cultivate more imaginative approaches to planning (Fischer and Forester, 1993). Fischer (2009) highlights the importance of deliberation as a way of making transparent a lack of knowledge and, therefore, where action is underpinned by embedded discourse; this latter tendency was earlier noted to underpin trends toward the public interest becoming rhetorical (Forester, 2011). The efficacy of such an approach is exemplified by how the framing of drug addiction in either legal or medical terms significantly changes the action prescribed (Fischer, 2009). Communicative approaches seek to make explicit the normative principles behind a plan, the discourse that informs them, and the power relations that promote them.

In this more transparent model of planning Sandercock (1998) characterises the role of the planner as about listening, with a particular emphasis on bringing marginalised groups into the planning process, such that situations are created where the outcomes are decided by the force of argument, rather than by who has the most power or highest status. To promote collective reasoning that recognises such reasoning as historically and contextually embedded (Healey, 1993) the collaborative approach adopts the principles of Habermasian Communicative Rationality as an analytical framework (1984), suggesting that ideally contributions should be understandable to all involved, sincere, truthful and representative of those for whom the contributor claims to speak. Healey (2012; 2006) suggests that achieving these ideals and, consequently a more people-centred democracy, is likely to be a continual struggle. On the other hand this is countered by the suggestion that those parties involved in consensus building are only involved because they cannot achieve their goals alone, thereby subverting power relations by introducing a greater plurality of interests to the decision-making process (ibid; Innes, 2004).

Knowledge in Planning

Drawing on concerns for how knowledge claims are probed it is useful to consider the role of knowledge in planning. Rydin writes about the traditions of knowledge produced by experts, providing a "mirror onto 'nature' for 'society'" (2007, p.52), and therefore resulting in large chunks of knowledge that sat around waiting to be picked up and rationally translated into action. This is the very definition of objective of technical knowledge; knowledge that has been produced by scientifically measuring things that can be broken down into units. A poignant example of this has been the housing density targets traditionally enshrined in planning policy; knowledge has been translated into policy that suggests achieving a density of thirty dwellings on each hectare of land is desirable. The implicit suggestion is that the extent to which planning fulfils the public interest can be objectively measured, but where this speaks to a tradition of the public interest being looked after by those who were technically expert in the use of such measures. Instead Booth (2003) points out the way in which such measures hide the way in which they have been arrived at, therefore making it difficult to know whether achieving such densities is in the public interest or not. This is one example of how knowledge is far from benign; that planning activities are about the ways in which knowledge is translated into action is demonstrated in the way that density targets have for many decades influenced how planners think about housing developments.

Rydin (2007) also details the trend towards rejecting formulations of knowledge as rationally technically produced, in favour of seeing knowledge as situated; produced by particular actors with particular interests. The implication is that knowledge is also situated within a particular set of power relations, representing a particular set of interests and can therefore be exploited by those with power (Campbell, 2012a; Sandercock, 1998). It is also a trend that is reflected in Vigar's (2012) questioning of the extent to which planning can lay claim to an exclusive body of knowledge. The ways in which such inclusive, deliberative processes try to enrol non-technical knowledge in the process are noted by Campbell (2012a); not least this is apparent in the potential of consensus building to overcome power relations by allowing all parties to communicate on the same terms (Innes, 2004). This privileges the expectation of sincerity by imbuing participants in consensus building with a responsibility to fully impart the knowledge that underpins their argument for a particular course of action (Williams, 2002).

In particular Sandercock's (1998) characterisation of planning as an activity about listening is underpinned by the synthesis of multiple ways of knowing. For Sandercock (1998) 'lay' knowledge may take seven forms:

- **Dialogical Knowledge:** The need for planners to listen to the stories of stakeholders, facilitating mutual learning about issues to be addressed. Sandercock cites Forester's (1989) assertion that reason and emotion are intrinsically intertwined.

- **Tacit/Experiential Knowledge:** The knowledge that people gain from experience, without necessarily being able to say where it has come from. Particularly this might take the form of aesthetic or emotional knowledge. This creates a need for planners to ask the right questions to uncover tacit experiences of place. Sandercock also reminds that planners routinely draw on their own tacit knowledge without being aware of it. This in turn provides an intuitive insight into the impact of future proposals.

- **Local Knowledge:** For Sandercock the challenge to planners is overcoming the embedded view of local knowledge as being coloured by self-interest.

- **Symbolic:** This is about recognising the value of non-verbal knowledge such as art and poetry, particularly as a way of understanding marginalised groups.

- **Contemplative:** Contemplative knowledge is that which doesn't result from a particular form of scientific enquiry, but might instead be accessed through story-telling.

- **Learning by Doing:** Sandercock suggests this is particularly relevant to empowering communities by supporting them to undertake particular activities, gaining knowledge through this practice.

Sandercock's argument is not for dismissing scientific/technical knowledge, but to emphasise the importance of other types of knowledge in understanding cultural diversity. Implicit in this is that a recognition of society's diversity must be accompanied by a recognition of a greater diversity of knowledge types. In turn this has consequences for how planning activities might be undertaken, something that becomes clearer in considering the implications of a communicative approach for the plan-making process.

The Implications of a Communicative Approach for Strategy Making

The Introduction drew on the characterisation of the plan as a 'black box', seeing it as a durable part of the planning system, but where it resulted from a process that was less than transparent in

the way it brought together multiple interests. In turn Healey (2007; 2003) details the movement taking roots in the 1960s away from the characterisation of plans as fixed structures, toward plans as strategies, evoking ideas of greater proactivity in achieving the plan's intended outcomes.

In the spirit of communicative approaches the ideal put forward for such strategies by Healey (2007) and Albrechts (2006) draws on multi-level governance in its move away from fixed hierarchies[14], toward bringing together multiple actors in collective action. Moving away from the widely adopted notion of the 'strategic plan' as an overarching set of policies Albrechts (2006) characterises strategic spatial planning as about vision, action and abandoning traditional boundaries, about being more proactive, when compared to the traditionally reactive nature of planning. These ideas draw on an understanding of place, not as a container, but as relational; products of multiple geographies of space and time, thereby including a far wider range of influences (Graham and Healey, 1999). To this end Healey (2007) strongly asserts the importance of context; each locality for which spatial strategies are made is a unique intersection of multiple histories, scales and cultures that are difficult to delimit. However Newman (2008) challenges this normative ideal, suggesting that there is weak evidence for its success.

This approach is captured in reframing the plan as a series of rehearsed arguments for why certain things should happen in certain places, ready for deployment as opportunities arise[15], which just happen to be recorded in a plan (Healey, 2007; Albrechts, 2006). In this formulation the strategy's influence depends on its ability to persuade other actors of the correctness of its vision (Healey, 2007). Healey (ibid) further notes the strategy's potential to mobilise resistance, making some actors hesitant to prepare them[16], highlighting the importance of assembling power behind the idea of a unique place in levering resource allocation for future development. Thinking of the plan as a strategy leads one to think of it as a set of arguments designed to promote a working consensus around a particular direction of travel towards a particular vision of the future.

Criticisms of the Communicative Approach: Context and Power

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[14] See also Faludi (2012) who urges planners to move away from fixed hierarchies and boundaries, in favour of so called 'soft spaces' that more closely adhere to the territory of the problem to be solved.

[15] Koopmans' (1999) exploration of Political Opportunity Structure theorises the opportunities that Healey (2007) notes for their potential to allow the implementation of strategic spatial strategies. The theory suggests that opportunities to take collective action, such as protesting, voting or lobbying are determined by the interaction of social movements with politics, such interactions in turn being shaped by democratic structures. However Koopmans further suggests that the opportunity to act is far from enough, suggesting that the capacity and motivation to act is also needed, further shaped by an ability to achieve a collective identity.

[16] See also Murdoch and Abram, 2002; Davidoff, 1965

Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) express concern that communicative approaches privilege communication at the expense of understanding the social and economic context within which planning takes place. They suggest that claims of communicative theory becoming the dominant paradigm in planning theory echo claims made about the rational-technical approach, another approach that saw planning as procedural, and one step removed from politics and, consequently, in danger of missing opportunities to influence these contexts. These concerns are strongly reflected by Purcell (2009) in his suggestion that communicative approaches do not challenge existing power relations and therefore cannot challenge the neo-liberal hegemony.

Healey (2012; 2003) counters criticism that the collaborative ideal cannot be achieved in the English planning system and pays insufficient attention to the forces structuring the opportunities for agency, with the suggestion that innovations are context specific and challenge local structures; Healey argues that more participative practices have tended to arise in local areas where local government has greater autonomy. However the optimism that consensus can be reached that is widely problematised, leading Young (1990) to suggest that the solution is the democratic state whilst Dryzek (2002) puts forward the idea that the outcome should be a working agreement, where a course of action is agreed but not necessarily because all stakeholders have the same reasons for agreeing it.

Conversely, as earlier noted, Purcell's solution is to encourage counter-hegemonic movements that are agonistic in nature. Mouffe (2005) characterises agonism as a development of antagonism; where in antagonistic situations participants aim to annihilate each other, those in agonistic situations see each other as adversaries with conflicting interests. In this spirit McClymont (2011) expresses concern that the collaborative approach causes parties to hide their true interests for fear of weakening their ability to reach an agreeable compromise through consensus-building. Drawing on English development control practices McClymont instead writes in favour of an agonistic approach, suggesting this to be illustrated by the planning appeals process, which abandons the need to reach a consensus in favour of a Planning Inspector's judgement. Such approaches speak to the imposition of the public interest but ensure that different interests are able to influence decision-making, leaving a remaining question of who may legitimately make the decision.

Limits to Recognition

Other criticisms of communicative approaches tend to come from the sphere of justice, from the broader debates about what a good society might look like, within which planning is situated.

Indeed Low (1994) suggests that the concerns of justice with fairness are necessarily concerns of planners, concerns that are dealt with by acting politically. Low concludes that planners must appeal to the principles of justice in seeking to defend their actions. In turn the criticisms related here centre on the tension between recognising the interests of different groups and making a judgement about the values that each group holds.

The need to allow for different group preferences is summarised by Fraser (2008, 2003) in noting that cultural difference does not easily map onto economic inequality. Fraser gives the example that those identifying as homosexual may fall anywhere on the income spectrum, such that achieving sexual equality is about being perceived as equal in the eyes of all society, rather than being about any form of redistribution. To put this in terms of planning activities the idea that society does not share a single desired mode of living can be seen in the existing built environment, in the sheer diversity of settlement patterns and their associated lifestyles. This is addressed by Healey's (2006) situating of the collaborative approach in a conception of the public sphere that encourages participation from positions of difference.

Conversely Moller-Okin (1999) argues for limits to individual freedom in areas other than material difference, considering for example whether polygamy should be recognised as a practice of a particular cultural group, embedded in a society where such behaviour is considered incompatible with its values. Moller-Okin's suggestion that such values should be imposed, even if only to recognise the detrimental effects on the women involved in polygamous relationships, starts to suggest a common good model of the public interest, based around intrinsically shared values.

Similarly Fainstein (2010) draws on Marx's concept of false consciousness; the idea that people's interests are unconsciously shaped by their societal position, thereby challenging the idea that people shape their sense of self through participation. In turn this prompts the question of whether those participating are able to judge their own interests or what is in the interest of the wider public.

Stakeholder Identification

It is also necessary to ask how appropriate stakeholders should be identified in order to achieve an ideal collaborative process. The notion that all stakeholders with an interest in an area should be included, suggests that an area and therefore its stakeholders can be delimited. However this is rather at odds with the relational understanding of place also advanced by Healey amongst others, which begins to suggest that stakeholders may not be based in the same locality, raising practical

questions of how they might be brought together to interact socially. As an example of this Healey (2008) writes about the contributions of academics to the strategic planning process; if a relational understanding of place may help to justify their inclusion as stakeholders Healey recognises that academics have access to different types of knowledge unavailable to other stakeholders. However Healey also cautions about the potential for this to crowd out other types of knowledge, suggesting that it is the choice of the policy-makers as to how to engage with members of the academy. Furthermore this seems at odds with the ideal of Habermasian communicative rationality that suggests all stakeholders should be able to engage at the same level, in order to overcome embedded power structures. In many ways the empirical work of Forester (2012; 1999) might be seen as a response to this, giving many practical examples of a mediated deliberative process. Yet the question that this raises is whether the same processes can be extended to a plan preparation process where a multitude of stakeholders can be identified, contrasting with the very much smaller numbers of stakeholders involved in very specific planning problems.

Attempting to plan for functional areas defined from the ground up, in accordance with a relational understanding of place, rather conflicts with the institutionalised need for English local spatial plans to both join up and the legal requirement for LPAs to work together to address cross-border issues, in order to ensure effective decisions for places are made across England. It does not immediately seem plausible that such coverage could be achieved without some imposition of boundaries, currently achieved through the occasional review of LPA boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE, 2011). Accordingly this can be seen as a strongly structuring influence that this research will need to work within.

Stakeholders That Can't Participate

To return once more to Dewey (1954) a public exists when political organisation is necessary to address the indirect spillover consequences of decisions. Communicative theories of planning are compatible with this theorisation, in so far as all those considered stakeholders are sufficiently localised so as to allow them to participate in decision-making. Under Dewey's formulation such stakeholders might be regarded as sufficiently closely related to avoid the need for officials to care for these consequences. The difficulty comes when the definition of a stakeholder and, by extension, the extent of those affected by decisions is probed further. The resulting question is around the limits of the public; should it cross national boundaries, should it extend to include other species affected by decisions and should it include future generations (Campbell, 2012b; Nussbaum, 2008)? The possible answers to this again stray into theories of justice and what makes

a just society, if it is arguable that this sets the context for planning theory, not least in suggesting who and what the public are and, in turn, whose interests planning should serve.

Historically it would have been easy to suggest that people divided by national boundaries would have been too isolated from each other as to share a meaningful common interest and therefore form part of the same public. However the contemporary context is one in which the media facilitates a far greater understanding of how decisions have consequences for distant others; those who are not sufficiently localised to participate in decision-making. O'Neill (2000) argues that it is part of human nature to make complex assumptions about how distant others will be affected, giving the example of road users; drivers do not generally know each other personally but must still imagine how their behaviour will affect other drivers and vice versa. Accordingly O'Neill suggests that people can be reasonably expected to think about the impacts that their actions might have on distant others, in recognition of the ways in which globalisation brings about a far denser network of inter-connections amongst the global population than at any other point in history. This is partly about moving from a container to a relational understanding of space. O'Neill notes how justice has traditionally been thought about in relation to the container view of the state, but is sceptical of the state's capacity to manage its population's obligations to distant others, given the significant inequalities between nation-states. The question that follows logically from this is whether the public extends to include other species?

A particularly influential idea in theories of justice is Rawls' (1971) 'Veil of Ignorance'; the assertion that if one had no idea what type of life one would lead and what one's position in society would be, one would select a societal model that privileged material equality amongst its members. Consequently a Rawlsian approach to justice favours material redistribution. However Nussbaum (2008) suggests that such a model is flawed in conflating those who design society with those who society is designed for, ignoring other species. Nussbaum's argument is that such elision fails to account for those who are not yet born, or for any species other than humans, again enrolling issues around environmental justice amongst others, such that her argument is particularly relevant to the future-orientation of planning. This is reflected in Nussbaum (ibid) and Sen's (1999) 'Capabilities' approach to justice, an evolution of the redistribution model which argues that redistribution is about ensuring equality of opportunity rather than basic material equality. In common with O'Neill, Nussbaum instead asserts that those who have the ability to communicate and reason need to recognise that they are also making plans for others.

In this spirit Dryzek (2002) cites Goodin's (1996) theory of 'encapsulated interests'; the idea that environmental interests will be represented in deliberative situations by people sympathetic to such causes. Dryzek extends this theory to suggest that introducing evidence of environmental problems will allow the environment to speak for itself, arguing for the mobilisation of environmental movements to campaign at multiple scales, rather than assume that such issues are dealt with at the national scale.

Building on this theme Read's (2012) discussion paper takes to its heart the idea that future generations should be explicitly represented in political decision-making processes, echoing Owens and Cowell (2011) in positioning Climate Change as the reason that "the further future impresses with more authority on present decisions than ever before" (Owens and Cowell, 2011, p.2). Not least this acts as a reminder of the future orientation of planning, indicating a need to account for the needs of future generations in present-day planning decisions. Read's (2012) solution is the idea of a super-jury, specifically selected to review the impact of government decisions on future generations, with the power to veto such decisions, should their deliberations reach a unanimous consensus that decisions will impact adversely on those yet to be born. For Read this is rooted in ideas such as that of the famous Conservative Edmund Burke, who characterised society as "a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born" (Read, 2012, p.3).

For each example of a stakeholder who cannot participate; distant others, other species and future generations, ways have been put forward for taking their interests into account when making decisions. Whilst these do not adhere to a strict interpretation of communicative approaches to planning each stakeholder is nevertheless expected to be accounted for through those that can participate broadening their thinking to advocate for those missing stakeholders. To this end the approaches outlined continue to emphasise a deontologically focussed approach to decision-making. However there are two immediate challenges to this focus on the quality of the process; the first is a lack of guarantee over whether such issues will be heeded, raising the question of whether ground rules should be set for deliberative processes. The second challenge is that, in line with O'Neill, those representing such stakeholders must have a sense of what those missing stakeholders would seek to achieve, bringing into play a teleological focus on the outcomes of decision-making. Each of these is worthy of examination in greater detail.

Setting Ground Rules

It has been widely asserted that for participation to act as a vehicle for redistribution those participating need to have power over the decisions (Healey, 2006; Arnstein, 1969). However Campbell and Fainstein (2012) note that participatory efforts have sometimes pursued less than progressive outcomes, leading to the question of what should happen if popular will fails to account for marginalised groups (Fainstein, 2010; Campbell, 2005)?

That participants do not always have good intentions in mind is illustrated by Wilson's (2005) experiences of trying to co-ordinate a community development programme, where many participants saw the programme as way to further individual self-interest. Perhaps more seriously Wilson relates the way in which the community particularly scrutinised projects aimed at ethnic minorities. Responding to whether ground rules should be set to avoid such situations Dryzek (2002) suggests that it is hard to confront racism and prejudice if it cannot be expressed, and therefore challenged, in a deliberative situation. Dryzek asserts that it is vital to have faith in the power of deliberation. However the assumption implicit to this; that such issues will always come to light, is not borne out by Wilson's account.

Dryzek (2002) considers this idea of setting ground rules to be related to constitutionalism; writing in the North American context Fox and Miller (1995) discuss the idea that non-elected public servants should be first obligated to the United States Constitution, a framework of fundamental principles, with obligations to elected officials coming second. However the idea of setting such a framework for deliberative democracy is suggested by Dryzek (2002) to be something in itself that could be deliberated, such that any framework promotes the rights of all, by provoking consideration of the interests of others over individual self-interest. Further to this Read (2012) notes the inclusion within the constitution of an obligation to maintain US society for future generations. In turn this suggests the setting of substantive goals that need to be taken account of in the decision-making process.

A Focus on Substantive Goals

It was suggested that communicative approaches to planning embody a process focussed conception of the public interest, contrasting with outcome focussed conceptions. A collaborative approach to planning aims to enrol types of knowledge not typically valued in planning activities. However this leads to the question of whether better outcomes necessarily result from being better informed, with the resulting 'knowledge-action interface' an area where empirical research is lacking (Campbell, 2012a). Campbell (ibid) notes that the use of knowledge tends to be organised through power relations. In adherence to a teleological conception of the public interest

Campbell further suggests that efforts to enrol other knowledge forms should be accompanied by considering the substantive goals of policy processes, and the extent to which they are redistributive.

Earlier discussions in both part 1 and this part of the chapter established the importance of accounting for plurality in society. However Fraser (1997) notes a receding concern for universal redistribution, particularly in the post-1989, post-socialist era, leading to increasing economic liberalism and, consequently, increasing global inequality. Fraser's argument is that both redistribution and the recognition of difference need to be accounted for. In turn this echoes earlier conclusions that planning is about both deliberating and judging the universal and the particular; "justice in planning is about situated ethical judgement" (Campbell, 2006, p.104). In achieving this Campbell (2012a) asserts that the key skill of those involved in planning should be the ability to synthesise multiple knowledges, but also to judge the need to take action. Echoing the point that planning is an arena for conflict between scales Campbell (2006) concludes that what is just will vary according to the scale one has in mind, suggesting that a focus on working at the local scale has neglected the ability of planning to achieve just outcomes at other scales.

Fainstein (2010) further contends that a communicative approach to planning pays inadequate attention to the substantive content of the debate, instead suggesting that principles of justice should be prioritised in evaluating public policy. Elsewhere evidence that society as a whole may benefit from pursuing a common interest in redistribution is implicit in the assertions that excellent public services are essential to solidarity regardless of economic circumstances, and that more economically equal societies are happier and healthier regardless of individual's economic circumstances (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010; Sandel, 2009a). The resulting assertion that planning theory should be about debating the goals of planning is summarised in the suggestion that "political mobilization requires a goal to mobilize about" (Fainstein, 2000, p.128). This reinforces the suggestion that pursuing the public interest through planning should be about particular values, but returns to the question of what these should be and how they are legitimised.

Echoing Fainstein's position Sandel (2009a) points out the difficulty of trying to reason about the right thing to do from a neutral position. This is further illustrated by Krumholz and Forester (1990); whilst Forester is typically associated with communicative, process focussed approaches, Krumholz's work in the city of Cleveland suggests that it is necessary to have an articulate

conception of what is in the public interest to pursue through that process[17]. For Krumholz planning is about both processes and outcomes and, if communicative models of planning do much to provide a normative direction for process oriented planning, Campbell and Marshall (2000) assert a need to revive ideas of the public interest conceptualised as the 'common good', as a way of addressing the need to think about outcomes.

Fainstein's (2009) concern that a just outcome is not necessarily the end of a just process is exemplified by the case of the Bronx Terminal Market in New York, where local wholesale food sellers were evicted and their premises demolished to make way for a shopping mall, ostensibly in a fair process, but one that Fainstein suggests contributes to the driving down of wages and consequently quality of life by large corporations, reflecting the power gradient considered to have disadvantaged the Bronx merchants. To address this Fainstein positions the 'just city'[18] as the goal of planning, a concept that strongly revives ideas of redistribution and planning to benefit marginalised interests, and one that also revives ideas of utopian thinking in the way that it tries to envisage a way of life beyond existing constraints (Campbell and Fainstein, 2012; Friedmann, 2012; Fainstein 2010; 2005; 2000). In the process Fainstein (2010) suggests that inclusivity in deliberation is about representing diverse interests, rather than participation for the sake of participation, though this is at odds with Young's (1990) suggestion that the participation of marginalised groups should be prioritised in order to compensate for historical marginalisation. In terms of the public interest's concern with common interests it can be suggested that participation should be about defining common interests rather than considering the interests of a particular group.

Mitigating Climate Change as a Key Example

In examining the boundaries of justice O'Neill (2000) notes the increasing porosity of state boundaries, but where this is coupled with an increasingly 'civic', or localised, approach to political reasoning. O'Neill suggests that universal approaches to justice have been criticised for being overly abstract and insufficiently sensitive to difference, but nevertheless maintains that universal approaches are in need of re-examination. To a certain extent this is conceded in Sandercock's (1998) suggestion, cited in Part 1, that decision-making should account for the plurality of groups

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[17] The suspicion with which the public interest is generally regarded in the North American context is however evident in a footnote, which notes the multiple attacks on the concept by authors interested in pluralist politics.

[18] Fainstein (2010, pp.172-173) sets out an extensive list of planning policies that should help to achieve the just city, too numerous to relate here.

but where those groups should be expected to appeal to overarching principles of justice, not least as a way of the need for planning to account for both the universal and the particular.

The role of planning in achieving sustainable development is one asserted by many, but also one that has traditionally been considered to be achieved through technical work rather than through the argumentation and deliberation intrinsic to a more participatory approach (Campbell, 2012b; Cowell and Owens, 2006). In contrast Levitas (1990) also highlights the relevance of utopian thinking in addressing the resurgence of environmental issues. It is also an issue that accords better with a relational conception of space over the traditional container view, if this does again return to the stakeholder identification problem.

Following from its impacts on generations to come Climate Change is arguably the issue that makes the strongest argument for theories of planning that incorporate universal conceptions of what is good. It is a phenomenon where the spillover effects of human activities, at even the most localised scale, create a public with a shared interest, which is global in scale. Equally it is a phenomenon where there is a sufficient working consensus around the need for its mitigation that it should act as a criterion in all public policy decisions (Fainstein, 2010). In this sense the mitigation of climate change exemplifies the need to have in mind substantive goals for the policy process. Yet the same authors pose a question as to whether a collaborative model of planning can account for Climate Change:

> "How can we justify a deliberative role for planning when faced with the exacting goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050?" (Owens and Cowell, 2011, p.14).

The implication is that substantive goals are regarded as such because of the need to achieve them regardless of whether they are legitimised through a deliberative process. However this is not intended to suggest that there is a singular course of action in achieving them.

Conclusions

Communicative approaches to planning have significant consequences for how planning activities should happen, in conjunction with the move from a technical to a value-led conception of planning. Recognising difference but overcoming it through consensus building is to be welcomed as stimulating collective action in a more positive way than the pluralist or neoliberal alternatives. Adopting a communicative approach to the public interest as a lens for evaluating practice can be seen to do much to address the criticism that planning activities are technocratic and impositional.

To be welcomed are the concerns of the communicative turn with language, communication and power, providing tools to make more transparent the plan-making process, in turn countering the Introduction's characterisation of the plan as a 'black box'. Furthermore the adoption of Structuration is extremely useful in recognising that whilst consensus decisions may lead to spatial strategies, those strategies act as a structural influence on future decisions (Healey, 2007). This characterises the spatial plan, not as a solid, immovable object, but as a set of arguments to be employed at the appropriate opportunity; arguments formulated through the intersection of structure and agency, that can sometimes be challenged through agency.

It is noteworthy that a collaborative approach repositions planning in relation to other activities, working well with ideas of planning that seek to reconcile the spatial impacts of other decisions. Equally it can be suggested that the communicative approach does much to clarify the version of the public interest that should be pursued by the LPA. It is an approach that suggests the 'public' to be the citizens within the bounded LPA area, where a focus on consensus building leads to their collective interest being defined through a deliberative process. However this is potentially at odds with the need for planning to reconcile conflicting issues at multiple scales.

The extent to which consensus-building is central to a collaborative approach warrants revisiting Part 1's distinction between a 'public' and a 'collective'. Consensus building is intended to give all of those affected by a decision a direct role in making that decision. Therefore, following Dewey's (1954) formulation, those involved would be sufficiently closely related such that a public would not come into existence. Healey is explicit that a collaborative approach privileges the quality of the process, such that what is in the collective interest is defined through a fair process, predicated on the ability to identify a clear set of stakeholders with an interest in the decision. This is arguably easier when the decision to be made has a localised impact, but less easy when the impacts are both more diffuse and less predictable. The implication is that, alone, the collaborative approach may be inadequate in dealing with the interests of the environment, other species and future generations; stakeholders that cannot directly participate in such a process.

Instead there is a need to think through some of the broad substantive goals that planning should achieve. This is summarised in the Aristotelian idea that thinking about the good life can't be done from a neutral position (Sandel, 2009a). The difficulty with this is that any revival of this type of homogenous, universal collective interest; termed the 'common good', needs to overcome both the exclusionary tendencies noted in Part 1 of the Chapter, and attempts to impose 'Modernist' solutions, key contributors to the downfall of ideas that society could have a common interest. It is

worth recording that moments such as the recognition of Climate Change and the post-2008 financial crisis have not created quite the sense of widespread collective imperative that might be best illustrated by the end of World War Two, perhaps echoing the recognition of society as pluralistic. Accordingly, bound up with an outcome focussed conception of the public interest is the question of who may legitimately make decisions about its imposition.

It is worth noting the use of the terminology 'substantive goals' rather than outcomes; the Introduction noted how planning activities were expected to result in changes to the places in which people live, but also how the English Local Plan is typically expected to last 25 years, such that its impacts on the physical environment may remain unknown for many years. Yet it is impossible to privilege either position wholeheartedly; the right outcome must still be arrived at by a process and arguably the quality of the process has the potential to impact on the quality of the substantive goals chosen, by enrolling a much greater range of knowledges than past tendencies to frame planning as a technical-rational activity.

Conversely the urgency of issues such as Climate Change means that substantive goals cannot be put to one side simply because the process was flawless. Equally, in thinking about the extent of the public, it is arguably easier in the contemporary context to imagine how far a more diffuse public with common interests might extend, demanding renewed attention to the scalar extent of collective interests; drivers of globalisation such as the Internet and mass media allow a better understanding of how issues can have global impacts, and how they impact on distant others. Taken together with the need to address the interests of stakeholders who cannot directly participate this necessitates further attention to who, and what, constitutes the public.

It was suggested that planning theory acts as an evaluatory lens for practice. In turn the lack of clarity in forward planning practice can be argued to reflect the lack of consensus in planning theory. Yet Fainstein (2010) suggests that the differences are a matter of emphasis, citing Fischer's (2009) suggestion that both can be integrated through a broader framework. Indeed it worth noting that pursuing substantive goals does not deny the value of deliberation about those goals, or the value of stakeholders being able to participate in those deliberations. Rather the difference of emphasis is in how the decision is made about such goals and who is in involved in making it.

Accordingly, if it is not possible to privilege either process or outcome focussed definitions of the public interest, it becomes necessary to construct a framework that incorporates both, to discover the extent to which these differing conceptions are enacted in practice. The next chapter puts forward a framework that tries to achieve this by drawing on scales of time and geography.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE PUBLIC INTEREST & SCALE

PART 1: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the changing ways in which the public interest has been conceived of through different theories and practices of planning. The chapter highlighted an enduring association of the public interest with the technocratic framing of planning and imposed solutions. As a result many have suggested abandoning the 'public interest', in favour of addressing collective needs in other ways. Yet it can also be argued that this continuing acknowledgement of the need to address collective concerns simply serves to emphasise the need to rehabilitate the concept of the 'public interest' as a widely understood label for this:

> "We are free to abandon the concept but if we do so we will simply have to wrestle with
>
> the problems under some other heading." (Flathman, 1966, p.13)

Certainly a collective interest remains intrinsic to ideas of planning; without it planning, even thinking about the future of places, becomes about self-interest. This might be acceptable were it not for the very roots of society, and, by extension, the making of places in which society comes together, being in the idea that by living together human beings experience a better quality of life than is possible individually. In turn this underpins the study's rationale for pursuing the concept's rehabilitation.

The chapter also began to suggest a gap in the literature for empirical work; conceptions of the public interest in the planning process have been examined in the North American and Irish contexts and in the development control context in England. However research in this area remains limited. Particularly lacking is work that examines how different conceptions of the public interest are brought into play through planning practices, in contrast to examining how the public interest is explicitly understood by practitioners. Furthermore an underlying theme throughout the work has been how planning activities must deal with conflicts between the appropriate course of action at different scales, suggesting that adopting a single conception of the public interest cannot satisfy all scenarios. Particularly Climate Change was highlighted as an issue that creates a 'public' that is global in scale, but an issue where the appropriate courses of action may cause localised discomfort.

The public interest in planning is about articulating the goals that planning activities should seek to address. It has been noted how communicative approaches to planning do crucial work in rehabilitating a deliberated collective interest in an era where diversity is better recognised as important, adhering particularly to a process-focussed approach to articulating what is in the public interest. However, in line with the contrast between process and substantive goals earlier identified, the collaborative model does not attempt to reclaim ideas of a pre-existing common good, as associated, for example, with the mitigation of Climate Change. Equally it arguably cannot account robustly for stakeholders that cannot participate in decision-making. Indeed, if the common good has been suggested to be closely associated with traditions of imposition and technocracy, the conclusions to the previous chapter suggested why it also needs to be reclaimed, such that it can no longer be acceptable to treat process and substantive goals; communicative and common good approaches to the public interest as irreconcilable.

The impossibility of privileging either a communicative or common good approach arises from a lack of certainty over whether including a more diverse range of voices and knowledges in the decision making process will necessarily lead to goals being set that better address what is in the public interest. In making the case for public participation in making planning decisions, Arnstein (1969) offers the example of including 'have-nots' as a way of changing goals to bring about redistribution. Conversely there is the possibility that an ostensibly fair and participatory process could lead to the setting of a goal that is exclusionary or discriminatory, requiring space for the judgement of that goal. Consequently the need to have approaches to the public interest that include both process and substantive goals is asserted by Fainstein and S. Campbell (2012), if it is

again worth highlighting that the contrast between them is a matter of emphasis (Fainstein, 2010). Indeed it is arguable that in any process, no matter how much attention is paid to its participatory nature, the decision will be influenced by having in mind substantive goals. Once again this highlights the question of legitimacy in decision-making.

To this end the work now considers a conceptual framework starting from the normative typology of the public interest put forward by Campbell and Marshall (2002a; 2000) and appending geographical scale and time scale as the factors that allows the integration of these not immediately compatible approaches. The focus of the conceptual framework is on what may be considered normative understandings of the public interest, so as to be consistent with the focus of the thesis on the rehabilitation of the concept. The intention is that this provides a framework against which planning practice may be analysed.

A Typology of the Public Interest

The key contrasts between these approaches is in how they approach the questions of who gets to decide what is in the public interest, and for who, or what? This is best illustrated by examining the different ways in which the public interest can be conceptualised, drawing on the typology of the public interest put forward by Campbell and Marshall (2002a; 2000). Particularly the typology has drawn praise for putting forward the case for continuing to pursue the public interest in the face of the criticism outlined in the previous chapter (Fainstein and S. Campbell, 2012).

Campbell and Marshall's typology draws together three distinctive conceptions, each offering a different way of articulating what is in the public interest. These comprise the summation of opinions, the common good, constituted through shared values, and fair processes, with communicative approaches to planning noted as a particular example of this; they are referred to respectively as the summatory, common good and communicative models.

The summatory model was discussed in Part 1 of the previous chapter as representing how the public interest is typically arrived at in the contemporary context, defined as the balance of collective opinion or the summation of individual interests. However it is hard to argue for it as a normative understanding of the concept; a democratic approach neither allows the interrogation of each other's understanding that characterises a communicative approach, nor the possibility of judging the outcomes of a democratic process, a crucial component of the common good. If the thesis is concerned with rehabilitating the concept of the public interest, this means seeking a

normative outcome, something that a summatory understanding of the public interest arguably cannot contribute to. For this reason it is not included in the framework that follows.

Whilst the summatory model is suggested to represent the dominant model of the public interest in recent decades, both the communicative and common good conceptions are more explicitly normative in nature, positioned as possible ideals to be striven for, rather than any prevailing reality. In common with the conceptions of the public interest outlined in Part 1 of the previous chapter it is useful to think about whether these normative conceptions are deontological or teleological and whether they construct the content of the public interest as being subjective or objective in nature.

The ability to conceptualise the public interest in multiple ways both helps in addressing the concept's lack of clarity, and hinders in further complicating how it is used. Table 2, below, uses the same variables as Table 1, as set out in Part 1 of the previous chapter (See page 25). It adds the normative conceptions of the public interest set out in this section, allowing their comparison to how the public interest has been thought of through different political traditions, if it should be noted that this is dependent on a high degree of generalisation.

Public Interest Conception	Summatory	Common Good	Communicative
Concern	Individual freedom	Future quality of Life	Empowerment
What is the aim?	High quality process	Achieving substantive goals	High quality process
Are decisions framed as subjective or objective?	Subjective & Objective	Subjective	Subjective
How are decisions made?	Representative democracy or market participation	Judgement	Participatory democracy

Table 2: Campbell and Marshall's (2002a) Typology

The Communicative

As explored in depth through Part 3 of the previous chapter the communicative model is concerned with process, but where the quality of the process is judged by the extent to which it meets communicative ideals. In contrast to the summatory model set the communicative model is concerned with consensus; what is in the public interest is the consensus arrived at through collective deliberation rather than the summation of individual preferences. In this sense a communicative process includes all members of the public who are expected to be affected by the consequences of decision-making. The importance attached to cultural differences and the amongst those involved and the different knowledges that they draw upon ensures that a communicative approach adheres to Flathman's (1966) assertion that the public interest is subjective in nature.

Crucially a communicative approach allows for the possibility that through deliberation different parties might persuade each other to modify their interests, where the summatory assumes that individuals express their self-interested desires. Equally a communicative approach assumes that appropriate goals are set through a fair process, as opposed to assuming that appropriate goals already exist. Howe (1994) suggests that this conception of the public interest can be adhered to either through engendering effective public participation in planning processes or through the principles of social and environmental justice, where all groups are accounted for equally in the process. The focus on deliberation means that this model of the public interest is very much subjective in nature, whilst concerns with quality of process classify it as a deontological approach.

The Common Good

The common good espouses the idea that, whilst individuals may have their own interests and ideas, humanity shares some fundamental values. This is therefore a teleological conception of the public interest, concerned more with achieving such values rather than necessarily being concerned with ensuring everyone is able to have a say in deciding what they should be. In contrast with a communicative process having a conception of the common good means having in mind a series of substantive goals that should be addressed by planning activities, as discussed in Part 3 of the previous chapter.

The other principle intrinsic to such a conception of the public interest is the idea that to achieve these outcomes, considered good for society as a whole, individual freedom may be restricted. The mitigation of climate change may be regarded as the epitome of a substantive goal based on intrinsically held values that are widely shared, particularly the value that the next generation should be able to live in the same relative comfort as this generation. Indeed this latter value is

assumed to be universally shared, but where this is an assumption based on the absence of opposition, rather than positive evidence that it is a widely shared value. As such, the extent of the public created by the consequences of such issues is far more abstract in nature. However the solutions, such as the imposition of higher petrol prices to subsidise public transport, may prove difficult, and highly tangible, for many.

Although recognising the importance of a fair process, exemplified by the communicative approach, it is the common good model of the public interest that Campbell and Marshall (2002a; 2000) prioritise as being in need of rehabilitation in relation to planning. Similarly Alexander (2002) suggests that dialogical approaches to the public interest, such as the communicative, provide no substantial content that can be used for the evaluation of plans. However the need to rehabilitate the common good alludes to its difficult past; the idealistic nature of the concept presented here rather obfuscates the difficulty of answering the question of who gets to judge what those intrinsically shared values comprise and how they should be enrolled in planning decisions.

As an example of this it was noted how certain strands of Utilitarianism positioned the state as being able to decide what constitutes the public interest, framing such judgement as resting with those with greater power. In turn this echoes the imposition of technocratic solutions; the previous chapter suggested how the idea of the common good has become discredited as a result of this perceived imposition and its failings, but also how the question of who gets to decide becomes even more knotty when it is recognised that such values can only ever be subjective.

Integration Using Scales of Time and Geography

The proposed conceptual framework seeks to incorporate both the process orientation of communicative approaches and the substantive goal orientation of the common good. In doing so the framework is inspired by Fraser's (2008, 2003) discussion of how contemporary debates around theories of justice have opened up in two key areas. The first of these is the challenging of models of justice that privilege redistribution, whether to secure material equality (Rawls, 1971), or equality of opportunity (Nussbaum, 2008; Sen, 1999), by authors who assert that the pursuit of justice should be reoriented to privilege the recognition of difference, after authors such as Young (1990) and Honneth (2003). Particularly Young (1990) grounds the pursuit of recognition as about the need to overcome oppression, not least in light of tendencies to view collective interests as homogenous without recognising how social relations are structure by difference. If the pursuit of redistribution sets a substantive goal, the recognition of difference broadly echoes the concerns of pluralist and communicative approaches to planning as discussed in the previous chapter. The

contrast between different approaches to justice therefore runs parallel to the contrast between different approaches to the public interest, where both are united by a concern for collective quality of life.

Common to Fraser's (2008; 2003; 1997) work in relation to justice is the assertion that neither redistribution nor recognition models of justice can be favoured over the other, but both are important. Not least Fraser (1997) makes the point that for groups who seek recognition on the basis of their marginalisation, their marginalisation may well result from a lack of redistribution. Accordingly the assertion that a single normative conception of the public interest cannot be privileged is borne out through these wider debates in justice. As a result parallels can be drawn between Fainstein and S. Campbell's (2012) call to integrate differing conceptions of the public interests and Fraser's (2008; 2003) calls for a framework that integrates both recognition and redistribution models of justice.

Crucially Fraser's suggested framework incorporates a third dimension; the political framing of the problem. The importance of this third dimension is captured in the second debate considered by Fraser. This centres on the movement away from the nation state as the assumed territorial unit for the application of justice, in common with both Dewey's (1954) framing of the public as resulting from the consequences of decisions, and O'Neill's (2000) discussion of how the porosity of nation-state borders calls into question the spatial bounding of justice. Consequently Fraser considers questions of how the communities for whom justice is being done should be framed. This challenge is captured in Young's (2000) assertion that a container view of justice; one that assumes that it is only those within the state who must be obligated to one another, removes the moral force associated with principles of justice; if the principles of justice can only extend as far as the state border they can only ever be regarded as arbitrary. Such debates are taking place in a context where it has come to be recognised that issues of justice do not confine themselves neatly to defined nation-states, environmental issues such as climate change and acid rain providing poignant examples of issues with little regard for borders (Fraser, 2008; O'Neill, 2000).

The need to re-examine the scales over which justice extends are also addressed in Young's (1990) earlier work. Particularly Young challenges the notion that participatory democracy is about small, autonomous communities, suggesting that such autonomy is exclusionary. Young instead puts forward the city region as the minimum scale at which participatory democracy can lead to decisions about the collective interest; democracy that promotes the recognition of cultural

difference and facilitates the participation of all those affected by a decision. This is seen as a way of overcoming tendencies of urban areas to be atomised into small, culturally homogenous communities, which must provide their own services. Instead organisation at a regional scale is suggested by Young to promote democratic investment and the collective provision of shared services, based on the principle of addressing need rather than profit-motivated competition. In common with the public interest this is about recognising that a better quality of life can be achieved by addressing issues collectively rather than on an individual basis.

Similar debates are apparent in planning theory; the English planning system is organised around a relatively fixed hierarchy of geographical scales. However there is a trend towards eschewing this 'container' view of space in favour of defining territories that more closely match the scope of the problem being addressed, in addition to recognising the relational construction of space (See for example Faludi, 2012; Healey, 2007; Albrechts, 2006). Indeed Fraser (2008) alludes to geographical scale as a continuum, an important conception in recognising the rather arbitrary and subjective nature of framing problems around fixed scales. Scale is therefore used here specifically as a way of framing how far the consequences of a decision extend, in terms of both time and geography.

Housing Shortage as an Example

Difficulties arise when trying to integrate a more fluid geographical framing of the consequences of planning decisions, whilst working both within the arbitrarily defined limits of England, and with the earlier suggested need to make planning decisions at selected discreet scales. Conversely such an integration is easier to achieve if it is recognised that planning decisions are made at particular institutionalised scales within the English planning system; early in the previous chapter it was noted how institutions at these different scales are expected to conceive of the public as the citizens within their defined boundaries (Healey, 2007), but it has equally been shown that the impacts of planning decisions are not necessarily confined within such boundaries, or indeed to the period of time in which such citizens may live within such boundaries. Instead planning decisions can be framed as being made at one institutionalised scale, at a particular moment in time, but as having multiple impacts on publics of varying size, over varying lengths of time.

Contemporary housing shortage exemplifies this, as a need that can be constructed as creating publics at multiple scales[19]. It is a problem articulated at the national scale, for society as a whole,

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[19] Murdoch and Abram (2002) examine the case of Buckinghamshire as an area where the tension between housing as a public good in the context of a growing population and housing development as it is resisted by local residents.

and a need that will affect the ability of future generations to house themselves, as well as those living today. However it is an issue addressed practically through the permitting or refusing of new housing developments, something that is generally expected to happen at the LPA scale. In turn a more localised 'public' is arguably created by the spillover effects of physical housing development resulting from issues such as location, design and infrastructure impacts.

At the national scale addressing housing shortage can be seen as a moral imperative, a matter of shared values, particularly given its consequences for inter-generational justice as earlier considered. In turn this suggests that it is an issue that adheres to the common good model of the public interest. Conversely decisions about particular housing development are generally made locally and the direct impacts of such housing development occur within the local area, on the quality of life of those living there now; this might lead to the adoption of a communicative approach to articulating the public interest as communicative, with a clear set of stakeholders in the decision. As a result it is an issue that exemplifies the inadequacy of a singular conception of the public interest but instead suggests how scales, in terms of both time and geography, are crucial elements to any conceptual framework that attempts to integrate these two normative conceptions of the public interest.

The following summary attempts to express this conceptual relationship in tabular form. The resulting question for the empirical research is the nature of the different conceptions of the public interest are apparent in plan-making practices and whether scales of time and geography have a role to play in how the public interest is conceived.

A Summary of the Conceptual Framework

In summary this chapter seeks to put forward a conceptual framework for the research that integrates both the communicative and common good, as explicitly normative approaches to articulating what is in the public interest, linking them to the scale of the impacts resulting from a particular decision, in terms of both geography and time. Particularly the framework is organised to suggest that how the public interest is articulated of in decision-making processes might flow from the scalar extent of the public, or publics, affected by the impacts of the decision.

Public Interest Conception	Common Good	Communicative
Over what geographical and time scales do decisions have impacts?	**Decision has impacts at different scales to that at which decisions are made.**	**Decision making scale the same as scale at which decision has impacts**
Concern	Future Quality of Life, based on shared values	Empowerment, recognising cultural diversity
What is the aim?	Achieving substantive goals, for example material redistribution or environmental conservation	High quality process, ensuring all stakeholders are able to participate
Are decisions framed as subjective or objective?	Subjective/Value-led	Subjective/Value-led
How are decisions made?	Judgement	Participatory Democracy

Table 3: A Summary of the Conceptual Framework

The framework is summarised in Table 3, above, though this should be regarded as a set of generalised tendencies rather than absolute categories. What cannot be easily shown by the table is that these different constructions of scale do not map onto each other easily, in that decisions may be made for the national scale but with only a short term impact or decisions may be made at the scale of the single house, but with impacts for many generations to come. Particularly it is worth noting that any temptation to conflate the communicative with the 'local' or the short term is challenged by Young's (1990) view of the region as the most appropriate scale for participatory democracy.

The intention of this framework is to suggest a theoretical relationship between different conceptions of the public interest, different geographical and time scales and the contrast between theories of planning that emphasise either process or substantive goals. What it cannot explain is the extent to which planning practice employs different conceptions of the public interest, which actors employ different conceptions of the public interest, and whether there is any relationship with the scales at which decisions have an impact. In line with the earlier suggestion that theories of planning should act as analytical frameworks for practice this suggests a need for empirical work that draws on this framework.

The importance of establishing a framework for the empirical work is suggested by Howe's (1994) experience of surveying planners where she found that many of those interviewed did not express the public interest directly, despite its intrinsic role to legitimising planning activities. Instead the framework is also intended to allow an exploration of where the characteristics of different conceptions of the public interest are apparent in practice, an approach examined in further depth in part 3 of this chapter. Furthermore the use of such a framework to examine planning practice, rather than as a normative tool is suggested by the critique of normative frameworks that they do not recognise the constraints of the institutional and political context that planning is conducted within (Healey, forthcoming).

The Institutional Context: Scales for English Planning

For the purposes of the English planning system geographical scale is divided into a series of administrative boundaries over multiple scales, as described in Table 7, below. Whilst these can in no way be assumed to be definitive or naturalised they provide a useful reference for thinking about the scales at which decisions are made. In turn this acts as a reminder that the conceptual framework's use of scale is about looking out from how decisions made at these scales can have impacts at multiple scales; the use of pre-conceived scales may have bound up with them particular conceptions of what constitutes the public but this does not necessarily mean that the impacts of decisions are contained within them.

Scale	Notes
Neighbourhood	For Neighbourhood Planning this might be a parish, or might result from an application to designate a Neighbourhood Forum
District	Any of these three may be designated as a Local Planning Authority, further complicated by the potential for joint-working to prepare a Local Plan.
Unitary	
County	
Regional	Usually the eight English Statistical Regions, previously the scale at which Regional Plans were made, but currently defunct for policy-making purposes.
National	Legislation and policy made by central government
European	Legislation made by the European Union

Table 4: Pre-conceived scales in the English planning system

Planning in England is currently organised around the policy preparation and decision-making the national and LPA scales, with the option undertake such processes at the Neighbourhood scale. As such this limits the choice of scales at which such processes can be examined. It is the LPA scale at which most decisions to permit development are actually made, therefore suggesting it to be the spatial scale in which an interest should be taken. However it is important to note that the LPA is

organised at a geographical scale that is far from fixed in its extent; whilst most LPAs are district authorities successive reforms of English local government have also resulted in larger unitary authorities that have resulted from the merging of more than one district authority with parts of the county authority, whilst other parts of England have seen district authorities merge only their planning functions, to create an LPA that has responsibility for more than one district. It can be suggested that the LPA is the correct scale at which to examine how the public interest is articulated but that further thought needs to be given as to what characteristics an appropriate case for the empirical work might have. This is addressed in Chapter 4.

Particularly it is worth emphasising that the primary concern here is with the scales at which decisions have an impact, a matter of looking out from the institutionalised geographical scales at which decisions are made. In turn this is intended to accommodate a relational construction of space. However, drawing on the it is also important to acknowledge the scales at which decisions are being made, to the extent that they are bound up with pre-conceived ideas of the public that decisions are being made for; a container definition of space. Whilst the research is particularly concerned with plans being made and implemented at the LPA scale it is also important to recognise where those 'local', contemporary decisions are influenced by decisions made at timescales other than in the present or recent past, at geographical scales other than the local.

To summarise the framework is intended to suggest a way in which different normative approaches to the public interest, drawing on different theories of planning, might be integrated into a single framework. Following from the conclusions to Part 3 of Chapter 2 the innovative element here is in the use of scale as a way of understanding who and what might constitute the public, and, by extension the ability of the public to participate in decision-making. However the extent to which it may be considered a normative framework for planning practice is arguably dependent on the extent to which it may be practically incorporated into practice. To this end the work now turns to a summary of the key points and conclusions set out thus far, leading to an overall research aim and set of research questions that will allow the relationship between this framework and planning practice to be established empirically.

PART 2: SUMMARY, RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Introduction characterised planning as an activity that was about intervening in decisions about land and property, with the intention of improving quality of life for society as a whole. This was captured in Chapter 2's consideration of the roots of planning in utopian visions, paralleled by practical regulation. The chapter also sought to explain how the local spatial plan, suggested by the Introduction to formalise these ideas of future places, came to be embedded in contemporary English planning practice. Moreover the same pages framed planning as technocratic and impositional, supporting the framing of the plan as a black box; it appears cohesive but this cohesion hides significant tensions between what is the right thing to do at different temporal and spatial scales, exacerbated by the tension between process and substantive goals. The reframing of the plan as a series of arguments that result from the interplay of structure and agency began to suggest how the plan-making process might be made more transparent by exploring the different influences on the plan.

In parallel the Introduction considered collective interest, in the form of the public interest, as the underlying justification for planning activities. However opening up the concept's history revealed its deep association with the technocratic and impositional critiques of planning's roots. Furthermore it was found to be a justification that those involved in planning activities are comfortable with, but one that has become confused in meaning and all too easily used for the purposes of obfuscation.

Addressing such critiques Part 3 of Chapter 2 narrated the recognition of planning as a value-led activity, in a diverse society with a diverse range of interests. This led to a consideration of communicative models of planning as providing a clear theoretical basis for arriving at a collective way forward from positions of difference. Particularly the collaborative model addressed how the multitude of interests identified in the initial practice example should influence the plan, potentially overcoming its technocratic past. However communicative approaches were found to be very much process focussed, at odds with the ideas, also expressed in Part 3, that having substantive goals for planning activities was also crucial. The difficulty of privileging a process focus was reinforced in thinking about issues such as Climate Change and inter-generational justice that even an inclusive process cannot easily account for, suggesting that thinking about the substantive goals of planning activities is equally important in order to arrive at the better places that should result from planning activities. Conversely the difficulty of endorsing a singular focus

on such goals arises from their association with the imposition of technocratic solutions, leading to the question of who may legitimately decide what constitutes an appropriate substantive goal?

In order to address this incoherence a normative typology of the public interest, taking in both communicative and common good conceptions was explored. The conceptual framework sought to frame these conceptions in relation to theories of planning that privileged a high quality process and substantive goals and, in turn, to different scales of time and geography, thereby attempting to theorise the initial idea that different conceptions of the public interest might be employed, depending upon the scalar extent of the public, or publics, upon which a decision will impact. Moreover any tendency to see the conceptual framework as a normative framework for practice was tempered by the need to understand whether such a framework can be practically relevant.

The framework is put forward as a way of addressing the study's normative orientation toward rehabilitating the concept of the public interest, in light of a continued need for planning to address collective interests. The challenge is to now explore whether those actors involved in plan-making do tend toward varying conceptions of the public interest in their actions, using the framework as a way of seeking the characteristics of these different conceptions. In turn there is a need to explore whether different conceptions of the public interest are used as a way of thinking about the consequences of planning decisions over different scales of time and geography, and the tensions between these. This needs to be examined at the Local Planning Authority (LPA) scale, as the arena for plan-making where competing ideas about what is in the public interest come together. Adopting the idea that the conceptual framework should act as a lens for planning practice this leads to the following overall research aim.

Research Aim

The aim is to understand what versions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans, what this says about the nature of planning practice and the implications of this for planning theory.

Research Questions

1. What conceptions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans?

2. How do the conceptions of the public interest enrolled vary with the temporal or spatial impact of the issues being discussed?

3. Who and what shapes the conceptions of the public interest enrolled in planning processes?

PART 3: THE USE OF CONTINUUMS FOR ANALYSIS

In addressing the research aim the research questions set out to explore whether different conceptions of the public interest are present in English plan-making practices and whether scales of time and geography are factors in how different conceptions are applied. The following chapter of the thesis sets out the methodology used to collect empirical material, in order to explore these themes. However, drawing on the conceptual framework set out in Part 1 of this chapter, the key aim of this part of the chapter is to develop a series of continuums, which will allow the characteristics that underpin different theoretical conceptions of the public interest to be identified in the different arenas of planning practice. The aim is to use these continuums to organise the analysis of the empirical material, to suggest how different empirical examples relate to the conceptual framework and therefore where different conceptions of the public interest are present in practice.

Particularly the framework of questions used in both Chapter 1, and as a basis for the conceptual framework, suggested that how the conceptualisation of the public interest varies can be captured in the following questions:

• 	What is the aim?

• 	How are decisions made?

• 	Are decisions framed as subjective or objective?

To these a fourth question was added for the conceptual framework, in order to recognise the potentially significant role of scale in determining which conception of the public interest might be most relevant in any decision, given the role of decision impacts in creating a public:

• 	Over what geographical and time scales do decisions have impacts?

This supposition in turn provided the basis for a set of overarching research questions that sought to understand the relationship between the public interest as it is implicit in different planning practices and the framing of decision impacts in terms of scale. These are reproduced in Table 5.

1.	What conceptions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans?
2.	How do the conceptions of the public interest enrolled vary with the temporal or spatial impact of the issues being discussed?
3.	Who and what shapes the conceptions of the public interest enrolled in planning processes?

Table 5: The Research Questions

The research questions point to a need to examine which versions of the public interest are apparent in planning practices, but without making a premature judgement about whether usage of the concept is appropriate. In particular they are worded in such a way as to suggest that how the public interest is articulated is not naturalised, but is actively shaped; this is not to suggest that how the public interest is taken into account is addressed explicitly but is intended to recognise that its meaning is shaped by the ways in which decisions are made.

Questions for Analysis

The questions used to characterise the public interest provide a useful way of interrogating the empirical material to understand how practices tend toward particular versions of the concept, in turn allowing the research questions to be answered. However, in line with viewing decision making as an active process, there is a need to reframe these questions in the same way; to better relate the somewhat abstract characteristics that define different conceptions of the public interest to the rather more nuanced practices of making planning decisions. Such a reframing results in the following four sub-questions:

1.   How are the impacts of decisions framed in terms of both geographical and time scales?

2.   In what arenas are decisions being made?

3.   Who is involved in making decisions?

4.   What types of knowledge are being framed as informing decision-making?

Question 1 is intended to probe how the impacts of planning practices are framed in scalar terms, looking out from the scale at which decisions are made to address the question of how the extent of the public is defined and what is included in its definition. Questions 2 and 3 address the extent to which communicative and common good conceptions of the public interest ultimately contrast in their concern for decision making which privileges participation. Question 4 addresses the extent to which planning practices are framed as subjective or objective; value-led or technical in nature. In this respect the answers to both questions 3 and 4 may be seen as situated by the answers to question 2.

If the public interest is, in the abstract, a fundamental justification for planning activities, the manner in which it is articulated and accounted for in practice is subject to answering these sub-questions. Using these sub-questions to shape the analysis of the empirical material will therefore allow conclusions to be drawn from the analysis that address the overarching research aim and

questions. As indicated by Table 6, below, these sub-questions do not immediately map on to the research questions but instead allow characteristics of different conceptions of the public interest to be identified that will allow them to be answered.

Characteristics of the Public Interest	Research Questions	Questions for Analysis of Practice
What is the aim?	1. What conceptions of the public interest are implicit in the processes of making and following spatial plans?	*Addressed by taking the other questions as a whole*
Over what geographical and time scales do decisions have impacts?	2. How do the conceptions of the public interest enrolled vary with the temporal or spatial impact of the issues being discussed?	1. How are the impacts of decisions framed in terms of both geographical and time scales?
How are decisions made?	3. Who and what shapes the conceptions of the public interest enrolled in planning processes?	2. In what arenas are decisions being made?
		3. What types of knowledge are being framed as informing decision-making?
Are decisions framed as subjective or objective?		4. Who is involved in making decisions?

Table 6: The Links Between the Conceptual Framework, Research Questions and Questions for Analysis

Table 5 is intended to illustrate how of these questions links back to the research questions and, in turn, the variables identified in arriving at different models of the public interest. The chapter now turns to a fuller explanation of how the answers to each of the four questions can be situated on a continuum or continuums.

Continuums

A continuum has been defined as "A sequence of minute graduations between extremes" (Allen, 2004, p.102). Its use is adopted here as a way of being able to express where characteristics of

planning processes tend towards one conceptualisation of the public interest or another, without seeing the extremes of the continuum as dichotomous, and without forcing examples into categories in which they do not comfortably sit.

As an example, if a key contrast between communicative and common good models of the public interest is their ultimate privileging respectively of process and substantive goals, the usefulness of a continuum is in recognising that planning practices are unlikely to be characterised by these extremes, but will instead tend toward one or the other. This is intended to allow the identification of where different conceptions of the public interest are in play, whilst maintaining the principle that theoretically it is not possible to privilege outcome or process driven conceptions of the public interest. Equally continuums are used as an alternative to dichotomies, which do not have sufficient fidelity to accommodate the more nuanced nature of planning practice and would not fit well with the recognition of this contrast as a matter of emphasis, rather than absolute disagreement.

Questions for Analysis of Practice	Continuum(s) Addressing this Question
1. How are the impacts of decisions framed in terms of both geographical and time scales?	The timescale(s) and geographical scale(s) over which decisions are framed as having an impact.
2. In what arenas are decisions being made?	The extent to which arenas are politicised or de-politicised in nature.
3. What types of knowledge are being framed as informing decision-making?	The extent to which the knowledge being drawn upon is framed as subjective/value-led or objective/technical in nature.
4. Who is involved in making decisions?	The extent to which decision-making processes are open to the participation of different interests, in terms of both influencing and making the decision.

Table 7: The Continuums that Address the Questions for Analysis

Table 7 briefly sets out the continuums on which the answers to each question used to organise the analysis is situated.

Continuums and Narrative

The use of the continuums also needs to be positioned alongside the concept of 'narrative', as it is drawn upon throughout the thesis. In particular the continuums are intended to provide a tool for understanding how the different narratives set out through the case studies relate back to the concept of the public interest; the analysis set out in Chapter 7 is formed by using the continuums to interpret the narratives put forward.

 The term narrative is used so as to recognise that the empirical data presented, as it is put forward by different actors and through different texts, is one interpretation of what is happening, drawing on particular knowledges. Often this is about putting forward a persuasive story, intended to lead to a particular course of action. Classifying these interpretations of reality as narrative recognises that they tend to oversimplify the context from which they result (Murdoch and Abram, 2002). In turn Murdoch and Abram (ibid) relate the way that narratives can cohere into a 'black box', becoming accepted without question.

Equally the use of narrative recognises the interpretive nature of the thesis itself; the arguments made through the remaining chapters of the thesis rely on drawing together the data collected into a particular story. In this sense the case studies themselves, as they are presented in Chapters 5 and 6, are the result of drawing together multiple narratives from multiple perspectives; the case studies are necessarily simplifications of complex realities. In turn the conclusions in Chapter 8 are intended to argue for how these narratives should persuade a particular course of action.

This leads back to the use of the continuums as a way of systematically categorising different narratives so as to offer an interpretation of what conceptions of the public interest are present. The following sections set out each of these continuums in more detail, explaining their relationship to the different conceptualisations of the public interest drawn on in constructing the conceptual framework set out in Part 1 of the chapter.

Continuum 1: How are the impacts of decisions framed in terms of both geographical and time scales?

This question addresses the concerns of the conceptual framework with the scalar impacts of decisions, as a possible way of organising how the public interest is articulated. Scale is chosen to recognise the recurring theme that planning must deal with conflicts between multiple scales, recognising that the right thing to do looks different at different scales. It is also chosen as a way of thinking about how the scale of decision impacts affect how the 'public' of the public interest is defined; who is actually impacted by different decisions? Particularly this draws on the argument developed through the previous chapter that the extent of the public depends on the extent of the decision consequences, with a corresponding impact on whether those affected may influence decision making processes. The answers to this question draw on the continuums of geographical scale and timescale; respectively the size of the geographical area included and the time-span that is being thought about, in order to situate the impacts of decisions made during planning activities. The resulting continuums on which the impacts of planning may be situated are described by Figure 1, below, organised so as to emphasise the point made in relation to the conceptual framework; that the scales of time and geography do not necessarily map onto each other.
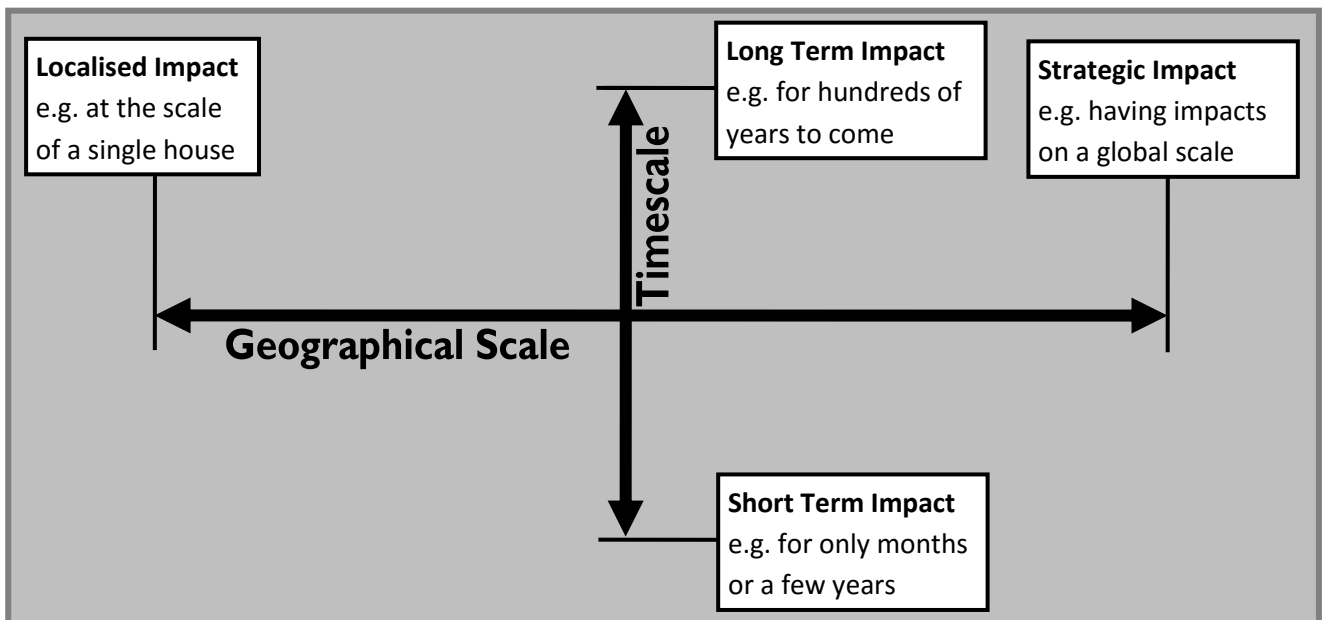
Figure1: The Continuums of Geographical Scale and Timescale

The conceptual framework considers how the English planning system is organised around a set of pre-conceived scales, as set out in Table 4 (p.83). It was suggested in Part 1 of Chapter 2,that such scales were one way of defining who constituted the public, for whom the public interest is to be addressed. However they are less helpful in situating the wider consequences, which are often of

a scale that cannot be easily quantified but only imagined in the abstract. In this sense it is arguably more helpful to think about geographical scale in more abstract terms; whether decisions have an impact at a localised scale or a more strategic scale. For the purpose of situating decision impacts timescale stretches from the present into the distant future, though it is also important to consider where past decisions are having an impact into the present and future.

When looking at how different conceptions of the public interest are enrolled in English plan-making processes examining how the scalar impacts of decisions are framed helps to address how the public is conceived of, before examining how decisions are made by/for them, using the other continuums outlined.

Continuum 2: In what arenas are decisions being made?

Chapter 2 highlighted the inherently political nature of both the public interest and planning activities, by virtue of both being value-based and about making choices over courses of action. This continuum is about the arenas in which those choices are made, recognising that this has an impact on who and what influences decision-making.

The arenas in which decisions are made, and the extent to which the decisions made in them are framed as matters of political choice, or de-politicised, and framed as matters of technical necessity, has strong implications for whether what is in the public interest can be articulated in a participatory manner. Drawing on the conceptual framework presented in Part 1 this has a clear impact on whether the public interest is conceived of as communicative, or in terms of the common good. In turn the arenas in which decisions are made sets the context for the following continuums that consider the knowledge and participants enrolled in decision-making processes.

Chapter 2 drew on Hay's (2007) suggestion that classifying a decision as political framed it as a matter of choice, to be made through deliberation. Particularly the emphasis must be on the freedom to deliberate, rather than assuming that this leads to agreement or even widespread consensus (Mouffe, 2005). For Hay the resulting continuum ran between the non-political and formal government spheres, with a further non-political sphere beyond formal government, where issues move along this continuum through processes of politicisation and de-politicisation. In turn this ability to decide how an issue is framed contributes to whether the public interest is articulated in a value-led or technically framed manner, as addressed in the next section.

In order to simplify this it can be suggested that the work is concerned with the extent to which the arenas in which decisions are made are politicised or de-politicised in nature, such that

decisions are seen as matters of pure preference at one extreme, and as matters of technical necessity at the other. Described in this way the continuum on which the answers to this question may be situated runs from the politicised to the de-politicised, illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2: A Continuum Describing the Extent to Which Decision Making is Politicised

Equally it is useful to contextualise this in terms of how decisions come to be situated in particular arenas, given that the tendencies for this to reflect the power relations behind decision making. This is about noting where processes of politicisation and de-politicisation are operating. These processes recognise the ability of those with power to construct the arena in which decisions are made; in common with scale the nature of the arena demands attention to how an issue is framed, with consequences for who is involved and the knowledges drawn upon.

Continuum 3: What types of knowledge are being framed as informing decision-making?

Whilst the normative conceptions of the public interest presented in the conceptual framework suggest that the public interest can only be subjectively defined, in terms of particular values, there have been attempts to frame the concept in technical terms, for example through technical-rational planning. This continuum is therefore about examining the knowledges that inform planning decisions, in order to understand which conceptions of the public interest are at play.

Examining the knowledges enrolled in decision-making arenas particularly addresses the concerns of a communicative approach to the public interest for enrolling lay knowledges not usually valued, explored in greater detail in Part 3 of Chapter 2, particularly through Sandercock's (1998) typology of lay knowledges. This relates to the implicit question of whether better outcomes are the result of more, better or different knowledges being enrolled in the process of defining those outcomes. However this also contributes to examining how what is in the public interest is arrived at and what kinds of judgements are being made about the knowledge needed to make decisions. This is

important given the evidence from practice discussed in Part 2 of Chapter 2, which suggested that how the public interest is conceived of has tended to become structurally embedded. It is given added emphasis by discussions of the public domain in Part 1 of Chapter 2, which suggested that using the word 'public' should embed very different ways of measuring the right thing to do.

Following from the extent to which decision-making arenas are characterised as political there is a need to consider the extent to which they are therefore driven by political ideology, rather than any form of deliberation or process of knowledge translation. Conversely there has been a particular interest in evidence-based policy, as a way of reinforcing the efficacy of knowledge translation in making policy and crowding out ideology (Campbell, 2002). To this end the knowledges enrolled need to be considered alongside the extent to which different arenas have particular conceptions of knowledge bound up with them.

In this sense a continuum of knowledge types, following on directly from their use in decision-making spheres, might be suggested. This runs between the 'instinctual' and the 'technical'; at one end of this is a situation where opinion and argument might be suggested to almost crowd out any form of evidence or knowledge. At the other end of the continuum is the technical, where an issue becomes characterised as something where the right answer is reached through analysis, using evidence that can only be understood as an "expert". This continuum is illustrated in Figure 3.

| Instinctual e.g. decision made according to an emotional reaction | Technical e.g. that collected through quantitative methods. |

Nature of Knowledge
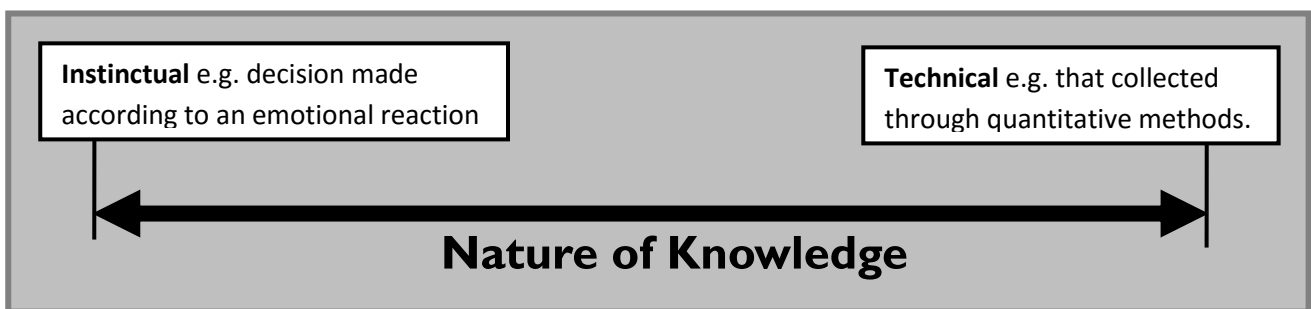
Figure 3: A Continuum Describing the Nature of the Knowledge Involved in Decision Making

This is not to suggest that any particular end of the continuum can be privileged. Some issues are political because there are choices to be made, whilst some technical issues are technical because they require a specific knowledge to participate in. In this sense it is also important to ask whether different knowledges are being drawn upon in a sincere manner, where sincerity lines up alongside accuracy as being crucial elements of truthfulness (Williams, 2002).

Finally, following the implication that the extent to which a process is participatory and deliberative will impact on the knowledges that are enrolled in a planning process, it is necessary to examine where the knowledge enrolled in decision making processes is drawn from, setting the context for examining whether decision-making processes are open to participation.

Continuum 4: Who is involved in making decisions?

The conceptual framework is based on the contrast between process and outcome focussed conceptions of the public interest, where the former is rather more concerned with who participates in decision-making than the later. This is based on suggestions, particularly implicit to a communicative approach to the public interest, that all interests affected by a decision should be able to have a say in making that decision. However it is also highly relevant to deliberation about which substantive goals should act on planning decisions, in the spirit of the public sphere as it was set out in Part 1 of Chapter 2. As such this question addresses the extent to which participation is an influence on decision-making in practice.

As with 'knowledge' openness can be taken as a subset of thinking about the arenas in which decisions are made; particular arenas have bound up with them historical notions of who should be involved. In turn this entails asking whether plan-making processes are open to participation by groups or interests who are less explicitly embedded in the sphere in which decisions are made but also whether their contributions are taken on board in the decision-making process.

The openness of decision-making to participation can also be suggested to have an effect on which knowledges influence decision-making, with a corresponding impact on whether decisions result from an instinctual reaction, from the analysis of one knowledge type, or from the synthesis of multiple knowledges (Campbell, 2012a). However it cannot be assumed that a more open decision-making process leads to better decisions; on one hand Schön (1983) discusses the role artistry and intuition play in being a professional, whilst Campbell (2012a) offers examples of where such a judgement can be crucial to action, suggesting that more and/or better knowledge does not necessarily translate into a better outcome. Conversely Arnstein (1969) highlights participation as a way of enrolling the knowledge of marginalised groups, in turn changing the goals of decision-making. Instead, echoing the discussion of knowledge, this is about what kind of judgement is being made when deciding whether different groups should be included or excluded.

There is a further question over the extent to which those interests included in the 'public' of public interest are in actuality 'public', in the sense that public is taken to mean open and working

towards collective wellbeing. Throughout the work public is taken to include the whole range of actors that might have an interest in planning but where it is actually important that the extent to which actors are pursuing a collective or a self-interest is borne in mind.

Decisions made by powerful interests, closed to outside influences　　　　　　　　**Decision making open to influence by a range of interests** ⟷ **Openness**
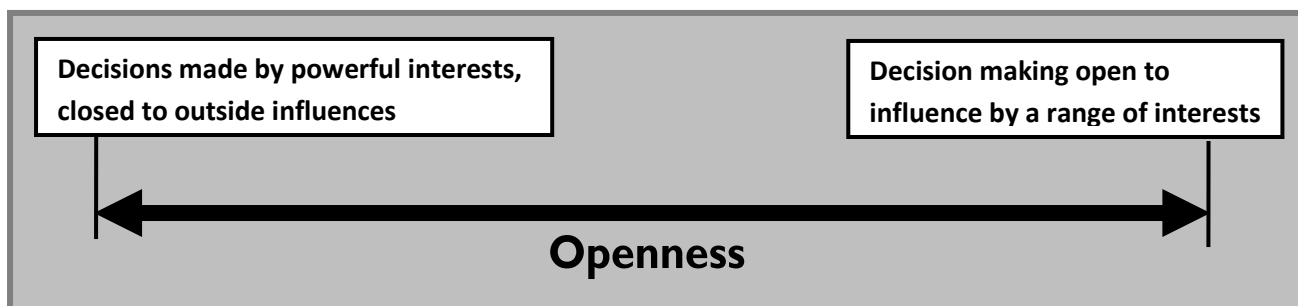
Figure 4: A Continuum Describing the Extent to Which Decision Making is Open

This continuum is therefore about considering the openness of planning processes to participation from different interests, as shown in Figure 4, above. At one end of this continuum are those who are embedded in the decision making process, starting with those who have ultimate responsibility for the decision. At this end of the continuum the process is closed to the participation of others. However as the continuum is moved along there is space for other groups to participate in the process, ultimately arriving at a completely open process, where there are no barriers to participation. It is also about asking whether participation has an influence on how the decision is made, in light of the possibility of designing a participatory process but without the decision itself being open to the views and knowledge contributed through participation.

The Relationship Between The Continuums and the Conceptual Framework

The aim of this part of the chapter has been to set out a series of questions that can be used to structure the analysis, where the answers to those questions can be situated on a series of continuums. Answering the questions is intended to allow links to be drawn between the empirical material and the conceptual framework set out in Part 1 of the chapter; answering the questions using the continuums is intended to honour the assertion, made at the end of Chapter 2 and reinforced through the conceptual framework, that neither a process or outcome focussed conception of the public interest can immediately be privileged. However, in order to illustrate how the continuums allow conclusions to be drawn about which conceptions of the public interest

are apparent in planning practice, it is useful to briefly consider where the normative conceptualisations, set out in Part 1, fall on each of the continuums.

The tendency of substantive goals to be characterised as a matter of necessity suggests that a common good approach would tend toward the de-politicised end of Continuum 2; Degree of Politicisation, and consequently has, in the past, tended toward the technical end of Continuum 3; the Nature of Knowledge. This is not to suggest that the tendency toward technical knowledge can be considered normative. Equally, in terms of Continuum 4; Openness, following from its de-politicised nature, the common good has tended towards a closed decision making process, where decisions are a matter of judgement rather than consensus.

In contrast a communicative conception of the public interest might be normatively positioned as seeing decisions as a matter of political choice, at the politicised end of Continuum 2, whilst drawing on knowledges from a range of positions on Continuum 3, and positioned toward the open end of Continuum 4. Such a positioning reflects the concerns of the communicative approach with a process that is open to a range of stakeholders, holding a range of knowledges, with the intention of making a consensus decision.

Continuum 1 was concerned with the impacts of decisions in terms of geographical scale and time scale, as a proxy for understanding the extent of a public. To this end the communicative approach may be most naturally positioned at scales where all stakeholders can be practically involved in the decision-making process. In contrast a common good approach implies judgements must be made where the public is too diffuse for this, at the strategic and long term ends of the continuums. However it is this relationship between scale and different conceptions of the public interest that the empirical research aims to explore. As such the thesis now turns to the methodological approach used to explore contemporary English planning practices in depth.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGNING AND UNDERTAKING THE FIELDWORK

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set out the methodological approach that has been adopted to collect data that will allow the research aim to be met. This calls for an approach to data collection that will allow it to be analysed in line with the conceptual framework and continuums set out in the previous chapter, in order to suggest how the public interest is accounted for in plan-making practice, and who this is shaped by.

This chapter starts by setting out the broad research approach chosen to achieve this aim, and the principles underpinning this choice. The chapter then moves to consider the chosen cases and how they were arrived at, before detailing how the chosen methodology was applied. Particularly this sets out the contribution made by each method to the data collected and the intended approach to the analysis of this data. The latter part of the chapter considers how the research was approached with a concern for ethical practice, leading to some reflections on the researcher's position in the process. Overall the structure of the chapter is intended to draw out the contrasts between a logically designed process of data collection and the rather messier reality of fieldwork.

Key Principles

The chosen methodological approach needs to recognise two key principles that underpin the aim of the research. The first draws on Lindblom and Cohen's (1979) assertion that all 'scientific' research must necessarily be less than objective in the selection of its research goals; a choice has been made to assert that understanding how the public interest is accounted for in plan-making practice is important. Indeed, central to this thesis is the argument that the public interest is still an important justification for planning activities, but a justification that is only explicitly discussed

when it is challenged. Following from this the second principle that must shape how the research aim is met is that planners struggle to define the concept of the public interest (See Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Howe 1994 for example). The data collection has therefore taken an approach that recognises this by characterising the public interest as an often implicit justification in plan-making practice, rather than as a concept that is necessarily explicitly discussed.

The methodology adopted for the empirical research is also predicated on the Introduction's assertion that the finished plan document does much to hide the ways in which the policies it contains have been reached. This is consistent with the idea of the plan as a black box put forward in the introduction; a document presented as solid and robust, but which hides the many conflicts and debates behind its preparation (Murdoch and Abram, 2002; Murdoch et al., 1999). The result presents particular conceptions of the public interest, embedded in policies intended to act as a structuring influence on future planning decisions, by setting technically framed criteria for them.

In the English local forward-planning context such structures extend to take into account state defined policy and legislation, as well as the historically, culturally and geographically embedded local context. Conversely the latter part of Chapter 2 sought to reconceptualise the plan as a series of arguments for the right way forward (Healey, 2007; Albrechts, 2006). On balance this is about recognising the role of structure, but without assuming that such structures, often taken for granted, should not be challenged, such that the capacity of agency also needs to be the subject of empirical work (Campbell, 2012a; Forester, 1993). The argument is that these structures act on the process of writing a forward plan but how they are interpreted, and therefore the impact they have, is the result of the interaction of a whole range of agents.

Given that the concern of the thesis is with exploring the processes of making and following forward plans, the empirical research needs to adopt an approach that recognises the plan, and the conceptions of the public interest that it embeds, as resulting from the interaction of structure and agency, rather than one or the other. This is a set of principles that suggests the use of a qualitative methodology to collect rich data that lends itself to interpretation, in order to answer the research questions set out at the end of the previous chapter. The empirical work has therefore been undertaken in line with a case study approach.

Adopting a Case Study Approach

The case study approach involves the selection of particular cases to be explored in depth, using multiple research methods. It is an approach that Yin (2003) seeks to revive in the face of it being

characterised as less than rigorous. Here the case study approach is chosen as a way of effectively accounting for the aforementioned context specific nature of forward plan-making, recognising that it can only be fully explained through deep and detailed analysis.

Yin (ibid) notes that a common question about case studies is whether their results can be generalised. However Yin suggests that the potential for generalisation arises from using case studies to test theory; this is the approach adopted here, drawing on the conceptual framework set out in Chapter 3. Equally Giddens (1984) has asserted that exploring more than one case study can help to verify the findings of the first, supporting the development of generalised theory. This is particularly relevant to the planning discipline, where there is a need to differentiate between practices that are distinctive to particular cases and practices that are more generally prevalent. To achieve this it was decided that two case studies should be explored.

Flyvberg (2006) further notes the importance of choosing case studies carefully, suggesting that the validity of any generalisation is improved if such trends are noted in a diverse range of cases. In making an appropriate choice of cases the first step was therefore to define what characteristics might have an impact on how the public interest might be articulated.

Case Study Characteristics

The extent to which this is again a time of transition for the plan-making process in England was outlined in Chapter 2. In this context Chapter 3 put forward the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as the scale at which plan-making has most consistently taken place and the scale at which decisions about individual planning applications are generally made; in this sense the LPA is taken for granted as the scale at which planning activities take place in the English context, thereby making it the most appropriate scale at which to consider how the public interest is articulated and accounted for. Moreover the previous chapter noted how the term 'LPA' could no longer be assumed to refer to a single 'district', instead being much more varied in its use.

Recognising this variety the research uses as its focus the Core Strategy, as the document produced under the post-2004 English planning system to set out each area's strategic policies; in the context of slow plan-making progress (Watson, 2009) it is this document that LPAs have most likely completed and will therefore continue to influence planning activities whilst local authorities work to prepare the Local Plans reintroduced by the post-2010 Coalition Government.

The reframing of the plan as a series of arguments that are employed to achieve desirable spatial outcomes does not necessarily suggest that they must be written down in a formal plan. However

the process involved in preparing a Core Strategy requires such arguments to be prepared, such that those who have been through the process are arguably better placed to reflect on their preparation. Equally the extent to which arguments put forward through the Core Strategy are employed when making decisions about planning applications is relevant to looking at how the public interest is accounted for. Accordingly the Core Strategy provides a focus for the research common to all of the case studies.

The number of cases chosen is a product of the need to draw on a breadth of experiences within a limited time period, whilst taking advantage of the depth that a case study approach offers, requiring a considerable amount of time to explore each case study in detail. Moreover a key reason for adopting a case study approach lies in the extent to which exploring planning activities is about entering into a situation over which the researcher has little control and an incomplete knowledge of the nature of the case until they are deeply involved in it (Flyvberg, 2006; Yin, 2003).

The choice of cases was made based on considering a series of known characteristics, following from the concern of the research questions with scale, in terms of both time and geography. It was considered important to choose cases with characteristics that changed the scales at which planning activities would have an impact, in turn potentially changing how the public interest is articulated. The following three characteristics were felt to do this by explicitly introducing particular scales or scalar impacts to the forward planning process.

The Presence of Community Planners or a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood planning was in its infancy when the research was being planned. However the number of communities opting to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan has rapidly increased in the meantime, often with support from local authorities. The Neighbourhood Plan introduces plans with statutory force at a more localised scale than has previously been the case in England, with the significant potential to change how the public interest is conceived of.

The Production of a Core Strategy through Joint-Working

Increasingly district tier authorities in England have brought together their plan-making functions to prepare joint or aligned plans, through both statutory agreements that constitute a new LPA, and through more informal mechanisms. This considerably expands the geographical area for which plans are prepared, potentially changing how the public interest is articulated, not least by changing the interests and groups involved. A similar trend is apparent in the formation of unitary authorities under the post-1997 Labour government. However the sense of changing the scale for

plan-making activities might be expected to be a more explicit narrative in areas undertaking joint-working, where a conscious decision has been made to work jointly on plan-making.

National Interests

Debates around the approval of the High Speed Two railway line have demonstrated the potential for conflict between local, regional and national conceptions of the public interest. As such the choice of a case study with an explicit national dimension, for example around environmental designations or economic concerns, might be expected to provoke debate of what is in the public interest at the local scale.

The Chosen Cases

In choosing two cases that addressed these characteristics a short listing process was undertaken, considering a range of cases that might offer an insight into how the public interest is articulated. The two cases eventually chosen are Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park. Neither case was entirely unknown to the author prior to the fieldwork; during a work placement the author spent time with the Central Lincolnshire Joint Planning Unit. Equally the author is based in Sheffield, on the edge of the Peak District National Park, and has spent considerable time in the Park. Whilst neither experience was enough to be able to fully understand the nature of each case it did allow an insight into whether the cases were likely to be appropriate.

When thinking about the choices of case a list of infrastructure cases being decided at the time by the Infrastructure Planning Unit of the Planning Inspectorate was drawn up, the idea that the Planning Inspectorate acts on behalf of central government being used as a proxy for the introduction of an explicitly national interest to the planning process. However this was not felt to be an easy process to access, due to the actors involved. Instead the Peak District National Park was pursued as an example of an embedded national interest, but one where this national interest is expressed rather differently.

Prior to the selection of the Peak District National Park thought was also to South East Lincolnshire, covering Boston and South Holland Borough Councils, and sharing part of its boundary with the North Kesteven part of Central Lincolnshire. This was put forward as a more directly comparable case to Central Lincolnshire, billed as a Local Plan being prepared by a Joint Planning Unit, overseen by a Joint Strategic Planning Committee, and also established through the use of a Parliamentary Order. As such it was felt that the fine grain differences between this case and Central Lincolnshire would allow a greater understanding of what could be generalised about joint

plan-making and what was specific to each case study, picking up on the balance between structure and agency as shaping the forward planning process. The process went as far as a meeting with the authority's Planning Policy Manager to consider the practicality spending time with the policy team. Ultimately however the Peak District National Park was felt to better reflect the interest of the thesis in how the scales of time and geography might shape how the public interest is thought about, allowing different comparisons to be made.

For each case initial contact was made via email, starting with the officer responsible for planning policy. In Central Lincolnshire this was facilitated by having previously engaged with the team, and having worked with one of the team leaders in a previous role. This choice of contact was tactical, based on the need to recognise that such teams operate hierarchically, but where contacting more senior LPA managers was felt to be unlikely to elicit a response. For each case this proved appropriate in gaining a foothold in the case study and was followed up with a face-to-face meeting to talk through the proposed fieldwork, particularly the practicality of being embedded in the authority's planning policy team. Between the two cases it can be argued that they embody all three of these characteristics, in ways that are further detailed below.

Case Study 1: Central Lincolnshire

From the case study characteristics identified Central Lincolnshire is an example of joint-working between three district authorities, leading to the preparation of a forward plan for an area much larger than the typical Local Plan. The designation of Central Lincolnshire as a formal functional area for the purposes of forward planning comes from its identification in the 2009 East Midlands Regional Plan as the Central Lincolnshire Housing Market Area, though this does not tell the entire story. In terms of timescales Central Lincolnshire is therefore a relatively recent construction, being formally constituted in 2009. The amalgamation is formally constituted by an Act of Parliament, but one where the driving force has arguably been relatively local in nature.

The other characteristic that sets Central Lincolnshire apart from a unitary authority, many of which are at a similar geographical scale, is that the authorities involved continue to maintain their separate identity and organisation, working together for the purposes of forward planning only. Equally the county council is a partner, such that Central Lincolnshire is about the preparation of a Local Plan at one geographical scale, by authorities organised at two other geographical scales.

Central Lincolnshire is also home to several Neighbourhood Planning efforts, a characteristic that was suggested to introduce another geographical scale to forward planning efforts.

At the time of the fieldwork the organisation was in the process of preparing a Core Strategy, due for examination shortly after the completion of the fieldwork, although this intention was later overtaken by circumstances. The process of preparing the plan was therefore a live one, though the principle of large scale housing growth had already been established.

Case Study 2: Peak District National Park

The Peak District National Park forms the second case study, selected in response to the characteristics of the Central Lincolnshire case study that became apparent during the initial fieldwork phase. Many characteristics of the Peak Park appear superficially similar to Central Lincolnshire; it is a much larger area than a typical local authority and is also an amalgamation of parts of several other local authorities. Equally it is home to Neighbourhood Planning efforts. However the differences lie in the detail; planning in the Park is the responsibility of the Peak District National Park Authority, a single entity with a single set of officers and members.

In addition, responding to the suggestion that an explicit national dimension might introduce a different scalar consideration, the Peak District National Park was defined by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and has a much longer history as a formally defined entity than Central Lincolnshire, this Act of Parliament coming into force in 1951. The area's designation as a National Park brings into play the Sandford principle, requiring conservation to take priority over the public enjoyment of the Park where the two conflict (PDNPA, 2011). This brings into play a very different agenda to the economic growth ideal enshrined in the NPPF (DCLG, 2012) that most Local Planning Authorities, including Central Lincolnshire, are expected to comply with.

Fieldwork Approach

A key aspect of the case study approach is the potential to build depth through the use of mixed methods, to allow the triangulation of date (Yin, 2003). The methodology for the research was designed to allow this triangulation by adopting the methods of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observation. The core data was collected through a series of interviews with planners, elected members and other interests involved with preparing and utilising the Core Strategy. This was contextualised by considering the plan documents themselves, seeking evidence of their preparation and understanding the issues selected for inclusion. Finally using opportunities to observe parts of the planning process in each case were felt to provide an opportunity to ground the interviews in the context of everyday practice.

A distinctive part of the fieldwork approach was spending time embedded in the planning policy team for each case, allowing observation of their day-to-day practices and the different groups that they engaged with. In the spirit of the case study approach this allowed a much deeper understanding of each case to developed. Particularly by attending different meetings this also allowed contact to be made with a wide range of potential interviewees.

The fieldwork phase began in late October 2012 and was completed in November 2013. Within this period interviews were conducted between November 2012 and November 2013. Work in the Peak District began somewhat later than in Central Lincolnshire, with observational work and interviews commencing in March 2013. For each case the time spent with the policy team amounted to one or two days a week over the course of the fieldwork period, further detailed under the section entitled 'Observation'. The chapter now turns to an account of the fieldwork that sets out the different methods adopted and the contribution of each to the research.

Interviews

The primary method adopted was interviews. In accordance with recognising the value of ordinary knowledge the assumption behind the use of an interview is that actors hold situated knowledge that can only be accessed through creating the right social situation and asking the right questions (Mason, 2002). Semi-structured interviews were chosen over structured interviews because they better recognise the situatedness of the interviewee and the need to record their specific experiences as they are shaped by their local context (ibid), something that is particular relevant to the context-specific nature of planning activities. Interviews are not the only way to access this information but perhaps represent the most logical method for being able to explore and follow up the answers of participants.

Initially it was those planners explicitly involved in preparing, maintaining and 'keeping' the Core Strategy that interviews were conducted with, for both case studies. This included planners in both more senior and junior positions in the team hierarchy. However it was also important to take account of the idea that planning cannot be positioned as an activity carried out only by those defining themselves as planners, so that it was also important to interview elected members, private sector interests and representatives of other groups with a stake in the planning process.

Recruitment of Interviewees

Prior to the fieldwork it was easy to suggest an initial list of interviewees that would be common to each case, including planners, elected members, parish councillors and senior managers.

However the distinctive interests involved in each case could only be identified once embedded in the case, particularly through the observation opportunities that this afforded. Examples of these included pressure groups and members of the Local Enterprise Partnerships. Equally the interviewees themselves were able to suggest other possible interviewees, a form of snowballing. Table 8 indicates the range of categories from which different interviewees were drawn.

Central Lincolnshire	Peak District National Park
6 planners of varying seniority	4 planners of varying seniority
4 planners and other officers working closely with the case study authority	1 planner from an adjacent authority
4 director level officers from the partner authorities	2 director level officers from the case study authority
5 elected members from the partnership	2 members of the case study authority
2 elected members from the partner authorities	1 member of Parliament
4 parish councillors and Neighbourhood Plan representatives	4 town and parish councillors
1 LEP member and 1 LEP officer	1 LEP officer
1 major landowner	2 estate owners/representatives
1 environmental organisation representative	2 campaign group representatives
Relevant to Both Cases	
4 representatives of national membership organisations	

Table 8: Categories of Interviewees

Data Collected

Overall the fieldwork included 51 interviews with a variety of actors, including planners, elected members, senior officers, parish councillors and representatives of other organisations involved in the forward planning process. A full list of interviewees can be found at Appendix 4. These interviews varied significantly in length, from five minutes with a Member of Parliament, to around an hour and a half. Most interviews lasted between forty minutes and an hour, using the interview schedules found at Appendix 3 as a basis. The approach adopted was to allow interviewees to settle into the interview setting with some basic questions about their day-to-day role and background. This set the scene for discussing each interviewee's involvement in planning processes, with the semi-structured approach allowing follow up questions to be asked where helpful. However the interview schedule was evaluated and modified for each interview, reflecting that the draft interview schedule was designed specifically with planners in mind.

The balance between the two case studies in terms of the number of interviews looks slightly skewed, with 28 interviews specific to Central Lincolnshire and 19 specific to the Peak District National Park. However this imbalance reflects the added complexity of the Central Lincolnshire

case in terms of the organisation of the authority; the involvement of four local authorities in the Central Lincolnshire meant that many actors were duplicated across all four authorities.

Analysis Approach

In analysing the collected data to prepare the following two chapters an electronic approach to coding was specifically rejected; whilst programmes such as NVivo can be used to code interview transcripts, it was felt that adopting such a programme had the potential to lose the richness of the themes and data that were key reasons for adopting the interview method. Instead the analysis of the data has therefore been achieved over the course of a year, through a gradual refining of the interview data into a clear narrative for each case through a set of themes that highlight important tendencies in the data, as well as allowing each case to be compared effectively. This is about looking for patterns in the data that suggest the prevalence of particular approaches to practice. In turn a more structured analysis has been undertaken using the continuums set out in Chapter 3, in order to identify how different practices in each case display characteristics that correspond to particular conceptions of the public interest. This recognises the need to build analysis in stages rather than jumping straight to conclusions (Jackson, 2001).

Observation

As with document analysis, observation is included as a method of data collection in order to provide context to the data collected through interviews. Such observations are ancillary to the main series of interviews and are entirely dependent on appropriate opportunities arising but usefully contextualise the interview data. This is about taking the opportunity to observe parts of the process that provide additional insight into how the public interest is accounted for. As with interviews the importance of positionality is recognised; the idea that observing a situation will change it because the researcher's presence will have subtle impact on the behaviour of those being observed. In observation situations this needs to be managed through an awareness of body language and choice of clothing. Any observations are recorded through note-taking as it is felt that electronic recording will impact too heavily on the dynamic of the situation, particularly in requiring written consent rather than simple verbal consent.

Data Collection

The observation element for both cases studies was substantial, involving working within the case study authorities for one or two days a week, throughout most of the fieldwork period. For both cases this involved sitting in the offices of the forward planning teams and undertaking particular

streams of work, making a contribution to each team's workload. For the Peak District this involved working through historical files to piece together the history of housing development in the Park. In this sense the process of observation became intertwined with the process of document analysis, as it involved reading in detail the documents prepared by each authority. In Central Lincolnshire the work involved attending and writing up the minutes for a series of 'Duty to Cooperate' meetings with adjacent authorities. At one point the work in Central Lincolnshire also involved trying to draw a tree for a leaflet explaining the plans for housing growth in the area. Diaries were kept of key happenings whilst in and around the offices. However, in recognition of the ethically grey area around observation practices, given that it is not subject to specific consent, these diaries were deliberately devoid of specifying which actors were saying what.

For Central Lincolnshire the observation element extended to making detailed notes about the public committee meetings. This was reflected by observing several of the monthly development control committee meetings in the Peak Park and, in turn, by observing a couple of development control committee meetings at North Kesteven District Council and Lincoln City Council. These meetings were particularly useful in identifying elected members who would be appropriate interviewees. Additionally the Peak Park development control committee meetings proved useful in identifying some of the other key campaign groups and estate owners with an interest in the Park. In Central Lincolnshire the committee meetings helped in the identification of other key officers who were part of the plan-making process but not formally part of the Joint Planning Unit.

Analysis Approach

The usefulness of data collected during observation is about being able to situate data collected during interviews within the day to day practices and processes in each case. In this sense events recorded through observation have been integrated into the analysis of the interview material, in order to enrich the narrative for each case.

Document Analysis

There is value to developing a detailed understanding of the published plan and other documents related to the planning process, both as a context for the interviews and in looking to see whether what is written is explicit about the scalar impacts of policy.

Data Collected

The document analysis focuses on the Core Strategy documents for each case, using these to set a context for the narrative relayed through the interviews and observations. Particularly Chapter 1

characterised spatial strategies as a set of arguments, intended to be persuasive about how an area should develop. In this sense the purpose of looking at these documents is to understand what they seek to make the argument for.

Analysis Approach

Yanow (2000) recognises that these documents can be interpreted in multiple ways but elaborates on the need to ignore the temptation to conflate interpretation with being impressionistic and carry out such analysis in a rigorous and systematic manner. To this end the main role of document analysis can be described as developing a rich and detailed context for the interview data. As such it is also necessary to consider the possibilities for observation in building up a detailed picture of the local context. Along with the document analysis the data collected through observation has been integrated into the narrative for each case, as a way of confirming or challenging the views put forward by interviewees.

Ethics

The research was subject to ethical review by the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield, a process that was extremely useful in thinking through the impacts of the research on the participants. This is about acknowledging that participants are not passive or neutral actors and that their participation will have personal implications beyond giving up the time to be interviewed. There is potential for the interview process to have positive impacts on the participants; previously the idea of planners particularly as reflexive actors has been considered, such that the interview process, if it is successful in prompting the interviewee to think deeply about their experiences, could prove to be an opportunity for the type of reflection advocated, thereby prompting the interviewee to think about how they act in the future.

Conversely it is critical that the potential for interviews to uncover more uncomfortable experiences needs to be acknowledged. On one hand the interview may prove cathartic in this sense, giving the interviewee the opportunity to share their more uncomfortable experiences in a protected environment, an opportunity to 'unburden' themselves. However such a situation simply increases the importance of strong procedures for the protection of data, and explaining to participants how it will be used (Punch, 2006), in order to reassure that it will not be possible to identify them directly in the published outcomes. However thought was given as to whether anonymisation should be extended to the removal of location names and positions from any

publications and the extent to which this will compromise the usefulness of the data. The consent form set out in Appendix 1 specifically asks participants to agree to their position being referred to.

The way in which informed consent is introduced to interviewees also needs to be carefully thought about. On one hand mechanisms such as consent forms and information sheets act as reassurance to the interviewee that their participation is not taken lightly. For the purposes of this research the consent form can be seen at Appendix 1 and the information sheet at Appendix 2. On the other hand the author's experience from past interviews suggests that an over-emphasis on such procedures cannot help put the interviewee at ease, particularly if the project title is included which suggests the type of answers or conclusions that the study might focus on. Accordingly a careful balance needs to be struck between ensuring that appropriate consent is obtained in an entirely uncoerced way and over-formalising the procedures to the point that they taint the interview itself. As with past practice this was achieved by sending the interviewee the consent form and information sheet in advance, allowing them sufficient time to reflect on whether they were happy to take part in the research. The information sheet places emphasis on the decision to participate being purely a personal one, which should not be influenced by anyone around them.

Reflections on Positionality

Intrinsic to ethical practice is the recognition of the researcher's positionality, something that this section aims to address. It is not possible to abstract the semi-structured interview from its situatedness in social interaction (Mason, 2002) such that adopting this approach requires the researcher to be highly aware of how their own opinions may influence their choice of questions and therefore the data elicited. As noted in the Introduction the author approached this research having had fifteen months experience of working in the planning policy section of a local authority. This also involved significant joint-working, on both housing studies and on the initial stages of a new Core Strategy, though the joint working was of a less formal nature. Additionally it was noted that the author spent part of a two week placement with the Central Lincolnshire policy team.

This familiarity can be argued to be both positive and negative. The extent to which this allowed access to officers working within the case study areas is reflected in the bias towards interviews with officers and elected members. This experience might have been expected to generate sympathy towards the viewpoint of officers and members. However the wide variety of actors included in the interview process helped to redress this balance; the researcher's openness to different viewpoints is reflected in how easy it was to sympathise with the position of different interviewees, despite the tensions between their positions.

It can be further argued that the resulting pre-conceptions about the cases that result from this familiarity are outweighed by being able to predict their suitability as cases that would help to meet the research aim. Equally, for both cases, being positioned 'inside' the cases allowed access to a number of meetings that would have otherwise have not been possible to observe, such as access to the regular team meetings. Particularly in Central Lincolnshire this allowed access to the committee briefing sessions that were not open to the public, as well as meetings about, for example, communicating the planned growth in Lincolnshire to the public, and the Duty to Co-operate meetings previously mentioned. In the Peak District this allowed access to a Duty to Cooperate meeting, held by an adjacent authority in the Greater Manchester area.

Conclusion

The previous chapter identified a research aim and a set of research questions which will allow the research aim to be met. The intention of this chapter has been to set out the approach adopted to collecting data in order to address the research questions and, ultimately, allow some conclusions to be drawn about how the public interest is accounted for in the process of making and following plans in the English context. It is to the stories of Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park that the thesis now turns.

CHAPTER 5: CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE: FORWARD PLANNING THROUGH JOINT WORKING

WHAT IS CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE?

Central Lincolnshire is the name which describes the amalgamation of three local authority areas; the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey, for the purposes of forward spatial planning. Figure 5, below, illustrates the geographical extent of Central Lincolnshire. The resulting construction has a population of some 285,500 people, spread over an area of 2116 square kilometres (CLJSPC, 2013); an area slightly smaller than Luxembourg, but with around half the population.

The Draft Core Strategy's 'Vision for Central Lincolnshire' (ibid, pp.26-27) is oriented toward improving the area through both economic and housing growth and the introduction of low carbon technologies. Consequently this is a vision for an area significantly changed in character through significant population growth; the word 'rural' does not feature in the vision. Meanwhile, other than a handful of place names, the only reference to the area's distinctive nature as it exists currently resides in the last sentence, in a wish to conserve the area's 'dark skies' .

The area is contextualised by borders with Nottinghamshire and northern parts of Lincolnshire[20]; the latter sit on the banks of the River Humber and tend to be economically oriented in that direction, whilst connections with Bassetlaw (Nottinghamshire) are severed by the River Trent. In

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[20] Nottinghamshire is a two-tier county, so that Central Lincolnshire borders with the district tier authorities of Newark and Sherwood, and Bassetlaw, as well as with Nottinghamshire County Council. Though part of the historic county of Lincolnshire, North East and North Lincolnshire are unitary authorities, not covered by Lincolnshire County Council.

terms of transport connections the area is bypassed by several key routes such as the A1 and East Coast mainline, whilst Lincoln itself has only recently seen the introduction of direct train services to London, if these are infrequent and tend to be extensions of existing services to Nottingham and Newark. Lincoln is the only city in Central Lincolnshire, though, with a population of around 100,000 people, it is smaller than many large UK towns. Sleaford and Gainsborough form the next largest towns, followed by a tier of large villages and small towns that differ more in terminology than in size. Caistor, Market Rasen, Ruskington and Heckington are examples of these. Otherwise the area is mostly rural in nature, its economy characterised by agriculture and food processing, several Royal Air Force bases, tourism, public sector employment and, particularly in Lincoln, engineering (CLJSPC, 2013).

Rescaling the Local Plan

The Central Lincolnshire partnership was legally constituted as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), with decision-making powers over forward planning for the area in October 2009, by parliamentary order, under Section 29 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Made by the Secretary of State on behalf of Parliament this order gave these powers to the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC), made up of elected members from each of the partner authorities. Its constitution by statutory instrument means that it can only be disbanded in the same way. A distinctive characteristic of the partnership is its portrayal as a formation at the district scale, driven by the three district councils choosing to come together, but also including the county council. Furthermore it is a decision to merge forward planning functions only, as opposed to merging completely. The result is a geographical area much larger than the single district for which Local Plans are typically made, whilst also giving the county tier authority a formal role in local plan-making, unlike a unitary authority. Whilst this model is increasingly common in England the Central Lincolnshire partnership is distinctive in the way each partner maintains its own identity.

The chapter's purpose is to trace how this rescaling of the Local Plan has affected its preparation and, in turn, influenced how other groups engage with it. It begins by considering the drivers behind its formation and how the partnership's structure reflects its increased geographical scope. Thought is then given to some key issues being enrolled in the plan-making process. The chapter then moves to narrate how the restructuring has affected the way in which other groups engage with the forward planning process, concluding with a short note on recent changes to the partnership.
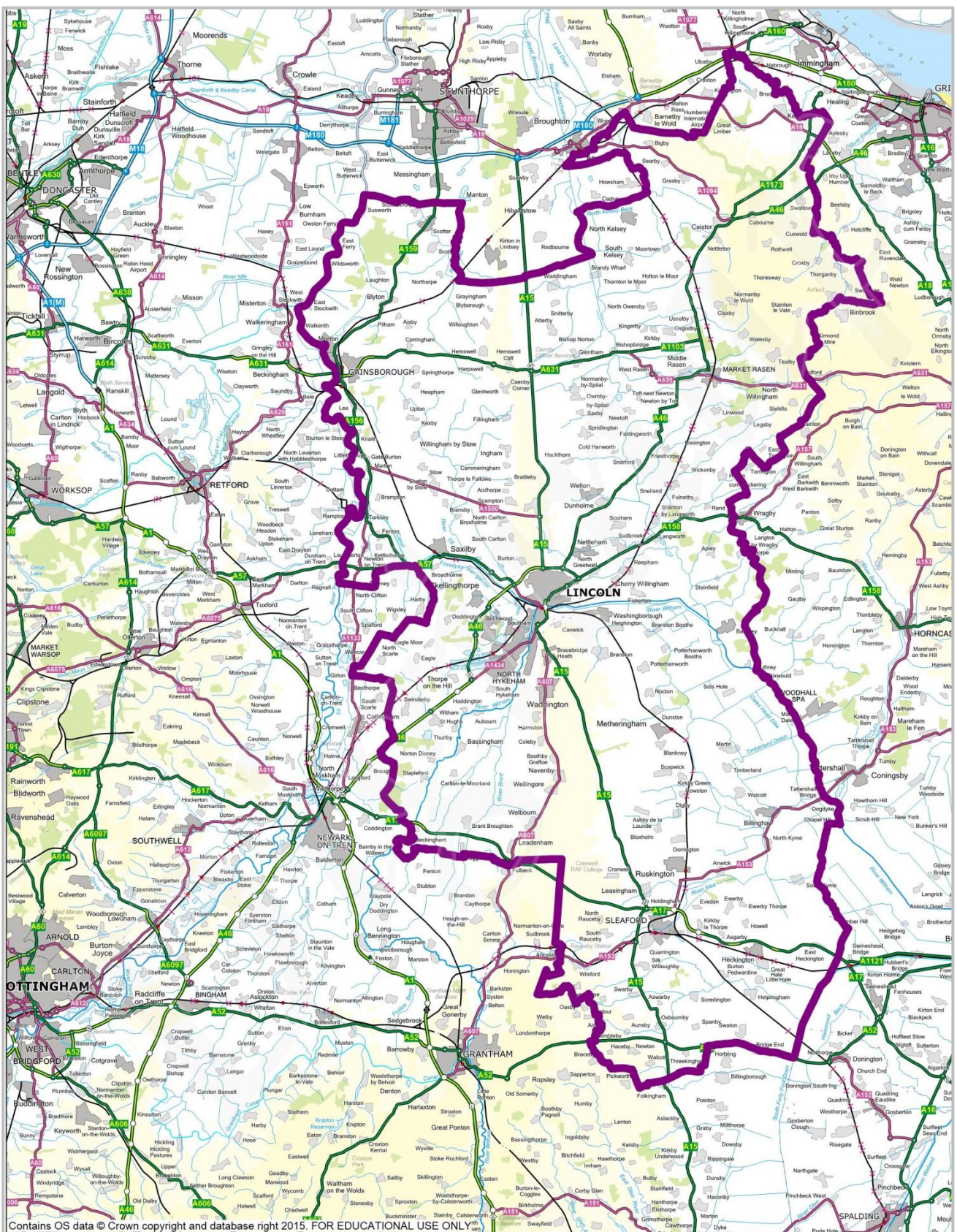
Figure 5: A Map of Central Lincolnshire

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

The driving force for Central Lincolnshire's formation is described from the outset as being the district-tier partner authorities. It is therefore positioned by those involved as being a relatively recent designation, relatively locally driven, but one that has its roots in partnership working between the four authorities over a number of years. Furthermore it is clear that the influence of the, now defunct, 2009 East Midlands Regional Plan continues to be felt. This section considers the different logics cited as behind the partnership's formation, including the ways in which it can be seen as the product of previous partnership working and previous plans.

Historical Influences

Central Lincolnshire's history as a legal entity is a relatively short one. However several founding members of the JSPC were previously members of the Lincoln Area Joint Strategic Planning Committee (LAJSPC), an organisation which brought together the same four partners. As such comments from the JSPC chair clarify the extent to which the contemporary manifestation of Central Lincolnshire has been influenced by this history of partnership working:

> "...we've got a, quite a history and culture of working together actually, in recognition of the fact that of course we share economies, we share job markets, we share housing markets. It makes eminently good sense therefore to strategically plan for those features in life that we depend on each other." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

Whilst the Central Lincolnshire partnership was earlier characterised as new and novel such comments suggest that it is actually about formalising an existing arrangement, instead putting an emphasis on the statutory nature of the partnership. The sense that past arrangements continue to impact strongly on the present is further evoked by the Draft Core Strategy, in its acknowledgement that the Central Lincolnshire name comes from its use in the East Midlands Regional Plan, to describe the Housing Market Area (HMA)[21] considered to unite all three partner districts (CLJSPC, 2013; GOEM, 2009).

Further reinforcing the efficacy of historical influences, the Regional Plan acknowledges the role of the 2006 Lincolnshire Structure Plan in defining and affirming the Lincoln Policy Area. This details how the policy area's extent was "defined primarily through an analysis of journey to work patterns related to other data concerning the frequency of public transport services, the existence

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[21] Housing Market Areas describe areas where the housing market is considered to have similar characteristics in terms of...?

of key rural settlement services and facilities and existing housing completions and commitments" (p.157, LCC, 2006). Indeed a Joint Planning Unit officer commented on having been involved in writing the Regional Plan's Sub-Regional Strategy for the Lincoln Policy Area, whilst working for Lincolnshire County Council. In both cases the implication is that Central Lincolnshire has long been considered an appropriate functional area to plan for. The result is a story of embedding partnership structures over multiple iterations, privileging particular narratives through the changed ways in which decisions are made, and the changed areas that they are made for.

Competing Logics

In its introduction the Draft Core Strategy (CLJSPC, 2013) sets out three benefits to the joint working; the idea of a shared vision and strategy, the ability to plan for functional areas rather than administrative boundaries and the shared costs of working together. These multiple reasons were given an economic framing by one member of the JSPC, who noted how working in partnership on forward planning has also led to a whole range of other partnerships:

> "...there is an economy of scale and we make savings as well, which is very important at the moment, so it seems to be geographically a cohesive area to deal with, and I think it can, it's probably better that it is dealt with as one, rather than we're in competition with each other and falling out over the borders." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

In common with the Core Strategy these comments do not prioritise one reason for the joint-working but give equal weight to several logics. Geographical cohesiveness is taken to mean that the partners should co-operate rather than compete, another recurring theme. However, following from the logic behind the county's enhanced role in the partnership, cohesiveness again competes with economic efficiency as underpinning the partnership.

The characterisation of the area as geographically cohesive for the purposes of strategic planning is apparent in both the chair's earlier comments, and the Regional Plan references to Central Lincolnshire. However two longstanding JSPC members suggest that the partnership is also a reaction to the 1997 Labour government's renewed pursuit of a unitary structure for English local government[22], with a political choice being made to avoid merging into a single unitary authority, in order to pursue a preference for joint-working. One suggested that Lincolnshire was too big to

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[22] Unitary authorities resulted from replacing the two-tier system of local government in certain parts of the UK. The two tier system comprised district or borough councils, and county councils; these were disbanded to be replaced with a single tier system, made up of unitary authorities that were generally sized between the two and delivered the services of both.

become a unitary authority but also that it would be difficult to choose where to divide the county. Instead, under the partnership model they suggested "we can retain our original identities but we can have that strategic overview, so I think that's where we win" (CL18-JSPC District Member). Particularly this suggestion that each partner has a distinctive identity is a recurring theme.

Many of those involved express a further driver in the need for the area to become economically competitive, again evoking ideas of competition. Conversely others, less directly involved with the partnership, see this as incompatible with the area's rural nature. Each of these points to a contrasting view of how planning best serves the public and is therefore considered in further details below. The resulting tension between these competing logics also manifests itself in the distinctive identity of the different partner authorities, each having different views of the partnership's longevity, discussed in greater detail later. Indeed it was suggested by another member, from the county council, that "a unitary will happen at some point because of the financial pressure on districts", suggesting that this political choice will be overcome by central government decisions to put further pressure on local government finances.

Geographical Cohesiveness

The geographical cohesiveness of Central Lincolnshire as a key driver for working in partnership was cited by both elected members on the JSPC, and senior officers. The suggestion that partnership working allows more effective market interventions was considered by the JSPC chair, as a way of addressing social disadvantage:

> "...I'm not a great believer in the beneficial consequences of letting the market rip, which is why instinctively I quite like strategic planning because I think it brings a rationality and a moderation of the worst effects of the market...the business that I'm in as a Labour politician I suppose is protecting people from the worst consequences of letting the market rip..." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

This belief in "common interests" as a basis for co-operation, drawing on the aforementioned belief in co-operation over competition, contrasts with the need for the area to become economically competitive with other areas, something that is returned to later. However it is worth noting the well-meaning but paternalistic tone of the language used, a tone that characterises planning as about protecting people. Whilst this is not necessarily in tension with other understandings of geographical cohesiveness it does highlight how adopting a different party-political persuasion can lead to issue being reframed. A further key distinction is made

between an emphasis on the shared characteristics of the partner districts and the conflict caused by arbitrary boundaries drawn around Lincoln:

> "...if you look down in the south of...Lincoln, the boundary of the district council actually cuts through the built up area and of course the travel to work area extends beyond the city council boundaries..." (CL16-County Council Director)

Echoing this a second officer noted that "...the economic driver of Lincolnshire as a whole is Lincoln city..." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer). Such comments embody the assumption that planning for a functional area will improve the plan, requiring a judgement about how a functional area is defined, but recognising how Lincoln is shaped by the places around it; a relational understanding of space. Indeed both hint at the economic and technical measures underpinning this. Indeed a member of the JSPC considered Lincoln's role at the core of the inter-relationships between the partner districts, drawing on these economic, technically framed measures of fucntionality:

> "...we're 160,000, we draw on 160,000 travel to work population, we draw on a 240,000 retail catchment area; Lincoln is hugely important to the surrounding area. Now that doesn't that we're ego-centric about it because we rely as much on those areas for our wealth and wellbeing..." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

Indeed another senior officer commented that "Some people worry that it's a little bit too Lincoln-centric" (CL14-District Council Director), but considered this to be an unfair criticism; in keeping with the economic framing they noted that the different characteristics of the partner districts allowed for a "...range of choices so that that investor can make the choice that's appropriate for their business." (CL14-District Council Director).

Overall then there is a sense that recognising the area as geographically cohesive and planning strategically for this will result in benefits over the longer term. Equally, however, there is a sense that the partnership revolves around the centrality of Lincoln and the need for economic growth, echoing the reasoning behind the county's involvement in the partnership. Furthermore it is useful to note how technical and economic measures are used to frame the area's cohesiveness.

Economic Efficiency

The shorter term, arguably more measurable, financial savings to the partner authorities that could be made through partnership working were also expressed by several interviewees. The context for the partnership's formation was the wider restructuring of Lincolnshire local

government, with two senior officers from different authorities commenting on how their posts had come to include responsibility for running services far from planning; a cinema in one case and business support and tourism in the other. It is therefore unsurprising that interviewees identified possible efficiency savings as a major driver behind the JPU's formation:

> "...the average cost of a Core Strategy was two to three million pounds per authority. We reckoned that we could do a Core Strategy for the whole of the Central Lincolnshire area for around three million...that means that it's a real cost saving of a million to two million per authority..." (CL18-JSPC District Member)

The same interviewee later illustrated the importance of the economic driver, suggesting that joint working on waste management amongst four Lincolnshire local authorities failed to reach fruition "because the cost savings weren't there, the way of letting contracts was difficult because they all ended at different times" (CL18-JSPC District Member). Furthermore one of the council leaders related the savings that had been achieved through similar partnerships for Revenues and Benefits and Information Technology, with the potential to extend this to other functions such as human resources and payroll.

Consequently the significance of financial efficiency in setting up other partnerships does raise the question of whether the Central Lincolnshire partnership would have formed without the savings identified. The emphasis placed on saving money also characterises planning as simply another service of local government, rather than as an activity to alter the setting in which other local government services operate. Following from the varying ways in which planning is seen to serve the public the economic framing of efficiency is returned to later, when considering the longevity of the partnership.

Politically Driven

In contrast to the functional and cost saving drivers behind the partnership's formation, drivers generally described in logical, apolitical terms, more overtly political motivations were also put forward. In particular one partner district was described as the driving force behind the partnership, both providing many of the JPU officers and having a Chief Executive who was considered to very "hands on" in managing the partnership:

> "I think it's partly because they've always felt in the shadow of (Partner District) and they wanted to try and usurp that role themselves...I've always seen it as sort of (Partner District)-lite...I was surprised at the ease with which City of Lincoln sort of handed it over

because...without a successful Lincoln there's...not much else to talk about..." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

The same interviewee went on to comment on the very close relationship between the Head of the JPU and the aforementioned Chief Executive. This was suggested to be a very powerful relationship when the council leader from the same partner district chaired the JSPC. Consequently there is a suggestion that any intrinsic geographical cohesiveness may have come to little without such politically motivated leadership, again echoing the importance of personality. In this sense the political choice to pursue joint working has embedded within it the political choice to pursue a particular conception of the public.

Lincolnshire as 'Backwards', Growth as Progress

Political motivation is also apparent in the perception that Lincolnshire's rural nature characterises it as 'backwards':

 "...we need to improve our infrastructure because, until we get linked up better with the rest of the world and until people discover where Lincolnshire actually is a lot of people won't come to Lincolnshire because they don't know anything about it and they...pre-judge it..." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

A desire to dispel this is reflected in comments made by the leader of one of the partner authorities, on the joint-working as a way of transforming Lincolnshire's image:

"When I first went onto the East Midlands Councils years ago anytime I spoke, there was, you'd get some of the chaps laughing and saying 'oh yes, you come from that little old county, across the other side of the A1', you know, 'the agricultural county' and you thought 'that's how we're always gonna be know if we're not careful.' And yet...the work that's being done in engineering, in food processing etc is just not realised until we promote it, until we ourselves say 'look at us, we can do this', yes." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

The comments show a determination to overcome a particular image of Lincolnshire, again framed in terms of economic competiveness and being outward looking. Indeed this a motivation considered by a senior officer to underpin the high growth ambitions earlier alluded to:

"...that's partly because the members want to mainstream Lincolnshire and what I mean by that is we're seen as being a bit backward and remote, not just geographically but in terms

> of...the lifestyles that we offer. I think the members are keen to get us up to a sort of a national standard in many respects, especially when it comes to infrastructure and building a lot of housing will help pay for that...they see growth as being the main way of improving the lives and also diversifying the economy..." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

Such comments more explicitly frame economic competitiveness as benefiting the public of Central Lincolnshire through the trickle down effects of economic growth, measured against an imagined national standard.

The intention that Central Lincolnshire will be able to have an impact greater than the sum of its parts is particularly strongly expressed in terms of the strategic infrastructure that can be included by planning for a larger geographical area that overcomes administrative boundaries:

> "...we've got an area that is bigger than some counties. And we've got the clout to go to government and do things like the Eastern growth corridor, the Eastern bypass...That's gone through largely on the back of the strategic planning..." (CL18-JSPC District Member)

These large scale infrastructure projects suggest how the partnership will have impacts of a greater magnitude than a typical Local Plan. The comments also reinforce ideas of competitiveness as a key driver for the partnership, extending the idea of an imagined national standard to encompass the ability to confront government at a national scale. This is further apparent in work done by East Midlands Councils to promote the East Midlands as an attractive area for central government to invest in, work that the JPU sought to contribute to during the fieldwork period.

To summarise the logic behind Central Lincolnshire is framed in a number of ways that can be suggested to compete for influence, but which are united by an overall economic, technical framing of how plan-making through joint-working is good for the public. Important to highlight is the extent to which Lincolnshire is seen as backwards in comparison to an imagined 'national standard'. Infrastructure such as the Lincoln Eastern Bypass is framed as helping the area reach that imagined standard but where a certain level of housing development is needed to fund such infrastructure. This theme is further developed through the remainder of the chapter, not least as a view that is opposed by other groups involved in the plan-making process. The history of the partnership and the logics enrolled in its embedding set the context for thinking about how the vision for Central Lincolnshire contained in the Draft Core Strategy has been developed through a particular institutional structure.

HOW IS IT ORGANISED?

The production of what will become the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is carried out by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU), formed by merging the planning policy functions of each of the three district partners and bringing together their planning policy staff. Indeed it is worth emphasising that only the planning policy functions of each authority have been merged; no other functions of the authorities have been formally merged through the partnership.

This is overseen by the JSPC that ultimately makes decisions about planning policy in the area. The manner in which the partnership formally amalgamates three district areas is reflected in the JSPC's structure, which allows its members to participate in making decisions that affect all three districts, rather than only making decisions for the district in which they were elected. Additionally the parliamentary order gives Lincolnshire County Council a formal role in decisions about the districts, a power that it would not usually hold. It is therefore worth thinking about how the partnership is organised to make these decisions.

The Joint Planning Unit

The JPU's role is typical of the forward planning function of most English local authorities; to collect evidence, write and consult on the Local Plan, and prepare it for examination. It was formed in May 2010, initially based at North Kesteven District Council in Sleaford, before its move to City of Lincoln's offices. Information technology is provided by North Kesteven and the JPU maintains 'hot desks' in Sleaford and Gainsborough (West Lindsey). It is funded by equal financial contributions from each of the three district authorities and a lesser contribution from Lincolnshire County Council.

At the time of the fieldwork the JPU staff comprised a Unit Head, two Team Leaders, two Principal Planning Officers, three Planning Officers, two Planning Assistants (one covering for one of the Principal Planning Officers), a Planning Technician, a Programme Development Officer and an Administrative Assistant, with most having transferred across from the three partner district authorities. The team was also supported by an independent consultant, hired to work on project management, and to act as a conduit between the team and senior managers across the partner authorities. Finally the team draws on the forward planning function of Lincolnshire County Council for some work, particularly around the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Despite the generic terminology used here the unit members maintained their titles, salaries and conditions from their previous local authorities; these have not been rationalised despite the JPU having existed for more than three years. Also of note is that only two staff transferred from West Lindsey, its staffing having been reduced in anticipation of the JPU's formation. Consequently former West Lindsey staff did not occupy any of the JPU's three most senior tiers.

The Joint Strategic Planning Committee

The JPU's work is formally governed by the JSPC. This committee comprises three full members and one reserve member from each of the four partner authorities, drawn from each authority's elected membership. This includes the leader of each district authority and, usually, the chair of each district's planning committee[23]. The meetings of the committee alternate between closed briefings and committee meetings that are open to the public; the briefings are sessions that allow members to discuss the issues on which decisions are to be made at the committee meetings. The locations of the meetings rotate between all four partner authorities, taking in Sleaford, Gainsborough or Lincoln, on weekday mornings. These arrangements were reflected on by the chair of the JSPC:

> "I ought to have stressed that those briefing meetings are not decision making, that they really are literally for, to make sure that members of the committee do fully understand the evidence base and the background to the papers that are coming forward for consideration...It's also a kind of storming and norming process in the decision making process, if you like, 'well what if we decided this, what would be the consequences of that? Do I agree with this or don't I?' " (CL17-JSPC Chair)

The chair proceeded to suggest that this opportunity to mull decisions without public scrutiny made the final decision better:

> "...the decision-making process would be less good if members hadn't had the opportunity without feeling that, you know, they're having to watch every 'p' and 'q'. So it's, I stress, not that we've made up our minds in secret then play it out in public...in the formal part of the proceedings, we'll listen to all the evidence again, have a discussion and make up our minds what we should do." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

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[23] The committee that calls in and makes development management decisions for each authority.

Particularly the comments suggest the role of dialogue in allowing members of the JSPC to test their views before finalising them. However implicit within them is a wariness of how such a dialogue might be portrayed to the wider public.

The chairmanship rotates between the leaders of the three district authorities, though this rotation doesn't include the county authority. The position of vice-chair is held by the authority leader next in line to hold the chair. The committee's chair described the role of members as about understanding the views of the people they represent:

> "...that is never an easy or straightforward job as you'll appreciate that, because in the end you will always find two, if not many more sides of any particular argument; some people want growth, some people don't...So you will always be seeking to resolve conflicting interests." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

Whilst such comments draw on the traditional representative role of elected members they introduce a further need for members to interpret the needs of their constituents, rather than simply taking them at face value. This interpretative role is reflective of a structure that concentrates legal powers for making decisions affecting a much larger 'public' than the typical Local Plan, amongst a small subset of the four authorities' elected membership. Equally the statutory nature of the committee means that its decisions are not required to be ratified by each district. This does suggest the logic behind including the district council leaders, who, given their leadership role, can be expected to understand the views of their council as a whole, and the inherent conflicts amongst these views. This more strategic mindset is arguably necessary for thinking about issues that inevitably have a more varied and conflicting impact over the much larger geographical area included in Central Lincolnshire. However the makeup of the committee excludes non-JSPC members such that decision making is a further step removed from the public, as they are represented by members who are not part of the JSPC.

The Political Nature of the Partnership

In party-political terms North Kesteven, West Lindsey and Lincolnshire County Council are all Conservative led councils. The City of Lincoln is the exception, as a Labour Party-led Council. It is noteworthy that the 2013 elections saw a ten strong contingent of UK Independence Party councillors elected to Lincolnshire County Council. These councillors mostly represent areas to the east of Central Lincolnshire, particularly the coastal towns of Boston, Skegness and Louth, and

have therefore not become JSPC members. However this did see the previous leader of Lincolnshire County Council deposed from his seat, leading to their replacement as a member of the JSPC; echoing the discussion of membership continuity this caused a continuing member of the JSPC to lament their loss.

This party-political make-up is generally reflected in the committee's make-up; the positions for two authorities are filled entirely by elected members from the leading party. However members from the other partners are more politically diverse, with one partner district in particular making a point of including a member from the opposition. The result is that the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats are all represented on the committee. Despite this commitment this member suggested that members should not "bring politics to planning full stop", suggesting that they were "there to represent the council and the Joint Planning Unit and try not to be too parochial" (CL18-JSPC District Member). Implicit within this is a conceptualisation of politics as party-political, as opposed to dialogical, if this party-political diversity is not immediately apparent from observing the committee meetings.

Reflecting on the extent to which members were able to think strategically about the area the JSPC chair suggested that members were broadly working in a strategic manner "...although you still get individual members who can be quite parochial about their own ward, or their own city, or their own district council". Indeed this was exemplified by a committee meeting that turned to the discussion of a large alternative housing site on Lincoln's outskirts, prompted by the elected member whose ward the site sat within. Overall it was felt that each partner authority understood the long term benefits of proposed growth, even though, in the shorter term, much of the money generated by development in all three districts would be spent on a road bypassing Lincoln. The overall impression though is of a group of elected members coming together to emphasise what the chair described as "a strong mutuality about our interests", building on the earlier discussion of the area's geographical cohesiveness.

Continuity of Membership

The extent to which conflict resolution is dependent on being able to develop an in-depth understanding of different viewpoints is debatable. Less debatable, however, is the evidence heavy nature of the English Local Plan and the complex terminology that accompanies it. Only three elected members have remained on the JSPC for the entirety of its four year history, whilst a fourth was present at its inception and has since rejoined. However continuity of membership was

considered important by members of the JSPC, as a way of understanding where policies had come from over several years. Particularly the complex and extensive nature of the work was felt to make it difficult for new committee members to engage with and understand immediately:

> "...they've almost wanted you to start again and explain things or couldn't see why...you expect them to fit in really. I mean you can see their problem but that's their council's choice or circumstance isn't it?...Some people have more difficulty in putting their own parochial things aside and looking at it from a strategic point of view, for the good of the whole, and that's difficult as well." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

From these comments continuity of membership is seen as going hand in hand with the need for the committee to have a strategic viewpoint. The role of continuity is further reinforced when thinking about the partnership's development, a theme alluded to here by the second interviewee's membership of a predecessor committee formed by the same partners, and returned to later. However it is also a theme to be borne in mind when thinking about the extent to which the resulting strategy has been subject to scrutiny and challenge; the advent of new members is not seen as an opportunity to revisit issues.

Officer Member Relationships

The structure of the Central Lincolnshire partnership emphasises the importance of the relationship between officers and elected members in developing the Local Plan, in the way that both are specifically constituted for the same purpose. Different interviewees offered contrasting perspectives on the effectiveness of this relationship, with a newly joined JPU officer commenting:

> "I think it's very much a formal process and I think it doesn't really work very well, especially with the committee...we have to present, they ask questions, they don't really understand what the issues are..." (CL5-Junior JPU Officer)

Formality is characterised here as obstructing the process of plan-making by limiting the ability of officers and members to engage in dialogue, leading to a lack of understanding. Conversely the external consultant working with the JPU suggested that the lack of understanding was not as significant as suggested by some but did feel that communication between the JPU and both senior officers and committee members was problematic, putting this down to poor communication on the part of officers:

> "I think dealing with members is a skill...if you are dealing with strategic issues, which you
> are in a joint unit, it's harder because members tend to have quite a local view of things so
> you have to be twice as good at it." (CL7-External Planning Consultant)

In contrast another officer suggested that they'd seen more formal relationships, noting that
although public meetings appeared formal, in order to show respect to the members, it was
generally very different afterwards, with discussions over lunch taking place on first name terms.
Indeed this lack of formality in other circumstances is a theme considered by those further from
the plan-making process, highlighting a contrast between parts of the planning process that are
considered 'public', and those that take place in private.

Particularly this suggests that the more strategic nature of the Central Lincolnshire partnership
makes it both more difficult for members to engage with, but also that officers struggle to
communicate this change in scale. This distance between officers and members was considered by
a founding member of the JSPC:

> "...we get the feeling we are a bit unnecessary or they've done all the work and they sort of
> live and breathe it all...we only know what comes in the written word...you rely on the
> members to ask questions of stuff when it's done, but we don't have a lot of input perhaps
> into how it's done." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

The same interviewee, went on to suggest that they kept their involvement with officers very
much at arm's length, when compared to other committee members. Accordingly the key tension
here is between developing a dialogue that connects the representative role of elected members
with the plan-writing role of officers, whilst maintaining a critical distance from the process, in
order to critique constructively. In turn this is complicated by the continuity of membership, that
both promotes this dialogue but also starts to characterise the partnership as something that one
is either inside or outside of, with implications for who has power in the course of decision making.
This inside/outside divide is developed throughout the chapter.

Changing the role of senior officers

A subtle but influential impact on Central Lincolnshire's formation has been the most senior
officers in each of the four local authorities, officers who would not usually have a significant role
in plan-making, but who have been brought into the process by virtue of the partnership's novel
nature. The JPU's work is managed through the Central Lincolnshire Officer Group, comprising the

three Chief Executives for each of the district authorities and an Executive Director from the county council. Prior to the legal establishment of the partnership it was the role of this group to advise the partner authorities on the partnership structure. This role was reflected on by the county council director:

> "...we discussed the merits of different sizes of joint committee, what the scope of the joint committee would be, and tried to come to an agreed professional opinion on that...we gave that advice and...broadly that was accepted by the politicians." (CL16-County Council Director)

Whilst the partnership is given statutory force by an order of Parliament at the national scale such comments serve to remind of the partnership's local origins. Equally they develop earlier themes about the relative roles of officers and members; it can be argued that the group's advice has had a structuring impact on how decisions are made, reinforcing the efficacy of officers in shaping the plan-making process. The same director went on to relate the group's continuing role in managing the committee process and the work of the JPU, including appointing a project manager:

> "We have at...significant points...given guidance as to how we thought the political context needed to be interpreted in the actual, technical planning...when we felt that progress was not being as rapid as necessary we decided to introduce (an External Consultant) into the process, as a sort of project manager..." (CL16-County Council Director)

Particularly there is a sense that senior officers act as a buffer, or a filtering mechanism, between the JSPC and the JPU. The director gave as an example the post-2010 introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework, where senior officers had to "with the politicians, work out how we wanted that to be interpreted in terms of our Local Plan" (CL16-County Council Director), in order to guide the JPU. This has also been apparent in committee meetings, where one of the district authority Chief Executives has been seen to offer his interpretation of member wishes in issuing instructions to the JPU. Such tendencies reinforce the traditional characterisation of plan-making activities, as undertaken by officers, as technical, apolitical.

The director went on to suggest that this was both about the geographical scale of Central Lincolnshire and the significance of it being a novel approach, where "...it was felt that there needed to be significant senior input right from the word go, in order to sort of ensure success." As a result the same director noted that "I have undoubtedly spent more time doing this than I

would have done had there been three separate plans, where I think I would have delegated much more of this further down into the system" (CL16-County Council Director).

Similarly a past chair of the JSPC acknowledged the role of personality and leadership in shaping the partnership, emphasising the ability of senior officers and council leaders to work together as crucial to the partnership's longevity:

> "...we've got a Chief Executive here who's been totally behind it and has been the main convenor of meetings etc to push things on and we've got senior officers...from all three councils really, who, if there are any problems, have been willing to sort it out..." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

This again emphasises the role of both officer-member relationships and membership continuity in driving the partnership, if the leadership dimension is also noteworthy. Consequently this section has drawn out how senior officers have taken a greater interest in managing the plan-making process than might typically be expected. This greater involvement has, in turn, acted to reinforce the characterisation of the planning activities, and the officers that engage in them, as technical in nature. Particularly this about driving forward the process but also starts to reveal an underlying concern for efficient progress.

Amplifying the role of the County Council

At the outset it was noted that the statutory instrument constituting Central Lincolnshire formally includes Lincolnshire County Council, both as a contributor to the JPU's work and as a member of the JSPC. Indeed Section 29 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, under which the statutory instrument was made, specifically requires the inclusion of the county council. Where the previous section considered how the partnership's structure amplifies the role of senior officers, this section examines how it also formalises the county-tier authority's influence. In comparison to a typical Local Plan a senior officer acknowledged how the process has changed the county council's role from being a consultee, somewhat outside the process, to a partner, inside the process, involved in making decisions and influencing the eventual shape of the plan:

> "Of course we can be voted down...and of course the possible downside politically is that you were part of the decision-taking process! So if you have a view which doesn't prevail then it's very difficult for you to say 'I don't like the view'..." (CL16-County Council Director)

Such comments contrast with the earlier suggestion that the process was above party politics, instead suggesting wariness about how such decisions might be viewed by the electorate.

The district-led nature of the partnership was again emphasised by a district leader, a former chair of the JSPC, reminding that county members are able to vote on JSPC decisions but are unable to chair it. However the same leader made it clear that the partnership was considered a desirable opportunity to formally include Lincolnshire County Council, in light of their infrastructure responsibilities, for example around flooding. In contrast the director felt that the county council recognised the economic efficiency of dealing with one plan rather than three, and Lincoln's key role in Lincolnshire's economy.

In both cases though the county's involvement is driven by economic considerations. This section also highlights the significance of infrastructure improvements, and the development economics that underpin this as a key influence on the structure of the partnership, something that was hinted in examining the logics cited as underpinning the partnership. Overall the partnership's structure has strong implications for the interests that are formally involved in making decisions for the public, in turn having implications for the issues that the plan should address. This sets the scene for thinking about the significant growth agenda that characterises the Core Strategy for Central Lincolnshire.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN PLAY?

It was earlier discussed how previous plans and partnerships were a key factor in the formation and direction of the Central Lincolnshire partnership. This same idea of history acting as a structuring influence can also be seen in the partnership's pursuance of a strategy based around high levels of growth, particularly in terms of housing.

Large Scale Housing Growth

A key motivation for rescaling the Local Plan is the ability to co-ordinate growth without being hampered by arbitrarily drawn local authority boundaries. Echoing this, the Draft Core Strategy (CLJSPC, 2013) characterises the growth agenda as a key driver behind the development of joint-working. At the heart of the strategy are plans for the development of some 42,000 new homes by 2031. This is in the context of the area containing 129,000 homes in 2011 (ibid, p.18), such that the planned growth would represent an increase of some 32% in the number of homes in the area. A key characteristic of the spatial strategy is the planned accommodation of 35% of these new homes in eight 'sustainable urban extensions' (ibid, p.62). Three of these will extend Lincoln, a further three will be located around Gainsborough, whilst the remaining two will be on the edge of Sleaford, located to promote more 'sustainable' settlement patterns:

> "...for a sustainable community...you're more likely to be able to encourage people to make those short distances by public transport or by cycle or walk if you're doing urban extensions. We know that a scattered rural population in the Lincolnshire context is difficult to manage. " (CL16-County Council Director)

Smaller scale housing developments are expected to be located around the other small towns and large villages in the area, whilst small numbers of houses are expected to be located in the smaller villages. However the association between 'rural' and 'unsustainable' strongly echoes the earlier conflation of 'growth' and 'progress', when thinking Lincolnshire in comparison to a 'national standard'. In turn this sets the context for a later examination of views opposed to growth.

Growth as Historically Influenced

Following from the role of the East Midlands Regional Plan in defining Central Lincolnshire its influence is again felt in the Core Strategy, despite the well-known intention that the plan would be revoked by the Coalition government. The final version of the Regional Plan, published in 2009, prior to its revocation in Spring 2013, sets out regional priorities for housing in the Central

Lincolnshire HMA that include "strengthening the role of Lincoln...through urban intensification and planned and sustainable urban extensions", the strengthening of the role of Sleaford and "supporting the regeneration of Gainsborough" (p.39, GOEM, 2009). These priorities are supported through the setting of housing targets through Policy 13a: Regional Housing Provision, but where this policy gives a specific housing target for the Lincoln Principal Urban Area, an area that is noted in the text to include the parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey.

Later on the Regional Plan sets out 'spatial priorities' for the Lincoln Policy Area that include the development of "phased strategic urban extensions co-ordinated with the necessary infrastructure provision" (p.151, GOEM, 2009). Furthermore the Draft Core Strategy highlights the designation of Lincoln and Gainsborough as 'Growth Points' under the previous Labour government, a designation based on their suggested potential to accommodate significant housing development and coming with significant funding to work towards this.

Following from the partnership's enhancement of the county's role one officer related the county council's historical designation as a Section 4/4 authority. Specifically this gave the county a role in the preparation of the Regional Plan, as well as having had the role of preparing a Structure Plan, and of running the Lincoln Area Joint Strategic Officers Group:

> "Some people seem, within the authority, seem to think the districts are a bit crazy for sort of promoting this and seem to think it is the districts who own it but...Structure Plans have always promoted a high level of growth; that history of planning policy which we either wrote or heavily contributed to has that growth agenda in it anyway; it is ours even though some people seem to forget that." (CL6-County Council Senior Officer)

Again this section highlights the continuing influence of ostensibly succeeded strategies, indicating the momentum that they can gather, whilst also reiterating the county-tier's influence. Indeed the comments also highlight the occasional political convenience of maintaining a separate identity, if any sense of separation is at odds with the significance of the county's role. The section also starts to highlight the scale of housing development planned, something that is shown in later discussions to the aspect of the plan that has captured the most attention.

Growth as a political choice

Drawing on extensive experience of working elsewhere in the UK, the external consultant noted that "What's quite different here from many other places I've worked is...the fact that this is an

area which at least politically appears to want growth, as opposed to 'how little can we get away with!'" (CL7-External Planning Consultant). The previous section sets out the planned growth strategy in rather apolitical terms. Indeed one JSPC member expressed their confidence that:

> "...the numbers wouldn't have been produced would they, without sufficient knowledge and work done prior...housing needs surveys, all sorts of things have been going on to produce the evidence because you've got to have everything evidence based haven't you" (CL20-JSPC District Member).

In relation to the discussions of officer-member relationships this expresses a somewhat blind faith in the work of officers, characterising evidence as a source of comfort. In turn this continues to frame growth as a technical necessity. However comments from other interviewees paint a very different picture, one of the planned housing growth as far more contentious.

The need to plan for growth was strongly asserted by the chair of the JSPC, justified by the inevitability of growth as it is driven by demographic change and migration to Lincolnshire. However the chair also made the case for promoting growth, rather than simply managing it:

> "...if we don't...encourage more growth...our area will atrophy actually...we'll end up with a very unbalanced population profile; far too many older people not in employment; the tax, council tax base begins to erode. Your ability to support public services begins to decline. Young people tend not to stay in communities...you get very unbalanced communities and all sorts of unwelcome knock-on effects." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

The latter part of these comments starts to hint at something that was put more bluntly by an officer from one of the partner authorities working with the JPU; around half of the planned growth responds to expected demographic changes but the rest is a political choice to pursue.

Echoing this a longstanding member of the JSPC offered a more passionate perspective on why housing growth in general was important, relating their attempts to persuade a constituent of the ongoing existence of a major housing shortage in the UK, not least driven by increasing life expectancy. This perhaps exemplifies the belief of JSPC members that their role is to interpret the needs of Central Lincolnshire residents, rather than simply taking them as they are expressed.

The same member alluded to the strong need for affordable housing in the ward they represented, but where planned schemes including affordable housing had not gone ahead because private

developers had deemed them unviable. Similarly the JSPC chair suggested how growth might address disadvantage in Lincoln, as a political priority for the city:

> "Lincoln...is relatively poorly off, so we...have a particular emphasis on the need for jobs and more homes...there are lots of people without employment and without affordable housing so we very much see ourselves as...batting for them." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

However there is, within this, a fuzziness about the relationship between growth more generally and building affordable housing, perhaps alluding again to the need for affordable homes to be privately funded, usually as part of a larger development, secured by conditions attached to the planning permission. In this sense growth becomes a next best alternative to the partner districts being able to address issues through public investment, emphasising the role of financial viability for private developers in delivering schemes that are characterised as having a public benefit.

Doubts about the planned growth

This theme of communicating the benefits of growth comes to the fore in some of the material the JPU has produced for public consumption, particularly exemplified by a leaflet promoting the 'growth' of Central Lincolnshire. Following a workshop for members of the JSPC to discuss the leaflet's core message communications officers from each of the three partner districts were asked to help design something that would explain the planned housing growth, concentrating on its associated infrastructure benefits. The result gives the message that growth is imperative, both because more housing is needed but also because it is seen as the only way of delivering infrastructure improvements.

The leaflet's production was regarded as unproblematic within the partnership but provoked a rather different reaction from an elected member outside of the JSPC, but with a strong interest in planning:

> "...it seems to me that if you were doing research...you wouldn't necessarily send a leaflet to everybody that you are going to interview before you come to interview them, pushing a particular line. So how come 280,000 people or whatever it is have got leaflets from the JPU, pushing a line that says 'growth'...when they might want growth, they might not want." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

The normality of producing such a leaflet can perhaps also be seen as highlighting the extent to which the pursuit of growth has become embedded in the mindset of those involved in the

partnership, promoted by membership continuity though multiple partnership and strategy iterations. Particularly this highlights the contrast between directive leadership and deliberative democracy as ways of deciding the best course of action for the public.

Challenging this the same member went on to express serious concerns that those developing the housing targets had neither understood the criteria attached to targets set out in the Regional Plan nor understood the intricacies of demographic projections:

> "And it is a bit slack to say 'oh well, this'll go to an examination in public' when most of us believe that the Planning Inspectorate have been leaned on from a very very great height, to say 'more housing at all costs'..." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

Particularly such comments suggest the heightened difficulty of challenging high housing targets in the contemporary context, setting a context for later consideration of the role of the Planning Inspectorate and Central Government. These comments hint at the way in which political imperatives have also come to outweigh other considerations at the national level, a theme that is also further developed .

The member went on to relate concerns about the way in which large scale growth would fundamentally change the setting of the village in which they lived, comments contextualised by them having moved to Lincolnshire from London to retire:

> "...if you build just too many houses you take our green and pleasant land and turn it into another sprawling estate; is that progress? Because that goes against the ideal of what is fundamentally a rural area. Don't forget Lincoln only has a population of 80,000; it is fundamentally a medium sized market town...It has a certain gravitational pull but I would argue rather less gravitational pull than the people in West Lindsey and North Kesteven accorded it." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

The population size quoted here is half of the 160,000 population size earlier quoted for Lincoln by the chair of the JSPC. Whilst population might superficially be considered objectively measurable the differences illustrate an ability to frame population size according to purpose; the Draft Core Strategy quotes a figure of 165,000 people for the Lincoln Policy Area, which includes several villages in Lincoln's outskirts, whilst the 2011 Census gives the population of the administrative area of the City of Lincoln council as 93,541. Each member adopts the number that more persuasively supports their argument, with the chair looking to illustrate the wider impact of Lincoln, whilst the non-JSPC member seeks to downplay this.

Echoing the 'inevitability' of growth a senior officer at one of the partner districts, closely involved in the process, noted that they didn't "...think there has actually really been a point where we've sat down and thought actually...is growth the answer or not?" (CL14-District Council Director). This was suggested to be symptomatic of the broad acceptance of the need to manage growth that would take place anyway. The interviewee went on to reinforce the sense that at least some of the planned growth is acknowledged to be a political choice, rather than demographically driven:

> "The bit that has kind of been lobbed on, a bit under the radar probably, is the bit about the additional growth, because the rationale for that has been the employment." (CL14-District Council Director)

Within this is a tacit admission that emphasising the extent to which the planned growth is a demographic imperative is somewhat misleading. However the comments serve to highlight how the growth narrative has been immune from serious challenge, having evolved in line with the evolution of the partnership. Indeed the way in which the growth agenda originally emerged from the predecessor partnership; LAJSPC was related rather more critically by the earlier, non-JSPC, elected member:

> "That held its cards phenomenally close to its chest...All of a sudden the growth agenda is a little bit like the Phoenix; it emerged from Zeus' head fully formed...It's never really been discussed in full council, it's never really been something which the major political parties have been given an opportunity for buy-in. Now all of a sudden it's rolling forward. Nobody feels they own it. Nobody feels they're capable of stopping it..." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

Behind this is a sense of the power afforded to the members involved in earlier iterations of the partnership in shaping the area's future. Conversely the lack of ability to challenge growth from outside of the partnership is considered in further depth later.

Citing the aforementioned notion that "when planning becomes party politics it's bad...If you look at a planning committee we all leave our politics outside" the same councillor went on to note how this lack of opportunity to challenge was being responded to politically:

> "...it's becoming politicised, party politicised, so you have some of the independent members using it as a political beef, against the party which has overall control...I think it would be very unfortunate if politics came into the policy process but...what other

mechanisms have they got, to either oppose negatively or to challenge constructively?" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

The comments emphasise a contrast between making choices in either a political, or a party-political, characterising the latter as getting in the way of deciding what is good for the public.

Echoing this the county council director expressed their own reservations about the proposed targets, drawing on the tension caused by the continued legal requirement to have regard for the Regional Plans despite the clear intentions of the Coalition government to abolish them:

> "So halfway through our process the Regional Plans disappeared...I think had we not gone so far down the road or had each district had to go to first principles, then maybe they would have questioned a little more whether those growth forecasts were right" (CL16-County Council Director)

This confirms the continued influence of the Regional Plan housing targets but also begins to construct them as a 'black box', where their assumed validity is now starting to be questioned. Indeed another county council officer cast doubt on whether the Core Strategy's adoption would be sufficient to increase annual housing construction by the 700 units per year necessary to reach the proposed targets, from a base of 1300 annual completions. They instead suggested that the abolition of the Regional Plans would allow greater flexibility to suggest lower numbers of housing completions in the initial years of the plan. Elsewhere similar questions were noted to have been asked by board members for the Local Enterprise Partnership, representing housing developers.

The overall story about the planned growth is perhaps best summarised by the external consultant working with the unit, who suggested that "...some people don't think it should be quite as big...but on the other hand I don't think you can turn the supertanker round now; you've gotta go with what you've got." (CL7-External Planning Consultant). There is an inevitability about the planned growth but an increasing sense that the hindsight allowed by the abolition of the Regional Plans is causing questions to be asked about its appropriateness. The tone of the comments reveal a lack of perceived space in which to address this.

Western Growth Corridor

One example of the enthusiasm within the Central Lincolnshire partnership for growth, but also of the way that growth has become politicised, is a proposed housing site named the 'Western Growth Corridor'. This site, to the West of Lincoln City Centre, has long been considered an appropriate site for housing development, due to its location close to the centre, to the railway

station and to other key routes. However a senior officer related how three attempts to develop the site had been opposed by the Environment Agency, on the grounds that the site was at high risk of flooding, as well as being somewhere that floodwater could be stored:

> "So part of it is a strategy conflict between them and us...there has been real concern as to the impact of any development. And that's why we've done quite a lot of work...we've got some kind of actual, demonstrable evidence saying 'actually this is how you could do the development'...And actually what the development will deliver is an improvement to the risk that they currently face from flooding." (CL14-District Council Director)

Indeed one of the district council leaders cited the Western Growth Corridor as a key example of why the JPU were behind schedule in completing the Core Strategy:

> "...the Environment Agency in the end, I think, have been very reasonable. Lincoln city would probably say no because they wanted 5000 houses there and the Environment Agency's saying 2700. But I did hear, before we actually started this Local Plan I did hear the previous man in charge....say that they would never accept any building on that site at all..." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

However a representative of the Environment Agency suggested that Central Lincolnshire were not willing to compromise over the site:

> "...we've had fairly regular meetings with them in terms of trying to discuss a contentious site...they present something as a consultation but I get the feeling that it's not really consultation...rather than sort of sitting down and discussing the issues from the outset...saying to each other 'how can we work together?', it's really a question of they know the outcome they want and they justify it." (CL24 – Environment Agency Representative)

From these comments there is a sense that any concerns about flooding were overwrought by the potential for growth on the site. As a result of the long-running dialogue between the local authority and the Environment Agency the planned development has become party-politicised, through its use in political campaigning leaflets suggesting that the planned development will exacerbate flood risk. Consequently this is an example that, alongside the leaflet promoting growth, suggests tendencies for public information to be less than balanced in nature.

Lincoln Eastern Bypass & Community Infrastructure Levy

The assertion was put forward by one of the district council leaders that the county council's involvement in the partnership was cemented by the economics of large scale infrastructure, through the receipt of £50 million, or 50% of the project cost, from central government to construct the aforementioned Lincoln Eastern Bypass. Particularly the member noted that developer contributions from housing development around Lincoln, in the form of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money collected by the districts, would be needed to fund the shortfall:

> "...it pulled them in and they have been a very full partner I would say in the last eighteen months to two years. Before that I think it was a case of districts get on with it; a superior attitude! But I'm happy now that they are fully on board." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

Officers working with the JPU presented a scheme for the allocation of CIL to each of the three district authorities in late 2013. A large part of this was allocated to the development of a new road to ease congestion; the aforementioned Lincoln Eastern Bypass. In a time of reduced public spending the planned housing growth was framed as absolutely vital to the development of this road going ahead:

> "...a lot of this is going to hinge on the ability of the CIL charging authorities to extract money from developers and that's already being watered down through the latest reforms, so I think there's some serious doubt now as to how much can be delivered to the right standard." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

These assertions make it difficult to separate housing development from infrastructure needs, something that has also been emphasised in the communication of the planned growth strategy to the public. Indeed another interviewee noted that a particular risk to the plan was that the individual partner districts could undermine the plan by choosing not to agree to the proposed CIL regime and projects, a decision that remains with the individual partner districts, as opposed to the Central Lincolnshire partnership.

Elsewhere the extent to which this is can be seen as a strategy that is inherently risky is illustrated by the announcement around this time, alluded to by the interviewee, of the 'Boles Bung'; the expectation that 25% of CIL receipts would be redistributed to parish councils, thereby threatening the ability to build the bypass. Particularly fears were expressed by one JSPC member that Parish Councils would waste this money on repairing the village hall roof, rather than providing community facilities. Moreover this does put forward a particular view of what constitutes

community facilities. These are fears that effectively illustrate the delicate and highly interdependent relationship of the proposed housing and infrastructure developments, in turn further reinforcing the growth narrative and arguably increasing its resistance to challenge. The comments can also be suggested to characterise parish councils as subordinate to the JSPC in serving the public's needs, setting a context for how other groups have been engaged in the plan-making process.

A Realistic and 'Deliverable' Plan?

Concerns for writing the plan in a timely and therefore economically efficient manner strongly echo an apparent pre-occupation with the need for the plan to be realistic, in the sense that there needs to be a reasonable chance of the plan's proposals happening on the ground.

A particular feature of the committee meetings was how elected members revived discussions around renewable energy and affordable housing, after the publication of policies in the Draft Core Strategy. In the case of affordable housing the JPU were asked to revisit a policy that was felt to be unrealistic in practice. Drawing on technical work looking at the local affordability of houses, the Draft Core Strategy included a policy that 40% of new housing in Central Lincolnshire should be affordable (CLJSPC, 2013, Policy CL12, p.84). The wording of the policy acknowledges this to be a high target but includes scope for negotiation on a site-by-site basis. However further discussions moved the provision of a particular quantity of affordable housing away from being an acknowledged necessity, instead reframing the issue as something with political dimensions, with merits and drawbacks to pursuing a higher or lower level of affordable housing.

A similar tone was apparent in the view of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) board members, as related by the officer responsible for managing the board:

> "...a lot of the housing board members were just in shock because they're people who develop on this patch so to speak!...people from the development world have kind of fed back and it's still 40% you have to come back and give a really good explanation as to why you're still at that figure..." (CL13-Local Enterprise Partnership Officer)

If these comments again echo the extent to which policy debates have moved away from the principles that underpin the need for affordable housing, and toward the requirement that affordable housing is viable for the private sector, they also begin to hint at the way in which the LEP amplifies the influence of the private sector.

A similar process was set in motion around the proposed policy on renewable energy, where the committee took objection to an illustration included in the Draft Core Strategy, showing how targets for renewable energy production might be met, the example including a high proportion of wind energy. The committee's debate was not framed in terms of cutting carbon emissions, but in terms of landscape impacts and government subsidy, with significant doubt about whether such targets could be realised.

The tension between economic growth driven by private investment and the move towards low carbon living was also highlighted in a highly revealing comment made by an officer participating in one of the Duty-to-Co-operate meetings. This suggested that the viability of the large urban extensions may need to be supported by abandoning many of the environmental measures that would need to be incorporated into the new houses to fulfil the aim of low carbon living.

Reflecting this an elected member outside of the JSPC suggested the high targets for generating renewable energy to result from a process involving officers who "...are young and there is a tremendous amount of, sort of, Greenpeace idealism built into this...", leading to a set of "staggeringly unrealistic" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member) energy targets. These comments highlight the tension between being ambitious and idealistic, and drafting a plan according to what private investment is considered likely to deliver, a point addressed directly by the elected member, who emphasised the need for balancing ideals with a need for plan targets to be "realistic and deliverable". Accordingly addressing what is in the public interest requires navigating these tensions between viability and ambition.

It is also a debate taken up by a senior officer at one the partner district authorities, who reflected on the increased difficulty of using planning processes to secure economic growth, in an economic context where new employment opportunities are far less likely to be delivered on designated sites. Their views were again reinforced by the LEP, representatives of which questioned how Lincoln might be expected to attract growth in the financial and service sectors, as envisaged by the Draft Core Strategy. The LEP officer's feeling was that these difficulties had not been well accounted for by the Core Strategy.

Overall it can be suggested that there was significant doubt over whether ambitious targets set by the Core Strategy can ever become a reality, but where this is strongly contextualised by the expectation that planning is done by the public sector and delivery by the private sector. Yet what is also interesting is the difficulty in getting away from the word 'growth' in these discussions, and its inherent connotations of economic growth. This is unsurprising given some of the expressed

drivers behind the partnership's formation. However it is also a rather abstract term, one that arguably hides the impacts of 'growth' on the day-to-day lives of Central Lincolnshire residents. This contrast sets the scene for later considerations of how groups such as parish councils engage with plan-making. It also sets the scene for the next section, which considers some key changes in national policy that have set the context for making the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CONTEXTUALISING FACTORS?

The Influence of National Policy and Institutions

In addition to the particular structure of the Central Lincolnshire partnership there are also a number of other external factors that have shaped the openness of the Core Strategy preparation process. Particularly these can be seen as a result of policies and initiatives put in place by central government at the national scale. Key amongst these influences have been the National Planning Policy Framework and 2011 Localism Act. The former of these further emphasises the expectation that forward plans should promote economic growth and planning for new housing to address a national shortage. The latter introduces Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Duty-to-Co-operate and Neighbourhood Plans, where the first two of these can be shown to have had a particular impact in shaping who and what has influenced the Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy.

Both Labour and Conservative members of the JSPC highlight an inherent tension between the need to adhere to national policy and the rather 'populistic' nature of national planning priorities under the coalition government, described as "...a constantly changing theatre." (CL17-JSPC Chair). Another member noted how changing policy has delayed the process of writing the Core Strategy, as a resulting of continually needing to check its conformity against the latest policies. Thinking about the impact of these initiatives sets a context for thinking about how different groups are engaged in the plan-making process.

Imagining the view of the Planning Inspector

It is clear from many of the interviewees involved with the partnership that a particular influence on the direction of the plan was whether it was likely to be found 'sound' when examined by a Planning Inspector at the Examination in Public (EIP). Particularly this was apparent in concerns expressed about delivery rates for new housing. This is reflected in the remit given by senior officers to the planning consultant brought in to assist the unit with project management:

> "I was also asked to particularly, originally look at the sustainable urban extensions and to think of a way...could enough information be put in place to convince an Inspector that they were viable, that they were goers?...pieces of evidence to say 'this is where we are, we're working with developers.'" (CL7-External Planning Consultant)

There is a sense that the role of the planners is to persuade the Planning Inspector above all others that the plan is the right one. This also imbues the inspector with particular expectations, such that planners need to be able to narrate for the Planning Inspector the story of the growth strategy, in light of doubts about the extent to which it is realistic:

> "The main strategy is credibility because the delivery of this large quantum, which is historically unprecedented, gives cause for concern and it's something the Inspector will press hard on at the EIP, but it's difficult to go against that given the political pressures for growth." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

One view from the JPU was that planning for housing numbers slightly above the targets originally set out in the Regional Plan would be an effective strategy for getting the plan through its Examination in Public. This is partly in response to an environment in which the most common reported reason for Local Plans being withdrawn from examination is the failure to plan for sufficient housing. In turn this prompts recourse to a wider question about how EIPs are turning on a single question of 'growth'. The same interviewee went on to note the likely need for an alternative strategy to the planned urban extensions, in order to convince the Inspector that the targeted growth can be delivered:

> "...they need a Plan B, which is what Inspectors are increasingly keen on and I can only see that being presented via the villages so it could lead to a more dispersed pattern of development in the early years of the plan...they need to demonstrate significant progress on that by the time they come to the EIP because the Inspector will ask the question." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

These comments suggest the considerable effort put into thinking about how the Inspector will perceive the plan. The officer's suggestion that Plan B will involve dispersing more development to the villages has significance when taken with the comments made by some of the parish councils about the planned growth, particularly given the contrast between building very large urban extensions on relatively untouched land and adding small extensions onto rural villages, changing the interests involved. Ultimately such concerns have given the growth imperative at the heart of the NPPF an imagined voice in the plan-making process, through imagining how the Planning Inspector will judge whether the Local Plan is in compliance with the NPPF.

Whilst urban extensions have come to be considered the most appropriate way to deliver new housing in Central Lincolnshire the need for an alternative strategy breaks the link between an

abstract target and how this physically manifests itself on the ground, by emphasising the importance of numbers rather than of the resulting built form. This is very much in line with earlier comments about dropping measures to make new housing more environmentally friendly; taken together such actions characterise the delivery of housing numbers as more important than all else in serving the public.

The influence of this imagined presence was illustrated by the JPU bringing in a different external consultant to act as a 'critical friend'. As part of the Planning Advisory Service's support to local authorities this consultant's role was to advise on how they felt a Planning Inspector would perceive the Core Strategy. As such this section has illustrated the extent to which the process of plan-making, and how it embodies the public interest, has been driven by the need for the resulting Core Strategy to pass examination by the Planning Inspectorate, a need that is further evidenced by consideration of the introduction of the Duty-to-Co-operate.

Duty-to-Co-operate

Under the 2011 Localism Act the Duty-to-Co-operate with certain bodies is conferred on local authorities preparing a Local Plan. This requires the local authority to demonstrate that they have made efforts to engage with and resolve issues raised by adjacent local authorities and statutory agencies such as Network Rail, the Environment Agency and Natural England amongst others. A particular characteristic of the duty is that it cannot be fulfilled retrospectively but must have demonstrably taken place from the outset of the process. Whether the duty has been discharged is a test of soundness for the plan (DCLG, 2012) and, theoretically, cannot be addressed without starting again if the Planning Inspector finds that it has not been properly dealt with. It is therefore unsurprising that the JPU officers put significant time and effort into arranging meetings with its neighbouring local authorities, including Nottinghamshire County Council.

Commenting on whether the Core Strategy would effectively offer a strategic overview a senior officer at the county council suggested that "It takes in strategic issues through the Duty to Cooperate, which is really a sort of fluffy, second best alternative..." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer). In comparison they felt that "...the Regional Plan was able to agree very difficult housing growth figures across a region so that individual authorities didn't have to fight each other...You've got the fundamental out of the way, you say 'right where are we going to deliver them'." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer) Intrinsic to these comments is a sense that the Duty-to-Cooperate reintroduces local politicking, where the Regional Plan was more effective at putting aside an attachment to local wishes, in favour of considering regional need.

In reality the process raised few issues that could be addressed through the Core Strategy but points to how the Localism Act introduces a new set of interests that the Local Plan must have formal regard to. To a certain extent this is reflected in the way consultation comments were reported to the JSPC, with the comments from statutory authorities reproduced in full but comments from the public summarised. The question that this prompts is around the extent to which such a duty replaces more general public consultation in the consciousness of those preparing the plan.

The Local Enterprise Partnership

One of the bodies included in the Duty-to-Cooperate is the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), a group with whom Central Lincolnshire have made particular efforts to engage. As such the inclusion of the LEP in the Duty-to-Co-operate specifically brings into the planning process a set of interests who would have been otherwise expected to contribute through more generic processes of public consultation.

Indeed the effort put into engaging with the sixteen members of the LEP board were highlighted by an officer working with the LEP:

> "Yeah we've had three presentations...Central Lincolnshire have been good at communication...Equally I think it's fair to say our LEP board has been challenging to them around employment growth, job creation and particularly deliverability..." (CL13-Local Enterprise Partnership Officer)

The need to overcome a strong view, amongst private sector LEP members, of development management as a barrier to their plans, in order to persuade them of the benefits of engaging with strategic planning to set a framework for development management was put forward by a county council director. Indeed the director also reminded of the need for the LEP to engage with other Lincolnshire authorities to the same extent that they have with Central Lincolnshire, reflecting the amplified status of the partnership. Consequently there is a sense that considerable effort has been put into bringing into the plan-making process a small number of people, with a particular interest in planning facilitating the operation of private sector interests, strongly concurrent with the economic growth narrative put forward by central government.

Overall this section has put forward a number of formal mechanisms that more or less explicitly have the impact of emphasising the view of central government at the local authority scale. In turn this promotes a particular view of the public interest as about growth.

HOW IS THE RESTRUCTURING SHAPING ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER GROUPS?
Closing the process to other elected members

Whilst the Duty-to-Co-operate and LEP specifically open the plan-making process to a new set of groups, giving them a formalised influence on the forward planning process, other aspects of the Central Lincolnshire partnership structure have tendencies towards closing the process to groups who have traditionally had more influence over plan-making processes. Particularly an elected member outside of the JSPC noted how elected representatives at their authority who were not selected to sit on the committee were locked out of the process:

> "...there is what left wing politicians call a 'democratic deficit'...if my residents say to me 'but what has your involvement been in the consultation I'm invited to take part in?' I have to say that my involvement doesn't go a huge hill further than that of the...quarter of a million odd other people who live in the JPU area." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

The same councillor further noted that, until recently at their authority, "the works of the Joint Planning Unit were specifically excluded from the scrutiny process" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member). As a result the councillor felt that "because you've locked out a lot of the ordinary councillors it is not a very contended process" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member). Crucially they noted that, despite being a member of their authority's planning committee for development management, they were only tangentially involved in the process that is intended to set the policy context for the committee. This was strongly reflected in the comments of a non-JSPC member from a different district, who noted that "We're not really in a position to say 'no, that's wrong'; because...of its construction as a statutory body..." (CL25-Non-JSPC District Member). Particularly this reinforces the inside/outside nature of the partnership, but also reduces the potential for a more inclusive dialogue about the plan's vision for the area's future.

This expectation that elected members outside of the JSPC engage through the public consultation process at the particular authority in question was also reflected by a JSPC member, when discussing the Central Lincolnshire's profile amongst non-members:

> "...they can get their head around the fact that we're in a union with the other districts for Central Lincolnshire. But I think the Core Strategy concept is very difficult. And I think that, until it's a particular incident or something is brought to members' attention it floats past

them...by and large, they don't see that it concerns them particularly." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

Indeed the leader of a partner district council went on to suggest that elected members outside of the JSPC had not always made the effort to engage:

> "We've done a lot of work we've done with our members...There are those who are very interested and will turn up and I should think that's about, what, 60% of the councillors; some who never bother at all and then just come running up and say 'what's happening here? I didn't know this was happening!'" (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

Such comments speak to the earlier consideration of JSPC needing to be able to adopt an appropriate mindset for making decisions about the area as a whole. In turn the implicit suggestion is that non-JSPC members may make insufficient effort to helpfully contribute to the plan-making process. However comments from other JSPC members do indicate variation amongst the different partner authorities, with some holding full councillor briefings to ensure that non-JSPC members are kept up-to-date. Indeed one member noted how Central Lincolnshire matters are discussed at a particular committee within the council, including inviting along officers involved with the process and allowing fellow councillors to raise particular concerns. However the overall impression is that the plan-making process has removed the direct ability of most elected members to influence the process. The resulting extent to which the partnership's structure concentrates power amongst particular members has significant consequences for whether it can be thought of as democratically representative.

Conversely the non-JSPC member went on to elaborate how this lack of engagement and information flow was leading to dissatisfaction with the process:

> "Some members feel I think quite vulnerable to what their populations will say about development in which the members don't feel they've had any particular say and that there is also emerging political trend where some members are I think going to use for example housing allocation...that that will be used in a very political way, but that's I think inevitable." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

The same member also cast doubt on whether democratic involvement was ever designed into the planning process for Central Lincolnshire:

> "I think they thought about it in a very managerial way, and they thought about it as a negotiating process between four local authorities and government institutions above them. But I don't really think they thought for more than five minutes about all those people out there. And all the democratic representatives who represent all those people out there." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

Following from comments about the party-politicisation of the housing site allocation process the implication is that because members do not feel ownership of the process they challenge it in order to appeal to their constituents. Equally the suggestion that plan-making is seen as a process, rather than as a dialogue builds on the aforementioned lack of challenge to the growth agenda, setting a context for how other groups are engaged in the process.

The Ill-Informed Public

The significant time, effort and resource put into large scale public consultation by the JPU was asserted by several interviewees. However this was contextualised by views of how difficult it was to engage the general public in the plan-making process:

> "...I kind of veer between an absolute commitment to the fact you must let people know, you must engage them in what's going on, and a very real intellectual struggle with the fact that actually most people haven't got time and they're not terribly interested and they just want it to happen...On the other hand if it's happening near you, you have incredibly vociferous views about it, not always based on very good understanding..." (CL7-External Planning Consultant)

The external consultant making these comments went on to note the difficulty of engaging around 300,000 people; giving them a sufficient understanding of the plan-making process in an area where levels of education are perhaps lower than average. In turn this alludes to the contrast between plan-making as an activity that is either with or for the public.

Following earlier comments about the extent to which elected representatives had been locked out of the Central Lincolnshire partnership the same non-JSPC member commented on how the "public interest involves a level of democratic involvement, whether it's direct democratic involvement, or whether it's a representative involvement" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member). This theme was echoed in the same member's comments on the potential for direct democracy:

"...the direct side is left but you have actors, be they parish councils or be they individuals, who are fundamentally ill informed and ill-trained to scrutinise; they may express an opinion. Or they may say 'bugger it, I can't be bothered'." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

These comments contribute to an emerging theme around the extent which effort is needed to engage with plan-making, following from the expectation that elected members do make efforts to engage deeply with the process. Similar themes are apparent in the JSPC chair's comments on public engagement, though they do assert the importance of more abstract strategic planning matters in impacting on day-to-day life:

"The day-to-day, long term, rather abstract strategic planning processes of 'look we've got to think thirty years ahead...isn't going to enter the consciousness of most members of the public...until they see the connection between those wider, longer term things that we grapple with and, you know, their day-to-day fortunes, because, my goodness, they do impact on people's day to day fortunes..." (CL17-JSPC Chair)

The chair's comments point to a contrast between the strategic principles and how these are practiced through the everyday making of decisions on planning applications.

The partnership has also continued to publish a quarterly newsletter with the aim of keeping those interested up-to-date in between these occasional points at which the plan is specifically put out to public consultation. However this suggestion that the public find it difficult to engage with planning until a specific proposal with very tangible impacts comes along was a common theme amongst several JSPC members:

"Unfortunately what happens in practice in my experience is people will suddenly say 'I didn't know we could respond'; they don't engage... And once you've got to a position whereby a site's put forward for three hundred houses; nobody's actually objected or engaged into that. It goes through the planning process and they say 'we don't want all these houses!'...And even parish councils can sometimes be, reluctant..." (CL18-JSPC District Member)

However this view of promoting understanding is challenged by a district elected member who is not part of the JSPC in the suggestion that "There is a fixation amongst officers and councillors, and I'm not just talking about councillors from any particular one authority here, at the top that they know best" (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member). This again points to the role of representative

democracy, provoking questions about whether the wider public's lack of interest in the plan-making process is exacerbated by tendencies to frame the Core Strategy to the public as abstract in nature.

The same member was additionally critical of how public consultation responses have been treated:

> "...they have received objections, they've received comments and not simply ignored them but I have watched senior politicians and senior planners deride them publicly and deride for example Parish Councillors for making, for expressing reservations about whether we actually need 42,000 houses building." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

Although they need to be treated cautiously the comments suggest a lack of respect for opinions of non-planning experts. They are comments that should be borne in mind in relation to later reflections from parish councillors in getting involved in planning. Overall though the section suggests that the strategic/abstract nature of the plan and the inside/outside nature of the partnership have strongly structured how the public at large have been engaged in the process.

Public Engagement in Practice

The response to public consultation was noted by a longstanding member of the JSPC to have been generally disappointing:

> "...over two years or more there have been various meetings...which haven't been particularly well attended...I mean the whole of the consultation I think from the public has been extremely disappointing and I think they've only had about 700 responses I think throughout." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

This is framed as a lack of interest on the part of the public, something that was qualified by a senior county council officer commented on the stimulus for different groups getting involved and the way consultation was therefore designed:

> "I think Lincolnshire organisations act when they can see some significance to themselves. I don't think they engage in, if you like, in philosophical discussions about things; I think they leave that very much to the...public sector...so a lot of our effort I suppose is trying to increase the level of understanding and knowledge, prior to asking questions."(CL16-County Council Director)

Implicit within this is a need to overcome self-interest in order to encourage dialogue about collective interests. Similarly another senior officer from a different partner authority commented on how well the idea of Central Lincolnshire was understood, suggesting that understanding was growing, but also that the partnership hadn't made enough of Central Lincolnshire constituting half of the county's population. It is interesting that this draws on the political motivation behind the partnership, in terms of an increased national presence, embodying the assumption that if the residents of Central Lincolnshire felt part of a bigger construct this would encourage them to engage with the process.

Moreover an alternative viewpoint was put forward by an elected member, not part of the JSPC:

> "I don't think the consultation's been done very well...I think the way it's been done has also hindered it because it's been too dense and technical, which has stopped people engaging with it because they feel they're not in a position to get involved." (CL25-Non-JSPC District Member)

Particularly this reflects a tendency for planning to be framed as technical activity. This was further reflected in the regret expressed by one of JPU team leaders, that they had not been able to take the consultation process further, suggesting that alternative methods may have helped to gather a more representative set of views.

> "In hindsight I'd had ideas that I'd like to have done which are probably things like...targeted working groups with proper community representatives rather than trying to get the numbers...quality versus quantity really...sounding boards of representative people would probably had a better effect on the plan than...seeking to stimulate responses to surveys and questionnaires...to people that are generally the angry mob that actually comment, rather than the people that are influenced by it but don't necessarily react, haven't got a problem with it." (CL22 – JPU Team Leader)

However the same officer went on to note that such a process would have required additional resource, echoing the concerns for economic efficiency underpinning the partnership.

A member of the JSPC noted that "The local press have been very good....Radio Lincolnshire and Lincs FM they've all been very good at promoting this; 'out for public consultation', 'make sure you go'" (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member). Echoing this a junior JPU officer commented on the sequential nature of public engagement, suggesting that the initial stages of the Core Strategy

process are more about informing the public; the officer went on to assert that neither members nor officers could do much to influence overall planned levels of growth, again echoing the framing of growth as technical necessity.

The same officer went on to suggest that consultation is more useful to planners at the site specific scale:

> "And that's when it really will potentially affect local people, and consultation there is probably the most beneficial to the planners…because, you know, there's specific issues on streets, localised flooding, surface water drainage, which sometimes isn't picked up on the documents that are done and therefore…the public can generally sort of influence consultation a bit more…" (CL5-Junior JPU Officer)

A very limited insight into how the allocations work was progressing came when the Head of the JPU briefly interrupted an interview with the chair of the JSPC, commenting on a village hall meeting:

> "Once they'd stopped attacking me they started attacking each other, because of the different views about growth…Unpleasant at the time but a great success!" (CL17-Head of the JPU)

Indeed this sense of disagreement about growth, but also the high level of interest in its impacts on specific places, was further elaborated on by the junior JPU officer:

> "Two of those were very very controversial and well attended. We had two settlements where we probably had about four hundred people turn up at the Village Hall. Very varying views on development…highlights the interest that the allocations process is going to have...Most events were well attended, I think there was only a couple where we had probably only twenty people or so." (CL5-Junior JPU Officer)

The lack of a consensus amongst those at the meeting reflects the suggested role of elected members in trying to understand these conflicting views, perhaps also legitimising the extent to which the process can be seen as top-down in nature. The same officer went on to note that in some places they had been met with protests, making it difficult for officers to put forward the partnership's view on growth.

One of the JSPC members noted that the public did not have speaking rights at the committee meetings, acknowledging that this made it difficult for the public to engage with the committee, but without going so far as to suggest the importance of changing this:

> "...they can ask a question if they write in but we don't have the three minute thing...And also I think because quite naturally we do move our meetings from one district to the next and so on. And they're on a Monday morning at 10 o'clock..." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

This has the effect of formalising the idea that elected members and the general public should engage with the plan-making process through different mechanisms, to a certain extent removing the ability for elected members to directly experience public views, in contrast to planning committees dealing with individual planning applications. However the same interviewee suggested that it would be difficult to change this arrangement.

Echoing this the external consultant further suggested that public engagement was extremely difficult, except at the very local level, where it is extremely resource intensive:

> "...something I've often thought is about members as leaders of the community...it's a two way street; they shouldn't just be bringing their own community's views into the council, they should be going out and telling their communities...that to me seems the only way really you could get your tentacles of information out into the individual communities..." (CL7-External Planning Consultant)

These comments highlight the traditional role of representative democracy as a mechanism for linking the views of many thousands to the very small group of people writing the plan. However it is apparent from the earlier discussion of the lack of influence that non-JSPC members are able to have that this has not been the case in Central Lincolnshire. It is consequently difficult to pinpoint how public consultation has impacted on the Draft Core Strategy.

Privileging Particular Interests

When officers were asked to consider how widely understood the partnership was and who the Local Plan would have an impact on the interests first cited are those of private developers, ahead of the general public:

"Certainly the developers and the agents and people like that that we work with; they definitely get it. I think, even the general public I think get, you know, get why we're doing it. " (CL14-District Council Director)

"An impact on everybody; more so the people who are probably involved in the planning process but you know, the Joe public as well, because, ultimately it's changing the place where they live…probably developers and agents and probably landowners more than anybody." (CL5-Junior JPU Officer)

Both sets of comments characterise the impacts on the public as subordinate, echoing the extent to which development is increasingly the purview of the private sector. This is further amplified by the reflections of a district council leader on the considerable developer and agent involvement in the process of engagement, when compared to the general public, if they also felt that commercial sensitivity was stalling any dialogue. Indeed the suggestion that the plan may privilege developers is further reinforced by an elected member who is not a member of the JSPC commenting that the plan was worded to allow developers to come along and build many thousands of houses:

"…many of the officers involved have had extensive meetings, which are not publicly minuted, with developers, which again seems to me challenging to any kind of transparency in public process…We've got no understanding of what commitments are being given. However if I look at the emerging plan and I was a developer and I wanted to rewrite the plan it's the way I'd rewrite it." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

If this lack of transparency again highlights the issue of commercial sensitivity in the development industry it also serves to further emphasise the extent to which the partners are reliant on the private sector to 'deliver' their plans. The passage also highlights the potential for development interests to influence the plan in a less than transparent manner.

Offering a different perspective on involvement with the plan was a regional policy advisor for the National Farmers' Union (NFU), who emphasised the importance to the NFU of being involved in the Local Plan process. This was noted to extend to advertising public consultations to its members using both email and NFU magazine, leading to more farmers getting involved in the plan-making process. They were however very clear about their own focus on particular themes within the plan, often dismissing two thirds of the plan. They also considered local authorities to

be effective at taking any comments made on board, if this was partly considered to be driven by the Coalition government choosing to give agriculture a higher standing:

> "...we do get Local Plans changed and, or we get text changed and I think our comments are very valued. And there are a lot of cases where planners will contact me and say, you know, 'we're thinking of writing a policy on this, what do you think? Or 'in the light of comments you've made we want to change this to, in this way.'" (CL19-National Famers' Union Representative)

Similarly the advisor noted that under the Coalition government local authorities had become "much more pro-growth than they were, you know, five to ten years ago, no question." (CL19-National Famers' Union Representative). Indeed it is noteworthy that it is not necessarily the NFU's aim to protect agriculture:

> "...if a farmer actually owns the land on which the houses are built he's off to the Cayman Islands or wherever and good news for him. So we certainly...don't take an anti-housing view at all...the main beneficiaries of development are in some cases farmers and we cannot argue against that." (CL19-National Famers' Union Representative)

The organisation can be characterised as a privileged interest, not least through being able to engage with the terminology of planning. Equally the advisor noted the availability of support for farmers wishing to make their own objections to the Local Plan, for example on issues such as traveller sites, where the NFU itself would be reluctant to object without 'valid agricultural reasons'. As such there is a sense that, as a membership organisation, the view presented by the NFU is a broad approximation of the self-interest of farmers. However the advisor did show interest in protecting what might be considered more traditional agricultural values, such as protecting high grade agricultural land. The resulting question is whether farmers may be characterised as part of the wider public, or as a self-interested group.

Differing Relationships and Distance from the centre

The presence of several Neighbourhood Plans in Central Lincolnshire also gives some insight into the relationship between planning efforts at different scales within the area. In one Neighbourhood Plan, located quite some distance from the JPU's Lincoln base, the understanding of the planning process was very good, helped by a chair with a strong planning background. However the chair of the group noted that they were distinctly unimpressed with the JPU's blunt

attitude towards their efforts, symptomatic of the distant relationship between the partner authorities, the JPU and the community:

> "The question was raised of us a fortnight ago is 'have you thought of now just stopping and giving us all your work and we can use it in our development plan document?' There was a polite answer to that which they just about got and there was definitely a less polite answer." (CL15-Neighbourhood Plan Group Chair)

Certainly this is isn't helped by the observation that when attending the discussed meeting the representative of the JPU "...I wouldn't say they quite bored the rest of the group, but they spoke in a level and language of local authority bureaucracy that you could tell that people were turned off." (CL15-Neighbourhood Plan Group Chair). The exacerbation of this distance by the joint-working model was reflected in a more benign manner by the external consultant, who, when talking more specifically about the Central Lincolnshire context, noted that:

> "...they're trying to deal with such a large physical area and such a lot of people...you can't spend five years talking to every Parish Council about what's going to be in the Core Strategy because the world will have moved on and it's how you find mechanisms that are as good as they can be without costing an absolute fortune." (CL7-External Planning Consultant)

The comments once more illustrate how economic efficiency acts as a structuring influence on the plan-making process.

The theme for this section has been the way in which the larger physical area of Central Lincolnshire has affected how the public have engaged in the plan-making process. Particularly it is worth noting the extent to which the process appears to privilege those with planning expertise. In turn this sets a context for looking at how other groups perceive the key issues enrolled in the Core Strategy.

HOW ARE OTHER GROUPS ENGAGING WITH THE KEY ISSUES?

Parish Councils: The Lived Experience of Infrastructure

It was felt by the JPU that everyday experiences of place would be helpful in assisting the public to influence specific locations for new housing beyond the urban extensions to be included in the Core Strategy. Those interviewees who belonged to one of the Parish Councils were often able to relate the impacts of inadequate infrastructure on everyday life, exemplified by a parish council chairperson responding to a developer consultation on a planned new housing development:

> "...I said to him 'how many roads have you got in and out of this?' 'Oh only one.' Excuse me how is it going to...accommodate an extra two hundred houses, I mean it's bottle-neck now...you see this is the thing with developers;...the infrastructure, they don't think about it." (CL11-Parish Council Chair)

Indeed the very localised concerns of many residents, including parish councils themselves were reflected in the views of another parish council chair; they noted that the parish council were very active in matters such as keeping the cemetery in good condition and acting as a conduit for people wishing to complain about non-working street lights, for example. Particularly these comments demonstrate a keen awareness and knowledge of matters that impact on everyday quality of life. However, despite this concern for understanding the village, the interviewee was very clear about the lack of control the parish council has over planning applications, if they were often invited to comment on local planning applications and frequently took advantage of this, for example where they felt they had particular knowledge about the state of road junctions.

The particular parish council had also been involved with their district council in forward planning matters such as affordable housing:

> "...we worked with them because although the Parish Plan, or our parishioners said we don't want any further development, we wanna retain our village identity, we realise that it is gonna be thrust on us if we didn't..." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

However the chairperson noted their disappointment with the resulting houses not being occupied by village residents, suggesting that "the whole idea was so that local people; youngsters who want to get on the property ladder and all that and people who work in the village or who have got ties with the village can come back".

These comments give a strong sense of who they felt the village was for; implicit in this is a sense of who the public are in decisions made about the village. Conversely a different perspective was offered by the leader of the local district council:

"...the Parish Council has sent a note round recommending everybody to say 'we don't want any affordable housing'; I ask you! And when people talk to me about affordable housing; 'we don't want those sorts here' and I say 'what sorts? They're your sons, your daughters, trying to get their first step on the ladder'...12 affordable homes in that area; those people would be assimilated very quickly...I think it's people are unable to look ahead." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

The strong belief in the capability of the parish council as a body for understanding a village's needs and wants was further reflected in the same interviewee's later comments:

"And because you live there, because you're talking to people all the time...You put a simple article in the village magazine and you get this tide of opinion...You might not get answers in a form, on a form saying tick the boxes or anything like that but you understand and you know what people want and you know how they feel." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

This makes for an interesting comparison with the formal mechanisms associated with the Core Strategy. However the same interviewee also noted that they felt their own reasons for living in the village helped them to understand the views of residents:

"And you know that yourself because, you know, we moved from London 16 years ago to a village location. That's what we wanted; we wanted to move out of the metropolis and we wanted a village location and I don't want to see this village turned into an urban sprawl..." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

This conflation of the views of residents with one's personal views makes it difficult to get a sense of how varied the views of residents actually are. However the emotive nature of planning at a very local scale was also felt by the interviewee, exemplified by a planned electricity substation:

"People can get very hostile...When you're dealing with some really emotional and emotive things like that people tend to get, you know, finger pointing almost; 'you make sure it doesn't happen, you do this, you do that'." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

Accordingly there is a sense that the parish council is expected by residents to feed into decisions made at the district scale. Moreover there was a hint that this very inter-personal interaction was overriding the ability of the parish council to be pragmatic:

> "...we have a policy, a blanket policy, that we're against all back-to-back and tandem development in the village; the reason being is, is that it is one of the most emotive subjects ever…we found that if you look at individual ones and you recommend or you say to district when it comes to planning, 'well, you know, yes we agree on that but we don't agree on that one' then you get this problem with people coming up and saying 'well why did you agree to that?'"(CL10-Parish Council Chair)

These passages raise the awkward nature of planning for future development that is likely to benefit newcomers but will have a negative impact for existing residents.

Reacting to the Local Plan: A mechanism for opening up contestation?

The fieldwork took place at a time when Neighbourhood Plans were getting into their stride. For one parish council joining forces with a bordering Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan was seen as a way of resisting the very large scale of housing growth proposed by the Core Strategy, in light of the idea that "people want to keep it rural. I can see in the future that your children probably won't know what a green grass looks like, do you know what I mean?" (CL11-Parish Council Chair). Particularly these comments display a concern for the quality of life for future generations, partially in reaction to the considerable growth of, and resulting change of character in, the adjacent village. However the comments also perhaps demonstrate a naivety about the expectation that "Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan" (p.44, DCLG, 2012):

> "...if they come in and say 'oh look, there's a lovely piece of ground there, we'd like to put three hundred houses on' and we've said in our plan we don't want, we want ten, then (Local District Council) have to abide by that, so once we've got the plan in place we have this, bit more (legal status)." (CL11-Parish Council Chair)

Implicit to this is, again, a view of the village as for existing residents.

Equally the chair of another Neighbourhood Plan group reflected on the effectiveness of the process in drawing into planning those who wouldn't otherwise take an interest:

> "...if you're stood carrying out a consultation event and people know who you are you can have a more meaningful conversation than perhaps somebody who's sort of parachuted in...if you don't know the place when people then start questioning you about stuff, your answers can become a little bit...patronising perhaps?" (CL15-Neighbourhood Plan Group Chair)

In commenting on how the parish was opposed to growth a parish council chair highlighted the high rate of response to the preparation of a Parish Plan:

> "When we did the Parish Plan we got over, over a 40% return; very strong village community, village identity, village containment. Very, very strong. This created a lot of discussion, a lot of quite heated, you know, again the finger; 'you make sure we don't make sure we don't want any more major, multi-occupancy developments'." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

Indeed this same high response rate was reflected in the comments of an elected member at one of the partner districts, who had previously worked on a Village Plan:

> "...it got a phenomenal amount of buy-in and response rates to the parish plan surveys are normally in the sort of 15, 20%s; we got more than 80%. I had to knock on damn near every door three times to get it but we got it! That was a very useful process, the problem is there was no way of implementing it within the planning framework." (CL12-Non-JSPC District Member)

These high response rates echo earlier comments about the resource intensiveness of effective participation. Echoing this final comment another parish council chair was also keen to stress that whilst they had heard about the partnership's formation they felt that they could have little or no impact on Central Lincolnshire's work. These comments were strongly reflected by the chair of another parish council:

> "I do go to Core Strategy meetings when they happen, when I can because, obviously, I like to know what is basically going on. Whether we'll have a lot of say in that I don't know. I really don't understand all that side of it quite honestly to be truthful. I just go along, make notes, come back and report to my people...then we all sort of go 'oh my god'!" (CL11-Parish Council Chair)

This emotive reaction to the significant growth planned through the Core Strategy becomes easy to understand when combined with an admitted lack of understanding of the process. However the same interviewee did also comment that the parish council was kept well informed by the district councillors for its village.

Reflecting the role of the East Midlands Regional Plan in Central Lincolnshire's formation and the persistent characterisation of rural as 'backwards', the previous interviewee went on to cite their

experiences of the Regional Plan as behind their expectation that they could not influence the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan:

> "...I think that what the influence, where it comes in, will be diluted by the time it gets to that level. It was the same when we had the East Midlands...that...lost sight of farming communities, it lost sight of, you know, small individual villages. It looked at it purely generically and I'm sorry, that's wrong....There are good cases why people who live in remote areas of the countryside should have some sort of financial help with motoring, because if they haven't got a car they don't live, you know." (CL10-Parish Council Chair)

The general feeling of an inability to influence makes for an interesting contrast with the frustration of JSPC members expressed when discussing the lack of engagement from parish councils. Reflecting on this the chairperson noted the wider responsibility of district councillors to the whole district as well as the residents in their wards. Conversely the same interviewee had clear ideas about how Lincoln should develop, suggesting the Lincoln-centric nature of Central Lincolnshire is also felt by its residents.

To summarise the overall message is one of strong community identity, with correspondingly strong feelings about how particularly smaller villages in the area should evolve into the future. However there is a further underlying message about the significant distance between local communities and the Central Lincolnshire partnership.

CHALLENGES TO THE PARTNERSHIP

The extent to which the joint-working arrangements are considered permanent were the subject of a pragmatic response from a senior county council officer:

> "It's permanent to the extent that...it's very difficult to abolish; you'd have to go through a fairly time consuming legal process in the same way that you had to to get it set up in the first place, so I think it is here to stay." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

This sentiment was further reinforced by the chair of the JSPC, in the comment that "...to undo it would require a change of legislation through Parliament, because we have been set up by Parliament. So it's a solemn undertaking...But you can never be sure" (CL17-JSPC Chair). This note of caution is emphasised in the reflections of one of the district council leaders, commenting on the importance of the statutory nature of the partnership:

> "I honestly think if we hadn't been set up by statute, by the Labour government, I can think of one council that would have walked away in the early period. But sorry chum, you've signed up...a bit naughty really but it held us together in that initial period."(CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

This suggestion that the partnership would have faltered without its statutory force was echoed by a senior officer at one of the district partner authorities, who suggested that they were still committed to the partnership but that "...the delay in getting a Core Strategy out has definitely impacted negatively on the strength of feeling..." (CL14-District Council Director). A similar point was made by a senior officer at the county council:

> "...they are about eighteen months behind the original timetable, which I think is a major disappointment to the members who possibly don't understand the full complexity of planning...I think the politicians are increasingly sceptical about the ability of the JPU to deliver the plan to the agreed timetable." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer)

In contrast an elected member, not part of the JSPC, suggested that they had heard that the partnership would be easier to disband than was generally held by those involved to be the case.

Within such comments is a tendency to conflate effective plan-making with an economically efficient process. In turn the extent to which the four partner authorities have maintained their identity can be seen as manifesting itself in their varying satisfaction with the outcomes and

stances on the permanence of the arrangements. The different positions of the district partners were summarised by a senior officer at the county council:

> "...West Lindsey are probably debating this more...if you're on the southern fringe of West Lindsey, which contains...a good third of the population I should say, then we tend to be more Lincoln-centric. If you're in Gainsborough or Market Rasen then, or Caistor, you're much more likely to look either towards South Yorkshire or North Lincolnshire. So West Lindsey I think feel slightly more torn about whether they need to do more than they're doing and whether once the Core Strategy's finished they would then stop..."

This accords with the suggestion in the previous section that the relationship with the idea of Central Lincolnshire, particularly as a Lincoln-centric construction, varies with the distance from Lincoln. In contrast the same officer felt that North Kesteven had benefited from having an increased influence on the process, for example in providing a home for the unit, whilst the City of Lincoln had benefited from being able to influence planning for areas outside of their boundary but still contiguous with the city's built up area. The officer concluded that "...it probably will survive but I think there'd be a range of appetites for extending its powers..." (CL16-County Council Director), echoed by the views of another senior officer at one of the district partners:

> "Members' expectations of what will come out of the Joint Planning Unit is not necessarily what we'll see. We'll see a Core Strategy for Central Lincolnshire...but it's not going to have necessarily the detail which I think they may have expected...that we may have to do some sort of DPD, say around Development Management policies, I think will come as a bit of a shock effectively." (CL8-District Council Senior Officer)

This is a reminder that the Core Strategy sets out broad principles for planning but doesn't specify the detailed policies and practices that will be used to judge whether individual planning applications will help to achieve these principles, a further reminder of the interplay between principles and practice.

The officer felt that "generally there's sort of an agreement in where we want to end up. It's some of the minor details don't always come together as we'd see fit", suggesting how practices might vary in their district, when compared to the other partner authorities:

> "...we're much less precious here on things like boundaries to settlements; I think we've got a lot more settlements in (District Name) that are open to growth... and some of the

work that they might see as important we don't necessarily prioritise." (CL8-District Council Senior Officer)

In turn this reinforces the initial idea that the joint-working would allow the partner authorities to maintain their individual identities. Instead the officer commented on how the joint working for Central Lincolnshire had led to the formation of multiple working groups between the partner authorities on issues such as affordable housing and developer contributions, creating an effective network for sharing knowledge:

"...this is where we show up other Lincolnshire authorities; we all know what's going on really well and there's some really close connections in the type of work and things that happen; I think that's absolutely sort of brilliant with that." (CL8-District Council Senior Officer)

Despite this they felt that the partnership was still far from being taken for granted. The same officer went on to reiterate the importance of the efficiency driver behind the partnership, asking "... what would it have cost to deliver a Core Strategy ourselves?...once we get past that amount I then start saying...'we've now spent more than we would have delivering a Core Strategy ourselves." (CL8-District Council Senior Officer)

This passage might be considered slightly contradictory in that the benefits of partnership working are recognised beyond the efficiency argument, yet equally those arguments have not been conclusively won, such that Central Lincolnshire and the Joint Planning Unit are still not considered permanent additions to the landscape. The interviewee suggested that each district partner authority paid around £200,000 to the Joint Planning Unit, whilst the County Council paid in around £100,000, noting that they were working from a benchmark figure of £500,000 in making this judgement, based on the cost to another authority of reviewing their Core Strategy.

In contrast another senior officer suggested that permanence was inevitable partially because "financially the authorities aren't in a position to establish their own" (CL14-District Council Director) planning policy functions again, perhaps a less than positive reason for continuing with the partnership arrangements. There was however less certainty that Lincolnshire County Council would continue to be an active partner in the JPU, having only committed to help finance the production of the Core Strategy.

Infrastructure and Viability as a source of tension

Infrastructure provision was earlier suggested to underpin the county council's involvement in the Central Lincolnshire partnership. However it was also characterised by several interviewees as a source of tension:

> "It's quite easy to sort of, as a County Council member or a County Council officer to say 'oh f-ing districts'...some of our members would definitely say that!...We're more about providing infrastructure. The districts are more about providing affordable housing, there's only so much in the viability pot, there's fundamentally a tension there." (CL6-County Council Senior Officer)

Renewable energy was highlighted as a particular source of tension. In light of Lincolnshire's attractiveness to renewable energy projects a JSPC member noted that "the county have this policy of enough's enough, no more, we won't take anymore...But we said to the county you cannot say 'no more, we will not have any more wind turbines'; that's not on..." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member). In contrast doubts were cast over the extent to which the plan is realistic by a senior county council officer, conflating their views with those held by the county council's elected members:

> "There are two areas where we are taking a slightly different view at the moment as a county council...one is on energy policy; we don't believe that the renewable targets are realistic; 60% renewable...generation doesn't seem plausible to us when the national is 15%, and in fact our target is 15% by 2020." (CL16-County Council Director)

This characterisation of the relationship between the districts and the county as slightly removed is reinforced by the suggestion of a county tier JSPC member that "He feels that he'll always be outvoted when it comes to the crunch because he sees the districts as being more together with themselves than on the side of the county..." (CL9-County Council Senior Officer). Furthermore this was confirmed by a JSPC member representing a district partner:

> "Shall we say the districts don't always agree with the county or think they get enough help from the county...And of course they've just changed their members as well and that's most unhelpful. Mind you can't have somebody on who hasn't been voted, who hasn't won their seat..." (CL20-JSPC District Member)

Following from earlier discussions these comments hint at the role of membership continuity in managing such tensions. As such the way in which partnership working allows each partner to

maintain an individual identity, particularly an individual political viewpoint, is very much in evidence here:

> "We've argued and we've argued very hard indeed and somebody's more or less left the room saying 'well that's that, I shall never vote for that you know' but come back the next time having thought about and common sense does prevail." (CL21-District Council Leader/JSPC Member)

As a result there is a sense that, at least within the JSPC, the ability for partners to maintain distinctive identities and consequently varying opinions is promoting a healthy dialogue about the right courses of action. In turn this links back to the mediation role that senior officers are suggested to play in the plan-making process.

The Aftermath

Following the conclusion of the fieldwork element, the team size has been drastically reduced, now comprising less than half the number of staff outlined at the beginning of the chapter. As a result the Joint Planning Unit has been rebranded the 'Local Plan Team', including changing the logo and colour scheme associated with the team. A recently joined elected member framed this downsizing as a routine part of the plan-making process:

> "There was a general feeling that the core work had been done and delivered...once you've gathered the evidence and agreed what it means to where you're trying to go then you don't need the same people. You need a different skill set in terms of managing the unit going forward...The people who have worked on the background are too close to this, in my view, in terms of taking it through an enquiry process." (CL5-Junior JPU Officer)

In contrast one of the JPU team leaders acknowledged that the team needed restructuring but suggested that the extent of unit size cuts had come as a shock:

> "I believe that the managers genuinely feel that they can still deliver the work with a team that's potentially sort of half in size...they've failed to appreciate that the process of bringing forward policy...stimulates the delivery; they feel that development organically comes when, yeah interest has increased...but it has genuinely only come because we've reached an advanced stage of the Core Strategy." (CL22-JPU Team Leader)

The same officer expressed their frustration that the JPU's early success in attracting eco-towns funding of £750,000 had worked against them; this money was absorbed into the budget of the JPU to fund staffing, but had now run out and could not be replaced. This again emphasises the importance of economic efficiency.

Similarly a more junior JPU officer related the significant effects of the cuts on morale, suggesting that the restructure was being put forward be senior officers, with little input from elected members, other than to approve the final decision. In turn this links back to the role of senior officers in structuring the partnership from the outset.

This downsizing coincided with the Draft Core Strategy being withdrawn from examination, following concerns raised by the Planning Inspector that there was insufficient evidence to support the high housing targets. Overall then this section suggests that the economic efficiency driver behind that partially underpinned the unit's formation has come to the fore in the unit's restructuring. Simultaneously earlier related attempts to imagine how the plan will be perceived by the Planning Inspector have proven inaccurate; the role of strong evidence has been prioritised over the possibility of significant housing growth. Work is currently proceeding to translate the Core Strategy into a Local Plan, which is expected to be submitted for examination in 2016 (CLCLPT, 2015), some seven years after the partnership was first established.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall it can be suggested that the decision to pursue joint-working in Central Lincolnshire has had a significant impact on how the public interest is articulated. The greater geographical scope of the Core Strategy and the decision-making arenas that have been constructed to accompany this have had a clear impact on how the public is conceived of. This has lessened the extent to which existing groups in Central Lincolnshire have felt able to have an impact on decision-making, in turn leading to the articulation of alternative conceptions of the public interest through alternative mechanisms, such as the Neighbourhood Plan.

Not least this has been demonstrated through the growth narrative that has come to dominate the plan-making process. Whilst the realisation of this growth will have profound impacts upon the area's physical environment the hopes that this will significantly change how the area is thought about are also striking, not least in the way that it is intended to attract forms of private investment that are seen as serving the public interest. In turn this requires asking who the planned growth will serve, given the resistance to it apparent amongst many existing residents. Certainly those making decisions seem quite comfortable with the idea that growth will serve an abstract future public, in the face of it being seen as imposed by many.

In turn something must also be said about the tension between seeing the public interest as served by planning for growth, and seeing it served by economic efficiency, with a corresponding reduction in the capacity to make plans. This is echoed in the tendency to portray growth as a matter of technical necessity, but where further exploration reveals multiple narratives based on different types of knowledge.

Consequently it is necessary to ask whether articulating the public interest in terms of growth is about the right thing to do at the more localised scale, as it is framed, or whether this obfuscates the extent to which those making decisions are simply complying with the growth imperative as it is outlined through national policy. In turn this sets the context for exploring planning processes in the Peak District National Park, a construction similar in its constitution as an LPA through appropriating parts of multiple local authority areas, but very different in its national policy context.

CHAPTER 6: THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK: LOCAL PLANNING WITH A NATIONAL PURPOSE

WHAT IS THE PEAK DISTRICT?

The Peak District National Park is home to around 38,000 people, spread across 1438 square kilometres. In comparison to Central Lincolnshire this is approximately two thirds of the land area, but with less than one eighth of the population, reflecting a lack of large settlements in the Park. Conversely Figure 6 shows the extent of the Park, but also how it is contextualised by some of the UK's largest cities; Manchester to the North West, Leeds to the North, Sheffield to the East and Nottingham and Derby to the South East. Key road and rail links between Manchester and Sheffield run through the Park.

In recognition of the beauty of its landscape the area was designated as a National Park in 1951, under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The provisions of the act designate National Parks for "(a) their natural beauty, and (b) the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation, having regard both to their character and to their position in relation to centres of population". Particularly the second provision considers the designation of the Park for the public both inside and outside its borders. As a result of the 1974 Sandford Review, which considered how national parks should balance conservation and recreation, it is the Sandford Principle that guides decision-making in the Park:

> 'Where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment, then conservation interest should take priority.'

This recognises, and indeed prioritises, conservation as having intrinsic value, in comparison to the more explicit value behind protecting the Park for public enjoyment.
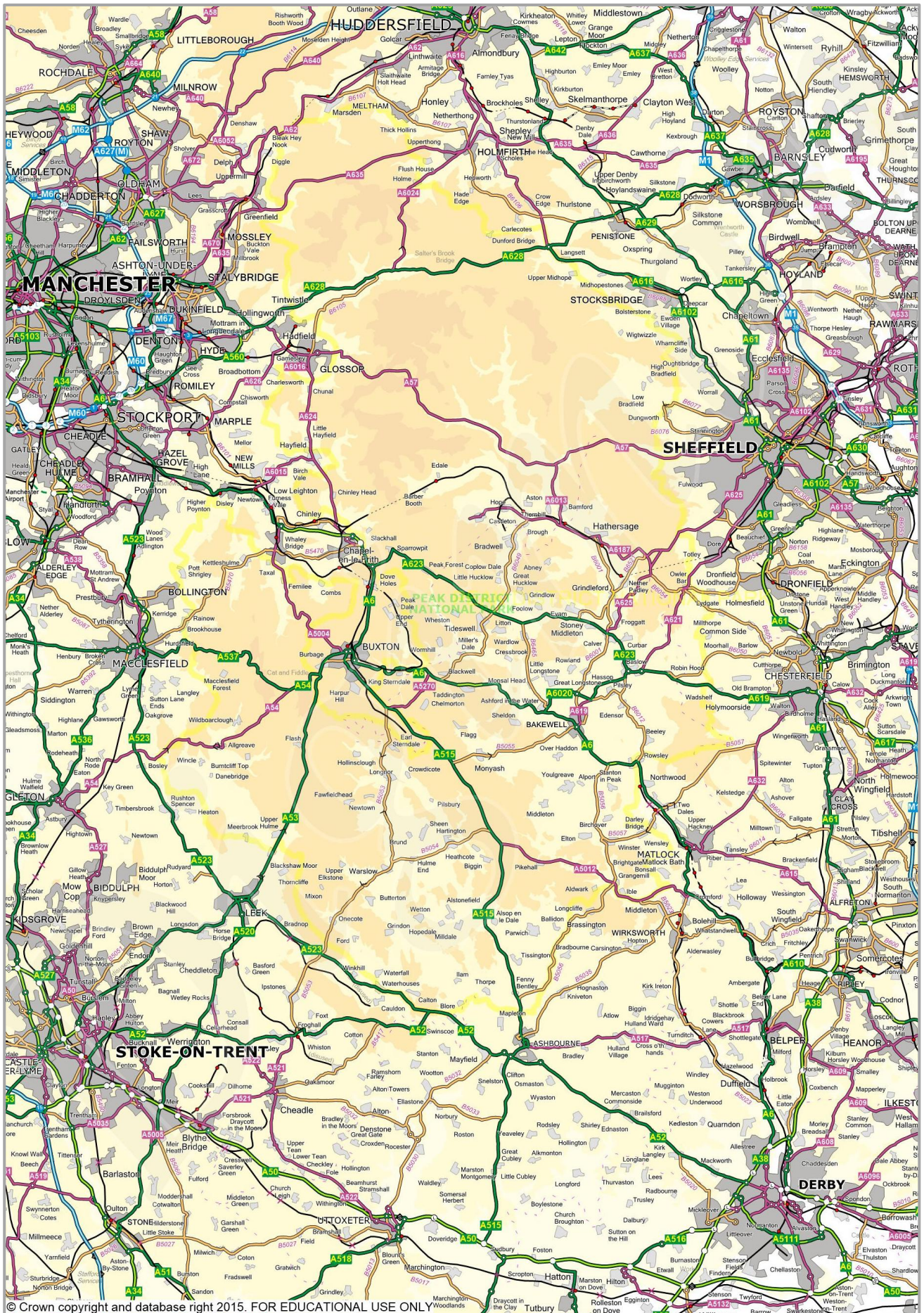
Figure 6: A Map of the Peak District National Park

The Core Strategy for the Park was adopted in 2011. The nationally defined purposes of the Park are enshrined in the Core Strategy through policy GSP1; 'Securing National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development', which explicitly states that development must be consistent with the Park's national purposes, including applying the Sandford Principle where necessary (PDNPA, 2011, pp.37-38). Similarly the vision for the Park sets out a similar sequence of principles, first seeking 'A conserved and enhanced Peak District', followed by 'A welcoming Peak District, in turn followed by creating 'vibrant communities for both residents and people in neighbouring urban areas' and finally 'A viable and thriving Peak District economy' (ibid, p.44). When thinking about what is in the public interest these provisions set up a tension between the Parks' intrinsic landscape value, the wider UK population's ability to enjoy the Park, and the needs of the Park's residents. This chapter is about exploring how these historically embedded values collide with contemporary forward planning processes, in the context of changes to how decisions are made in the Park.

WHO IS THE PEAK PARK PLANNED FOR?

The statutory designation of the Park immediately sets a strong context for how decisions are made in the Park. A key theme for the chapter is captured in the assertion of one of the planning directors that "...we have a statutory basis to what we do which other planning authorities don't...While you're working for a national park you should never have any uncertainty about what your job is..." (2-1-Planning Director). Implicit to this is the suggestion that officers should be able to draw on the Park having a clear sense of purpose.

Describing the resulting context for planning a longstanding policy officer suggested that the Peak Park is "...protected for the interests of people who don't live there", leading to "...an area where the decision-making is largely based on protecting something that's valued by the rest of the country, where those values might disadvantage the local people..." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer). The tension described here between the interests of the Park's population and the wider public outside of the Park was further reinforced by another team member when explicitly considering the public interest:

> "...38,000 people live here but actually it's not their interest that we're planning this area for exclusively. You know, their interest is important to us but it's, there's millions of other people coming here to enjoy this area..." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

The interviewee went on to note that this wider interest manifests itself in the stakeholder groups that are engaged in the planning process, but that this didn't resolve the difficulty of giving the landscape itself a voice. Both sets of comments are patriarchal in tone, following from the suggestion that officers should be guided by the Park's clear sense of purpose. In turn this sets a distinctive context for planning decisions, as outlined by a member of the authority appointed by the Secretary of State:

> "...you might find it just a little tougher to get precisely what you want but it's for good reasons. And those reasons may not just include because we're trying to protect it as a national park for people to visit; it actually might be a little bit about the reason why you want to live here as well, so don't forget that!" (2-18-Secretary of State Member)

The latter suggestion that the historical protection of the Park has maintained its attractiveness as a place to live sets a context for the later consideration of other interests in the Park. It is also apparent in the team manager's reflections on the shared sense of purpose between officers and members at the authority:

> "People are happy that big open market estates aren't going to happen, that big windfarms aren't going to happen and that we are essentially about landscape; I think at that big level there's a lot of common purpose but, at the minute, there's a lot of the real intent of core bits of policy that...we're finding it quite difficult to...get that understanding of what we're trying to achieve." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

Particularly the interviewee asserts that the national park purposes are broadly understood and accepted but that the detailed policies aimed at continuing to protect the Park are more problematic. This contrast between broad agreement about the principles underpinning the Park but less agreement about the practices that should uphold these principles set a crucial context for examining recent decision in the Park. Developing this theme the same interviewee commented on the subjective nature of local needs.

> "...policies are there to support local communities but it needs to be there in a sustainable manner...not just this individual personal need that might be transient or short term but actually you're leaving a legacy of development that should support the community in the long run; actually doesn't mean that once that house is lost we need to just replace it." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

This explicitly introduces timescale as a lens for decision-making, positioning it as allowing the reconciliation of competing local and national needs. Conversely the resulting question over whether officers, members or the communities themselves are best placed to interpret those needs is a key theme for the remainder of the chapter. Certainly the extent to which the Park must remain untouched by development in order to address its statutory purposes is perhaps open to debate, with another team member offering rather more pragmatic view:

> "...it's not an island, it exists as part of the bigger picture; things change here as they change everywhere but the speed at which it changes is slower, and that means that there's a difference between what's going on out there and what's going on in here, and 50 years down the line you'd like to think that that difference...is about the same..." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Noteworthy is how the team member refers to being inside and outside the Park, emphasising the extent to which the Park is considered a distinct entity. The same team member went on to place this debate in the international context:

"The reality of English national parks as that they're not remote wild areas, they're not IUCN[24] Category 1, they're Category 5 and Category 5 means that there are an awful lot more options in planning terms...If some of those villages get slightly bigger then is that a problem?" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Overall then this section suggests that the longstanding recognition of the Peak District landscape as worthy of protection remains well understood. However, implicit to the ways in which officers reflect on this sense of purpose as creating a context for planning activities, is the suggestion that it is the officers who are best placed to look after the Park's future. Conversely there are also hints that the extent to which development should be allowed in the Park without threatening its purposes is both rather more contested and contested by a rather wider range of groups. As such the chapter now turns to consider the way in which planning in the Park is organised.

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[24] International Union for the Conservation of Nature

HOW IS IT ORGANISED?

Within the Park planning, conservation and tourism fall within the remit of the Peak District National Park Authority. Particularly the inclusion of planning recognises the power of planning activities to shape the landscape, but also suggests the need for adopting a particular mindset when making planning decisions for the Park.

All other functions typically carried out by a local authority remain with one of the ten local authorities, both district and county tier, with land that falls within the boundaries of the Peak Park. Despite living within multiple administrative boundaries, one of the Park's directors noted that resident surveys showed residents' understanding of living in a national park to be generally good. Conversely another director reflected on the tendency of local people to see the authority as an extra layer of government imposed upon them.

Planning within the Peak Park authority is, not untypically, divided into a Forward Planning team and a Development Management team, each of which currently fall under a different planning director, though this will change with the retirement of one planning director in the next few months. Compared to working for a typical local authority the contrasting nature of working in a national park was apparent in a team member's note that some planners had left because the Park's designation limits development, leaving them unable to fulfil their ambition of getting involved in master-planning exercises. In the context of these arrangements one of the Planning Directors commented on the profile of planning within the authority:

> "Clearly planning is the most important function of the authority...If we get the planning wrong the rest of it is, I wouldn't say irrelevant, it's certainly heavily compromised because if we get planning decisions wrong our landscape protections goes. " (2-1-Planning Director)

A member of the policy team offered a slightly different perspective, feeling that planning was "...only a fraction of what a national park is about...there's many other things that cause massive changes out there that are nothing to do with the development plan." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer).

The contrast between these viewpoints is reflected in changes to the Park's governance. Until the early 2000s all members of the authority were also members of the planning committee, something felt by the director to demonstrate planning's high profile within the authority. Despite consequent changes, so that it is now made up of a subset of 18 members, the director noted that, for members, "...the planning committee is the one that most of them think 'that's the one I want

to be on' or 'that's the one that's important'" (2-1-Planning Director). This change is one of a number of governance changes that set the context for how planning decisions are made in the Park in the contemporary context.

The Political Nature of Planning in the National Park

The authority is made up thirty members, of whom eight are appointed by the Secretary of State, six are Parish Members and sixteen are appointed by the local authorities that make up the Park. In contrast with typical English local authorities, no member is directly elected to the authority, with the six members from parishes within the Park also being appointed ultimately by the Secretary of State. Considering the relative confidence of members and officers in the purposes of the national park one policy planner commented that:

> "...we'd like to hope that when members arrive at the authority they can leave the baggage of their district and counties behind and that, when they come here, they're switching and they have a slightly different focus. In terms of what they then do; it would suggest that their understanding is either not great across the board or their willingness to actually switch hats at the door is as strong as we'd like." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Implicit in this is the suggestion that, whilst officers are permanent, the authority's members come and go. Equally implicit is the suggestion that officers are more confident in understanding and upholding the Park's purposes; this is a reminder that many of the members come from local authorities who do not have statutory conservation purposes, and must instead adhere to the growth agenda embedded in the NPPF. This contrast was put more bluntly by closing comments from the policy team manager:

> "Some are really bothered about the strategy and following our purposes, others just want to support farmers and local people and don't want the bother of all of that." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

In considering the disappointment of officers with the practices of members it is noteworthy that the use of 'our' and 'we' in these passages emphasises the characterisation of officers as the custodians of the national park purposes, rather than the authority members. Conversely that members should change mindset when on Peak Park business is reflected in a request from members themselves, for a document explaining the differences between policy inside and outside of the Park. As a result the team manager suggested that of lot of discussion had taken place to consider how written reports for members might deal with the debate between the

nationally defined purposes of the Park and local needs, to answer the question "...how far in pursuing our purposes can we support local people?" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer).

The variable nature of the membership was commented on by one of the planning directors, reflecting on whether there was a shared sense of purpose between officers and members:

> "We've got a very disparate bunch of members...they don't really operate as political blocs...The benefit of that is that they should see themselves as National Park members first and foremost...I've heard them say on more than one occasion we're here as national park members...some members understandably buy into it more than others." (2-1-Planning Director)

The suggestion here is that the structure of the national park authority removes any tendencies towards the party-political, something that is characterised as a good thing. Setting a context for how members were engaged with the development plan the team manager noted what they termed a 'semi-political' input from the members. Particularly this was felt to be driven by those members representing district councils, characterised as having concerns for example about meeting social housing needs, in turn requiring reconciliation with the Park's conservation purposes:

> "The political angle from members tends to be a local political thing...it doesn't tend to be party political, although that might happen in the background; somewhere there might be little groupings, but in the committee environment certainly it tends to be with a small 'p' and it's about supporting local communities. " (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Here politics is characterised as about opening up choices, hinting that members see more choices to be made than officers. The sense that being a national park authority member should be different was reinforced by later comments from the same director about Secretary of State appointed members:

> "...they've got a much clearer sense of being here for the National Park and if you do see any groups in committee it tends to be Secretary of State members who are <u>not</u> parish councillors taking one view and the other members perhaps taking the other..." (2-1-Planning Director)

This was reinforced by a Secretary of State appointed member themselves, who noted that, whilst it was not always clear cut, such members tended to prioritise the landscape value of the Park, where the other members might be more concerned about jobs and the strength of the Park's

economy. In turn they suggested this could cause some tension on the planning committee. Particularly this view of Secretary of State members taking a collective view was reinforced by the same member noting that they had brought together this group of eight members for the first time, in order to put pressure on the authority chair to solve a particular problem.

The key argument is that a national park ideology exists, and it is felt by officers that this should overcome political ideology, and the ability to make political choices about whose interests should be served. In turn this necessitates a more thorough examination of the extent to which the authority is democratic in nature.

The Democratic Accountability of Authority Members

One of the eight Secretary of State appointed members, reflecting on their own appointment, was positive about the authority's governance arrangements, particularly about the balance that Secretary of State appointees brought to the authority:

> "So we've each got our proper justification for being there and it's a very useful and helpful mix...those national members, chosen nationally, because the other people are all chosen locally, I mean we actually kind of embody some sense of this is a national park, not just a local park for local people." (2-18-Secretary of State Member)

This makes explicit the idea that these members do not represent the Park's residents.

Particularly the member noted that they were shortlisted for their skills and experience and appointed through an interview panel including a Deputy Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a representative of Natural England and the Chair of the National Park Authority. However the same member noted that there is no mechanism or requirement for them to report back to central government, something that they expressed their surprise about; "...the deputy secretary doesn't get together the eight members and say 'well what do you think?" (2-18-Secretary of State Member). Their democratic accountability can therefore only be measured through their conscientious dedication to the role. However the same member noted how the extent to which members were elected caused some tension:

> "It's a bit pointed for some of the members who are from councils, say 'we were elected' etc; well actually they weren't elected to be on the national park, they were elected to be on their council...'yeah but we were chosen; we were actually had to tough it out in competition and we were chosen for skills and experience.'" (2-18-Secretary of State Member)

Moreover one of the Park's town councillors suggested that the structuring of the authority's membership to account for wider interests than those within the Park does, in turn, cause concern when that same membership is making decisions with very local implications, hinting at scalar tensions. This perceived lack of democratic accountability is reflected in the comments of a large estate owner, also an elected member for one of the Park's constituent districts:

"Most of my ward is in the national park, so as far as dealing with constituents who have planning issues...I won fairly conclusively in my ward yet I have no say over, or trying to help my constituents because it all goes to the national park." (2-19-Estate Owner)

Accordingly more radical changes have been mooted in the suggestion that the authority should have directly elected members, a possibility discussed by one of the authority's parish members:

"The government wanted us to have open elections right across the board, but they'd just pilot it with six. Which is quite convenient because we only have six parish members, so we rather knew where they were targeting it! So we said all thirty or none and they've gone away, because they've got other things to do." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Responding to the possibility of elected members for the Park the same parish member suggested that parish members already did have democratic accountability:

"...we are responsible to our community and elected by our community...An awful lot of the district and county are elected by people both in and out of the Park, but we're not; we are elected from within the Park so we have a big responsibility for the people we serve as well as the Park we protect." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

These comments presage an important narrative about the way in which the interests of local residents come to the fore in the contemporary context rather more so than in the past. To this end Peak Park Watch, a pressure group set up around perceived failings of the authority, commented that "Yes absolutely; they should all be elected" (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative), echoed in the estate owner's suggestion that "they should have done it ages ago" (2-19-Estate Owner). Conversely a town council member expressed concern that introducing directly elected members might be seen by political parties as an opportunity to extend their influence:

"...the more you get political parties the more you lose an individual's ability to express their own point of view because they're possibly at odds with the political line, and you get block voting." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

This coincides with the intrinsic distaste for party politics expressed by the planning director. However it also touches on the public perception of party politics, prompting a question about whether democratically accountability automatically leads to good decision making. Certainly the current organisation of the authority's membership is predicated on the notion that it does not, with particular implications for how the public interest is thought about. Particularly electing members from within the Park might be expected to change how the public is thought about by making members accountable to particular groups of people. This therefore becomes a very interesting theme as it begins to position the authority membership as bridging the gap between the views of officers and the views of outside stakeholders such as Peak Park Watch.

Governance Changes in the Recent Past

Setting out the context for the contemporary organisation of the Park's membership one of the authority's directors reflected on the changes made to its governance in the late 1990s. Particularly these changes introduced parish members, a change considered to respond to criticism that the Park wasn't representative of local people. Prior to the introduction of parish members the authority members appointed by the constituent districts numbered just one more than the authority members appointed by central government, by the Secretary of State:

> "...the balance in the debating chamber was often quite well balanced between all those interests...which tend to be brought into the room through Secretary of State appointments and their skills and backgrounds, and the local issues which tend to be brought in by the local politicians." (2-2-Planning Director)

This points to the categorisation of issues according to their scalar impact. Reflecting on the introduction of parish members the Director went on to comment on how this balance had moved towards three quarters of the membership either representing local authorities or parishes within the Park. The authority's second planning director further suggested that such changes were having particular implications for the outcomes of decisions:

> "...twenty years ago that decision in (Village Name) probably would have been a clear cut refusal because we'd have a strong enough block of Secretary of State members who weren't thinking about local politics." (2-1-Planning Director)

The example reiterates the potential for members to open up political choices. In turn the director hints at a preference for the previous arrangements, with their greater emphasis on the Park's national value. However the change is noteworthy in setting the context for events that are

explored later in the chapter, indicating a challenge to how the public interest has traditionally been thought about.

The Context for Officer-Member Relationships

The relationships between officers and members at the Peak Park Authority set a crucial context for how the statutory purposes of the Park are being translated into the planning decisions made by the monthly development control committee meeting. The policy team manager highlighted the regular contact between officers and members at training events, and the willingness of members to attend briefings with the officers, suggesting that "...there is a good climate of discussion, you know, we're not them and us..."

In this spirit the incoming planning director considered their relationship with the Chair of the Planning Committee to be critical; one where both parties were prepared to listen to each other, partially by virtue of both coming into position around the same time, but one where "...if that relationship was somehow broken or it wasn't based on trust it would be very difficult" (2-1-Planning Director). This was echoed strongly in the reflections of the committee chair:

> "I came at them in July 2012 as a completely new, different sort of chairman, who talked to people and engaged with people and got involved with the staff. The respect wasn't changed...the ability to communicate was changed because it was made clear that I needed to be talked to." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

The chair went on to reflect on the need for more open lines of communication in response to previous practice at the authority:

> "...you can't work together if there's an invisible barrier between you, which is you mustn't talk to members, which was here for a long time...as far as planning's concerned it's broken down completely and there's free communication across." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Certainly one of the policy team members commented on how the officer-membership was "...teetering on the edge of breaking down", having previously "...been very good at this authority; there's been a lot of sharing...My feeling is not as productive a relationship as it might have been 20 years ago." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer). The comments hint at the differing views between officers and members about how decisions should be framed.

The interviewee explained that a previous Secretary of State appointed member had been involved heavily in reading and editing a previous plan but that there was less willingness of members to get involved with such activities now, summarising their current perception of the relationship from a distance. The straining of the officer-member relationship was also reflected upon somewhat cryptically by the planning committee chair:

> "We've currently got a situation going on where the staff have been lobbying the members because there's chaos reigning supreme, I can't say any more than that, and executive don't like it but we like it because if you're going to make us a critical friend we have to know what's happening. And we didn't know what was happening." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

The themes of trust and personality come further to the fore if officer-member relationships are characterised as driving the planning process. A focus on these relationships is sharpened by examples offered by Peak Park Watch where this trust has ostensibly been broken. One example cited is a quarrying application, interrogated by a member with a keen interest in quarrying:

> "...(member) said 'I want a site visit' and (officer) said 'oh you don't need a site visit, it's very simple, very simple', so (they) insisted so they had a site visit and they went there and lo and behold it had all gone."..."It went to planning committee then and he hadn't altered his report saying some stone had been removed...he got really told off by the chairman..." (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

The same interviewee noted that the "...chairman has actually written...he says 'the lies and the cheating up there it's the culture, the bloody culture' but he didn't do anything about it did he!" (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative) Ultimately the group suggested that the authority operated in the opposite manner to a typical local authority, where officers follow the instructions of members:

> "...there's a lot of big problems with a campsite…a member kept asking and asking 'why are you allowing it, why are you allowing it?' And they said 'oh we'll tell you in six months', never told her, never any enforcement action." (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

These examples characterise the officer-member relationship as one where officers seek to mislead members, a serious allegation, put bluntly in the suggestion that "the officers are telling the members what to do!" Whilst it is difficult to know to what extent such cases are typical of the

relationship the attitudes outlined are consistent with the confidence of officers in the Park's purposes, but also with the implied lack of faith that officers have in some of the members.

In a tacit acknowledgement of the need to address this relationship the incoming planning director discussed the need to rebuild trust between officers and members, particularly in the officers' recommendations to members on planning applications. This is about reinforcing members' awareness that officers are obligated to make their recommendations in line with policy. Equally it meant ensuring that reports are clear in setting out the issues, particularly in suggesting where policies do not lead to clear cut recommendations:

> "They mustn't write reports that are so one-sided that members don't have faith in it...if you give the impression that every time you recommend refusal that the national park will end if this is approved, it's a bit like crying wolf; people stop believing in you...My approach has been to say to members 'if we are saying you really really shouldn't be approving this you've got to believe us because when we think it's marginal we'll tell you.'" (2-1-Planning Director)

Within this is a clear dose of pragmatism in trying to manage the relationship and build levels of trust. Equally it hints that planning expertise may be characterised most succinctly as spending time understanding all the different arguments for something. The variable relationship between officers and members, and the changing balance of interests represented, sets the context for how recent planning decisions have been made in the Park, and in turn how the public interest is being accounted for.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CONTEXTUALISING FACTORS?

Mineral Working

The context for planning in the Peak District is partially a product of mineral workings permitted by central government in the years prior to the national park's 1951 designation. Indeed mining and quarrying was noted to have taken place in the Park since Roman times, though the authority has a standing objective to reduce these activities. Based on these outstanding permissions there are still significant mineral reserves that are permitted to be mined, for example some 250 million tonnes of limestone. However the continuing decline in activities, from sixty or so workings ten years ago to less than fifty, was commented on by a Secretary of State member, noting that "we won't grant new permissions for open working unless there's a very very strong justified need... (2-2-Planning Director)". They did however suggest that new applications were handled pragmatically:

> "The only time we give permissions...is when it seems sensible to do it as a Quid Pro Quo for actually reducing somewhere else; for giving up permissions which we feel might be more dangerous to the landscape than the new one that they're seeking." (2-18-Secretary of State Member)

A notable exception is the planning committee's approval of an application to allow Chatsworth House to reopen a small quarry, to quarry stone of the type needed for the house's restoration. However there is a general sense that these compromises are about continuing to move towards the overall objective of ending minerals activities in the Park.

Historical and Structural Influences

In most English local authorities it is expected that housing targets are set in accordance with demographic trends. However in the Peak Park the authority have succeeded in having the principle accepted that any population growth will result from housing being permitted, a reversal of this principle. Whilst undertaking the fieldwork the author was involved in summarising an archive of documents and articles detailing housing policy development in the Park. The archive demonstrated how the narrative of restricting new housing in the Park has developed over time, in consultation with the other national park authorities, particularly the Lake District.

Furthermore the structuring role of more recent history is illustrated in the impact that the East Midlands Regional Plan continues to have on housing policy, with a longstanding team member noting "...the role I personally had in regional planning, when it existed, in setting up the system

which allowed this authority to have a very particular approach to housing policy" (1-11-Planning Policy Officer). This was further reflected in the interviewee's relation of concerns about the Core Strategy process:

> "...it shouldn't be blown...off track, from the track that had been established...the course is set clearly in legislation...the intent of designations was to hand those parks onto future generations. You can't vary your future policy approach tremendously...It might vary but it shouldn't be a radical change, otherwise what was the point of all that decision making in the last 50 years?" (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

These comments suggest an incremental approach to plan-making, particularly making explicit how such an approach serves future generations. In turn this contributes to thinking about the relative roles of structure and agency, and the extent to which structuring influences are seen as immovable. The passages again position officers as those with responsible for upholding a traditional approach to planning in the Park, not least through giving agency to the Core Strategy.

National Parks in the National Planning Policy Context

The NPPF states about National Parks that 'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty' (DCLG, 2012, p.26) when writing a Local Plan, but gives little further consideration to them. Where the Park fits in the national context was related by one of the authority's planning directors, commenting on the attitude of central government:

> "...this government and CLG in particular are driven by the need for growth and economic prosperity and there's gotta be a very very good reason why that isn't going on, so you can't just say 'we're a national park go away'..." (2-2-Planning Director)

Implicit to this is that the Park does not escape the creeping neo-liberalisation agenda that is being pursued by the Conservative-led government, despite being protected for the beauty of its landscape. The same director went on to note the consequent need to invoking national park status tactically:

> "...if we just constantly keep saying 'it's a national park, it's a national park' they'll just get sick of listening to us and not take much notice...we need to do it with a concerted voice across the national park family if we can..." (2-2-Planning Director)

These comments suggest an undertone of challenge to the extent that the Park's statutory designation can continue to be held up as a structuring influence on decisions. The preference for a cohesive approach across all of the national parks on key issues suggests the efficacy of strength in numbers when talking to central government. This capacity is maintained through a small central team working for all of the national parks. The need to act tactically was contextualised by

a policy team member, suggesting that national parks currently have a relatively low profile in the national policy context:

"I think the concept of a national park is a bit buried... it's buried in the NPPF, in a little paragraph. It's never seen to come to the fore when the government are doing consultations about things themselves...the statute's supposed to do everything but how do you get the message out if it's not in other things as well?" (1-18-Planning Policy Officer)

Their frustration that national parks are not given more attention in central government policy consultations caused them to wonder whether they are purposefully neglected. Certainly one of the planning directors felt that, compared with the supportive nature of the 1997 Labour Government, the 2010 Coalition Government has been rather less interested in national parks:

"...we need to get national parks back up the agenda and get the government to understand the consequences of what might appear to them to be relatively minor changes in planning legislation...how significant they can be in very sensitive landscapes like national parks." (2-1-Planning Director)

A key example of this was around the latest planning legislation changes, which the Peak Park unsuccessfully applied to be exempt from. Officers felt the authority had struggled to be heard on why changes to permitted development rights, allowing the conversion of offices to residential use and agricultural buildings to other uses, were particularly important in the Park. This was reflected in frustration expressed by the Planning Committee Chair at central government's insistence that permitted development rights should be consistent throughout England. The Chair felt that the National Parks had not been considered as places that should be exempt from these changes, despite coming under different legislation. Indeed the Chair's impassioned outburst about the current government's perceived ignorance of national parks was justified in a more measured manner, in their consideration of how national parks should differ:

"Our legal duty is to do planning within this park outside the...lack of constraint that goes on out there. Our constraint...should be more, should be different, should be focussed on protection of the landscape and promoting the understanding that this lovely space in which we live." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

In light of this the incoming planning director reflected on their desire to regain the Peak Park's traditional role as one of the lead national parks, by revitalising the Park's external profile. Particularly it was felt to be important to engage with National Parks England, central government and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), "...to make sure that we influence the right people to make sure that national parks are on the agenda" (2-1-Planning Director). The importance of a

strong external profile, alongside a strong planning team, was summarised as "...there's no point in...fiddling with the deck chairs while the Titanic sinks; because the planning system's going the wrong way!" (2-1-Planning Director). Such comments highlight the perception of the national context as important, in light of changes to policy at the national scale.

The Director felt this would have been easier to achieve with an inward focussed Head of Development Management, allowing the Planning Director to concentrate on the external context. However the former role was removed in a previous round of budget cuts, so that both roles now fall to the director. The implication is that the top down imposition of special purposes also grants a role to be vocal in shaping how these purposes should be pursued, particularly in light of the lack of attention to these special purposes at the national scale.

Contrasts with Typical Local Authorities

In order to suggest what was distinctive about the Peak District several interviewees drew comparisons with their expectations of a Core Strategy drawn up by a typical English local authority, with one in particular noting "...that we're very much landscape led and they're very much communities and economy led..." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer). Drawing on this contrast a longstanding policy team member noted how national park purposes constrain the resulting development plan:

> "...the agreed future is already established in law...so its own consideration of what the future of the National Park might be has to fit in with what Parliament has already decided National Parks are for, which sounds as if it ought to make life simpler put at present I think most National Parks are going through a kind of backlash by local members against the true impact of what the purposes say." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

Similarly one of the Planning Directors suggested that these purposes should make it very easy to have a vision of the Park's future, suggesting that "... if you don't have a vision working at a national park...a clear idea of what you expect to see...in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years you shouldn't be in this job" (2-1-Planning Director). The same director went on to note that "...most people get what national parks are about; even if they don't like the idea of it how it might affect their application for their conservatory they get national parks at a wider...global level" (2-1-Planning Director). This again emphasises the differentiation between the principle of the Park, and the practices that uphold that principle.

Another policy team member felt that these statutorily defined purposes of the national park actually made the plan-making process easier, in the way that they are suggested to negate certain needs that typical local authorities must meet through their Local Plans:

> "...we haven't got these housing numbers to achieve...We've got conservation needs to show and development we can fit in alongside and that's where I think the misunderstanding is. I think a lot of people that think we've got targets for things when we can't have targets for things, it would be contrary to what we have to do." (1-18-Planning Policy Officer)

Accordingly these comments again bring in towards their end the interplay between principle and practice; the relationship between the nationally defined purposes of the Park, how local decisions are made and the role of the development plan within this. Particularly this is reflected in the policy team manager's overview of the Core Strategy as including:

> "...the Development Strategy, which talks about the attitude to development across...the national park as a whole, these things can happen, and then at the slightly higher level, in these villages, Bakewell, this other batch of things can happen, and at different scales. So it's types of development, location and scale." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

However there is, in addition, a sense of national park purposes bringing with them greater clarity of what should happen in the long term, the impact of this on public consultation practices later being considered in greater depth. Towards the end of the final passage there is however a hint that the national park struggles to maintain its 'difference' in a context where there is a pervasive sense that local authorities must still set housing targets. Another interviewee noted that this was within a changing national context, where the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was perceived as applying to everything, causing misunderstandings about how it applies in the Park and "...less deference to statute..." (1-18-Planning Policy Officer). This theme was expanded on by the same interviewee in relation to other organisations taking part in plan-making consultations:

> "...not the statutory bodies but other bodies don't necessarily understand the context so you get some consultations where you think 'if only they'd picked the phone up to ask about the context before they'd written it' because then you've got this very negative thing, often about targets; 'you're not meeting the targets that have been set by the government', you think 'well hang on a minute, we haven't got any but you didn't know that'..." (1-18-Planning Policy Officer)

As a result there is a clear sense from within the Peak Park authority of how it is different to other English local authorities. However it seems that this is no longer felt as strongly outside of the authority, strongly evidenced by the changing national context earlier outlined. This is a theme further developed in thinking about how this sense of difference has eroded through the managerialisation of the authority.

Managerialisation

Commenting on how things had changed since he first started working for the national park authorities in the 1980s one of the planning directors reflected on how the authority had become increasingly like a typical local authority, in the way that it functions and the procedures that it follows:

> "...we felt like an entirely different animal; we didn't feel like we're part of the local government family we're our own small family. We did things differently, we were often well resourced, we were treated as a special case by ministers and others...that sense of being special in the '80s, and I'm told even more so in the '70s, has, I wouldn't say it's disappeared, it's certainly reduced...the danger is government just sees us as a district council with a different name." (2-1-Planning Director)

The same director noted their efforts to reverse this trend, by stripping away layers of management in the development control section of the authority, in order that each planner feels greater 'ownership' of the work they're doing and the recommendations that they make.

This overall trend toward diluting the extent to which the Peak Park authority is set apart from other local authorities arguably has a structuring effect on the context in which what is in the public interest is decided upon. Particularly taken with the changes in the authority membership these trends challenge the extent to which the nationally defined, statutory purposes of the Park will be taken into account in decision-making.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN PLAY?
Writing the Core Strategy for the Peak Park

A theme that has developed through the previous sections has been the extent to which plan-making is seen as a continuation of what has gone before. In turn this theme sets the context for examining the process behind the Core Strategy.

One team member considered how the Core Strategy followed on from being able to test the Structure Plan, allowing the evaluation of which policies were successful and which were not. Equally the team went to some length in trying to understand what a Core Strategy should be, including meeting with a local authority held up as exemplifying best practice, receiving input from the Planning Advisory Service and hosting day long visits from other national parks with successfully adopted Core Strategies.

A member of the policy team considered how the rest of the authority engaged with the Core Strategy's development, suggesting that it was generally very good, but driven particularly by the team leader's insistence that other parts of the authority were involved in previous Local and Structure Plans. Particularly they highlighted the involvement of officers responsible for leading Cultural Heritage and Ecology, highlighting the authority's difference to other local authorities. In turn the policy team manager highlighted the development of a project board of officers such as these, in order to achieve a working consensus around the Core Strategy as it headed towards examination:

> "We had a series of contentious issues meetings with lead members; you're doing everything you can to get to the point where you get to the examination that you've got rid of as much objection as possible, through consensus." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

The team leader went on to highlight the appointment of a project manager, and the extent to which this helped the team to get back on track with writing the Core Strategy. In turn thinking about the range of influences on the plan sets the context for political engagement and the role of consultation.

Political Engagement with the Core Strategy Preparation

Such comments can be seen as setting a context for the engagement of the authority's members with the planning process. A member of the policy team noted that members had engaged to a

varying degree with the Core Strategy's preparation, through workshops and focus groups, but also through having member champions for particular policy themes. Another team member noted that some members had been very deeply involved in the process, giving an example of one member who had 'championed' the authority's Landscape Strategy, leading them to have significant input into the Core Strategy's landscape policies. The team member noted that it was clear in planning committee meetings which members had engaged with the Core Strategy process:

> "...those members who had that close involvement at that stage, when you go in committee now and you listen; they're the ones that get it...and they will champion it and those that didn't...I don't think that many of them have that depth of understanding. " (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

However, although they were elected for the role by the whole authority membership, the member champions were noted to be concentrated amongst the Secretary of State members. The same interviewee felt that it was often easier for those members to give up the time necessary to be deeply involved in the plan-making process, a point echoed by the policy team manager:

> "It's very hard to have a detailed discussion with the whole membership...we've done options type, broad option discussions with members...across the plan there might have been half a dozen key ones; barn conversions, local needs affordable housing cases, things like that." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

Such comments rather echo the split identified in the priorities of the membership. This was also apparent from the perspective of members, one of whom noted how the number of comments on these particular issues reinforced that they were the ones needing further discussion:

> "We have very very well run workshops here where all the ideas go up on the wall and we walk round either with little dots to stick on or with comments on post-it notes...It was quite obvious what came back...they were the ones with all the post-it notes on." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Equally the team manager commented positively on what the detailed involvement of a few members could achieve, exemplifying this in relation to emerging Climate Change policies:

> "For a long time that lead member wasn't happy with the document; it wasn't positive enough, needed to be more enabling, so we continued dialogue, tried to improve some

areas to the point where he was happy and talked about it as such at committee...soon as that happens; the lead member is championing this, other members get on the back of it..." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

This highlights the role of member as leaders, particularly as people with potential to shape the views of others. Reflecting on the involvement of members in the Core Strategy process the policy team manager noted the need to be tactical in engaging members:

"...it's kind of using democracy but from a kind of topic approach rather than a party political approach; so it's good in that respect that we're dealing with issues rather than politics." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

Particularly this strongly reflects how the authority is considered to be further away from party politics than typical English local authorities. However the team manager also went on to characterise members as lay people, suggesting that "...they haven't gone through these circles of debate like we have time and again and understood every angle and they think we haven't thought about it" (1-12-Policy Team Manager). Equally this was suggested by another interviewee about local members, characterising them as driven by "grassroots politics and insurgencies", and therefore less used to working in an evidence-based manner than Secretary of State members:

"They have amazing knowledge of the area, really amazing knowledge of the Peaks and we sort of ignore that at our peril but they don't bring that sort of perhaps rigour of thinking around what it would mean in policy terms....It was a clear learning point for us." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Particularly such comments are characteristic of an 'us and them' relationship that was earlier dismissed by the same interviewee, but has been alluded to by other interviewees. The comments also start to raise questions about what evidence might constitute in the plan-making process.

The comments also begin to suggest something not about expert knowledge, but about an intensity of knowledge, brought about by spending time thinking through and reflecting on the issues, almost characterising the planner as an expert simply because they have spend more time with the issues, in spite of also characterising authority members as lay people. Indeed, when compared to the suggestion that local members tend to concentrate on local issues there is perhaps an implicit suggestion that Secretary of State appointed members tend to think a little more broadly about the issues at hand, reinforcing the identified split in the membership. Overall

though the same team member did stress the need to learn from the breadth of experience amongst the membership as a whole.

Ownership of the Core Strategy

Echoing the tendency of officers to draw on the Park's statutory purposes a member of the policy team reflected on who the development plan belonged to:

> "Members, and some officers here, might sometimes say 'our plan'; well it's not our plan...it isn't even the government's plan, it's the people's plan which this authority was charged with drawing up, and obviously has enormous influence on, but, at the end of the day, has been through a public process that allowed for disagreement, scrutiny, and it comes out as being 'the plan'; the people's plan for the National Park." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

In thinking about the public interest such comments characterise the public as an abstract construct. They also suggest the process to be one open to influence through dialogue, if this is somewhat at odds with the view that the plan should follow on from previous plans.

The same interviewee considered the ultimate approval of the plan by a committee of members to be the end of the process, the signal that the authority has reached the best position it can. However they also outlined the inherent contradictions between the publicly accessible nature of a plan and its legalistic foundation as a basis for decision making that must ultimately be defensible in court. In turn this links to the interplay between the public interest as about the ability of the public to engage with the planning process, and to have influence, and the public interest as about ensuring that the 'right' forms of development take place.

In practice the chair of Planning Committee offered a slightly different take on the adequacy of the Core Strategy, suggesting that "the strategy in general is ok" but hinting at a view slightly at odds with officers at the authority. The Chair felt that their view was not that of a planning expert, but of "a parish member who wants to see this place looked after".

Constraints on Development

The modesty in the chair's statement is revealed in the same member's understanding of housing needs in the Park, in the need to separate out housing that meets local needs and housing that is affordable:

"...you can have a local needs house which maybe you couldn't afford and I couldn't afford but they could afford. So it's not affordable in terms of the government legislation but it's affordable to...those particular people. But it's a local need, so we need to try and keep them both together, when you're doing a scheme, and apart when you're doing an individual one." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Particularly interesting is how the constrained nature of development in the national park serves to amplify even the nuanced differences in affordable housing. This is also reflected in how a member of the policy team saw the planning strategy for the Park as setting the context for very finely detailed debates about the nature of development in the Park:

"...alright it might be a house but it's ultimately one site in one village;...we have debates internally as to whether it's in the right place or it's of the right design etc etc; is it for the right person? But ultimately...we're having the right kind of debate...Ultimately we're not dealing with a big estate, we're not getting applications for the big stuff." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Again these comments illustrate how the smallest details of small developments tend to be amplified in the absence of larger scale development. Equally the same interviewee noted how the Core Strategy divided the Park up according to the character of the landscape, reflecting different cultural values, intended to reflect the different relationship that residents have with the Park, depending on whereabouts within it they live. The same interviewee noted that policy priorities for these different areas was also informed by a tier of 'community strategies', in order to ensure what they described as "spatial distinctiveness". However this approach was criticised by an architect representing Peak Park Watch, who felt that the resulting policies were overly restrictive:

"Now they're dividing landscape up even more...which is micro-management gone mad...they tell you where you can have a wind turbine in all of these areas...they've tied themselves in knots so no development can take place if they don't want it to really." (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

The implication here is that planning has too much power to constrain development in the Park. Conversely a member of the policy team noted that a lack of village boundaries in the plan made it difficult to know whether proposals were within or outside the village, musing that this seemed to depend rather more on whether the proposal was looked upon favourably by the authority.

Essentially, whilst such boundaries tend to reinforce the framing of planning decisions as technical, the potential to interpret such boundaries works to belie such a framing.

Differing Views on Decisions

Crucially this contrast between framing planning activities as technical, and as activities which require political choices to be made, plays out in the arena of the planning committee. Following the suggestion that the principles underpinning the Park's designation were well accepted, the detailed implications less so, one of the planning directors commented on the relationship between the strategic nature of the Core Strategy and the more detailed Development Management policies that sit below this:

> "...you'd tend to find that the membership and the public will go along with strategic policies but when you look at the next layer of policies, what...they become more meaty in the sense that the public start to see the possible implications of those policies." (2-2-Planning Director)

In contrast to accusations that officers dominate members the same director asserted that members increasingly arrived at different views of decisions to officers:

> "...in recent years I've seen far more examples where the officers have found the policy balance as a national park authority but the membership have gone for different balance because of their local messages...it begs questions back at the whole essence of national parks and their purposes and how you protect those properly into the future..." (2-2-Planning Director)

Another planning director felt that Planning Inspectors often better understood national park purposes than some of the authority's members, suggesting that this was reflected in the attitude of local planning consultants:

> "...sometimes you've got a better chance of getting an approval against policy...locally (than) if you have an appeal because Inspectors will say what does the Local Plan say? Whereas the local committee members who are influenced by other factors; local politics, personalities etc may not give the Core Strategy and Local Plan quite the weight it deserves." (2-1-Planning Director)

Such comments both illustrate the confident views of officers and can be suggested to characterise members as undermining these views. The suggestion that the plan is not being given appropriate weight was linked, by a longstanding member of the policy team, to the introduction of parish members, leading the planning director to comment that "I've warned the committee about that, that they need to be very very careful about how much weight they give to personal circumstances; you must put policies first." (2-1-Planning Director)

The director felt that this resulted from the aforementioned need for parish and local authority members to be re-elected periodically, suggesting that their "...high regard for what's been said to them locally and sometimes that can bring them into conflict with national park purposes, because those purposes are national purposes" (2-2-Planning Director). As a result the policy team manager suggested that members "...go straight to the details, straight to the personal case and miss the point of principle...", explaining that "it feels frustrating at the minute that there are cases that are going contrary to officer recommendation and therefore contrary to policy" (1-12-Policy Team Manager). They expanded on this by citing the influence of members of the public speaking at planning committee meetings:

> "...as soon as you get in the room in front of some passionate, impassioned local person, hear that story and quite easily turn away from policy." (1-12-Policy Team Manager)

As part of the fieldwork several planning committee meetings were observed where houses were approved against officer recommendation, in favour of meeting the needs of people with a clear connection to the Park. The observations revealed how the dynamics of the meetings were affected by the applicants and their supporters making effective use of public speaking rights, using their three minute speech to relate their needs. This is in a context where members would occasionally voice their views on the importance of maintaining vibrant communities in the Park. The result will be a number of small developments that go against officer recommendations in terms of their design and location, with a consequent perceived impact on the Park's landscape, but developments that contribute to meeting local needs.

Another recent change in the way decisions are made is that, in the recent past, planning committee decisions that went against officer recommendations were referred to a full authority meeting of all thirty members for endorsement. Under the new system such decisions are referred back to the next meeting of the planning committee for verification, so as to allow time to reflect

on the implications. One of the planning directors reflected on the adoption of this compromise, as a way of avoiding the loss of the referral process altogether:

> "There was a feeling amongst planning committee members that their authority...was being undermined by the...senior officer on the day, having the discretion to refer things to authority if they thought it was a departure from policy. It seemed undemocratic to the committee. Those people who supported it, including quite a few members, saw it as a necessary safeguard, but there was a move to get rid of it altogether." (2-1-Planning Director)

Certainly the original process can be seen as reflecting comments about the power of officers. In turn the redesign of the process can be seen as giving greater power to the members of the Planning Committee, reinforcing their ability to make decisions for the public. However the process is still intended to encourage members to think about whether they are making the correct decision:

> "It's a little bit uncomfortable in that it will allow the planning committee a month later to confirm their earlier decision and, if it's a bad decision, from a policy point of view we could be stuck with it...That doesn't mean they have to agree with all our recommendations otherwise what's the point of a committee? But they have to have very clear reasons for going against us and understand the consequences; in extreme that might be a third party taking us to judicial review because we've got a very poor decision." (2-1-Planning Director)

Implicit within this is the aforementioned distance between members and officers. Arguably the differences between the two systems are as subtle as the contrast between endorsement and verification; between an outsider reviewing the decision and an insider reflecting on it. In turn these comments reinforce the idea of a tension between the nationally defined purposes of the Park and the everyday lives of local residents. These led the planning director to suggest that it was becoming much more of a challenge to make appropriate and lasting policies in the contemporary context, because "...you can only scar your policies so many times before you then have to have an operation, you know, and fix it as a whole" (2-2-Planning Director). Echoing this the policy team manager urged the need for members to reflect on the impacts on policy, asking if it was "...better sometimes to refuse this case but to invite them to come back in a way that is in accord with the plan and not trying to find ways around it? " (1-12-Policy Team Manager).

Another member of the policy team explained how the authority had moved away from having a committee dealing specifically with planning policy, such that members of that committee who might have previously 'championed' policy when making development control decisions are no longer in place. By extension such comments characterise planning policies, not as benign, but both as living policies that can only withstand being deviated from so many times before they cease to have an influence, and as policies that are given agency by people arguing for their relevance. Indeed they also related the importance of giving advice about the intent behind the published plan policies:

> "...at the end of the day there'll be a document there and the further you go through time, unless your reasoned justifications are really clear there's always scope for nuance in intent; did it mean to be this? So to be able to go back to the evidence behind it and to the examination, to the debate around it; what did we really intend to do?" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

This adheres to the characterisation of the plan, not as passive, but as a series of arguments, in turn imbuing those involved in its preparation with responsibility to remain faithful to the arguments behind the policies. There is also a nod to the role of historical structure, in that the authority members have changed somewhat in the time since the Core Strategy was adopted. The same interviewee questioned whether this divergence could be attributed to the impression that the NPPF was all pervading, despite the fact that the legislation governing the Park in reality hasn't changed.

The subtle politics involved in getting this across to the authority's members when making decisions at planning committee are perhaps apparent when Development Management officers have been observed to address those members, calling the plan 'Your Plan'. However a longstanding forward planning team member criticised this wording, suggesting that "if you use the language 'this is your plan' not 'the plan' they then think 'well we're free to just change it'" (1-11-Planning Policy Officer). They went on to note that the process is designed to prevent such changes, to prevent the plan changing each time the membership changes. As such there is within this an overt wish to maintain the influence of history as a structuring influence on contemporary decisions.

Offering a contrasting perspective the planning committee chair, a parish member, suggested that local knowledge of the area better placed members to decide where policy should be put aside, drawing comparisons with the un-nuanced growth imperative put forward by central government:

> "...we have to make sure we don't put the wrong obstacles in their way...if we can flex the policy because we think actually it is being too constraining then we should, but that should be up to us, not up to somebody in Whitehall, behind a desk, saying that we've got to. Because they don't know the area." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

These comments return to the debate around abstract principles and more tangible practices, but in doing so start to suggest a layering of abstraction, with which support varies. They went on to note that some policies would be revisited as a result of difficulties with applying them in practice:

> "There are some policies which, as a planning committee we find we bump up against all the time…I don't want to put it any stronger than that because that's probably it; we bump up against it...they don't like the word review because that causes hiccups all round and consultations and twenty six weeks of this, that and the other. So we're going to revisit it." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Particularly the chair commented on how some policies were considered too flexible whilst others were too inflexible, citing the authority's policies on climate change and replacement houses as two problematic examples. Particularly in the case of the latter they noted how the replacement dwellings policy had occasionally allowed small houses to be replaced with much larger ones. In offering reasons for why members should be able to treat policy flexibly the same interviewee did go on to demonstrate passion for why they were in the role:

> "...one of our core purposes, apart from protecting the landscape and providing an understanding, is having communities; if we're going to have thriving communities we can't just have everyone coming home to sleep." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

The overall message is that departures from an overall strategy of constraint should be about local discretion rather than national direction, somewhat at odds with accusations that the authority is micro-managing this protection. Particularly this suggests support for the same views expressed by Peak Park Watch about the importance of people in the Park, if these views should be noted as those of one particular member.

Very Local Issues in the Development Management Context

Comments from Peak Park Watch begin to suggest that this conservationist approach, where there is little prospect of major development is manifesting itself in the authority paying considerable attention to very localised issues. Particularly the group offered an example of the authority threatening to take enforcement action again a small extension to a permitted static caravan. Whilst the action was avoided by removing the extension this was then considered by the authority to take with it permission for the caravan itself.

From the details offered such a case comes across as the authority clamping down on what could be perceived as a very minor issue, something that becomes interesting in the context of thinking about what version of the public interest such actions align with. Whilst such issues align with a highly conservationist viewpoint, in line with the Peak Park's nationally defined purposes such cases begin to suggest that there is absolutely no space within the Park for things to happen that might go against the authority's plan for how things should work.

Indeed the authority's high rate of activity in this area has also been noted by an organisation representing landowners and providing advice to them in such matters:

> "...we do tend to get a high volume of members enquiries regarding enforcements and what members can and can't do i.e. with holiday lets, with agricultural buildings which have been erected...you can either find that the Peak Park say 'well no, this isn't what it was, you need planning permission for this'...the Peak Park want to protect their environment which, you know, they're quite entitled to, but it does hinder some of our members in what they want to do, in terms of developing buildings, that sort of thing." (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative)

Perhaps more seriously Peak Park Watch also accuse the authority of mishandling planning applications, offering the example of the authority drawing over a photo-montage of a proposed dwelling to suggest that it was actually much larger than shown on the plans.

A similar viewpoint comes from a large estate owner, refused planning permission for the addition of solar panels to a listed building:

> "I've written to the Prime Minister, the Energy Secretary on my latest thing; I want to put some solar panels up...it was a crap debate. It was craply chaired...Then I had two of my district councillors abstain, I mean weasels, weasels." (2-19-Estate Owner)

In contrast a town council member offered a more positive viewpoint about the Park's planning committee in relation to the case of a Costa Coffee opening in one of the Park's towns:

> "I was very impressed by the quality of the discussion that took place from the elected members around the planning committee, and, at that point, they overturned, surprisingly, the recommendation of the officers." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

Particularly this last section comments on longstanding traditions, where personal interests are expected to be declared and acted upon, but where this in turn may prevent those people who know best the good intentions of others from acting to support those good intentions. Indeed the same interviewee made this point explicitly, in relation to their other role as an elected member as a district authority. Such comments also touch upon the role of local knowledge in planning decisions but suggest that it can be at odds with fairness and transparency where this local knowledge is held by actors such as elected members. Indeed this point is made more explicitly by the chair of the planning committee, reflecting on changes that they instigated to committee procedures:

> "Speakers used to come and then members would ask them questions and if you got a good speaker who'd got his brain switched on they got two or three or four or five six more bites of the cherry. You get a housewife come in who's a little bit...about it all and they'd go, they'd just clam up...So I stopped all questions; questions have to be directed to the officer, who should know the answers. Only if they don't know the answers will the officer go back to the applicant, because that then makes it fair; they're only answering factual information, not emotional information." (2-20-2-Planning Committee Chair)

Particularly these final comments about being invited to planning committee meetings become interesting when taken alongside discussions about the role of speakers in these meetings and their influence on the decision that is made. Such a change highlights the tension between a fair process, where applicants are able to make equal contributions, and the ability for detailed local knowledge to impact on how decisions are made. Overall though it is clear that the diluted emphasis on policy is creating space for local residents to influence how decisions are made. Again this points to changes in how the public interest is conceived of.

HOW IS THE PARK'S STRUCTURE SHAPING ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER GROUPS?

A particular theme that has been illustrated through previous sections has been the tension between the Park's purposes and the wishes of residents. The way in which the Park's purposes shape its relationship with local communities was reflected on by the second Planning Director, who described the process of reconciliation as an art:

> "Our working relationship with communities is good but we can't always agree with what they want. You know there are times when they don't want to accept some development and we think it's appropriate. There'll be times when they do think some sort of development is appropriate and we don't." (2-2-Planning Director)

Particularly this reinforces the view that the authority has a legitimate role in deciding what is best for the Park, ahead of the views of the community. The same interviewee went on to further develop this suggestion, noting how the Park's statutory purposes act as an extra constraint:

> "But what you need to get to, underneath that, is what is actual need?...And just because say 80% of that particular community doesn't want something to happen, it doesn't mean to say that within that community there isn't a need." (2-2-Planning Director)

Setting the context for such engagement a member of the policy planning team noted the public perception of planning as something to be scared of, particularly in relation to gaining planning permission. They felt that this could be overcome by people engaging with the authority on planning issues earlier in the process. However a contrasting viewpoint on this issue was offered by representatives of Peak Park Watch:

> "What a lot of people in the Peak Park would like is for planning to go back to the individual authorities like Derbyshire Dales...they're more approachable, you know. Somebody said 'why are you telling me this?' And the officer said 'Because I am the authority.' And that's the arrogance...'I am the authority.'" (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

Particularly such comments again reinforce the sense that the authority's officers play a strong role in upholding the Park's purposes, at the expense of their relationship with local communities.

Public Consultation

The way in which national park status changes how the authority engaged with stakeholders was considered by one of the planning directors:

"We do have a responsibility to those outside our borders so we do have to engage with a broader range of people. That can be difficult for local people because they think that means we're not putting them first...(District Council) can sell the 'we are looking after you' much better than we can because we, if we're honest, we're also having to look after the wider public outside the national park. And that can be uncomfortable at times but we need to be honest about that, we have a duty to do that." (2-1-Planning Director)

Whilst this perhaps takes a simplistic view of the manner in which other local authorities prepare their own Core Strategies there is a clear message about the way in which national park status changes who must be engaged with. There is also a sense of a need to be honest about this with local people. In turn a member of the policy team reflected on the way in which the statutorily defined purposes of the national park changed the scope of the public consultation:

"...it's wrong to suddenly open the floodgates and say 'we're no longer doing it that way anymore' so you're working within these parameters that people kind of know about;...affordable housing for local need rather than open market housing, so I think people know you're not talking about big change...It's degrees of flexibility." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

They went on to note that debates tended to centre on issues such as how specific the plan should be about issues such as the character of replacement dwellings, what comprises a local connection to the Park and whether a hierarchy should be specified for which buildings can be re-used for which uses. Building on the theme developed through previous sections this tends towards seeing the Park's protection as achieved by setting technical criteria for decisions, where such policies are, in turn, embodied by the authority's officers.

Another longstanding team member also reflected on how the National Park's designation clarifies the role of public consultation in:

"Arriving at policy which secures purposes but offering as much freedom of choice to the public inside that and wherever the general public or indeed the agency consultations have said things that are compatible with purposes but...operate at a subsidiary level we've tried

to build in the desire of the subsidiary level within the policies." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

Commenting on the effectiveness of the consultation process another team member suggested that it did influence the resulting Core Strategy, in helping the team to understand what the Core Strategy could do to help local people achieve their aims, within the Park's purposes. Another team member exemplified this in giving an example of a specific village where the Core Strategy had been changed to reflect local views, having significant value for people on the ground and, in turn, significant political value, but having virtually no impact on the overall planning strategy. This points to a sense of clarity about where changes to the plan can be made.

One team member considered the authority's patchy history in terms of engaging with the communities within its boundaries, noting that this had been heavily criticised in earlier years:

> "The authority's been extremely conscious that it needed to engage with communities at all sorts of levels over a long period of time. So really a lot of the input that went into the Core Strategy didn't just come through a few events in 2005/6 or 6/7...what communities, how communities felt about things was already instilled through village planning." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

However the same team member later noted it was possible to go too far with consultation, with the authority getting to the point of feeling they'd saturated communities with consultation, having also consulted heavily on the National Park Management Plan:

> "...because we were so defensive we perhaps went a bit overboard...we're suffering a bit now from that because...communities just say 'look we've told you, don't keep asking us, just go away and write the damn thing'. They don't see why it should take so long!" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

The same team member noted how senior managers and members, including the authority's Chief Executive and Chairman, were involved, giving a sense of the profile of the Core Strategy within the authority. They also noted how the team had gone beyond what the regulations require of a Core Strategy public consultation, to reinforce that the Core Strategy is for the authority as a whole, rather than simply a document produced by a planning department:

"...we used the Peak Park Parishes Forum events...we'd go out to parishes if they wanted us to go out to parishes, we used member events if members were having events. We used every opportunity just to keep the profile of it high." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Another team member noted that public engagement on the Core Strategy had consisted of workshops in several parts of the Park, as well as public meetings and exhibitions. Conversely there was significant scepticism about the value of the process:

"...the people that come are obviously people that are keenly interested and, from their perspective, it might be the first time they've done it so they will learn a lot and it helps them engage with the authority in general. It doesn't necessarily provide much material that the policy team ends up using; they often veer off the point...A lot of what is said back to you is not relevant to the process or is based on no evidence or wrong evidence...often it's based on misunderstanding." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

Indeed the same interviewee commented on how the process of consultation itself has a value but that the practicalities of consultation limited the number of residents that officers and members could meet with, limiting the extent to which consultation could influence the plan itself. There are again hints within this passage at the contrast between recognising that public consultation cannot account for the interests of all residents, and recognising the potential benefits of the consultation process other than influencing the plan. In contrast a member of the policy team reflected more positively on the relatively low number of responses:

"We never really get much more than a hundred but often it's more organisations than individuals so it represents a lot of people. Parish council or interest group, people always comment in a lot of detail for us so we get fewer people or organisations but reams of paper." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

This was despite criticism from the authority's communications team that the documents were overly complicated, with the same officer suggesting that "...you don't want to say some things in too simple terms, make people think 'oh we'll get permission for that" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer). The same interviewee later considered the unique designation of the national park as a factor in achieving a good response to public consultation:

"I think we do get a good level of attendance for most of the things because a lot of people are very passionate about the national park....You get people like ramblers' associations;

you get all the different associations as well as all the parishes..." (1-18-Planning Policy Officer)

Such comments suggest how the area's national park status enrols a different set of interests in the plan-making process. Echoing earlier scepticism about the value of consultation another team member felt that it was rare for the consultation process to bring anything new to the plan-making process:

> "...we don't hear things that we haven't heard before...the numbers of times when somebody comes up with something totally radical and new and we think, 'yep we can actually work and do something with that', and actually change policy; they're pretty rare..." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

However the same interviewee felt that changes over successive planning cycles were inevitably shaped by communities, leading to a much longer term influence. As a result the overall message about how consultation shapes the plan is a mixed one, with the suggestion that there is little immediate or readily identifiable impact on the plan. Equally it is made clear that the power to determine the extent to which the plan is shaped by consultation rests with the authority.

Implications for More General Public Engagement around Planning

Clearly the authority is making efforts to make it possible for the public to engage with planning but there is a wider theme within this around the extent to which planning should be seen as integrated with the other functions of a local authority. In this spirit a member of the policy team reflected on trying to promote an understanding of the relationship between the Core Strategy and the National Park Management Plan, starting out with a joint consultation called 'Help Shape the Future':

> "That, as a consultation, was actually quite good; there was a good document produced; it got a good response to it but it wasn't comprehensive and there wasn't enough evidence underpinning it. It wasn't well connected to spatial issues...we had to go further." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

The difficulties associated with running a more generalised consultation speaks to the debate around what public consultation should be trying to achieve, something also considered by another team member:

"In a national park authority there is also the Management Plan and now a general concern for members to be more involved with the public...the engagement process...should not be championed by the planners but planning should be simply a part of an ongoing broader engagement process and I think we're moving towards that." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

A series of meetings had been set up with groups where there were particular planning issues that required solving, meetings that continued outside of the process of preparing a plan. However the same interviewee noted that these meetings tended to last for cycles of 5-6 years, before the interest of these groups waned and attendance at the meetings dropped off:

"It's usually disagreement that stirs other people's interests but once things have been agreed most people on the outside of the authority go away thinking it's being looked after and fair enough because they've got other things to do in their lives." (1-11-Planning Policy Officer)

Intrinsic to these comments are an interesting take on the role of the local authority, positioning as the place to which interests come to both be reconciled and looked after; the local authority becomes a depository for the positions of particular interests and organisations.

Another team member also reflected on the ideal role of evidence in the process:

"...you'd have all that evidence front-loaded, you'd have it analysed, put into very simple terms for the community, then you'd go out and say 'right...this is the national park, this is what it means...on the back of that this is what we'd like to do...does that make sense to you? It tends to be the other way round doesn't it!" (1-18-Planning Policy Officer)

This passage hints at the value placed on evidence as a form of knowledge but also reveals a desire to make this evidence accessible to other groups, in order to allow them to participate in the process on a more equal footing. In this sense this section reveals both a desire to facilitate engagement with other groups, but recognising that it is difficult to achieve consistency. Particularly interviewees continued to identify a crucial role for the authority in this.

The Views of Other Stakeholders

This view of the ability of stakeholders to get involved in public consultation was echoed by a member of one of the Park's Town Councils:

> "...there is some opacity in trying to make professional documents clear to lay people. They have to be professional and they have to be robust legally, I can understand that. But at the same time they've got to be transparent for people...I think it could be made clearer." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

Taking into account the idea that there is a need to develop a common understanding and dialogue over planning in the Peak Park the same interviewee suggested that the material is not necessarily available to facilitate this dialogue:

> "...you need a development plan-lite; you need something almost on one side of A4, or two sides of A4, which are the absolute core issues that you're trying to address and these should also be the headline issues." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

The wish implicit in these comments is of trying to better understand the system, to be able to better engage with it. They also return to the debate around the interplay between somewhat abstract planning principles and the messiness of practice, but with the implication that a more widely shared understanding of the core principles would help facilitate more constructive dialogue around individual planning applications.

A very different view comes from the NFU, who noted dramatic improvements in the relationship with the Peak Park in recent years. From a low point of agriculture being left out of an earlier version of the National Park Management Plan, despite the Park's agricultural nature, a representative suggested that the authority now verged on being too inclusive:

> "And they have a special land managers forum, which is very useful, that they put ideas about the Local Plan and other things in front of. So we have a sort of extra bite of the consultative cherry if you like…" (1-22-National Farmers Union Representative)

Similarly the regional planning advisor for a national environmental charity noted that they also held an annual liaison meeting with the Peak Park authority, to review how the charity's own planning applications had been dealt with and to give the authority advance notice of proposals coming forward. The result is an agreed protocol between the authority and the charity, setting out how the two will engage over planning applications. Certainly the relative importance of the Peak Park, when compared to Central Lincolnshire was apparent in comments about the charity's relationship with each:

> "...there's probably a dozen or more planners at the Park authority that I know of and there's probably half a dozen that I have very regular contact with, whereas I couldn't tell you who any of the officers are in any of the authorities in Central Lincs!" (2-12-Environmental Charity Representative)

Instead such comments hint at the extent to which particular interests have privileged access to the authority, through their greater stature. In turn this sets the context for looking at how powerful interests are able to influence plan-making through other mechanisms.

The Ability of Stakeholders to Influence Through Other Mechanisms

In addition to public consultation processes several organisations demonstrated an ability to have an impact on the process of plan-making for the Park through other mechanisms. One example of this was the owner of a large estate within the Park, who was not adverse to also feeding views into the process through other organisations, an ability particularly facilitated through the inherited ownership of the estate, thereby hinting at the power relations between different actors in the planning process:

> "I'm obviously part of the CLA and we get our guys to do it all professionally and we feed in through committee and through email to a central guy, a central surveyor, who puts in our particular strategy and I forget what all the detail was." (2-19-Estate Owner)

Echoing this a representative of a member organisation, representing landowners throughout the UK, noted that key to their interests in Local Plan consultations was ensuring conformity with the NPPF. However the same interviewee reinforced this clarity of interest, noting the limits of the organisation's involvement so as not to put itself in a position where it ends up favouring one member over another, a position also practiced by the National Farmers' Union (NFU):

> "We don't act for our members...they phone us for advice and we can give them the best advice to our ability...very rarely would we actually go to the Council or go to a particular organisation or somebody else to oppose something or to query it." (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative)

Indeed, in common with interests such as the NFU, this organisation also has the ability to lobby central government, and indeed European politicians, through its London based headquarters. Particularly the interviewee noted meetings with the Transport Secretary over the High Speed 2 railway line and with the Department for Food and Rural Affairs over the European Common Agricultural Policy. Equally their Chief Planning Advisor was noted to have close links with

government ministers, including writing a paragraph included in the NPPF. The aforementioned changes to permitted development were suggested to illustrate the success of such lobbying:

> "...diversification is very important to farming and land ownership...obviously the changes in permitted development which have just come about...will be very beneficial to some rural areas, rural businesses who've got business use on various buildings and will then be able to convert them into residential...so that's very welcomed...it's a success on our part from our team in London, who've lobbied long and hard for that." (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative)

Such a position is very much at odds with the Peak Park authority's efforts to achieve an exemption from such changes.

The potential power of such organisations becomes even more apparent in their ability to collaborate with other organisations, with the interviewee noting the NFU to be a "...close ally of ours on various things and we do collaborate and cooperate in challenging government on various issues. Two voices are better than one" (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative). Whilst it might be expected that the force of an argument underpins its impact, such comments continue to suggest that impact is about strength in numbers.

The power of coalescence into larger organisations becomes more interesting in the context of another stakeholder's efforts to make its voice heard by forming a partnership to overcome a lack of statutory powers. A member of the Town Council in question noted that they were a statutory planning consultee but with little power over the final decision, leading to it forming a town partnership with local interest groups, retailers and the relevant local authorities, including the Peak Park:

> "...I suppose quite bluntly we're trying to give ourselves a bigger voice, because if our voice could influence the voice of the other three, within that forum, it gives a better chance for partnership to be proactive." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

The partnership was felt to be have had mixed success, particularly in starting to encourage dialogue between different interests in the town, if changing how the authorities worked with the town council was seen as a longer term goal. They further suggested that the Peak Park had been highly supportive in terms of giving officer time to support it, but that the county and district tier authorities appeared to be trying to avoid taking on responsibilities from the partnership.

A planning advisor for an environmental charity that owns around 13-14% of the land in the Peak District considered how closely the charity's stated aims aligned with the Peak Park's statutory purposes, consequently suggesting that it would be surprising if the Park's Local Plan didn't reflect the charity's stated aims. Particularly where organisations such as the NFU are in favour of less stringent planning restrictions the charity is explicitly in favour of producing forward planning policy as a way of protecting its assets against undesirable development:

> "We're usually conflicted when we go into a hearing session because...we're usually looking for something to be changed and the last thing we usually want to see is a plan found to be unsound so we've then got no certainty, you know, protection policies are up in the air; opportunities for developers to get something in before a plan gets adopted." (2-12-Environmental Charity Representative)

Contextualising these thoughts the same interviewee echoed earlier comments about the inadequacy of the authority's policy on climate change:

> "...Peak Park have acknowledged to a degree that they need to revisit climate change or at least review policies on climate change. They think they're positive enough. One or two vociferous people...think they probably need to do a bit of a review." (2-12-Environmental Charity Representative)

Indeed, given its core aims to protect heritage and landscape assets, it is interesting that the charity pursued its concerns about the policy as far as the Inspector's hearing, though without much success. More recently however the interviewee suggested that the policy's robustness was also being challenged through planning appeals. Elsewhere the advisor touched on other areas in which the charity had had an impact on the Peak Park's Core Strategy, particularly through co-operation with English Heritage to suggest a revised Heritage policy at the submission stage:

> "We produced a statement of common ground for the Inspector; so that was tripartite...effectively that new policy was just cut and pasted into the final plan...That was a rare example." (2-12-Environmental Charity Representative)

In common with the other two membership organisations the environmental charity divides the UK into regions that tend to cover a large number of planning authority areas. Equally the charity also demonstrated its ability to engage with different constructs in order to achieve its aims, exemplified through its previous heavy involvement with, and strong support of Regional Plans. Particularly they noted that the charity had managed to achieve changes in heritage policy in the

East Midlands Regional Plan, in order to protect the settings of heritage assets. In turn they were able to use these policies to ensure that local authorities took this into account in Local Plans and Core Strategies. Indeed the charity's ability to project power through processes such as regional planning, as exemplified in this passage becomes interesting as it then uses regional policy as a structure in influencing more local policy formulation, in a similar manner to that employed by the aforementioned land owner membership organisation.

The same interviewee went on to note how regional policy content has been lost due to previous national policy requirements that Local Plans should not restate regional or national planning policy, lamenting the loss of the regional approach. Particularly they suggested that regional planning had strengthened the role of evidence such as Landscape Character Assessments, feeling that this has continued to influence Core Strategies. As a result they related efforts to encourage the Peak District to make the Local Plan's heritage policies more locally specific:

> "...it was doing little more than restating national policy and regional policy and we got them to lengthen and refer to one or two, they'd got some characterisation documents, Conservation Area Management Plans and Appraisals and we just made reference to those..." (2-12-Environmental Charity Representative)

Indeed the profile of the charity has also been demonstrated through a high profile campaign mounted in opposition to the NPPF, perhaps putting its viewpoint rather at odds with the two membership organisations previously mentioned, but again indicating how important national planning policy is considered to be in shaping local practice.

Overall then the organisations considered here have demonstrated a willingness to shape the plan-making process through other mechanisms, with the member organisations demonstrating the power that their geographical reach affords them. Particularly the influence on national and regional policy, which in turn constrains local policy making shows an ability to project power at scales other than the local authority

Local Enterprise Partnerships

What is perhaps missing from these considerations of planning for a national park is any notion of economic development, noted later to be something of a thorny issue. However the profile of this issue is perhaps illustrated through the Peak Park's engagement with multiple Local Enterprise Partnerships but ostensibly without being a particularly active player in any of them. The position

of the Peak District as an associate member of the Sheffield City Region LEP was related by an officer working for Sheffield City Region:

"...they keep their hand in various LEPs... We go along to Business Peak District, so, for example, on things like growth fund we engage with people with businesses based in the Peaks...we have quite a few board members that live in the Peak District but I'm not aware of any our board members that have businesses that are based in the Peak District." (2-20-Sheffield City Region Officer)

The same interviewee suggested that representatives of the authority attended when there was an appropriate agenda item, describing the relationship as "...not a particularly active but a constructive relationship where necessary" (2-20-Sheffield City Region Officer).

Such comments rather reinforce the imagination of the Peak Park as a lovely place to live for those who can afford it, at odds with other views of what the Park should be, as later considered. However, in response to criticisms that the Park was 'anti-business' a more pragmatic approach to balancing the needs of business with the Park's purposes, was outlined by one of the authority's directors, in the context of the Park being covered by the predominantly urban LEPs for Sheffield, Nottingham, Derby, Manchester, Stoke and Leeds:

"...we've created Business Peak District and it's bringing together from about half a dozen different business sectors in the national park...they're working with us to try and build cases in which we have our dialogues with the LEPs..." (2-2)

The same interviewee noted that the Park's application to be a rural LEP in its own right was unsuccessful, due to central government's feelings that LEPs should be about the interaction between urban and rural areas, rather than only about the urban. However a consequence of this is the lack of funding specifically for the Park, with the authority only able to access funds through the urban-based LEPs. Consequently the interviewee lamented the loss of regional government:

"When it was a regional approach, regional government, I could go to the regional office and make a case for, I mean they had a rural team at the regional office so it was more straightforward and it was one place to go to whereas now we have to go to six." (2-2-Planning Director)

In comparison the representative of a membership organisation representing landowners noted the organisation's keen interest in engaging with Local Enterprise Partnerships, seeing themselves "...the voice of the rural community and landowners and rural businesses, to be able to make sure

that they get a slice of the European cake through structural investment funds and make sure that rural is represented..." (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative). Indeed the engagement of the organisation with the LEPs is interesting to compare with the apparently less active engagement of the Peak Park Authority, as earlier noted.

Overall this section serves to reinforce the sense of a lack of attention to the distinctive nature and history of National Parks by central government, when undertaking policy reform processes.

The National Park as Understood in Surrounding Areas

Following on from the idea of understanding rural-urban relationships a policy team member commented on the Park's relationship with its constituent authorities on planning matters, suggesting that they often saw the Park as a barrier to their own ambitions:

> "You get the bigger involvement from those that have all the population...but isn't necessarily as supportive, you get lesser involvement from the peripheral big urban ones but actually, in terms of what they say...they get it. They're proud of the area, they're proud of how it contributes to the bigger picture." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

This is strongly reflected in views from a senior planning policy officer for Sheffield, who expressed support for the authority's highly protectionist policies, as a way of maintaining what is seen as an important asset for Sheffield, with access to the Park making the city a desirable place to live:

> "...they want the implications of any development for the Peak Park taken into account; they've got a standard form of words;...'development on land which is conspicuous in the Peak District National Park should protect and enhance the Park's landscape and scenic beauty and not conflict with its purpose or harm its valued characteristics.' You'll probably find wording similar to that in other neighbouring plans." (2-15-Senior Planning Policy Officer, Sheffield City Council)

The extent to which the Park is regarded as important is suggested in the weighing up of the importance of good transport connections between Sheffield and Manchester, which conflict with the protection of the Park's landscape. The interviewee suggested that any increased capacity would not be allowed to be at the expense of landscape quality. Instead the greatest impact noted was the Park's effect on Sheffield's housing market, despite later suggesting that the city would never seek to actively redistribute housing development to the Park:

> "...some of the existing dwellings there kind of cream off the top end of the market but in a sense that takes pressure off the city...so maybe the Peak Park takes a bit of our demand that way." (2-15-Senior Planning Policy Officer, Sheffield City Council)

Such comments reinforce earlier suggestions of the Park as nice to place to live for the privileged few, at odds with the views of those wishing to make the Park more affordable.

These views are reinforced by views expressed by an Economic Policy Officer working for Sheffield City Region and its associated Local Enterprise Partnership, who commented on the Park as "...one of the strongest assets we actually have" (2-20-Sheffield City Region Officer), relating how it contributed to quality of life in the area and, in turn, as somewhere to invest in:

> "...clients come to the region and they take them to the Peak District. They take them for a walk and they kind of show them the countryside and then they take them into possibly Sheffield City Centre...then they try and flog them some stuff, you know!" (2-20-Sheffield City Region Officer)

The overall message is that the two areas do not have a significant impact on each other, leading to a lack of engagement that is apparent from both organisations:

> "...we've been quietly supportive of each other because in a sense they benefit from the thriving city over here, we benefit from really high quality countryside over there." (2-15-Senior Planning Policy Officer, Sheffield City Council)

Indeed the same interviewee went on to hint at the way in which Sheffield City Council subtly perpetuates the protected nature of the Peak Park by taking it for granted:

> "Got to take the Peak Park for granted in a sense; we value it but it isn't consuming political energy...If there were sort of a threat to the Peak Park...Sheffield certainly would be an ally there." (2-15-Senior Planning Policy Officer, Sheffield City Council)

Overall this section has examined how different interests have different relationships with the Peak Park, but particularly the extent to which these are constituted through different mechanisms. In turn this sets the context for examining the basis for challenges to the Park's purposes.

CHALLENGES TO THE PARK

A recurring theme for the chapter has been the extent to which the statutory purposes that underpin the Peak District's designation as a National Park have been embedded over several decades. The unique membership structure and imposed boundary that are associated with this have long been open to challenge and this has been emphasised in the changing national policy context. This section is therefore intended to address some of these challenges.

The District Councils

Early in the chapter it was noted that the boundary of the Park cuts through several different local authorities. In turn one of the planning directors commented on how the inclusion of planning in the remit of a separate national park authority is challenged every few years on the basis that it is democratically unaccountable, due to its members being unelected:

> "There's a cycle where somebody says we think national parks should hand back their planning powers to district councils and there was a move about a year and a half ago to do that...every now and again, somebody, perhaps one of the district councils, will say 'that part of the national park is in our district, we should have responsibility for planning.'" (2-1-Planning Director)

There is therefore a relatively local undercurrent of challenge to the Peak Park which is further developed in this section, with its basis in the Park's undemocratic nature considered elsewhere. Particularly comments from another of the authority's planning policy officers suggest such challenges to be inevitable:

> "There's an undercurrent of pressure that's consistently applied from one or two of the constituent councils for us to do things differently...there are politicians in those councils that have never liked the way the authority plans for the area and would, at a stroke, be rid of us and take planning back...It will come back again at the next examination." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Such comments emphasise the extent to which planning is political in nature, and subject to political choices being made.

At one point the possibility of a joint approach to plan-making with authorities of which large areas are within the Park's boundaries was explored, very much in line with the approach taken in Central Lincolnshire. However the rejection of this approach highlights the extent to which

different objectives underpin planning activities in the Park; it was felt that having to accommodate these more growth oriented objectives would undermine the use of planning to protect the Park, whilst suggesting that the district authorities could undertake planning for the Park:

> "...planning in the national park was with the districts at one point, back in the 70s... it was decided that there wasn't the feel for a national park and that was reflected in some of the development decisions." (1-17-Planning Policy Officer)

Such comments serve to reinforce the suggestion that the Park's purposes also manifest themselves in a specific approach to planning. As such the wariness that can be detected in the inevitability of challenge is perhaps a product of the authority's confidence that it is the most appropriate body to make plans for the Park. However there is also an apparent fear that other organisations would simply ignore the purposes for which the Park was originally designated. Arguably such fears coincide with changes to the national policy context as earlier considered.

Other Stakeholders

Another challenge to the authority's planning powers is more local, in the form of organisations with a stake in the Peak Park. Particularly Peak Park Watch have been extremely vocal about deficiencies, both in how the authority works, but also in the interests it seeks to serve:

> "I think we're very lucky because it is a very nice part of the world, but."-"The raison d'etre in all the documents is protecting the landscape, people come second."-"And that's wrong"-"People, jobs, everything else come second and that's terrible." (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

Particularly the group were able to exemplify these comments with an example of a proposed house in one of the Park's villages. It was suggested that allowing the applicants to live in the village, and to start a family there, would contribute to keeping facilities such as the school, shop and pub going. However the proposal was refused initially and only allowed at a second planning committee meeting. Similarly one of the large estate owners noted the lack of discussion around the future evolution of the Park, noting their own wish to evolve their estate and to have the authority's agreement to this, in the context of wishing to maintain the estate as a working entity.

More gentle challenges to the national park's strategy were also apparent from other stakeholders. Particularly an NFU representative stated that they would always prefer the authority to be less

restrictive, noting that farmers felt they were always being prevented from doing things, if the authority's position was considered to have softened somewhat:

> "...several years (ago) the farmers would say there's no point in even approaching the Peak Park because...they'll refuse to countenance any development whatsoever but we have moved away from that..." (1-22-National Farmers Union Representative)

The change in approach is arguably consistent with the changing membership structures and, to a certain extent, moves away from the idea of a special authority. In turn the interviewee felt that the authority had been effective in taking on board the NFU's views, but noted that it continued to have a rather traditional view of farming, bolstered by wealthy individuals taking over farming businesses as a hobby:

> "...we say that larger farmers who are very commercial producers need to be taken account of and the Peak District National Park tends to like to think that farmers who farm solely for the environment are also profitable and valid businesses, but they're not...they don't make any money you see." (1-22-National Farmers Union Representative)

Indeed it was noted that farms generally needed to increase in size to remain profitable, at odds with the Peak Park's perceived preference for smaller farms. However the interviewee conceded that farms producing upmarket niche products bridge this divide to a certain extent, as well as being good for the Peak District 'brand' but also noted the role of farming in generating income for the large estates, that make up a significant proportion of the Park. Overall this section gives a sense that the authority is somewhat ignorant of the wider context within which the Park operates.

The Economic Health of the Park

A similarly gentle challenge is also expressed by a membership organisation representing landowners for 50% of the land in England and Wales, its expression of similar views to the NFU unsurprising given the presence of a working relationship between the two organisations. The organisation's key aim is to give its members the flexibility over how they utilise their land. As such it has opposed and publicly criticised the authority's efforts to gain an exemption from aforementioned changes to permitted development rights:

> "...obviously people need to live and work within the Peak Park to service jobs for agriculture, for tourism, so they should be under the same obligations as every other unitary authority. There shouldn't be any exemptions should I say because they are a national park." (2-11-Landowner Organisation Representative)

This view is coherent with the view put forward by central government, but contrasts strongly with the views put forward from within the authority around the lack of exemption. However the interviewee also suggested that the Peak Park have to go through a similar process of planning for new housing to that of typical local authorities, but where Peak Park officers emphasise that this is not the case. This further exemplifies the pervasiveness of the national planning policy context and the extent to which the Peak Park's exemption is hidden in the NPPF.

These passages again introduce economic considerations about the health of the local economy, but where this intertwined with the general health of local communities. Indeed this same theme was commented on by members of Peak Park Watch:

> "50% of residents work outside the Park and 40% of jobs in the Peak Park are…people who come into the Park to work…all the young people have to come in from Chesterfield because they can't afford to live here. So if you don't do more for young people, people who live here, it's going to get even worse; there'll be more and more commuting which is unsustainable." (2-22-Peak Park Watch Representative)

These comments therefore introduce wider notions of sustainability that can be characterised as in tension with environmental conservation. Similar concerns were expressed by both a Town Councillor, who commented on having to drive to Chesterfield to shop affordably. Equally they were echoed in the views of a Member of Parliament, illustrating the extent to which such views are widely held:

> "…people have got to be able to live and work in the National Park and I don't want to see the National Park become some sort of museum…where you've got to be very wealthy to be able to live…I would like to see them being much more responsive to modern industries…The whole question of the Internet and fast broadband gives a huge opportunity for people to be able to live and work in the National Park and to not have to travel into cities." (2-23 – Local Member of Parliament)

Echoing these concerns a town councillor drew on their personal experience of struggling to attract high calibre staff to a school with a very strong reputation, due to the Park having a reputation for being expensive to live in and not easy to commute to:

> "I've been talking to a local managing director that runs his own electronics engineering company and he says that none of his people…live locally; they all have to commute…he's

been thinking maybe of relocating...there is an issue of house price being a disincentive to economic activity." (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

They pointed out that local developers were more interested in developing open-market housing or holidays lets, than affordable housing, despite the limited availability of affordable housing locally. Indeed these views about high housing prices are to borne in mind when considering earlier noted comments made by stakeholders outside of the Park, suggesting it to be a home for the wealthy. The town council's lack of influence was exemplified in a case offered by the same interviewee, where a developer wished to create a single house by converting a listed building. The town council felt the opportunity existed to create two affordable homes. However this was ruled out by the authority on the basis of the changes that would be needed. As a result of the restriction on open-market homes in the Park the remaining option was to convert the house for use as a holiday let, at odds with the lack of affordable housing in the Park. In such a case the lack of flexibility can be suggested to result from tendencies to adhere to technical criteria when making planning decisions.

From these views there is a clear message about the wider range of interests that should be taken account of in planning for the Peak Park, one that is very much at odds with how authority officers see the Park's purposes. However, whilst the common thread here is about the ability of the Park to sustain its residents, the perspectives from which the views are offered contrast significantly. Whilst the town councillor commented that the authority were trying too hard to be reasonable, despite the damage caused by this activity, Peak Park Watch felt that the authority's attitude was about constraining freedom, and that the Park should be open to all. In turn the question is who gets to judge whose interests should be fulfilled.

Very Local Planning in the Peak Park

The Peak Park Authority has a history of actively engaging with village plan work of more than a decade, heavily supported by EU funding. It is an area in which a couple of team members, including the policy team manager started out. Currently the authority is less active in this area though has recently appointed an officer to support community planning efforts in the Park. The intention is that it will be up to communities to decide whether they want to produce a full Neighbourhood Plan, or something less formal such as a Parish Plan.

The same officer went on to give an example of a specific Neighbourhood Plan, currently being prepared for one of the villages in the Peak Park, suggesting that "...there's a big leap...moving

from community's aspirations to turning that into the robust language of a planning policy statement" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer). They went on to think about how communities might make such planning efforts locally distinctive and meaningful; "they might say 'we want more affordable homes' or 'we want to promote business'; well our plan says that as well so what's the specific thing?" (1-17-Planning Policy Officer) Particularly the interviewee considered communities might achieve levels of detail beyond that in the relatively generic Core Strategy, and the evidence that communities might produce, for example detailed land-use surveys.

The challenge of producing a Neighbourhood Plan distinct from the authority's own planning framework was considered from a different perspective by a member of one of the Park's town councils, one that is considering writing a Neighbourhood Plan to give it greater control over planning in the town. In doing so they showed a very clear understanding of the NPPF's requirement that such plans are in conformity with the local planning framework, particularly the Peak Park's Core Strategy:

> "...if the nesting policies created by the National Park are at variance with what we would like to see in (Town Name) we ain't going to get any further. And so some councillors have said 'well in that case, to hell with it, why bother; it's as usual.'" (2-19-2-Town Council Member)

This raises the question of whether the authority's active embrace of this area of work stems from confidence about where this type of very local planning fits with the nationally prescribed purposes of the Park. It must be asked if the authority is always the best guardian of balancing interests or whether there are areas of the Park, such as the large estates where those directly looking after the estates have both a more direct interest in their long term future and a better sense of how this might be achieved? A large estate owner within the Park further reinforced this point when considering their frustration with the authority's lack of co-operation when applying to use solar panels, despite the authority acknowledging the estate's importance to the Park:

> "We're very special. Why aren't you treating us very specially? Why don't you come to the meetings I've asked before? Why don't you deal with the issues I've come before?...Give me officer time instead of us then coming to committee and...everyone getting upset." (2-19-Estate Owner)

The same estate owner noted how they had "...had a vision since I inherited it and I presented to the national park various plans... and I don't think they ever get read" (2-19-Estate Owner).

Particularly the interviewee resented having to spend significant sums of money to fit in with the authority's way of working, rather than being able to pursue their own vision of how the estate should evolve, suggesting that the estate survived "...despite the national park" (2-19-Estate Owner). Particularly such comments appear to suggest a lack of positive dialogue about the estate's development.

This point is reinforced when considering the position of an environmental charity, also with significant land ownership in the Peak Park. Its members may seek to influence charity policy, in a manner not dissimilar to local government. through the charity's annual general meeting. Furthermore the potential for the organisation to be the best guardian of its land interests is reinforced by a specific set of aims that might be argued to be highly philanthropic in nature but also responsive to the contemporary context, and the public view of whether the charity is doing a good job. Equally the charity has invested substantially in renewable energy projects and has adopted policies on a range of planning matters not immediately concurrent with its core remit of protecting heritage and landscape assets. The charity's profile is such that it has also become a consultee for organisations looking to develop in ways that may have an impact on the charity's assets, if the charity is clear about its interest in protecting views out of and towards its assets.

Another interviewee also touched upon the way in which judgement had been exercised by officers of organisations such as the NFU and the Country Land & Business Association in their comments on the previous Structure Plan, which sought policies that both worked for the organisations' aims and accorded with the Park's purposes. Such an example arguably reveals the value of dialogue in reaching a compromise. However the interviewee noted that formal objections were still submitted at the end of the process, a result of those organisations' membership overruling officers to submit objections based on more entrenched positions.

What starts to emerge from the preceding few passages are hints at the importance of dialogue as a way of developing a common understanding, if this is within a context of the Park Authority considering itself to have a legitimate, entrenched position. The challenges put forward arguably come from a common viewpoint of the Park as too restrictive over development, with consequences for the economic health of its residents and businesses. This again arrives at a recurring question of who the public is and therefore how the public interest is best served; this is around the extent to which upholding the principle of environmental conservation that underpins the Park's designation is dependent on practices that significantly restrict freedom to develop within the Park.

CONCLUSIONS

The immediate parallel that must be drawn with Central Lincolnshire is how planning in the Peak District National Park is dominated by a particular narrative. Equally whilst the conservation narrative is very different to the growth narrative that characterises Central Lincolnshire, similarities can be drawn in the way that each is coherent with its respective national policy context. In turn this has particular implications for how the public interest is being articulated. In a further similarity this leads to the public being framed as something other than the Park's residents, with implications for how other interest have influenced the plan-making process.

On the other hand a key contrast can be drawn in the way that decision-making processes in the Park are very different. In terms of articulating what is in the public interest there is again evidence of this taking place through mechanisms outside of planning processes. However what is striking is how decision making processes can be seen as intended to bring together the public interest as it might be articulated at different scales, through the way in which it is structured. Moreover there is evidence that officers feel that they are better placed than members to protect the park. This is leading to a significant tension between whether planning decisions are framed as matters of political choice or technical necessity.

Certainly there is evidence that decisions about particular planning applications are influenced by a wider range of interests than in Central Lincolnshire, but within a context of restricted development. In turn this results in a reversal of the basis for challenges to the dominant narrative; where the challenges in Central Lincolnshire are about maintaining the status quo those in the Peak Park are about how the restrictive nature of the Park's designation can lead to difficulties in day to day life. It is these many contrasts and parallels between the two cases that forms the context for a more structured analysis of the two cases, to which the thesis now turns.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSING THE CASES USING THE CONTINUUMS

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to use the continuums set out at the end of chapter 2 as a lens for understanding how the public interest is represented in Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park, in light of the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5. Drawing on the concepts of scale, politics, knowledge and openness is intended to aid with sorting through the messy nature of the case studies, in order to understand how the public interest is articulated in each case.

The chapter starts by using the continuum of scale to understand how the scalar extent of the public is framed by different decision making processes in each case. The arenas in which these decisions are made are then considered, through an examination of the extent to which they are rendered political in nature, and how decisions are arrived at in that arena; the political is about the extent of choice in what is defined as what is in the public interest. In turn this sets the context for thinking about the types of knowledge that are drawn upon in making decisions, and the processes through which knowledge is translated into decisions in these arenas. Finally the chapter turns to thinking about the extent to which these arenas are open to participation. This allows an examination of who influences the making of decisions about what is in the public interest and from where different types of knowledge are drawn. Thinking about each of these aspects is intended to set the context for drawing some conclusions around how the public interest is being articulated in each case.

THE SCALAR EXTENT OF THE PUBLIC

Throughout the thesis scale has been understood as about the extent of a decision's impact, in terms of both time and geography, and how these impacts create a coherent public with a common interest. The intent of this first section is to set out the different ways in which the public is framed in terms of scale, through different decision-making processes. In each case the ways in which the impacts of decisions are framed, whether intended to pre-empt 'private' decisions about development, or to react to these private decisions, leads to the resulting public being framed in a number of different ways.

Different Framings of the Public Through Different Narratives

The starting point for this is to consider the public as it is framed by the narratives that dominate how each case is understood, the narratives that are most strongly embodied by the 'authorities 'who undertake planning activities in each area and are embedded in the Core Strategy documents that they have produced.

In Central Lincolnshire the narrative put forward is about the need for economic and housing growth, where the formation of a partnership bringing together three district authorities is seen as a more effective way to achieve 'growth'. It is this growth aspiration that is characterised as being common to all three partner districts, but where fulfilling this aspiration is seen as reliant on recognising the functional inter-relationships between each area. Not least the Lincoln Eastern Bypass is identified as the type of infrastructure that will bring benefits to Central Lincolnshire as a whole, but the type of infrastructure that can only be pursued by working in partnership. For the purposes of making plans the formation of the partnership ignores the boundaries between the districts, in turn embodying the suggestion that a plan is being made for a single, coherent public, rather than for three different publics.

The basis for the partnership is that a coherent public is created by recognising that Lincoln plays a significant role in the lives of people who live outside of its boundaries, through the services that they visit the city to access. Consequently Central Lincolnshire's residents are framed as having a common interest in decisions about the city's development. This is further reinforced through the location of planned large scale housing developments on the edges of Lincoln, where future residents will almost certainly draw on the services offered by the city, but on land that existing administrative boundaries define as being within one of the other partner districts. As a result the

functions of Lincoln are considered to create a coherent public that extends over a much greater geographical area than that contained within the boundaries of Lincoln City Council.

Accordingly the Draft Core Strategy for Central Lincolnshire is framed as being for a public that is geographically contained by its boundary. However the extent to which this public exists in the present, formed pre-dominantly of the existing residents of the area, or one that is hoped to exist in the future, becomes clearer by looking at who economic growth is seen as serving. In common with this the significant housing growth proposed frames the extent of the public as contained within the boundary of the area, with no explicit links made to how the proposed growth will impact on the housing shortage identified at a national scale. However this public is framed as stretching into the future; housing growth is seen as serving the future residents of Central Lincolnshire as they will result from significant population growth. This population growth is partially justified as about accommodating new generations of existing residents, but is also about large numbers of people moving to the area from outside. The public that the planned housing development will serve is therefore abstract and somewhat homogenous in nature, in the way it is imagined to be composed of different individuals to the existing public, but without being clear about who might move to the area.

The portrayal of Central Lincolnshire as needing to become economically competitive, both through significant housing growth and attracting inward investment, is challenged by an alternative vision for the future of the area, which seeks to maintain the status quo. Those who oppose the growth narrative draw on an alternative conception of the public with a common interest in maintaining the rural nature of Lincolnshire. Notably this is framed as maintaining this rurality for future generations to enjoy, also bringing into play more abstract conceptions of the public over the longer term. The public that shares this common interest is not dissimilar in terms of its extent, in that it is a view expressed in different parts of Central Lincolnshire. This should not be taken as a universal view but one that tends to be framed in terms of protecting particular village communities from change wrought from the outside; this sense of ownership suggests that the extent of the public is geographically defined by the boundary of the village, if it is a public that stretches into the future, by virtue of including future generations of residents.

In addition the framing of Central Lincolnshire as a single coherent public can be seen to obfuscate the extent to which each partner district does have its own distinctive identity. Particularly this becomes apparent when examining the differences of opinion about the partnership's longevity

and the extent to which the partners otherwise have slightly different priorities. Bound up with this is the extent to which the northern parts of West Lindsey have little to do with Lincoln, suggesting that they lie beyond the geographical scope of the public created by the functions of the city.

For the Peak District the narrative contrasts sharply; where the growth agenda in Central Lincolnshire can be seen as trying to bring about fundamental change in the area's character the dominant narrative in the Peak District is one of conservation; the authority exists to conserve what is considered to be a highly valued landscape, such that the ambition for planning activities is to achieve as little change as possible.

In contrast to Central Lincolnshire decisions made within the Park are explicitly intended to have impacts at a geographical scale extending beyond the boundaries of the Park. The empirical material highlighted how officers and Secretary of State members drew on the Park's statutorily defined purposes to characterise this conservation aim as embodying the idea that the Park is protected for the UK as a whole. Decisions made about the Park are therefore expected to have an impact on a public that extends throughout the UK. The resulting definition of the public is national in geographical scale and stretches into the distant future.

However, in common with Central Lincolnshire, the confidence with which this purpose is expressed is at odds with the less then precise definition of the public that results; the Park is protected for the public as those who might enjoy it, but with little attention to who is actually able to access the Park. The result is again an abstract definition of the public, that is difficult to delimit geographically and could be reasonably taken to include those living in other countries who might enjoy the Park, both in person, and as a wider environmental asset.

It is worth recording that, if adopted, the suggestion that all members of the authority should be directly elected to the authority would inevitably change the public, or publics, represented in decision-making processes. Members would be democratically accountable to a specific group of people. In turn this would rule out the representation of the landscape as it can currently be seen to be part of the role of the unelected Secretary of State members. Equally if a typical local authority structure was adopted and all members were elected from within the Park there would be no direct representation of the public outside of the Park's boundaries. Members would instead be elected by the Park's residents, arguably with the expectation that the interests of

residents would be better reflected in decisions. Currently this is highly speculative but serves to highlight the unique nature of the existing membership structure.

The further consequence of this focus on conservation is to rule out any large scale development, such that those decisions that come before the planning committee are about proposals that are generally small in scale, with similarly localised impacts on the day-to-day life of residents. In this sense the intention to have impacts at a scale greater than the Park's boundaries ensures that many of the decisions made by the authority actually have tangible impacts that are much smaller in scale, with equally limited spillover effects. Conversely the lack of major development ensures that many very small scale developments are considered by the authority's planning committee, with the effect of reframing such small developments as worthy of debate over the extent of their consequences. Essentially the impacts of small scale development are amplified in the context of a lack of large scale development and the intention to minimise changes in the Park.

In turn a coherent public, with a contrasting set of interests, can also be identified; one that is created by the boundary of the Park. This is the residents of the Park, for whom the restrictions on development have been identified as making day-to-day life more difficult. Particularly housing development illustrates how the interests of residents are framed as subordinate to the conservation aim of the Park as a whole when making decisions. The Peak District's exclusion from the need to pursue housing and economic growth ensures that decisions to permit housing development are the result of decisions made at the scale of the Park, without the need to take on board the housing growth imperative embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework. The impacts of housing development are therefore framed as about meeting the needs of existing residents, where that need is suitably long term in nature, rather than projecting what the needs of future residents of the Park will be.

The result is an acknowledged tension between these two definitions of the public, drawn at different scales, where tendencies towards the former, more strategic definition of the public, leads to an undercurrent of challenge emanating from the latter. However it is important to emphasise the extent to which the interests of these publics should be described as in tension, rather than as being in absolute opposition. The conservation aims that underpin the more strategic definition are acknowledged to create a highly desirable living environment that can be regarded as a common interest for the Park's residents. Residents do not challenge the principle of the Park and are, therefore, also part of the larger scale public for whom the Park is protected.

However some residents do challenge the extent to which practices adopted to uphold this principle are restrictive. Furthermore it was illustrated how the introduction of members drawn from parishes within the Park has changed the balance of decision-making toward meeting the needs of the Park's residents. This illustrates the extent to which decision-making in the Park is about balancing between the needs of multiple framings of the public.

The Impact of Decisions Made at the National Scale

Neither case can be helpfully understood without examining how decisions made at greater geographical scales are having an impact on how the extent of the public is defined at the scale of the case. Particularly this entails looking at decisions made at the national scale, where it can be argued that the making of these decisions by central government portrays them as being for a public that is national in scale. A noteworthy contrast between the cases is apparent in the way that national planning reform agendas are having an impact that varies considerably in its subtlety. Economic growth is a clear narrative in national policy, with clear expectations that most local authorities are expected to account for this in their Local Plans, if the Peak District is generally excluded from this.

Central Lincolnshire is framed by those involved as a construct that will allow the area to be economically competitive with other areas, particularly at the regional and national scales. In terms of the scalar extent of decision impacts this is not about decisions made in Central Lincolnshire having an impact over greater geographical areas, outside of its boundaries. Instead it is about being perceived at these greater geographical scales as worthy of attracting inward investment by drawing on the persuasive power of being able to portray Central Lincolnshire as an entity that is significant in scale, not least in population terms.

Equally this is not about the identification of particular named places or areas with which Central Lincolnshire is seen as competing. Instead these greater geographical scales are used to signify the characterisation of capital as hyper-mobile; the ability of those with money to invest, both central government and the private sector, to look across the UK as a whole when deciding where to invest it. In this sense the public affected by the decision to pursue economic growth continues to be defined by the Central Lincolnshire boundary. However the larger size of this public, when compared to each individual partner authority, is intended to act as a critical mass in attracting attention and ensuring that decisions made at other scales have a beneficial impact for that public.

Arguably this can be characterised as a reaction to a contemporary context where well organised urban areas, increasingly in the form of city regions, are prominent in debates about economic growth and competitiveness. Consequently there is a sense that the resulting changed perceptions of the area are at least as important as the immediate practical implications of the partnership, particularly when looking further into the future. However the extent to which the dominant narrative embodied by the partnership coheres with the growth narrative embodied by national policy ensures that the impact of national policy is less than explicit; growth is framed as a local choice, rather than the inevitable result of prescriptive national policy.

National policy continues to exempt the Peak District from the need to pursue housing and economic growth. However recent changes to the national policy framework, particularly those extending permitted development rights, are arguably amplified by the Park's history of development restraint; in the context of a lack of large scale development the impacts of small scale changes are more keenly felt. The decision to not allow the Park an exemption from these changes allows individuals the freedom to make certain changes without permission from the Park authority, in the process reframing them as private decisions; decisions whose spillover effects are no longer seen as creating a coherent public with a common interest in their outcome. In common with the challenge emanating from the Park's residents, the challenge from these changes can be similarly characterised; such changes do not represent a challenge to the overall principle of the Park, but do challenge the practices adopted by the authority in upholding the principle. The changes can therefore be seen as a more explicit impact of planning reform processes.

The Impact of Decisions Made in the Past

The other aspect of scale considered by the continuums was that of time; the extent to which decisions have impacts into the future. However an understanding of both cases also rests on the ability to understand how they have been shaped by decisions made in the past, where the impacts continue to have resonance in the contemporary context and act as a structuring influence on how contemporary decisions are made. Equally an understanding of the implications of historical decisions gives a sense of how contemporary decisions may have an impact into the future.

For Central Lincolnshire attention needs to be paid to the ways in which the current, statutory form of partnership can be seen as resulting from previous, less formal partnership working and previous plans. Clear from the empirical work was the extent to which the growth narrative has

resulted from decisions made and enshrined in plans written at local authority, county and regional scales. The emphasis on these is intended to frame the growth narrative as locally driven, giving the impression that the growth agenda pre-dates the growth imperative as it is expressed through current national policy, particularly the NPPF. As a result there is a sense that national policy is not an explicit influence on the plan-making process in the way it is communicated to others, if its influence is clearly felt in ways that are discussed later on. The result is that the growth has become embedded as the dominant narrative through a series of decisions over a long period of time.

For the Peak District this is most about recognising that the decision to designate the Park was made at the national scale, more than six decades in the past. Consequently the principle of the Park has become strongly embedded. Equally the making of this decision by central government has allowed the imposition of a new boundary, disregarding local authority boundaries as they existed at the time, in favour of recognising the extent of the valued landscape for which the Park is protected. However the view put forward by officers in the Park is that this historical decision to designate the Park has not been reflected in more recent policy decisions made by central government; essentially the historically embedded principle of the Park remains unchallenged, but the nationally defined principle of the Park is not reflected in the nationally defined policies that increasingly prescribe how planning must be practiced. The result is a tension between the common interest of a national scale public as it was framed by central government in the past and as it is framed by central government in the contemporary context. The historical decision to define the Park created a public with a common interest in its conservation. More recent decisions create a public where the common interest is deemed to be economic growth, but where little effort has been made to reconcile the tension between the two.

The boundaries to both cases are drawn with the intent of recognising functional relationships that do not respect the boundaries of existing local authorities in each area. The statutory formation of each authority therefore draws on the idea that its boundary better recognises the extent of decision impacts as they already existed; each authority is predicated on better recognising the existence, and indeed the extent, of a coherent public with common interests.

Drawing on the distinction between a container conception of space, that looks to draw a specific boundary around the extent of the public, and a relational conception of space, that recognises space as the product of activities taking place at multiple scales, it is worth noting how scalar

impacts in each case draw on both definitions. The drawing of Central Lincolnshire's boundary is intended to delimit the extent to which Lincoln influences daily lives, whilst the Peak District, is intended to delimit the extent of the valued landscape. However both cases recognise the impacts of decisions made, particularly at the national scale, in turn contributing to an understanding of each area as relationally constructed. In addition both illustrate the conflict between drawing a definitive boundary around a public for administrative purposes and how the scalar extent of the public is often open to debate. Arguably in neither case is the functional relationship captured entirely by the boundary that has been drawn; not all parts of Central Lincolnshire are united by the services available in Lincoln whilst the subjective nature of the valued landscape makes it difficult to draw an absolute boundary to this.

Both cases embody multiple definitions of a coherent public on whom planning decisions will have an impact. In each the dominant narrative for what is in the public interest is framed as future oriented. The conservation of the Peak District is framed as being in the interests of a public that exists at a geographical scale beyond the Park and far into the future; this dominant framing is seen as an appropriate justification to explicitly subordinate the coherent public created by the interests of the Park's residents. In contrast the public whose interests decisions made about Central Lincolnshire are intended to serve can be suggested to approximate the area's geographical boundaries. However the justification that the growth agenda is in the interests of a future public, made up of in-migrants, can be characterised as a more subtle subordination of the wishes of many existing residents to maintain the area's rurality, not least their own future descendants.

Further exploration is needed of how these tensions between the interests of different framings of the public play out in decision making processes. In the first instance this is about examining the arenas in which decisions are made.

THE ARENAS IN WHICH DECISIONS ARE MADE

The intent of thinking about scale was to identify in each case how the extent of the public is framed through the key narratives. In turn the framing of the public in particular ways results from decisions that are made in arenas where they are framed as either matters of technical necessity or political choice. This necessitates an examination of which arenas decisions are made in and how they ended up there.

For both cases the arenas in which decisions are made have distinctive forms that reflect the dominant framings of the public outlined in thinking about scale. Particularly each of these arenas can be seen as intended to account for the larger scale framing of the public that each authority is formed with the intent of recognising. In each the formal decision to form an authority that better reflects existing functional relationships is one that has ultimately been taken by Parliament at the national scale. This frames the decision to form each authority as being made in the party-political arena, legitimised through representative democracy. However a contrast can be discerned in the way that each decision ended up in this arena, with accompanying questions about the accuracy of this framing.

Specifically the decision to form Central Lincolnshire is framed as a political choice to pursue joint-working, a decision made in the party-political arena, but at the local authority scale. The common growth ambitions of the three partners underpin the reinvention of Central Lincolnshire in its movement from a loose construct, held together through iterations of joint-working, to a formal entity. This process of formalisation has resulted in the formation of a new arena for decision-making, in the form of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC).

The distinctive form of decision-making mechanism associated with Central Lincolnshire also has particular implications for how decisions about what is in the public interest are made. Whilst a larger scale conception of the public is intrinsic to this amalgamation it was recorded that the JSPC concentrates the power to make decisions on behalf of this public amongst a smaller subset of elected members drawn from each authority, an arrangement that does not require decisions to be ratified by each district. This arena continues to be party-political in nature, framed as an arena in which choices are made about Central Lincolnshire as a whole.

Members of the JSPC are drawn from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, as well as hailing from different authorities. The result is a series of committee meetings that are explicitly party-political in their formulation, but where the members seek to suggest that they do

not make decisions in a party-political manner. In practical terms the formal nature of the partnership does allow the members in each District to participate in making decisions that affect all three Districts, having an impact over a much larger greater geographical area than the typical district tier authority.

Conversely the delegation of powers over plan-making to the joint committee can be characterised as a mechanism for de-politicising decisions made for Central Lincolnshire. It does not immediately render issues as technical but does concentrate decision making powers amongst relatively few elected members, in the context of the larger scale of the area actually bringing together a much larger number of members. The choice to structure the partnership in this way has had the effect of moving forward planning decisions into an arena that is de-politicised in the way that it is one step removed from each local authority and its membership, in turn further removing it from the public that it makes decisions for.

The decision to create this new arena is, in turn, de-politicised through its referral to the Secretary of State, to make the order granting the committee statutory status, on behalf of Parliament. In this sense the political decision made at the local authority scale is reframed as a matter of necessity when being presented to the Secretary of State and Parliament. Simultaneously this making of the order by Parliament allows the formation of the Committee to be reframed as a decision formalised at the national level, and therefore outside of the purview of local political choice, in response to challenges that threaten the Committee's stability; the act of simultaneously ceding the decision to the national scale and reframing it as a matter of necessity has been highlighted as crucial in ensuring that the partner authorities continue to work together. The statutory designation of the Committee, not least the supposed difficulties associated with dissolving it, is also credited with holding the partnership together during moments of difficulty, confirming its influence as a structuring force.

As a result it is worth noting that the partners have been forced to reach a working consensus; dissatisfactions have been aired but an inability to easily dissolve the partnership at the local scale has, to a certain extent, removed any possibility of partners choosing to leave to pursue their own choices. In this way the joint-working arrangements can be characterised as confirming the Lincoln-centric nature of the resulting plan, ensuring that the wider influence of Lincoln is appropriately recognised, but perhaps marginalising those parts of the districts furthest away from Lincoln. Such arrangements can be seen to ensure that the partners, however reluctantly, recognise the impact of different issues on a conception of the public that is larger in scale; these

impacts would arguably have existed anyway but could be legitimately ignored when making decisions for a single local authority area[25]. The result is to de-politicise Central Lincolnshire as a construct, reframing its coherence as a technical necessity, rather than as a construct that the partners can make the choice to recognise.

The structure of decision-making at the Peak Park is, at face value, not dissimilar to that of a typical English local authority. However the crucial difference is that the planning committee is made up of three types of members who can be said to each represent the different conceptions of the public outlined, emphasised particularly by the inclusion of Secretary of State members. The appointment, rather than election, of these members, who can be characterised as representing the landscape and the wider public outside of the Park, correlates strongly with the suggestion that the Peak District embodies a definition of the public that includes the landscape.

The tension between the two dominant definitions of the public apparent in the Peak Park is resolved in the explicitly political arena of the planning committee, an arena in which clear choices are being made about how the public interest is conceived of. For a typical local authority this might be described as a party-political arena, though the role of political parties has been suggested to be less relevant to the decision-making process in the Park.

Planning applications as they are judged by officers, under delegated powers, are framed as technical, judged against a set of criteria. However, when these decisions are called in to the planning committee, they arguably go through a process of politicisation. When made by the planning committee the decision is reframed as one where there is an element of choice, but also a decision that has impacts outside of those immediately involved. The amplified impacts of small scale development in the Park are reflected in the extent to which decisions made by the planning committee would more typically remain with officers, to be made under delegated powers, at other local authorities.

In this arena the extent to which the introduction of authority members drawn from parish councils in the Peak District has changed the outcomes of decisions is highly visible, particularly in the way that they reframe decisions, considered by officer recommendations to be a matter of technical necessity, as decisions where there are political choices to be made. Not least this is seen in the frequent tendency of decisions made in the planning committee arena to go against officer

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[25] The exception to this would be cross-boundary issues identified through either, in the past, the Regional Plan or, under the NPPF, the Duty-to-Cooperate. However the argument is that there is greater scope to frame these impacts differently when acting alone.

recommendations. This ability to politicise decisions was highlighted as a distinct source of tension between members and officers, who continue to see such decisions as matters of necessity in light of the Park's statutory conservation purposes. Particularly the recasting of decisions as political tends to favour the residents of the Park, in a situation where parish members are most directly representative of residents. Whilst it is not appropriate to make a judgement here about whether this is leading to better or worse decisions, the shift in balance does suggest how decision making may further evolve should the introduction of directly elected members move forward. More generally it is a question of whether showing greater favour toward residents in decision-making challenges the principle of the Park, in the context of development restraint.

The Impact of Decisions Made in the Past and at the National Scale

The extent to which both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak Park are historically embedded constructions has significant consequences for the extent to which decisions are rendered as either political or technical, as well as the arenas in which contemporary decisions are made. Both illustrate how the extent to which the dominant narratives result from historical decisions has a de-politicising impact.

Central Lincolnshire can be characterised as the latest iteration of increasingly formal joint-working arrangements, resulting from a series of historical decisions, if it is not yet a construct that is taken for granted. These moments of renewal might also be expected to be moments where the necessity of the partnership is reframed as a matter of political choice, moments in which the narrative underpinning the partnership might be debated and tested for its continued appropriateness. However the involvement of the same key characters throughout ensures that each iteration has reinforced the structure and narrative behind planning processes in the area, instead allowing this evolution to be characterised as a process of de-politicisation.

The argument for the Peak Park's purposes being protected by a different type of authority with specific purposes are summarised in the idea that protecting the Park should be an end in itself, rather than an aim that it is incidental to the roles of a typical English local authority, one that might be traded off against an authority's other priorities. As such the formation of a special type of authority, with a redrawn boundary and Secretary of State appointed members, with a concern for conservation rather than economic growth, can be seen as intended to de-politicise the conservation aims of the Park.

Over the Peak District's long history it can be argued that there has been a lack of significant challenge to the Park's purpose; essentially a political choice to define the area as a National Park has not been revisited, over time rendering the Park's conservation purposes as a technical necessity. The conservation purposes of the Park, as they are embedded both statutorily and historically, carries the expectation that decisions will be made with this overall purpose in mind. Accordingly the extent to which there is scope to frame decisions as a matter of political choice and deliberation is variable, but immediately narrowed by this overall purpose.

Conversely the decision, also made at the national scale, to shift the balance of the membership in favour of local members, can be characterised as a move to politicise the conservation aims of the Park by increasing the scope for decisions to be made that balance between the competing definitions of the public, rather than simply prioritising the conservation aims. The competing argument is that the scope for these choices to be made exists within the Park's statutory purposes, without challenging the principle of the Park, in turn characterising this as a question of whether members are striking a balance between the purposes or, as the Park's officers would suggest, simply ignoring its conservation purposes.

In addition the embedding of conservation principles over many decades has become somewhat removed from the practices involved in upholding it; a lack of major challenge to the principle of the Park has left little need to revisit the debate about why the Park is designated as a national park, such that the principle behind its designation arguably remains intact. Conversely, whilst the visual quality of the landscape ensures that this principle is far from an abstract one, the argument that the Park's special character should be looked after by an equally special form of authority, embodying a specific set of practices, has been eroded in the intervening decades, in the context of the wider managerialisation of English local government. Instead creeping managerialisation has seen the Park authority become more like a local authority in nature. This has left the Park open to changes that cannot be suggested to challenge its conservation purposes but do have a structuring influence on the arenas in which decisions are made about the Park.

The changes to national policy made by central government, as discussed under scale, constitute a particular form of de-politicisation, in their reframing of such developments as private decisions, without a broader public impact. The result is that such changes bypass local authorities completely, taking them out of the public and party-political spheres, and instead situating them in the private sphere. The consequence of this is to allow certain small scale developments to proceed according to individual preferences, reframing them as a matter of simple necessity.

Moreover the lack of an exemption also disregards the historical suggestion that a particular form of authority, with particular powers is needed to look after a National Park, by ignoring the authority's capacity to judge what is appropriate for the Park's conservation. As a result the capacity to make a judgement about the wider impact of small scale changes is removed completely, de-politicising such changes by removing them from any sort of public arena.

Housing Development as Exemplifying the Contrasts Between the Cases

For both cases new housing development sets the context for thinking about the decision-making processes that operate and the challenges that this gives rise to. Equally it is an issue that demonstrates the most acute contrast between the dominant narratives in the two cases. However both cases demonstrate parallels in the development of their approach to housing over multiple iterations of the plan; housing development is framed as a technical matter, about meeting objectively identified local needs, with the effect of de-politicising housing development, and the intent of moving it out of the realm of political choice.

In common with the decision to form Central Lincolnshire the joint committee is framed as the party-political arena in which the consensus around large scale growth has been arrived at. The planned growth is, in turn, de-politicised, to be framed as a matter of necessity, if there is some dispute about the validity of this framing. A powerful influence in this process of de-politicisation is the extent to which past plans have promoted growth, such that it is no longer portrayed as a political choice to be made in the contemporary context. This is reinforced in the way that sites such as the Western Growth Corridor have also been carried forward through successive plans. Instead it is simply seen as a continuation of something that has always been seen as a necessity, such that it is widely acknowledged to be an imperative that has not been opened up for debate. There is a sense from the empirical material that defining the common interest of Central Lincolnshire as 'growth' is a matter of common sense, partially illustrated by the lack of challenge to growth as the dominant narrative from within the partnership. As a result the plan-making process becomes less an arena in which to make choices about what the area's future should look like, in favour of becoming the process through which growth is formalised as the area's future; essentially the plan has the impact of further de-politicising the growth narrative.

Following from the extent to which the planned quantity of growth can be seen as resulting from past decisions at the local and regional scales, the form of growth can additionally be seen as a product of efforts to de-politicise growth at the national scale. Growth is framed by national policy as the result of allocating of a range of housing sites that are 'viable' for private development.

Furthermore the extent to which the viability of development crowds out other considerations is exemplified by the possibility of sacrificing environmental measures in order to support the viability of new housing. In turn the relatively short term aim of making housing development viable for the private sector, as a method of achieving economic growth, crowds out the long term impact of new housing and its potential environmental impacts in an era of climate change. The consequence is to significantly narrow the ability for local political choices to be made about the form that growth should take and how it should respond to local needs.

Not least the framing of growth as technical was exemplified by efforts to communicate the necessity of this growth to the public, focussing on the infrastructure improvements that would result. However this effort was not accompanied by the creation of any public arena in which a dialogue might take place, characterising it as about informing the public of a decision rather than about encouraging a dialogue that might influence that decision.

The expectation that the planned growth will be delivered by private developers is carried forward in the formation of working groups to drive forward the development of the Sustainable Urban Extensions. On one hand this cooperation appears pragmatic as a mechanism for persuading private developers of the plan's correctness, in the absence of local government capacity to proactively follow the plan. However this equally serves to further de-politicise the growth agenda, by displacing responsibilities to closed groups accountable only to JSPC members.

The contrasting approach to housing development in the Peak Park has the effect of reframing it as a political choice, to be made at the local scale. However this choice is also seen as being narrowed by the embedding of a distinctive approach to housing development through multiple iterations of the Local Plan, but also through regional planning, leading to the de-politicisation of constraints on housing development. As a result the extent to which specific housing developments are seen as a matter of political choice is dependent on whether decisions are made by officers or brought into the party-political arena of the planning committee by members.

Renewable Energy and Affordable Housing

Where the power of the JSPC to de-politicise issues is demonstrated by housing growth, the committee's power to politicise issues; to reconstitute them as matters of choice, is demonstrated by the revival of discussions about renewable energy and affordable housing within its meetings. For affordable housing the debate centred on whether delivering high quantities of affordable housing was realistic, but also echoed the concerns of the private sector as articulated

through the LEP. The process moved the provision of a particular quantity of affordable housing away from being an acknowledged necessity, instead framing the issue as a political choice. This again emphasises the powerful influence of development viability on the plan-making process, in turn serving to characterise the public interest as about economic efficiency.

Discussions about renewable energy targets were similar in nature, responding to the wider opposition to high targets amongst members at the county council. Whilst renewable energy is arguably a key example of how planning activities play a role in responding to climate change, an issue that is global in scale, the committee's dialogue put this to one side, to instead consider the financial viability and landscape impacts of renewable energy.

In both cases there was little evidence of societal housing shortage or the need to mitigate climate change, issues that might be seen as affecting publics that are national and global in their extent respectively, having an impact on the debate. Particularly this might be argued to reflect the power differential between officers and members, where there was little opportunity for officers to contribute to how the debates were framed. Instead it is arguable that putting the imperative need for affordable housing and renewable energy to one side; the principle, allowed the detailed practices behind their provision to be framed in terms of political choice.

The Arenas in Which Alternative Framings of the Public are Articulated

Whilst the dominant framings of the public have come to be expressed in the particular arenas outlined it is also useful to recognise the extent to which alternative, more localised, framings of the public are being articulated in arenas that also take a distinctive, political form. In both cases the parish councils should be recognised as arenas in which the narratives of a sense of ownership of the village and resistance to change are being articulated. Equally for some communities the Neighbourhood Plan is being seen as a way to formalise, and therefore render as matters of necessity rather than choice, these alternative narratives; in communities in both cases the Neighbourhood Plan is intended to rule out development by putting this in the form of a plan that the LPA must abide by in decision-making. Certainly in Central Lincolnshire there is a suggestion that opposition to the growth narrative is being adopted in an explicitly party-political manner, as a rhetorical device for persuading residents in the area to vote for particular candidates.

Overall, the arenas in which the dominant narratives and dominant framings of the public are embodied can be seen as intended to be inherently political in the way that decisions made in them are legitimated by democratic representation; each is an arena in which decision making

falls to members, most of whom are elected, and many of whom hail from a particular political party. Each is also an arena that is about deliberation, where the members have significant power to render decisions political, even where they may previously have been framed as matters of technical necessity by officers. However the extent to which decisions about what is in the public interest are seen as political is narrowed in each case by a number of factors. Despite being defined in different arenas the statutory designation of both areas at the national scale, through acts of Parliament, can be seen as having a de-politicising effect; the decision to create them as constructs with statutory force has taken place at the national scale, some distance from the more localised scale at which they are most readily challenged. Arguably this makes it difficult for each authority's statutory designation to be challenged directly.

The result is to create arenas that concentrate the power to adopt particular framings of the public in decision-making amongst the authority members, within the context of this narrowed scope. Both authorities can be suggested to embody a particular goal for planning, with a particular public in mind; growth in the case of Central Lincolnshire and conservation in the case of the Peak District. In turn this has led to the de-politicisation of these goals, narrowing the scope of decision-making, if the goal of conservation has been somewhat re-politicised in the arena of the Peak Park's planning committee.

There is an extent to which alternative framings of the public go through a similar process in the way that they are organised through parish councils and Neighbourhood Plans. These can be seen to act as alternative political arenas, setting the context for thinking about the interaction, or lack of interaction, between the actors in each arena. This is addressed later, in considering the openness of different arenas to participation. Moreover both cases illustrate how planning reforms at the national scale, designed to achieve economic growth have the impact of de-politicising decisions at the local authority scale, either by removing the scope to shape national imperatives to meet local needs, or by removing decisions from the political and public spheres. The tension between economic growth, particularly the extent to which it is expected to be driven by private investment, and the move towards low carbon living is one that is well illustrated by these decisions. In terms of the multiple framings of the public outlined in the first section national policy narrows the ability to view decisions as political; encompassing an element of choice, in turn narrowing the ability to make decisions that try to reconcile the needs of multiple publics.

THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE

In framing decisions as either technical or political different actors in each case draw on different types of knowledge to frame the consequences of decisions. As a result different types of knowledge are translated into decisions in different ways. Essentially the framing of decisions as either political or technical influences whether what is in the public interest is presented as objective or subjective. The intent of this section is to examine the types of knowledge claims that are being drawn on in these decision making arenas.

Multiple types of knowledge are drawn upon when explaining the reasons for forming Central Lincolnshire. The extent to which Lincoln already plays a role in how people who live outside of its boundaries experience the area on a day-to-day basis is framed as objectively measurable, through data such as travel to work patterns, rather than drawing on the lived experiences of residents. This serves to portray the development of Lincoln as the matter in which Central Lincolnshire residents have a common interest in. Equally the financial savings from working together are cited, a driver that was also framed by some as being objectively measureable, returning to ideas of the public interest as about economic efficiency.

On the other hand the emphasis on these forms of knowledge can be seen to downplay the extent to which the partnership draws on an instinctive reaction; a wish to move away from the view of Lincolnshire as backwards, with the aim of replacing historical experiences of the area with experiences that feel much closer to more economically 'successful' parts of the UK. Viewed in this light the economic growth narrative appears persuasive as a vision that is tangible from experiences of other, more 'successful' places. Consequently the decision to pursue Central Lincolnshire might be described as resulting from the synthesis of multiple knowledges, both objective and subjective in nature. However there is less evidence of a systematic translation of these knowledges, only that each aligns to underpin the joint-working. The result is to confuse the underlying values behind the partnership with technically framed drivers.

The ability of officers to draw together and analyse different types of knowledge hints at the nature of their expertise as about having the time and skill to explore issues in depth. The ability of planners to explore in depth the functional relationships that might make for a better plan can be characterised as one way in which planning might best serve the public. Ultimately, however, the significant resource needed to undertake such activities was overtaken by the need to save

money, achieved by reducing the size of the JPU. In turn this portrays the public as best served by financial efficiency, a technical framing.

Conversely the designation of the Peak District is arguably more subjective in nature, instead bringing into play the value of landscape attachment. The ability to enjoy the Park is implicitly regarded as a good thing, but where this is based on the idea of shared values, rather than any technical knowledge. Equally this is reinforced by the Sandford principle's privileging of conservation over enjoyment, extending the definition of the public to include the landscape.

Crucially the visibility and accessibility of this landscape allows this designation to be grounded in experiential knowledge, such that the value of the landscape becomes persuasive through its tangibility. However a key role of the Park's planning policies is to render this subjective, value laden attachment into a series of criteria based policies, for example around what is regarded as a local connection, that reframe planning decisions as technical. Equally the plan-making process draws on studies that try to clarify what about the landscape should be protected and how this might be achieved, a further attempt to reframe landscape attachment as objective, but one that can be seen as responding to the expectation that local plans are based on evidence.

The Knowledges Enrolled in the Committee Arenas

For both cases the way in which the committees are arranged; the JSPC in Central Lincolnshire and the planning committee in the Peak Park has particular implications for the types of knowledge that are drawn into decision-making processes.

For the JSPC the relationships between members and officers generally seem formal in nature, providing scope for the officers to present particular forms of knowledge and to offer their professional opinion on these, but in such a way that limits the dialogue in which officers and members may engage in the setting of a committee meeting. Moreover the power of officers in the process can be seen in their ability to choose the evidence that is presented to the committee, exemplified for example in the presentation of consultation responses that highlighted the input from particular interests.

In the Peak Park, whilst a broad consensus remains around the need for the scale of any development in the Park to be limited, the previous sections have highlighted how a split has emerged centred on the extent to which development needs to be regulated, with attention to fine grain details. Both the tendency for smaller scale developments to be decided by the planning

committee and the trend toward the planning committee reframing decisions as matters of political choice have broadened the range of knowledges that can be seen as influencing decision-making; whilst members receive technically framed recommendations, based on officers' procedural knowledge of the planning system, the nature of the committee environment also allows for applicants and other interested parties to speak at the meeting. In turn this has introduced to planning decisions the types of lay knowledges; experiential and emotional, knowledges that do not play a role in the officer's recommendation to the planning committee. As suggested this has changed the balance of decision-making in favour of local residents.

The Knowledges Underpinning Housing Development

The future orientation of plan-making in Central Lincolnshire is made particularly clear in the way that the analysis of technical knowledge, in the form of demographic data, is used to characterise the existing make-up of the area as leading to future problems. It is the analysis of this data that is used to frame the planned growth as a matter of necessity. Equally the contribution that growth will make to funding infrastructure is framed as a matter of technical analysis, where the number of houses built will directly influence the infrastructure that can be funded.

In turn the benefits to existing residents, in the form of additional jobs and infrastructure improvements, are framed experientially, but in a way that captures rhetoric expounding the 'trickle-down' effects of growth. However it is arguable that the singular framing of growth as necessity, based on demographic analysis, obfuscates the extent to which pursuing housing growth is a political choice, based on an emotional desire to change the area's image.

Equally it is useful to note the extent to which high housing targets were, in part, used as a tactic for persuading the Planning Inspector of the plan's concurrence with national policy. Indeed, in light of the extent to which such perceptions contributed to the de-politicisation of the growth agenda it is noteworthy that a perceived lack of reliable technical knowledge about the certainty of housing growth contributed to the plan's withdrawal from examination. Overall this starts to suggest how more emotional and more technical framings of the growth have been confused, but also how it is difficult to separate growth as it is locally favoured from growth as it is an imperative enshrined in national policy.

Furthermore the extent to which housing development is economically viable for private developers, framed as a matter of technical analysis, is seen as having an influence on whether

new housing will be environmentally sensitive. This is similarly true of debates around the proportions of affordable housing targeted through policy, targets which were challenged over their economic 'viability'. However the choice to pursue particular forms of housing development as a result of the singular analysis of economic viability crowds out other forms of analysis that might also be described as technical in nature; it can be argued that the need for housing to be environmentally friendly results from the widely agreed imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, whilst the targets for affordable housing result from analysis of who in Central Lincolnshire is unable to afford housing at the full market rate. The framing of these decisions as based on technical analysis, has the impact of obfuscating the extent to which particular knowledges have been chosen over others as a basis for decisions.

In common with Central Lincolnshire decisions about housing development in the Peak District are framed as technical, drawing on a set of criteria examining affordability and whether the applicant has a local connection. However the absence of the viability imperative emanating from national policy does have the impact of making space for other types of knowledge, as outlined above.

Particularly this contrast serves to emphasise the impact of national policy on the types of knowledge that can be accounted for in decision-making. In turn this raises questions about the scale of housing growth that might have been pursued in Central Lincolnshire had there been less concern for how the Draft Core Strategy would be perceived by the Planning Inspector, as proxy for this national imperative.

National Scale Policy Reform

Changes to national policy are arguably the result of a very narrowly drawn definition of knowledge, particularly informed by the ideology of the Conservative-led coalition government, an ideology strongly informed by the pursuance of economic growth and the characterisation of planning as getting in the way of this growth. In this sense the impact of national policy on the scope of political decisions can also be seen to influence which forms of knowledge are taken into account in the making of decisions.

In turn the failure of the Park to gain an exemption from such changes illustrates the aforementioned separation of the abstract principle of the Park and the practices that uphold the principle; the NPPF continues to exempt national parks from the requirements of planning that most local authorities are obliged to fulfil, such that the principle of national parks remains

untouched. Conversely officers in the Park suggest that the special nature of the Park is marginalised in the content of the NPPF, leading some organisations to assume that the Park is also required to plan for high levels of housing delivery.

Challenges to the Dominant Narratives

The persuasive nature of experiential knowledge is strongly apparent in challenges to the growth narrative apparent in Central Lincolnshire. These are rooted in the rural way of life that is valued by existing residents, but also in the suggestion that the technical framing of Lincoln's influence is at odds with tacit, experiential knowledge of residents outside of Lincoln.

Parish councils demonstrated a particular ability to draw together everyday experiences of the communities that they represent, as way of making tangible the consequences of future development. Not least these experiences take the form of observing the limits of existing infrastructure; this is a highly rational framing of the inappropriateness of housing growth, in light of perceptions that infrastructure requirements are ignored in new developments.

Furthermore the ability of parish councils to collect the views of significant proportions of village residents can be seen to give the viewpoints put forward a legitimacy rooted in democratic representation. However it was noted in thinking about the scale of the public that the viewpoints put forward are very much focussed on maintaining the village for existing residents. Furthermore those representing parish councils appeared to lack the procedural knowledge of how they might use their experiences to influence the plan-making process, despite having a strong awareness of development control practices.

In summary it can be suggested that the designation of the Peak District is much clearer in the way its justification rests on experiential knowledge; a subjective attachment to the landscape, but nevertheless an attachment that it deeply embedded. In contrast the types of knowledge that are suggested to underpin Central Lincolnshire's formation are both more numerous in nature and have been synthesised in such a way that makes it difficult to identify the relative roles of different justifications. Obfuscating the extent to which the growth narrative results from particular values by framing growth as a technical necessity can be seen as underpinning the plan's withdrawal from examination.

There is a sense that the public is served best by a plan-making process that is economically efficient.

The growth narrative in Central Lincolnshire illustrates how the national context for planning activities has a strong impact on the types of knowledge that are being taken into account; the need to ensure that development is economically viable can be seen to crowd out any consideration of how new housing development might be experienced on a day-to-day basis. In turn there seems little space for the experiential and emotional knowledge that underpins the narrative that challenges growth. This is emphasised by planning activities in the Peak District, where these are less explicitly impacted by such imperatives, so that it can be seen how experiential and emotional knowledges are having a clearer impact on how decisions are made. Consequently there is a need to examine where the different types of knowledge enrolled in decision-making, the knowledges that in turn underpin the framings of the public outlined in thinking about scale, are actually being drawn from. Accordingly the chapter now turns to examine the extent to which different arenas are open to participation.

THE OPENNESS OF ARENAS TO PARTICIPATION

The arena in which decisions are made and how decisions are framed using different types of knowledge has strong implications for how different interests were involved in decision-making processes. In particular each case demonstrates how a range of different groups were able, or not able, to influence decision-making processes. Following from looking at how the public is framed in decisions, which arenas they are made in and which knowledges they drawn upon, this final section examines which different interests are able to have an influence on these decisions.

The first section examined how Central Lincolnshire creates a public that is larger in geographical scale. However there is a sense that this greater scale further disconnects the decision making process from views expressed at the scale of village communities. The parish councils representing these communities did not see themselves as having an influence on the plan-making process, despite their ability to understand the role that Lincoln played in their lives. As a result it is hard to see where the wider public is influencing the plan. Certainly the Core Strategy is framed by planners themselves as being too abstract for the wider public to engage with, raising the possibility that this may be a self-reinforcing assertion.

Not least this disconnect can be seen as resulting from the JSPC, as the arena in which decisions are made about Central Lincolnshire, concentrating decision-making powers amongst a small subset of the area's elected members. In turn this rules out the possibility of the process being open to the wider public of Central Lincolnshire through its democratically elected representatives. The parish councils each have a designated district councillor but where only some of these will also be members of the JSPC.

The Committee Structures

It was earlier noted how Central Lincolnshire attempts to portray itself as an ambitious area, of considerable scale. If the JSPC can be regarded as the arena in which the growth narrative has been most influentially articulated, it is an arena that can also be seen as legitimated through its statutory designation. Consequently this is a structure that excludes from the process framings of the public interest as about something other than large scale growth. Equally the closed nature of the committee and the extent to which its direction results from a historical trajectory provides some explanation as to why the competing framing of Central Lincolnshire as a rural idyll has had little influence. This illustrates the power of those associated with the partnership to decide who and what is admitted to the process, and who and what is excluded. In turn tendencies to frame

the plan-making process as being much better understood by developers and agents, than by the general public suggests that this can partially be understood through the power of the partnership to decide how much effort is put into engaging different groups in the plan-making process.

There are a number of characteristics of the Central Lincolnshire partnership that have particularly shaped the ability of interests outside of the partnership to get involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy. In the first instance the more substantial role afforded to the county council and to more senior officers, such as the Chief Executives for each of the three district authorities, can be suggested to crowd out the influence of other interests outside of the authorities. Particularly the influence of senior officers in recommending the structure of the JSPC can be seen as having a lasting influence on the extent to which the plan-making process has been an open one.

Further limits to the openness of the committee meetings are apparent in the expectations of longstanding committee members that new members will adhere to decisions that have already been made, reinforcing the efficacy of past decisions in informing the present. This is bound up with suggestions that a particular mindset is needed to be able to think about Central Lincolnshire as a whole, rather than for their district or their ward, to make decisions at this more strategic scale.

The committee meetings themselves are portrayed as open, in the way that they are public meetings, that include the possibility for the public to ask questions. However the practicalities of the meetings limit this openness; the timing of the meetings in the morning, the hosting of them in different locations and the need for public questions to be submitted in advance all discourage wider participation. This openness is further rendered artificial in that each open committee meeting is generally proceeded by a closed briefing, at which issues to be debated at the committee meetings are discussed. On the other hand the argument can be made that such briefings create moments of openness for committee members; the freedom to engage in dialogue and explore the extent to which there are political choices to be made, without fear of this dialogue being reported and held against them. The implication is that the procedural nature of formal meetings stalls the potential for an open dialogue.

The extent to which the joint committee moves decisions into a closed sphere is emphasised by the exclusion of those elected members in each of the partner authorities who are not part of the JSPC. The Committee's power to make such decisions without them being ratified by the partner Districts further removes decisions about the plan-making process from other elected members; the source of legitimacy for the JSPC is representative democracy but its small size ensures that it

is paternalistic in nature. Other elected members are able to offer their views through discussions and through public consultation channels, but where the power remains with the JSPC to decide how much weight is given to the views offered through these channels. The result is a process that is relatively closed in the way it is structured.

At face value planning activities in the Peak Park have the potential to be similarly closed, in the way that decisions are ultimately taken by authority members. In both cases planners comment explicitly on the need for elected members to adopt a specific mindset that puts the conservation purposes of the Park first when making decisions. The implication is the same for both cases; they are different to the typical English local authorities that elected members may be used to. For the Peak District this is about recognising the conservation aims of the Park, for Central Lincolnshire it is about recognising the more strategic scale of decision impacts, the intention in both cases being to narrow what members take into account when making decisions. Particularly this is in terms of encouraging members to put aside loyalties to their electorate, in favour of making a good decision for a conception of the public that is much larger in its scalar extent.

This is most strongly expressed by officers in the Peak District in their suggestion that typical local authorities have greater freedom to account for the views of local residents, allowing them to frame what is in the public interest according to a more localised definition of the public. This is a suggestion aimed at members drawn from the district and parish councils that make up the Park. However it is also apparent in Central Lincolnshire, in the suggestions that members can be overly parochial in their viewpoints. Conversely there is an implicit suggestion that planners already have this mindset and are more generally used to thinking about these areas in this way.

Certainly officers at the Peak Park authority contend that they expect the Core Strategy to act as a structuring influence on decisions, particularly as it was adopted by the authority's members. However there is evidence that members see the plan as less of a structuring influence than officers would wish, illustrating how a lack of shared purpose between officers and members is creating space for other interests to influence the decision-making process. Whilst such a tension is not necessarily unique to the contemporary context it is described as a tension that is considerably more evident than in the past, not least underpinned by changes in the Park's governance structures to bring in parish members.

Combined with the emotionally charged appearances made by members of the public at the Park's planning committee meetings, the argument is that the receptiveness of local members to these arguments has created an arena in which local residents can have a direct influence on

decisions about particular planning applications. As a result there are clear moments in committee meetings where there is open space for the personal circumstances of applicants to be taken into account. The lack of challenge to the Park's purposes mean that such possibilities result from the possibility of major development having already been ruled out; such moments of openness are in the context of a generally restricted approach to development.

The variance between how officers and members portray the purposes of the Park as structuring decision-making is further illustrated in the move from referring decisions that do not conform to policy to a meeting of the full authority membership, to referring decisions back to the next meeting of the planning committee for confirmation. The original intention that such decisions would be scrutinised by the membership as whole, rather than just the subset making up the planning committee, can be characterised as a further structuring influence on decisions, intended to further the influence of the Park's conservation purposes on decision-making by allowing decisions to be overturned by the full membership. Conversely the referral of decisions back to the planning committee arguably lessens this influence by reducing the possibility of the decision being changed. Moreover the very act of referring decisions, to allow time to reflect, echoes the suggestion that making appropriate decisions is not simply about judging the evidence, but is also about having time to adopt an appropriate mindset to consider the implications of decisions.

Despite this shift to a more localised conception of the public, disquiet from residents and groups within the Park ensures that a desire to move toward a fully elected authority membership continues to be voiced. Bound up in this is the argument that this type of representative democracy ensures that opportunities exist for residents to express their views about how decisions should be made in the Park. However, whilst the current make-up of the membership ensures that both localised and national definitions of the public are invoked during decision-making dialogues there is a potential that democratic accountability leads to the national definition of the public being crowded out, in favour of fulfilling the wishes of the Park's residents; introducing more democratic accountability may increase the extent to which decision-making is open to local interests and local knowledge but might also be expected to reduce the extent to which it is open to those who wish to protect the landscape, not least through ending central government appointment of members to embody this protection.

The Example of Housing Development

In Central Lincolnshire the national scale growth agenda is given agency at the scale of the case, in the form of imagining how a Planning Inspector will judge the plan. Accordingly how the eventual

examination of the plan is imagined acts as a strong influence on how it is written, restricting the possibility of making political choices and, in turn, closing down the space for other interests to influence those choices. Yet what is interesting to note is the extent to which this constraint is an imagined one, based on past experiences, the occasional physical presence of a 'critical friend' and the media's reporting of other plan examinations.

The extent to which the growth agenda has been removed from the public sphere by processes of de-politicisation at multiple scales is apparent in the lack of space in which even democratic representatives can challenge it. The highly technical framing of the growth agenda makes it difficult to challenge the proposed housing targets without prompting concerns about not being able to deliver large pieces of infrastructure. This is bound up with the aforementioned expectations that planned housing development will be financially viable and allow developers to choose from a range of sites, such that the partnership is accused of serving the interests of developers. In turn it is difficult to understand whether such infrastructure would be desirable in existing circumstances, or whether it is only necessary to accommodate future growth. Such measures illustrate the extent to which LPAs are expected to facilitate private sector housebuilding, with consequent effects on the plan's ability to account for a wider set of interests.

The formation of working groups around the planned urban extensions rules out competition between developers to build places of high quality, perhaps illustrating the extent to which the privileging of housing growth at all costs removes space for deliberating over the quality of new developments; in the abstract building new housing is absolutely imperative to addressing a growing housing shortage but the danger illustrated here is that the process of turning this abstract imperative into physical development excludes dialogue around how new developments impact on the quality of places and the day-to-day life of people.

The Impacts of National Scale Reforms on Openness

Following from the extent to which the plan-making process in Central Lincolnshire is narrowed by how the Planning Inspector will scrutinise the plan's conformity with national policy, this tendency is echoed in the role that planning reform has given to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), through the Duty-to-Cooperate. The views of the LEP were suggested to centre on whether the plan was economically realistic, again echoing national policy concerns about economic growth.

These are interests that would have been previously expected to get involved with plan-making through the processes of public consultation; whilst the views of developers and agents in

particular are often privileged through the arrangement of specific consultation events it can be argued that LPAs have previously had greater freedom to assign weight to their views. However their identification through national policy as interests with whom consultation and cooperation is a factor in the plan's examination has seen a whole set of new meetings and events created specifically to engage with these groups. Equally each of these interests is able to converse in the technical, evidence based dialogue with which planners have traditionally been associated. In a context of time and resource constraints such considerations are persuasive, with the result that this particular set of interests arguably diverts attention away from those less conversant in the language of planning, with aims that diverge from the pervasive rhetoric of growth.

The efficacy of being able to access central government planning reform processes directly is demonstrated by some of the large, UK wider membership based organisations, who maintain the capacity to lobby central government directly, allowing them to contribute to directly to processes such as the drafting of the NPPF where the objectives of their members align with those of central government. It can be suggested that the large numbers of members that such organisations represent legitimises such involvement. However such lobbying can also be seen to have an indirect effect on the national policy framework for the two cases, subsequently narrowing the capacity for choices to be made locally. In turn such organisations are able to bypass dialogue about the right way forward at the local authority scale, where their arguments may be less persuasive. Essentially such organisations have the power to choose the scale or scales at which they engage with planning, in turn allowing them to choose to engage where their interests align with those who have the power to make decisions.

In this context it is interesting to note how the Peak Park Authority is able to use the Duty-to-Cooperate to ensure that its conservation purposes act on the plan-making processes taking place in adjacent authorities. Similarly strong parallels can be drawn between Central Lincolnshire's desire to have a higher profile at the national scale and the interest of senior officers in raising the Peak Park's profile in policy debates at the national scale, not least through the overarching organisation of national parks. Embedded within this is a tacit recognition of the impact of central government planning reforms on the Park and a frustration at a lack of capacity to challenge such reforms, without having a presence at the national scale; the intent in both cases is to shape the local context for planning by having an influence on the policy context as it is set by central government. However an argument might also be made that the success of these efforts would in

turn lead to the further crowding out of other interests not directly involved with the authorities in each case.

Challenges to the Dominant Narratives

Those who challenge the growth narrative suggest that the framing of Lincoln as serving its surrounding areas is overemphasised, but with little opportunity to put forward such an argument to those more directly involved in the partnership.

The ability of parish councils to engage effectively with residents suggests the value of informality in creating effective dialogue about places. This was further reflected in two places, where the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan was seen as opening up opportunities for village communities to both get involved in plan-making, and to have some say about how their village should develop. Particularly this is in light of having a sense of ownership over the future of the village, but one that is seen to be challenged by plan-making processes.

The previous section suggested that the narratives underpinning Central Lincolnshire resulted from the synthesis of multiple knowledge types. However there is little evidence of this knowledge being drawn from groups or individuals who are not already closely involved in the partnership. It is the way in which these knowledges are put forward by a limited range of actors that can be seen as having a particular influence on the direction of the plan; despite significant efforts put into public consultation the openness of the plan-making process in Central Lincolnshire can be characterised as limited. Moreover this is exacerbated by the need to account for interests such as the LEP, whose concerns broadly align with the growth imperative put forward in national policy.

In contrast the tension between officers and members in the Peak Park can be suggested to manifest itself most openly in the arena of the planning committee, in turn making space for decisions on individual applications to be influenced by other actors who choose to exercise their speaking rights. However this is against a backdrop where the greatest influence on the plan-making process is the Park's statutory purposes. This narrows the possibility for other interests to influence the direction of the plan, particularly where those interests do not align with the aim of conserving the Park, or dominant ideas about how this might be achieved.

Planning reform processes at the national scale have been a recurring theme, having variable impacts in each case. However for both cases they can be seen as narrowing the possibility for interests at the more local scale of the case to get involved, particularly in plan-making processes.

Case	Narrative	Scalar Extent of Public	Decision Making Arena	Knowledge	Openness
Central Lincolnshire	Economic and Housing Growth	Central Lincolnshire as a whole, particularly future residents	Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Mix of technical framings of functionality and political will	Limited opportunity to influence, possible influence on location of development
	Economic Competitiveness	Central Lincolnshire as a whole, future residents supporting existing residents	Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Political will, based on instinctive rejection of existing rurality	Limited opportunity to influence
	Maintaining Rurality	Future generations of community residents	Parish councils, Neighbourhood Plans	Value of rurality and impracticality of growth	Through Neighbourhood and Parish Plans, possible influence on location of development
Peak District National Park	Conservation	The UK as a whole	Peak District National Park Authority	Value of attachment to landscape	Limited opportunity to influence
	Housing Development	The residents of the Park	Planning Committee	Technical criteria but evidence of emotional appeals having impact	Opportunity to influence through speaking rights
	Economic Growth	The residents of the Park, private sector interests	Pressure groups, membership organisations	Experiential knowledge, comparisons to national standards	Through legal mechanisms, process of policy-making at greater geographical scales

Table 9: Key Narratives and their Relationships with the Continuums

Table 9 is intended to draw together how the key narratives in each case have been interpreted through this chapter, drawing on the continuums set out in Chapter 3. This tells an overall story common to each case, one about planning activities being dominated by particular imperatives that are strongly coherent with the national scale context in which they were defined. However the relationship with national imperatives is somewhat more complex than this, requiring attention to the extent to which these have been translated into a more localised narrative. Within this there seems little space for the narratives that challenge these imperatives to be brought into the dialogue about each area as a whole. Consequently there is evidence that the public interest is being articulated in a number of ways, but less evidence that these different ways are being brought together. Accordingly this provides a basis for returning to the research questions, to address more specifically which conceptions of the public interest are present in Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park. In turn it is this lack of dialogue apparent in articulating the public interest that sets a context for drawing some conclusions to the thesis as whole.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together some conclusions that set out the contribution of the thesis to both the theory and practice of planning. Specifically this is about addressing the overall aim of the research; to understand what versions of the public interest are enrolled in the processes of making and following spatial plans, and whether these vary with the scales at which planning decisions will have an impact. In the contemporary context the public interest is widely dismissed as an empty justification. Nevertheless the basis for the thesis is the argument that accounting for collective interests continues to be the fundamental justification for planning activities, regardless of the terminology adopted. The conclusions presented here draw together how the articulation of the public interest plays out through the two cases, through the different structures and practices that they embody. However the conclusions must also address ways in which the concept of the public interest might continue to have value and therefore remain the fundamental justification for planning activities. The aim of the research is to understand what versions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans. In turn it is also intended to address what this says about the nature of planning practice and the implications of this for planning theory.

ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to address the overall research aim this first part of the chapter is intended to address each of the research questions, drawing on the analysis undertaken using the continuums in the last chapter. In turn these were posed to examine how useful the theoretical framework set out in Chapter 2 might be in drawing out the relationship between theory and practice. This framework centred on the idea that the scale of the public might inform the processes of articulating the public interest in planning activities. The research questions that addressed this idea were set out as follows:

1. What conceptions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans?
2. How do the conceptions of the public interest enrolled vary with the temporal or spatial impact of the issues being discussed?
3. Who and what shapes the conceptions of the public interest enrolled in planning processes?

Each of these research questions is now taken in turn, to provide a basis for drawing a more general set of conclusions that address the overall research aim.

1. What conceptions of the public interest are present in the processes of making spatial plans?

Drawing on Campbell and Marshall's (2002a; 2000) typology, normative understandings of the public interest were understood in Chapter 2 as being about either the common good, based on intrinsically shared values, leading to shared substantive goals, or as about arriving at what is in the public interest through a high quality process, described as communicative. However Chapter 1 also set out related ways in which the public interest has been understood in policy processes, putting forward the welfare and neo-liberal approaches, as practical expressions of conceptions of the public interest as, respectively, utilitarian and summatory (ibid). As such it is first necessary to consider how the previous chapter, particularly drawing on the continuums of the political, knowledge and openness, suggests how these different conceptions of the public interest underpin the two cases.

In both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park the dominant narratives draw on a common good conception of the public interest, in the way that a judgement about what is in the public interest is made by a relatively narrowly drawn set of interests; these judgements draw on values that are held to be widely shared, in pursuit of particular substantive goals, but where

these goals are articulated by central government. In turn they are strongly embodied by those with the greatest power to make decisions at the local authority scale, narrowing the potential for the public interest to be articulated through deliberation at this scale. In doing so the extent to which the dominant narratives are challenged by alternative conceptions of the public interest echoes the expectation that pursuing the common good will lead to restricted freedom for some.

The conceptual framework adopted the idea that the recognition of planning as value-led also means that the public interest can only be articulated in a value-led, or subjective, manner. However both cases embody a continuing tendency to portray planning activities as rational, informed by technical knowledge. For the Peak Park this value is more easily named; it is about conserving the intrinsic value of the landscape, setting this up as a substantive goal for planning activities in the Park. Despite the Park's designation during the era of the welfare state, the subjective nature of landscape attachment confirms the extent to which planning in the Park is rooted in a subjectively defined common good, coherent with the recognition of planning as a value-led activity. However there is still a tendency amongst officers to see issues such as housing provision and landscape protection in the Park as technical matters. Moreover the extent to which this technical framing is a source of tension in looking at how the public interest is articulated means that it is often reconstituted as a matter of choice, decided by the force of the argument.

In Central Lincolnshire the shared value can be named as economic growth, but with less clarity over whether this is about a widely shared, deeply held value, or an objectively measurable necessity; whilst the political choice behind Central Lincolnshire is widely acknowledged, the growth narrative continues to be presented to the public as a matter of necessity. Whilst not obviously deliberate the result is to render dialogue about the future of Central Lincolnshire less than transparent in nature, adhering strongly to the oft referred to concept of the 'black box'.

In the extent to which the need for growth is seen as measurable this echoes a narrow utilitarian view of the public interest, further reinforced by this agenda being pursued by a relatively small group of elected members, with the power to make decisions for Central Lincolnshire as a whole. Crucially this positions economic success as the substantive goal for the plan-making process, but echoing how the public interest was pursued in the era of the welfare state, in the way that the impacts of growth are characterised as supporting the area's population. For both cases the tendency to continue to frame matters as technical has the effect of portraying them as the realm of 'experts', in turn excluding others from the dialogue.

Moreover the recurring theme alluded to at the outset of this section has been the ways in which the articulation of the public interest has been shaped by planning reforms taking place at the national scale. A neo-liberal conception of the public interest is strongly embodied by planning reforms being undertaken by central government in its concerns with un-inhibiting the market. There are tendencies to frame this as about pursuing a substantive goal in the form of addressing a national housing shortage. However the measures that accompany it; an extension of the permitted development regime, a greater choice of sites for developers and greater concern to ensure that new developments are financially 'viable', all speak to the public interest being addressed by private sector development of new housing, in turn allowing private individuals to meet their own needs through participation in the market.

Building on challenges to planning as a technical-rational activity, tendencies toward a communicative approach to the public interest are most apparent in the planning committee arena, in the Peak District. Specifically the embedded principle that environmental protection outweighs human enjoyment of the Peak District points to a definition of the public that includes voices that cannot participate in decision-making, whether by virtue of seeing environmental protection as protecting the landscape for future generations yet to come, or by seeing the landscape as included in the public, with its own intrinsic interest. On the other hand the appointment of members to embody this interest suggests how the voiceless can still be included in decision-making, drawing on the idea of 'encapsulated interests' (Goodin, 1996, cited by Drzek, 2002) such that the remaining question is whether landscape protection should be given priority, acting as a structuring influence on any decision, or whether it should simply sit alongside other interests in the process of reaching a consensus.

The distinctive organisation of the Peak Park authority membership allows this to be tested, in the sense that, following the introduction of parish members, different parts of the membership do represent different interests. As a result the Park's planning committee meetings can be characterised as a rough approximation of a communicative planning process; each stakeholder in the case is represented, made possible by public speaking rights allowing the participation of other groups. The dialogue's aim is to reach a consensus decision, based on everyone having access to the same information in the form of the planning officer's report, facilitated by the committee chair. Equally it has been shown how the ability of other groups to participate, introducing lay knowledges to the process.

Case	Narrative	Scalar Extent of Public	Decision Making Arena	Knowledge	Openness	Public Interest Conception
Central Lincolnshire	Economic and Housing Growth	Central Lincolnshire as a whole, particularly future residents	Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Mix of technical framings of functionality and political will	Limited opportunity to influence, possible influence on location of development	**Common good, framed in both technical and value-led terms.**
	Economic Competitiveness	Central Lincolnshire as a whole, future residents supporting existing residents	Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Political will, based on instinctive rejection of existing rurality	Limited opportunity to influence	**Neo-liberal, framed in both technical and value-led terms.**
	Maintaining Rurality	Future generations of community residents	Parish councils, Neighbourhood Plans	Value of rurality and impracticality of growth	Through Neighbourhood and Parish Plans, possible influence on location of development	**Summatory,** **Framed in terms of Common Good, value-led.**
Peak District National Park	Conservation	The UK as a whole	Peak District National Park Authority	Value of attachment to landscape	Limited opportunity to influence	**Common good, framed in value-led terms.**
	Housing Development	The residents of the Park	Planning Committee	Technical criteria but evidence of emotional appeals having impact	Opportunity to influence through speaking rights	**Tendencies towards Communicative, framed in value-led terms.**
	Economic Growth	The residents of the Park, private sector interests	Pressure groups, membership organisations	Experiential knowledge, comparisons to national standards	Through legal mechanisms, process of policy-making at greater geographical scales	**Summatory, based on democratic representation of individual interests, framed in both technical and value-led terms.**

Table 10: Key Narratives and their Relationships with Different Conceptions of the Public Interest

However, compared to a collaborative process as described by Healey (2006), the shortfalls are in the formality of proceedings; the inability to modify the proposal and to deliberate in a way that allows stakeholders to change each other's preferences, and the making of the decision by majority vote rather than consensus decision; the decision is made by those with power, reflecting the significant power inequalities bound up with the way in which decision-making in the English planning system is structured. Arguably the most crucial shortfall however is that the influence of lay knowledges is against the wishes of the authority's officers, who argue that such a process pays insufficient attention to the substantive goal of conservation. In turn this can be set in the context of a planning system that has embedded particular ways in which planning decisions should be made, including the knowledges that may be taken into account.

The arenas in which the dominance of conservation and economic growth are challenged by the other narratives also show tendencies toward process focussed conceptions of the public interest. Particularly this is in the concern of the parish councils that predominantly constitute these arenas to make significant efforts to engage with their locality. However it is less clear whether the competing narratives that come to be articulated represent either a consensus or are representative of a complete range of stakeholders. Equally such concerns tended to be framed in terms of the Common Good, seen as appropriate for the public at large.

Table 10, above, attempts to summarise how the dominant narratives identified for each case in Table 9 (p.256) can be suggested to lead to the public interest being conceived of in a particular way, drawing on the conceptions set out through both Chapter 2 and the Conceptual Framework in Chapter 3. Drawing on Chapter 7's analysis suggests the public interest to be articulated in ways that draw on both normative and embedded conceptions of the public interest, in the way that it is articulated in both process and outcome oriented manners, drawing on both technical and value-led framings. In turn this provides a basis for considering whether different conceptions of the public interest are implicated in the different scales at which decisions have impacts.

2. How do the conceptions of the public interest enrolled vary with the temporal or spatial impact of the issues being discussed?

The use of scale here is about understanding where a public is framed as existing when decisions are made, following from Dewey's (1954) notion that a public is created by the extent of the indirect consequences of a decision. This is not about multi-scalar governance but is instead about

looking at how decisions made at one geographical scale can have impacts at multiple scales. The intention is to discern who, and what, the public includes when what is in the public interest is articulated, as a way of integrating different approaches to how what is in the public interest is arrived at.

The consequence of undertaking planning activities at the more strategic scales represented by Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District is to change immediately the scale at which the public is assumed to exist as a coherent group, with common interests. In both cases the dominant narratives embed an abstract conception of the public by virtue of the scales at which they aim to have an impact, where this public is rendered abstract by the lack of an ability to delimit its boundaries; to say specifically who is in and who is out. For both cases this is the result of plan-making activities in particular being explicitly seen as for the public that will exist in the future.

Drawing on a container view, where the public affected by decisions is all of those within an area's defined boundaries, each case rests on the assumption that a coherent public exists over a much greater geographical area than is typical of an English local authority. In practice the ways in which the idea of a public is framed in each case are more varied; a framing of the public interest drawing on the container view is significant, if not uncontested, in Central Lincolnshire. In contrast the container view of the public interest is explicitly rejected in the dominant framing of the public interest in the Peak District, though the contestation of this is also highly significant. Certainly, whilst each case embodies a dominant framing of what is in the public interest, these examples of contestation ensure that the dominant framings are not the only framings.

It is the framing of the public as the residents of the three districts that make up Central Lincolnshire that dominates; there is little discussion of how what goes on in the area has impacts over greater geographical scales, which extend outside of the area. Particularly, in relation to Chapter 1's discussion of issues such as climate change and housing shortage, where these issues were suggested to underpin the continued relevance of pursuing substantive goals, discussions around these issues made little reference to a broader conception of the public for whom these issues need to be addressed in the long term. Instead the impacts at a larger scale are about an increased ability to be economically competitive having an impact on the future development of Central Lincolnshire. In this sense the scale of the impacts is described as long term in nature, with the intention that the proposed growth is about fulfilling needs stretching far into the future. As a result this public is rendered equally abstract by virtue of its framing as the future public of Central

Lincolnshire; the public that will result from projected rapid population growth, rather than the residents of Central Lincolnshire as they exist today.

The conservation aims of the Peak Park create a coherent public that is at least national in geographical scale and long term in timescale, in turn leading to any limited development that does take place having impacts that are far more localised. The national scale public is abstract in the sense that the Park is protected for those who enjoy it, a definition that may extend to include people in other countries but where this excludes larger parts of the population with no interest in outdoors activities or the environment more generally. It is equally abstract in the sense that it is based on the assumption that the value of environmental conservation is widely shared but without this necessarily being couched in any sort of evidence.

The limited scale of development that is seen as serving this large scale public also creates a distinctive secondary conception of the public, bound up in the decisions made by the authority; these decisions create publics that are highly localised in scale, having an impact on the day-to-day life of individual communities but without having an impact beyond those communities. In turn it could be suggested that the embedding of this restricted approach to development in the Park's forward plans over multiple iterations means that very few individual planning decisions in the Peak Park have impacts on day-to-day life that create a public that approximates the scale, or area, of the Park. However it may also be suggested that the view put forward by officers is that the cumulative impact of such developments over the long term does have impacts over a much larger scale.

Other framings of the public as very localised in scale are apparent, particularly in efforts to prepare Neighbourhood and Parish plans. The ability of very local plans in both cases, exemplified by Neighbourhood and Parish Plans, to encourage extensive participation was earlier suggested to attest to the potential for a communicative conception of the public interest to play a role in shaping the future of places. However the question that remains is what relationship such plans can have with issues that have a broader impact, issues that have not tended to be systematically accounted for in such plans. Indeed there is evidence of them being intended as a mechanism to oppose the impacts of issues with a more diffuse geographical impact, such as housing development. Attempts to connect these scales together are apparent in Central Lincolnshire, in intentions to link the abstract large scale growth proposed to its more tangible day-to-day impacts

by consulting local communities about where this growth should be located, if the effectiveness of this is not possible to judge.

The framing of central government planning reform as about addressing housing shortage embodies a definition of the public that is national in scale and long term in nature; particularly it is framed as about providing housing for future generations. This framing derives its legitimacy from democratic representation; ultimately decisions about planning reform are made by the elected members of Parliament. However the further effect of such reforms is to characterise the public as having highly homogenised interests, essentially an interest concerned only with overall numbers of houses built, across the UK as a whole. There is little space within such a framing for smaller scale publics created by differentiated interests, for example on the basis of affordability or lifestyle choice. Furthermore a singular focus on housing numbers ignores the extent to which the public created by housing shortage is also part of a public, both geographically larger and longer term in scale, created by climate change.

Both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District demonstrate how past decisions have impacts over a long time span, in turn suggesting how contemporary decisions may have equally long term effects, whether direct or indirect in nature. Consequently in both cases there is a clear relationship between the scale of the impacts of different issues being discussed and the conception of the public interest that is implicit in the practices of accounting for these issues. However the extent to which the contemporary context is shaped by past decisions sets the scene for thinking about how the public interest is shaped by different interests, operating in different time periods.

3. Who and what shapes the conceptions of the public interest enrolled in planning processes?

When examining who is shaping how what is in the public interest is articulated it is the planning officers in each case who portray themselves as having a more appropriate mindset for thinking about what is in the public interest, accounting for the ways in which these cases are different to typical English local authorities. That elected members cannot devote the same amount of time to thinking through decisions and are reliant on the evidence presented to them by planners ensures that planners continue to have a powerful influence on how what is in the public interest comes to be framed. However what is in the public interest is ultimately decided by the members in each case, if their decisions are constrained by the structures within which they work.

The structure of Central Lincolnshire ensures that only one conception of the public is represented; the public that is embodied by Central Lincolnshire as a whole. The arena in which such decisions have been made for Central Lincolnshire arguably has the effect of excluding the ability of non-JSPC members to influence what is framed as being in the public interest. Paradoxically the legitimacy of the JSPC rests on it being representatively democratic, whilst excluding the majority of members from forward planning decisions about the areas that they represent. In this sense Central Lincolnshire echoes the structure of decision making in central government; the power to make decisions falls to the privileged few. The resulting lack of a public sphere excludes the possibility of open dialogue and ensures that challenges to the dominant narrative must adopt alternative political practices.

Furthermore whilst the growth narrative has become historically embedded any possibility of ensuring that its physical manifestation is responsive to the distinctive rural form of the area, to wider environmental concerns, or to localised needs for affordable housing is negated by the pervasiveness of the planning reform agenda.

In turn a lack of representative democracy is a source of challenge to the Peak Park authority, in the way that residents are perceived to lack the influence that they would have over a typical local authority. Conversely the unique way in which the Peak Park membership is structured means that decisions made by the planning committee give a glimpse into an environment in which different publics are explicitly represented. The result is a dialogue that examines these conflicts, if the inability to alter applications rules out the possibility of modifying proposals to reach a compromise. It would be to overstate the effectiveness of the planning committee environment to describe it is a public sphere, but there is a space in which decisions are open to the participation of a wider range of groups, and consequently a wider range of knowledges.

It is important to acknowledge how the authority in each case is a product of a decision made by Parliament at the national scale. Arguably the statutory designation of each authority through Acts of Parliament gives it legitimacy, particularly valuable in Central Lincolnshire, where the partnership is portrayed as locally driven, but where its statutory designation is suggested to be crucial to holding the partners together. Equally the impact of national scale reforms on practices within each case cannot be over-emphasised; in both subtle and less subtle ways national policy is removing the ability for planning decisions to be made at the local authority scale. In the Peak District this is literal; changes to the permitted development regime remove certain changes from requiring permission, with the implicit assertion that their spillover effects no longer create a

public. In Central Lincolnshire decisions are still made but are highly influenced by both imagining how the plan will be perceived at its examination and by new mechanisms that arguably emphasise the need for planning to facilitate the activities of private interests.

Reforms undertaken by central government have the impact of allowing what is in the public interest to be articulated by interests such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, backed by the Duty-to-Cooperate. In turn the Central Lincolnshire case illustrates the concerns of such groups with plans being financially 'viable' and realistic for private sector interests. Furthermore the ability of large organisations to access and influence reform processes taking place within the sphere of government directly, with consequences for the scope of planning activities, was particularly illustrated in the Peak Park. This is not about a public dialogue in the sense of the Habermasian (1989) public sphere but is about the ability of those with power, power that is democratically legitimised, to admit into the process those whose interests align.

Conversely it is clear that this space, at the local authority scale, is also threatened by planning reforms that render decisions previously considered to have a wider public impact as private; decisions that individuals are free to make on the basis of self-interest, without considering their wider impact on issues where a public is deemed to have common interests (Dewey, 1954). Larger, well organised groups are able to influence planning policy reform at the national scale, but where the policy resulting from their influence actually crowds out the influence of other groups at the local authority scale by removing decisions from the purview of the local authority.

In both cases it was earlier suggested that planning is seen as an activity oriented toward the future public. However the arguments for what this future should look like, as they are set down in the Core Strategy, both strongly draw on what has been decided in the past. Furthermore planning activities in both cases have been strongly shaped by decisions made at the national scale, by central government.

Particularly the normative formulation of the common good referred to in the conceptual framework draws on the idea of a deliberated public interest, that values a range of voices and draws on a range of knowledges. The resulting characterisation of the dominant narratives as most strongly espousing a common good approach to the public interest is a product of the narrow range of interests involved in deciding what is in the public interest, drawing on a highly selective framing of how this is articulated, a highly paternalistic articulation of what is in the public interest. As a result it is not immediately clear where the space exists in which the future of each area can be deliberated and shaped in the present; whilst it can be said that a clearer

articulation of what should be protected in the Peak District is creating more space for looking at how the needs of residents can be accommodated within the overall conservation narrative there is little evidence of this happening within Central Lincolnshire at this stage, if this may be softened by the good intentions associated with the allocation of new housing sites. It is this overall lack of space for different interests to deliberate about what is in the public interest that sets the context for drawing out some conclusions about the normative implications of the research for both planning theory, and planning practice.

CONCLUSIONS: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

The overall aim of the research expressed in Chapter 3 was to understand what versions of the public interest are implicit in the processes of making and following spatial plans, and whether these vary with the scales at which planning decisions will have an impact. The first part of this chapter was able to draw together some clear ways in which a relationship between how the public interest is articulated and the scales at which planning has an impact are present. However such a relationship is relatively crude in practice, tending to draw on a container view of the public contained within particular scalar constructs, rather than recognising the extent to which each scale is relationally constructed; the extent to which planning activities at different scales shape and mediate each other.

The literature review drew on the contrast between the public interest as the fundamental justification for planning and the public interest as an incoherent concept that has become an empty justification for action. Thinking about the extent of the public was suggested by the conceptual framework to provide a useful basis for integrating the communicative and the common good as normative, but distinctly different, understandings of how what is in the public interest should be arrived at. In turn the crucial contrast between these approaches is the extent to which they emphasise substantive goals and the quality of the process when arriving at what is in the public interest, where the use of 'emphasis' is carefully chosen (Fainstein, 2010). Calls to integrate both approaches within a broader framework have emanated from both within the planning theory literature (Fainstein and Campbell, 2012; Fischer 2009) and in the justice literature (Fraser, 2008; 2003). For each approach there is a need to understand who decisions are being made for and therefore how they should be made.

In practice this relationship is hierarchical in nature in England; central government policy, with the national definition of the public that is bound up with this, is having a significant influence on how planning takes place at the scale of the local authority. There is little space for the authorities in either case to challenge this. In turn there is evidence that competing visions of what is in the public interest are being articulated through mechanisms such as Neighbourhood Planning, mechanisms that embed a highly localised definitions of the public. The result is that, despite the considerable efforts being made to articulate what is in the public interest at different scales, through different mechanisms, there is little evidence of effective dialogue between these different scales, to reconcile competing understandings of what is in the public interest.

It may be argued that Central Lincolnshire's continued embracing of growth, with the hope of using this narrative to improve its profile in the arena of economic competition, is, therefore, highly pragmatic. Over a history of multiple iterations Central Lincolnshire has become strongly associated with a narrative of economic and housing growth. This is a narrative that has not been strongly challenged, one that has grown stronger through closed decision-making structures and has narrowed to a focus on numbers through being bound up with infrastructure funding and a concern for getting the plan through its examination by the Planning Inspectorate. In short the scope of the plan-making process and the extent to which it includes a wide-ranging dialogue about what the future of Central Lincolnshire should look like has been progressively narrowed by an ever more pervasive rhetoric emanating from central government that privileges economic growth and the meeting of housing targets by ensuring that private development is unencumbered. The resulting growth agenda appears strikingly similar in character to the historical imposition of modernist solutions, in the name of the 'common good', that has been closely associated with the problematisation of the public interest as a justification for planning activities (Fainstein, 2010).

Particularly the sense that Lincolnshire must overcome its 'backwards' image by becoming economically competitive with the rest of the country reduces the potential for locally distinctive places that create a high quality of life in other ways. In light of Central Lincolnshire's often rural nature and the accessibility problems that this creates, the coupling of growth and infrastructure investment, in an era of significantly reduced public spending, is a powerful driver in the pursuit of housing development. The pervasiveness of neoliberal thinking is reflected in the assumption that the proposed levels of housing development will be delivered by the private sector. This poses the question as to whether the traditional rural nature of Central Lincolnshire would come to be seen

as quite so problematic if national policy placed a lesser emphasis on economic growth. However it is equally useful to ask how different a future vision of Central Lincolnshire might look if it was possible to address existing infrastructure inadequacies, for existing residents, without this having to be dependent on attracting new residents to the area.

Conversely recent central government reforms can be seen to do the opposite, in the way that they privilege private interests through national policy and reinforce this through measures such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Duty-to-Cooperate that divert time and resource away from considering how more local interests should impact on planning activities. The expectation that local authorities facilitate private development has the effect of ensuring that what is in the public interest becomes about national policy, with little space for local challenge. Ensuring the viability of housing sites, to the extent of ensuring that a choice of sites is available, undermines the ability of a local authority to ensure that housing contributes to the quality of places and responds to local experiences of places by removing any certainty that the sites chosen through the plan-making process will be developed; whilst viability is intended to ensure the delivery the choice of sites is intended to allow developers to choose sites that are easy to develop and will increase their profit margins. As a result the public interest as the abstract principle of meeting a national housing shortage is never translated into the fine grain practices of how day-to-day experiences of place impact on quality of life. To this end Central Lincolnshire confirms a wider historical trend in national efforts to address housing shortage in England; where once the 'Garden City' principles were about a way of life that included culture, community. and housing form and layout contemporary efforts are concerned solely with the numbers of houses built, divorcing this even from the need to address climate change or anything else (Ellis and Henderson, 2014).

In many ways the Peak District represents a sharp contrast, if its designation for particular purposes provides only a limited insight into what planning activities might look like outside of the national policy context. The notion that political organisation is about addressing particular goals is strongly embedded in the dominant conservation narrative that characterises the Peak District. In this sense the Park strongly embodies notions of the common good, particularly in the way that it is protected for a public that is hard to define, beyond the assumption that the value of protecting a valued landscape is widely shared. Critically this shared value is seen as engendering a common interest amongst a public that is greater in extent in terms of both time and geography, and therefore results in discomfort for the public that is lesser in geographical extent; the Park's residents. In common with Central Lincolnshire this appears to be an imposed common good in

the tradition of the welfare state, perhaps unsurprising given the Park's designation in the late 1940s.

Over a much longer history the Park has maintained the principle of environmental protection and embedded an approach to housing development that is the reverse of most English local authorities. However this approach has not been immune to challenge, both from within the Park and from changes in central government policy. For the Peak Park the critical relationship between principle and practice is a tense one. This is the relationship between the principle of recognising and maintaining the Park's special character, a principle that wasn't challenged in itself by any of those interviewed, and the decision-making practices that decide whether everyday decisions enhance or detract from the Park's character. Given that the Peak District most clearly adheres to the pursuance of the common good, based on a widely shared substantive goal, it is perhaps therefore surprising that the Peak District comes closest to embodying a communicative conception of the public interest, in the way that decision-making in the planning committee arena facilitates dialogue between representatives of different publics.

Moving towards a communicative model of planning is intended to facilitate the influence of a wider range of interests and knowledges on planning activities (Healey, 1997). In turn this can be seen as facilitating more synthetic approaches to planning, approaches that bring together the overarching principles of justice that should set a context for planning, with practices that translate these principles into places that respect and enhance people's day-to-day experiences of them (Campbell, 2012a; 2006). The difficulty is that this is happening by accident; the space in which multiple interests are able to contribute to the decision-making dialogue is created through tensions in a formal process, in which officers and Secretary of State members have a fundamentally opposed view to that of local members and, often, local residents. In this sense the ability of other interests to influence the decision making process is created because of disagreement within the authority, where there might be expected a shared sense of purpose. To this extent the dialogue is still not one that allows discussion of how local needs can be integrated within the broader framework of landscape protection but tends to be one where one side emerges victorious.

In neither case are these conclusions intended to suggest that the dominant narratives in each case are the wrong ones; at a national scale, over the long term, the significant housing growth planned in Central Lincolnshire responds to a generally well accepted national housing shortage, whilst the Peak District is a landscape that has long been recognised as having significant natural

beauty. However these are issues that have an impact on a relatively abstract definition of the public. In both cases many of those set to benefit are not yet born. What is missing in both cases is any sense that the arguments for these dominant narratives are ones that need to be persuasive to the public as it exists in the present, particularly as the residents within the local authority areas. Officers in particular frame these as narratives to be communicated to the public but without any sense that the arguments for a different narrative might have an impact on their own thinking. This might be characterised as an inevitability that the most powerful voice will win, rather than the force of the better argument, very much at odds with the reframing of the plan as a series of persuasive arguments (Healey, 2007; Albrechts, 2006).

In turn this points to the role of dialogue and deliberation in the making of the plan. Both normative conceptions of the public interest as either about the common good, or a communicative process, rest on an ability to deliberate about what is in the public interest. This is in order to overcome the historical tendencies, apparent in both cases, to impose solutions claimed to be in the public interest, framed as a matter of technical necessity. Campbell (2012a) makes the valid point that there are moments where action is needed and this cannot wait for deliberation to take place. However it can be argued that within the context of the English planning system the plan-making process is the space in which dialogue should be open and extensive, such that decisions where the plan acts as a structuring influence, are decisions where the persuasive arguments contained within the plan should act as a structuring influence without the need to revisit the dialogue. Essentially the plan should be persuasive because it has been arrived at through an inclusive and extensive dialogue.

The impacts of these dominant narratives; respectively the proliferation of and restraint on new development have far more tangible impacts for those already living in these areas, those for whom planning activities impact on day-to-day quality of life. In Central Lincolnshire there is little evidence that an abstract, nationally driven growth imperative is being filtered by more local considerations, leading to the possibility of large scale housing development with little respect for how it is integrated into existing places and existing lives. In the Peak District there is considerably more evidence that the local impacts of development are being considered within a broad framework of development constraint; the dialogue taking place in the planning committee arena draws on both the abstract principle of landscape protection and the more tangible impacts of development for local residents.

Drawing on the scalar extent of the public it was suggested that decisions made by central government, legitimated through representative democracy, intrinsically embody a public that is national in scale and stretches into the future. Characterised this way the tendencies of central government to pursue a version of the public interest that is distinctly neo-liberal in flavour is difficult to challenge. Following the conceptual framework suggests that decisions made at this national scale should act as a structuring influence on decisions made at more local scales, where the public is lesser in extent. Equally the decision to pursue such a public interest can be seen as rooted in political ideology, ensuring that it is a version of the public interest that is subjective in nature.

However in spirit it is a conception of the public interest that is not particularly 'public' in nature. Being 'public' in nature was conceived of at the beginning of the thesis as embodying what might be described as the progressive values of "equity, citizenship and service" (Marquand, 2004). If Dewey's (1954) conception of the public made space for predicting the consequences of decisions, what these shared consequences should look like were to be debated in the public domain, or sphere (Marquand, 2004; Habermas, 1989). It is this dialogue; the prediction of desirable consequences, that those making decisions should respond to. Yet the oft referred to reforms undertaken by central government echo tendencies for the de-politicisation of issues at the national level to exclude the wider public from debating their common interests (Owens and Cowell, 2011); the resulting narrative about pursuing housing growth at all costs exemplifies the resulting concern that what is in the public interest becomes rhetorical (Forester, 2011).

For the two cases the implications are to reduce the space for deliberating what is in the public interest at the local level. As a particular example the concern of national policy with housing growth is difficult to argue with if its impacts on the public, as the country as a whole and stretching into the future are taken into account. However the mechanisms used to ensure that this is accounted for in plan-making processes leave little space for translating this relatively abstract principle into specific and distinctive local practices that address the principle of housing shortage but do so in a way that responds to the local environment and more localised needs. In making decisions at the local authority scale what is clear from both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park is how the public can be defined in a number of ways, at scales that are both more and less geographically localised than the scale at which the decision is made. The interests of these publics tend to conflict in ways that cannot be entirely reconciled, such that

decisions will tend to favour one conception of the public over another. However there is little opportunity for these different interests to be brought into a single dialogue.

Overall, drawing on the idea that planning is about "both the universal and the particular, deliberation and judgement" (Campbell, 2006, p.104), the theme that comes to the fore from both cases is the interplay between principle and practice, where the dominant narrative tends to be rooted in a particular principle; the pursuance of economic and housing growth for Central Lincolnshire and the protection of the national park in the Peak District. Different ways of articulating what is in the public interest by examining the scale of the public is an approach that is already very much in evidence in planning practice. However existing practice can be criticised for its lack of ability to filter overriding imperatives into practices that are locally sensitive; particular notions of what is in the public interest are pursued uncritically, without considering how the interests of multiple publics might be addressed simultaneously.

To put this in terms of the public interest each represents a substantive goal; a common good that encompasses a widespread conception of the public. In turn each broad and somewhat abstract goal is translated into physical outcomes through other planning activities, not least through decisions about particular planning applications. Crucially each of these goals is relatively abstract in nature, in the way it homogenises the interests of a broad conception of the public. Not least this is where the concept of the public interest has proved open to criticism (Fainstein, 2010; Sandercock, 1998). However it is imperative that such goals continue to be borne in mind when navigating the messy and fragmented nature of planning practice, if planning is to continue to address issues that are globally significant; environmental change, housing shortage and income equality to name but a few (Ellis and Henderson, 2014). Practices in both cases show how it is relatively easy to ignore these issues in favour of those that shout more loudly.

In this sense the conclusions of this thesis must tend towards those of Campbell and Marshall (2002a; 2000) that it is the common good model of the public interest that is in need of revival, as a way of recognising that, despite its diversity, humanity continues to share some deeply held values. Most simply this is by virtue of the impracticality of adopting a truly communicative approach; one that brings together all possible stakeholders when making a decision. The cases show how planning decisions do have long term implications and create publics that do not yet physically exist. However this is not about giving licence to those with power to make decisions based on the assumption that their views embody those of the public. Instead what is needed is greater attention to both engaging in dialogue about where planning practices result in decisions

that affect multiple publics. This is about recognising that there are multiple ways of achieving substantive goals, where dialogue has the ability to change practice. Communicative approaches to planning encourage practitioners to pay attention to exactly who and what the public consists of and to encourage dialogues that allow different groups to express and explore their interests. Accordingly it is this dialogue that reminds those making decisions of those who they are making decisions for. The result is to suggest that different theories of how planning should be undertaken each have their place according to the extent to which the public affected by the making of decisions can be represented in the process of making that decision.

To this end the public interest should and indeed must remain the fundamental justification for planning activities. The lessons for practice are the need to pay greater attention to the multiple publics that are affected by each decision and the need to promote a dialogue that allows a shared understanding of these multiple publics to be developed. However this can only be achieved in a context in which national policy sets the broad substantive goals for planning activities at more local scales, but returns to the local scale the autonomy to achieve these goals in a manner that responds to the distinctive nature of the local area.

What also becomes clear is the need for such a reconciliation to take place at a scale that can bring together multiple interests and multiple knowledges. Equally this is not an argument to abandon the local authority, where it appropriately recognises the extent of functional relationships, as a scale for this reconciliation. However this is an argument for national priorities to be defined in such a way that they can be appropriately translated into local practices that recognise the distinctiveness of local places. In turn this requires planning practices that are designed to mediate between principle and practice in an open and transparent manner; whilst individual decisions in the development control arena cannot be left open the plan-making process offers an opportunity to set the context for such decisions, whilst taking the time to understand what form this context should take through and open and inclusive dialogue. The implication is that the plan should be a 'black box', but rendered as such in the spirit of Latour (1999); it should be a black box because it produces the right outputs, in the form of places that promote quality of life, where these result from a more transparent assemblage of the correct parts.

In turn the implications are not that the profession of planning should be abandoned, or that planning's claim to be a profession on the basis of having a specialised technical expertise (Thomas, 1994; 1991) should be abandoned. However the implication is that the specialised

technical expertise that constitutes planning needs to be reoriented in the direction of planners being those who have the mindset, the time and the skills to explore issues in depth, with others (Forester, 1999), and make a judgement on this basis; considering what the substantive goals of decisions should be; who the public(s) are that decisions impact upon, and therefore what interests and knowledges should be enrolled in decision-making; and how the goals of different publics might be brought together through the decision-making process.

Overall then the argument of this thesis may therefore be summarised thus; planning activities are and should continue to be about addressing the collective interests of how people live together; the public interest is a concept that has been often misappropriated, and its tendencies to homogenise interests have been shown to be outdated. However it is a concept that is widely understood to embody these collective interests, and is therefore a concept worth reclaiming; in reclaiming the concept considerably greater attention needs to be paid to who and what constitutes the public, and how the interests of different publics might conflict; the thesis' intended contribution to theory is to show that thinking about the scalar extent of the public in terms of time and geography is useful in deciding both who should have a role in articulating what is in the public interest, and whose interests should be prioritised; this is not necessarily about generating new theories of how planning should be done but is about suggesting how greater attention might be paid to where existing theories are appropriate in different situations.

In this sense, whilst the empirical work has been undertaken in the English context, this is an approach that has international relevance; in a context where issues such as Climate Change create a public that is international in scale, and globalisation provides the tools to understand this, planning as an activity practiced worldwide has a responsibility to take account of such issues. In doing so it is an approach that draws on theories that have been shown to have international relevance. Meanwhile the cases of Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park show that thinking about the public in this way is already crudely implicit in English planning practice, if in a way where national policy dominates, and in a way that allows little interaction between the interests of different conceptions of the public.

Further Research

In making the calls set out through these conclusions it is important not to overreach. They are drawn on the basis of two English cases where the need to examine how different interests might be simultaneously accommodated arises from the existence of relatively clear dominant narratives. Both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District suggest the need to think about how

broad principles need to be translated into localised practices in rehabilitating the need to address the public interest is a more generalised concern. However only by examining a wider range of cases can the extent to which thinking about the scale of the publics involved can address this relationship between principle and practice. To this end both a range of more 'typical' local authorities and local authorities that have outsourced their planning activities to the private sector may make for interesting comparisons to the two cases examined here. Particularly the latter might allow an examination of the extent to which the public interest is addressed in a 'public' manner, given the normative understanding of the word set out in Chapter 2. Equally reference has been made to well organised city regions, exemplified by the Manchester Combined Authority, as areas where the greater range of organisations involved might be expected to give rise to an increased number of publics, with a gather diversity of interests. In a contemporary context where these city regions are increasingly gaining formal powers and responsibilities on the basis that they implicitly embody a coherent public this would seem a fertile area for further research, not least in understanding whether their increased scale creates any additional space for challenging the dominance of national policy.

Final Thoughts

Where the thesis must finally conclude then is with a challenge to practice; to find the space in which the interests of different publics can be brought into a single dialogue, in order to address where and how the interests of one public may be integrated within the interests of other publics. This is an argument for practices of planning, particularly plan-making, that continue to account for the public interest, but practices that explicitly recognise multiple, simultaneous versions of the public, where scale is a useful mechanism for prioritising which public, and dialogue is a useful mechanism for understanding the extent to which the needs and wants of different publics can be reconciled. The increased attention to dialogue and argument, over imposition and technicality, is merely a reminder of where the thesis started out; what is in the public interest can only ever be subjectively defined (Flathman, 1966).

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APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Planning in the Public Interest?

Researcher: Christopher Maidment   **Tel:** 07729 092315   **Email:** c.maidment@sheffield.ac.uk

Participant Number: **Date:**

Please initial the boxes to indicate you have understood this form.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 12th June 2012 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the lead researcher and supervisor to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified in the report or reports that result from the research.

4. I understand that the electronic recordings made of my participation will be discarded at the end of the research project.

5. I agree/do not agree that reference may be made to my position in the planning process in the report or reports that result from the research.

6. I agree/do not agree for the anonymised data collected from me to be used in future research.

7. I agree/do not agree to that the lead researcher may contact me to follow up my responses until the end of the research project.

8. I agree to take part in the above research project.

_____   _____   _____
Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Researcher   Date   Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies
Once this has been signed by all parties the participant will receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form and the information sheet. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be placed in the project's main record, which will be kept in a secure location.

APPENDIX 2 : PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
Planning in the Public Interest?

As part of the research for my PhD I'm interested in forward plan-making and I want to interview those involved about its impacts. As such you are asked to participate in this research as someone who, due to your position, will have a unique and interesting perspective on the topic. However it is important that you are comfortable with taking part.

As such I would ask you to read the following information before signing the attached consent form. Please feel free to talk about your participation with others and don't hesitate to contact myself or my supervisors using the contacts at the bottom if you have any further questions.

Participation
Participation in the research is, of course, entirely voluntary. You must feel free to end your participation at any time and without needing to give any reason. If you do decide to participate you will be given this information sheet to keep and a signed copy of the consent form.

How Long?
Choosing to participate will need you to commit to a single face-to-face interview, to take place at a convenient time and place. The length of this will vary according to how much you want to say but will generally last not longer than an hour. Participants will be asked whether they are open to follow up questions or clarifications by phone or email, but there will be an opportunity to opt out of this on the consent form.

What Does The Participant Do?
The interview will be semi-structured. This means that although I will have some questions ready to ask you the interview does not have to stick to these questions and will be more conversational in style, allowing us to spend the time on the areas that you want to talk about most.

Will Participants Be Recorded and How Will These Recordings Be Used?

This interview will be recorded electronically as I don't want to waste your time by missing half of what you are saying! The recording of your interview will available solely to myself and will only be used to allow the preparation of a typed interview transcript or notes. These electronic recordings will be discarded at the end of the research project.

What Are The Benefits and Disadvantages?
It is hoped that you will find the interview process beneficial as an opportunity to reflect on your experiences of planning. However there is a possibility that such reflections may prove uncomfortable, which, along with the time that you are being asked to give up, are considered to be the main disadvantages to participating.

Confidentiality
Your personal details will be kept strictly confidential and your name will be removed in any work published as a result of this research. However I do want to be able to refer to the positions of those who I interview so please do let me know if this might cause a problem.

Ethical Review

This research has been ethically reviewed via the Department of Town and Regional Planning's ethical review procedure.

Purpose

This research is being carried out to form the basis of my thesis, the core of Doctoral studies in the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield. The research specifically is not subject to any external funding and has not been commissioned by any external organisation. However the overall PhD is funded by a full scholarship from the University of Sheffield.

Timescale

The primary research for the thesis is planned to take place between September 2012 and June 2013, with the final thesis planned to be submitted in August 2014. I would be very happy to keep you updated on my progress and eventual conclusions.

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APPENDIX 3 : INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
First Draft

1. Can you tell me about your background and education?
2. How would you define the role of planning?
3. What do you understand the role of the Core Strategy to be?
    a. What do you think should be the balance between vision and policy? Would you say one was more important than the other?
    b. To what extent would you say that your Core Strategy achieves this balance?
4. Can you tell me about whether you had a role in preparing the Core Strategy?
    a. How well would you say you understand the purpose behind each policy?
5. What do you understand the purpose of public consultation to be?
    a. Would you say that the process you went through achieves this purpose?
    b. What value do you feel consultation adds?
    c. How comfortable do you feel making a judgement about the comments you receive?
    d. What kinds of things do you consider in making such judgements?
    e. Are there any parts of the strategy you would say have been more strongly influenced by public consultation than others?
    f. Why?
    g. Would you say that this is about the people making the comments or the ideas they were expressing?
6. Would you say that things happening at scales other than the local and the national have had much influence on the Core Strategy content?
    a. Any groups in particular?
    b. On any particular sections?
    c. Why?
7. Do you think of the Core Strategy as having much impact outside the Local Authority?
8. Has there been much political influence, either on the preparation process or on the plan content itself?
    a. Whose interests do you feel the politicians were representing?
9. What would you say was the single greatest influence on the resulting Strategy?
    a. Do you think that this should be the case?
    b. How much of it would you say has come from the team?
    c. Are there any groups that you think should have had less influence than they did?
    d. How did national level policy influence the strategy?
10. How would you define the public interest?
    a. What would you say has influenced your thinking in this area?
11. Do you think it will be effective in achieving the vision it sets out?

Phase 1 Interview Schedule for Planners

Theme & Questions	Justification
Motivations & Background	
1. What motivated you to become a planner?	Could say a lot about whose views should be privileged in the process and therefore who constitutes the public?
2. Can you talk me through how you've ended	Understanding how views have been shaped

up where you are today?

3. How would you describe the role of the Core Strategy?	Setting context for all other questions.
a. Who and what would you say that the strategy will have an impact upon?	Do they think of the strategy's impact in terms of multiple scales?
b. How would you describe your role in preparing of the Core Strategy?	Again setting context for other answers.

Judgement and Representation

4. What role should consultation with other groups play in the Core Strategy's preparation?	Understanding the extent to which decision making is a collaborative process, or one entrusted to particular actors, the extent to which the process matters.
a. Do you see the process of engaging with other groups as about informing the strategy or making the decisions that shape it?	
b. Would you say that the process you went through effectively fulfils this?	
5. How comfortable do you feel about judging comments received through the process?	Decision-making as collaboration or judgement?
c. Are there particular factors that decide the impact such comments and interactions have?	Can scalar factors be identified in that affect how decisions are made?
d. For example would you say that a comment should be judged by who it comes from or by the ideas expressed?	
6. Are there particular groups that have engaged more effectively with the process than others?	Who is trying to shape the strategy and who do they represent?
e. Would you say that their level of engagement has increased their influence on the strategy?	
7. Are there groups that you have made particular efforts to engage in the process?	What groups do planners feel should shape the plan and who do they represent?
f. Why did you feel this was important?	

Influences

8. Are there parts of the strategy that have been influenced more by consultation than others?	Is there any variance in how the strategy has come about?

a. Can you point to any reasons for this?	Can scalar factors be identified in that affect how decisions are made?
9. What are the other major factors that have shaped the strategy?	Can large scale/greater good issues be identified in these?
a. How does the influence of consultation compare with these?	Balance between summation and greater good
b. Is this balance similar throughout the strategy?	Can scalar factors be identified in that affect how decisions are made?
10. Do you feel that the team has freedom in judging how such influences should be balanced?	Who is shaping how the public interest is enrolled?
11. Has there been much political influence on how the strategy has been shaped?	Who is shaping how the public interest is enrolled?
a. Have there been parts of the strategy that have attracted particular political attention?	

Example Interview Schedule for Other Groups

1. Could you tell me a little about your day-to-day job and background?

2. And how did you come to be in the position that you're in now?

   o (What was your motivation for becoming a planner?)

3. Could I also get you to describe in your own words what you see as the role of the NFU?

4. How would you describe the role of the Core Strategy/forward planning? What do you understand it to be?

5. How would you describe your involvement in the Core Strategy preparation process?

6. Have you been involved in planning processes before?

7. What first prompted you to get involved?

8. What would you say are the benefits of the (Organisation) being involved in forward planning?

   o How important would you say getting involved with planning is compared to other policy areas outside of planning?

9. How well informed do you feel about the forward planning process for both Central Lincolnshire and the Peak District National Park?

10. Do you feel able to draw comparisons between Central Lincs. and Peak District National Park?

    o Was there anything about these areas that prompted the (Organisation) to get involved with them? Or does the (Organisation) try to get involved in all Local Plans?

11. Would you be able to comment on how effectively each of them have engaged with outside interests such as the (Organisation)?

   o Given what you know about the areas and the information provided do you feel you were able to get to grips with the each area and to make comments accordingly?

   o Do you feel that either or both have taken on board comments made by the (Organisation)?

   o How would you rate the relative importance of each area to the (Organisation) achieving its goals?

   o Would you say this is reflected in your working relationship with each area?

12. Do you know of any examples of Local Plans that have been particularly effective in listening to outside interests?

13. Do you think the interests of farmers more generally are being accounted for sufficiently in planning?

   o How about compared to other interests generally?

14. And finally...does the (Organisation) get involved in much lobbying at the local level?

   o Does the organisation find this to be an effective way for getting its views across?

   o (Planners vs. locally elected members/politicians?)

APPENDIX 4 : LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Central Lincolnshire	Peak District National Park
Planners for the Case Study Authorities	
(Former) Head of the Joint Planning Unit, Central Lincolnshire	Planning Policy Manager, Peak District National Park Authority
Team Leader, Joint Planning Unit , Central Lincolnshire	Planning Policy Officer, Peak District National Park Authority
Planning Policy Assistant , Central Lincolnshire	Planning Policy Officer, Peak District National Park Authority
Planning Policy Officer, Central Lincolnshire	Planning Policy Officer, Peak District National Park Authority
Planning Policy Officer, Central Lincolnshire	
Planning Consultant, Central Lincolnshire	
Planners working with Case Study Authority	
Principal Planning Policy Officer, Central Lincolnshire	(Former) Principal Planning Policy Officer, Sheffield City Council
Principal Planning Policy Officer, Lincolnshire County Council	
Senior Planning Manager, Lincolnshire County Council	
Housing Officer, Central Lincolnshire Partner Authority	
Senior Officers	
Director, Lincolnshire County Council	Director of Planning, Peak District National Park Authority
	Director of Planning, Peak District National Park Authority
Senior Officer, Lincoln City Council	
Senior Officer, East Lindsey District Council	
Members of the Case Study Authorities	
(Former) Chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Authority Member, Peak District National Park Authority
Member of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Authority Member, Peak District National Park Authority
Member of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee	Member of Parliament,
Member of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee	
Member of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee	
Elected Member, Central Lincolnshire Partner Authority, non-JSPC Member	
Elected Member, Central Lincolnshire Partner Authority, non-JSPC Member	
Town and Parish Councillors	
Parish Council Chair, North Kesteven area	Parish Councillor,
Parish Council Chair, North Kesteven area	Parish Councillor,

Parish Councillor/Elected Member, North Kesteven area	Town Councillor,
Neighbourhood Plan Group Chair, East Lindsey area	Town Councillor,
Local Enterprise Partnerships	
Member, Greater Lincolnshire LEP	Officer, Sheffield City Region
Manager, Greater Lincolnshire LEP	
Other Interest Groups	
Major Landowner, Lincoln Area	Estate Owner, Peak District National Park
Officer, Environment Agency	Estate Representative, Peak District National Park
	Representative of Peak Park Watch
	Representative of Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, South Yorkshire
Relevant to Both Cases	
Representative of the Home Builder's Federation	
Representative of a national landowners' organisation	
Representative of the National Farmers' Union	
Representative of a national environmental charity	